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Facultad de Lenguas

**“RECOGNITION OF THE “/d/” “/t/” “/ed/” ENDINGS OF REGULAR VERBS IN
SIMPLE PAST THROUGH LISTENING BY SECOND MIDDLE SCHOOL
STUDENTS”**

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, for their endless love, sacrifice and unwavering belief in me. Their constant motivation has been my greatest source of strength.

I also dedicate this work to my brother Lohengrin Hernández whose support and encouragement through this journey has been invaluable.

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Abstract

Despite knowing word meanings, learners often struggle to identify individual sounds, particularly the endings “/t/”, “/d/”, and “/ed” in the simple past of regular verbs. This study addresses how a listening recognition strategy can help students distinguish such sounds by enhancing their listening comprehension and develop their phonological awareness. This research was carried out in a public middle school with second graders, and it employed a mixed method approach by collecting data through a pretest, a pos-test and a focus group. Findings indicate that attentive listening and regular practice may significantly improve students’ ability to recognize verb endings. The strategy not only refined participants' skills but also made learning more meaningful. Performance in assessments suggests that students could transfer their recognition skills to practical listening tasks. The study highlights the importance of implementing listening strategies to improve listening comprehension. Extended periods of listening practice to recognize specific sounds can offer positive long effects and produce an effective listening comprehension and language proficiency.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Language facilitates social interaction and enables individuals to express ideas, intentions, emotions, and thoughts and it plays an important role in shaping our understanding of the world. Therefore, learning a foreign language like English is important in today's globalized world because it is used in communication, education, diplomacy, business, and entertainment. When English is incorporated in education, learners can be prepared to participate more actively in the global community (Nivedita, 2023). Then, students should develop English appropriately by developing their listening, writing, reading, and speaking skills.

When learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL), listening has an important role in communication because listening contributes to the development of those speaking skills to receive and exchange information (Nafa, 2023). Consequently, when learners participate in a listening activity, they receive a model of the language for their own speaking and for enhancing their listening comprehension. Rost (2013) declared that listening involves overlapping types of processing: neurological processing, linguistic processing, semantic processing and pragmatic processing. For example, linguistic processing requires input from a linguistic source, this means that listeners identify units of spoken language using prosodic features and one of these is recognizing words. Neurological processing registers information and finds meaning in both the external and internal world. Semantic processing encompasses listening in comprehension, inferencing, learning, and memory formation. Pragmatic processing includes pragmatic comprehension, interactional and symbolic competence and discourse analysis, this last one is

concerned with the ways listeners make use of linguistic information and background knowledge as they listen in a social context.

Therefore, listening involves not only hearing the words but also understanding meanings in context. The listener needs to employ techniques such as predicting or scanning to gather and interpret information from spoken language input (Su & Liu, 2012). According to Hadijah & Shalawati (2018), listening comprehension is an “active process that requires concentration, linguistic knowledge, and listening strategies in order to gather or interpret information from aural input” (p. 53). Then, EFL students need to learn adequate strategies for developing their listening comprehension along with the learning of language grammar and vocabulary.

1.1 Rational of the topic selection

In San Pablo del Monte, secondary public-school students study English as a Foreign Language (EFL) as part of the Mexican curriculum. The Secretary of Public Education (SEP) establishes that by the end of the third grade of middle school, students should certify a B1 level of proficiency within Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (SEP, 2011 as cited in Li, Castillo & Tellez 2021). In fact, SEP recognizes the importance of English language proficiency for learners in basic education and aims to equip learners with English language skills.

SEP created the Programa Nacional de Inglés (PRONI) to support the study of English which includes student centered teaching, a variety of didactics, collaborative learning and an emphasis in competences, formative assessment, inclusive environments and relevant social topics (SEP, 2017 as cited in Li, Castillo & Tellez 2021). PRONI supports the learning of English to participate in more realistic social

practices (Ramirez & Sayer, 2016). The PRONI English teacher should hold a B2 or a higher English level and a major in the area of language teaching. PRONI aims to strengthen public schools' technical and pedagogical capacities for teaching English, so students have access to pertinent and relevant education (Bonilla, 2023).

PRONI started in 2016 and it would be implemented in 33,093 public schools (Bonilla, 2023) and the expansion phase would continue from the third-grade preschool to the sixth grade. SEP plans on expanding PRONI across the nation and this may require more than 99,00 teachers since most primary school teachers do not speak English, however, there is shortage of qualified English teachers nationwide (Ramirez-Romero & Sayer, 2016 as cited in Bonilla, 2023). Moreover, students in Mexico are not reaching the proficiency levels that are expected because of school conditions, class size, mixed ability classes, available resources, and time (Manrique & Izquierdo, 2024).

In San Pablo del Monte, EFL learners of second grade at Felipe Santiago Xicohténcatl middle school have no previous knowledge of the language because they did not take classes at elementary school level. This means that they did not have access to the PRONI program in their community. Then, students are starting their English language learning at middle school. They study English as a foreign language at the age of 12 and take three classes of fifty minutes per class, a week. Class time is invested in reading, writing or speaking but there are not many listening activities in the class. This could be a result of classrooms not having access to the internet plus there is no TV, computer or projector to work. The only resources teachers use are a book with reading activities and some speakers to practice listening with song lyrics.

Each skill in English plays a unique role in understanding, expressing, and interacting. However, these secondary students have difficulties with listening activities. One difficulty may be the lack of concentration while students are listening to exercises. Listening is challenging because students do not know the words to understand what is being said (Grigorievna, 2022). Although learners may know word meanings in the text when they hear the words in the flow of speech, they may not recognize them as they also struggle with identifying individual sounds, for instance, the endings of the conjugation of simple past in regular verbs.

1.2 Significance of the study

English is a global language which leads to the integration of people worldwide. When we learn a language, we need the four skills for communication. According to Moore (2017), there are some universities that require a specific level of English proficiency as a mandatory requirement for admission and for graduation. So, regardless of the level of education, there is a need to help English learners to improve language skills and obtain academic success. However, some conditions inside the classroom may not allow students to fully develop their language proficiency. A significant variable for learning a language and developing proficiency is determined by language exposure (Lubega, 1979 as cited in Sheela & Ravikumar, 2016). For example, the lack of resources, materials or the facilities such as a language laboratory to practice the language may hinder certain abilities to be developed. One of these abilities is listening.

Therefore, this research may contribute to the English teaching field by providing information about how to apply a listening strategy to help students

recognize the endings “/d/” “/t/” “/ed/” of regular verbs in the simple past. In Mexico, middle school students may not be exposed to different listening materials to recognize the sound differences of the past tense endings, and this is relevant because it is in the language curriculum which establishes that learners can comprehend simple past in listening and describe past events in spoken language.

Discriminating sounds or recognizing specific words is part of the teaching of listening that students need to develop (Burns & Siegel, 2017). Middle school learners may find it challenging to recognize the sounds “/d/” “/t/” “/ed/” in simple past because they do not know that the past tense can be pronounced in three different ways and that requires being attentive to subtle phonetic differences. This study may be helpful for teachers who are working in middle public schools about how to teach students to listen to the endings of regular verbs in past tense. Therefore, this research aims to develop the recognition of the endings of regular verbs in the simple past in middle school students of second grade with a strategy to teach listening recognition.

1.3 Context of the research

The Felipe Santiago Xicohténcatl is a technical secondary school at an urban area in San Pablo del Monte in the state of Tlaxcala. San Pablo del Monte borders to the north with the municipalities of Tenancingo, Papalotla de Xicohténcatl, Mazetecochco de José María Morelos, Acuamanala de Miguel Hidalgo and Teolocholco, and to the south and west with the state of Puebla (INEGI, 2010).

The school has room for twenty-seven groups of students, fifteen in the morning and twelve in the afternoon. Each group has around thirty-five to forty

students. The school's total number of students is nine hundred twenty-one, four hundred sixty-seven males and four hundred fifty females. The students' ages are from eleven to fifteen years. Students take basic English classes of 50 minutes three days a week. The total number of teachers are seventy-five and only four are English teachers, two in the morning and two in the afternoon (Escuelasmex, 2023).

