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Research submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for Bachelor of Arts Degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

Theme:

Methodological alternatives to improve the listening comprehension skills in 11th grade students from Guillermo Cano Institute, during the second semester 2014.

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Dedication

We would like to dedicate this Action Research above all to our creator God, for giving us life, wisdom, patience, knowledge and strength to culminate this research.

We want to say thank you to our entire families, because they have supported us during this process in order to accomplish our goals.

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Abstract

“When people talk, listen completely. Most people never listen”

Ernest Hemingway

As we know listening is one of the most important skills, you need in order to learn a foreign language, in this case English. To develop these skills, it is necessary for teachers to apply appropriate methodological strategies during the learning process. Also there are other factors which are involved for example: the appropriate environment, the sufficient audio resources, the students ‘motivation and finally the appropriate material.

The largest potential barrier is that the lack of audio resources in the classroom does not allow the teacher to develop dynamic listening activities with students. Without dynamic activities students mentally leave the class even whilst they are still in it, because they lose concentration and are not engaged in the learning process.

When students are listening to conversations in English, but do not understand the meaning, they lose the motivation to involve themselves in the English class, for this reason they do not participate in listening activities, this results in them never developing this skill, and they leave high school without it.

To resolve this we need to apply methodological alternatives in order to increase the student’s motivation and participation in listening activities and thus improve their listening comprehension skills.

Introduction

Listening skills are considered difficult by students learning English as a foreign language in high school. Students need to develop these skills in the early stages in high school in order to develop proficiency during the learning process. The application of good strategies is necessary to make easier for students improve these skills.

For this reason this Applied Research is focused on identifying some methodological alternatives to apply strategies of teaching Listening skills and helping students to increase their level of comprehension when they are using the foreign language.

This research was developed at Guillermo Cano Balladares Institute in the evening session with 11th grade students, aged between 16 and 25 years old. The English class was observed for almost one month, equivalent to 4 class session. The English teacher agreed with our area of study because he recognised that students were having problems with spoken English. He also confirmed the necessity for improving these skills.

According to this research's hypothesis the problem with developing listening skills, is the lack of audio resources, because of in public schools, there are not sufficient audio resources, this limits student's motivation and also it makes more difficult for the teacher to develop good strategies to improve the listening comprehension skills on students.

The aim of this Action Research is the implementation of audio resources and listening activities such as dialogs, plays, songs and conversations about real life in order to increase students' motivation and attention. If students' interest for English lessons is higher, they may participate in listening activities and then will develop a better understanding when they listen to any foreign person speaking English.

Besides, the objective of this Action Research is to suggest new strategies and ideas about how the teacher can facilitate a listening comprehension lesson for students in an interesting and dynamic way.

Objectives:

General Objective:

To validate the use of appropriate techniques to facilitate the improvement of listening comprehension skills in 11th grade students at Guillermo Cano Balladares Institute, during the second semester, 2014.

Specific Objectives:

- ✓ To diagnose difficulties students face when they are trying to develop their Listening comprehension skills.
- ✓ To develop a Didactic Plan which contains techniques and activities in order to develop a better level of student Listening comprehension.
- ✓ To implement and monitor the Didactic Plan to improve the student's learning process through this research.
- ✓ To evaluate the Didactic Plan so as to check that this plan is adequate for the environment and student's needs according to their level of Listening Comprehension.
- ✓ To use our results to provide strategies recommendations for teachers to apply during English Listening sessions.

I. Theoretical Framework:

“We have two ears and only one tongue in order that we may hear more and speak less”

Diogenes Laertius

1.1 The meaning of Listening Comprehension skills:

According to the Springer Reference “Listening Comprehension encompasses the multiple process involved in understanding and making sense of spoken language”¹ it means paying attention to something or someone who is talking about a specific theme. For example when students are in the classroom, they pay attention to what the teacher is saying, and also Listening should be taught through good Listening Exercises, like: games, dynamics, dialogs, etc., because these activities will provide interest, motivation and attention for students during the learning process.

Listening is important because it improves the quality of conversation and it is the first step towards building networks of communication and trust. Listening is a complex skill that needs to be developed through practice.

For this reason when a teacher helps students to develop their Listening Comprehension skills, they need to do it through strategies which actively improve Listening Comprehension and understanding. This will help students to learn and to develop the ability and critical assess what they are hearing during listening activities.

This is the importance of learning Listening using audio visual resources, because the student will want to participate in the Listening Comprehension activities because they will be interested in it.

¹ SpringerReference.com is a platform for researchers and academic and corporate libraries.

1.2 Importance of Listening Comprehension Skill:

Listening is important to obtain information which is necessary for the development of a language. But it is necessary for the teacher to be a person who motivates students during the class, through activities that help students to take an interest in the learning process. For example through roll plays, drama, dialogues, etc.

Doing these activities, students will incorporate new English vocabulary into their language, so later the students will be able to understand English commands. Besides the teacher should use helpful strategies for listening because this skill requires practice and perseverance, despite the distractions.

Louise Lamphere Beryl wrote an article named: Pedagogical Tools, in her article she says that: "Concentration is the focus of thinking about a particular problem."² Moreover, Active Listening is a method to respond to someone who encourages communication, and it is because Listening is the most common communication activity in daily life: students can expect to listen twice as much as they speak, four times more than they read, and five times more than they write.

Listening is one of the most important skills to learn a foreign language, it needs practice and practice as much as possible. But here in Nicaragua is customary learn first the English in a written and grammarian way and later the spoken and listening way.

