

BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA



Facultad de Lenguas

Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés

Students' and teachers' perceptions about listening comprehension development at Upper-

Intermediate level in an ELT program

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of languages

For the Degree of

Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés

By

María Eugenia Tepale Almonte

Elizabeth Juárez Collado



Puebla, Pue.

April 2015

**STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT LISTENING
COMPREHENSION DEVELOPMENT AT UPPER-INTERMEDIATE LEVEL IN AN
ELT PROGRAM**

**This investigation has been read by the members of the
Committee of**

María Eugenia Tepale Almonte

Elizabeth Juárez Collado

**And is considered worthy of approval
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

LICENCIATURA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS

Mtra. Georgina Aguilar González

Thesis Director

Dra. Rebeca Elena Tapia Carlín

Committee Member

Dra. Ma. Del Carmen Castillo Salazar

Committee Member

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First of all, we want to thank Mtra. Georgina Aguilar González for her valuable comments, dedication and patience in the accomplishment of this project. It was a pleasure to work alongside this project and during the major. We also want to thank Dra. Ma. Del Carmen Castillo Salazar and Dr. Rebeca Tapia Carlin for reading our thesis project and giving us important comments to enrich and improve it.

Special thanks go to all professors who were part of our professional and personal development in this major, thank you for your dedication and effort. We would also like to thank the time and contributions of the participants in this study because without them this project would not have been possible.

DEDICATIONS

*There are many things I would like to write,
but I need a good phrase to start
and enough space to write
how thankful I am....*

Lizzie JC

Writing this short paragraphs do not reflect the size of my debt, I need to acknowledge some things:

First , that this project would have been utterly impossible if not for the extraordinary support of God ,my best advisor and friend ever, the one who gave the chance to lead this project and worked alongside great people to get this excellent project done.

Second, I am amazingly fortunate to have a wonderful family, my parents Ruben Juárez and Guadalupe Collado and siblings Ruben , Miriam , Heber and Abigail who are the biggest fans of what I do professionally, and even luckier to have Benjamin Lima as friend and pastor.

Third, that our mentor Professor Gina believed in this project from the beginning and did much to shape it and thanks as well to our talented readers whose careful reading and astute comments were a blessing to us.

Fourth, that I am very grateful to Maru my friend, co-worked and travel partner in this adventure.

Fifth, the comments of friends made during this project which were essential to the writing and revision of this project.

Thank you so much to all of you

“Word hard, laugh when you feel like crying, keep an open mind, open eyes and an open spirit

You see, God helps only people who work hard that principle is very clear.....”

Rachael Ray and A.P.J Abdul Kalam

“We must go beyond textbooks, go out into the bypaths and untrodden depths of the wilderness and travel, explore and tell the world the glories of the Journey”

John Hope Franklin

I thank God for letting me reach this important moment of my professional life and for being always there with me, this thesis is only a beginning of my journey.

I would like to dedicate this work to my family, friends, and teachers. A special feeling of gratitude to my loving parents Mario and Remedios who supported me all the way since the beginning of my studies and for everything they have taught me, to Mario and Luis my brothers who always encourage me and are very special.

I also dedicate this work to my friends who have supported me throughout the process, specially my friend and co-worker Lizzie for her support throughout the whole of this work.

My thanks and appreciations to my teachers specially professor Gina for the great support, motivation and advice which encouraged me to be professionally better in all the possible ways.

To all of them, with all my heart, thank you.

María Eugenia Tepale Almonte

“What we have done for ourselves lone dies with us; what we have done for others and the world remains and is immortal.”

Albert Pike

**STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT LISTENING
COMPREHENSION DEVELOPMENT AT UPPER INTERMEDIATE LEVEL IN AN
ELT PROGRAM**

Abstract

Listening plays a key role in the communication process and the acquisition of a second or foreign language. Despite its value, students as well as teachers should recognize its importance. This study attempts to examine how teachers and students at Upper Intermediate level perceive listening in comparison with speaking, reading and writing and what difficulties students might face during the training of this skill. Through a series of questionnaires their perceptions and difficulties were explored. The study reveals the awareness of both participants, the use of cognitive, metacognitive and socio-affective strategies to solve listening difficulties. Finally, the results of this study provide relevant findings that may have some implications for students and teachers regarding listening comprehension development.

CONTENT

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 1

DEDICATIONS..... 2

Abstract 4

LIST OF FIGURES..... 7

LIST OF TABLES..... 8

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION 9

1.1 Statement of the problem and rationale for the study..... 9

1.2 Significance of the study 11

1.3 The context of the research..... 12

1.4 Location of the research 12

1.5 Aims..... 12

1.6 Research questions 13

1.7 Chapter summary and thesis overview 13

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW 14

2.1 Second language learning and foreign language learning 14

2.2 Defining listening comprehension..... 15

2.3 The role of listening in foreign language learning..... 18

2.4 Teaching listening skill in the EFL/ESL classroom..... 19

2.5 Listening Comprehension Difficulties 22

2.6 Listening strategies 23

2.6.1 Cognitive strategies in listening 24

2.6.2 Metacognitive Strategies in listening 25

2.6.3 Socio-affective strategies in listening 26

2.7 Definition of perceptions..... 27

Chapter III: METHODOLOGY 28

3.1 The participants..... 28

3.1.1 The students..... 28

3.1.2 The language teachers..... 29

3.2 Instruments..... 29

3.2.1 Multiple choice questionnaire.....	29
3.2.2 Questionnaire based on likert scale	30
3.3 Procedure.....	30
CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS	32
4.1 Overall perceptions about listening comprehension.....	33
4.1.1 Students’ perceptions about listening comprehension.....	33
4.1.2 Teachers’ perceptions about listening comprehension.....	36
4.2 Difficulties and strategies in listening comprehension according to students’ perceptions	39
4.2.1 Difficulties in listening	39
4.2.2 Solutions suggested by students.....	41
4.2.3 Difficulties in pre-listening stage.....	42
4.2.4 Strategies used in pre-listening stage	43
4.2.5 Difficulties in while-listening stage	44
4.2.6 Cognitive strategies used in while-listening stage	45
4.2.7 Meta-cognitive strategies used in while-listening stage	47
4.2.8 Socio-affective strategies in while-listening stage	48
4.2.9 Difficulties in post- listening stage	49
4.2.10 Strategies in post-listening stage	50
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS	51
5.1 General conclusions.....	51
5.2 Implications of the study	52
5.3 Limitations.....	53
5.4 Suggestions for further research	53
REFERENCES	54
APPENDIX I.....	57
APPENDIX II	58
APPENDIX III.....	60
APPENDIX IV	61

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Figure 1: Students' perceptions about listening comprehension.....	33
2. Figure 2: Listening skill the most difficult skill to develop.....	34
3. Figure 3: Listening Comprehension Level.....	35
4. Figure 4: Difficulties in Listening.....	40
5. Figure 5: Solutions suggested by students.....	41
6. Figure 6: Difficulties in pre-listening stage.....	42
7. Figure 7: Strategies used in pre-listening stage.....	43
8. Figure 8: Difficulties in while-listening stage.....	44
9. Figure 9: Cognitive bottom-up strategies used in while-listening stage.....	45
10. Figure 10: Cognitive top-down strategies used in while-listening stage	46
11. Figure 11: Metacognitive strategies used in while-listening stage.....	47
12. Figure 12: Socio-affective strategies in while-listening stage.....	48
13. Figure 13: Difficulties in post-listening stage.....	49
14. Figure 14: Strategies in post-listening stage.....	50

LIST OF TABLES

1. Table 1: Teachers' Perceptions about listening comprehension.....	36
2. Table 2: Listening Comprehension as the most difficult skill to teach.	37
3. Table 3: Students' Listening level.....	38
4. Table 4: Students' Difficulties	38

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the problem and rationale for the study

The spread of English as a world language has been accompanied by a great and powerful movement called globalization. As a result of this; English has taken an important role in international communication and as a popular international language that has taken the first place of second or foreign language followed by Chinese, Japanese and French.

However, learning a second or foreign language is not an easy process because it implies the development of four major skills as we did in our first language: listening, speaking, reading and writing although the difference is that we did this process unconsciously. Learning a second or foreign language is a conscious process where we should look for strategies to develop the four skills gradually.

The purpose of developing listening, speaking, reading and writing in a second or foreign language is to communicate successfully. In this process of communicating, listening takes an important role since more than 40% of communication is carried out through listening, speaking 35% and the remaining 25% is in charge of reading and writing (Miller, 2003). Based on that, it is worth to clarify that in the communicative process listening plays the key role and primary means of acquisition in a second language since it is the channel for language input (Rost, 2002).

In contrast of the previous ideas, researches have revealed that listening does not receive enough attention and instruction in the classroom, and it had been neglected in second language acquisition, research, teaching and assessment. Supporting this statement Xu (2011) states listening skill was traditionally viewed as a passive process in which our ears received information poured, and listeners passively registered the message. On the other hand, he also states that listening could be considered an active process in which learners listen actively what

speakers say by relating what they hear with what they already know interpreting sounds, structures, stress and intention. Therefore, listening is an active and interpretive skill since it involves cognitive processes and awareness about the communicative process in ESL or EFL.

As listening plays a significant role in the acquisition of a second or foreign language, in recent years more attention has been paid on listening comprehension and it assumed greater and greater importance in foreign language classrooms (Nunan 1998, cited in Pourhossein and Reza 2011, p. 977). Consequently, listening should receive enough importance and instruction in teaching and in the acquisition of a second and foreign language research.

In favor of the previous ideas, this research was carried out in a Bachelor Degree of Teaching English which is a major offered in a Public University. The curricula of this major include five target languages and four workshops which help to develop and improve students' four major skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Two of those workshops (Workshop I and Workshop III) are focused on instructing and empowering students in the listening skill.

According to previous researchers, in the acquisition of a second or foreign language, listening may be one of the most difficult skills to develop and instruct. Hence, this study intends to explore listening skill based on students and teachers perceptions about listening comprehension development in the mentioned bachelor degree of ELT where students are supposed to reach an Upper Intermediate Level according to the American Council on Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Firstly, it was taken into account how students and teachers perceived listening comprehension, secondly what difficulties students faced in listening comprehension training, and finally how they overcame these difficulties.

1.2 Significance of the study

According to Ferris (1998, cited in Pourhossein and Reza 2011, p. 979), listening is the most frequently used language skill in the classroom, where both instructor and students should be aware of the importance of listening comprehension for success in academic settings. As a result, it is important to research in this field in order to improve the teaching and learning of the listening skill in the classroom. Therefore, the gained results from this study could be of considerable assistance for teachers, learners as well as researchers working on related fields.

First of all, the results of the study may raise the awareness among learners and teachers of English at Upper Intermediate level about the difficulties in listening skill training process. The research findings may provide helpful information to teachers and students in the development of listening skill; so both (teachers and students) can take initiatives to explore suitable strategies and to better involve in the training process of listening skill.

Findings from the research could lead to more interest into the current teaching and learning of listening skill at ELT. In addition, the research results could help to define the significance of listening skill taught at ELT. Lastly, this research could offer useful references for further studies on the related topic areas as well as suggestions of instruction and learning in listening training at Upper Intermediate level for future teachers and learners.

1.3 The context of the research

The research is related to different areas such as teaching language and language acquisition. In addition, this research can be related to learning strategies area because it seeks to empower students who face certain difficulties in listening comprehension training through the use of adequate strategies suggested by those students who have got a good listening comprehension level.

