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Exploration of the Cognitive Learning Strategies that help in the Development of the
Listening Skill in students of eleventh grade at Maestro Gabriel Institute, second semester
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INDEX

RESEARCH SCOPE	5
1.1. Introduction	5
1.1. Rationale	6
1.2. Research Background.....	7
1.3. Problem Statement	9
1.4. Research Questions	11
1.5. Objectives	12
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	13
2.1. Listening Skill and its Importance.....	13
2.2. Learning Strategies: A General View	17
2.3. Cognitive Strategies	19
2.3.1 Top-down and Bottom-up.....	24
2.4. Influence of Learning Strategies in Students' Comprehension	26
2.5. The Importance of Metacognition and Cognition in Learning.....	27
2.6. Students' Awareness of the Use of Learning Strategies	29
2.7. Strategic Knowledge	31
2.8. Strategy Instruction	31
2.9. The Impact of Learning Strategy Instruction on Listening Comprehension	34
3. METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN.....	36
3.1. Research Method	36
3.2. Type of research	36
3.3. Population and Sample.....	36
3.4. Data Collection Techniques.....	37
3.1. Research Instruments	38
3.2. Validation of Research Instrument.....	39
3.3. Application of Research Instruments	39
3.4. Analysis/ Findings.....	40
4. CONCLUSIONS	58
5. REFERENCES	62

6. ANEXES.....70

Chronogram of activities70

Abstract

Among the years learning English has become a worldwide need because its importance as a universal language. Additionally, the listening skill represents one of the most important macro skills in the acquisition of any language as it permits the development of the speaking skills needed to communicate, but in the process of learning English many language learners usually face difficulties in developing their listening skill and as a result students cannot understand the lessons or communicate with others. Thus, this problematic was taken into consideration and it was decided to investigate which cognitive strategies the students at Maestro Gabriel Institute use and the impact of these strategies have in their listening performance to solve the problem. The sample selected were eight students from eleventh grade, classroom “D” and their respective teacher in charge. The data collection techniques were a classroom observation, an interview to the teacher and a survey designed for students to answer. The results showed that students did not know the majority of the strategies in general and they had little exposure to them. Thus, they did not show too much improvement in their listening skill.

Keywords

English, learning strategy, cognitive, listening skill, metacognition, strategy knowledge, training, comprehension

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RESEARCH SCOPE

1.1.Introduction

The priority towards learning the English language has grown in Nicaragua so much that the Ministry of Education is emphasizing this area since primary school and is trying to improve it. In addition, most students take the English language as a primary step in their studies to achieve their academic and professional goals, because Nicaraguan people are conscious that learning a foreign language opens a door of opportunities. However, even though people know that acquiring another language is important, they do not pay attention to develop the four macro skills; unless they focus most of the time in two or three of them forgetting in most of the cases the more essential one, which is the listening skill.

Taking into account the importance of the listening skill, this research was developed taking as an object of study the eleventh grade students (classroom D) at Maestro Gabriel Institute in the morning shift and was carried out in the second semester of the year 2020. As its title indicates, in this paper was sought to explore the cognitive learning strategies that contribute to the development of listening skill. It was hoped that the theories presented in this research and the analysis made could help generate a better understanding of the cognitive strategies that can be integrated in the teaching of listening.

1.1.Rationale

This research was carried out to explore the cognitive learning strategies that help 11th grade students to develop their listening skill in English. The present research was made at Maestro Gabriel Institute in Managua, during the second semester 2020. The decision of conducting this research was to deepen the knowledge about the learning strategies used in the classroom and the influence of these in helping students to achieve success in the listening skill.

The information of this research was collected through a classroom observation, the application of a survey to the students and an interview to the teacher with the objective of obtaining the relevant and sufficient information to make the conclusions and results of the investigation. Moreover, this research work was made owing to in Nicaragua context of education there is a poor emphasis in the development of the listening skill in the acquisition of English, situation which needs a change. Nicaraguan education has to pay more attention to the listening skill since it is the most crucial skill to acquire in order to be proficient in the target language, as Franklin (n.d) maintains, “active listening is an essential mentoring skill” (p.205).

In addition, this research will help students have a general understanding of the cognitive learning strategies, providing both learners and teachers a clearer vision of what strategies to consider during the listening learning process and when putting them into practice. In other words, this research can be used by teachers and specifically students to consolidate their knowledge about strategies for a better acquisition of the language and development of the listening skill. Additionally, this research paper could help teachers to reflect on the need of strategy instruction or training for both learners and teachers in order to improve the education of English in Nicaragua. Finally, this work will be preserved for future generations interested in educating themselves in this area or about this specific topic to continue it.

1.2. Research Background

Listening is an essential skill that takes part in the daily communication. Some researchers have paid attention in investigating it and say that “the importance of listening lies in the fact that it enables students become aware of language and how it is used” (Boyle, 1987). Despite of its importance in language acquisition, the ability to listen is the least investigated of the four macro skills (Call, 1985) since in the teaching and learning process the more deductively taught are reading and writing. In Nicaraguan context of education this case is observable at Maestro Gabriel Institute where English is taught as a foreign language. Teachers usually pay more attention to develop writing and reading skills rather than listening and even though the school has some resources to develop a listening class, teachers do not make use of them. Students just have opportunities to practice listening when they pronounce the vocabulary that the teacher teaches or when the teacher gives instructions, and as a result students are not proficient enough in the target language. Additionally, the lack of motivation to learn and the lack of knowledge in using learning strategies do not allow students to be excellent language learners.

This research gathers information that is required to analyze the learning strategies that help students to develop their listening skill in English. First of all, it is the work of Cortez, Sorto & Velasquez (2015) that was carried out as their final research report at University of El Salvador with the title: *The use of strategies in the development of the listening comprehension skill in intensive intermediate English I students at the foreign language department*. It had as a purpose to present the strategies that students use to develop their listening skill and report to the teacher strategies to help learners to improve their skills in the classroom. The instrument to collect information about students and teacher was the survey. The data gathered showed that the 55% of students use more cognitive strategies and less the others. According to the results the 42%

students usually struggle with unknown vocabulary, 41% of them have difficulties with different accents and the speedy speech represents an obstacle for the 45% of the students. Moreover, learners agree that strategies are helpful to increase their listening skill. This research helped to have a general knowledge about learning strategies such as cognitive, metacognitive and social-affective strategies and their effectiveness.

Another research was conducted by Calub, Garcia, Tagama & Shinette (2018) focused on listening difficulties. It has as title: *Listening comprehension difficulties of college students: basis for remediation strategies in the classroom*. This work was applied in 280 students of the College of Education who were taking English III in the academic year 2015-2016. In order to obtain qualitative and quantitative data the researchers used a survey questionnaire as an instrument to gather information. This survey consisted in 2 parts focusing on listening comprehension difficulties of students. The data collected showed 75 different difficulties were identified; some of them are comprehension difficulties caused by failure to concentrate, difficulties related to psychological characteristics, difficulties related to the listener and the speaker, the quality of the equipment and the audio characteristics which are the most usual causes of listening problems in learners. All these difficulties serve as a basis to suggest remediation strategies in the classroom to improve students' listening comprehension. The strategies suggested by the authors were activating schemata, rephrasing the instructions, daily repetition of questions, guessing meaning from context, simplifying the vocabulary and syntax from grammar, teaching students to take notes, and adapting listening materials. Suggesting that the use of learning strategies is a good solution to the learners' problems in listening.

1.3.Problem Statement

This research focuses on listening, because it is the most used ability in everyday life, but the least investigated, and it is important to rise an interest in developing this skill in Nicaraguan education of English. "Listening comprehension has historically received only minimal treatment in the teaching of English as a Second/Foreign Language (ESL/EFL); however, it remains one of the most important skills in language learning" (Berne, 1998; Clement, 2007; Oxford, 1993; Rubin, 1994)" (p.1). In addition, listening consumes the 42% of time of an average person and it is the medium to acquire a large portion of information that helps to understand the world and its people (Cooper, 1988). Thus, it is important that teachers start raising awareness on students about the importance of being good listeners to help them to be better learners, and including more listening lessons in their program to give students more opportunities to develop the skills they need in English.

Recently, Nicaraguan teachers have failed in teaching students how to master the listening skill and as a result students' acquisition of English has been affected. More specifically is the case of eleventh grade students in the morning shift at Maestro Gabriel Institute where learners were facing difficulties in their learning of the foreign language owing to their lack of ability to listen effectively, the lack of knowledge and interest to use learning strategies. Situation that brings to the conclusion that the teaching and learning process must change from a traditional approach to a student-centered approach in which learners must be more actively involved in their own learning. Teachers need to teach students ways to face their problems in learning through using learning strategies.

The questions of systematization are presented here:

- Which are the cognitive learning strategies that students of eleventh grade can use to develop their listening skill?
- How does the cognitive learning strategies help eleventh grade students to comprehend the listening tasks?
- What does the teacher do to help students improve their proficiency in the listening skill?
- How do the cognitive learning strategies are used by students in the listening activities?

1.4. Research Questions

- What is the most frequently used cognitive learning strategy that eleventh grade students use to improve their listening skill?
- In which manner does the teacher involve the students in the listening activities?
- How does the use of cognitive learning strategies help eleventh grade students in the completion of the listening tasks at Maestro Gabriel Institute?
- How does the use of cognitive learning strategies influence eleventh grade students' comprehension of the listening activities?

1.5.Objectives

General Objective:

To explore the cognitive learning strategies that contribute to the development of the listening skill

Specific Objectives:

- To determine the most frequently used cognitive learning strategy that eleventh grade students use to develop their listening skill at Maestro Gabriel Institute, second semester 2020
- To identify the contribution of the teacher in the development of the listening skill in eleventh grade students at Maestro Gabriel Institute during the second semester 2020
- To analyze how cognitive learning strategies help eleventh grade students in the completion of the listening activities at Maestro Gabriel Institute during the second semester 2020
- To state the influence of the cognitive learning strategies in the comprehension of the listening tasks in students from eleventh grade at Maestro Gabriel Institute, second semester 2020

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section discusses the main important concepts that are the basis of this research, serving as a guide for readers to understand the topic in general, and the urge of paying attention to the importance of teaching listening and learning strategies to facilitate the acquisition of English.

2.1. Listening Skill and its Importance

To begin with, Madhumathi (2013) argues that “listening is not just hearing, but interpreting with concentration the ideas or words uttered by a speaker” (p.126), and Tyagi (2013) in her study emphasizes the value of listening as a skill and the various aspects that help a listener to understand and respond correctly depending on the situation. Tyagi (2013) claims that listening is a skill that requires the willingness to understand a person, requires respect and interest towards the ideas and feelings of others, and an open mind to accept different points of view (p.1). The author’s perspective of listening helps to understand that listening is an activity that involves not just the ears, but people interests and values. Thus, students at school need to know the aspects that listening actively involves in order to complete their assignments and succeed in their classes. Moreover, the author considers that listening is a five-step-process and for communicating effectively one needs to hear first, understand the message, remember the more significant aspects, evaluate or judge the speaker words and respond.