This situation should change, taking students as the protagonist of the learning processes, involving them in real life English situations to make easier the learning. Listening skills also are an important part of literature, for example when children are growing, they expand their vocabulary through what they hear in their environment, so it is necessary that the teacher incorporates new methodologies to ensure students develop and improve their skills through dynamic and interesting classes.

2 Louise Lamphere Beryl is a PhD Candidate in Anthropology and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. Previously she was trained and certified as a secondary school teacher and taught high school students in New York and New Jersey.

1.3 Types of Listening Comprehension:

According to the web site “Changing Minds” there are five types of listening, starting with basic discrimination of sounds and ending in deep communication. We list them below:

1. Discriminative listening: Discriminative listening is the most basic type of listening. It consists of making out the difference between sounds and identifying them. This objective doesn't take into account the meaning; instead the focus is largely on sounds. If you cannot hear the differences between some words, then you cannot make sense of the meaning that is expressed by such differences.

2. Comprehension listening: The next step beyond discriminating between different sounds and sights is to make sense of them. The focus of this is “understanding the message”. However, to comprehend the meaning, requires first having a lexicon of words at our fingertips and also all rules of grammar and syntax by which we can understand what others are saying.

3. Therapeutic Listening: This is one kind of listening where the listener's role is to be a sympathetic listener without much verbal response. In this kind of listening the listener allows somebody to talk through a problem. This kind of listening is very important in building good interpersonal relations.

4. Critical Listening: Critical listening is the fourth kind of listening in which listeners have to evaluate the message. Listeners have to critically respond to the message and give their opinion.

5. Appreciative listening: In appreciative listening, we seek certain information which will appreciate, for example that which helps meet our needs and goals. We use appreciative listening when we are listening to good music, poetry or maybe even the stirring words of a great leader.

We can say that “Appreciative Listening” occurs when the focus is on enjoying what one listens to. For example: when students listen to English music, even if they don't understand, they still enjoy it thereby challenging the notion of comprehensive listening as the basis for the other three types of listening.

These types of Listening start from a basic level, from when students are babies, because a child responds to sound stimulus and soon can recognize their parent's voices amidst all other voices. Later the child is able to “Discriminate Listening” among the phonemes of other languages.

Until the highest level which is “Appreciative listening”, which consist in enjoying while we listen. Teachers can take advantage of this type of listening because students reflected on the practice of listening to songs over and over again. Generally they listen to the songs once and try to make out the lyrics before listening a second time with the lyrics.

Moreover listening to songs, there are many strategies which students can perform with all these types of Listening, like: games, dialogs, plays, listening and completing a paragraph, watching videos or cartoons, and so on. The most important thing is that students practice their listening through a dynamic and interactive way.

1.4 Strategies to develop Listening Comprehension Skills.

There are many strategies that teachers can apply in the classrooms, but in this Action Research were chosen these 5:

- ✓ a). Playing Games / Dynamics.
- ✓ b). Listening to Songs.
- ✓ c). Listening to Classroom Commands.
- ✓ d). Listening to a short Story.
- ✓ e). Making Dialogs or Role-plays.

a) Games: According to Dr. Kelly S. Meier, “Using games to teach effective listening to students is a fun way to develop auditory skills and social development. Listening is key to following directions and developing the ability to remember concepts taught in the classroom. Games serve as repetitive activities that enhance these skills and cultivate auditory and literacy development.”

Teachers can even use games as a way to exercise the students’ brain and promote retention of academic content. Listening activities condition students to develop new vocabulary and recognize appropriate grammar”³. Here in Nicaragua there are many games that teachers can develop with students as: : “Simon Says”, “Mimics”, “Hot Potato”, “The Cabbage”, “The run marker” and so on, in order to increase their interest for English class.

b) Listening Songs: Also the Dr. Kelly S. Meier, has wrote about the importance of listening to songs during the learning a foreign language process. She said: “Listening to music for relaxation is common among students to counter the effects of stress or anxiety while completing difficult academic tasks.

3 Dr. Kelly S. Meier is a professor and college administrator for a large public institution in Minnesota. She has published more than 15 books on education, group development and diversity.

Some studies supporting this technique have shown that background music promotes cognitive performance while other studies have shown that listening to music while engaged in complex cognitive tasks can impair performance.” In Nicaragua students like to listen to music, so this strategy makes more dynamic the class for students.

c) Listen Classroom Commands: The NEA (National Education Association) wrote on its Facebook profile the following comment: “Face the student with arms uncrossed and relaxed, and usually always smiling! Give them eye-to-eye contact, and pay attention to them! By doing this, we are conveying the message that ‘we care!’”. In other words it says that it is really important that students feel that teacher is taking care about them during the English classes. It could be saying some classrooms commands in English so eventually students will be listening phrases in English in order to increase their listening comprehension. Later the teacher can increase the level of difficulty.

d). Listening to a short Story: According to the web site: “BBC British Council” teachers can implement this strategy because everyone has a story to tell about something. Getting students to share their own stories is a great way of personalizing a topic, encouraging them to listen to each other and developing their speaking and listening skills.

They have to listen to each other to make sure none of the details are missed out. They can write a story in groups and then present it in front of the class. At the end they can compare the final version with the first version already written and see how much the story has changed. Furthermore the teacher can do some questions from the story, to evaluate student’s comprehension.

e). Dialogs or Role-play: Teachers can play a video in the English class and when it ends, choose two or three of the characters from the video and some students already chosen will continue the dialogue, imagining what they would say to each other. This is a good way of developing creativity and imagination as the dialogue goes beyond what is in the video. Also students will develop their listening comprehension skills in order to continue with the dialogue.