The school has seventeen classrooms, one administrative office, one library with one projector, one multipurpose hall and cafeteria and small dining area. There are also laboratories for different Computer Science, Office Automation, Architectural Design, and Metal structure Design. However, there is not a laboratory or any special classroom for foreign languages like English. The school is composed of diverse family structures, including nuclear, extended, and blended families. Finally, although Spanish is the mother tongue, there is also the presence of indigenous languages such as Mixtec, Zapotec, Mazatec, Nahuatl, and Totonac in addition to Spanish, but the students at Felipe Santiago Xicohténcatl technical secondary school are not bilingual.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to apply a listening strategy to help middle school students recognize the endings “/d/” “/t/” “/ed/” of regular verbs in the simple past. This research will be done in a public school in second grade, through the listening recognition strategy it is expected that students may develop their listening ability and lead them to understand the spoken language.

1.5 Objectives

General

To recognize the ending sounds of “/d/” “/t/” “/ed/” in regular verbs in the simple past when listening.

Specific objectives

- To apply the listening recognition strategy to identify the ending sounds of the regular verbs in past.
- To identify the phonetic patterns of the endings “/d/” “/t/” “/ed/” in regular verbs in the simple past.
- To analyze how middle school students recognize the ending sounds of the regular verbs in the simple past.
- To assess middle school students' performance in listening to the endings “/d/” “/t/” “/ed/” of regular verbs in the simple past.

1.6 Research questions

This study aims at responding to the following research questions:

- 1) How does the recognition strategy facilitate second grade middle school students recognize the endings: /d/ /t/ /ed/ of the simple past in listening?
- 2) How effective is the implementation of the recognition strategy in improving middle school students' ability to recognize the endings: “/d/” “/t/” “/ed/” of the simple past in listening?
- 3) How does phonetic pattern identification facilitate second grade middle school students to recognize the endings: “/ d/” “/t/” “/ed/” of the simple past in listening?

1.7 Summary

This chapter described how the listening skill has an important role in communication and how it contributes to understanding spoken language as this enables English language learners to participate in class activities such as conversations, interviews, or other forms of verbal interactions. The chapter also describes the rationale behind this study which attempts to teach middle school learners listening recognition by applying a strategy so they can identify the ending sounds of the conjugation of simple past in regular verbs. The context of the study and participants were also presented. Finally, the objectives and research questions were described. The following chapter will present the literature review that supports this study.

Chapter II Literature review

This chapter presents the literature that supports this study. English as foreign language (EFL) is described especially when it comes to its instruction in Mexico as a foreign language. Also, language skills are presented to come down to the listening comprehension skill. Micro and macro skills in listening are described as well to also present the ability of recognition in listening regarding phonemes.

2.1 English as a Foreign Language

Learning English as a Foreign Language is a common practice worldwide (Napitupulu and Kino, 2014). Johnson (2017) comments that there are a billion people around the world learning English as a Foreign Language. Moeller and Catalano (2015) explain that a language is considered foreign if it is taught in a classroom setting and it is not used in the society where the teaching occurs. Many countries include English into their educational curricula. In Mexico, according to Moore (2017), teaching English takes place in public education and English is taught from the third grade of preschool to the third grade of secondary as a mandatory subject in the curricula and in 2014 approximately 23.9 million people in Mexico City were learning English through various means.

In the field of language there is a distinction between acquisition and learning. According to Moeller and Catalano (2015), learning involves formal instruction of a second or foreign language in a classroom setting and language acquisition refers to the natural process that occurs without any formal instruction. For Hussain (2017), acquisition is natural, subconscious, and innate faculty which is negligent of grammatical rules and syntactic structures. On the other hand, language learning is

conscious, voluntary and needs intentional exertions to be effective. Both processes involve language skills, and the difference is that language acquisition is the implicit learning in which learners develop language skills through the exposure to a language in their environment and it may occur during childhood.

Language learning involves explicit instruction and refers to acquiring the language through study, and it takes place in various settings such as classrooms or online courses. Learning a foreign language facilitates communication and promotes cross-cultural respect, tolerance, and empathy between different cultures (Sultonxo'jayeva, Karimora & Mukhamedova, 2024). Language allows us to communicate, and language learning equips us with the formal knowledge and rules necessary to understand and use language proficiently, as well as it opens personal and professional opportunities.

2.1.1 EFL in Mexico

English language plays an important role in Mexico as English is used in tourist areas or industries where international communication is needed and also for its geographical proximity to the United States political and economic relationships between the two countries is promoted (Hidalgo, Cifuentes & Flores, 2011 as cited in Ruano, 2022). In education, English is taught as a foreign language in Mexican public education mostly because of their position in the academic world, where scientific and political ideas are usually published in English (Hidalgo et al., 2011 as cited in Ruano, 2022).

In 1993, English as a foreign language became obligatory in Mexican public education (Basurto & Weathers, 2016). The syllabus says that the students receive 50 minutes of instruction of English three times a week, however, this instruction and

practice time is significantly less because in the classroom, English instruction may be constrained because of other class activities such as calling the roll, classroom management and checking homework (Basurto & Weathers, 2016). These time constraints are also associated with teaching English in countries where English is not the native language where learners have limited time to dedicate to foreign language learning (Sultonxo'jayeva, Karimora & Mukhamedova, 2024). The goal of teaching English as a foreign Language in basic education in Mexico is to have students develop those necessary multilingual and multicultural competencies to face the communicative challenges of a globalized world and respect other cultures (SEP, 2010 as cited in Sayer, 2015).

2.2 Language skills

Language skills enable people to communicate and express their emotions and thoughts whether it is formal or informal. For example, Indeed (2023) comments that speaking is the verbal expression of your thoughts, ideas and that speaking effectively includes having clarity and fluency in your expression and vocabulary. Second, reading skills help you understand different texts, context and can help to enhance vocabulary, expressions, analysis, and communication. Moreover, writing skills represent your thoughts in a text using the right structure and flow of information. This skill includes changing the format and the tone of the text according to the target audience. Finally, listening is part of the communication process and refers to understanding, to interpret and analyze the speakers' message. These four language skills can be used simultaneously when people interact, and it is common to combine two or more language abilities (Manaj, 2015).

Listening and speaking are highly interrelated (Manaj, 2015) and work simultaneously in real situations and the integration of the two aims to foster effective oral communication. Reading and writing also form a strong relationship with each other as skills and are tools to achieve an effective written communication. Therefore, the integration of listening and speaking with reading and writing will make learners express themselves and enhance their ability to communicate effectively in both oral and written forms.

2.3 Listening

When learners want to speak a language, they first need to understand the spoken language they hear. Wah (2019) defines listening as the cognitive process whereby we attach meaning to aural signals and it is the active intellect of decoding, understanding, interpreting, and evaluating messages. Listening impacts various aspects of our lives and connects with others. This skill is important because in verbal communication we cannot communicate without listening to the speaker first and then understanding what they say or imply. Listening fosters communication and allows us to comprehend the listeners perspectives.

Listening plays an important role in people's daily lives because out of the time spent on communication, listening takes us 40-50%, speaking 25-30%, reading 11-16% and writing about 9% (Mendelson, 1994 as cited in Yildirim & Yildirim, 2016). In addition, Pourhossein Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011, as cited in Ahmadi, 2016) point out that listening needs active involvement, effort, and practice where listening to others requires active engagement with the speaker's emotions and opinions. Nation and Newton (2020) comment that listening was traditionally seen as a passive process, but it is more active and interpretative in which the message is not fixed but

is created in the interactional space between participants. Meanings are shaped by context and constructed by the listener through the act of interpreting meaning rather than receiving it intact.

Listening is complex, a process of interpretation in which listeners match what they hear with what they already know. Listeners must construct and represent meaning, then negotiate it with the speaker and respond and create meaning through involvement, imagination and empathy (Rost, 2002 as cited in Sepúlveda, 2018). Listening is the foundation of effective communication and EFL learners need to understand the spoken language to respond appropriately. This can be done with practice and by learning listening comprehension skills.

