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RESEARCH PROJECT:

TEACHING STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE THE LEARNING OF THE LISTENING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH CLASSES FOR STUDENTS IN THEIR THIRD EDUCATIONAL ACADEMIC YEAR AT UNIDAD EDUCATIVA BILINGÜE STEINER, ACADEMIC YEAR 2013-2014.

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TEACHING STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE THE LEARNING OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION IN ENGLISH CLASSES FOR STUDENTS IN THE THIRD YEAR OF BASIC EDUCATION AT UNIDAD EDUCATIVA BILINGUE STEINER, ACADEMIC YEAR 2013 - 2014

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ABSTRACT

This research project studies the different problems the student faces when he is practicing or working with Listening – Comprehension activities in the English class due to the lack of training in this skill. This kind of issue is connected to the weak teaching strategies that the teacher has used in order to develop listening – comprehension activities in English. This problem also deals with the selection of wrong material or the lack of appropriate resources in the English class in order to provide the student with the correct and most adequate strategies to develop listening – comprehension activities in a natural and meaningful way.

At the same time this research project presents the most adequate teaching strategies in order to enhance listening- comprehension problems based on the Constructivism theory with the purpose of developing and work successful results in the students. It is advisable to create and implement interesting and significant activities that can explore and analyze how the metacognitive strategies with worthwhile listening activities can help the students to have a better development in this important skill in real life situations, so that the student will be able to act naturally at the moment he has to decode spoken messages.

This research paper also suggests the teachers who are facing problems when teaching listening to follow the different kind of strategies that are mentioned in this document in order to improve the students’ listening skill.
It is important to take into consideration that also the education in English provided for the Ecuadorian teacher has to improve. This can be possible if the teacher collaborates and updates himself using technological resources that help a lot. Following these suggestions his students will be able to overcome this kind of situations.

**Keywords:** Strategies, learning, listening comprehension, English, metacognitive, teaching strategies, convey, constructivism, constructivist teacher, constructivist classroom, knowledge, sounds, decode.
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1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents background and Statement of the problem, Objectives: broad and specific, Significance, Justification or Rationale of the Study, Scope and Delimitations of the Study, Research Questions, Hypothesis and Indicators and Variables.

1.1. Background and Statement of the Problem

During the learning process of a foreign language, students present different reactions. That is why teachers should consider the needs of all the students that are involved in the acquisition of a new language; in this case English; in order to provide them a meaningful and significant knowledge.

Even though there are many bilingual schools that are applying different kind of strategies in order to make their students learn English in an easy and practical way, the acquisition of a foreign language includes the development of four skills that are listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is said that listening comprehension is one of the most important skills while students are learning a foreign language because it allows the students to communicate and interact in an effective way.

It should be taken into consideration that most of the time we are decoding spoken messages. Among these aspects, listening is an important capability of social interaction, and it has been found that people receive new messages more efficiently via listening than reading (Luo, 2008). We always have a purpose for listening. We listen to the radio every morning in order to know what is happening in our country or the world, sometimes we listen to...
songs according to our mood or just for pleasure. In the past the material used for listening activities was based on post listening questions provided by the teachers. That is why in some cases this technique did not work properly, because the students did not know why they were listening. The teachers should take into consideration that they can guide and help the students listen more effectively if they tell them the purposes for listening.

L2 researchers consider *listening* as an ability that could be developed without assistance, and a deep investigation into the history of language learning reveals this lack of attention to the listening skill (Chiang & Dunkel, 1992; Morley, 1984; Moyer, 2006; Mendelsohn, 1998; Schmidt-Rinehart, 1994). This means that listening is a skill that the learners can develop by themselves in activities such as listening to their favorite music or maybe watching a movie without subtitles.

L2 research findings indicates that listening is the most important skill for language learning because it is the most widely used language skill in normal daily life (Morley 2001; Rost 2001), and it develops faster than the three other language skills, which in turn suggests that it can facilitate the emergence of the other language skills (Oxford, 1990). The development of the listening skill allows the other skills appear without much trouble during the students’ learning process. That is why is suitable to make the students be able to practice listening comprehension activities since they are in the first stages of education.

In the 1970s, more attention was paid to listening comprehension, and the status of listening changed from being incidental and peripheral to a status of utmost importance. The importance of listening in language learning was brought into attention when Gary (1975) stated that focusing on listening comprehension, especially in the early phases of second language learning/teaching, creates four different types of advantages:

- cognitive
- efficiency
- utility
- affective
The cognitive advantage of an initial exposure to listening gives the students a more natural way to learn the language. Listening should be stressed before speaking because recognition knowledge is required to process and decode the aural input, whereas retrieval knowledge is required to encode and generate speech. Concentrating on speaking in initial stages leaves little room for listening, and hence little room for comprehension. Let’s take the case of children who are learning a new language in the environment where that language is spoken. The input they receive is in that new language and after about six months of being exposed to it they can start saying the first words. Analyzing this case it is noticeable that the development of that stage was only focused on the listening prompts they received from people around them.

The second advantage is efficiency. Language learning is more efficient when the learners are not immediately required to speak and are only required to listen to the language. This early emphasis on listening is efficient because learners are exposed only to good models of the language. That means the teachers and realistic recordings. It is important for the students to be exposed to an environment where first they have to listen and receive the spoken messages by their teachers who are the closest people to them.

The third advantage is utility, or the usefulness of the receptive skill. According to research in the fields of communication, while communicating, adults spend 40-50% of communication time listening, 25-30 % speaking, 9 % writing, and about 11-16 % reading (Rivers in Gilman and Moody, 1984). It follows then that learners will make greater use of comprehension skills: listening and reading. According to this information it is noticeable that the skill that is most used is the listening one because it contributes to the students' comprehension development more than any other skill.

The last advantage of emphasizing listening from the beginning is the affective advantage. The students feel embarrassed and sometimes discouraged when they are forced to make early oral production. When this pressure does not exist, the students can relax and stay focused on
developing the listening skill, which helps the emergence of the other language skills. That means that when the students feel comfortable and at ease to produce the language freely the final result will be what the teachers expect.

The problem concerned with the difficulties that students of third year of basic education at “Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Steiner” presented in listening comprehension activities in English classes, influenced when the teachers practiced dictation or a simple conversation. The students could not understand because they did not decode the sounds of the foreign language.

At the same time it influenced in the academic motivational aspect too, because the grades were low and the students felt scared to participate in classes because they were embarrassed to pronounce a word in a wrong way. It allowed the students to experience a mental block that did not permit them to interact with their partners or with the teachers in class. This experience takes into consideration that the students show sometimes no attention or interest to the listening skill, as a consequence of traditional English classes which have been applied in a mechanical way.

It is important to mention, that the teachers do not take enough time to prepare their lesson plans. They should open their mind to change this reality with the purpose of encouraging the English knowledge in students at these early levels.

The purpose of this study is to find what would be the best teaching strategies for the teachers to optimize the learning of the listening comprehension of students in third year of basic education at “Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Steiner” in the English language.
1.2. Objectives: Broad and Specific.

**BROAD OBJECTIVE**

Design a set of appropriate teaching strategies to improve the listening comprehension of students in third year of basic education at Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Steiner.

**SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

Identify what difficulties the students show in listening comprehension during the English classes.

Determine the best teaching strategies that will help students reduce the problems with activities in listening comprehension in English classes.