1.4 Location of the research

This research was carried out in ELT program which is located in a public university in central Mexico a non-English speaking country. This location was chosen because the researchers had easy access to it. The participants of this study were females and males from 19 to 23 years old. These students were selected according to the semester they were in since they were classified as Upper Intermediate Level on the basis of ACTFL. Consequently, they have had experience with the development of listening comprehension in the acquisition of English as a foreign language. Other participants were two professors teaching at Upper Intermediate Level in this major with a Master degree in TEFL.

1.5 Aims

First and furthermore, the study attempts to examine how students and teachers from TEFL perceive the importance of listening skill development in comparison with the other three skills: speaking, reading and writing. The main purpose of this research is to explore what difficulties students face during their listening comprehension training and how they overcome

those difficulties. With these initial targets, it is expected to raise helpful implications to teachers and students and future researchers about the field.

1.6 Research questions

This paper aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How do teachers perceive listening comprehension in the classroom?
2. How do students perceive listening comprehension in the classroom?
3. Do students face difficulties in listening comprehension? If so, which are the most common difficulties?
4. Do students use strategies to overcome the difficulties they face in listening comprehension? If so, what kinds of strategies do students use?

1.7 Chapter summary and thesis overview

In this chapter, it was provided background information, significance of the study, context of and the location of the research, aims and research questions. In the following chapters, it is presented the literature review that guided us to answer the four research questions above. In chapter three, it is described the research methodology and the instruments used to answer the research questions. This is followed by chapter four in which we present the results of the study and answers to the research questions of this paper. Finally, in chapter five, it is summarized the study and present suggestions for further research in this area.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to review the theories and researches regarding listening skill in English as a foreign language on which the methodology and research questions of this study are based. This chapter is divided into seven interrelated sections: Section I, defines what second language learning and foreign language learning mean, Section II discusses the definitions of listening comprehension. Section III, presents the role that Listening plays in learning a second or foreign language. Section IV shows some aspects related to teaching listening comprehension. Section V, presents the potential problems in learning listening skill. Section VI provides definitions and descriptions of listening comprehension strategies. Finally, section VII provides a definition of perceptions.

2.1 Second language learning and Foreign language learning

This study belongs to foreign language learning area; therefore, it is important to know what second language learning and foreign language learning mean. Second language learning refers to learning a nonnative language in the environment in which the language is spoken. On the other hand, foreign language learning refers to “the learning of nonnative language in the environment of one’s native language” (Gass, 2001,p. 5). In addition, Wilson (2000) defines second language learning as the conscious knowledge of a second language; it means knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them. The same process happens with foreign language learning, which is a formal learning of a language in the classroom but in a nonnative place.

2.2 Defining listening comprehension.

In our first language, we have all the skills and background knowledge settled to understand what we hear, but we are not aware of how complex the process of listening is. Listening as comprehension is traditionally viewed as the way of understanding spoken language. For this reason, both, listening skill and listening comprehension are considered synonyms because the main function of listening in ESL or EFL is to understand the oral language (Richards, 2008).

Definitions of this process go from the simple to the extensive. Rankin (1952, cited in Pourhossein 2012,p .9), defines listening as “the ability to understand spoken language”. In similar way, Johnson (1951) states listening as “the ability to understand and respond effectively to oral communication” which implies successful communication as in real life. Additionally, Rost (2002) defines listening as a process of receiving what the speaker actually says, constructing, representing and negotiating meaning with the listener, and responding, creating meaning through involvement, imagination and empathy.

Listening in a second or foreign language involves two settings: Interactive and non-interactive. Interactive listening means not only understanding the verbal message, it also involves understanding in the context in which it occurs (Brown and Jule 1983, cited in Pourhossein 2011, p. 978). In contrast, non-interactive listening is the process where listeners receive input passively (lingualinks library, 1999). In interactive listening, the listener takes part in the interaction and alternately listens and speaks in the communicative process. It includes face-to-face conversations and telephone calls in which the listener has a chance to ask for clarification, repetition, or slower speech from the conversation. On the other hand, in non-interactive listening, the listener is supposed to listen passively and he does not have the

opportunity for clarification, repetition, or slower speech from the conversation. It includes situations such as listening to the radio, TV, lectures, films or even sermons which require no oral response.

Besides listening skills, there are seventeenth aural skills involved in the conversational discourse which allow learners to know what they need to do in order to acquire effective interactive listening strategies. In addition, these micro skills help teachers to get a good idea of what techniques they need to cover in the domain of listening comprehension (Richards & Brown 1994, cited in Michael Rost 2002, p.119)

Following is a check list adapted by Richards (1983, p. 241) and other sources, which provides the micro-skills that learners should acquire in the listening training:

1. Retain chunks of language lengths in short-term memory.
2. Discriminate among the distinctive sounds of English
3. Recognize English stress patterns, words in stressed and unstressed positions, rhythmic structure, intonational contours, and their role in signals information.
4. Recognize reduced forms of words.
5. Distinguish word boundaries, recognize a core of words and interpret word order patterns and their significance.
6. Process speech at different rates of delivery
7. Process speech containing pauses, errors, corrections and other performance variables.
8. Recognize grammatical word classes (nouns, verbs, etc., systems (e.g. tense, agreement, pluralization), patterns, rules, and elliptical forms.
9. Detect sentence constituents and distinguish between major and minor

constituents.

10. Recognize that particular meaning may be expressed in different grammatical forms.
11. Recognize cohesive devices in spoken discourse.
12. Recognize the communicative functions of utterances, according to situations, participants, goals.
13. Infer situations, participants, goals using real world knowledge.
14. Form events, ideas, etc., described, predict outcomes, infer links and connections between events, deduce causes and effects and detect such a relations as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization and exemplification.
15. Distinguish between literal and implied meanings.
16. Use facial, kinesics, “body language”, and other nonverbal clues to decipher meanings.
17. Develop and use a battery of listening strategies, such a detecting key words, guessing the meaning of words from context, appeal for help and signaling comprehension or lack thereof.

Lastly, listening is a complex process as it goes further than hearing sounds. Listening means understanding, but also responding effectively. According to the setting where the understanding takes place, listening is divided into: interactive listening and non-interactive. Besides the division of both settings, successful listening is based on the integration and the use of all the micro-skills coordinately.

2.3 The role of listening in foreign language learning

Learning a second or foreign language implies the development of four skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing. This study is about listening comprehension under the communicative process because according to Nguyen (2011) the aim of teaching and learning listening skill is to communicate successfully. In the same way, Morley (1991, p. 82) believes that “listening is a critical element in the language competence performance because it is used in the normal course of a day, at least twice as much as speaking and four to five times as much as reading and writing”. Consequently, listening plays a key role in foreign language learning and competence.

It is worth to point out what the role of listening comprehension in the classroom is. As Rost (1994) points out listening is vital in the language classroom because it provides input for the learner. In addition, numerous studies have indicated that successful listening skills are more important than speaking skills as a contributing factor for academic success (Coakley & Wolvin, 1997; Truesdale, 1990). To sum up, listening comprehension is the most important skill to develop in learning a foreign language since it plays a primary role in the communicative process and it is used as a primary medium in learning at all stages of education.

Once the definition and the role of listening comprehension were reviewed, it is important to explore listening skill in foreign language learning and teaching process. In the learning process, learners acquire and develop learning strategies to be prepared for listening to a foreign language. Based on the previous statement, it can be said that, listening provides the foundation for all aspects of language and cognitive development, as well as, playing a life-long key role in the process of communication. In the early stages of learning a foreign language, through listening, students make the initial contact with the target language and culture, but they also learn important linguistic aspects such as vocabulary and syntax, as well as pronunciation and

intonation. For this reason, it is fundamental to raise students' awareness about the importance of listening skill.

2.4 Teaching listening skill in the EFL/ESL classroom

As it has been reviewed, listening comprehension plays a key role in the process of learning a foreign language. All foreign languages acquisition take place through receiving comprehensible input that is a little above learners' present level which is achieved through reading and listening to the foreign language. Some teaching methods such as Total Physical response rely strongly on the listening input at the beginning stages of learning a foreign language (Richards and Rogers 1994, cited in Petric, 2000, p.7). It is known the importance of listening at the beginners' level, but it does not diminish as learners get more advanced. Practicing listening at all stages of learning not only develops this skill, but also it expands and consolidates other elements of language knowledge, such as vocabulary, grammar and intonation (Petric, 2000). There are different views that approach the teaching of listening in different ways.

Some authors believe that the unconscious exposure to spoken language develops listening skill and helps to acquire other elements of the foreign language (Krashen and Terrell 1983). On the other hand, Rost (1990, 1994) and Ur (1984) agree that practicing listening benefits learners and it is necessary to develop this skill in a direct and systematic way. Brown (1994, cited in Petric, 2000, p.12) points out that listening is developed through the process of exposing learners to listen to texts, on which they perform tasks specially designed to promote the development of certain sub-skills. They also emphasize on the importance of three main factors in teaching listening at all levels: listening materials, listening tasks and the procedure for organizing listening activities.

The interaction of those three factors plays a significant role in designing effective listening activities. For materials, the texts used are selected according to the teaching purposes, as well as, certain characteristics such as the genre, level of authenticity, linguistic and cognitive complexity, amount of information, length, speed of delivery and a variety and dialect of English. (Petric, 2000). However, more attention has been focused on tasks accompanying where skills are developed by doing the tasks. In addition, Harmer (1985, cited in Petric, 2000, p. 4), points that the importance of tasks lies on the fact that they create a purpose, motivation and expectations in learners, which are all characteristics of listening in real life.

In the analysis of tasks and their effect on the development of listening skills, different task types have been proposed and classified according to the level of difficulty, the factor of time, the quantity of responds among others characteristics of the task itself (Petric,2000). Therefore, different types of tasks focus on different stages of the listening process, listening strategies and sub-skills that learners need to develop. In addition, the choice of task will depend on the aims of listening instruction in a particular learning stage and the characteristics of a particular teaching context. In the procedure for conducting listening activities, most methodologies divide listening activities into three basic stages: pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening, each of them has a clear aim and function (Underwood, 1989).

In recent methodologies , pre-listening activities are used since they do not only provide the necessary context for activating the language and background knowledge related to the topic , but also they raise learners' expectations and motivation of what they will listen (Petric, 2000). During the phase of the listening process, teachers prepare students for what they will hear and what they are expected to do. First, students need to be aware about their knowledge of the topic. Second, a purpose for listening must be established, so students know the specific information they need to listen to or the degree required. Using all the possible and available information,

students can make predictions to anticipate what they might hear (Vandergrift, 1999) in this stage of listening task students make important decision about what and how to listen.

During the listening activity itself, students continue to monitor their comprehension and make decisions about which strategy they should use. Firstly, students need to evaluate continually what they are comprehending for consistency with their predictions, secondly internal consistency. The intervention of teacher during this phase is virtually impossible, because of the ephemeral nature of listening which is an internal process. Periodic practice in decision-making skills and the strategies used can excel inference skills and help students to monitor more effectively (Vandergrift, 1997). The strategies practiced in this stage include: logical inference and appropriate use of elaboration or world knowledge and word derivation skills which are related with metacognitive and cognitive processes.