2.3.1 EFL Listening comprehension.

English as a Foreign Language (EFL) listening comprehension plays an important role in daily interactions even though it has been neglected in second language acquisition (Zanjuampa & Juarez, 2015). EFL listening comprehension is underemphasized in the English learning process because the emphasis in the classroom is entirely on how to be an effective speaker but not an efficient listener, and teachers interested in improving listening may not know where to begin (Brownell, 2015). According to Richards (2008), the main function of listening in second language learning is to facilitate understanding of spoken discourse as listening comprehension involves actively listening to spoken information. Therefore, learners need to receive more opportunities for listening because the listener carries eighty percent of the responsibility for communication and connecting with people by means of speaking.

Listening comprehension is an interactive process in which listeners construct meaning. Listeners comprehend oral input through sound discrimination, previous knowledge, grammatical structures, stress, intonation and other linguistic or non-linguistic clues (Rost, 2002 as cited in Gilakjani and Sabouri, 2016). Listening comprehension also conveys the privilege conditions for language accomplishment and improvement of other languages abilities such as speaking, reading, writing and listening (Hasan, 2000 as cited in Namaziandost, Ahmadi & Hossein, 2019). Besides, listening comprehension constructs meaning by using cues from contextual information and from existing knowledge to fulfill the task requirements (O'Malley, Chamot, and Kupper, 1989 as cited in Yildirim & Yildirim, 2016). However, students face listening comprehension challenges related to distinguishing English sounds (Syukur, 2024), and this may be due to ESL teachers tend to focus on the outcome of listening activities rather than the actual process of listening. Therefore, listening comprehension must be highlighted for language learners because in order to communicate effectively with others they need to understand spoken language.

2.3.2 Micro and Macro skills in Listening

Teaching listening comprehension is to provide opportunities for learners to acquire strategies. The identification of macro and micro skills of listening comprehension can assist teachers in pinpointing those skills learners need to incorporate them into the learning objectives (Galdames, 2018). For example, Richards (1983, as cited in Renandya, Hidayati & Ivone, 2023) stated that listening microskills have to do with the ability to: 1) retain chunks of language for short periods; 2) discriminate among sounds; 3) recognize stress patterns; 4) recognize the rhythmic structure, and 5) recognize the functions of stress and intonation.

Likewise, Solak (2016, as cited in Ekayati, 2020) recognized five aspects of listening microskills: a) to differentiate among sounds, b) to maintain lengths of language in the short memory, c) to identify patterns of stress, rhythmic structures, and their role in providing information, d) to identify the reduction form of words, and e) to differentiate the limits of words, identify the core of a word, and interpret word order patterns and their significance.

On the other hand, listening macro skills (Brown, 2007 as cited in Prastiyowati, 2018) refer to the ability to: 1) recognize cohesive devices in spoken discourse; 2) recognize the communicative functions of utterances according to the situation; 3) make inferences using real-world knowledge; 4) infer outcomes, connections, causes and effects, and its relations to the context; 5) distinguish literal and implied meanings; 6) use body language and other nonverbal clues to decipher meanings; 7) develop listening strategies to identify key words, guess meaning from context, signal comprehension, etc. Therefore, both macro and micro skills contribute to the effective listening comprehension and students benefit from practicing both aspects to enhance their language proficiency (Syukur, 2024).

2.3.3 Recognition

Recognizing sounds is important for developing effective listening skills and being capable of engaging in effective communication. The recognition of the sounds of words is key for having a fluent speech. Word recognition is divided into three discrete levels of representation: 1) an orthographic level for the representation of the letters, 2) a lexical level for the representation of words, and 3) a conceptual level for the representation of meanings. All three levels are interconnected because they function together, orthographic to the lexical to semantic levels and vice versa

(Rumelhart and McClelland, 1982 as cited in Smith, 2014). Listening to sounds and recognizing such sounds is the basis of spoken language comprehension because when individuals recognize words, they understand the messages intended by the speaker.

Undeniably, the development of automaticity of word recognition is critical for L1 and L2 acquisition (Segalowitz et al, 2008 as cited in Rost, 2013). This ability is important for building communication. Astuti, Syam and Daddi (2024) state that listening involves identifying the sounds of speech and processing them into words and sentences for the sake of producing meaning especially because listening involves a package of related processes such as recognition of the sounds uttered by the speaker and intonation patterns (Lynch and Mendelson, 2013). Rost (2013) explains that because of the inherent nature of sound, whenever we create a speech sound, we simultaneously create that sound in several harmonic ranges. This means that every individual phoneme has a unique identity in terms of frequency and ratio of a sound.

Phonological features, phonemes and intonation contours are the three levels of bottom-up information used simultaneously in word recognition (McClelland et al, 2006 as is cited in Rost, 2013). Kazanina, Bowers, and Idsardi (2018) describe phonological features as fundamental units of speech in both articulatory and auditory terms. For instance, the phoneme “/t/” is a stop consonant because it interrupts airflow through the mouth; it is alveolar because of its constriction at the alveolar ridge, and it is voiceless because it does not vibrate during its production. These features are essential for analyzing and understanding the complex nature of speech sounds. As for phonemes, they are the smallest units of sound that can distinguish meaning between words for example: the vowels in 'pin' and 'pen'

represent different phonemes or the consonants sounds in 'pet' and 'bet'. Intonation contours play a role in conveying different meanings based on the pattern of pitches, tones, or stresses within an utterance. For instance, the phrase "finish that report," can be articulated with varying intonation contours to express different intentions; with a rising intonation, it may indicate a question and when delivered with a flat non-emphatic intonation, it conveys an imperative command (Nordquist, 2024).

2.3.4 Phonemes

Phonemes are the smallest unit of sound in spoken language and the segmental level of the discrimination of phonemes is important to grasp the content of utterances such as "rake" versus "lake" (Schaadt and Männel, 2019). Phonemes are units of speech perception and access codes to lexical representations, and they are the size of a consonant or vowel and a single phoneme may have different acoustic realizations (Kazanina, Bowers, & Idsardi, 2018). Consonants and vowels are two types of phonemes (Erdogan & Wei, 2019) for example, the letter "y" can function as a vowel sound in the word "very", but as a consonant in the word "yellow". Besides, phonemes can be contrastive sounds because they can result in a change of meaning such as the words "pat" and "bat", while non-contrastive sounds, or allophones, do not distinguish meanings of words and keep the same sound despite the physical difference. For example, the English sound / ð / represented by the digraph "th" in words such as "then", "they" or "those" differs from the sound /d/ as in "den", "day", or "doze".

According to Melah and Rashid (2015) English has 44 phonemes and the English language has a total of 24 consonants and 20 vowels, 12 are pure vowels and 3 diphthongs and each English vowel is spelt in different ways (Figure 1). While

all short, long and diphthong vowels can operate as nuclei in English closed syllables. The input for listening comprehension is the acoustic signal which represents the meaningful sounds of the language, phonemes, as these are combined to make up individual words and phrases (Buck, 2001).

Illustration 1 Vowels and consonants

VOWELS	monophthongs				diphthongs			Phonemic Chart voiced unvoiced
	i: sheep	ɪ ship	ʊ good	u: shoot	ɪə here	eɪ wait		
	e bed	ə teacher	ɜ: bird	ɔ: door	ʊə tourist	ɔɪ boy	əʊ show	
	æ cat	ʌ up	ɑ: far	ɒ on	eə hair	aɪ my	aʊ cow	
CONSONANTS	p pea	b boat	t tea	d dog	tʃ cheese	dʒ June	k car	g go
	f fly	v video	θ think	ð this	s see	z zoo	ʃ shall	ʒ television
	m man	n now	ŋ sing	h hat	l love	r red	w wet	j yes

Source: The 44 phonemes of Received pronunciation based on the popular Adrian Underhill layout. Adapted by EnglishClub.com

2.4. Summary

This chapter described English as a foreign Language (EFL) in Mexico, focusing on EFL listening comprehension. The chapter also explored both micro and macro skills, highlighting the importance of the ability of recognizing sounds and phonemes, which are the fundamental units of sound speech. In the following chapter will be discussed the methodology, the data collection and data analysis as well as the research instruments and the participants involved in the study.