Apply these strategies in the classroom to see how feasible are according to the students’ needs at this level.

1.3. Significance, Justification or Rationale of the Study

The realization of this project is of great importance because it will help the foreign language teachers; in this case English; to find the best teaching strategies to optimize the listening comprehension skill in the student, since it is a very common problem faced not only by the teacher of this private school, but also by other teachers who work teaching the English language to students whose mother tongue is Spanish.

Taking into consideration that in Ecuador students do not use English at a hundred percent in their daily life, this project raises a possible solution to guide the teachers to help their students when they show problems in listening comprehension, through the implementation in the classroom of teaching strategies that will generate the interest of the students to participate and get motivated during the English classes.
In addition, the proposal is very feasible because it would provide the institution the appropriate teaching strategies to improve the problem in listening comprehension, which will be directly used by the classroom teachers without hiring extra help that would generate expenses to the institution.

The student of this institution will reach an optimum level of knowledge in the English language which will be a benefit for the prestige of the institution, by providing an education of quality in the target language applying the indicated teaching strategies to strengthen the language basis for the students of this age.

This project has the purpose of finding out and applying the most adequate and helpful teaching strategies that will contribute to enhance the learning of listening comprehension in English classes for the student of third year of basic education at “Unidad Educativa Bilingue Steiner”.

1.4. Scope and Limitations of the Study.

This research project is conducted at “Unidad Educativa Bilingue Steiner” located in Guayaquil, and developed with the students in their third educational academic year with a number of 24 students in the academic year 2013-2014 it counts also with the approval of this institution that authorized us to perform the project giving us the necessary facilities.
Chapter II

2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

According to Dakin and Howatt (1974) listening is “the ability to identify and understand what another person says. This is a process which involves the speaker’s pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and comprehension of meaning. A capable listener can do these four things at the same time because when somebody listens he decodes these aspects altogether.”

Ronald and Roskelly (1985) say “listening is an active process requiring the same skills as predicting, hypothesizing, checking, revising and generalization that writing and reading demand.”

This project focuses on listening simply because it is the most neglected of the language arts (reading, spelling and writing). Most of the time the teachers say “my students do not listen well” but sometimes this problem appears because the instructions are not accurate, that is why teachers cannot find good listeners in the classroom. During the process of this project we asked ourselves what is a listener? And we reached to the conclusion that listener is the person who listens to sounds, but what makes a good listener? We can say that teaching strategies applied by the teacher in the classroom can guide the students to follow the instructions step by step in order to develop himself as a good listener.

Most of the teachers think that the students cannot write well because they do not follow what is required. Perhaps it happens because the students have not learned to listen. The problem is related in some way to the lack of attention to the activities of listening comprehension in English, which is very understandable as the students between 7 and 8 years tend to get distracted easily, and this causes the difficulties presented in listening comprehension. For this reason, the project that is being carried out will have as a purpose to
design and describe different teaching strategies through which the students will be encouraged to develop listening comprehension habits doing it in a natural way, using English as close as his mother tongue.

2.2. Theoretical review

2.2.1. Teaching strategies

The concept that is found in dictionaries or books for the word *strategy* is that it is a plan intended to reach a specific purpose.

Related to education it is said that a strategy is the technique or procedure that the teachers develop or use to permit the students to access to the information given in an easier way. Besides, the strategy is used to guide the student to build his own understanding or knowledge.

Teaching strategies are steps or procedures to be followed by the teachers that make the students acquire some meaningful learning with the purpose of solving problems. It refers to the technique that is used by the instructor to ensure that the course work has been well understood, taking into consideration that each subject requires different strategies, because some subjects are more practical than others like listening comprehension in which the students have to be alert to the listening messages they are receiving in order to decode them in an accurate way.

It is important to mention that the teaching strategies we apply in the classroom will help the students to develop their critical thinking, and in this way the class will be more effective because the students will become an active learners or the main character of the class. The teachers should be conscious that the teaching strategies are tools that should not be absent from the classroom, as the old adage says “if all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail.” So we can compare it with the students and the teaching strategies because the students will always need the help from their teachers.
as a guide, as the main source of knowledge they have, but in order to make this possible teachers should have a variety of strategies for each pupil.

For the development of this project it has been necessary to investigate in different web pages related to the topic. Even though many listening comprehension procedures have been implemented, not all of them have had the expected results, because nowadays there are many students with difficulties in listening comprehension. Consequently, it is believed that the design of the teaching strategies for listening comprehension will offer a different type of teaching for the learning skills, becoming a great help for the students and the teachers in their daily classes.

According to the information that has been researched, Medina (2007) proposes guided teaching strategies for listening comprehension in order to get the students' attention in this type of procedures which are:

a. The language must be spoken at normal speed using a logical pausing.

b. Before you ask the students to provide specific information about what they are listening to, it is necessary to establish the place in which the communication is developed.

c. Tell the students, before listening to the document, the activity that is expected to be carried out. For example, select a drawing, order a series of statements, answer questions, get the general idea of what you hear, remove specific information.

d. Have the students listen to at least three times the prepared material.

2.2.2. The need for effective listening strategies

In second language most beginners cannot comprehend when the native speaker starts to communicate. Most of the time even in Spanish, our native language is complicated to understand everything that a speaker says. For
that reason the learners start to predict what is coming later in order to construct the information in their minds. In fact, Ur (1984) insists "They have a kind of compulsion to understand everything, even things that are totally unimportant, and are disturbed, discouraged and even completely thrown off balance if they come across an incomprehensible word".

Sometimes the environment takes an important role. That is why it is recommended the listening session to be developed in a quiet place. If the learners really pay attention when they are having listening comprehension activities they will become more effective listeners. Mendelsohn (1994) says, “Some strategies, such as guessing and inferencing should be taught to the learners to compensate the lack of understanding.” It means that when the teachers notice that their students do not understand what is being presented in the listening activity, the students will take hand of these tools in order to get what is required. At the same time when the teachers proceed in this way their students will feel motivated to participate despite of the mistakes they may have made.

2.2.3. Classification of strategies

Researchers classify listening strategies in different ways. H. D. Brown (2001) made an important emphasis that teaching effective listening strategies improve the chance of students in becoming good learners, and presented the following eight strategies: looking for key words, looking for nonverbal cues to meaning, predicting a speakers' purpose by the context of the spoken discourse, associating information with one's existing cognitive structure (activating, background information) guessing meanings, seeking clarification, listening for the general gist, and various test-taking strategies for listening comprehension.

Nunan (2001) urges teachers to make the learners conscious of what they are doing and of the process of learning introducing the following eight strategies:
• Listening for gist
• listening for purpose
• Listening for main idea
• listening for inference
• Listening for specific information
• Listening for phonetic distinctions
• Listening for tone/pitch to identify speaker’s attitude
• Listening for stress.

Teachers should analyze each listening activity they are going to present in the classroom because not all of them have the same purpose and of course the students should know what is expected in each listening activity.

Mendelsohn (1995) divides the listening strategies into seven major categories to determine setting, strategies to determine topic; for example, when coming in the middle of a presentation; strategies to make predictions and inferences, strategies to determine the main idea of a passage. When students are having listening activities teachers should convey the accurate tools the students need to develop the activities without problem, that is why teachers want students to focus their attention on specific information such as the main idea, and also to give the students tools to predict while listening.