After listening, students need to evaluate the results of their decisions in the listening task. Teachers can encourage students for self-evaluation and reflection. For example, a group or class discussion on the strategies taken by different students can promote reflection and a worthwhile evaluation (Vandergrift, 1997). Therefore, post-listening activities offer a natural opportunity to link listening with another language skill, as they usually lead on speaking or writing (Petric, 2000).

As it was mentioned, most methodologies follow these patterns (pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening) to conduct effective and meaningful listening activities, where teachers take an important participation in pre-listening and post-listening; meanwhile, students outstand the most during listening stage, because they make decisions and take their comprehension at this point.

2.5 Listening Comprehension Difficulties

Since listening is a complex process where listeners decode and construct meaning integrating previous knowledge as well as linguistic knowledge. Learners may face difficulties during listening comprehension. This part of the literature review provides an overview of the main difficulties students face during the listening comprehension training. In an early investigation Underwood (1989) states that students face seven obstacles during the listening comprehension.

1. *Listeners cannot control the speed of delivery:* It means that listeners think that the greatest difficulty with listening comprehension is the speed because they cannot control how quickly the speaker speaks.
2. *Listeners cannot always get things repeated:* This problem may be faced by listeners in real situations because they cannot make a pause and ask every single time they do not catch the idea in the conversation. Even in the classroom they may face this problem, since teachers decide what and when to repeat listening passages ; nevertheless , it is a hard work for teachers to determinate whether or not the students have understood any particular section of the passage they have listened .
3. *Listeners have a limited vocabulary:* In other words, listeners usually find an unknown word , this action may cause them to think about the meaning and consequently miss the next part of the speech .
4. *Listeners may fail to recognize the signals:* It is related to the particular way speakers say certain utterance. Therefore, it is not easy for the learners to interpret or understand these signals.

5. *Listeners may lack contextual knowledge:* It means sharing mutual knowledge and common content make communication easier. However, listeners sometimes feel that listening is a challenge even when they are interested or know the topic, since listening implies a big effort to figure out the meaning intended by the speaker.
6. *Listeners may have difficulty to concentrate:* It usually happens in the classroom context because listeners have to pay attention in order to know what they hear.
7. *Listeners may have established certain learning habits:* Listeners have ways to get the input such as understanding every word. As a result, they are worried if they fail to get the meaning of a particular word.

It is important to take into account how to deal with the obstacles mentioned above because any of all these difficulties are clear examples of possible barriers faced by foreign language listeners during their listening comprehension development. The most common difficulties students face in listening skill are: lack of control over the speed and limited vocabulary (Castro, 2011). The previous statement reveals the importance of knowing if any of these obstacles are faced by students at Upper Intermediate level in listening skill development.

2.6 Listening strategies

In the following section of this study, listening strategies are reviewed. First, it is presented a definition of listening strategies that foreign learners tend to apply when they face difficulties in listening. Second, it is presented the classification of these strategies that some researchers have suggested.

Oxford (1990) defines language learning strategies as the techniques that learners apply to improve the use of the target language information. According to O'Malley (1990), these

strategies are based on the cognitive theory and categorized according to the cognitive activity in language learning into two types: metacognitive and cognitive strategies. However, a third category appears, socio-affective, which was added to describe the learning that takes place when learners interact with classmates, ask the teacher for clarification, or use specific techniques to lower their anxiety (Pourhossein, 2012). These strategies have been proved to be one of the most important factors that helps to succeed in the listening comprehension training.

Previous studies have found that the learner proficiency is one of the main factors that determine the choice of a strategy (Rost & Ross, 1991). Skilled learners were found to use more strategies than their less skilled. Also, there were differences in the types of strategies skilled and less-skilled learners used. It means, students with high level in listening skill use strategies according to their necessities to success in the communicative process; meanwhile, less skilled students stay in the basics or they might not found the adequate strategies yet.

2.6.1 Cognitive strategies in listening

In regard of cognitive strategies, Derry & Murphy (1986) claim that cognitive strategies are problem-solving techniques that learners use to handle the learning tasks and facilitate the acquisition of knowledge or skill. In similar way Brown (1990, cited in Pourhossein 2012, p.6) explains that cognitive strategies are more directly related to a learning task and involve direct manipulation or transformation of the learning materials. That means that learners will use the knowledge gained from those tasks or materials to apply it and solve future problems.

In recent years, two broad types of cognitive strategies have been the subject of L2 listening research: bottom- up and top-down. The bottom-up processing involves constructing meaning from the smallest unit of the spoken language to the largest one in a linear mode

(Nunan, 1998). In that way bottom-up strategies include word for word translation, adjusting the rate of speech, repeating the oral text, and focusing on prosodic features of the text (Pourhossein, 2012). That means the bottom-up strategies are those ones which allow learners to construct meaning through the smallest units of meaning to understand the full oral text.

On the other hand, Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) point out that in top-down processing, the system makes general predictions based on a higher level, general schemata, and then searches the input for information to fit into these practically satisfied, higher order schemata.

Consequently, Nunan (1998) says this strategy is listener based; the listener taps into background knowledge of the topic, the situation, the context, the type of text, and the language. Previous researches have revealed that advanced learners employ more top-down strategies than beginners (Clark, 1977). Thus, top-down strategies include predicting, inferring, elaborating and visualizing, employing new input as clues to predict the meaning of the speaker or the oral text.

2.6.2 Metacognitive Strategies in listening

Metacognitive strategies are a kind of self -regulating learning. It includes the attempt to plan, check, monitor, select, revise, and evaluate learning. For example, for meta-cognitive planning strategies, learners would clarify the objectives of an anticipated listening task, and attend to specific aspects of language input or situational details that assisted in understanding the task (Vandergrift, 1999). In the same way, according to Oxford (1990), the conscious use of meta-cognitive strategies helps learners to get back their focus when they lose it. However, without the development of appropriate cognitive strategies, the potential of these meta-cognitive strategies is reduced. Metacognitive strategies concern with the learner's awareness of what is going on and what learners should do for listening effectively.

2.6.3 Socio-affective strategies in listening

Vandergrift (2003) defines these strategies as the techniques listeners used to collaborate with others, to verify understanding or to reduce anxiety. Similarly, Habte-Gabr (2006) states that socio-affective strategies are those which are non academic in nature and involve stimulating learning through establishing a level of empathy between the instructor and student. They include considering factors such as emotions and attitudes (Oxford, 1990). In other words, learners use socio-affective strategies to reduce their anxiety and feel confident when doing the task, promoting personal motivation and increasing listening level.

Thompson and Rubin (1996, cited in Vandergrift 1999) indicate that instruction has great influence on listening performance of university students learning foreign language. They demonstrated that students who received strategy instruction in listening had higher scores than those who received no instruction. Vandergrift (1999) also mentioned the result of O'Malley and Chamot (1990) to support this idea. Hence, strategies instruction could be effective in the initial learning of students in second or foreign language learning.

It can be appreciated that strategies have an enormous impact on enhancing success in foreign language listening. According to O'Malley and Chamot (1990, cited by Pourhossein 2012, p.15), students do not have innate capacity to understand them; hence, it takes a long way to develop them and it is required instruction in the learning process and both (instructors and students) should be aware of this process and look for the best strategies to empower listening skill.

2.7 Definition of perceptions

Since learning is an individual process, the instructor cannot do it for the student. Therefore, students only learn from personal experiences; moreover, learning and knowledge cannot exist apart from a person. Thus, in learning a second or foreign language there are two main characters (teachers and students) that need to be interacting, in order to share experiences as well as perceptions which would help them to improve in the learning process.

Research on learners' perceptions and beliefs has revealed that knowing learners perceptions and beliefs can play a crucial role in developing the right program to know their needs (Ahmed, 2011, cited in Castro, 2011, p.8). Therefore, it is important to explore what perceptions, attitudes and emotions EFL learners have toward listening comprehension.

Perception is defined as the process whereby stimulation is translated into organized experience (Feldman, 1999, cited in Castro, 2011, p.8). In addition, it is the process by which organisms interpret and organize sensation to produce a meaningful experience of the world. Everything that is perceived by consciousness is defined as an attributed phenomenon by the sense of perception that is given by the sense itself.

Chapter III: METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides specific information about participants, the instruments, setting and the procedures used to carry out this study. First of all, the purpose was framed to deal with teachers' and students' perceptions about listening comprehension from Upper-Intermediate EFL learners in a major of English language teaching at a public university in central Mexico. In addition, this paper explores what difficulties students face during the training of this skill and how they overcome those difficulties. This research was carried out applying a descriptive study using statistics and numeric data, which involves collecting information by means of multiple choice items and Likert questionnaires.

3.1 The participants.

3.1.1 The students

The research was carried out in a public university. This public university has a B.A. in TEFL preparing students to become language teachers. The participants were all native speakers of Spanish studying the major for two years and a half approximately. All the 27 participants belonged to 2 Groups: G1 (9) and G2 (18) and were enrolled in an Upper-Intermediate course. The participants of this study were females and males from 19 to 23 years. These students were selected because they have had experience with the development of listening comprehension and they were classified as Upper Intermediate learners according to ACTFL (2012).

3.1.2 The language teachers.

To carry out this research, it was necessary to include the opinion of two teachers a female and a male with ten years of experience in TEFL. The participants hold a master degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language and they usually teach at Upper –Intermediate level.

3.2 Instruments

Questionnaires are used in surveys in order to gather information from the participants who answered different questions (Creswell, 2009). As stated before, data was collected by means of questionnaires with 20 questions each one, two different types of questionnaires were applied; one which is of Multiple Choice and another which is a Likert based. These types of questionnaires were selected, since they may lower test anxiety while participants are answering, they increase reliability, they require little instruction and manageability to score them. In addition, the participants are not asked to provide a simple and concrete yes or no answer; instead of that, they are allowed to respond in a degree of agreement or disagreement.

3.2.1 Multiple choice questionnaire

This type of questionnaire was used to determine students' and teachers' perceptions regarding the importance of listening comprehension in the classroom. Two questionnaires were provided, one to students and another to teachers. Both questionnaires were divided in two parts. The first part presents the multiple choice questions and the second part contains open questions due to it was sought to analyze the perceptions about listening comprehension of both participants. **(SEE APPENDICES I AND II)**

3.2.2 Questionnaire based on Likert scale

The questionnaire was used to determine the difficulties of the students in listening comprehension. In addition, it was used to identify what kinds of strategies were used by students to overcome these difficulties. The questionnaires were adapted from a combination of questions gathered from two previous studies, which are: “Students perceived difficulties in studying English listening comprehension at Pham Ngu Lao High School” by Nygen (2011) and “Listening Comprehension Strategies of Arabic-Speaking ESL Learners by Pourhossein, F. (2012). Basically, the adaptation of the questionnaires had to deal with the subjects, location and context. Each question was written in first person in order to enroll the participants in the study. In addition, the answers for difficulties were given in a scale from 1 to 4 (1= Always 2= Usually 3= Seldom 4= Never) to get the information. Regarding the answers about strategies , they were given in a scale from 1 to 4 (1= Strongly agree, 2= Agree , 3=Disagree, 4= Strongly disagree (SEE APPENDICES III & IV).

3.3 Procedure

As a first step, it was asked for permission in two Upper-Intermediate courses (G1 9 students and G2 18 students) in order to apply the questionnaires and avoid interfering with their studying process. The questionnaires were applied at two different moments in two weeks. In the first week, the questionnaire about perceptions regarding listening comprehension to students and teachers was applied. In the second week, it was applied the questionnaire designed to determine students difficulties in listening comprehension and finally the questionnaire related to the strategies students use to overcome listening difficulties.