Chapter III Research Methodology

Introduction

The chapter provides a description of the methodology used in this study. The study aims to explore middle school students' listening performance in recognizing the endings “/t/” /d”/ “/ed/” of regular verbs in the simple past. This study follows a mixed method approach, the data was collected through a pretest and a posttest and a focus group. The participants and context are described as well as the instruments used in order to collect the data. Finally, the procedures followed to collect, organize and analyze the information for this investigation are explained below.

3.1 Research Methodology

This research is based on a mixed method approach (Creswell, 2021) that includes both quantitative and qualitative approaches. In a quantitative method researchers use statistical analysis to obtain information to answer the questions/ hypotheses and make an interpretation of the results. In qualitative research, researchers pose questions and collect data in the form of text, audio recordings or video recordings. The data is collected by observation, open-ended questions, interviews, focus groups or questionnaires. Collected data can be analyzed with a thematic analysis. A mixed method implies analysis and integration of quantitative and qualitative data in a single or multiple study (Hesse-Biber, 2010). Qualitative data is in the shape of words, pictures and narrative and can be combined with

quantitative numerical data allowing research results to be generalized for future studies and examinations.

Regarding the research methodology used in this study, Kimmons (2022) argues that one common mixed methods design is Explanatory. Explanatory mixed method design is done when quantitative data is collected first, and qualitative data is then later collected to illustrate what the quantitative methods found. An example of an explanatory design would be conducting pre and post tests on professional development training with teachers to determine training results. Explanatory mixed method was selected for this study because of the design of a pre and post test to determine the effects of a listening recognition strategy in second middle school students. By collecting this data it can be possible to draw attention to high and low scores. Similarly, a focus group was selected because as Creswell (1999) mentions a focus group aims to gain extra understanding to the research questions established for the research.

3.2 Context

Felipe Santiago Xicoténcatl is an urban technical secondary school located in San Pablo del Monte, Tlaxcala. The school has an administrative office, a library, a multiple purpose hall and a cafeteria with a small dining area. The school has seventeen classrooms with no access to the internet nor a TV, computer or projector to practice a language, for example. Existing laboratories are for subjects such as Computer Science, Office Automation, Architectural Design, and Metal Design, but there is not a laboratory or a special classroom for foreign language learning.

3.3 Participants

This school manages 27 groups, 15 in the morning and 12 in the afternoon, each group has from 35 to 40 students. The total student population is 921 students. For this study, the students considered were 25 second-grade middle school students from group “B”. Students’ ages range from 13 to 14 years old. There are 13 females and 12 males. Their English level is below basic because most of them have not taken English classes consistently during their elementary education instruction. They began their foreign language learning at 12 just as they entered middle school. English is taught as a foreign language and their mother tongue is Spanish. Students take basic English classes three days per week of 50 minutes each session.

3.4 Research instrument

For this study, two instruments were used to collect data: a pre-test and posttest, and a focus group. Pan and Sana (2021) suggest applying pretests before because results can offer insights about the object of study. In addition, Pan and Rivers (2023) mention that pretesting offers information that one has yet to learn about; consequently, a pretest measures participants' knowledge and gives an overview before a procedure is made and provides a starting point to know how to continue with the procedure. Therefore, a pretest for this study was designed for 12 to 14 years old second middle school learners and aimed to assess “/t/” “/d/” “/ed/” sounds of regular verbs in the past to diagnose participants’ knowledge (See the appendix A).

The pretest instructs participants to listen to each verb and underline the correct ending sound of the regular verbs in the past. The pretest was designed as a

multiple-choice test with twenty items. This list of verbs was taken from a YouTube video because it contains those verbs that are the basic one's participants have to learn at this level. The test is divided into eight regular verbs with "/t/" sounds, six regular verbs with "/d/" endings and six regular verbs with "/ed/" endings. The pretest is not expected to gather a given number of correct answers but to diagnose participants' previous knowledge about the recognition of ending sounds in the simple past.

On the other hand, post testing is a retrieval practice (Pan & Sana, 2021) where participants take a test after the intervention and the results are considered an outcome that is measured against the intervention (Farmus, Arping-Cribbie & Criebbe, 2019). For this study, a post-test was applied to measure the improvement after the application of the strategy used for this research. The posttest was the same version as the pretest described above. The posttest contained the same 20 multiple choice items that assessed the ending sounds of regular verbs in the past. However, with the posttest it was expected to gather data that could yield different scores from those in the pretest because it could evidence progress after the participants had practiced recognition of sounds.

The second instrument was a focus group. Stewart (2018, as cited in Sim and Waterfield, 2019) mentions that a focus group is a type of group discussion about a topic under the guidance of a trained group moderator. Focus groups aim to obtain data from a purposely selected group of individuals (Nyumba et. al., 2018) as a focus group use interviews to gather in-depth knowledge concerning attitudes, perceptions, beliefs and opinions of individuals (Ranking & Ali, 2014).

The focus group for this study was designed to obtain information about participants' opinions regarding the application of the strategy. The strategy consisted

of listening tasks used to recognize the endings” /t/ “/d/”/ed/” of regular verbs in the simple past. The focus group intended to know the difficulty participants perceived and the most memorable part of the teaching resources for them. For the focus group, interview questions were designed. Participants were asked five questions: the first question was for them to express what difficulties they had experienced from listening to the material used for this study. Second question asked about how the strategy helped them to identify the ending sounds of the regular verbs in the simple past. Question three inquired about if participants had noticed any improvement in their listening skill after the application of the strategy. Question four asked how phonetic pattern identification exercises helped them to distinguish the endings when they were listening to exercises. Finally, question five was for the participants to offer suggestions to improve their learning about the recognition of ending sounds of regular verbs in the past. The following section describes the data collection procedure of both instruments.

3.5 Data collection

The data collection was divided into three stages, first it was necessary to ask the school principal for authorization to carry out the study and select a target group. Once participants were selected, five sessions were scheduled to take place for three weeks. The English class took place in the library because it has the required equipment: a projector and speakers for participants to see videos and listen to audios. Second, during the first session the pretest was applied to let students recognize the “/t/” “/d/” “/ed/” sounds in the simple past. Then, in the following three sessions the recognition strategy was applied. In each session participants watched a video and had to complete handouts regarding the recognition of sounds. The

researcher/teacher explained to participants that the objective for the activities was to listen to regular verbs in the past simple and identify /ed/ sounds. At the end of each session, the teacher and participants reviewed the answers and discussed the results. The fifth and last session was scheduled to apply for the post test. When participants had finished the post test, they were invited to participate in a focus group to share in more details their views about the strategy applied.

Only seven participants, out of 25, in the group accepted to participate in the focus group (Table 1). The focus group was held at the library as a round table where the teacher guided the discussion as a moderator. Once the date and time had been established, the day of the focus group the teacher/moderator welcomed participants and provided instructions: 1) the discussion should be respectful, 2) every participant had an opportunity to share their opinion, 3) confidentiality and anonymity were emphasized, and 4) participants were informed the focus group was being voice recorded with a cellphone. Participants granted their permission. Once the focus group started, the teacher asked participants the prepared questions and invited them to share their opinions. The teacher kept track of time to ensure all questions were adequately covered for the purpose of the study. At the end of the focus group the moderator thanked participants for their participation. After the collection of data, the next step was to analyze both types of data. The following section presents the procedures for analysis.

Table 1. Participants' pseudonyms

	Participants' Pseudonyms	Gender
1	Laura	Female
2	Alejandra	Female
3	Raquel	Female
4	Roberto	Male
5	Pedro	Male
6	Diego	Male
7	Leonardo	Male

3.6 Data analysis

This section aims to describe the steps for the analysis of the data. The analysis of the pretest and posttest followed the following steps: first, the data was organized to tally the total number of correct answers for each verb type (/t/ sound, /d/ endings, and /ed/ endings) in an excel table format. In the table, for both pretest and posttest scores, there were five columns to represent the students, the three scores for /t/ sounds, /d/endings and /ed/ endings and the final column for total scores. Once this was done, both results were compared to contrast scores between the pretest and posttest. A different table was used to show the differences for each type of ending to show if any improvement was visible in terms of participants' performance in recognizing the verb endings of regular verbs in the simple past.