Since Listening leads to earlier achievement and success, the students are more motivated to continue learning. Listening was no longer taken for granted in second language learning after the emergence of communicative and proficiency-oriented approaches to language teaching, which has emphasized listening in all levels of language learning. Several Foreign Language teaching methods stressed the importance of listening back in 1960s.
Listening Comprehension Strategies

The interest in listening comprehension strategies has evolved in a number of studies (O’Malley, Chamot, & Walker, 1987; Oxford & Crookall, 1989; Wenden & Robin, 1987). Oxford Dictionary (1990) defines language learning strategies as the techniques that learners utilize to improve the use of the target language information.

It is important to consider that while students are learning or acquiring the target language, are developing a series of techniques or strategies that are put into practice in the moment the students are processing new information. In other words, the students start looking for the best strategies in order to learn in a meaningful way.

O’Malley and Chamot (1989) categorize strategies into two groups: cognitive and metacognitive. However, a third category, socio-affective, was added to describe the learning that takes place when the students interact with their classmates, ask the teachers for clarification, or use specific techniques to lower their anxiety.

During the development of socio-affective strategies, the students are able to express their emotions or feelings in a natural way while the learning process is developing. That is why it is important to encourage our students to participate and interact with other partners. That means they will also be working on their self-esteem because the impact that their environment has on them is crucial for the acquisition of a foreign language.

Previous research has also revealed that the students’ proficiency is one of the main factors that determine the choice of a strategy (Conrad, 1985; O’Malley & Chamot, 1990; Rost & Ross, 1991). Also there were differences in the types of strategies skilled and less-skilled students used. They applied the Cognitive Strategies, Metacognitive Strategies, Socio and affective Strategies and Language Learning Strategy Research.
Believed it or not each student learns different types of strategies while learning a language. It is very important that the teachers control this part of the learning process. Each student has a different way of learning, some of them can be visual learners, and others can be auditory learners. For that reason in the case of auditory learning it is important to start motivating the students to discover by themselves which are the most adequate strategies they should apply in order to make learning a very meaningful process.

**Cognitive Strategies**

Cognitive strategies are problem-solving techniques that the students use to handle the learning tasks that facilitate the acquisition of knowledge or skill (Derry & Murphy, 1986). An article which “presents findings from research into listening strategies of ESL learners” offers the following definition:

Cognitive strategies are more directly related to a learning task and involve direct manipulation or transformation of the learning materials (Brown and Palincsar, 1982; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990). Language learners use cognitive strategies to help them process, store and recall new information (Goh, 1998, p. 124).

**Metacognitive Strategies**

Metacognitive strategies are management techniques employed by learners to have control over their learning through planning, monitoring, evaluating, and modifying (Rubin. 1987). For example, for metacognitive planning strategies, listeners would clarify the objectives of an anticipated listening activity and attend to particular aspects of the aural language input or situational details that facilitate the comprehension of aural input.

According to Oxford Dictionary (1990), the conscious use of metacognitive strategies helps learners get back their focus when they lose it. However, learners do not use metacognitive strategies very frequently despite the importance of self- monitoring and self-evaluation.
Socio and Affective Strategies

The last category of strategies is socio and affective, which includes the attempts to create and promote positive emotional reactions and attitudes towards language learning (Chamot & O'Malley, 1987).

Vandergrift (2003) defined socio-affective strategies as the techniques listeners employ to collaborate with others, to verify understanding, or to lower anxiety.

According to Gardner & MacIntyre (1992, 1993), the affective strategies used to control learning experiences are very important because the learning context and learners' social-psychological factors (i.e., how learners feel about the learning experience) are directly related.

Aneiro (1989) found a significant correlation between low anxiety and high listening performance, which suggests that using affective strategies could facilitate and enhance listening.

O'Malley & Chamot (1987) found that among the four strategies of management, cognitive strategies, social and affective strategies in listening comprehension influenced the learning context immediately. All these authors mention that teachers have to consider every single time they are performing their classes that the social and affective aspects take an important role in the listening comprehension process.

2.2.4 Different Approaches to the Listening Skill

Krashen and Terrell (1984) argue that the priority of listening in second language learning is the same as the priority of the listening only stage a child needs to acquire his/her first language. According to Chastain (1971), listening comprehension is the ability to understand native speech at normal speed in unstructured situations.
When the listening skill is mentioned, the students can be scared at first because they can feel that the message given to them is not clear enough to understand. The teachers should apply several listening comprehension strategies with the purpose of providing the students the possibility to make learning more meaningful and real for them in order to prepare the students for natural conversations and decodification of natives' speaking.

Morley (1972) defines listening comprehension as the ability not only to discriminate auditory grammar, but also to reauditorize, extract essential information, remember it, and relate it, everything that entails processing sound and construction of meaning. Listening – comprehension is related to several aspects, it i to say that it can be used to connect previous experiences with new ones whether they are referring to grammar, important information, sound or meaning.

Neisser (1976) views listening comprehension as a temporally constant process in which the listeners anticipate what will come next. Listeners can be considered as people who can guess what the speakers are thinking about, in order to be prepared in advanced for the things that will come.

Goss (1982) defines listening comprehension as a mental process in which the listeners attempt to construct a meaning out of the information received from the speakers.

Listening comprehension can be viewed in different ways, as when the students are able to create their own concept out of the information received from speakers around them.

Wipf (1984) defines listening as a complex mental process that entails receiving, interpreting and reacting to sounds being received from a sender, and finally retaining what was gathered and relating it to the immediate as well as the broader sociocultural context of the utterance.
According to Wipf listening is considered a mental process that it is focused on receiving, interpreting and at the same time of reacting to all the sounds the students receive from the speakers or senders. The purpose of this skill is to connect what the students already know with the context in which the activity is developed.

Listening Stages

There are three stages the teachers should follow while teaching listening comprehension activities.

The stages are the following:

a. Pre- listening stage
b. While listening stage
c. Post – listening stage

Pre- listening stage

In this stage the teachers direct or guide the students in the listening comprehension activity by using and applying teaching strategies like predicting and giving opinions about the activity they are listening to. While the students are on this stage the teachers have to encourage them to participate and avoid the fear of answering questions related to the activity.

While listening stage

This stage is connected to the pre- listening stage, meaning that while the students listen, they are motivated and engaged to pay attention for specific information that the teachers require. At this stage the students confirm their expectations which help them to develop acquire or reinforce the activity in the target language.
Post – listening stage

At this stage the teachers evaluate the students’ listening comprehension by applying what they learned in the previous stages. It is also the students’ opportunity to put in practice what they have learned even outside the classroom. During this stage the teachers can reflect and analyze if the strategies used were accurate or not for their students and for their own purposes.

Systematic presentation of listening for main ideas, listening for details, and listening and making inferences

Brown (1989) also mentions the importance of teaching listening in an effective way making the teachers focus their attention on three specific steps in order to present listening in a systematic way:

- listening for main ideas
- listening for details
- listening and making inferences.

Listening for main ideas consists on explaining the students that they have to listen in order to understand what the main idea of the activity is. That means that if the students are listening to a conversation in a restaurant the teachers will tell the students that they have to pay attention to the most important idea or thing of the conversation. After that, they should write some possible options on the board, so that the students will feel more confident to answer and the teacher will reach his goal.