Purdy (n.d) in his study about the process of listening establishes the importance that listening has in people personal and professional life and remarks that it is needed for learners to become good listeners because that improves their speaking competence in the target language. Purdy claims that “we must be constantly alert and open to improvisation as the elements of the listening situation change” (p.4). In academic life students have to learn to respond quickly and not to hesitate too much while speaking. Learners should comprehend well the teacher’s instructions and questions, they need to speak and respond in context according of the situation;

distinguishing between formal or informal conversations and use the language properly. Learners should be cultural and linguistically prepared to respond to what they are listening to or receiving. However, to be a good listener is not as easy because it requires a general understanding, the willing to hear others' points of view, needs, concerns and good listeners need to be able of giving advice or feedback if necessary. Consequently, the author concludes that listening involves the mind and body working at the same time.

Harrowth (as cited in Asemota, 2015) defines that “listening can thus be seen as a process, which involves more than mere hearing of sounds and noises, but including identifying, understanding and interpreting spoken languages” (p.28). In addition, listening is a dynamic process that requires an active involvement because for answering properly people need to attend the speaker words, perceiving what the person needs, interpreting and responding verbally or non-verbally. Furthermore, Asemota (2015) argues that students who are highly aware of the importance of listening in their learning develop confidence to communicate with their classmates, as they are able to notice how the language of study works and sounds through listening and as a result they develop their comprehension ability. Moreover, the author provides a list of listening and listener types in his study and states that listening can be active, partial, intermittent and appreciative. Each of the types have their own characteristics. In the active one students are distinguished for learning faster and listening for the most important details, the partial is characterized for those students who think what they say beforehand, the intermittent is characterized for the kind of students that are highly influenced by their attitudes when listening to something, and the appreciative is the one which is used for the students that pay attention to body language, gestures and words (Sharifian, 2009).

Yang (2009) from his part in his study of learning strategies employed by English listeners compares successful and no successful listeners using a written questionnaire to collect data establishes the role of listening in language acquisition, emphasizing that “listening provides comprehensible input for learners and plays a crucial role in language acquisition”(p.134). In other words, listening is needed to comprehend and respond in the language because it enables students to communicate and develop the other macro skills that learning a language requires.

On the other hand, Liubiniene (2009) considers that “listening is the vital skill which provides the basis for the successful communication and successful professional career” (p.89). This author provides a basis in this investigation because she gives a list of activities that students use in order to learn a language effectively. Liubiniene (2009) concludes that “listening is a complex skill that needs to be developed by practice” (p.92). Moreover, she suggests that learners should learn about the process of listening because it will help them look for opportunities to learn by themselves outside the classroom.

Some of the strategies that learners use in the listening activities according to Liubiniene (2009) are: preview the content, rehearse pronunciation of words, establish a purpose for listening, take notes, check comprehension using prior knowledge, listen for clarification or repetition, evaluate comprehension, select information and assess its importance, listen for main idea, memorize words or word recognition as clue, pay attention to discourse markers and body language, making inferences, draw conclusions, make use of context clues, apply background knowledge of the L2, storytelling, use of translation, paraphrase what the speaker says, relax while listening and encourage themselves to continue listening even when it is difficult to understand (p.91). All of these strategies can be adapted in different contexts and are considered the most common and easier to practice among learners.

Besides that, listening is an essential skill that allows people to communicate with each other and takes part of their habitual life (UKEssays, 2018). For its importance in daily life, there are many researches about the listening difficulties that students face while learning English as a foreign language. This problematic is very common in Spanish speaking countries. It is believed that the level of listening comprehension of the listener and the speaker pronunciation are some of the causes of this common problem in students (Calub, Garcia, Tagama & Shinette, 2018). However, there are many other reasons that affect students' listening ability. Regarding to this, Underwood (1989) states different causes that make difficult the acquisition of the listening skill. He argues that it is believed that speed of delivery is the biggest difficulty in listening because learners cannot control it (p, 481). Second, there is a limit of repetitions; students cannot exceed the number of repetitions because the decision is not in their hands. Third, students' lack of vocabulary does not allow them to comprehend the whole conversation or audio. Forth, students' lack of contextual knowledge may lead students to failure as they are not able to recognize the context, and sixth the lack of concentration and the level of anxiety they feel during a listening task in the foreign language do not allow them comprehend the conversations.

In order to help students overcome the obstacles mentioned before the use of learning strategies play a critical role. Bao (2017) points out that strategies are generally problem oriented, because when students feel they have difficulties to learn, they consciously look for strategies and select the more suitable depending on the problem they have. Besides, Allah (2016) concurs with Bao and claims that learning strategies are mechanisms that learners utilize to overcome obstacles in the process of acquiring a second language and states that strategies can help boost their capacities at the same time, since through the use of learning strategies students challenge themselves to improve.

Alwan, Asassfeh, & Al-shboul (2013) on the other hand, made a research about the relationship of listening comprehension and awareness of learning strategies. The authors consider that the use of learning strategies play an important role in language oral communication. (p.31). Additionally, Ivarsson & Palm (2013) give a general understanding about listening. Vandergrift (2010) argues that listening is the hardest skill to study and says that “since there is a wide selection to choose between, the strategies can vary from person to person” (p. 9). There are no strategies that function in the same way to all students, thus students can always look for one that help them depending on the purpose they have in mind or the problem they present.

According to Murcia, (1991), there are four perspectives or models of listening and language instruction. Into them it is found, **listening and repeating** that consist in asks students to imitate pronunciation patterns and use memorized patterns in conversations. Secondly, **listening and answering comprehension questions**, in which the teacher requests students to answer factual questions. Then, **task listening** where the professor requests students to use the information received to complete a task. Last but not least, **interactive Listening** when teacher requests students to use information received to develop aural/oral skill. To Marianne Murcia, the listening skill has been received more attention and today the role and purpose of listening comprehension instruction in the SL/FL curriculum can be one of the four different perspectives before mentioned, this means, a generic instructional model for each perspective.

2.2.Learning Strategies: A General View

Bao (2017) makes an empirical and comparative investigation about how teachers and students use different strategies to construct learning, stating the main strategies used for students and providing some useful definitions about what a strategy is and its characteristics. Regarding

to this, Oxford (1990) claims that a language learning strategy is a decision that is consciously taken by language learners to enhance their understanding of the target language, the way they interpret, retain and recall the information to later use it to complete their assignments (p.187). What is more, students need to be conscious that it is their responsibility to take control of their learning, practice what they learn and look for alternatives to learn beyond the classroom if they want to acquire a second language. Furthermore, the author supports his point of view using relevant evidence through a questionnaire survey which demonstrates the range of cognitive strategies used by students in the classroom.

Besides, Crystal (as cited in Mejilla, Calero & Salgado, 2014) points out that “listening strategies are techniques or activities that contribute directly to the comprehension and recall of the listening input” (p.29). Bao (2017) states that strategies can be performed in the mother tongue and the target language and they can contribute indirectly or directly to learning by providing useful data that students can process and the kind of strategy that students use depends of the learners’ engagement and their preferences (p.187).

Zhou & Wei (2018) underline some strategies that can be used to enhance language learning in the listening area. In this study students were required to recall and reflect about what they know, what they want to know and what they have learned and students were asked to identify the reasons of why they could not answer certain listening comprehension activities or what were the main problems they encounter while they were watching an online video. The students were not aware of which strategy to use before they were instructed, but after that they become conscious and recognize that identifying their problems and knowing about strategy use they were able to manage and overcome their difficulties in listening. Moreover, they performed significantly better on listening comprehension tests through the reinforcement of their

comprehension in the language. In addition, Alhaisoni (2018) found that learning strategies are frequently used by students as this kind of strategies help learners in the management of their studies (Oxford, 2001).

2.3.Cognitive Strategies

O'Malley & Chamot (2001) state that cognitive strategies are used to solve problems, direct analysis, and transform the incoming information (p.135). Guan (2014) agrees with O'Malley & Chamot and claims that cognitive strategies are used to manipulate the language in order to complete a task, and unlike other strategies, cognitive strategies intervene directly with the information received in the listening activities (p.75). Oxford (1990) states that these strategies involve the processing of the target language through reasoning and analyzing the input (p.42). While Richards (2008) claims that these strategies are “mental activities related to comprehending and storing input in working memory or long-term memory for later retrieval”. The authors' perspectives about cognitive strategies are in some way related and help to construct a general view of this kind of strategies. Leading to the conclusion that cognitive strategies are the most used ones among language learners.

Gilakjani & Sabouri (2016), in the paper *Learners' Listening Comprehension Difficulties in English Language Learning*, “Cognitive strategies are related to understanding and gathering input in short term memory or long-term memory for later use”. Besides that, according to the authors cited in the same paper Azmi Bingol, Celik, Yidliz, & Tugrul Mart (2014), and Derry and Murphy (1986) Cognitive strategy is a problem-solving method and problem-solving techniques that learners apply to deal with the learning activity, facilitate the learning of knowledge. It means that cognitive strategies are an essential tool to have better results during listening activities.

Alhaisoni (2018) claims that students can use cognitive strategies to contribute the way in how they acquire, recall, storage and use the information they learn. Additionally, cognitive strategies are good in the application of techniques that help students construct their learning so it would be a priority to instruct learners in the use of this strategies (O'Malley, Chamot, & Kupper, 1989; Vandergrift, 1997). Since “cognitive strategies instruction develop the thinking skills that will make students strategic-flexible learners” (Sitti & Shalawati, 2018).

Apart from, Vandergrift (1997) provides a taxonomy, where he states the common cognitive strategies in second language acquisition; strategies such as inferencing, elaborating, summarizing, translating, transferring, repeating, resourcing, grouping, and note taking. All of this strategies require time and practice for being effective tools when learning English, the more students use them, the more they will help them in their studies.

Guan (2014) explains that inferencing refers to using contextual information to find the meaning of unfamiliar words or phrases and predict outcomes. Within the strategy of inferencing it can be found sub-strategies like: linguistic, voice, kinesics, extra linguistic and inference between parts. Every kind of inference has its own characteristics in voice inference learners have to learn how to identify the tones of voice to guess the meaning of unknown words in the listening activities. In the kinesics inference, learners have to learn to interpret body language.

Regarding to the strategy of elaboration students have to use their prior knowledge and associate it with the new information to complete the listening task. Translation and transfer strategies are used to facilitate the comprehension of another language. In addition, the resourcing strategy consist in using multiple references of information available to learners like dictionaries, textbooks, listening transcripts etc. The note-taking strategy refers to writing down key words or concepts in abbreviated form (Vandergrift, 1997).

Apart from the above mentioned, the highlighting of key terms could be considered a strategy used to point out main ideas, details and useful concepts. According to Hasanabadi, Biriya, & Kassaian (2016), the use of different types of highlighting techniques (for example, use of color, underlining and italics) in reading and listening activities play an important role in the good practice of these activities and are very helpful in capturing information that may be necessary during exercises. In addition, in the same work Adams and Osgood (1973) are cited to agree on the essential that underlining with color can be in our listening practices with text, since they believe that color an important visual experience for humans and functions in the cognitive system improving memory (p.10).

Moreover, Adams and Osgood (1973) mention the advantages of highlighting and state that highlighting is not limited to the words. Students can highlight difficult parts of spelling words, verbs, or whatever the lesson is accentuating. The most obvious reasons to encourage to students to put in practice highlighting is that, this allows the teacher to find out which words students do not know. Furthermore, students can re-read or re-listen paying attention to highlight words. Besides that, the application of highlighting makes easier the reviewing of important material. Finally, highlighting is also a good way of picking out specific language within a text that you may want to cite or quote in a piece of writing (p.17).