For the focus group, data analysis consisted of a content analysis approach. The analysis started by transcribing the data, first, then the information was read several times to identify recurring codes and assign themes to segments related to

specific aspects relevant for this study. The participants' responses and the final categories are presented in the following table (Table 2).

Table 2. Focus group's categories.

Difficulties	Strategies	Improvements	Suggestions
Challenging to distinguish the sounds /d/ /t/ /ed/ at first	Concentration to listen carefully	Participants can distinguish /t/ and /d/ sounds because of the practice	Avoid distraction
Lack of concentration for listening attentively	Apply their recognition ability to distinguish the ending sounds /t/ /d/ or /ed/	Their listening skills are enhanced with regular practice.	Practice with listening exercises
Hard to remain in silence for the listening exercises	Feedback when discussing mistakes after the exercises		Practice the pronunciation of ed sounds endings
			Pay attention to listen carefully

3.7 Summary

This chapter provided information about the process of gathering data. The context and participants involved in the study were described. Also, the instruments used to collect the data and the procedure about how data was analyzed were presented as well. In the following chapter, the results of this data analysis will be presented.

Chapter IV Results

In this section, the results of the data analysis are described. They are presented in two major sections: the quantitative section that describes the results of the pretest and posttest, and the qualitative section that presents the results of the focus group and categories. Also, at the end of this chapter, the research questions will be responded to and presented besides the discussion of results.

4.1 Pretest results

The quantitative data was gathered from pre-test and a posttest to assess middle school students' listening to recognize the ending sounds of regular verbs in the simple past. The pre- test was applied to diagnose students' ability to recognize the endings "/t/", "/d/", and "/ed/" while the post test was applied after the strategy to identify any change or progress in the recognition of the endings of the regular verbs in the simple past when listening.

First, the pre-test scores are presented. The pre-test contained twenty items adapted from a YouTube video related to ending sounds of regular verbs in the past. In order to facilitate the interpretation of the results the items were grouped into three categories: eight regular verbs with "/t/" sounds, six regular verbs with "/d/" endings and six regular verbs with "/ed/" endings. The pre-test attempted to address the previous knowledge of the students in recognizing the ending sounds of the regular verbs in the simple past. Pre-test are visualized in the following table (Table 3).

Table 3. Pre-test Scores

Student	Sound /t/ (8 items)	Sound /d/ (6 items)	Sound /id/ (6 items)	Total (20)
Fernanda	5	3	1	9
Maria	0	3	0	3
Nohemi	4	2	2	8
Teresa	1	3	0	4
Rocio	3	2	1	6
Daniel	4	2	2	8
Guadalupe	3	4	1	8
Carlos	2	1	4	7
Rodrigo	4	0	0	4
José	6	2	2	10
Carmen	6	3	0	9
Ittai	4	0	4	8
Mayte	5	1	0	6
Octavio	2	6	2	10
Alejandra	0	3	1	4
Jesus	4	1	0	5
Julián	3	5	2	10
Andrea	3	2	1	6
Abigail	4	1	0	5
Andres	5	1	1	7
Ana	4	2	1	7
Luis	4	3	1	8
Alexis	3	0	2	5
Dana	4	3	0	7
Efrain	2	3	1	6

As it can be observed, the first column indicates the students' names, the second, third, and fourth columns indicate students' scores according to the maximum expected obtained points per section, and the fifth column indicates final pre-test scores where twenty corresponds to the highest score. Thus, the highest overall score obtained was 10 points, the lowest overall score was 3 and the average among the twenty participants was 6.8.

In the sound “/t/” item column a score of 6 was obtained as the maximum by Jose and Carmen, and 1 as the minimum by Alejandra. Then, in the third column, the sound “/d/” with six items, just one participant scored 6 over the rest who scored from 0 to 5. Finally, in the fourth column “/ed/” sound, two participants, Carlos and Ittai reached a score of 4 over 4 as the highest and 0 as the lowest score obtained by Teresa, Maria, Rodrigo, Carmen, Mayte, Jesus, Abigail, and Dana. It seems from the statistics, lower scores, that the sound “/ed/” section was the one in which participants struggled the most because unlike other sections where they performed better overall. The pre-test results show that just three participants scored 10 and two of them, 9, respectively.

4.1.2 Post test results

The post-test instrument follows the same design as the pre-test, twenty regular verbs in the simple past adapted from a YouTube video and divided in the same number of sections. The post-test scores are organized in five columns specifying the same sections content and expected maximum scores, 13 being the highest obtained between the overall ones, and 4 as the lowest. The post-test was applied to obtain students’ performance after listening, practicing and reviewing endings “/t/,” /d/,” ”/ed/” sounds of regular verbs in the simple past during classes as it traces their progress (Table 4).

Table 4. Post-test Scores

Student	Sound /t/ (8 items)	Sound /d/ (6 items)	Sound /ed/ (6 items)	Total (20)
Fernanda	3	2	1	6
Maria	3	3	4	10
Nohemi	6	2	5	13
Teresa	5	2	2	9
Rocio	2	4	1	7
Daniel	2	1	1	4
Guadalupe	3	4	2	9
Carlos	3	0	2	5
Rodrigo	5	3	2	10
José	6	5	1	12
Carmen	3	3	3	9
Ittai	5	3	0	8
Mayte	3	2	0	5
Octavio	5	1	4	10
Alejandra	2	3	3	8
Jesus	2	3	1	6
Julián	5	4	3	12
Andrea	3	1	1	5
Abigail	1	3	1	5
Andres	5	2	4	11
Ana	2	3	3	8
Luis	4	4	2	10
Alexis	3	1	0	4
Dana	2	2	2	6
Efrain	5	1	2	8

In the “/t/” sound item column, it can be observed a score of six as the maximum and one as the minimum. Then, in the second column, the sound “/d/” with six items with just one participant scoring five points over the rest who just scored below five. Finally, in the third column “/ed/” sound, Nohemi reached 5 over 6 as the highest and 0 as the lowest score obtained by Ittai, Mayte and Alexis. It seems from the statistics that the sound “/ed/” section was the one in which participants struggled the most because of the lower scores, unlike other sections where they performed

better overall. The participants found it challenging to distinguish the /ed/ sound because it was often confused with the /d/ sound. The similarity between these two sounds posed difficulties during the assessment. Finally, the post test results show that just three participants scored 13 and 12, overall but none of them reached a straight 20.

4.1.3 Comparison of pretest and posttest results

This section shows the comparison of both results of the pretest and the posttest (Table 5).

Table 5. Comparison of pretest and posttest results

Student	Sound /t/ (8 items)		Sound /d/ (6 items)		Sound /id/ (6 items)		Total (20)	
	Pre-test	Pos-test	Pre-test	Pos-test	Pre-test	Pos-test	Pre-test	Pos-test
Fernanda	5	3	3	2	1	1	9	6
Maria	0	3	3	3	0	4	3	10
Nohemi	4	6	2	2	2	5	8	13
Teresa	1	5	3	2	0	2	4	9
Rocio	3	2	2	4	1	1	6	7
Daniel	4	2	2	1	2	1	8	4
Guadalupe	3	3	4	4	1	2	8	9
Carlos	2	3	1	0	4	2	7	5
Rodrigo	4	5	0	3	0	2	4	10
José	6	6	2	5	2	1	10	12
Carmen	6	3	3	3	0	3	9	9
Ittai	4	5	0	3	4	0	8	8
Mayte	5	3	1	2	0	0	6	5
Octavio	2	5	6	1	2	4	10	10
Alejandra	0	2	3	3	1	3	4	8
Jesus	4	2	1	3	0	1	5	6
Julián	3	5	5	4	2	3	10	12
Andrea	3	3	2	1	1	1	6	5
Abigail	4	1	1	3	0	1	5	5
Andres	5	5	1	2	1	4	7	11
Ana	4	2	2	3	1	3	7	8
Luis	4	4	3	4	1	2	8	10
Alexis	3	3	0	1	2	0	5	4
Dana	4	2	3	2	0	2	7	6
Efrain	2	5	3	1	1	2	6	8

It can be observed that participants improved from 1 to 4 extra points higher in comparison to the pretest as in the case of Ittai from 4 to 5, Carlos from 2 to 3, Rodrigo from 4 to 5, Ittai from 4 to 5, Noemi from 4 to 6, Alejandra from 0 to 2, Julian from 3 to 5, Maria from 0 to 3, Octavio from 2 to 5, Efrain from 2 to 5, and Teresa from 1 to 5. Other participants obtained the same score as Guadalupe from 3 to 3, Jose from 6 to 6, Andrea from 3 to 3, Andres from 5 to 5, Luis from 4 to 4, Alexis from

3 to 3. Other participants presented a decline of one to three points as it is the case of Rocio from 3 to 2, Daniel from 4 to 2, Mayte from 5 to 3, Jesus from 4 to 2, Ana from 4 to 2, Dana from 4 to 2, Carmen from 6 to 3, Abigail from 4 to 1.