II. Methodological Design:

This action research project was carried out at Guillermo Cano Balladares Institute of Estelí. The students expressed their different viewpoints, ideas, and opinions about the methodology that were used by their teacher to develop their listening comprehension skill during the English class. The following information was collected in order to choose the students that could be part of the research:

2.1 Population: The population who attend at Guillermo Cano Balladares Institute is 120 students at evening session. For this study was taken 20 students from 11th grade of high school, 14 women and 6 men, and 1 teacher who is responsible for facilitating the English class.

 **Sample:** The sample is inductive (intended) and we took a sample of 15 students who represent the 10% of the population.

The sample was taken according to the following criteria:

- ✓ Students from 11th grade from high school.
- ✓ Men and women.
- ✓ Students chosen randomly with high and low level of Listening Comprehension skills.
- ✓ Willingness to participate in the research.

2.2 Sources of Information – Procedure to Collect Data:

Three instruments were applied for this research in order to get enough information about the problem in the Listening Comprehension skill in 5th year students from Guillermo Cano Balladares Institute.

First, several English sessions were observed, using an “Observation Guide”, to get a general idea about how the teacher applies the strategies to facilitate the Listening Comprehension skills to students, the use of audio resources and the student’s motivation to participate in the Listening activities given by the teacher. Also to determine if the school provides the enough audio resources to develop a correct Listening class.

Second, an “In Depth Interview” was applied to the teacher, with the objective to get information about the student’s difficulties in order to develop Listening Comprehension skills, because it is not only the teacher’s responsibility to make students develop a good level of Listening Comprehension, but many factors influence in this problem.

Third, a “Survey” of closed answers was applied to students, in the order to know the student’s different viewpoints about the English Class, and what are the possible causes for the low level of Listening comprehension for them. Also with the objective to obtain suggestions to overcome this situation.

To complete all of these activities was designed an “Activities Schedule”, to plan each activity with the appropriate time and with the necessary tools to get as much information as possible.

Also more information was found from our teachers who have more experiences in teaching English, and they know where we can find relevant information as in some books, articles, websites and some newspapers.

2.3 Methodological Reference.

This Research was carried out at Guillermo Cano Balladares Institute. This is an Action Research, which first was observed the problem and difficulties that students were presenting and then was designed an Action Plan to overcome this problem. The variables of this research were:

- ✓ The use of appropriate methodologies and strategies.
- ✓ The use of audio resources to improve Listening Comprehension skills.
- ✓ Make a more practical lesson instead than a theoretical lesson.

Here are mentioned the steps that were followed in order to complete this research:

Stage 1. Diagnosis Stage: It was applied during the first semester 2014 with 14 women and 6 men of the 11th grade students from Guillermo Can Balladares. The instrument applied was an “Observation Guide” In this stage were identified the difficulties students were presenting at the moment of listening someone speaking in English.

Stage 2. Construction of the Didactic Plan: It was developed a didactic plan since students´ difficulties and considering the Listening Comprehension level that they should have for this scholar year. For this stage were chosen 5 strategies to develop them in 10 class session. Besides in this stage were used audio resources, materials like handouts, sheets, images, wall paper, mp3, tablets, computer, speakers and so on, also students were motivated and encouraged to participate in this learning process.

Stage 3. Application of the plan: The application of the strategies was developed in the second semester with the same group of students that were observed in the first semester 2014. During each class session was applied a different strategy in order to increase the student listening comprehension level. For this stage were used audio resources and didactic material to make more interesting the English class.

Stage 4. Evaluating the Didactic Plan: The evaluation of the didactic plan was made through a survey applied at the end of the class. In this survey students had the opportunity to evaluate the application of techniques in the facilitation of the contents. Considering the students' comments and performance that they presented during each class day. The application of the teaching techniques was improving each day, looking for the most appropriate techniques which could develop the students listening comprehension skills.

Stage 5. Recommendation of the most appropriate techniques to improve the listening comprehension skills on students: Once gotten the results from this research is proposed to give some recommendation to teachers in order to apply the appropriate techniques to make easier the facilitation of the contents during the development of the students listening comprehension skills.

III. Results

3.1 Diagnosis.

From the “Observation Guide”, the “Students’ Survey”, and the “In Depth Interview” applied during the first semester 2014, was found the following diagnosis according to the problem with the low development of the listening comprehension skills on students:

- ✓ The teacher teaches his class mostly using Spanish language introducing the new vocabulary in a written way, because students are not able to understand the teacher’s explanation when he speaks in English.
- ✓ The lack of audio resources is a big limitants because public schools does not have budget to provide to the facilitator audio resources as speakers, radio, TV, data show, recorder, or even books for each student which makes boring the English class.
- ✓ The low level of students ‘knowledge is a big difficulty to understand spoken English. For this reason the teacher does not uses this language for explain a topic.
- ✓ The Nicaraguan Curriculum is focused in written English of oral English.
- ✓ The lack of student’s motivation and interest to participate in dynamics or activities given by the teacher.
- ✓ The English class session is not enough because it is just 80 minutes per week. The time is not enough to practice and develop the listening skill as well.

⁴ **Curriculum:** *The Program for English subject already stipulated by the National Ministry of Education, it contains the contents to teach during the scholar year.*

a). Causes of the Problem:

5. Lack of good strategies implementation:

Maryellen Weimer wrote an article named: “Effective Teaching Strategies: The Importance of Marrying Content and Process”, she said: “When teachers think the best way to improve their teaching is by developing their content knowledge, they end up with sophisticated levels of knowledge, but they have only simplistic instructional methods to convey that material. To imagine that content matters more than process is to imagine that the car is more important than the road. Both are essential. What we teach and how we teach it are inextricably linked and very much dependent on one another”⁵.