On the other hand, Ahmed (2015) in his article *Five essential listening skills for English learners* mention the use of inferring meaning as a useful strategy to collect information during listening activities. He explains through examples that this strategy consists on deduce or conclude information from evidence and reasoning rather than from explicit statements. Besides that, in this technique it is necessary the use of “clues and prior knowledge about a situation to work out the meaning of what we hear”.

On the other hand, Goh (1997) argues that strategies such as using visual clues, activating schemata from titles, ignoring unfamiliar words, taking notes, recognizing discourse makers, intonation and tone of voice, guessing meaning and asking for repetition assist learners' comprehension of the listening tasks. In addition, the author provides a list of strategies for developing the listening skill; strategies that are the followings: Talk to competent speakers frequently, get exposed to different accents of English, improve vocabulary, get familiar with the pronunciation of words, listen all kind of input, listen to interesting information and make use of subtitles to check comprehension (p, 8). The strategies that Goh listed are the most commonly recommended for learners to develop proficiency in the language. Learners could be highly benefited from the use of these strategies because if learners are familiar with the English variation, they will not face difficulties in comprehending conversations of native speakers of English with different dialects and accents. Moreover, the improvement of their vocabulary will benefit their language acquisition as vocabulary knowledge is a sign of language comprehension permitting learners keep a balance between bottom-up and top-down processes. Additionally, a large vocabulary size is considered a prerequisite to reach a good listening comprehension (Dimassi, 2016, p.14).

Regarding to exposing students to a variety of accents, Sung (2016) states that, despite the unwillingness and reluctance of students to practice listening with different accents, this should be applied because English is a language of global presence. In addition, in his same study he says that according to an analysis revealed through a survey, the same students admitted that the exposure to different accents is elementary for a complete command of this language.

Furthermore, in the article *Defining unknown words by listening* Sheppard (2013) explains that the importance given to vocabulary is notorious, since it is mentioned that

recognizing new vocabulary in listening activities is one of the most difficult tasks for students who have problems in this area. For this reason, Sheppard emphasizes this problem and how necessary it is to look for techniques and alternatives to strengthen this weakness.

Gur, Dilci, Coskun, & Delican (2013), in their study address some of the benefits of taking notes during listening exercises and how basic this is mainly in higher education contexts. They claim that according to various studies "when students do not take notes, their attention span is 10 to 15 minutes, but thanks to note-taking, extending this period and increasing the level of interest and motivation of listeners could help them understand better". This means that teachers should encourage their students to put this strategy into practice if they want to be successful in developing listening skills. In addition, they cite the results of a study by Carrell, Dunkel, Mollaun (2002) on note taking, in which participants stated that they felt comfortable and relieved when they were given the opportunity to take notes during the lessons; they admitted that note-taking was very helpful in answering the activities related to the course content and facilitates the retention of what they learned.

In addition, they mention that various researchers such as, (Kneale, 1998; Laidlaw, Skok and McLaughlin, 1993; Ayer and Milson, 1993; Davis and Hult, 1997; Kiewra, 2002; Boyle and Weishaar, 2001; Titsworth and Kiewra, 2004; Brent, 2004; Bonner and Holliday, 2006; Tok, 2008) argue that note-taking facilitates recall and that it is a process that needs cognitive processing, as it is composed of several steps that are, listen, understand, analyze, selection and writing in the form of notes. They support the fact that taking notes while listening "makes listeners more active by engaging them in higher-order cognitive skills like assessment, interpretation, decision-making and summary".

2.3.1 *Top-down and Bottom-up*

Gilakjani & Sabouri (2016) state that bottom up and top down processes are part of cognitive strategies. Bottom up involve translation, repeat the oral text, and concentrate on prosodic characteristics like intonation and stress of words and top-down strategies involve previewing, guessing, and visualizing. Furthermore, Richards (2008) gives a definition of top-down and bottom-up processes claiming that “bottom-up processing refers to using the incoming input as the basis for understanding the message”. Top down on the contrary goes from complex to the simple. In bottom-up learners start to construct their comprehension by listening to the smallest units of language like sounds and words to then combine them into phrases and sentences. Finally, when sentences are combined, they are used to write concepts (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005). Regarding to top-down Johnson (2001) argues that learners start building up the meaning of a message in their minds. Which makes the top-down strategies a unique process of concept-driven construction where context and prior knowledge are of essential importance. Prior knowledge, as defined by Vandergrift and Goh (2012), is “all conceptual and life experiences that language learners have acquired and are available for comprehension purposes” (p. 65).

Furthermore, Jeremy Harmer in his book *The Practice of English Language Teaching* gives some important recommendations to teachers when using top-down processes. He mentions that it will be useful to preview unknown vocabulary for learners to be prepared for explain students the meaning of unknown words.

Moreover, Vandergrift (2010) explains that learners can use both bottom-up or top-down processes depending on the situation, context and purpose they have when listening. Students can comprehend and build meaning of conversations or listening activities by paying attention to

details like: context, situation, clauses, phrases and pronunciation of words. For this reason, the author suggests that “listeners need to know how to use both these processes to their advantage, depending on their purpose for listening” (p.12).

Crystal (2001) argues that top-down strategies are students centered and the students that put into practice this kind of strategy need to use the previous knowledge and experiences they have in order to prepare themselves to hear, anticipate and comprehend what they are going to listen. In addition, this strategies include listening for the general idea, predicting the content, drawing inferences from the evidence they have listened to previously and summarizing what they understand. Secondly, bottom-up strategies are the ones that use a text as a basis and include strategies like listening for specific details and word-order recognition. Furthermore, Slimon (2012) found that “learners with higher listening proficiency used significantly more bottom-up processes... and total strategies as well as recalling significantly more audio contents than those who used fewer strategies” (p.473).

On the contrary, Gilakjani & Sabouri (2016) agree with (Conrad, 1985; Tsui & Fullilove, 1998; O’Malley, Chamot, & Kupper, 1989; Abdalhamid, 2012) in that advanced learners use more top-down strategies than beginners. Besides that, Abdalhamid, (2012), is cited again to mention the curious data collected from a quantitative study realized at a university with students that learn Spanish. This showed that male participants utilized more cognitive and that females applied more metacognitive strategies than males. Moreover, the results of Abdalhamid qualitative study indicate that listening success is related to the ability of applying multiple strategies, the ability of modification, and self-controlling.

Furthermore, Nurpahmi (2018) states that students can perfectly use their background knowledge to comprehend the spoken language; this mean that learners are able to use what they

already know about a content to grasp the meaning of a word or speech in context and utilize it in different situations. Additionally, Brown (2006) argues that students obviously need both bottom-up and top-down processes since students pass most of the time listening to instructions, conversations and so on in their learning environment; students need to listen attentively, because it contributes to connect their ideas with the subject of study and then interpret what they heard before something new appear. In the same way, use the background knowledge students' have acquired throughout the years contribute to determine the meaning of the words and make meaningful connections. (p.31)

El-Koumy (2000) states that “neither instruction in bottom-up nor top-down listening processing is effective when used alone”. El-Koumy concludes that both processes complement each other and thus, teachers have to provide balanced listening instruction in both bottom-up and top-down processes in order to teach their students how to use all the sources available that help them in the construction of meaning.

2.4. Influence of Learning Strategies in Students' Comprehension

Numerous studies have been made in the use of learning strategies in the development of listening skill. Studies argue that students need to understand the instructions and activities in order to complete a task. According to Rost (1994) if students do not understand the input, they cannot learn. Thus, it is important to teach learners be active listeners to help them complete the activities without difficulty, and a way to do this is by teaching students use learning strategies that help them succeed. Cortez, Sorto & Velasquez (2015) claim that “the use of listening strategies can help students to develop their listening comprehension skill” and state that teachers have a big responsibility in making the listening activities successful (p, 2).

Vogely (1995) points out that “students could be instructed in the use of listening strategies to improve their performance on listening tasks”. Moreover, Cortez et al (2015) recommend cognitive strategies because they help students comprehend and construct their learning by associating familiar with unfamiliar knowledge and improve their listening proficiency increasing their ability of concentration.

2.5.The Importance of Metacognition and Cognition in Learning

Wenden (1987) underlines the concept of metacognition that is the process which is in charge of regulating the use of strategies and at the same time it is an important feature in the intelligent activity (p.135). In addition, Wenden considers that metacognitive knowledge and learning strategies are needed to understand one’s own processes, because they involve beliefs, personal knowledge about the known and unknown, strengths, talents and weaknesses in order to help people create an awareness or ability of auto evaluation.

Additionally, metacognition apart from being a regulatory ability of the cognitive processes (Schraw & Moshman, 1995). It is considered a “strong predictor of academic success and problem-solving ability” (Dunlosky & Thiede, 1998). In other words, metacognition goes beyond helping students in the comprehension of the activities and improvement of their skills as it develops an ability that make them able to cope with problems and solve them. However, metacognition without a need for cognition in students could be problematic because learners with a strong need for being engaged in the cognitive activity are intrinsically motivated to think, but students who are not interested to learn or think, they have more impediments to improve. Taylor (1981) describes these kind of learners as ‘cognitive misers’ as they prefer not to spent energy on thinking (p.163)

The need for cognition refers to the activity that makes the cognitive action pleasant. (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982). Learners with a high need for it, use strategies that help them elaborate, comprehend and deepen their knowledge, which help them understand the input in a deeper way allowing them to have a good performance on the tasks that are assign to them (Coutinho, 2006, p.163).

Baker (2008) agrees with Schraw & Moshman regarding to the concept of metacognition and states that metacognition has to do with the management of the knowledge and control over the cognitive activity. Metacognition is closely linked to the awareness of what people know and the way of regulating how and when it is needed to use learning strategies. In addition, metacognition is an essential feature in learners with high motivation in learning and improving, because as O' Malley (1985) argues the students who do not use metacognition are learners without direction and motivation in monitoring their progress and goals accomplishments. (p.118).

On the other hand, Baker (1978) defines metacognition as “students’ awareness and organization of thinking processes that they use in planned learning and problem-solving situations”. Students become aware of their learning and take responsibility for it when they notice their difficulties and creates a plan to overcome them. In addition, Ayersman (1995) states that metacognition can occur when learners learn to auto evaluate their processes and the way they behave to improve. Learners with metacognitive skills are able to express their thoughts based on the knowledge they have acquired, update constantly their knowledge and implement new strategies in order to succeed in their learning, these learners know their strengths and weaknesses and strive to be better (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 1999).

2.6. Students' Awareness of the Use of Learning Strategies

Anderson (2002) claims that one of the essential skills for learners to acquire is learning to understand and control their own cognitive processes and for students to do it, teachers have to help students develop these skills. "Teachers can assist students by making them aware of multiple strategies available to them" (Anderson, 2002, p.4). However, learners firstly need to be aware of the importance of listening as well not just about the use of strategies and for that reason, Goh (2000) argues that learners' awareness about listening can be reached through give the students the opportunity to discuss or report their problems in the listening activities and how they have overcome them. Besides that, (Goh, 2000) claims that "encouraging students to think aloud soon after they have completed a listening task provide opportunities for individual reflection", which is a good step to guide students to an autonomous stage of learning.

It is needed to involve students in thinking about their own learning and more importantly get them interested in the process of listening rather than have them focused in the content of the listening tasks (Goh, 1997, p.9). On the other hand, it is worth mentioning that learners must have a variety of strategies available to them to avoid the overuse of a single strategy.