The sound “/d/” item column shows that only one participant showed a significant improvement with a maximum score of 5, over 6. Other participants improved with 2 or 3 extra points above in comparison to the pretest as in the case of Rocio from 2 to 4, Jesus from 1 to 3, Abigail from 1 to 3, Jose from 2 to 5, Ittai from 0 to 3, Rodrigo from 0 to 3. Also, six participants out of twenty-five scored 1 extra point above in comparison to the pretest and five out of twenty-five participants obtained the same score. It is important to highlight that other participants presented a decline of one, two or even three points as in the case of Fernanda from 3 to 2, Teresa from 3 to 2, Daniel from 2 to 1, Carlos from 1 to 0, Octavio from 6 to 1, Julian from 5 to 4, Andrea from 2 to 1, Dana from 3 to 2, and Efrain from 3 to 1. Finally, in the sound “/ed/” item column, participants with the lowest score in the pretest reached 2 and 4 over 5 respectively pointing out their performance improvement along the most challenging section. In addition, Nohemi was the only one who reached a score of 5 over 6 as the highest and Abigail, Andrea, Jesus, Jose, Daniel, Rocio and Fernanda as the lowest respectively.

The results of both tests show an improvement among participants in the most challenging section that is the sound “/ed/” where Ana and Alejandra, Andres and Noemi obtained 1 and 2 points in the pre-test, but they obtained 3, 4 and 5 points in the post test. In addition, there were participants who maintained their scores such as Fernanda, Rocio and Andrea. Finally, Ittai was the participant who decreased his score from 4 to 0 but she met the expectations in the other sections. The sound “/d/” section presented improvement even though no participants reached the maximum

score, 6. For example, Rocio, Rodrigo, Jose, Ittai, Mayte, Jesus. Abigail, Andres, Ana, Luis, Alexis obtained: 2, 0, 2, 0, 1, 1, 1, 1, 2, 3, 0 during the pre-test but reached: 4, 3, 5, 3, 2, 3, 3, 2, 3, 4, 1 in the posttest, respectively. Finally, Carlos's score went down from 1 to 0 over 6.

The sound "/t/" section showed improvement such as María, Nohemi, Teresa, Carlos, Rodrigo, Ittai, Octavio, Alejandra, Julian, Efrain who obtained: 0, 4, 1, 2, 4, 4, 2, 0, 3, 2 points initially, and in the post-test, they scored: 3, 6, 5, 3, 5, 5, 5, 2, 5, 5, respectively. Other participants kept their same score during both tests such as Guadalupe, 3, Jose, 6, Andrea, 3, Andres, 5, Luis, 4, and Alexis, 3. This section also presented a decrease since some participants reached fewer points compared to those obtained during the pre-test. For example, in the case of Fernanda, Rocio, Daniel, Carmen, Mayte, Jesus, Abigail, Ana, Dana with 5, 3, 4, 6, 5, 4, 4, 4, 4 points during the pretest in contrast with 3, 2, 2, 3, 3, 2, 1, 2, 2 obtained in the post-test.

Participants who reached the highest scores of the pretest are the ones who slightly increased their score in the posttest by 2 to 5 more points. For example, Nohemi, Jose, Julian, who scored 8, 10 and 10 in the pretest, in the posttest they scored 13, 12 and 12. Participants with the lowest scores improved just like the case of Maria who got 3 over 20 during the pretest, but 10 in the post-test especially showing improvement in sound "/id/", and sound "/t/" sections. Also, participants with the lowest performance improved by doubling their points just as the case of Alejandra who got 4 over 20 during the pretest, but 8 in the post test especially showing improvement in sound "/id/" and sound "/t/" sections. Rodrigo got 4 over 20 in the pretest, but 10 in the posttest showing improvement in sound "/d/", and sound "/id/" sections and Teresa who got 4 over 20 during the pretest, but 9 in the posttest showing improvement in sound "/t/" and sound "/id/" sections. Finally, Alexis instead

of improving he scored lower points in the sound “/d/”, and sound “/id/” sections but kept the same score in the sound “/t/” section and went down from 5 over 20 in the pretest to 4 in the posttest. Three participants: Nohemi, Jose and Julian obtained 13, 12 and 12 points over 20 respectively whereas the rest reached 4 to 10 points is an indicator of the effectiveness of listening to “/ed/” ending sounds of regular verbs in the simple past.

Participants did not meet the expectations in the posttest exercises that seemed to be the easiest and scored lower in the pretest. An explanation can be that listening exercises engaged participants, but they noticed the verbs seemed to be the same in both tests and may have been confused in distinguishing the “/ed/” sounds. Also, another explanation could be that participants may have been distracted by other classmates while answering the exercises and activities in the classroom.

4.2 Focus group results

The focus group aimed to collect participants’ perceptions regarding the recognition strategy to distinguish the /d/ /t/ /ed/ endings in the simple past. Four main categories were identified: difficulties, strategies, improvements and suggestions and they will be described below.

4.2.1 Difficulties

Students’ perceptions regarding their recognition ability for /ed/ ending sounds were perceived as a challenge, at first, because it was difficult to distinguish the sounds associated with /ed/ verb endings. They found it difficult to differentiate among the /d/, /t/, /ed/ sounds. For example, Roberto said: “I found it difficult because

all sounded the same" and as Raquel stated, "verb endings seemed almost equal and it was challenging to identify whether it was /t/ /d/ or /d/." Another difficulty was the lack of concentration since this emerged as a common issue. According to the participants, not concentrating on the listening exercises made it hard for them to identify the sounds in the exercises. For example, Leonardo said: "I found it challenging to pay attention to the sounds and it was quite stressful." In addition to this Alejandra stated, "I struggled to listen well, and I could not concentrate." As a consequence, the other difficulty they reported is that because of this lack of concentration they find it hard to remain silent during listening exercises. Not being quiet in class affected their listening ability and the task of focusing on the listening exercise to distinguish the sounds posed a significant difficulty. Just as Pedro says, "I must concentrate and block others because they are not quiet" or Raquel who reports "It was somewhat difficult, I needed my classmates to be quiet so I could hear clearly".

4.2.2 Strategies

Participants pointed out the importance of concentrating and listening carefully during the exercises such as Laura who said: "I need to pay attention and listen to the verbs and as Pedro stated, "I simply need to concentrate more". Both agreed that by being attentive participants could recognize subtle phonetic differences. In addition, participants applied a listening strategy to distinguish /t/ /d/ and /ed/ sounds in verb endings. For example, Pedro who also expressed that "I pay attention to the final /ed/ sound" or Diego who reported "I listen carefully to the verbs three times in order to understand which /ed/ ending is correct." Undeniably, feedback, after the listening exercises, played an important role in helping participants to gain insight into

those weak areas where they needed improvement as Alejandra said “I found it challenging because I felt confused while listening and this frustrated me a bit. However, I managed to cope with it” or Pedro who stated that “It was difficult because I could not hear well, and I could not concentrate”. Participants were told during feedback to listen to the audio multiple times as repetition can help them to become familiar with the sounds and improve their concentration. In addition, Andres stated “It was difficult for me because I did not understand what was said”. To improve, it was also suggested to continue practicing and try to focus on the endings of regular verbs rather than understanding every single word, just as Raquel expressed “I focused on listening attentively to understand what they are saying.” This shows that participants in the study not only recognize the importance of feedback but also appreciate discussing their mistakes after completing the listening exercises. By doing so, participants had the opportunity to learn correct pronunciation and gained a more comprehensive understanding of verb endings and improved their recognition of /ed/ sounds.