The teachers have to keep in mind that listening for the main ideas means that the students should have a general idea of what is being said; in this case we can say that the details are less important.

Listening for details is another way to reinforce listening comprehension in the students. In this step teachers have to ask students specific
questions related to the listening and most of the time the answer can be an isolated word. Also it is important to mention that listening for details is an action that human beings do every day, meaning it will not be complicated for the student.

Listening and making inferences is another aspect that should be taken into consideration during the listening comprehension process, but before that, it is important to know that inference is the activity performed by the listeners in drawing conclusions that are not explicit in what is said. Therefore, it is important as good listeners, to pay attention to what is said between the lines to understand what is really meant. This is one activity that has to be practiced in every day conversation in the classroom, in order to help the students become effective listeners.

The teaching strategies to enhance listening skills should be applied in a natural way. When the students learn listening skills the teachers have to be focused on: practical and useful English, considering that listening is a demanding process. At the same time it has to be taken into consideration that the students have many advantages between seven and eight because they are like a sponge and their brain classifies and puts the information where it has to be placed. Researchers say that the human brain is programmed to give things the real sense since a very early age. Listening also paves the ways for reasoning activities.

It is important to have a variety of strategies when teaching listening. Using visual aids is a good idea, and videos are helpful, too. “One of the aims of teaching English to student is to instill in them the idea that language learning is a happy experience and videos create an attractive and enjoyable learning environment” Tomalin (1991:48). Listening is crucial for communication because they are both related. This is an important fact that the teachers should consider before they apply teaching strategies to develop listening skills in their students. These strategies are very important because it is by listening that the students learn to develop their language skills.
Learning to listen in English

The initial stages

Listening to a foreign language, in this case English, is hard work especially for young children. In the early stages, the students may spend much of their time listening to the teachers while playing simple games, singing songs, saying rhymes or listening to stories.

It is important to remember that listening is not a passive activity in which the teachers are always asking to students to simply listen and remember because it can make the students feel anxious, place a great strain on their memory and tend not to develop listening skills.

The teachers will be able to support the students to focus more effectively to specific points that have to be listened for. The teachers can do this by using activities that guide the students’ attention to specific parts of the spoken text. This might include the use of visual materials such as, pictures to match or follow a sequence.

1. Give the children confidence

It is not necessary that the students always understand every word, but it is important for them to have a general idea.

For example, when they are listening to a story, most of the time the students do not understand at first time, but teachers expect them to pick out key words. Later when it is repeated the students will be able to recall the exact sequence of the story. The gestures, tone of voice, and visual aids will help them to feel confident about what is important to concentrate on.

2. Explain why the children have to listen

It is important for the students to be clear about:
• Why they are listening
• What the main point or purpose of the activity is

This helps to build up learner’s confidence and reduce anxiety.

There are different kinds of listening purposes:

• To physically settle pupil:
  To calm the students when they are too boisterous, there will often be some form of mental engagement.

• To stir pupils:
  To stimulate or allow them to be physically more active if they seem bored or tired.

• To improve the general listening attitude:
  Listen for enjoyment, improve concentration or develop the memory.

• To develop aspects of language:
  Listen to improve pronunciation, stress, rhythm and intonation, as well as familiarity with new words and structures. Listen to learn songs and rhymes provides pronunciation practice, while listening to stories may provide practice in tenses or vocabulary connected with the topic.

• To interact with others:
  Activities which encourage the students to work with others require the students to negotiate meaning by listening and asking questions, checking meaning, and so on.

• To provide support for literacy:
  Older children can be encouraged to make connections between spoken and written English by picking out written words or statements which are part of a spoken message.
3. **Help the student develop specific strategies for listening**

Some important listening strategies are the following:

**Predicting**

Before the students listen to something it is useful to get them guess what they think they will be listening to. It is important to use pictures to encourage them to guess the topic. While they are in the middle of the listening, stop to ask them what they think might come next. It helps them to realize that their expectation matches the reality of what they hear, which helps to keep motivation high.

**Working out the meaning from context**

Although the teachers explain new words before the students listen to something, they also need to encourage them to use pictures in order that the message itself works out the meaning of unfamiliar words.

**Recognizing discourse patterns and markers**

Words such as *first, then, finally, but and so* give important signals about what is coming next in a spoken text. Sequence markers are especially important in stories and instruction.

4. **Set a specific listening task**

In order to make listening an active learning focused process, teachers need to develop a repertoire when listening to a series of actions in a narrative. For example, a listening task which asks the students to rearrange a series of pictures, or put numbers by pictures describing different actions, support the children’s understanding very well. That is why it is advisable to use different types of language according to the activity.
5. Organize listening

The development of listening skills does not have to rely on the availability of a cassette or pre-recorded material. Most listening is in fact based on teachers talk. However, if you do have a cassette of published listening materials, this is useful to provide a good model of spoken listening. It may be useful to introduce variety by setting up a listening corner in one part of the classroom for one or two groups to use at a time, while the rest of the class does something else. In that way when the teachers have to develop the listening class the students will feel confident doing this kind of activity.

The importance of active listening in the classroom

Active or empathic listening stresses putting oneself in another's place. The goal is to effectively understand and accurately interpret another's meanings.

Active listening is a way of listening and responding to another person that improves mutual understanding. Often when people talk to each other, they do not listen attentively. They are often distracted, half listening, half thinking about something else. When people are engaged in a conflict, they are often busy formulating a response to what is being said. They assume that they have heard what other person is saying many times before, so rather than paying attention; they focus on how they can respond to win the argument.

Active listening is a structured form of listening and responding that focuses the attention on the speakers. The listener must take care to pay attention to the speakers fully, and then repeat, in the listener’s own words, what he or she thinks the speakers have said. The listener does not have to agree with the speakers--he or she must simply state what he thinks the speakers said. This enables the speakers to find out whether the listener really understood. If the listener did not, the speakers can explain some more.
Often, the listener is encouraged to interpret the speaker’s words in terms of feelings. Thus, instead of just repeating what happened, the active listeners might add the emotions that are involved in the speakers’ participation whether the speakers are feeling angry, frustrated or confused when a particular event happened. Then the speakers can go beyond confirming that the listeners understood what happened, but can indicate that he or she also understood the speaker’s psychological response to it.

Active listening has benefits:

First, it forces the students to listen attentively to the teachers.

When the students are working a listening comprehension activity in their class they have to pay attention to all the instructions given by the teachers, because in that moment that maybe they get distracted the main objective of the activity is not going to be achieved as the teachers have planned before, and the students will not acquire this important skill in an accurate way.

Second, it avoids misunderstandings, as the students have to confirm that they really understand what another person has said. Listening is a skill in which the teachers at the first instance can check if the students really understand or not the activity.

When a listening activity is performed by the teachers, they have to be sure that the spoken messages that they use in order to evaluate listening comprehension are really understood by the students, asking them or maybe telling them to do something in which they can confirm that the students are really learning the target language.

Nevertheless, there are the students who are poor listeners, even in everyday life. They tend to listen and think about something else at the same time. In addition, they tend to interpret things to coincide with the views that they already have. For this reason, they assume they know and understand
what other people are saying, because they assume that it corresponds to their own expectations about what the people are likely to say or "should" be saying.