Gan & Lin (2014) in their research examine the level of students' awareness in the use of listening strategies to learn a foreign language and emphasize the role that learners have in the regulation and control of their learning, and according to Inan (2013), self-regulated learning strategies contribute to increase the motivation and interest to learn from students' part; as learners feel motivated they become able to improve their performance and there is more possibility that they reach their goals in their future professions or studies (p.59). In other words, students who are committed with their learning are responsible and know how utilize strategies for their benefit to reach their goals no matter the difficulty they may encounter in the process.

Tsao (2009) states that the use of listening strategies in the class enhance students' comprehension as they show high motivation and commitment in their classes. Using strategies with a purpose and motivation increase students' confidence, and as a result they improve their proficiency in the language and get better performance in the listening activities.

Vandergrift (1999) gives some recommendations for teachers to develop metacognitive awareness and facilitates second language acquisition in learners. Vandergrift claims that listening is a complex work that deserves to be analyzed and supported. Thus, teachers have to teach students to plan for more successful completion of the listening tasks, prepare students to listen and what explain them the expectations and purpose of the activities; students need to make use of their background knowledge, and have a purpose for listening, thus they can make predictions and inferences of the information they hear. All of this to help students focus their attention and lower their anxiety.

During listening teachers can instruct their learners to confirm their hypothesis and monitor their progress, and after listening the teacher can encourage students to discuss about their difficulties to then make them reflect and evaluate themselves. In addition, the use of learning strategies is a less frustrating route to language learners, thus teach students how to use strategies will help them learn significantly. Palmer & Goetz (1988) argue that students' awareness of their own learning influences directly the way they learn and students' perceptions of learning strategies influence their strategy choice (Nisbet & Shucksmith, 1986).

2.7. Strategic Knowledge

Strategy knowledge in language acquisition is important since “without specific strategy knowledge, a critical part of metamemory, a person could not recognize when to apply a strategy” (Pressley, Borkowski, & O'Sullivan, 1985). Apart from that, Jou (n.d) in his research claims that learners should develop the ability of using listening strategies in their learning, because it would enable them to apply the strategies and techniques needed without the instructor guidance. In addition, Vandergrift (1999) argues that strategy knowledge is essential in listening training, because it facilitates the auto evaluation of students and help to improve their comprehension and ability to respond (p.4).

2.8.Strategy Instruction

Goh (2008) states that through strategy training or instruction students can improve, because when students know how to use strategies during listening activities, they are less anxious and more motivated, they have a better listening performance and weak listeners are the most benefited. Besides that, Oxford (1990) proposes a model of instruction for teaching learning strategies which have eight steps; the first steps are related to planning and preparation and the last ones involve conducting, revising and evaluating the teaching process. Oxford explains that teachers must take into account the learners needs, time available, time to select the appropriate strategies for students level, think on how to integrate strategy training in the course, consider the motivational aspects of learning strategies, prepare carefully the materials and activities, evaluate the way strategy training is done and revise it (p.5).

Gilakjani & Sabouri (2016) cite Goh (2000) who sustains that “it is very important to teach listening strategies to students and before doing this, teachers should increase learners’ knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and phonology”. The authors concord with Vandergrift

(1999) when he states that “the development of strategy is significant for the training of listening, and learners can guide and assess their own understanding and answers”. In other words, strategies make students able to monitor and evaluate their progress.

On the other hand, O’Malley & Chamot (1990) made a longitudinal study focused on investigating the impact of strategy training on the performance of students in listening, speaking and vocabulary tasks. 75 Intermediate students of English in the United States were separated in one metacognitive group and one cognitive group. The two groups receive fifty minutes daily during two weeks. Pretest and post-test were administered to students. O’ Malley and Chamot research states that a more successful result could be observed if teachers consider the time spent, the practice done, and students’ level of proficiency. McGruddy. (1998) points out that longer length of time may be needed to strategy instruction to boost its effectiveness.

Additionally, Macaro (2006) claims that when students do not have explicit training in using learning strategies, students transfer the strategies learned in L1, but learners do not always have good results owing to their inability to use them in L2. The findings suggested that “Raising metacognitive awareness may be a good way to assist learners in being able to transfer their strategies and tactics to the target language and vice versa”. In other words, students need to maintain knowledge about strategy use in order to apply the strategies learned in similar situations, and they need to transfer their knowledge to apply the strategies in different situations.

Chamot (1987) states the importance of listening strategy training in high school students, and claims that “teachers need to provide listening strategy training on a regular and repeated basis to help students develop proficiency”. The same author raises the question whether strategy instruction should be direct or implicit. She explains that when the strategy

instructions are carried out implicitly the teacher takes the role of a guide without informing students the uses of the strategy and the benefits. On the contrary, when strategy instruction is given directly the teacher must explain students the benefits of applying a specific strategy and how transfer it, which is important for strategy instruction to be effective because “learners need to maintain and transfer their strategic knowledge to other tasks” (McCormick & Pressley, 1997). Apart from that, it is better to explain to the students the usefulness of the strategies than simply told them to use the strategies without any information of their benefits to help students accomplish their goals (Pressley, Borkowski & O’Sullivan, 1984).

Oxford (1990) provides a rationale for strategy training. She argues that the effectiveness of strategy training laid when students learn to use determined strategies in specific situations and when they are able to transfer those strategies in new situations (p.12). Besides, O’ Malley & Chamot (1994) suggest that for strategy instruction teachers should raise students’ awareness in the use of learning strategies and its importance, explicitly present the strategies to students, give students opportunities to practice the strategies in different contexts, encourage students to evaluate if the strategies work for their purposes and use the strategies in their classes. In the same vein, Mendelsohn (1994) firmly advice that in explicit strategy instruction the teacher must guide students in using strategies in authentic tasks, let them practice and provide them useful feedback.

Graham (1997) provides a different rationale for strategy instruction stating that learners who need instruction in the use of strategies may need to receive it in their mother tongue when these learners are of low proficient level, contrary to those students who are of high proficient level or are from different backgrounds who can perfectly receive the instruction in the target language. Graham says that “if all students and the teacher in a language class share the same

language, initial strategy instruction can be provided in the native language or in both languages”. In other words, the strategy language choice have to be made taking into account the learners proficiency and backgrounds.

Carrier (2003) argues that students need strategic knowledge in order to perform better in their academic studies, but unfortunately strategy instruction in using strategies to improve listening is not a priority in the English as a second language curriculum, and listening activities are frequently a source of anxiety for students as listening is just taken into account as a way to measure students’ ability to listen to oral input and answer questions according to what they comprehended (Field, 1998). Additionally, the ability to use learning strategies effectively is relevant in the ESL context as the use of the strategies can help students comprehend the listening activities (Thompson & Rubin, 1996).

2.9.The Impact of Learning Strategy Instruction on Listening Comprehension

To begin with, Buck (2001) defines listening comprehension as “an active process of constructing meaning and this is performed by applying knowledge to the incoming sounds. (p.5). Jung (2003) points out that the development of the listening comprehension has received minimal attention in the teaching of English, even though the influence it has in the development of writing, reading and speaking. He argues that students must master this skill to succeed in their studies. Listening comprehension has been considered a passive skill, but it is an active skill “in which the listener must discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpret stress and intonation, retain what was gathered, and interpret it within the immediate ... sociocultural context of the utterance” (Vandergrift, 1999). Without comprehension, language interaction cannot occur.

Rasouli, Mollakhan & Karbalaie (2013) in their research focus on examining the effect of listening strategies training on EFL listening comprehension. The authors in this study selected 120 Iranian intermediate students of English to administer them a listening comprehension test to determine if strategy training can enhance learning. The conclusions of this research were that strategy training can advance Iranian learners' comprehension when teachers prioritize learners' needs and implement learning strategies to make the learning easier. Dunkel & Rost (2002) emphasize the importance of developing comprehension skill in English as it at the core of language acquisition, because students need to comprehend the language to develop the other skills needed to speak the English language fluently. Despite its importance, teachers rarely teach learners how to be good listeners (Vandergrift, 2007). And for strategy training to be effective, teachers need to provide to students the motivation to learn to be good listeners, and "designing effective listening tasks and activities that not only are interesting, but meaningful and relevant to the objectives of the course" Rasouli et al (2013).

3. METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

This section discusses the research design that best fits the objectives of the research project, it describes the population selected to make this research and discuss the results found.

3.1. Research Method

The research methodologies used in this paper were case study and classroom observation because they permit the researchers investigate the case within its real-life context to have a general picture of the issue being studied and try to find a solution. Moreover, the research approach of this study was mixed methods where quantitative and qualitative approaches are combined to reduce the weaknesses of each method and maximizing their strengths (Dornyei, 2007, p.43). It was decided to incorporate a mixed method approach, because of the nature of the research questions, the objectives, and the benefits it has for the analysis of the findings since quantitative and qualitative data complement each other to form a deep insight.

3.2. Type of research

The type of research used for this study was descriptive because it describes the case or situation by gathering, analyzing and presenting the results of the data collected and it has a series of definitions or concepts that help in the comprehension of the topic. Additionally, it is exploratory because the researchers had to observe the case within its real context inside the classroom.

3.3. Population and Sample

This research was carried out at Maestro Gabriel Institute in Managua where the researchers selected eight false beginners from twenty eleventh grade students randomly at classroom “D”, who were around 17-18 years old. Four of the students selected were boys and four were girls in

order to respect equality and make sure that both genders had equal opportunities. It is important to point out that those learners received 2 hours of English class per week.

3.4.Data Collection Techniques

For carried out the research, a survey for students was applied, an interview for the teacher and a classroom observation for students and teacher as techniques to collect the information required to make the research analysis and conclusion.

Survey Technique

The importance of surveys is that they are capable of obtaining information from large samples of the population. They are well suited to gathering demographic data that describes the composition of the sample (Glasow, 2005). This consists of obtaining data by asking to people about the things that they know according to a specific topic. The answers in a survey usually need to be short, concise and of multiple choice. It was needed to obtain precise data thus a survey was a suitable instrument in this research paper.

Interview Technique

Interview is an important selection technique where there is two-way exchange of information either on one-to-one basis or by an interview panel. This provides important information from the candidates (Tanuja, n.d). This consists of a conversation face to face between the interviewer and the informants. It was of relevant importance to interview the teacher of eleventh grade in this study to obtain the information needed to fulfill the objective of knowing the contribution of the teacher in the development of the listening skill, thus an interview was made.

Classroom Observation

The observation is another essential instrument to collect data and this is used in many types of disciplines due to its effectiveness. According to (Kawulich, 2005), "this is a tool for collecting data about people, processes, and cultures in qualitative research". In this research the classroom observations made provide a better understanding of the way in which cognitive strategies are put in to practice during listening activities, how frequently these are applied and how they influence students' performance.

3.1. Research Instruments

The instruments are crucial in every research since thanks to them useful information is acquired about the group of study, their opinions and ways of thinking. This consists of a paper which contains questions of interest about the topic of investigation. As the purpose of this research, three instruments were designated, which are, teacher's interview, student's survey instrument and classroom observation.

Teacher's Interview Instrument

The interview had the purpose of knowing the perspective and experience that the teacher has about the cognitive strategies that students applied when they try to look for alternatives to develop listening skills and how these strategies play an important role in the acquisition of listening skills. It was intended to know the performance of students in listening practice, how they improve, verify if the teacher encourages students to implement cognitive strategies to improve listening skills and whether or not she teaches learners how to use cognitive strategies.