The questionnaire related to the perceptions was applied in both groups. Before asking them to answer the questionnaire, students were asked if they had any doubt of the vocabulary or if they did not understand any instructions. The questionnaires took around 10 minutes to be answered in each group. While students were answering the questionnaire, the researchers made sure participants could receive assistance on time.

In the case of teachers' questionnaire, it was not answered in the class, because they could answer it randomly; therefore, the questionnaire was provided to the participants to be answered at home, since it was considered important that they were more reflective about their answers having the time to do it and they could feel comfortable answering the question.

As this study follows a descriptive method the data was collected, compiled, coded, analyzed, interpreted and categorized. Consequently, the questionnaires were computed to reveal the students' and teachers' perceptions at Upper-Intermediate courses, as well as, the difficulties they could face in listening comprehension at this level. Finally, this study provides a descriptive analysis of data in order to understand the results obtained.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

In the previous chapter, it was stated that the purpose of this study was framed to deal with teachers' and students' perceptions about listening comprehension. In addition, it aimed to explore what difficulties students face during the development of this skill and how they overcome those difficulties. This research was carried out using a descriptive method, which involves collecting data by means of Multiple Choice and Likert questionnaires.

In this research, the participants were 27 students at Upper-Intermediate courses in English and two teachers. The procedure followed was: firstly, the questionnaire designed to obtain teachers' and students' perceptions about listening comprehension was applied. Secondly, a questionnaire designed to determine students' difficulties in listening comprehension was used. Eventually, the questionnaire related to the strategies students use to overcome their problems in listening comprehension was administered.

This chapter reports the results addressed to the four research questions of this study. The results are presented in two sections. In the first section, it is presented, both students' and teachers' perceptions about listening skill training at Upper-Intermediate English courses. The second part presents the identified students' problems in listening comprehension and the suggested solutions used by students to overcome these problems.

4.1 Overall perceptions about listening comprehension

4.1.1 Students' perceptions about listening comprehension

This section presents the results gathered from questions designed to get students' perceptions about listening comprehension. In the first question, it was identified the importance given to listening comprehension. The results are shown in the following figure.

Figure 1: Students' perceptions about listening comprehension

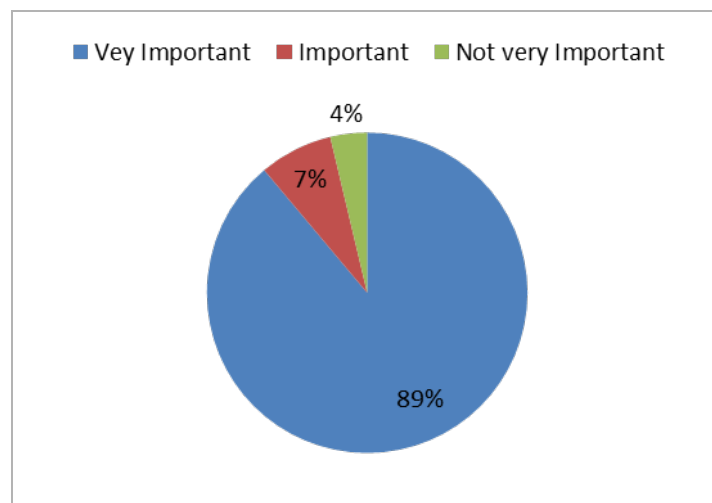


Figure 1 shows that 89 % of students perceived listening skill as very important in EFL and 7 % agreed with the idea that listening is an important skill to be developed in EFL and just the 4 % did not consider listening skill as a very important skill in EFL. It could be appreciated that the majority of the students of Upper-Intermediate English courses were aware of the importance of listening. This supports what Pourhossein (2012) states regarding the increased focus on EFL listening ability, because of its importance perceived in learning and teaching language in recent years.

Besides knowing the perceptions of students regarding the importance of listening comprehension, it was worth to know if they considered listening skill as the hardest skill to develop in EFL.

Figure 2: Listening skill the most difficult skill to develop

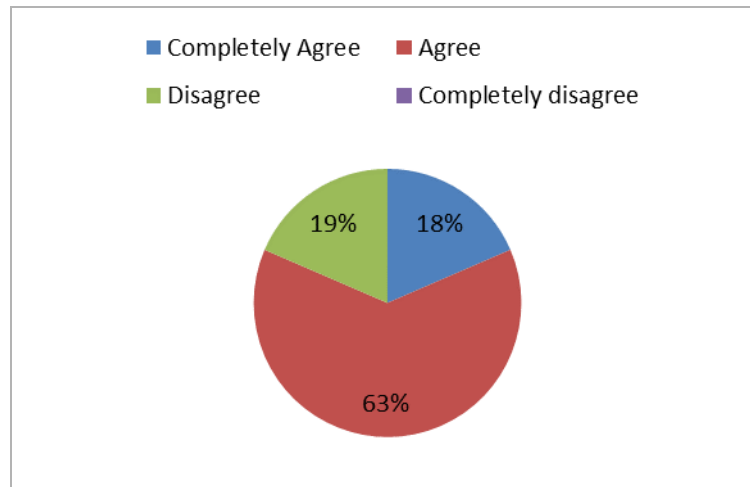
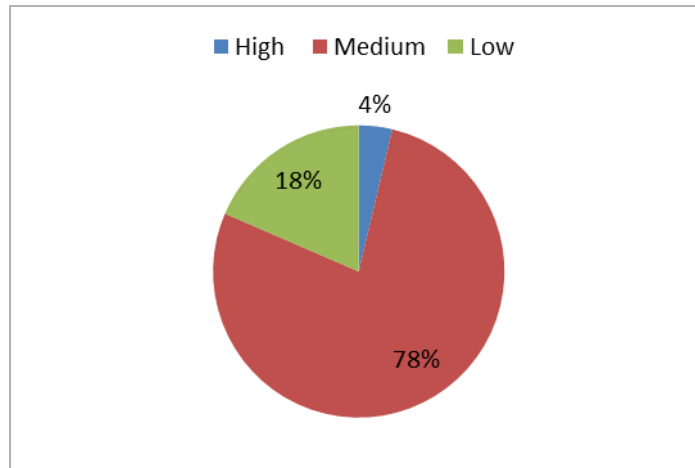


Figure 2 shows that 18% of students completely agreed with the statement that listening is a difficult skill to develop in EFL. On the other hand, the 63% agreed with the statement and the 19% of the participants did not consider listening comprehension as the hardest skill to develop in EFL. It seems that the majority of the students consider listening skill as the most difficult to develop among the other skills.

Besides the perceptions about listening comprehension in the classroom, it was important to explore how students consider their listening comprehension level according to the level they are in. In this part of the results, it is important to remember that the level of the students should be Upper Intermediate Level according to ACTFL which is referred to their English course.

Figure 3: Listening Comprehension Level



In **figure 3**, the answers show that 4 % of the students considered themselves with high level in listening comprehension, 78% of the students considered their listening level medium and 18% considered their listening comprehension level as low. It may be said that the majority of the students of these Upper-Intermediate courses in English considered themselves with a medium level in listening comprehension whereas a low percentage of students consider they have a high level in listening comprehension. It would be interesting to find out more information about students' reasons for choosing low, medium or high level, as well as, comparing their perceptions with real performance.

4.1.2 Teachers' perceptions about listening comprehension

As Nguyen (2011) suggested, the aim of teaching and learning listening skill is to communicate more successfully. Based on the previous statement, in this part of the findings, it is reported teachers' perceptions about listening comprehension in the classroom.

Table 1: Teachers' perceptions about listening comprehension

Participant	Answer
Teacher 1	Very Important
Teacher 2	Very Important

In **table 1**, teachers agreed that listening skill is very important in ESL and EFL contexts as well as time demanding; consequently, teacher 1 agreed with giving enough time for listening activities in the classroom and including at least one listening task in every class. Supporting the previous idea, teacher 1 commented about the following activities in the classroom:

The listening activities that I use for this level are:

"Listening for gist, listening for main ideas, listening for reflecting, listening for main details"

On the other hand, teacher 2 expressed some thoughts about the time given to practice listening:

"listening skill is practiced in the class twice a week since not enough time is given".

However, it was found that both teachers agreed in following the metacognitive process in their listening tasks that includes predicting, inferring and planning.

Thus, it could be appreciated that both teachers and students are conscious about the importance of listening comprehension at Upper-Intermediate English courses. Teacher 1 agreed with teaching listening in a direct and systematic way as it is suggested by Rost (1994), Ur(1984) & Brown (1994). In contrast, teacher 2 expressed that listening skill demands a lot of time and it should be supported by workshop III.

Following it is presented what teachers think about the level of difficulty in teaching listening skill at Upper Intermediate level:

Table 2: Listening comprehension as the most difficult skill to teach

Participant	Answer
Teacher 1	Agree
Teacher 2	Disagree

In **table 2**, it seems to be a disagreement between teachers’ opinions regarding the difficulty of teaching listening skill in the classroom. Teacher 1 agreed with the statement that listening is a hard skill to teach. Beneath, it is mentioned what the teacher does in order to help students in their development of listening comprehension:

“I try to guide my students to what they are really into; however, it is not easy and sometimes it is difficult for them to discover what they really like”.

On the other hand, Teacher 2 opinion disagreed with the statement and the answer was justified with the following:

“I disagree in this question because I just work on this skill twice a week more or less because it demands a lot of time of the section, so I ask my students to work on their own at home”.

In addition, teachers were asked about their students' listening level and following the results are presented:

Table 3: Students' listening level

Teacher 1	Teacher 2
Weak listener: 30%	Weak listener: 95%
Average listener:40%	Average listener:5%
Strong listener: 30%	Strong listener: 0%

Table 3 shows that teacher 1 considered 40 % of the students as average, 30 % strong and 30 % weak. Even though teacher 2 considered that listening skill is not difficult to teach, it could be appreciated that 95% of the students are considered weak and 5% average.

Regarding difficulties in listening skill, teachers commented the following issues found in **table 4**.

Table 4: Students' Difficulties

Teacher 1	Teacher 2
Vocabulary limitation	Unfamiliar speakers' accents
Unfamiliar speakers' accents	Intonation
Intonation	Lack of listening strategies
Lack of background knowledge	
Lack of cultural aspects	

As it can be observed, both teachers agreed that unfamiliar speakers' accents and intonation are the main difficulties that students face for listening comprehension. Also, teacher 1

mentioned vocabulary limitation and lack of background knowledge as well as cultural aspects whereas teacher 2 adds lack of listening strategies.

It could be meant that teaching listening skill is a hard task for teachers even for students since students face some difficulties in the listening task and teachers may not know what students really like to do or which activities fit their interest or if students do something else outside the classroom that helps them to develop their listening skill. Besides that, not enough time is given to practice listening skill in the classroom; teachers need to motivate students more in order to practice listening by their own and guide them by suggesting a variety of activities to do and strategies that they could use in listening task.