It is necessary that the teachers train students since the first moment in order to avoid poor listeners in the classroom, that is why is advisable to work every single day listening comprehension activities. It is important to consider that the teachers have to speak only in English since the moment the class starts, allowing the students to develop the listening skill, right from the very beginning.

Such poor listening makes good communication almost impossible. No matter how much care one person or group takes to communicate his concerns, values, interests, or needs in a fair, clear, unthreatening way, if the listeners are not willing to receive that information in that way, the communication will fail.

It is important to remember that all communication has two parts: a sender and a receiver. The sender has a message he intends to transmit, and he puts it in words which, to him, best reflect what he is thinking. But many things can intervene to prevent the intended message from being received.

**Listening in the classroom**

It is quite clear that listening is the skill that children acquire first, especially if they have not learnt to read yet. When the students start to learn a foreign language, it is going in mainly through their ears and what they hear is their main source of the language. Of course, it is also given to them as much visual back up as possible through facial expressions, through movements, through mimes and through pictures.

When teachers are talking and students are listening, it is important to say things clearly, and repeat them. When you are telling a story, for example,
you don’t have to tell it from beginning to end without breaks. You can re-tell it again and again as you go along:

“This story starts on a nice, sunny Monday morning. Who is the story about? Who can we see in the picture? Yes, Fred and Sue. It’s nice, sunny Monday morning and Sue and Fred are...... Where are they? In the forest. Right. They’re in the forest. And what are they doing? They’re picking berries. So, it’s a nice sunny Monday morning, and Fred and Sue are in the forest picking berries. What happens next? Well........´ and so the story continues.

Table1. Example taken from booklet Teaching English to Children

As in the example above, the listeners cannot re-listen in the same way that they can re-read, it means that if you are the listener, you cannot decide how fast you work. Therefore, you have to concentrate very hard when you are listening.

Some listening activities will wake the students up, make them move about, create movements and/or noise. Others will calm them down, make them concentrate on what is in front of them, and create a peaceful atmosphere. Sometimes you want to have a nice quite atmosphere and sometimes you want the students to move about and in those situations teachers can use listening activities for both purposes.

Listen and do activities

Instructions

The most obvious ‘Listen and do’ activity which the teachers can and should make use of from the moment they start the English lesson is giving genuine instructions. Most classroom language is a type of ‘listen and do’ activity.
Communication is two-way, and the teachers can see very easily if the students have understood the message or not.

**Moving about**

There are also lots of ‘listen and do´ exercises which the teachers can do with the students where they have to physically move about. The younger the students, the more physical activities they need. The students need exercise and movement, and the teachers should make use of this wherever is possible. As well as moving about activities connected to doing ordinary things in the classroom, the teachers can ask the students to do all sorts of crazy things (stand on your head by the door, hop on your left foot five times) and the more language the students learn, the more the teachers can ask them to do.

The advantage with this type of activity is that teachers know at once if students have understood. You can check classroom vocabulary, counting spelling, etc. students learn from each other. If students have not understood the first time, they will still be able to do the activity by watching the others. As students learn more and more language, you can let them take over the role of ‘instructor´. They are very good at it.

**Drawing**

Listen and draw is a favorite type of listening activity in almost all classes, but remember that drawing takes time, so keep the pictures simple. In listen and draw activities teachers, or one of the students, tell the other students what to draw. You can make up a picture or describe a picture you have in front of you. This activity is particularly useful for checking object vocabulary, prepositions, colors and numbers. It is not so useful for actions, since drawing people doing things is quite difficult for most of us.
Listen for mistakes

You can use the picture in your book but make mistakes in the text you read, so that students have to listen for the mistakes. The same can be done using the correct text and the wrong picture, but this takes a bit more time to prepare.

Putting things in order

The students have a number of pictures which illustrates a text in front of them. The pictures are not in the right order. The students listen to the text and put the pictures in the order they think is right.

Hints to be considered for the Listening Activities

The following aspects should be considered while students are developing a listening comprehension activity:

a. Listen without jumping to conclusions. Remember that the speakers are using language to represent the thoughts and feelings inside their brain. You don’t know what those thoughts and feelings are and the only way you’ll find out is by listening.

b. Allow your mind to create a mental model of the information being communicated. Whether a literal picture, or an arrangement of abstract concepts, your brain will do the necessary work if you stay focused, with senses fully alert. When listening for long stretches, concentrate on, and remember, key words and phrases.

c. When it’s your turn to listen, don’t spend the time planning what to say next. You can’t rehearse and listen at the same time. Think only about what the other person is saying.
d. When listening, remember that words convey only a fraction of the message.

e. Finally, concentrate on what is being said, even if it bores you. If your thoughts start to wander, immediately force yourself to refocus.

### 2.2.5. Constructivism

Learning is an important process that all human beings experience. For that reason there are theories that focus on improving the process of learning. Constructivism makes students to consider previous experience in order to construct their own knowledge. Constructivism is a new approach in education that claims humans are better able to understand the information they have constructed by themselves. According to constructivist theories, learning is a social advancement that involves language, real world situations, interaction and collaboration among learners. The learners are considered to be central in the learning process. Learning is affected by our prejudices, experiences, the time in which we live, and both physical and mental maturity. When motivated, the learners exercise their will, determination, and action to gather selective information, convert it, formulate hypotheses, test these suppositions via applications, interactions or experiences, and to draw verifiable conclusions. Constructivism transforms today’s classrooms into a knowledge-construction site where information is absorbed.

In constructivist classrooms, unlike the conventional lecturer, the teacher is a facilitator and a guide, who plans, organizes, and provides directions to the learner, who is accountable for his own learning. The teacher supports the learner by means of suggestions that arise out of ordinary activities, by challenges that inspire creativity, and with projects that allow for independent thinking and new ways of learning information. Students work in groups to approach problems and challenges in real world situations, this in turn leads to the creation of practical solutions and a diverse variety of student products. Constructivist theories have found more popularity with the advent of personal computers in classrooms and homes.
Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky are two eminent figures in the development of constructivist theories. They share the common belief that classrooms must be constructivist environments. However, there are differences in terms of their theories and variations as to how constructivism should be carried out in classrooms.

That is why in this research project it is considered that this theory will help the teachers in order to find the correct strategies for the listening comprehension skill. According to Piaget and Vygotsky Constructivism is related to these aspects.

![Constructivism Diagram]

**Figure 1.** The difference most frequently cited between Piaget's and Vygotsky's Constructivism is in the proximal locus of cognitive development.

https://sites.google.com/site/constructivism512/Home/definitions-and-theorists

### 2.2.6 Piaget’s Constructivism

Jean Piaget (1896-1980), remembered for his extensive research on developmental psychology, explains the learning process by Schemes, it means to show how the information is going to be organized, then he
mentioned the Assimilation, when the learner understands and can place the information into Schemes. He concluded mentioning Accommodation, the ability that the learner will develop in transforming the obtained information into new one. Therefore, the learner will be able to construct or create new information. He also mentioned the importance of motivation in the learner because it allows him to be adapted to the environment; referring to the Equilibrium between the knowledge and the environment. Continuous interactions among existing Schemes, Assimilation, Accommodation, and Equilibrium create new learning.