As she said the facilitator should combine the theory with the practice, to turn all the structures and grammatical rules into the real life conversations, useful phrases and commonly activity. This is the best method to learn a language, applying it into daily activities in order to use the language as much as possible. Practice is the key.

6. There´s not the appropriate classroom environment:

According to the article from the website “Childcare Education Institute”, it affirms that: “The developmentally appropriate classroom is a safe, secure, and stimulating place where each child can grow physically, socially, emotionally, and cognitively. Classrooms should consist of developmentally appropriate materials and learning centers for the children to explore”.

Here in Nicaragua teachers should be creative and innovator, even though we do not have enough resources and materials for help students in the learning process. Teachers and students can decorate the classroom, making it a comfortable place to learn.

For example posting wallpapers with commonly phrases and when students need to say any phrase or when students listen to any classroom commands they will be able to understand the meaning. Also organizing the chairs in the classroom in order to play a game or to present a dialog, because is very important that all the students can listen to the students whom are in from of the class.

⁵ *Maryellen Weimer, PhD in Effective Teaching Strategies, Faculty Development.*

b) Possible Alternatives:

- ✓ Real life English situations were applied in the classrooms, making dialogs about, buying food and clothes. Making some advertisements about any product, and performing any social problem.

- ✓ Tasks in groups, in pairs and individually were assigned, in order to promote students cooperation and helping to students with a low level of comprehension.

- ✓ Some tasks were assigned using internet, and cellphones like download songs to play them the next class day, it motivates students because they were who chose the songs.

- ✓ Guiding students through the learning process, not only provides them with the knowledge by which they can accomplish a task or assignment; but also motivates them and gives them control of their learning.

- ✓ Socio-affective strategies describe the techniques listeners use to collaborate with others, for example pre-listening activities help students make decisions about what to listen and then to focus on meaning while listening.

- ✓ In order to obtain possible alternatives listening and speak English fluently, students should practice listening to the audio and video aids in English (dialogues, thematic texts and narrative stories).

- ✓ It's a good idea to record the teacher's narrating a short story and then playing it for students to making them practice their Listening Comprehension skills.

c). Application of techniques

For this stage of the Research was designed a Didactic Plan. It was developed since the students' deficiency and strengths already found. The previous knowledge that they presented and the suggestions that they expressed in order to improve the listening teaching applying the appropriate strategies.

The Didactic Plan was emphasized in students' weaknesses and necessities in order to apply the best methodologies highlighting the importance of bringing the theory to practice to develop their skills in a dynamic and motivating way.

From students' contributions we chose the methodology "we do together", which we applied later in the classrooms.

We implemented the Didactic Plan with 11th grade of high schools students, at evening session in the second semester of 2014. The applied techniques used are summarized here:

a) After teaching the content of "The Body Parts", which involved new vocabulary and the pronunciation of each word in order that students will be able to recognize the sounds. The game "Simon Says" was played, this way students had the opportunity to put in practice the knowledge already learnt through this game, because they had to touch a part of their body to follow the game. If they got loose they should to say a sentence in English using the body parts. This game was funny because students did not want to lose so they were so careful about to perform really well the game. They just thought that they were playing, but also they were consolidating the new knowledge and they will recognize these words in the future.



In this picture we can see students enjoying the game "Simon says"

b) After presenting the content “Wh-questions”, the game “Hot Potato” was applied. Students were very motivated because all of them were part of the game. The game consisted in make a ball with some pieces of paper with “Wh-questions”. When students were making sentences using the questions, the rest of students were listening carefully, because later the facilitator was going to ask them what the student had said. Through this methodology students listened to their classmate’s questions, they processed the information, and then provided feedback when the facilitator asked them about what their classmate said.



Here we can see a student asking a question and the rest of students are Listening carefully to her.

c) After reviewing the content “Simple Past” and the differences between Regular and Irregular verbs. The song: “Good bye” was played. In which students had to circle the correct form of the verb in past tense. To complete this task the song was played three times because the objective was not just to complete the assignment but to improve listening comprehension skills, getting the main idea from the song. After listening to the song three times, students answered some questions from the song’s information, to measure the students’ comprehension and determine if they were able to distinguish the Regular and Irregular verbs structures. They enjoyed this methodology.



Here students are completing this task working alone, circling the correct form of the verbs.

3.2 Monitoring Results and Evaluation:

The activities and lessons were monitored by an Evaluation instrument. We did this evaluation after each class day, when we applied a strategy to develop new content we asked students the following general questions:

1. Did you like the class?
2. What was the better part that you enjoyed?
3. What did you dislike?
4. What suggestions do you have to improve the lessons?

After finishing each English lessons were given to students a piece of paper with the following Survey in order to get their opinions about the strategy already applied. We got the following results:

Survey about the application of the strategy "Listening a Song" (circling the correct form of the verb)	Agree	Disagree	So So
After Listening the song, did you get the main idea?	13	5	2
Do you think that Listening songs will help you to develop your Listening Comprehension skills?	10	4	6
If you practice more, will you sing a song in English alone?	8	5	7
Do you want that your facilitator plays songs in the English Class?	17	3	0
Would you Listen this song again in your free time?	10	5	5

At the beginning of the application of this technique almost all the students were shy, they did not want to sing because they were thinking that the rest of the class would laugh at their pronunciation, but the facilitator encouraged students to sing, even though they were making mistakes, "It is part of the process". Students sang the song and then they completed the exercises of "Filling in the blank" with the correct form of the verb.