Student's survey Instrument

The survey had the objective of collecting important information about the students. For example: how frequently they apply cognitive strategies to improve the listening skill and how they are interested in looking for ways of doing that. Moreover, the answers of the survey are going to indicate how important cognitive listening strategies are. The survey was designed in English but it was applied in Spanish. However, the data collected was processed in English.

Classroom Observation

The classroom observation guide helped to identify the weaknesses and fortitudes that were present during the teaching and learning process and infer in the performance of students in listening activities. This tool supported the information collected with the instruments applied to teacher and students. Eighteen items were included in this observation guide, specifically twelve focused on the teacher performance and six in student's actions.

3.2. Validation of Research Instrument

The jury experts of the instruments validation were the MSc. Estela Hernández Cajina, MSc. Geraldine Abril López Darce and MSc. Sandra Ríos from the English Department of UNAN-Managua. The rating by jury per item was calculated as an average to have a clear interpretation of them in coherence, clarity, and relevance and sufficiency terms in a scale from 1 to 4 points. The items rated in a minimum of 2.5 points were valid and applied.

3.3. Application of Research Instruments

The observation guide was applied on the third week of November, the survey on the fourth week respectively and the interview on the first week of December.

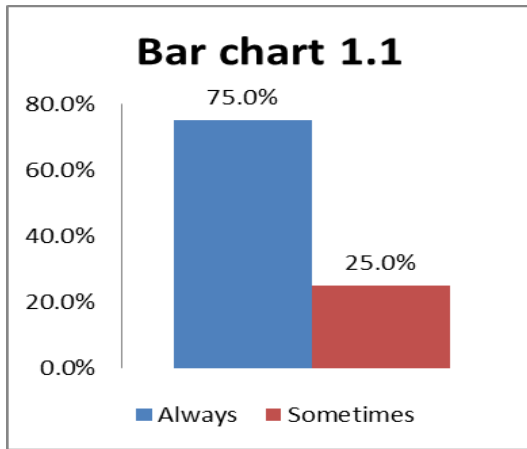
3.4. Analysis/ Findings

In this section it is discussed the main findings of the research. Each instrument was analyzed separately. The data obtained from the observation and interview were analyzed and written as a report. You can see the observation guide aspects and interview questions in the annexes section. The data processing instrument used to analyze the information of the survey were the SPSS program and Excel. The sample that took the survey is a total of 8 students: 4 males and 4 females. The following graphics and tables are part of the survey that the sample took.

Findings of the Survey

The first nine tables and their charts are part of the first item. The table 1.1 above shows the frequency in which the cognitive strategy “Reading the instructions or items before completing a listening activity” is used. From the sample involved in the survey, 6 learners replied that they always use this strategy and only 2 learners sometimes use it.

TABLE 1.1				
ITEM 1 STRATEGY 1		Answers		Percentage of cases
		N°	Percentage	
Reading the instructions or items before completing a listening activity	Always	6	75.0%	75.0%
	Sometime s	2	25.0%	25.0%
Total		8	100.0%	100.0%



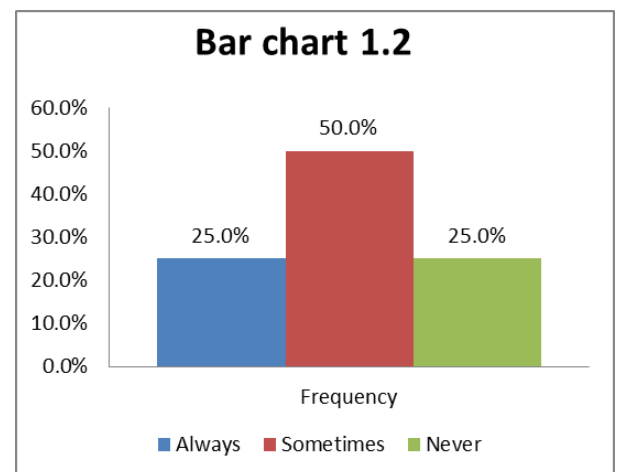
The bar chart 1.1 above demonstrates that the majority of the students answered “always” and the minority of them answered “sometimes”. The 75% corresponds to 6 students and the last 25% corresponds to 2 students. In conclusion, the majority of the sample used this strategy.

ITEM 1 Strategy 2		Answers		Percentage of cases
		Nº	Percentage	
Highlighting unfamiliar words to then looking for the meaning	Always	2	25.0%	25.0%
	Sometimes	4	50.0%	50.0%
	Never	2	25.0%	25.0%
Total		8	100.0%	100.0%

The table 1.2 in the left is about the second strategy “Highlighting unfamiliar words to then looking for the meaning”. It describes that 2 students always used this strategy, 4 students sometimes used it and 2 students did not use

it at all.

The bar chart 1.2 in the right shows a considerable difference in the frequency of use of the previously mentioned strategy. The majority of the sample, who

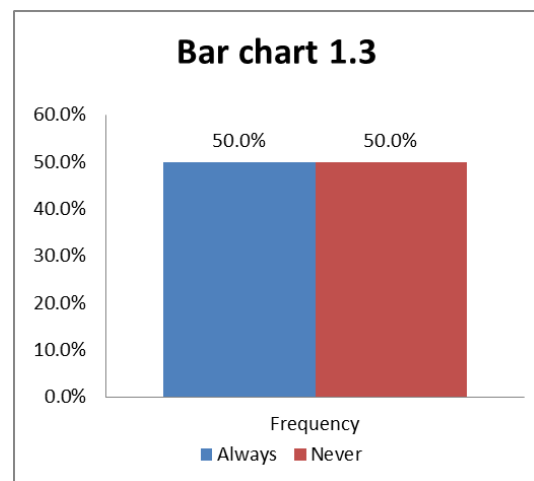


represents the 50%, sometimes used it. A 25% of them answered they always use it and the last 25% answered they never use this strategy. All in all, this strategy was used less frequently among students

The following table (1.3) displays the students' answers about the third strategy "taking notes about the audio". It demonstrates that half of the sample answered that they always use this strategy and the other half did not.

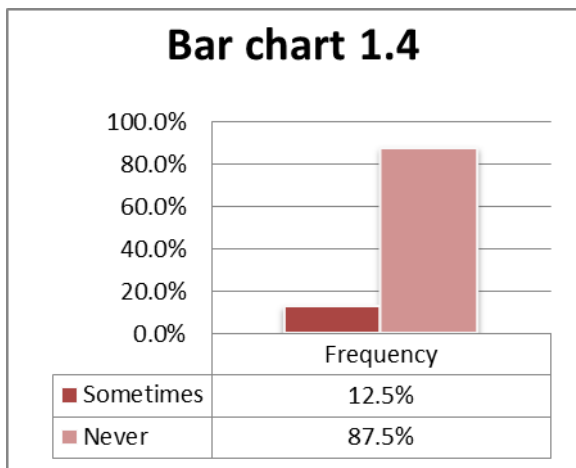
TABLE 1.3				
ITEM 1 Strategy 3		Answers		Percentage of cases
		N°	Percentage	
Taking notes about the audio in the listening task	Always	3	50.0%	50.0%
	Never	3	50.0%	50.0%
Total		6	100.0%	100.0%

This graphic 1.3 illustrates that the 50% corresponds to 3 students who always use the strategy, on the contrary, the other 50% that is equivalent of last 3 students do not use it at all. It is necessary to clarify that 2 students did not answer for that reason the SPSS discarded them.



In the next table below (1.4) is completely notable the enormous difference between the results of the fourth strategy “using conceptual maps or graphic organizers”. The majority of the students do not use this strategy and the rest of them sometimes use it. The majority is equivalent to 7 learners from 8 and the minority corresponds to 1 learner.

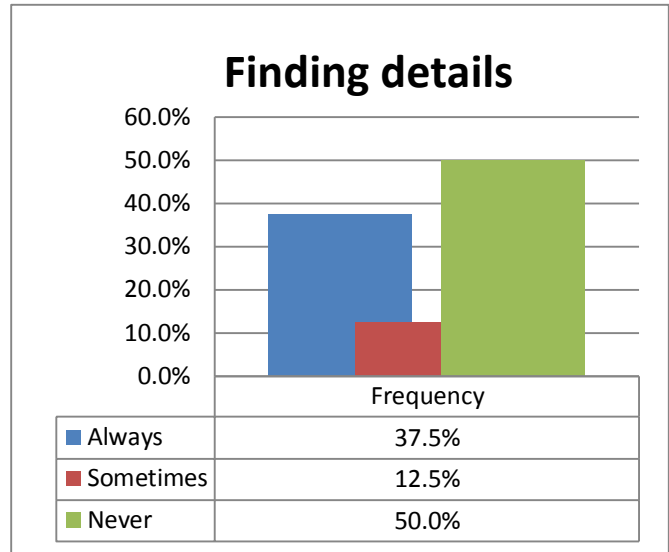
TABLE 1.4				
ITEM 1 Strategy 1.4		Answers		Percentage of cases
		N°	Percentage	
Using graphic organizers or concept map	Sometimes	1	12.5%	12.5%
	Never	7	87.5%	87.5%
Total		8	100.0%	100.0%



The chart 1.4 presents that the 87.5% (majority) of the sample replied that they make use of the previously stated strategy but the least 12.5% of them (minority) responded that they sometimes use it. In closing, it is evident that the fourth strategy is less commonly used among the students.

The table below 1.5 is about the results found in the survey about the fifth strategy “Finding details”. It displays that the majority of the sample that corresponds to 4 students replied they never use it, 3 students always use it and just 1 student sometimes uses it. To sum up, most of the learners do not prefer this strategy.

ITEM 1 Strategy 5		Answers		Percentage of cases
		N°	Percentage	
Finding details like dates, time, name, etc.	Always	3	37.5%	37.5%
	Sometimes	1	12.5%	12.5%
	Never	4	50.0%	50.0%
Total		8	100.0%	100.0%



The bar chart above indicates that the 50% of the learners did not use the strategy "finding details". Moreover, the 37.5% of them always make use of it and only the 12.5% of them sometimes use it. To sum up, There is an abysmal difference between the frequencies of use of this strategy, most of the students discard it.

The following table 1.6 regards to the sixth strategy “Finding the general idea of the

audio”. This chart shows the following results: From 8 learners, 4 students replied that they never use the strategy. Finally, 2 students replied that they always use it and the last 2 students answered that they sometimes use this strategy.

TABLE 1.6				
ITEM 1 Strategy 6		Answers		Percentage of cases
		N°	Percentage	
Finding the general idea of the audio	Always	2	25.0%	25.0%
	Sometimes	2	25.0%	25.0%
	Never	4	50.0%	50.0%
Total		8	100.0%	100.0%

Bar chart 1.6 above represents the answers of the sample as percentages. It is clearly observed that the 50% of the students do not use the strategy, a 25% sometimes use and the last 25% always use it. Overall, this strategy is not preferred by the majority of the learners.