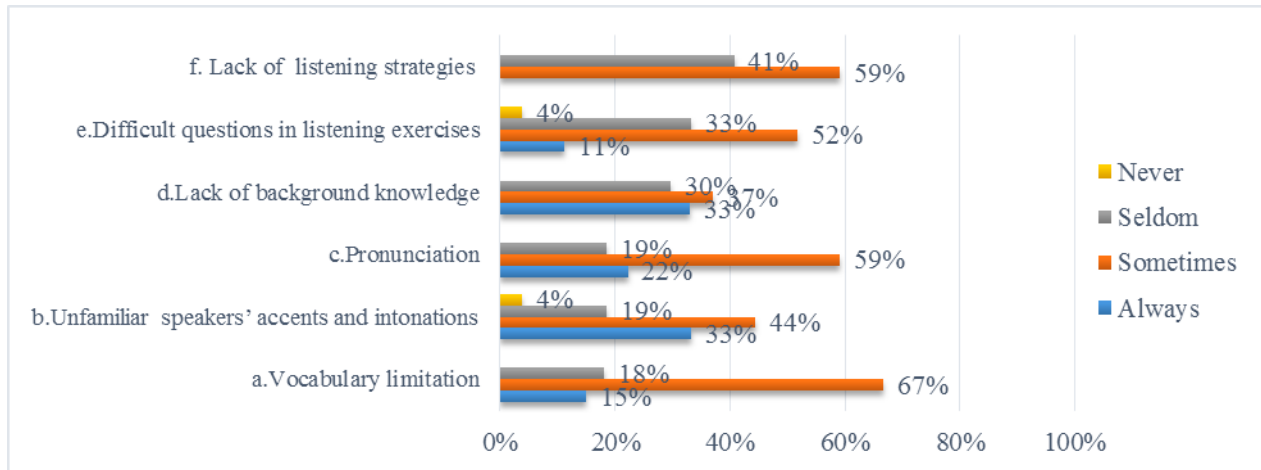
4.2 Difficulties and strategies in listening comprehension according to students' perceptions

In this part, the responses of the third and fourth research questions are presented, which lead to find out what difficulties students face in listening skill, as well as, the strategies they use to overcome these difficulties. The results are presented and divided as follows:

4.2.1 Difficulties in listening

As mentioned in the literature review, difficulties are considered a great obstacle for students in listening; in that way, **figure 4** presents some of the most common linguistic difficulties students face in listening skill such as vocabulary, intonation, speech rate, and other features implied in the type of listening activity. Moreover, other variables are considered regarding students' strategies and background knowledge. Then, responses are presented and placed from the most frequent to least frequent above 40% of always and sometimes.

Figure 4: Difficulties in listening

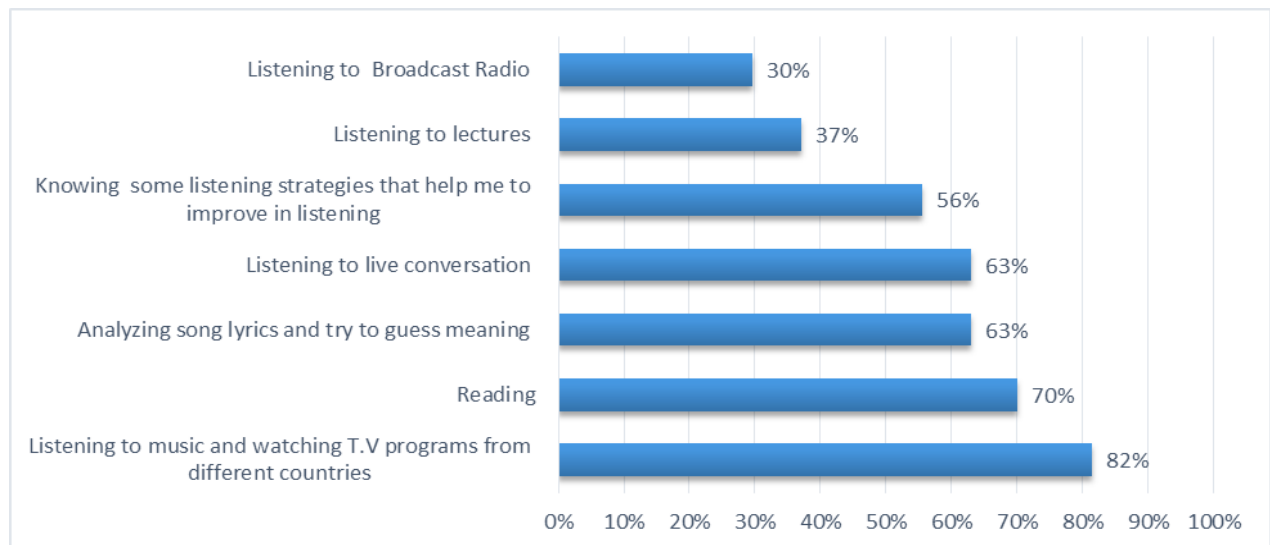


It can be appreciated that 67% of students sometimes experienced limitation of vocabulary when listening, it is followed by pronunciation and lack of listening strategies with 59%. Meanwhile 52% sometimes found difficult questions in listening exercises, the 44% sometimes struggled with unfamiliar speaker accent and intonation. Finally, less than 40% always faced lack of background knowledge in listening.

4.2.2 Solutions suggested by students

In this part, the data gathered from the second instrument is presented, in order to explore the students suggested possible solutions to overcome difficulties while listening. In **figure 5**, it can be appreciated the suggested solutions.

Figure 5: Solutions suggested by students

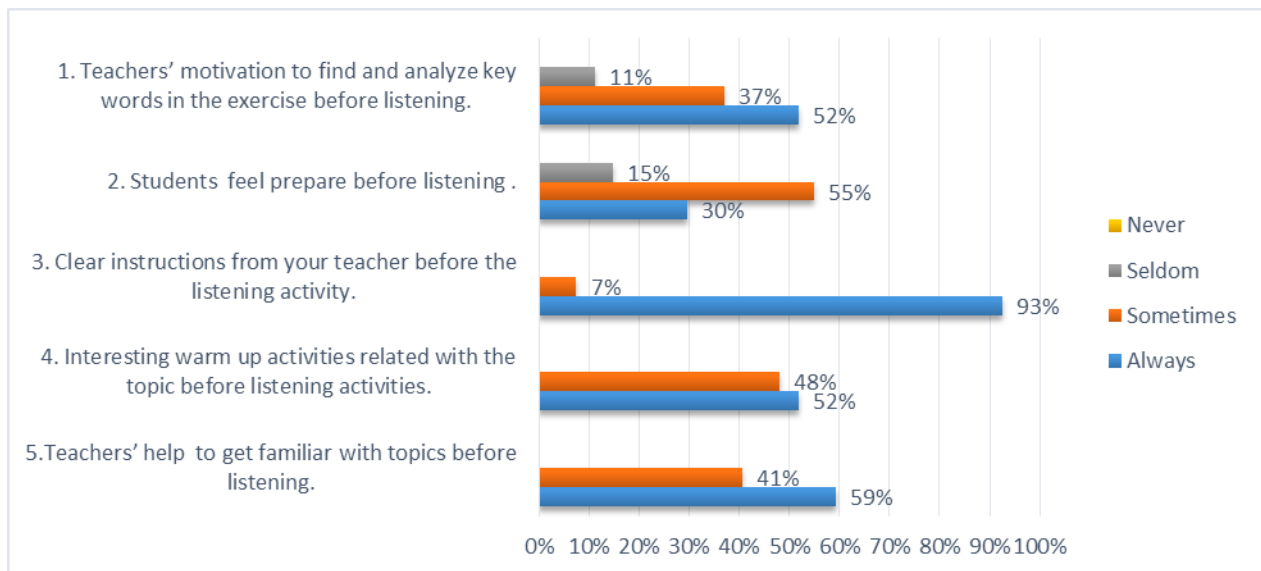


The 82% expressed that listening to music and watching T.V programs from different countries is helpful to understand different accents such as intonation and pronunciations, as well as, getting the use to the speech rate. The 70% said that if they read more, it helps them to overcome vocabulary barriers, as well as, increasing the background knowledge. In addition, the 63% expressed that listening live conversations or analyzing songs' lyrics might be useful to increase vocabulary and get used with the speech rate. In addition, the 56% agreed with knowing what strategies apply to improve listening is important, but 37% said they consider important listening to lectures since it helps you to learn more vocabulary and understand different accents, intonation and pronunciation, as well as, getting used to speech rate. However, only 30% considered listening to radio broadcast as a good idea to overcome the previous difficulties.

4.2.3 Difficulties in pre-listening stage

Figure 6 presents the difficulties students usually have in a pre-listening listening activity, the items are associated with the methodology used to teach listening by tasks doing pre, while, and post listening. Thus, 5 items associated with pre-listening activities are indicated such as: reviewing vocabulary or key words for understanding the listening activity among other elements

Figure 6: Difficulties in pre-listening stage



The previous figure shows that teachers prepared students before the listening activity. A closer look of pre-listening stage shows that, 93% of the students always received clear instructions before listening; the previous data is followed by 59% who said they are always helped to get familiar with the topics. The 52% agreed they are always motivated by the teacher to find and analyze key words before listening as well as the use of interesting warm up activities related to the topic before listening. Whereas 55% of the students expressed they sometimes feel prepared before listening. Pre-listening is a vital stage, and it has to receive enough attention and preparation by language teachers. In this part, it could be said that the majority of students were appropriately prepared to listen.

4.2.4 Strategies used in pre-listening stage

Once pre-listening stage was analyzed, it is worth to know what strategies students applied while listening. **Figure 7** presents the strategies students from Upper Intermediate level usually use before listening activities. As it was reviewed in chapter II, these strategies are associated with cognitive and metacognitive strategies.

Figure 7: Strategies used in pre-listening stage.