Survey about the application of the strategy “Hot Potato”	Yes	No	So So
Did you like this strategy?	9	6	5
Do you think this strategy helped you to understand better the content already given?	13	6	1
Did you feel shy or nervous when you had to talk aloud in English?	16	2	2
Do you want that your facilitator applies this strategy again?	14	5	1
Do you think this strategy will help you to develop your Listening Comprehension skill?	14	4	2

Almost all the students were nervous about this strategy, because they did not want to talk in English. They felt unsure and they were worried about what their classmates were going to say. But the facilitator motivated students to participate by telling them that it was just a game, nobody loses, but everybody could win if they participated. The situation was going better by the end. All the students participated and they were asking questions and giving answers using “Wh-questions”, which was our objective.



What strategy is the most appropriate to develop your Listening Comprehension skills?	Student's Opinions
Paying Games / Dynamics	7
Listening to Songs.	5
Listening to classroom commands	2
Listening to a short story	3
Making dialogs or role-plays.	3
Total of students	20

a) Achievements:

- ✓ Students already have more vocabulary to use when they are speaking aloud, and they can understand better when they are listening to someone because now they can associate some words and getting the meaning by context.
- ✓ Students are excited about speaking a second language, because they have discovered that they can learn new words and get a better pronunciation through listening to songs and moreover they will enjoy this process.
- ✓ Students are enthusiastic about learning listening in a better way through dialogues in the classroom, because it is more motivating for students. This is an important factor in order to get better results.
- ✓ At the beginning it was a little bit difficult to involve all the students in the Listening activities but at the end it was possible, because students appreciated the different strategies that were applied and they were very happy to practice listening through these activities.
- ✓ Applying the appropriate strategies and using interesting material it is possible to develop a higher level of Listening Comprehension skills in students.
- ✓ Although there were several limitations with the lack of audio resources it is possible to overcome this situation by applying methodological alternatives with the objective to help students during the learning process.

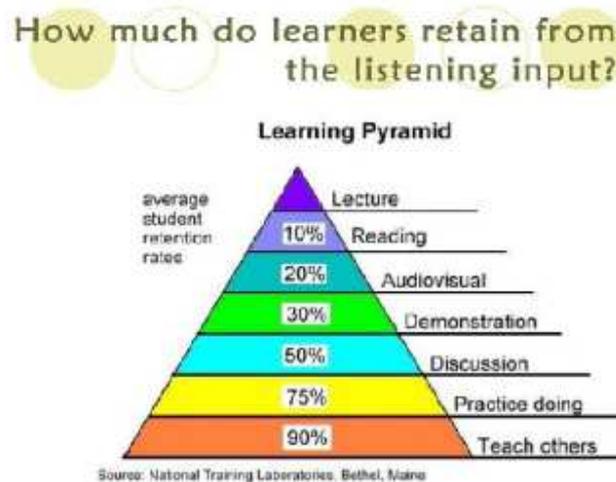
b) Difficulties:

- ✓ One of the difficulties that we had was the lack of time, because in the school there are always different activities during the English class, also we have to emphasize that the students received English class once a week and that is not enough time to develop a good listening class.
- ✓ The school did not provide us any audio resources to develop listening classes, because they did not have a budget to invest in any resources.
- ✓ When we started to apply new strategies the students were not motivated, they were too shy and they did not want to participate in the activities applied. It was a challenge for us to encourage them to be part of the class, it was difficult but this situation was overcome.
- ✓ Another difficulty was the lack of interest of the students at the beginning of our research process. We think that the greatest difficulty was that students did not want to participate in the activities, but we did our best in every technique that we applied, and students could feel that, so later they were getting involved in the process.
- ✓ The low level of Listening Comprehension was a big difficulty, but motivation and encouragement was given to students with the aim to get a confident feeling and confidence. Now they have an acceptable level of Listening Comprehension, according to their high school level.

c) Lessons:

From this experience is important to mention that it is possible to improve the Listening Comprehension skills of high school students even though there is not sufficient materials and resources, if the appropriate techniques, methodologies, strategies and games are applied in order to facilitate the learning process for students.

As we can see in the following pyramid by the source: “*National Training Laboratories Bethel Maine*” students learn better when they are part of the learning process.



During this research were shared different experiences between facilitator and-students, as strengths and weaknesses, facing students who present an insufficient level of listening comprehension for completing tasks, but with the motivating guidance of the facilitator it was possible to improve their listening comprehension level to an acceptable level according to their school year.

Finally it is relevant to mention that the creative process of looking for methodological alternatives, was really interesting and enriching for students and for the facilitator.

3.4 Methodological Contributions in the application of Strategies:

a). The Dialogue Strategy: It was a very good because it got the students interested in learning a second language and also they were motivated and enthusiastic to learn. At the end most of the students were able to create dialogues easily because they gained a lot of vocabulary due to having the gradual development and plenty of practice during the class.

b). Listening to Songs: The application of this technique was successful because afterwards the students were very excited about listening to English songs. At the end we solved the problems with the exercises and it was successful because the students were ready with new vocabulary to do the exercises together, the results were positive now we know that this technique can be useful to apply to the learning process.

c). Listening to Short Stories: This strategy made students feel motivated to learn listening comprehension through listening to good stories and they felt confident about asking questions after listening to the stories, also trying to tell short stories to each other because they knew different ways of how to tell different stories about real life.

d). Fill in the Blank through Listening Strategy: The students were very happy because all of them were involved in giving answers and were talking together and at the end everyone was saying good things about the technique that we applied also it was easier for them to fill in the blank because they had good vocabulary and had developed their knowledge.