Piaget explores four sequential stages of the psychological development of the young learner and believes teachers should be conscious of these stages. During the Sensory-motor Stage, (before the age of 2) sensory experiences and motor activities dominate. Intelligence is intuitive in nature and knowledge; it is acquired through mental representation during the Preoperational Stage (from age 2 to age 7). At the Concrete Operational Stage (from age 7 to age 11), intelligence is logical, conserved, and dependent on concrete references. The Formal Operational Stage (after 11 years of age) is the stage when abstract thinking starts and the learners initiate thinking about probabilities, associations, and analogies.

Piaget’s developmental theory of learning and constructivism are based on discovery. In order to provide an ideal learning environment, he states that children should be allowed to construct knowledge that is meaningful for them. In this way the learner becomes the main character in his learning process.

The Piagetian classroom

Piaget believes that a constructivist classroom must provide a variety of activities to challenge the students to accept individual differences, increase their readiness to learn, discover new ideas, and construct their own knowledge. He insists that the learner will develop his own concept about things taking into consideration his previous experiences. In a constructivist classroom the student will be provided with a variety of these opportunities.
Students have the opportunity to be exposed to other ideas, cultures, and forums on global issues. Students can work on collaborative projects, which may come in the form of a networked writing project, or the building of separate phases of an engineering project that enables them to receive and give instant responses.

In an elementary Piagetian classroom, concrete learning experiences, such as drawing, drama, model building and field trips that involve hands-on opportunities to see, hear, touch, taste, and smell are essential, because the constructivist teacher will convey tools that allow the students to put into practice all the knowledge they have acquired through the years.

2.2.7. Vygotsky’s constructivism

Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), known for his theory of social constructivism, believes that learning and development is a collaborative activity and that children are cognitively developed in the context of socialization and education. The perceptual attention and memory capacities of children are transformed by vital cognitive tools provided by culture, such as history, social context, traditions, language, and religion.

Vygotsky’s constructivism is known as social constructivism because of the significance of culture and social context. For Vygotsky, the zone of proximal development “the distance between the actual development of a child as determined by the independent problem solving, and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more peers (Vygotsky: 1978)” suggests that cognitive development is limited to a certain range at a particular age. However, with the help of social interaction, such as assistance from a mentor, students can comprehend concepts and schemes that they cannot know on their own. Curriculum specialists and lesson plan builders can use the zone of proximal development as a guiding reference.
To occur learning, the students first make contact with the social environment on an interpersonal level and then internalize this experience. The earlier notions and new experiences influence the students, who then construct new ideas. This author mentions the importance of socialization during the process of education that is why the listening process is an action of socialization because a person needs to decode what the speaker is mentioning.

The Vygotskian classroom

A Vygotskian classroom emphasizes creating one’s own concepts and making knowledge one’s property. This requires that school learning takes place in a meaningful context, alongside the learning that occurs in the real world. As seen earlier in the Piagetian classroom, this model also promotes the active participation and collaboration of a distinctive student.

The Vygotskian classroom stresses assisted discovery through teacher-student and student-student interaction. These Vigotskian methods or strategies allow the teachers to use them in different context. In this case we connected it to our purpose that is to find the best teaching listening strategies in which the students will construct their knowledge using the experiences they have previously had. In conclusion, Piaget and Vygotsky agreed that building constructs and internalizes the knowledge that is conveyed. At the same time, it provides the students the opportunity to analyze the information and reflect on it in order to construct their own concepts.

Constructivism raises that “each student structures his knowledge of the world through a single pattern, connecting each new fact, experience or understanding in a structure that grows from a subjective and that leads to the apprentice to establish rational and meaningful relationships with the world”. (Abbott & Ryan, 1999)
This project is based on the epistemological basis of Constructivism, as it is believed, this is a process in which the students learn through experience and interaction that can come together and work, to build their own knowledge, which will allow them to propose innovative things.

Apart from these theories, there are some kinds of strategies that also help the students to develop their listening comprehension skill such as Metacognitive Strategies.

Both Piaget and Vygotsky appreciated the essence of building constructs and internalizing the knowledge given, rather than accepting the information as presented through rote-memory. Constructivist learning environments promote the learners to gather, filter, analyze, and reflect on the information provided and to comment on this knowledge so that it will result in individualized comprehension and private learning.

**Metacognition**

According to the American developmental psychologist John Flavell, Metacognition is the ability of one to manage and monitor the input, storage, search and retrieval of the contents of his own memory. “Thinking about thinking” (Flavell, 1971)

Metacognition also means learning about learning. One of the keys of the modern curriculum is getting children to understand how they learn, so that they can do so better and independently.

Flavell (1976) also identified what the students gradually acquire in the context of information storage and retrieval. These were:

- The students learn to identify situations in which intentional, conscious storage of certain information may be useful at some time in the future.
• The students learn to keep current any information which may be related to active problem-solving, and have it ready to retrieve as needed;
• The students learn how to make deliberate systematic searches for information which may be helpful in solving a problem, even when the need for it has not been foreseen.

Figure 2. Metacognition
http://academic.pg.cc.md.us/~wpeirce/MCCCTR/metacognition.htm

Metacognition refers to higher order thinking that involves active control over the thinking processes involved in learning. Activities such as planning how to approach a given learning task, monitoring comprehension, and evaluating progress toward the completion of a task are metacognitive in nature.

Because metacognition plays a critical role in successful learning it is important for both students and teachers. Metacognition has been linked with
intelligence and it has been shown that those with greater metacognitive abilities tend to be more successful thinkers.

Most definitions of metacognition include both knowledge and strategy components. Knowledge is considered to be metacognitive if it is actively used in a strategic manner to ensure that a goal is met. Metacognition is often referred to as "thinking about thinking" and can be used to help students "learn how to learn." Cognitive strategies are used to help achieve a particular goal while metacognitive strategies are used to ensure that the goal has been reached.

**Metacognitive Strategies**

Metacognitive strategies involve executive regulation processes directed at the regulation of the course of thinking. They involve decisions that help

- to allocate resources to the current task,
- to determine the order of steps to be taken to complete the task, and
- to set the intensity or the speed at which one should work the task.

Some studies have focused on metacognitive strategies (i.e. Goh, 2006; Vandergrift, 2005; Goh, 2006). Other studies have investigated the strategies the student relies on while taking a listening test (Cohen, 2000, Taguchi, 2002). Metacognitive strategies are considered the most essential ones in developing student’s skills and it was emphasized by O’Malley, J. M., Chamot, A. U., Stewner-Manzanares, G., Russo, R., & Kupper, L.(1985) that the student without metacognitive approaches has no direction or ability to monitor his progress, accomplishments, and future learning directions.

Baker and Brown (1984) identified two types of metacognitive ability: knowledge of cognition (i.e., knowing what) and regulation of cognition (i.e., knowing how). The first type is concerned with the student’s awareness of what is going on, and the second type relates to what the students should do
to listen effectively. Empirical studies have found that an important distinction between skilled and less skilled L2 listeners lie in their use of metacognitive strategies (e.g., Bacon, 1992; Goh, 1998, 2000; O’Malley & Chamot, 1990; Vandergrift, 1998, 2003).

O’Malley et al. (1989) found that skilled students use more repair strategies to redirect their attention back to the task when there is a comprehension breakdown, whereas less skilled listeners give up and stop listening.