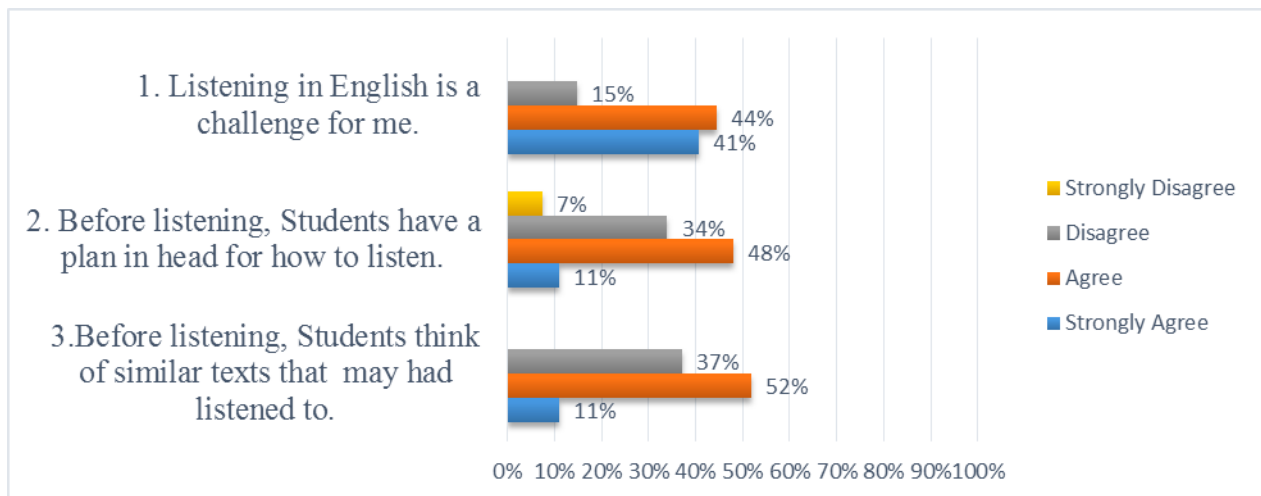
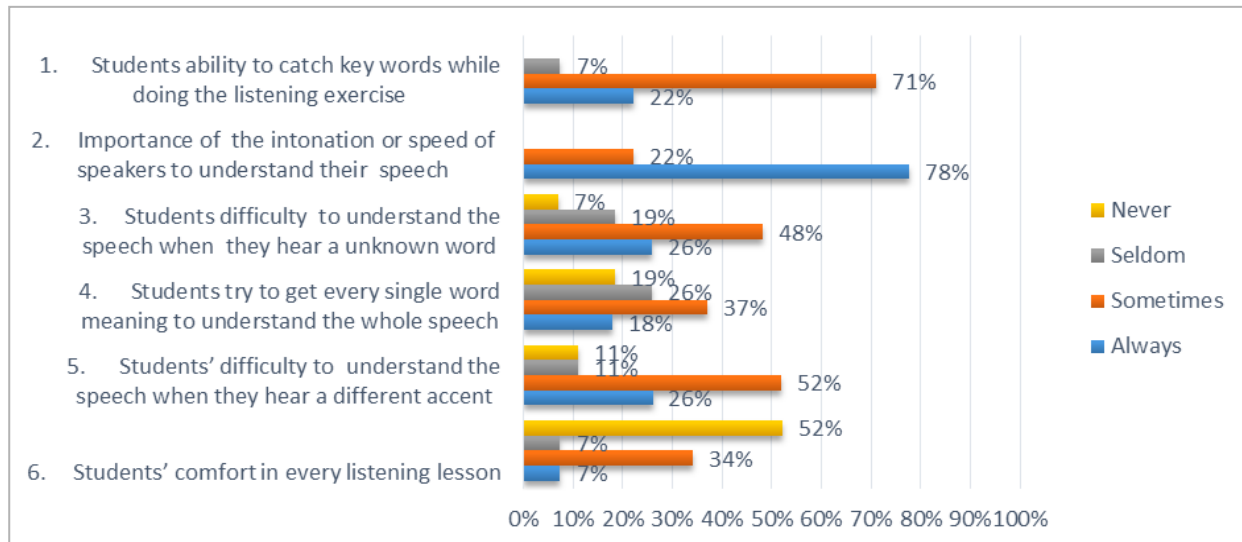


Figure 7 shows that before listening, the 52% of the students agreed that before listening they think of similar text they may have listened to; meanwhile, 48% of the students agreed that before listening they have a plan in head of how to listen. Eventually, 44% of the students agreed on feeling that listening is a challenge for them. Thereby, it can be appreciated that, students use cognitive strategies such as: their background knowledge and metacognitive strategies as planning before listening.

4.2.5 Difficulties in while-listening stage

After presenting pre-listening stage difficulties, it is worth to know what difficulties students face while listening. **Figure 8** presents the difficulties students from Upper-Intermediate level usually face during listening activities.

Figure 8: Difficulties in while-listening stage



Among difficulties while listening, **figure 8** shows that 78% of the students always found difficulty in intonation or speed of speakers, it is followed, by 71% of the students who expressed sometimes they find difficult to catch key words while listening. Then, 52% expressed sometimes listening to a different accent is difficult and the 48% sometimes found difficult to understand the speech when they are listening unknown words. **Figure 8** also shows that 52% of the students never felt comfortable while listening and less than the 50% tried to get every single word meaning to understand the whole speech. Thus, it seems students face difficulties while listening and most of them are associated with linguistic difficulties.

4.2.6 Cognitive strategies used in while-listening stage

As it was mentioned before, two types of cognitive strategies have been the subject of L2 or Foreign language in listening research which are: bottom- up and top-down. **Figure 9** presents bottom up strategies which help students to overcome the difficulties they faced during listening.

Following it is presented the strategies that students at Upper-Intermediate level use during listening. Thus, 2 items associated to cognitive strategies.

Figure 9: Cognitive bottom-up strategies used in while-listening stage

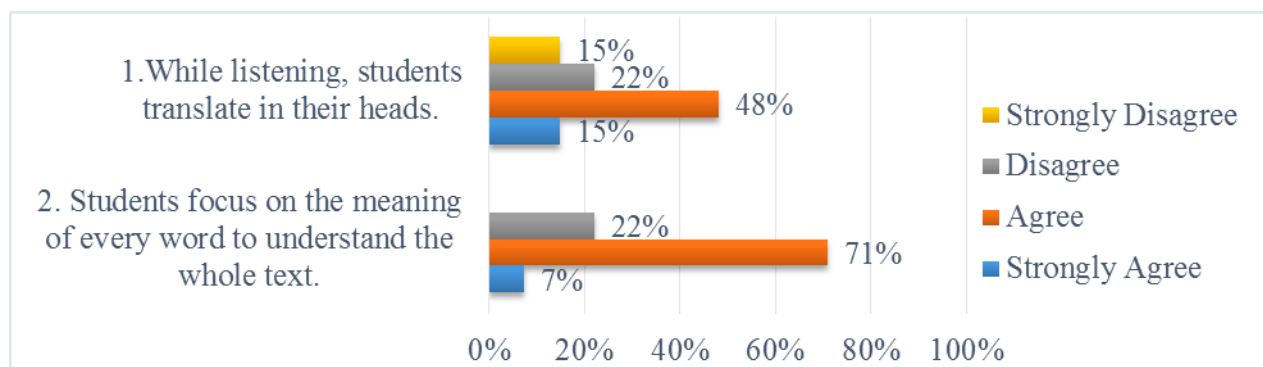
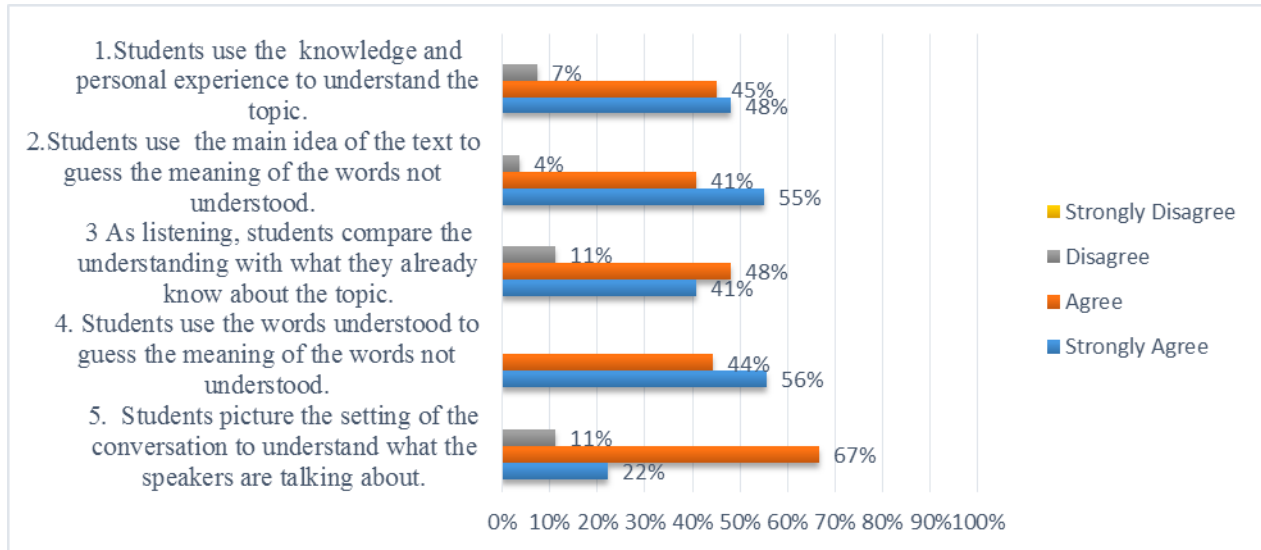


Figure 9 shows that 71% of students strongly agreed on focusing on the meaning of every word to understand the whole text, whereas 48% translated in their head while listening. Through these results, it can be appreciated that students at this level usually use bottom-up strategies.

On the other hand, **figure 10** shows cognitive top-down strategies usually used by students at Upper Intermediate level to overcome the difficulties faced while listening.

Figure 10: Cognitive top-down strategies used in while-listening stage



It is appreciated that 56 % strongly agreed in using the words understood to guess the ones they do not, followed by 55 % which strongly agreed in using the main idea of the text in order to guess the meaning of words that were not understood. Then, 48% strongly agreed they used their previous knowledge and experience to understand the topic and 41 % strongly agreed that when listening they compare what they understand with what they know about the topic. Finally 67% agreed in picturing the setting of the conversation in order to understand the topic.

4.2.7 Meta-cognitive strategies used in while-listening stage

Figure 11 presents metacognitive strategies used by students in while listening, it also shows positive results and the most strategies used by students are: checking, monitoring and revising their objectives during the listening task.

Figure 11. Meta-cognitive strategies used in while-listening

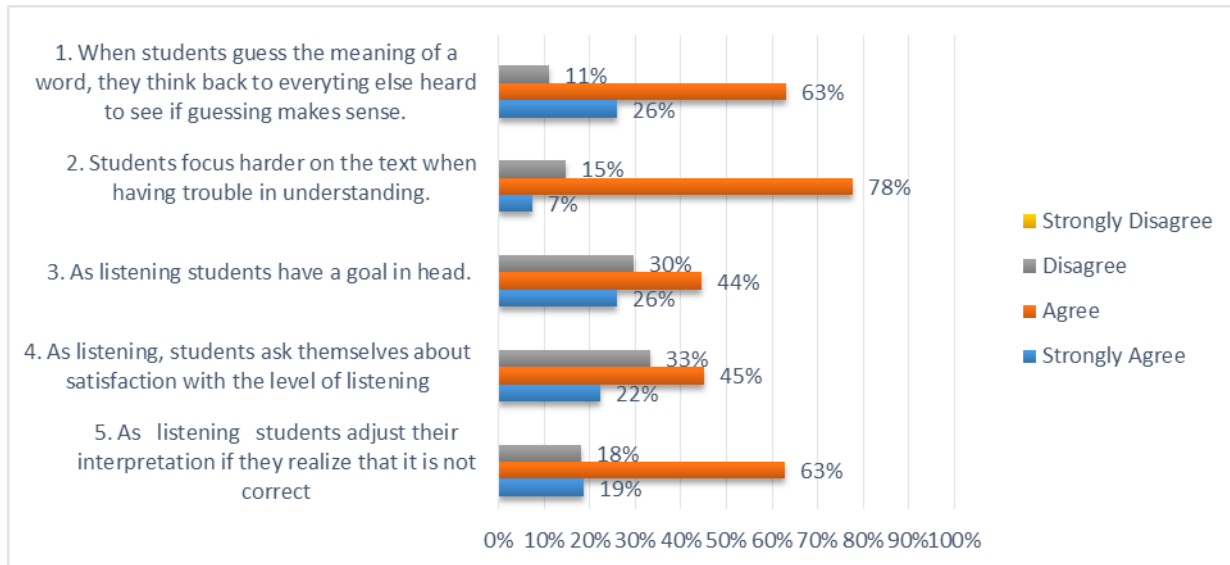
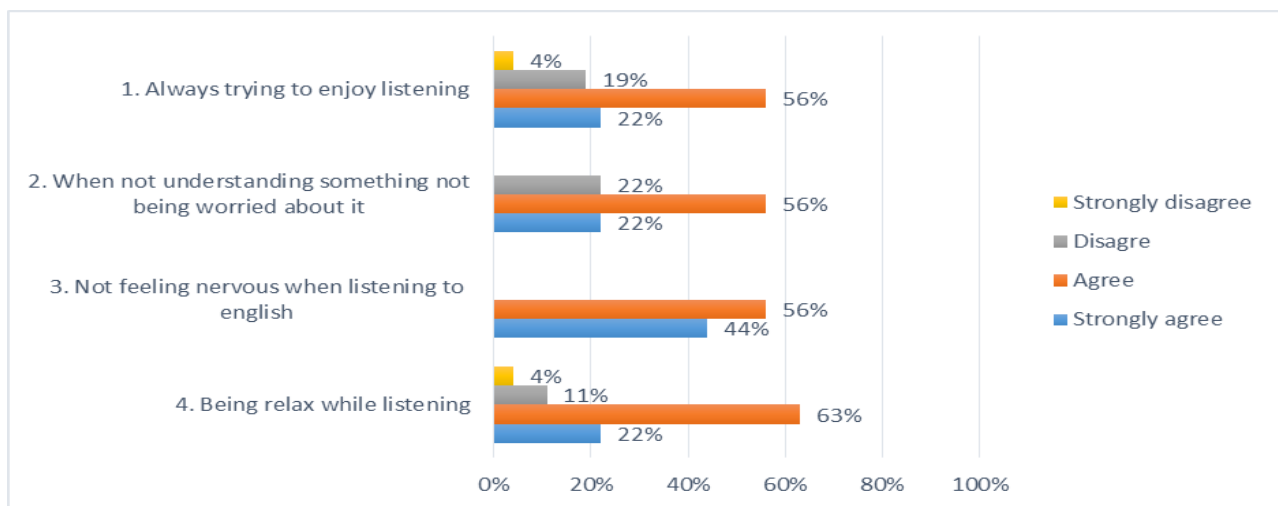