3.5 Recommendation:

- ✓ The school should provide the necessary resources to develop a Listening class using materials like: poster paper, magazines, books, and speakers.
- ✓ The teacher should speak as much as possible in English while they are giving instructions or explaining content.
- ✓ The teacher should be enthusiastic, motivating, and creative in order to make students feel confident.
- ✓ Incorporate visual material which helps to enrich the listening comprehension in students.
- ✓ Cellphones should be used by teachers to listen to English music in order to improve listening comprehension.
- ✓ Develop activities such as dictation, listen and do, answering true/false questions, as these activities are important for a better listening comprehension.
- ✓ Interesting tasks could be assigned to students. Assign task either in group or pair so the students maintain fellowship.
- ✓ The curriculum should include more practical than theoretical content. In other words the content should be related with daily activities to make feel students able to use English in theirs daily life.
- ✓ Finally the most important recommendation is practice and to practice Listening as much as possible, as is shown in the following image by “*National Training Laboratories*”, students learn easily through practice doing.

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ANEXOS

Theme: Methodological alternatives to improve the listening comprehension skills in 11th grade students from Guillermo Cano Institute, during the second semester 2014.

Annex #1. Activities Schedule: This schedule was designed in order to accomplish the activities purposed to collect enough data and good results during this Research process.

1	Designing the research protocol.	Tuesday, April 01st	01:00 pm	Wendy's house	Group	8
2	Asking for permission for the classes	Tuesday, April 08th	05:40 pm	Anexa	Group	1
3	Choosing the topics to teach.	Thursday, April 10th	02:00 pm	Wendy's house	Group	4
4	Designing the observation guides.	Monday, April 21st	01:00 pm	Wendy's house	Group	4
5	Applying the observation guides at college.	Tuesday, April 29th	05:40 am	Anexa	Group	4
6	Designing the interviews and survey questionnaire.	Monday, April 28th	01:00 pm	Wendy's house	Group	9
7	Apply interviews and surveys to students	Tuesday, April 29th	01:00 pm	Anexa	Group	5
8	Designing the lesson plans.	Monday April, 05 th to Friday April, 09 th	01:00 pm	Wendy's house	Group	20
9	Creating the pictures and cards for the lesson plans.	Thursday May 08th, Tuesday 13th, Thursday 15th	01:00 pm	Wendy's house	Group	12
10	Writing the first draft for the research paper.	Monday, May 19th to Friday, May 23 rd	01:00 pm	Wendy's house	Group	12
11	Revising the first draft with the teacher	Saturday, May 24 th	01:00 pm	FAREM - Estelí	Group	5
12	Writing the final document for the research project.	Monday, May 26th to Thursday, May 29 th	01:00 pm	Wendy's house	Group	16
13	Creating the presentation and printing documents.	Monday June 02nd to Friday June 06 th	01:00 pm	Wendy's house	Group	20
					TOTAL	120

Annex #2. Observation Guide:

General Information:

Name of School: Instituto Nacional Profesor Guillermo Cano Balladeres

Type of School: Private: _____ Public: X Other: _____

Department: Estelí **City:** Estelí

Teacher: Lic. Norlan Vallejos **Grade:** 11th “A”

Date: Tuesday May, 20th, 2014

Objective: To get information about how does the teacher use some methodologies and activities teach Listening in order to improve the student’s Listening Comprehension.

- I. Write a check in the correct cell according to the right answer: Always (A), Sometimes (S), and Never (N).**

N°	Statements	A	S	N	Observation
1.	The teacher teaches her class in: a) Spanish b) English c) English and Spanish				
2.	The teacher introduce new vocabulary and phrase in a: a) Spoken b) Written				
3.	The teacher applies real-life activities that involve students’ improvement in their Listening Comprehension skill: a) Interview a) Roll plays b) Shopping c) Instruction b). Dialogs d). Games. f) Conversations				

Theme: Methodological alternatives to improve the listening comprehension skills in 11th grade students from Guillermo Cano Institute, during the second semester 2014.

4.	The teacher organizes the class activities: a) Individual b) In pair c) In group				
5.	The students are able to answer in English simple question asked by the teacher or their classmates				
6.	The teacher helps their students giving some clues to improve their Listening Comprehension skill. b) During the development of the activities. c) After the development of the activities.				
7.	The teacher encourages her students to participate in the development of her class through Listening Comprehension activities.				
8.	The students ask questions when they have doubt after listening something in English.				
9.	The teacher applies quizzes of listening skill.				
10.	The resources used by the teacher to develop his/her students listening comprehension skill. a) Flash card b) Pictures c) A Computer d) A Tape recorder e) Body gestures				

Annex #3. Teacher's in Depth Interview.

1. Do you Speak English during your class all the time? If so Why?

No, I do not, because the level of knowledge of students is too low to speak fluent English.

2, What kind of activities do you use with your students to practice Listening Comprehension?

I use "Complete sentences" and "listening to English Songs".

3. Do you apply roll plays or real-life activities to improve Listening Comprehension during the class? If Yes Why? If Not Why?

Yes, I do, because students enjoy learning English interacting through some real, dynamic and attractive activity.

4. Do you give some clues to your students when you are speaking to improve the student's Listening Comprehension (Mimics) If Yes Why? If Not Why?

Yes, I do, because it makes easier the Listening Comprehension for students. For example in the topic of "Sports", I make mimics describing some sports activities, or I use mimics also to represent some common activities.