Vandergrift (2003) found that skilled listeners used twice as many metacognitive strategies as their less-skilled counterparts. Among the metacognitive strategies, two strategies will be analyzed here. Focusing on what the speakers are saying is a strategy that enables the student-listener to focus his attention on the speaker’s message without being distracted. This strategy is very useful in participating in the classroom, watching TV, listening to the radio, or talking to other people.

The second metacognitive strategy is deciding in advance what to pay attention to. Listeners employ selective attention as a technique to facilitate the comprehension process. For example, some listeners choose to focus on pronunciation and accents as a way to understand the spoken language with different accents. However, focusing too much on accents can have a negative impact on comprehension because it can lead to distraction and misunderstanding.
Potential Problems in Learning to Listen to English

Underwood (1989) pointed some potential problems that could hinder listening comprehension.

First, the speed of delivery is beyond the control of listeners. Underwood says, “Many language learners believe that the greatest difficulty with listening comprehension, as opposed to reading comprehension, is that the listeners cannot control how quickly a speaker speaks” (Underwood, 1989.)
This is a typical problem that the students face while listening to a conversation or doing a listening comprehension activity in class. It is really difficult for the students to decode or understand every single word that the speaker is saying. This problem usually happens when the listening resource is made by a native speaker. When the audio is done by a Spanish speaker it is a little bit easier for the students to understand the message.

Second, it is not always possible for the students to have words repeated. This is a major problem in learning situations. In the classroom, it is the teacher who decides whether or not a recording or a section of recording needs to be replayed. It is “hard for the teachers to judge whether or not the students have understood any particular section of what they have heard” (Underwood, 1989).

This kind of issue is faced everyday by teachers because sometimes students need to listen more than one time the activity, but the conventional teachers will consider that three times is enough. In a listening exercise sometimes the students are affected because of the noise from outside and the teacher should take that into consideration and be flexible with the student. For this reason it is recommended to practice listening activities every single day. In that form students will be more confident with this kind of activities and teachers will feel satisfied with themselves because their students will develop the task in a comfortable way.

It is really important that teachers check the listening material in advance in order to make sure about the activities that they will use in the classroom. Teachers have to train the students every class with the vocabulary that is in the books, and they have to confirm that the vocabulary in the listening resources is the same. Also the teachers have to use that vocabulary in most of the subjects during a certain period allowing students to become familiar with the new words.
Fourth, it can be very challenging for listeners to concentrate on a foreign language. It is generally known that in listening, even a slight break or a wander in attention can interrupt comprehension. When the topic of the listening passage is interesting, it can be easier for the listeners to concentrate and follow the passage. However, students sometimes feel that listening is very challenging even when they are interested in the topic because it requires a lot of effort to figure out the meaning intended by the speakers.

According to the level of the students the listening material should be chosen, so in that way the students will not feel frustrated about it. It is necessary to engage the students in the activity and for that reason the teachers should select material related to their student’s interests with normal and practical vocabulary at the beginning, and little by little the teachers can increase the level of difficulty. The teachers should tell their students that it is fine if they cannot catch every single word. They have to tell the students that it is important for them to catch the main topic of the listening more than every single word. In that way the students will not be uncomfortable and worried about the activity. Listening activities should be natural and relaxing for the L2 students.

In order to overcome these listening comprehension problems, students need to develop techniques known as listening strategies that are going to help them to perform the listening comprehension activities with good results. During this process is when the metacognitive strategies mentioned above have a great impact during the language acquisition performance of students, while working with teaching strategies.

**Evaluation and assessment**

Evaluation is a process of making judgments to be used as a basis for planning. It consists of establishing goals, collecting evidence concerning growth towards goals, making judgments about the evidence and revising procedures and goals in the light of judgments. It is for improving the product, the process and even the goals in themselves (Wiles, 1933). Evaluation is the
process of determining to what extend the educational objectives are being realized. (Ralph Tyler, 1967)

**The purpose of evaluation**

- To discover the extent of competence.
- To predict the educational practices.
- To certify student’s degree, proficiency in a particular educational practice.
- To appraise the status of, and changes in student’s behavior.
- To make provision for guiding the growth of the individual student.
- To diagnose the individual student’s educational weakness and strength.

**Assessment**

It focuses on learning, teaching and outcomes. It provides information for improving learning and teaching. Assessment is an interactive process between students and teachers that inform teachers how well their students are learning what they are teaching. The information is used by teachers to make certain changes in the learning environment, and is shared with students to assist them in improving their learning and study habits. Angelo, T and Cross, K.P. (1993)

**2.3. Conceptual framework**

This research project is guided by the theory of Jean Piaget that focuses on the importance of constructivism (1896 - 1980) Piaget was convinced that learning is an important process that all human beings experience and for that reason they always tried to make people figure out that constructivism is part of the learning process because as they believed knowledge can be constructed through the student’s previous experiences.

Piaget started searching everything related to Developmental Psychology. He used three key words in his research such as Schemes that show how the information is going to be organized. Assimilation which is the
student’s understanding placed into schemes, and Accommodation, meaning the transformation of previous information into new one.

This theory focuses on discovery which allows students to create their own knowledge by discovering new things from what they already know. Piaget also mentions the important role of teachers in a constructivist classroom, emphasizing that the main characters have to be the students, giving the teachers the role of facilitator.

Vygotsky’s view of Constructivism (1896 - 1934) is also guiding this research project. His theory expresses that learning and development is a matter of collaboration and it also says that the social environment in which students are involved takes an important role in this process. That is why this theory emphasizes the importance of social constructivism. In this study is mentioned that when learning occurs, the students are first influenced by their social context like religion, culture and beliefs. Vygostky also mentioned that students’ earlier experiences help them to construct their own idea.

English is a language that everybody is trying to learn because of its importance in society. As it is known, this language is used for business, social communication, technology, etc. That is why this subject has become very necessary in schools which want to give the students the most accurate knowledge to communicate in an adequate way.

Photograph 2. Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Steiner
VISION

To be an innovating institution that is always looking for success, with trained personnel and an adequate building. To be recognized as an educational model with the main objective of preparing students in a complete way to be able to face, propose and generate changes in our society.

MISSION

Provides a humanistic and scientific education that develops in the same way “mind, spirit, and body”, to children and adolescents of our country, focusing on the moral and civic values and the respect for nature. To promote always the national culture identity and give the society individuals that can be able to compete in this century.

At Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Steiner students begin that process since they are in Kindergarten. The main objective is to give the society human beings that are able to communicate without problems in this second language. The objectives of this educational institution are based on the Common European Framework which sets levels of knowledge for European languages basically. It also describes in a comprehensive way what language learners have to learn in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop so as to be able to act effectively.

The Common European Framework also defines levels of proficiency which allow learners’ progress to be measured at each stage of learning and on a life-long basis. Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Steiner has focused its English objectives on this framework and in the third year of basic education the expectations by the end of the course are the following:

1. The student will communicate by talking, listening and speaking to others for a variety of purposes and in a variety of contexts.
2. The students will demonstrate understanding and critical awareness of a variety of written materials that are read by students with the teachers.

3. The students will use reading strategies that are appropriate for this level in order to make sense of a variety of written materials.