Figure 11 presents that 78% of the students agreed with focusing harder when they have trouble in understanding, while 63% agreed with the strategies of guessing the meaning of a word and adjusting their interpretation, if they realize it is not correct. Then, 45% agreed with asking themselves about satisfaction with the level of listening. Finally, 44% agreed with having a goal in head while listening.

4.2.8 Socio-affective strategies in while-listening stage

The third factor, socio-affective were presented by 4 items which are strategies that have to deal with emotions and attitudes to reduce their anxiety and feel confident while doing the listening task, in this way, they also promote personal motivation and increase their listening level when facing difficulties. **Figure 12** presents the data collected regarding those strategies used by students.

Figure 12: Socio-affective strategies in while-listening stage

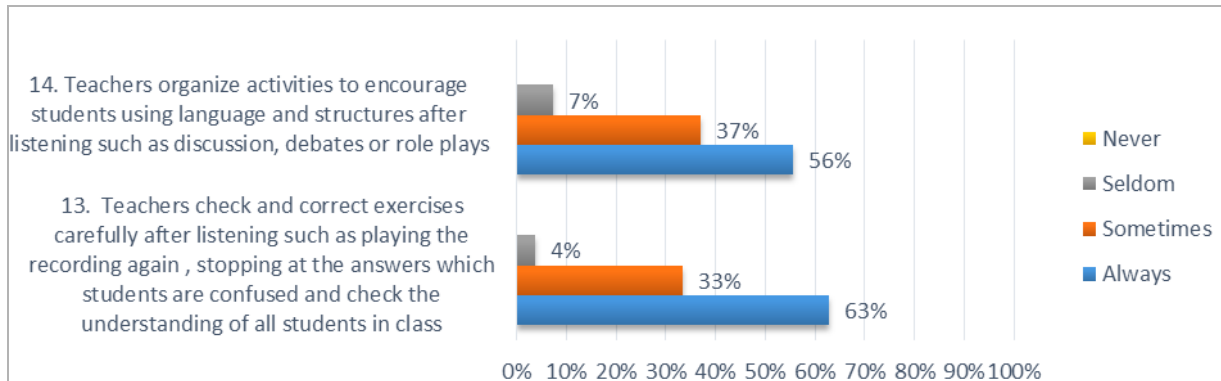


From the results above, it can be appreciated that 63% of the students agreed on being relax while listening, and more than 50% of students agreed on always enjoying listening, not being worried if they do not understand something and not feeling nervous as listening to English.

4.2.9 Difficulties in post- listening stage

The last stage, but not the least in listening activities is post-listening, which comes up with great importance, as well as, pre-listening and while listening. **Figure 13** presents the results obtained in post listening, it refers to what teachers and students do after listening.

Figure 13. Difficulties in post- listening stage

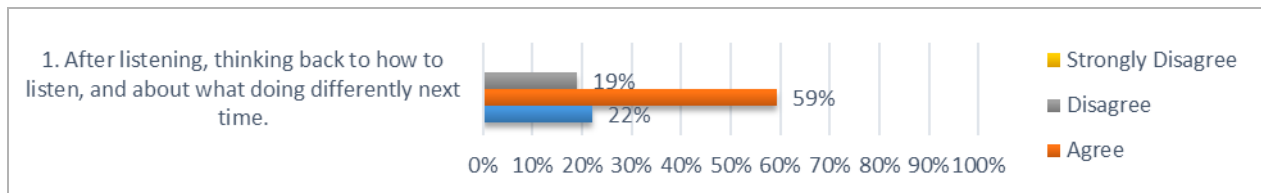


The 63% of the students said that teachers always check and correct exercises carefully after listening, while 56% said that teachers always organize activities to encourage them using language and structures after listening.

4.2.10 Strategies in post-listening stage

Following it is presented the most common metacognitive strategy students use in post-listening.

Figure 14. Strategies in Post listening stage



In **figure 14** it is appreciated that, 59% agreed with thinking back about what they should do differently next time.

From the results shown above, it can be observed that pre-listening and post-listening receive enough attention and preparation by teachers at Upper Intermediate level. In contrast, the results also stated that students face difficulties in while listening stage, where they are supposed to use cognitive and metacognitive strategies to get over those difficulties in listening comprehension. Therefore, it can be assumed that some students might not know what strategies they could use in listening.

In this chapter, the results gathered from the four research questions this study attempted to answer were presented and analyzed. It was appreciated the awareness of both, students and teachers regarding the importance of developing listening comprehension at Upper Intermediate level inside and outside of the classroom. However, listening skill is considered one of the most difficult skills to develop in ESL or EFL and most of the learners face difficulties in while listening stage. But, students and teachers try to apply some strategies that help them to go through listening development.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

5.1 General conclusions

The present research is a descriptive study that explored students' and teachers' perceptions at Upper Intermediate Level in a Public University regarding listening comprehension in the classroom as well as students' difficulties during the listening training and the strategies they use to overcome those difficulties.

On one hand, it was found that students' perceptions about listening comprehension were quite similar for all participants. They considered listening skill as one of the most important skills in foreign language learning, but at the same time they also believed this skill is one of the most difficult skills to develop since it takes time, implies a high level of difficulty and demands a great effort for them; therefore, students try to look for strategies and extra resources in order to practice and improve listening inside and outside of the classroom.

In similar way, teachers expressed that listening skill is very important in ESL and EFL contexts, but it is a hard to teach, develop and improve since it is time consuming, students have different listening levels and face certain difficulties such as: vocabulary limitation, lack of cultural aspects, accent and intonation. Besides that, teachers included the metacognitive process in the listening tasks, but it is still hard to find the topics and activities that students are interested in order to improve listening skill.

Furthermore, lack of vocabulary, followed by intonation of the speech, speech rate and different accents were the difficulties that students face the most. However, they apply a set of listening strategies which allow them to overcome those difficulties. The findings of this study showed that metacognitive strategies were more used than cognitive strategies by students, while

socio-affective strategies were used to reduce anxiety situations to relax and to enjoy the listening task.

Thus, it could be assumed that both teachers and students are conscious about the importance of listening at Upper Intermediate English course. However, the findings of this study have indicated that it is not an easy job to teach, develop and improve listening skill inside and outside of the classroom; nevertheless, previous researchers have indicated that early instruction and the use of listening strategies help students to develop listening comprehension and motivate them to learn. In fact, listening strategies play a key role on listening comprehension development since they do not only provide students with useful tools to retain oral input, but also these tools empower students to reach the goal of communication; consequently, students need to be provided with materials that fit their current proficiency level and interest in order to reduce difficulties and become better listeners in EFL.

5.2 Implications of the study

The results of this study might have important implications in listening comprehension training. First of all, the finding that students at Upper Intermediate level employ a set of strategies to get over their possible difficulties in listening tasks, suggests that students' at beginning levels should be made aware and instructed to use these strategies in the process of listening training . In addition, these strategies should be considered by teachers in the design of activities to teach, develop and improve students' listening skill inside of the classroom.

5.3 Limitations

The paper unavoidably had some limitations, firstly, although the questionnaires were based on the literature review and adapted, they could be improved to get better results; secondly questionnaires provide only opinions and perceptions which may not reflect the reality at all. Another limitation is the amount of participants so no generalizations are expected to be done just contributions to the field of listening comprehension in EFL or ESL.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

This study attempted to explore students' and teachers' perceptions about listening comprehension development and the possible difficulties students might face during this process at Upper Intermediate level. However, some recommendations could be considered to improve this study. Firstly, this study could be carried out considering only students with high listening level after the application of a diagnosis to select them. In addition, observations in listening tasks could be useful to get deeper in the context of listening training, as well as the strategies used. Secondly, further research could be carried out in the field of teaching listening strategies in order to implement them in the English course or special workshops where students are trained to develop listening.

After that, it is hoped to promote deeper research on listening comprehension process to discover students' difficulties in developing listening skill in lower and high levels. It may have a deep understanding related to the issues of teaching and learning English, through this way, they can come up with practical plans to improve the issues. Moreover, further studies and action researches might be carried out to focus on listening strategies which generate a great impact in students learning since the fact they are useful tools in learning a foreign language.