5. How do you organize your students (Individually or in pair, groups) to practice the Listening Skill? Why?

I organize students in groups, because they can help each other.

6. Do you use audio resources to improve your students Listening Comprehension? If Yes Why? If Not Why?

Yes, I do, but just a few times, because the school does not provide me a tape recorder, and it's up to me to bring an audio resource but it is expensive and cumbersome.

7. What kind of audio resources do you use to teach Listening Comprehension? Why?

I use some audio resources like: the cellphone, because it is portable and students can practice the songs when they want.

8. Do you use any methodological strategies to teach Listening Comprehension? If

Yes Why? If Not Why? I use the methodological strategies of “Total Physical Response Method” because experience has realized that the student learns by doing and practicing.

9. What activities do you apply to teach Listening Comprehension?

I use some activities like: True or false, Complete, Answers Questions, Songs, Interviews; because of my experience I found that these activities are more dynamic and engaging for students.

10. Do your students produce satisfactory output according to the Listening Comprehension activities you develop in your classes? If Yes Why? If Not Why?

No, because students have different level of listening comprehension and not all of them can perform the same listening activities. I can say that just the 50% can do satisfactory the listening activities.

11. What kind of activities do you apply to evaluate your students learning in the Listening Comprehension Skill? I use the item “True or false” and some

conversations recorded, because these are the best way to evaluate the student’s listening comprehension.

12. What do you think are the best activities to improve your students’ Listening Comprehension? The best activities are “Answers questions” and “Listening the

topic”, because the students can give their point of view.

13. How do you motivate your students to practice activities to develop their Listening Comprehension? I motivate students through “Listen songs”, because the music is

more interesting for students.

14. What are some difficulties that you have seen in your students Listening Comprehension? Some students do not like the strategy or activities when it comes to

listening and the school does not have a laboratory or some essential audio resources.

Annex #4. Student's Survey.

General Information:

Name of School: Instituto Nacional Profesor Guillermo Cano Balladeres

Type of School: Private: _____ Public: X Other: _____

Department: Estelí City: Estelí

Teacher: Lic. Norlan Vallejos Grade: 11th "A"

Date: Tuesday May, 27th, 2014

Age: _____ Male: _____ Female: _____

Objective: To get information about the methodologies and activities applied by the English Teacher about Listening Comprehension.

- I. Write an X in the correct cell according to the right answer: Always (A- 100%), Usually (U - 75%), Sometimes (S - 50%), Rarely (R - 25%) and Never (N - 0%)

N°	Statements	A	U	S	R	N	Observation
1.	I like that my teacher teach the class in: a)Spanish b)English c)English and Spanish						
2.	Do you understand when your teacher explains in English?						
3.	Does your teacher apply listening comprehension activities to develop the class? a) Stories b) Songs c) Conversation d) Obeying Instruction e) Dialogs f) Answering questions						

4.	Does your teacher give you some clues (mimics, advices) to help you to develop the listening activities correctly?						
5.	<p>My teacher organizes the class... to develop the listening activities.</p> <p>a) Individually</p> <p>b) In pairs</p> <p>c) In groups</p> <p>d) My teacher in front of the class</p>						
6.	Does your teacher give you some clues (mimics, advices) to help you to develop the listening activities correctly?						
7.	<p>My teacher uses visual aids like:</p> <p>a) Pictures</p> <p>b) Real Objects</p> <p>c) Flash Cards</p> <p>d) Gestures</p> <p>e) Body movements</p>						
8.	<p>My teacher uses audios resources like:</p> <p>a) Tape recorder</p> <p>b) Data show</p> <p>c) MP3 player</p> <p>d) Theatre</p>						
9.	<p>What do you think is the most useful didactics material or activities to develop your listening comprehension?</p> <p>a) Answering questions</p> <p>b) Real objects</p> <p>c) Flash cards</p> <p>d) True or false</p>						

10.	<p>What listening activity do you prefer to put in practice your listening skill?</p> <p>a) Interview b) Shopping c) Conversations d) Instructions e) Games</p>						
11.	<p>Does your teacher motivate you to participate in all the listening comprehension activities?</p>						
12.	<p>Do you put in ´practice the clues and advices given by your teacher in your free time?</p>						
13.	<p>How do you like to perform listening comprehension activities in class?</p> <p>a) Individually b) In pairs c) In groups</p>						
14.	<p>Do you like that your teacher applies quizzes about listening comprehension to evaluate your skill?</p>						
15.	<p>Your school provides to your teacher enough audio resources to allow him develop listening comprehension activities.</p>						
16.	<p>Your School motivates you to improve your academic grades in the English subject.</p>						
17.	<p>You receive enough class time to put in practice your listening comprehension skill at the classroom.</p>						
18.	<p>You like to practice listening activities to develop your listening comprehension skill.</p>						

Annex #5. Lesson Plan:

A Didactic Plan was designed for each English lesson according to the students' level of comprehension and with their necessities. One of the Lesson Plans is presented below:

Lesson Plan

Date: Tuesday, October 21th, 2014

Subject: Foreign Language

Grade: 11th grade

Time: 90 minutes

Unit III:

Communication and technology

School: Guillermo Cano Balladares

Materials: worksheets (reading), pens, notebooks, speakers, computer, marker.

Achievement Indicators: The student will be able to use the Present Perfect in a correct way describing past activities.

Content: Internet

Technique:

- ✓ Video about Internet.
- ✓ Audio questions
- ✓ Questions about some images.

Target Grammar:

- ✓ Review Present Perfect.