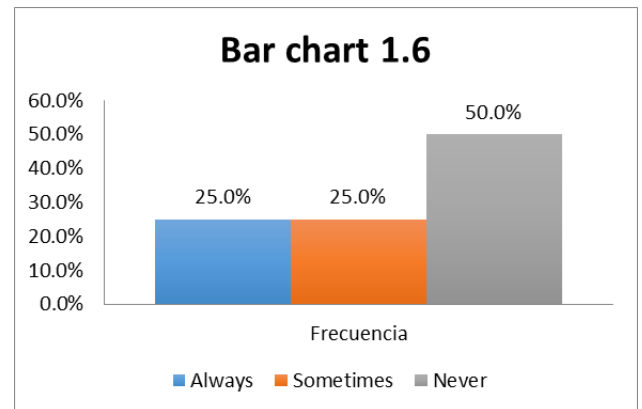


TABLE 1.7				
ITEM 1 Strategy 7		Answers		Percentage de cases
		N°	Percentage	
Finding key vocabulary such as synonyms, etc.	Always	2	25.0%	25.0%
	Sometimes	4	50.0%	50.0%
	Never	2	25.0%	25.0%

Total	8	100.0%	100.0%
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The table 1.7 summarizes the results of the seventh strategy “Finding key vocabulary”. It evidences that 4 students (50%) sometimes prefers this cognitive strategy, unlike 2 students (25%) who always use it and 2 (25%) who do not.

The chart 1.7 illustrates the significant difference between the frequency learners use the 7th strategy. It presents that most of the students of the sample make use of this strategy less common than the minority of them.

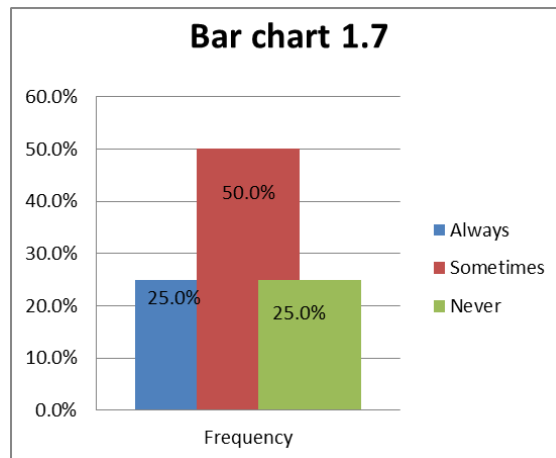


Table 1.8 demonstrates the students' replies of the eighth strategy "Identifying and practicing the new vocabulary" the 62.5% of the sample always use this strategy, the 25% of them sometimes use it and the last 12.5% do not. The chart 1.8 clearly above shows that this strategy is very used by more than a half of the sample.

TABLE 1.8				
ITEM 1 Strategy 8		Answers		Percentage of cases
		N°	Percentage	
Identifying	Always	5	62.5%	62.5%

and practicing the new vocabulary	Sometimes	2	25.0%	25.0%
	Never	1	12.5%	12.5%
Total		8	100.0%	100.0%

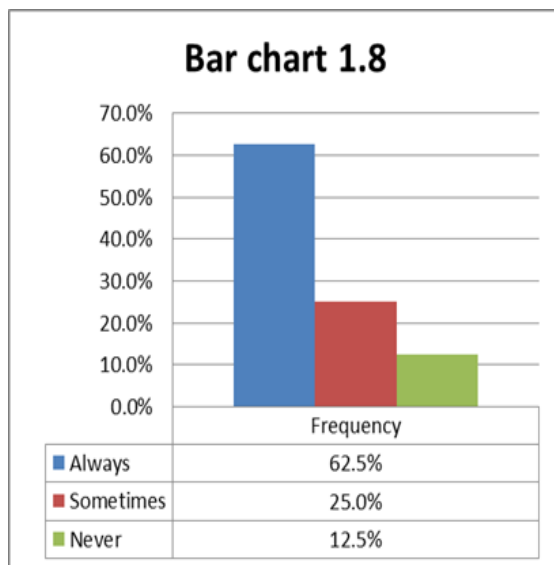
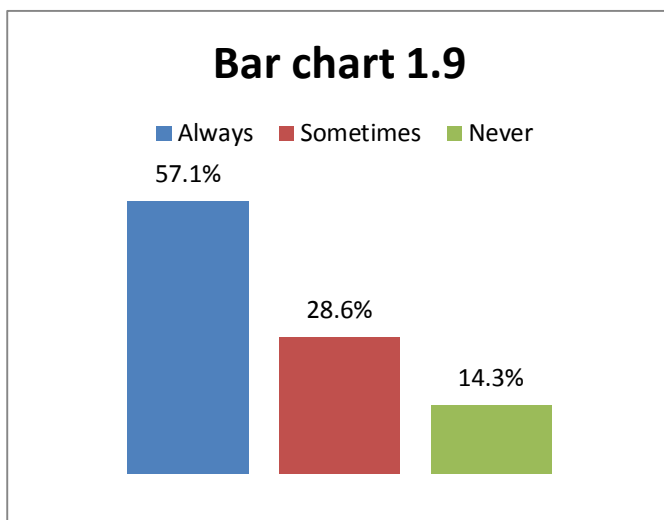


TABLE 1.9

ITEM 1		Answers		Percentage of cases
Strategy 9		N°	Percentage	
Imitate the pronunciation of words	Always	4	57.1%	57.1%
	Sometimes	2	28.6%	28.6%
	Never	1	14.3%	14.3%
Total		7	100.0%	100.0%

The bar chart and the table 1.9 evidence that the 57.1% of the students always use the ninth strategy before mentioned, the 28.6% represents those students who sometimes use it and

only the 14.3% who do not. To conclude, this is strategy is preferred by learners.



The following item is part of the student's survey, the second item does not have chart or graphics but it has a discussion respectively.

The second item is about the strategies that learners find useful. The findings are the followings: From 8 students who took the survey, 3 students state that reading instructions about the listening activity is useful for them. 1 student prefers repeating or imitating the pronunciation of words after the teacher. Highlighting unfamiliar words is useful for 2 students. 1 of them uses both the last one mentioned and the note taking strategy. 2 students did not answer the item.

The item number three does not have neither a chart nor graphics. However, it has a discussion in a separate way. This is an open-answer item about those strategies they use in the pre-listening, while listening and after listening activity. This item permitted students to answer freely taking into account their thoughts and experiences. The sample corresponds to a total of 8 students; each of them must answer a set of 3 strategies respectively. Overall, the results are the following: Because 1 student from the sample did not answered, just 7 students' answers are taken into consideration.

From 8 learners:

- 6 learners use the strategy “read the instructions after completing a listening activity” and 1 learner uses the strategy “identifying and practicing the new vocabulary” in the pre-listening section.
- 1 learner uses the strategy “looking for contextual meaning”, 5 learners answered they use the strategy “highlight the unfamiliar word to them looking for their meanings” and 2 of them use the "taking notes of the audio" strategy in the while-listening section.

- In the after-listening section, only 3 learners use the strategy “identifying and practicing the new vocabulary”. Finally, 1 learner uses the "taking notes" strategy.

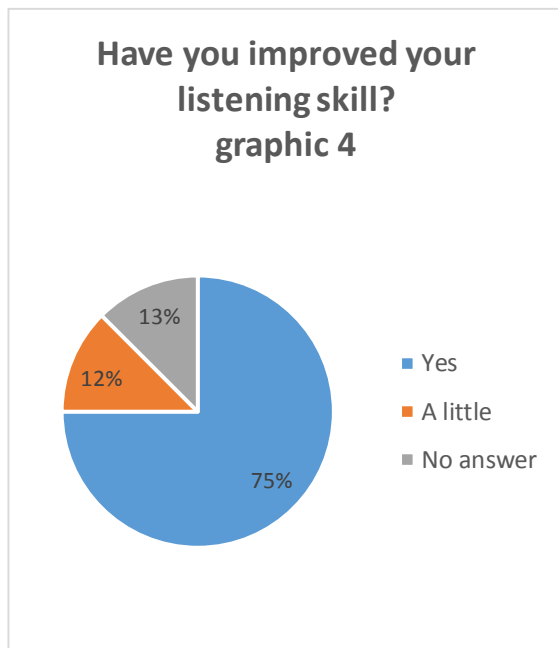
The fourth item discussed is about how strategies have influenced students learning and have improved the listening skill. The results show that 6 students agree that they have learned and improved their skill, 1 student has improved a little and 1 student did not answer the item.

TABLE 4
How strategies previously mentioned have influenced your learning?
Have you improved your listening skill?

ITEM 4		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Students answers	Yes	6	75.0	75.0	75.0
	A little	1	12.5	12.5	87.5
	No answer	1	12.5	12.5	100.0
	Total	8	100.0	100.0	

The chart above give us the percentage of students’ answers in the question number 4:

6 students replied yes (75%), 1 student replied a little (12.5%), 1 students did not answer at all



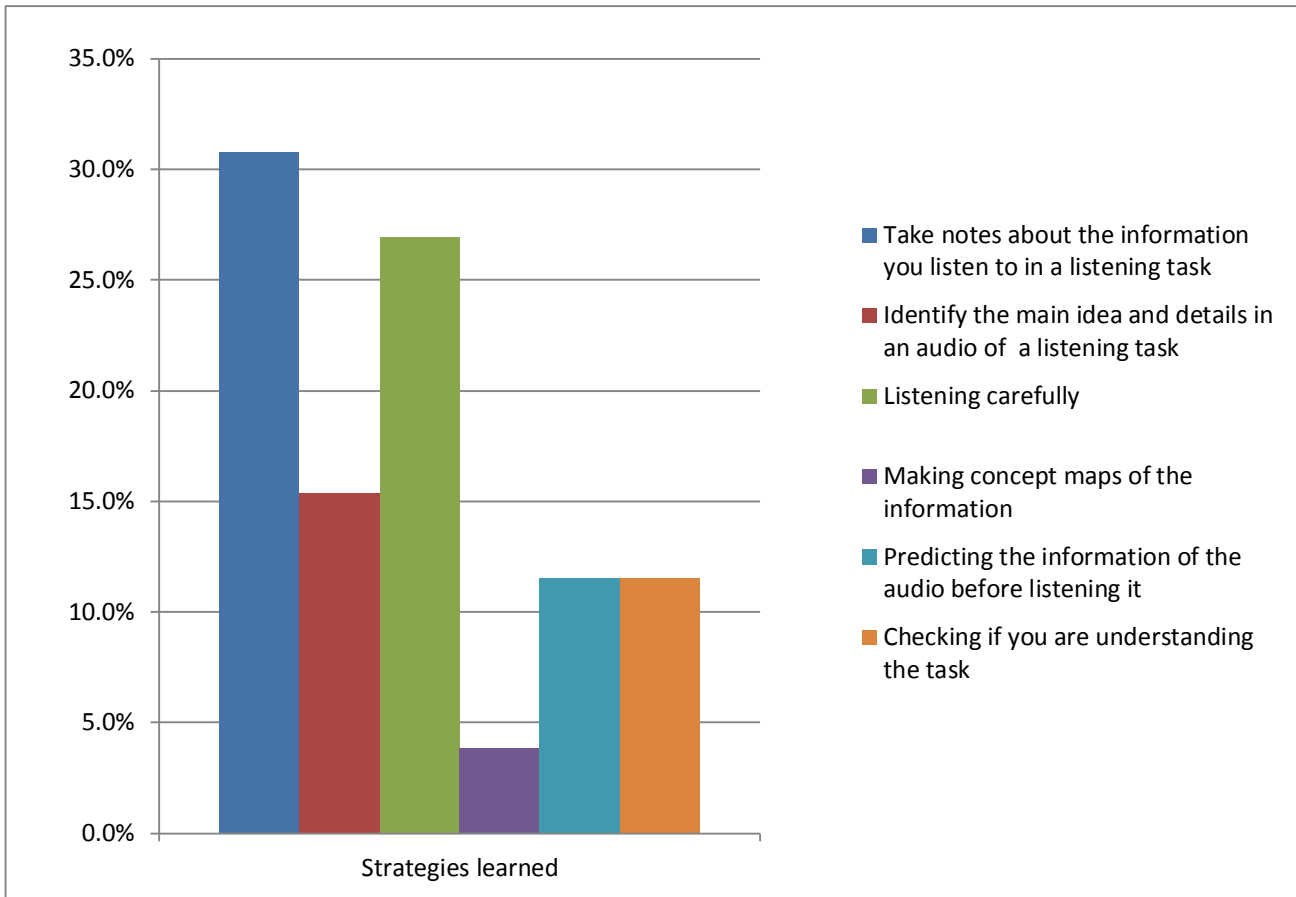
(12.5%) respectively.