REFERENCES

- American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). (2012). Proficiency guidelines. Retrieved from www.actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org
- Brown, G. (1995). *Dimensions of difficulty in listening comprehension*. In D. Mendelsohn and J. Rubin (Eds.), *A guide for the teaching of second language listening*. (pp. 59-73). San Diego, CA: Dominie Press.
- Brown, H. D. (1991). *Breaking the language barrier: Creating your own pathway to success*. Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press, Inc.
- Carrell, P. L., & Eisterhold, J. C. (1983). *Schema theory and ESL reading pedagogy*. *TESOL Quarterly*, 17, 553-573.
- Castro Vázquez, Elizabeth. (2011). *Factors that affect the development of Listening Comprehension skill in English as a foreign language*. Puebla, Mexico, Lenguas Modernas, Facultad de Lenguas Modernas
- Clark, H. H. & Clark, E. V. (1977). *Psychology and language: An introduction to psycholinguistics*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc.
- Coakley, C., & Wolvin, A. (1997). *Listening in the educational environment*. In M. Purdy & D. Borisoff (Eds.), *Listening in everyday life: A personal and professional approach* (2nd ed.) (pp. 179-212). Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Coakley CG & Wolvin AD. (1986). *Listening in the native language*. In B. H. Wing (Ed.), *Listening, reading, writing: Analysis and application* (pp. 11-42). Middlebury, VT: Northeast Conference.
- Creswell, J (2009) *RESEARCH DESIGN Qualitative, Quantitative. and Mixed Methods Approaches*. SAGE Publications. London
- Ferris, D. (1998). *Students' views of academic aural/oral skills: A comparative needs analysis*. *TESOL Quarterly*, 32, 289-318.
- Gass.M.S (2001). *Second language Acquisition*. (p,5). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers. Mahwah, New Jersey. London
- Habte-Gabr, E. (2006). *The Importance of Socio-affective Strategies in Using EFL for Teaching Mainstream Subjects*. *The Journal of Humanizing Language Teaching*, 8(5). from Retrieved September 10, 2009
<http://www.hlomag.co.uk/sep06/sart02.htm#C1>

- Harmer, J. (1985). *The practice of English language teaching*. London: Longman.
- Johnson k. (1951).The effect of classroom training upon listening comprehension. Journal of communication. Washington DC
- Krashen, S. D., & Terrell, T. D. (1983). *The natural approach: Language acquisition in the classroom*. Oxford: Pergamon.
- LinguaLinks Library, Version 3.5, published on CD-ROM by SIL International, 1999
- Miller (2003). *Developing listening skills with authentic materials*. ESL Magazine. Retrieved from www.elthillside.com/up/files/article4.doc
- Derry & Murphy (1986). *Designing systems that train learning ability: From theory to practice*.Review of educational research Florida.
- Morley J. (1991). *Listening comprehension in second/foreign language instruction*. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (pp. 81-106). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.
- NGUYỄN. (2011). *Students perceived difficulties in studying English listening comprehension at Pham ngu laohigh school,Hanio, Vietnam National University*
- Nunan, D. (1998). *Approaches to Teaching Listening in the Language Classroom*. Paper presented at the Korea TESOL Conference, Seoul.
- O'Malley, J. M. & Chamot, A. U., (1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Oxford, R. L. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Petric, B. (2000). *The effect of listening instruction on the development of listening skills of University Students of English*.
- Pourhossein, A .(2012) *Listening Comprehension Strategies of Arabic-Speaking ESL Learners Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, Vol. 2, No. 5, pp. 977-988 ; Finland , Academy Publisher
- Pourhossein, A. & Reza, M. (2011). *Study of Factors Affecting EFL Learners in English Listening Comprehension and the Strategies for improvement Journal of Language Teaching and Research* Vol. 2 , No. 5 , pp 977-988 ; Finland Academy Publisher.
- Richards, J.C.& Rodgers, T.S (1994) . *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press Cambridge.

- Richards, J. C. (2008) *Teaching Listening and Speaking from Theory to Practice* (p.3) Cambridge University Press Cambridge
- Rost, M. (1994). *On-line summaries as representations of lecture understanding*. In J. Flowerdew (ed.). *Academic listening: research perspectives* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rost, M. (2002). *Teaching and Researching Listening*. London, UK: Longman.
- Rost, M. (1990). *Listening in language learning*. London: Longman.
- Rubin, J. (1994). *A review of second language listening comprehension research*. *The Modern Language Journal*, 78: 199-221.
- Truesdale, S. P. (1990). *Whole-body listening: Developing active auditory skills*. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 21, 183-184.
- Thompson, I., & Rubin, J. (1996). *Can strategy instruction improve listening comprehension?* *Foreign Language Annals*, 29, 331-342.
- Underwood, M. (1989). *Teaching listening*. New York: Longman.
- Ur, P. (1984). *Teaching listening comprehension*. London: Longman.
- Vandergrift, L. (1997). *The strategies of second language (French) listeners: A Descriptive study* *Foreign Language Annals*, 30, 387-409.
- Vandergrift, L. (1999). *Facilitating second language listening comprehension: acquiring successful strategies*. *ELT Journal*, 53(3), 168-176.
- Vandergrift, L. (2003). *Listening theory and practice in modern foreign language competence*. Retrieved January 4, 2009 from <http://www.llas.ac.uk/resources/gpg/67>
- Wilson, R. (2000). *A summary of Stephen Krashen's "Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition"*. Retrieved December 28, 2006, from <http://www.languageimpact.com/articles/rw/krashenbk.htm>
- Xu, F. (2011). *Anxiety in EFL Listening Comprehension*. The School of Foreign Languages, Qingdao University of Science and Technology, Qingdao, China. ACADEMY PUBLISHER. Finland, from ///C:/Users/mar_u_000/Downloads/6087-13618-1-PB.pdf

APPENDIX I

Students' Perceptions

This questionnaire intends to find out the perceptions about the listening skill training at Upper-Intermediate level, we would like you answer these following questions. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

1. How important is listening comprehension in the acquisition of a second language?
a) Very important b) Important c) Not very important

2. Do you consider listening as one of the most difficult skill to develop?
a) Completely agree b) Agree c) Disagree d) Completely disagree

3. Are you able to complete a listening task according to the level you are in?
a) Completely agree b) Agree c) Disagree d) Completely disagree

4. How do you consider your listening comprehension level?
a) High b) Medium c) Low

5. Do you consider that listening skill receives enough practice in the classroom?
a) Completely agree b) Agree c) Disagree d) Completely disagree

6. Do you enjoy the listening activities that your teacher does?
a) Completely agree b) Agree c) Disagree d) Completely disagree

7. Does my teacher help me to improve listening skill?
a) Completely agree b) Agree c) Disagree d) Completely disagree

8. Please specify with an X when you experiment the following difficulties in listening comprehension

	Always	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
a. Vocabulary limitation				
b. Unfamiliar speakers' accents and intonations				
c. Pronunciation				
d. Lack of background knowledge				
e. Difficult questions in listening exercises				
f. Lack of listening strategies				

Thank you for your cooperation!!

APENDIX II

Teachers' Perceptions

This questionnaire intends to find out the perceptions about teaching listening skill at Upper-Intermediate level, we would like you answer these following questions. Your cooperation is highly appreciated. The information you provide will be used for academic and research objectives.

1. How important is listening comprehension in the acquisition of a second language?

a) Very important b) Important c) Not important

2. Do you consider listening as one of the most difficult skill to teach?

a) Completely agree b) Agree c) Disagree d) Completely disagree

3. Are my students able to complete a listening task according to the level they are in?

a) Completely agree b) Agree c) Disagree d) Completely disagree

4. What process do I follow in listening activities and why?

-Activities that include word for word translation, adjusting the rate of speech, repeating the oral text, and focusing on prosodic features of the text.

- Activities that include in predicting, inferencing, elaborating and visualizing employing new input as clues to predict the meaning of the speaker or the oral text

5. According to your opinion write the percentage of your weak, average and strong student in listening comprehension in your classroom

Percentage of weak listeners _____

Percentage of average listeners _____

Percentage of strong listeners _____

6. Do I give enough time for listening activities in the classroom?

a) Completely agree b) Agree c) Disagree d) Completely disagree

7. In every class do I include at least one listening task?

a) Completely agree b) Agree c) Disagree d) Completely disagree

8. The listening activities I use the most at this level are:

9. My students enjoy listening activities.
a) **Completely agree** b) **Agree** c) **Disagree** d) **Completely disagree**

10. Vocabulary needs to be reviewed in order to complete the listening task successfully?
a) **Completely agree** b) **Agree** c) **Disagree** d) **Completely disagree**

11. Do I motivate my students to develop the listening skill?
a) **Completely agree** b) **Agree** c) **Disagree** d) **Completely disagree**

If you Completely agree or disagree, please explain how you motivate your students.

12. I always plan a real task for developing listening
a) **Completely agree** b) **Agree** c) **Disagree** d) **Completely disagree**

13. How do you help your students to develop listening skill?

14. Circle the most common difficulties that your students face when listening.

- a. Vocabulary limitation
- b. Unfamiliar speakers' accents and intonations:
- c. Pronunciations
- d. Lack of background knowledge:
- e. Difficult questions in listening exercises
- f. Lack of listening strategies
- g. Other: _____

APENDIX III

Strategies

This questionnaire intends to find out the strategies used in studying listening skill Upper-Intermediate level. We would you to answer these following questions. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Please indicate with an X the number that fits with your opinion or strategy

Strategies	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I focus on the meaning of every word to understand the whole text.				
2. I try to picture the setting of the conversation to understand what the speakers are talking about.				
3. Before listening, I think of similar texts that I may have listened to.				
4. I use the words I understand to help me guess the meaning of the words I don't understand.				
5. I use the main idea of the text to help me guess the meaning of the words that I don't know.				
6. I use my knowledge and personal experience to help me understand the topic.				
7. As I listen, I compare what I understand with what I already know about the topic.				
8. Before I start to listen, I have a plan in my head for how I am going to listen.				
9. While listening, I translate in my head				
10. As I listen, I adjust my interpretation if I realize that it is not correct.				
11. As I listen, I occasionally ask myself if I am satisfied with my level of comprehension.				
12. While listening, I try to relax.				
13. I try not to feel nervous as I listen to English.				
14. As I listen, I have a goal in my head.				
15. When I don't understand something, I try not to worry so much about it.				
d16. When I guess the meaning of a word, I think back to everything else that I have heard, to see if my guess makes sense.				
17. I always try to enjoy listening.				
18. After listening, I think back to how I listened, and about what I might do differently next time.				
19. I focus harder on the text when I have trouble understanding.				
20. I feel that listening in English is a challenge for me.				

Thanks for your cooperation!!!

APENDIX IV
Students' difficulties

This questionnaire intends to find out the difficulties in listening comprehension at target language four. We would like to ask you to answer the following questions. Your cooperation is

1. What is your gender ? Female Male

highly appreciated. The information you provide will be guaranteed and kept in secret:

Part 1 General Information .

2. How long have you been studying English? _____

Please answer the following questions by using a tick on the option that fits with your opinion

	Always	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
1. Does T help you to get familiar with topics before listening?				
2. Does T often organize interesting warm up activities related with the topic before listening activities?				
3. Do you receive clear instructions from your teacher before your listening activity?				
4. Do you think you are well prepared before listening?				
5. Does your teacher invite you to find and analyze key words in the exercise before listening?				
6. Are you able to catch key words while you are doing the listening exercise?				
7. Is it important for you the intonation or speed of speakers to understand their speech ?				
8. Is it hard for you understand the speech when you hear a unknown word?				
9. Do you try to get every word single meaning of every single word to understand the whole speech?				
10. Is it hard for you understand the speech when you hear a different accent?				
11. Do you feel comfortable before every listening lesson?				
12. Which factors of linguistic do you find difficult the most:				
a. Pronunciation				
b. Vocabulary				
c. speech rate				
13. Does teacher check and correct exercises carefully after listening such as playing the recording again , stopping at the answers which students are confused and check the understanding of all students in class?				
14. Does teacher organize activities to encourage students using language and structures after listening such as discussion, debates or role plays ?				

Please according to your perception tick the solutions that can help to overcome listening difficulties (you can tick more than one):

- Reading
- Analyzing song lyrics and try to guess meaning
- Check vocabulary before the listening activity
- Listening to lectures
- Get familiar with the topic before the listening activity
- Listening to music from different accents T.V programs from different countries
- Listening to Broadcast Radio
- know some listening strategies that help me to improve in listening
- Listening to live conversation

Thanks for your cooperation!!!