4.2.3 Improvements

Participants expressed they perceived improvements in their ability to recognize verb endings. For example, Roberto said: “I improved my ability to differentiate between the /t/ and /d/ sounds, which initially seemed quite similar” and as Alejandra mentioned “Listening attentively made me identify the /t/ and /d/ sounds.” Participants refined their listening skill and gained confidence in identifying /ed/ sounds correctly. To address this the listening material designed was applied into the classes in order to provide students with ample practice during the lessons. Regular practice enhanced their ability to distinguish more effectively among verb

endings as this is expressed by Roberto “I required practice to distinguish the /d/ sound” and Alejandra who says: “My improvement came gradually through consistent practice with the exercises.” Improvement was attributed mostly to consistent practice and actively engaging in listening exercises and applying their recognition abilities more consciously.

4.2.4 Suggestions

Participants provided valuable insights for improving verb ending recognition. They emphasized the need to minimize distractions during the exercises by concentrating on verb ending discrimination just like Roberto stated, “I find it helpful to focus and ignore any distractions.” or Raquel who said “During /ed/ sound practice, it is important for our classmates to remain quiet”. In addition, regular practice through listening exercises and audio materials was highly recommended as it is expressed by Laura: “I believe consistent practice is essential to avoid forgetfulness” to what Andres added: “I require additional practice”. Both participants emphasize the importance of constant practice and exposure to these exercises as they also report willingness to continue to reinforce their recognition ability for listening. Furthermore, participants pointed out the significance of paying attention to enhance recognition of ending sounds. According to Roberto “Attentive listening is crucial to recognize the /ed/ sounds” to which María also adds: “I emphasize to pay attention during exercises”. Finally, participants expressed a desire to practice the pronunciation of “ed” sounds. For example, Diego said: “we should practice pronunciation of the verbs to learn them” and as Leonardo also stated: “Although it can be stressful, we can still pronounce the verbs.” This shows that participants suggested practicing verb pronunciation besides the bare recognition of the /ed/ sound endings.

4.3 Research Questions' answers

This section aims to respond to the three research questions guiding this study.

The recognition strategy facilitated second grade middle school students to recognize the /d/ /t / /ed/ endings of the simple past in listening.

Yes. The use of listening material, focused on the listening recognition strategy, improved participants' learning outcomes and helped them to better identify the “/d/” “/t/” and “/ed/” sounds during listening exercises. It is important to highlight those participants concentrated and listened carefully to the exercises and by being attentive they showed a better performance in assessments and exercises.

Statistically speaking, in test scores, there was visible improvement in participants' performance who applied the recognition strategy. Additionally, second middle school students indicated that they improved their recognition of /ed/ sounds thanks to the constant practice and listening strategy they learned. These findings show that listening attentively enhanced participants' listening recognition and that regular practice with listening exercises reinforced their ability to distinguish verb endings more effectively which made learning engaging and meaningful.

The effectiveness of the implementation of the recognition strategy in improving middle school students' ability to recognize the /d/ /t / /ed/ endings of the simple past in listening.

Yes. Effectiveness was present regarding the implementation of the recognition strategy to identify the /d/, /t /, /ed/ verb endings in listening exercises. The designed material played a major role as participants showed a better performance in assessments. In addition, participants showed improvement in the sound /ed/ which was the most challenging verb ending. For example, statistical analysis revealed that the overall average considering three sounds in the pre-test

was 6.8 compared to 8 in the post test with a variation of 1.2. This shows an increase in students' ability to identify the sound / t /, /d/ and /ed/ sounds. Additionally, participants reported that they gradually improved through consistent practice and feedback by applying their recognition abilities more consciously during exercises. These findings show that the recognition strategy refined participants' listening skills and led to a more effective learning experience.

The phonetic pattern identification facilitated second grade middle school students to recognize the /d/, /t /, /ed/ endings of the simple past in listening.

Yes. The phonetic pattern identification facilitated participants' recognition of /d/, /t/, /ed/ ending sound during listening activities. By listening attentively, participants became more sensitive to subtle variations in the pronunciation of such sound endings. Practicing with these variations, participants gradually noticed differences in the sounds and showed improvement and progress when applying their recognition skills which translated into better performance during assessments. Regarding specific sound statistics in both tests, for example, it was revealed that in the pretest the /t/ sound was identified up to 3.4%, while in the posttest it was 3.52%. In addition, in the pretest the /d/ sound, the average was 2.24%, while in the posttest it was 2.48%. As for the /ed/ sound, in the pretest the average was 1.6% while in the posttest it was 2%. Overall, the numerical results show improvement which is also perceived by the participants who indicated that they could recognize the subtle phonetic differences, and this helped them improve their recognition of sounds when working with the listening exercises during class and assessments. These results suggest that the implementation of the recognition strategy showed effectiveness in recognizing the phonetic patterns of the ending sounds of regular verbs in the simple past during the English class.

4.3 Discussion of results

The recognition strategy used in class significantly enhanced student's listening skills, leading to improving comprehension of spoken language. The implementation of the strategy proved beneficial for students because they focused on specific ending sounds during listening exercises. These listening exercises facilitated pattern identification which played a relevant role in helping students recognize more easily the ending sounds during listening tasks. This practice enabled students to enhance their awareness regarding the strategy they had to apply which led to identifying these sounds at more ease by demonstrating their improved listening comprehension skills.

The listening materials significantly enhanced participants' learning outcomes which was visible in a better performance during assessments. Regular practice undeniably helped participants distinguish verb endings more effectively along with the materials. Participants also showed improvement with challenging sounds which shows that attentive listening played a huge role in sensitizing participants to subtle variations in pronunciation. Practicing with these variations allowed participants to gradually improve their recognition skills and understand that pronunciation nuances can be tackled with listening practice in benefit to developing phonological awareness.

Improved performance in assessments indicate that students were able to transfer their recognition skills to practical listening tasks thanks to consistent exposure to reinforce phonetic recognition and support overall language proficiency. It needs to be highlighted the importance of implementing listening strategies to improve listening comprehension and phonological awareness. Teaching appropriate strategies not only may help students to identify specific aspects of the spoken

language but also contribute to their overall language proficiency and their impact on language learning.

4.4 Summary

Chapter four presented the quantitative and qualitative results from the pre-tests and post-test scores, and the focus group. Research questions were responded to and explained as well as the discussion of the obtained results was also presented. In chapter five, the conclusions, key findings, limitations, further research and a final reflection will be described.

Chapter V Conclusions

Introduction

This chapter addresses several key areas: firstly, it provides the research contributions and potential impact on different contexts, secondly, it discusses the limitations encountered that may have affected the achievement of the research objectives. Thirdly, it offers suggestions for further research by highlighting possible paths that could lead to different outcomes. Following a reflection in which the researcher expresses her growth during this study emphasizing how it enhanced her perception of the topic and participants.

5.1 Research Contributions

In this study, middle school learners demonstrated they can recognize the endings of regular verbs in the past tense which provides valuable insights for future EFL teachers and researchers. For example, by recognizing the specific difficulties students encounter with past tense verb endings allows teachers to adjust their instruction more effectively. In addition, teachers can create engaging activities that focus on these verb endings and enhance students' listening comprehension. Besides, teachers can offer constructive feedback on shared resources by sharing audio materials, worksheets and suggest improvements and adaptations to better suit different classroom contexts and students' needs.

Besides, middle school learners may benefit from this study by searching for extra exposure to various listening materials beyond the classroom. Early exposure to the sounds can significantly enhance their speaking skill. Practicing in class has allowed them to develop strategies to enhance their listening skills which are crucial

for their academic future for university admission and graduation, and for employment opportunities where English proficiency is required for success. Listening recognition underscores the importance of demonstrating that the earlier students become familiar and develop phonemic awareness this can also lead to better language proficiency.