Vocabulary: technological, marketplace, similar, Buy, gossip, DVD, download, meet, old fashion, new, old, modern, cyber, internet, website, cellphones, computer, cars, TV, appliances, etc.

I. Initial Activities:

- ✓ Greetings.
- ✓ Check attendance.
- ✓ Check homework.

II. Warm up activity:

- ✓ Ask students if they know some words about technology and the internet.
- ✓ Make students practice their Listening Comprehension asking some questions of internet.

III. Development:

a) Review the last topic about the Present Perfect questions (students will use the Wh-questions words in parentheses to form question in the present perfect)

1. He has listened to music today. (What. today)
What has he done today?
2. We have spent two hours at the cyber. (How much time. . .at the cyber)
How much time have you spent playing soccer?
3. I have seen 400 movies! (How many)
How many movies have you seen?
4. They have looked at pictures on the internet. (What. . . on the internet)
What have they looked at on the internet?
5. I have talked to her through e-mail. (How)
How have you talked to her?

b) Then play the video about a person talking about Internet. Students should listen carefully and take notes. (The video is already written in an annexed handout for students)

THE INTERNET

The internet is a technological marketplace. The internet and your town's central market are more similar than you may think. You can buy anything on the internet. When you need something that isn't at the store you can go to the market or now you can buy it on the internet.



The internet and the market are places that people go to meet and talk. Do you ever chat with people on the internet? People use to go to the market to her the latest gossip and get the town new. Now people can go on the internet and get all the news and gossip that they want. The internet is slowly taking the place of your local central market.

c) Answer the following questions about yourself:

1. How many times have you been to the cyber in the past 10 days?
2. How many texts (chat) have you sent in the last 24 hours?
3. How many telenovelas have you watched since Sunday?
4. How many times have you listened to (insert popular song) in the last two days?
5. How many songs or videos have you downloaded on your phone?
6. How many DVD movies have you bought this year?
7. How many times have looked at your phone?
8. How many texts have you received today?

a) After completing the sentences, students add up all the number in their answer.

b) Students use the following chart to determine their addiction to technology.

Your addition to technology		
More than 80: you are a comelón of technology		
60 - 80: you are addicted to technology		
45 - 59: you are a computer nerd		
30 - 44: Don't worry, you are normal		
15 - 29: you need more friends to chat with		
0 - 14: Do you know what a computer is?		

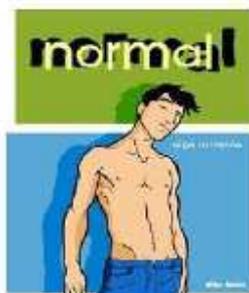
More than 80

80-60

59-45



44-30



29-15



14-0



- c) Divide students into groups of focus
- d) Students will answer the questions using a chart like the one below.

Group Member	Question	Answer
You	1	
Partner #1	2	
Partner #2	3	
Partner #3	4	

Questions:

2. What do you use the internet for?
3. Do you think people in your town are using the internet instead of the market? What about in other parts of the world?
4. Why is the internet important?
5. How can you use the internet to practice English?

IV. Ending.

- ✓ Check the exercise with the students.
- ✓ Ask some students the answers.
- ✓ Ask for clarifying.

- V. Evaluation:** Check if students are able to use the Present perfect in a correct way. Check the exercises on their notebooks. Ask students if they like the class and what suggestions they can give to improve the lessons.

Annex #6: Application of Techniques (Pictures)



Through the technique brainstorming students are giving their opinions to answer the question made by their facilitator.

During the game “Hot Potato”, this student listens to a question by her Facilitator and then she is going to answer it.

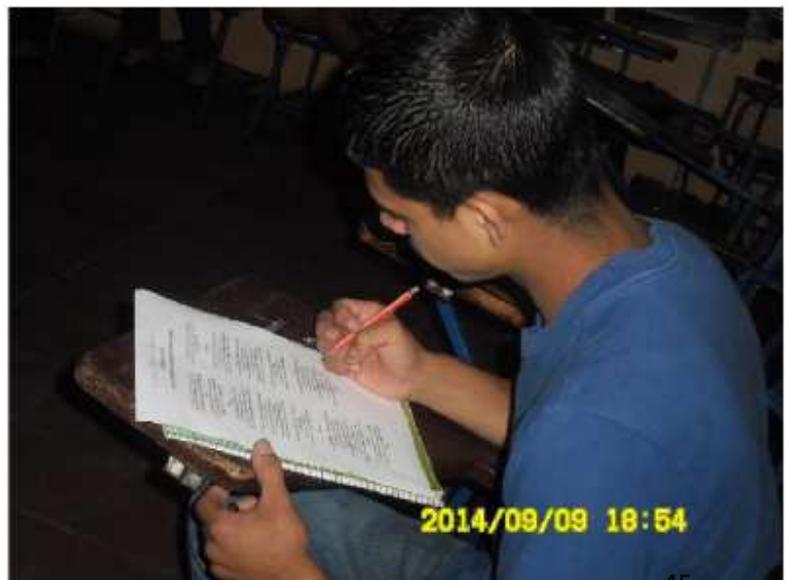


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For this lesson was used a tablet and speakers to play a song in order to improve the students listening Comprehension skills.

This student is working alone, filling in the blank with the correct form of the verb, after Listening to the song.



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This student is trying to ask his facilitator how to complete the task, using English language.

Students are working in pairs to help each other.



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We really enjoyed this Action Research Process, it was really enriching for all of us!

We learnt together, and we overcame a lot of difficulties together!

Thank you so much!