The graphic on the left presents us that the majority of selected students agree that they have improved their listening skill. In other words, strategies influence students learning in a positive way.

QUESTION 5				
ITEM 5		Answers		Percentage of cases
		N° of students who answered	Percentage	
Which strategies have you learned from your teacher?	Take notes about the information you listen to in a listening task	8	30.8%	100.0%
	Identify the main idea and details in an audio of a listening task	4	15.4%	50.0%
	Listening carefully	7	26.9%	87.5%
	Making concept maps of the information	1	3.8%	12.5%
	Predicting the information of the audio before listening it	3	11.5%	37.5%
	Checking if you are understanding the task	3	11.5%	37.5%
Total			100.0%	325.0%

The table and the bar chart summarize the results of the question number 5. They expose that the 30.8% of the students answered that they learned how to take notes about the information; the 15.4% replied that they learned how to identify the main idea and details. The 26.9% responded their teacher taught them how to listen carefully. The 3.8% replied that they know how to make concept maps. The 11.5% answered they learned predicting the

information of the audio before listening it and the last 11.5% answered they learned how to check their understanding.

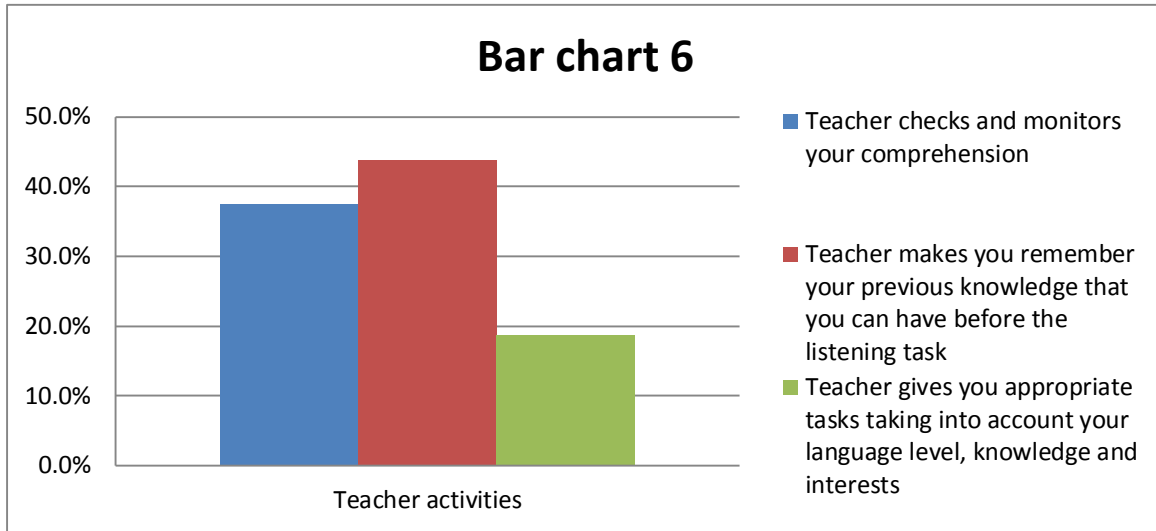


In the sixth item, students were asked to replied the mark with an “x” the activities the teacher applies in her class. Taking into consideration the answers we discovered that:

From 8 learners 6 of them replied that the teacher controls and monitors their comprehension, 7 learners replied that the teacher activate their schemata. 3 assure the teacher create activities according to their level, interests and knowledge. Also, the entire sample answered the teacher gives clear instructions and activities. Moreover, 4 of them reported the teacher uses bottom-up activities and 3 of the learners answered the teacher uses top-down activities.

The following table and its respective graphic establish that the 37.5% of the sample replied their teacher checks and monitors students' comprehension. The 43.8% answered that the teacher make students activate their schemata, and the last 18.8% answered the teacher give to students the appropriate tasks.

QUESTION 6				
ITEM 6		Answers		Percentage of cases
		Nº of students who answered	Percentage	
What does your teacher do in a listening activity?	Teacher checks and monitors your comprehension	6	37.5%	75.0%
	Teacher makes you remember your previous knowledge that you can have before the listening task	7	43.8%	87.5%
	Teacher gives you appropriate tasks taking into account your langue level, knowledge and interests	3	18.8%	37.5%
Total			100.0%	200.0%



Findings of the Survey

As an overall description of the information collected after the survey application in the sample, it was found that not all the students use the same cognitive strategies. Most of the sample preferred using one strategy than others, or even some of these strategies were discarded by them. The table of the first item, the learners selected answered which strategies they use with its corresponding frequency. The first strategy “reading instructions before completing the listening activity” was the cognitive strategy that students use the most. This one is following in popularity by the eighth strategy “identifying and practicing the new vocabulary”. It is relevant to point out that 3 strategies were discarded by the sample: “finding details, finding the general idea and finding key vocabulary”. Furthermore, the majority of the sample chose the first strategy previously mentioned as one of the most useful strategies for them, the rest of the learners selected strategies such as “highlighting unfamiliar words”, “repeat the pronunciation of words after the teacher” and “taking notes”. It is also important to emphasize that a great amount of the students taken for the sampling assured that they have improved their skills due to the use of these strategies. In addition, these learners agreed they have learned some strategies from their

teacher. Moreover, it is obviously implied that the teacher caused an impact in the students' skills. According to the students' answers, the teacher activated their schemata and checked their comprehension. However, it is considered that she did not always use appropriate activities or promote the use of bottom-up and top-down tasks. To conclude, students did not use the same all the cognitive strategies and they obtained little influence of the teacher in terms of strategy instruction.

Findings of the interview

The interview consisted in fifteen questions related to how the teacher teaches listening and what strategies she uses to help their students develop listening skills. Based on the teacher's answers it can be concluded that the teaching of listening is a matter of importance for the teacher of English, she was aware that students have to learn to listen in order to develop their speaking skills. Besides, it was found that the teacher used cognitive learning strategies in her teaching lessons of listening providing learners with some tools to deal with the listening activities. Despite, she made too much emphasis in pronunciation of words (word stress) and exercises of dictation, which means she did not provide learners with new strategies. The strategies the teacher used more were imitation of words pronunciation, highlight unknown vocabulary, identify main ideas and details, look for contextual meaning, listen to songs (to make students identify main details in completion exercises), activate schema (asking exploration questions to know what they know about a content), recall information through reviewing the contents and pre-taught vocabulary, practice pronunciation of short dialogs, check comprehension through asking students questions about what they listened to in the audios and translate when the students did not understand instructions. In addition, the teacher believed that by encouraging learners to listen to songs and make them pronounce and practice pronunciation

with their classmates, she was helping them to be good listeners. On the other hand, it can be implied that the strategies the teacher used to teach listening did not provide all learners with the enough motivation they needed because as she said students most of the time show interest in the activities when they are evaluated quantitatively.

It is worth mentioning that the teacher answered some questions in a similar way, and some questions were not answered as expected, which lead to the conclusion that she needs to update her knowledge and methodology. Because of the explained before, the interview results may have been affected in some way. Moreover, the information obtained from the interview helped to suggest that the teacher needs to be trained in the use of cognitive strategies to be prepared to teach students how to overcome their difficulties in the language.

You can see the interview questions and the teacher answers (written as a report) in the annexes section.

Findings of the Classroom Observation

Based on the teaching and learning process environment where it were applied the class observations guide during the English classes, the following was obtained by observation (classifying the frequency of the actions in Always, Sometimes and Never):

The teacher:

1. The docent **sometimes** asked students to imitate pronunciation patterns and use memorized patterns in conversations during the class. Most of the time when she taught new phrases and vocabulary before the listening activity.

2. The teacher **sometimes** requested students to answer factual questions during listening activities.
3. The docent **sometimes** requested students to use the information received to complete a task.
4. The docent **sometimes** requested students to use information received to develop aural/oral skills. This was in minor frequency because not all the students were willing to participate because nervous or shame at being wrong.
5. The teacher **sometimes** prepared appropriate activities to the students' level, learning styles and interests. This situation happened because the majority of the students did not have enough vocabulary to understand and answer correctly the listening activities and this made them feel demotivated to continue without the help of another classmate.
6. The teacher **sometimes** used tasks that lead to the achievement of the learning outcome (Listening comprehension). For example, listen and read a text at the same time.
7. The docent **sometimes** introduced the lesson by previewing vocabulary. This was really important because the lack of vocabulary in students.
8. The docent **never** asked students to find synonyms and antonyms in context.
9. The teacher **sometimes** asked students to find examples of the unknown words.
10. The docent **never** helped students make meaning by having them relate pronunciation, spelling and image.
11. The teacher **sometimes** exposed students to different accents because she taught them different forms of pronunciation of some words and sometimes made use of British and American audios.

12. The docent **sometimes** took students from the specific to the general, but also from the general to the specific. Sometimes the teacher asked to students to answer exercises about specific details during listening and also general information.

The students:

13. Students **never** highlighted key words.

14. Students **sometimes** took notes during the listening mapping. Even if they did not have much knowledge about vocabulary, some of them achieved to recognize some words and simple phrases.

15. Students **never** were able to find synonyms and antonyms in context.

16. Students **sometimes** were able to find examples of the unknown words.

17. Students **sometimes** related pronunciation, spelling and image to understand oral speech.

18. Students **sometimes** understood spoken passages better by going from specific to the general information or from the general to the specific.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The development of listening skill has received minimal attention in the Nicaraguan context of education. Listening has been viewed as a way to measure students' ability to comprehend the target language rather than being considered a crucial part of acquiring the foreign language. Nicaraguan teachers do use cognitive strategies in their teaching, however, in most of the cases, they do not innovate in the use of other strategies and the way of teaching in Nicaragua continues being traditional. In addition, the results of this research showed that both teachers and students need strategy training teachers because they have the responsibility to guide students to succeed, and learners because they need to become aware of the importance of using different mechanisms to improve their learning process by their own. Students made use of cognitive strategies, but they used the most common ones, the strategies that require more complex elaboration were usually avoided by them. However, it was found that the cognitive strategies students use most like: reading instructions before completing the listening activities, identifying and practicing new vocabulary, highlighting unknown words, taking notes and repeating the pronunciation of words after the teacher influence in a positive way students learning and comprehension of the activities. However, students expressed that they have experienced little improvement in their performance owing to the little exposure to a variety of strategies.

Recommendations

1. English teachers should be trained regarding the use of learning strategies in general and more specific about cognitive strategies in order to provide learners a better instruction and give them tools to overcome their listening difficulties.
2. Teachers should update their methodological skills to improve the teaching process of English as a foreign language.
3. Learners should be instructed about how to use different strategies depending on the listening task and self-awareness on students about the importance of listening need to be created or increased.
4. Further research needs to be done about the use of cognitive strategies in the development of listening skill in order to provide people interested in the improvement of education in Nicaragua a better insight, and new ideas to help learners.
5. The English teaching curriculum should be designed in a way that help teachers give more attention to the development of the listening skill.
6. Teachers need to spend more hours developing the listening skill to help learners to be proficient in the target language.

COGNITIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES

Matrix Variable

Specific Objectives	Variable	Indicators	Instrument
<p>No.1 To determine the most frequently used cognitive learning strategy that eleventh grade students use to develop their listening skill at Maestro Gabriel Institute, second semester 2020.</p>	<p>The most frequently used cognitive learning strategies in listening</p>	<p>Cognitive strategies</p>	<p>Survey</p>
<p>No. 2 To identify the contribution of the teacher in the development of listening skill in eleventh grade students at Maestro Gabriel Institute during the second semester 2020</p>	<p>Teacher's contribution in the development of the listening skill</p>	<p>Teacher's contribution</p>	<p>Interview Survey</p>

COGNITIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES

<p>No. 3</p> <p>To analyze how cognitive learning strategies help eleventh grade students in the completion of the listening activities at Maestro Gabriel Institute during the second semester 2020</p>	<p>How students use cognitive learning strategies in the listening activities</p>	<p>Use of cognitive strategies</p>	<p>Classroom Observation</p>
<p>No.4</p> <p>To state the influence of the cognitive learning strategies in the comprehension of the listening activities in students from eleventh grade at Maestro Gabriel Institute, second semester 2020</p>	<p>Influence of cognitive strategies in the comprehension of the listening activities</p>	<p>Cognitive strategies and comprehension</p>	<p>Survey</p> <p>Interview to the teacher</p> <p>Classroom Observation</p>

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6. ANEXES

Chronogram of activities

Activities / weeks	September					October				November				December					January			
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4
Definition of the problem																						
Delimitation of the topic																						
Compilation of the information to the purpose of investigation																						
Classification of the information																						
Construction of the problem statement, Objectives and Justification																						
Elaboration of the instruments: Survey, Observation guide and Interview																						
Validation of the instruments																						
Application of the Observation Guide																						

**Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua.
UNAN, Managua**



**Rubén Darío Campus
School of Education and Languages
English Department**

Research Topic:

Exploration of the Cognitive Learning Strategies that help in the Development of Listening Skill
in Students from Eleventh Grade at Maestro Gabriel Institute, second semester 2020

Validation of the instruments

Authors:

Heydi G. Urbina

María A. Talavera

Rosa M. Reyes

Tutor: Msc. Francisco Sánchez

Expert Judgment

Respected judge:

You have been selected to evaluate the Instruments about **“The Cognitive Learning Strategies that help in the Development of Listening Skill”**: which is part of the research: **“Exploration of the Cognitive Learning Strategies that help in the Development of Listening Skill in Students from Eleventh Grade at Maestro Gabriel Institute, Second Semester 2020”**

The evaluation of the instrument is of great relevance to ensure that they are valid and that the results obtained from them are used efficiently.

We thank you for your valuable collaboration.

NAMES AND SURNAMES OF THE JUDGE:

ACADEMIC BACKGROUND

AREAS OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

TIME _____

CURRENT POSITION

INSTITUTION _____

Research Objective:

To explore the cognitive learning strategies that contribute to the development of the listening skill in students from ninth grade at Maestro Gabriel Institute, second semester 2020.

Objective of the expert judgment: To validate the content of the instruments.

Objectives of the observation guide:

To analyze how cognitive learning strategies help eleventh grade students in the completion of the listening activities



Teacher's Interview

Objective of the Interview: To identify the contribution of the teacher in the development of listening skill in eleventh grade students at Maestro Gabriel Institute during the second semester 2020

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Answer the following questions

1. How do you integrate listening with other skills like speaking, reading, and writing?
2. How do you help your students to become good listeners?
3. What listening skills do your students need to develop?
4. How do you make sure students understand instructions?
5. Which strategies can help your students to develop their listening comprehension?
6. How do you motivate your students to listen actively?

7. How do your students respond when you ask them to imitate pronunciation? Do they show interest and motivation?
8. How do you make sure students recall specific information when asked questions?
9. Which activities are appropriate for your students' level and their learning styles?
10. How do you introduce vocabulary in the pre-listening stage?
11. How do your students respond to the exposure of different accents in the listening tasks?
English? For example: British English
12. How do you implement bottom-up strategies to the teaching of listening?
13. What do you do when using top-down strategies in the teaching of listening?
14. What do your students do when they find an unknown word in the activities? Do they look for context clues (Definitions, synonyms, antonyms, examples, cause and effect, context)
15. How do you teach your students to listen for the main idea?

Results of the Interview

The researchers made the interview following the questions designed beforehand. The information collected from the interview is reported here.

The English teacher in charge of eleventh grade agree with being recorded during the interview and these are her answers written as a report.

1. How do you integrate listening with other skills like speaking, reading, and writing?

The teacher answers that in her class, she tries to make students learn how to listen in order to they communicate in English as it is known that all the skills have a relation between them, so students have to listen to then speak. She added that she makes her classes practical but she does not make too much emphasis on integrate skills to the teaching of listening. She added also that in the listening activities, she sometimes makes dictation but first she makes some preparations like making students to pronounce words and details. For example the date that she writes on the board. She also asks students to perform dialogs and first she gives students the pronunciation; ask them to pronounce by themselves the words and then ask them practice. She asks them exploration questions and see that some students try to answer; some students try but they do not understand everything. Also, she makes students to work in groups and ask them to read and practice so that they could listen and find the specific information that the task requires. She uses tape recorder and have students to listen to songs. She said that she takes advantage of students like songs and use the songs to make students complete a song with the words they hear.

2. How do you help your students to become good listeners?

She expresses that she make students sing because it help them a lot. She instruct students to listen to music and help students with the pronunciation

3. What listening skills do your students need to develop?

She answered that students need to develop pronunciation to reading aloud, highlight unknown words, dictation. She said that she make students to write the unfamiliar words on the board to the help them figure out the meaning.

4. How do you make sure students understand instructions?

She said that she makes the instructions easy and use repetitions to help students learn.

5. Which strategies can help your students to develop their listening comprehension?

She reads instructions aloud, pronounce words and make dictation exercises.

6. How do you motivate your students to listen actively?

She answered that she speak to them in English or at least she tries because sometimes she has to speak in Spanish as some students are afraid of speaking in English or they do not have confidence enough or they do not understand. She also make students participate in the activities and practice pronunciation and writing.

7. How do your students respond when you ask them to imitate pronunciation? Do they show interest and motivation?

She answered that some students show a bad attitude and they do not want to speak but at the end as they realized that the activity is going to be evaluated they try.

8. How do you make sure students recall specific information when asked questions?

She makes a review of the last content and ask students questions using the vocabulary that she previously taught them.

9. Which activities are appropriate for your students' level and their learning styles?

She answered that it is known that in the classrooms exist different type of students. Some that speak a little English because they study in academies, so it is easy for them to respond, some others that try to respond even though they cannot. Some that are shy but they are good at pronouncing. In addition, because of students' level, she tries to make the activities easy, teach them pronunciation and implement interesting topics to her lesson.

10. How do you introduce vocabulary in the pre-listening stage?

She answers that she instructs students to perform short dialogs (using the tape recorder to students can listen the conversations)

11. How do your students respond to the exposure of different accents in the listening tasks?
English? For example: British English

She said that she teaches students different pronunciations of words with British and American English. She explains them and they listen and try to pronounce the words with both accents. They assimilate very well the two accents because they like to learn.

12. How do you implement bottom-up strategies to the teaching of listening?

She asks students to find unknown words and give them the pronunciation of words.

13. What do you do when using top-down strategies in the teaching of listening?

She said that if she uses a reading first, she asks students to read with her, explores the known vocabulary, asks them to pass to the board and explains what they understand. After that, she asks students questions about the reading and see if they have any doubt or questions.

14. What do your students do when they find an unknown word in the activities? Do they look for context clues (Definitions, synonyms, antonyms, examples, cause and effect, context)

She answers that students highlight the unknown vocabulary and write it on the board to then figure out the meaning with their classmates.

15. How do you teach your students to listen for the main idea?

She explains that if she gives students a reading about family for example, she asks them what a family is (exploration questions). Then instruct them to highlight the main idea and asks them questions to confirm they really understand.



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Student's Survey

The purpose of this survey is to identify and collect data about the Cognitive learning strategies that eleventh grade students use in the development of listening skill at Maestro Gabriel Institute, second semester 2020.

Gender: _____ **Date:** _____

Answer the following items depending on your thoughts.

1) Which of the following strategies do you use to practice listening in the English language? In the table, mark with a check to indicate which strategies you use and which you don't, and how often do you use them.

Strategy		Always	Sometimes	Never
Cognitive	1. Reading the instructions or items before completing a listening activity			
	2. Highlighting unfamiliar words to then looking for their meaning in the dictionary			
	3. Taking notes about the audio in the listening task			
	4. Using graphic organizers or concept maps			

	5. Finding details like dates, time, name of places, etc.			
	6. Finding the general idea of the audio in the task			
	7. Finding key vocabulary such as synonyms, antonyms, etc.			
	8. Identifying and practicing the new vocabulary			
	9. Imitate the pronunciation of words (repeating the pronunciation in chorus after the teacher)			

2) Which of those strategies previous mentioned are helpful for you to understand and complete the English listening tasks? Why? Explain with your own words.

3) Which learning strategies do you use?

- Before the listening task_____
- During the listening task_____
- After the listening task_____

4) How would you describe the influence of the strategies previous mentioned in your listening skill? Have you improved your listening skill? Explain.

5) Which strategies have you learned from your teacher? Circle the letter of those you have learned.

- Take notes about the information you listen in a listening task
- Identify the main idea and details in an audio of a listening task
- Listening carefully
- Making concept maps of the information
- Predicting the information of the audio before listening it
- Checking if you are understanding the task

6) What do your teacher do in a listening task?. Mark with a check those activities your teacher does.

- Teacher checks and monitors your comprehension
- Teacher makes you remember your previous knowledge that you can have before the listening task
- Teacher gives you tasks taking into account your langue level, knowledge and interests
- Teacher gives you clear instructions in activities
- Teacher uses complex to easy activities in an English listening class
- Teacher uses easy to difficult activities in an English listening class

COGNITIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES

Aspects	Always	Sometimes	Never
Teacher			
Asks students to imitate pronunciation patterns and use memorized patterns in conversations.			
Requests students to answer factual questions.			
Requests students to use the information received to complete a task.			
Requests students to use information received to develop aural/oral skills.			
Activities are appropriate to the students' level, learning styles and interests.			
Uses tasks that lead to the achievement of the learning outcome. (Listening comprehension).			
Introduces the lesson by previewing vocabulary.			
Asks students to find synonyms and antonyms in context.			
Asks students to find examples of the unknown words.			
Helps students make meaning by having them relate pronunciation, spelling and image.			
Exposes students to different accents.			
Takes students from the specific to the general, but also from the general to the specific.			
Students			
Highlight key words.			
Take notes during the listening mapping.			
Are able to find synonyms and antonyms in context.			
Are able to find examples of the unknown words.			
Relate pronunciation, spelling and image to understand oral speech.			

COGNITIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES

Understand spoken passages better by going from specific to the general information or from the general to the specific.		1	
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