This study is relevant for EFL institutions as it emphasizes the need to enhance access to high quality audio equipment and encourage language learning initiatives such as organizing language clubs to provide opportunities for language practice and listening skills improvement which may contribute to a more effective and engaging learning environment.

5.2 Limitations of the study

In the fulfillment of this research there were some limitations. One significant limitation was the student's limited English proficiency. Most students have not received formal English instruction until they began secondary school which made listening activities particularly challenging for them. Another significant limitation was the lack of resources, for instance, the absence of essential tools such as internet access, textbooks and other listening practice materials posed a challenge. Additionally, classrooms lacked audio equipment and facilities like a language laboratory which are crucial for developing listening skills. These resource constraints hindered the effective implementation of listening activities.

A third limitation was the challenge of working with a large class. Larger classes can be noisier making it difficult for students to concentrate on listening activities. Ensuring that all the students can hear the audios and feel involved in a large group was also challenging. Managing noise levels and maintaining students'

attention becomes a significant difficulty to carry out this study. A fourth limitation of this study was the limited time available to apply the recognition strategy with the class. The strategy could only be implemented over a short period which did not allow for extensive practice for participants to obtain thicker results. This time constraint affected student's ability to identify ed sounds and benefit from the strategy.

5.3 Suggestions for further research

This research aimed to enhance the recognition of ending sounds of regular verbs among middle school students of second grade. The findings can serve as foundation for further research on listening comprehension strategies, for example, integrating online games into classroom activities to provide students with additional practice opportunities in a playful and motivating environment. In addition, it is recommended that future researchers analyze different listening materials such as the utilization of online resources that provide interactive exercises and practice activities regarding the recognition of /ed/ sounds of regular verbs endings and observe how students develop their listening comprehension skills. This will provide insights into how students apply the listening strategies they are learning.

Additionally, employing different methodologies may give different results by offering a broader understanding of effective listening comprehension strategies. Besides, if the implementation period could be extended in a second edition this study could provide more information about students' ability and the benefits from the recognition strategy. Future research should consider that an extended period of time may allow students to have more practice and explore the long-term effects of the recognition strategy to provide information about its impact on students' listening skill.

Furthermore, lack of resources hindered the effectiveness of the implemented strategy. Addressing this limitation, schools should prioritize allocating funds to acquire supplementary materials, ensure internet access and equipment for audio.

5.4 Reflection

This research experience has been incredibly enriching. As an EFL teacher, I faced similar challenges just as many educators who are eager to improve listening skills but may not know where to start. However, I firmly believe that there is always something new worth learning every day. As a researcher, I learned that teachers often focus on the outcome of listening activities rather than the actual process of listening. This insight, along with other aspects of listening comprehension, has been invaluable. During the practice with the proposed materials, I diligently followed the lesson plan designed for this study and I observed how my participants responded, noting their efforts to identify the /d/, /t/ and /ed/ sounds and their struggle to concentrate during the listening activities. Despite these challenges, my students made commendable efforts to try new things and persist in their learning.

This experience motivated me to continue working by implementing listening activities, even though the process may be challenging. I have also learned that providing opportunities for learners to acquire strategies for improving their listening skills is part of our job as EFL teachers. As a researcher and student of this research seminar, I learned to organize the writing and convey ideas effectively and use academic vocabulary appropriate for the study. Feedback has played a crucial role in guiding my writing and improving my coherence and interpretation of information based on evidence. Moreover, my knowledge regarding my research topic and language proficiency has significantly increased.

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Appendix 1. A PRE-TEST & POST TEST

Nombre del alumno: _____ Fecha: _____

Grado: _____ Edad: _____ Número de
aciertos: _____

Instrucción: Escucha atentamente la lista de verbos y subraya el sonido final que consideres correcto. Escucharás la lista de verbos dos veces.

- | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Asked | | B. /t/ |
| A. /t/ | 8. Washed | C. /id/ |
| B. /d/ | A. /d/ | |
| C. /id/ | B. /t/ | 15. Used |
| 2. Appeared | C. /id/ | A. /t/ |
| A. /id/ | | B. /id/ |
| B. /d/ | 9. Offered | C. /d/ |
| C. /t/ | A. /t/ | |
| 3. Started | B. /id/ | 16. Granted |
| A. /id/ | C. /d/ | A. /d/ |
| B. /t/ | | B. /id/ |
| C. /d/ | 10. Landed | C. /t/ |
| 4. Ended | A. /d/ | |
| A. /t/ | B. /id/ | 17. Mixed |
| B. /d/ | C. /t/ | A. /t/ |
| C. /id/ | | B. /id/ |
| 5. Fixed | 11. Laughed | C. /d/ |
| A. /ld/ | A. /t/ | |
| B. /t/ | B. /id/ | 18. Danced |
| C. /d/ | C. /d/ | A. /d/ |
| 6. Talked | | B. /t/ |
| A. /d/ | 12. Enjoyed | C. /id/ |
| B. /t/ | A. /ld/ | |
| C. /id/ | B. /d/ | 19. Amazed |
| 7. Stayed | C. /t/ | A. /d/ |
| A. /t/ | | B. /id/ |
| B. /id/ | 13. Helped | C. /t/ |
| C. /d/ | A. /d/ | |
| | B. /id/ | 20. Needed |
| | C. /t/ | A. /id/ |
| | 14. Wanted | B. /d/ |
| | A. /d/ | C. /t/ |

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L6yIhh6iKE>

Appendix 2. LESSON PLANS

Lesson plan 1: Identifying -ed Endings.

Learning objective

Students will be able to recognize “/t/” “/d/” “/id/” sounds in regular verbs past simple in a video.

Learning Sequence:

1. Introduction: (10 minutes) Teacher introduces the concept of identifying /t/ /d/ /id/ sounds in regular verbs in past simple.
2. Listening Activity:(10 minutes) Teacher plays a video with “/t/” “/d/” “/id/” sounds.
3. Practice activity. (15) The students receive a hand out of an online listening exercise and the teacher plays the audio of verbs with -ed endings. Students listen carefully to the verbs and identify the -ed sound and complete a table.
4. Wrap up:15) Teacher reviews the answers and discusses the results with the students.

Lesson plan 2: Identifying -ed Endings

Learning objective

Students will be able to recognize “/t/” “/d/” “/id/” sounds by listening to a story in the simple past.

Learning Sequence:

1. Introduction: (10 minutes) Teacher begins the lesson by reviewing -ed endings of regular verbs in the past simple.
2. Listening Activity:(10 minutes) Teacher plays a video with “/t/” “/d/” “/id/” sounds.
3. Practice activity (15) minutes) Students receive a hand out about a story in the simple past and students listen to the story and color the correct /t/ /d/ /id/ sounds in each verb.
4. Wrap up:(15) Teacher reviews the answers and discusses the results with the students.

Lesson plan 3: Identifying -ed Endings

Learning objective

Students will be able to recognize “/t/” “/d/” “/id/” sounds by listening to sentences in the past simple.

Learning Sequence:

1. Introduction: (10 minutes) Teacher begins the lesson by reviewing -ed endings of regular verbs in the past simple.
2. Listening Activity:(10 minutes) Teacher plays a video with “/t/” “/d/” “/id/” sounds.
3. Practice activity (15) minutes) Students receive a handout with sentences in past simple and listen to them. Students circle the correct “/t/” “/d/” “/id/” sounds in each verb.
4. Wrap up:(15) Teacher reviews the answers and discusses the results with the students.

Lesson plan 4: Identifying -ed Endings

Learning objective

Students will be able to recognize “/t/” “/d/” “/id/” sounds by listening to sentences in simple past.

Learning Sequence:

1. Introduction (10 minutes) Teacher begins by giving examples of regular verbs in past tense and reviewing -ed endings.
2. Listening Activity:(10 minutes) Teacher plays a video with “/t/” “/d/” “/id/” sounds.
3. Practice activity (15) minutes) Students receive a handout with sentences in past simple and listen to them. Students underline the correct /t/ /d/ /id/ sounds in each verb.
4. Wrap up:(15) Teacher reviews the answers and discusses the results with the students.