4. The students will communicate in writing using strategies that are appropriate for this level.

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<th>A2</th>
<th>B1</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Listening</strong></td>
<td>I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.</td>
<td>I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.</td>
<td>I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.</td>
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</table>

**Table2. Common Reference Levels: self-assessment grid**


When learning a language it is necessary to consider several aspects. One of the most important: Listening. Experience has proved it is a difficult skill to develop. For that reason, this project has been done with the intention of finding the most adequate teaching strategies to fulfill the objective of acquiring this ability. According to what was observed in third year of basic
education at Unidad Educativa Steiner during the research. To become successful it is necessary to follow a procedure that starts with the explanation to the students about the objectives the teachers want to achieve with the listening comprehension activities.

It was observed that the students need to be trained with different strategies in order to become good listeners. It has to be taken into consideration that learning a foreign language requires many aspects teachers have to be focused on. For example, give students the opportunity to analyze what they are listening to. Then they should start asking for specific details or maybe give the students different clues until they reach the objective that is expected.

During the research was observed the importance of a constructivist classroom that allows students to build their own knowledge through their previous experiences. In this way it was confirmed what Piaget believed, when he said: “the student is able to construct and decode his own learning.” The teacher has to be just a “facilitator”, Out of experience, it has been observed that teaching listening comprehension activities is not an easy task, because in order to give students the most adequate strategies to be good listeners, the teachers themselves have to be good listeners first.

2.4. Research questions

What are the best teaching strategies that we need to apply to students in order to improve the listening comprehension skill?

How can we apply new teaching strategies that help students to develop listening activities without any problem?

How many teaching strategies do we apply in the classroom in order to make students learn and practice in an effective way?
What will be the impact with the implementation of new teaching strategies with students in their third educational academic year?

2.5. Hypothesis

The selection and implementation of a set of appropriate teaching strategies will improve the understanding of students in listening comprehension in their third educational academic year at “Unidad Educativa Bilingue Steiner”, academic year 2013 - 2014.
### 2.6. INDICATORS AND VARIABLES

**Independent Variable: Teaching Strategies**

**Dependent Variable: Achievement of Listening- Comprehension**

**Table 3 Indicators and Variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Conceptual Definition</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Instruments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Strategies</td>
<td>Set of steps or procedures that the teacher's plans and the students perform to achieve a goal.</td>
<td>The students will apply the seventy percent of the strategies. The teacher will accomplish the objectives set in the lesson plan in a hundred percent. The survey administered to the teacher will be verified by the researchers. The survey administered to the students will be verified by the researchers. The formative assessment will comply with the rubric.</td>
<td>Pair work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Individual work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Questionnaire to teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Questionnaire to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Formative Test</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Achievement of Listening Comprehension | It is a communicative capacity that covers the entire process of interpretation of the speech, from the mere decoding to the understanding of the phonic chain of the language (phonemes, syllables, words.) | At the end of the unit the student will reach the seventy percent of the content taught. The teacher will apply at least the seventy percent of the planned strategies. | Observation Forms  
Summative test |
2.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

TEACHING STRATEGIES
They are steps or procedures to be followed by the teachers and applied by students with the purpose of solving problems.

LISTENING – COMPREHENSION
It is a communicative capacity that covers the entire process of interpretation of the speech, from the mere decoding to the understanding of language of the phonic chain: phonemes, syllables, words, etc.

EVALUATION
To examine and judge carefully; appraise.

ASSESSMENT
It is an interactive process between the student and his teacher that informs the teacher how well his student is learning what he is teaching.

ACADEMIC
Belonging or relating to a place of learning, especially a college, university, or academy.

PROCEDURES
A manner of proceeding; a way of performing or doing something.

MEANINGFUL
Having a meaning or purpose; "a meaningful explanation"; "a meaningful discussion".

SKILLS
Proficiency, facility, or dexterity that is acquired or developed through training or experience.

EFFECTIVE
Productive of or capable of producing a result.
EMPHASIS
An idea that is given special importance or significance.

COGNITIVE
Of or pertaining to the mental processes of perception, memory, judgment, and reasoning, as contrasted with emotional and volitional processes.

GIST
The central idea; the essence.

ACCURATE
Acting or performing with care and precision.

TOOL
Anything used as a means of accomplishing a task or purpose in education.

METACOGNITION
Knowledge about when and how to use particular strategies for learning or for problem solving.

KNOWLEDGE
The facts, feelings or experiences known by a person or group of people.

MOTIVATION
Something that motivates; inducement.

EQUILIBRIUM
A state or feeling of mental balance; composure.

CONSTRUCTIVISM:
A theory that makes people considerate previous experiences in order to construct their own knowledge.
L1
Mother tongue of a person.

L2
A learner who is studying a second language that is not his mother tongue.

UTMOST
Of the highest or greatest degree, amount, or intensity; most extreme.

DECODE
To analyze and understand the construction of words and phrases, in a foreign language

ENCODE
To use (a word, phrase of a foreign language) in the construction appropriate to it in that language

RETRIEVAL
The possibility of recovery, restoration, or rectification

PROMPTS
To assist by providing the next words of a forgotten passage; cue.

EFFICIENCY
The quality or state of being efficient; competence; effectiveness

FOREIGN LANGUAGE
A language not spoken by the people of a certain place

UTTERANCE
Any speech sequence consisting of one or more words and preceded and followed by silence or a change in speaker.
HISTOGRAM
A statistical graph that represents the frequency of values of a quantity by vertical rectangles of varying heights and widths

BOX PLOT
It is a quick way of examining one or more sets of data graphically.

2.8. SUMMARY

During this process it was used some different techniques and strategies to make this research project viable and reliable. For the correct learning process of the students this project was based on these aspects: Teaching Strategies, The Need for Effective Listening Strategies, Classification of the Strategies, Different Approaches to the Listening Skill, Listening Stages, Learning to Listen in English, and the Importance of Active Listening in the Classroom.

Among these important aspects that helped us as researchers to develop this project that was also focused on the importance of the learning theory of Constructivism by Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky who said in their work that “the student has to construct his knowledge based on his previous experiences.”

During the research investigation there were research projects such as (Lieve Behiel) focused on the developmental process that students of a foreign language faced while acquiring it. These works helped us as researchers to have a guide for the development of this paper. It is important to mention that most of the time teachers face listening comprehension problems with their students and it is caused sometimes because of the lack of motivation, the wrong selection of listening activities that sometimes does not match with the students’ ages and interests, the inappropriate environment to do the listening activities. In some schools the students do not have laboratories or listening corners. The audio has to be very clear because he teachers have to be conscious that the sounds we have in the foreign
language are totally different from the ones we have in our mother tongue, in this case Spanish.

One of the strategies used during this research project was meaningful learning in the students, so the listening activities they developed were connected to their ages and interests. The use of technology helped, too. It is important to link the learning process of a new language with the technological resources the school provides the teachers.

In that way students are going to be more connected and happy while learning, every single thing they do has to be significant for them, that is why Constructivism Theory appears in the students because they have to connect what they already know with the new things they are learning. It happens in a positive way as students feel engaged with the activity.
CHAPTER 3

3. Research Methodology and Findings

This mixed method research being undertaken was exploratory, descriptive and explanatory.

It is exploratory because the purpose is to collect and identify general information about the problem of the project, and at the same time it gives suggestions that can be considered in future research. The purpose is to document experiences, analyze and discuss aspects of the problem that people have not previously studied in depth.

This research is at the same time descriptive, because one of the goals is to learn about the situation and prevailing attitudes through the exact description of activities and processes. The objective is to predict and identify the relationship between our variables. As researchers we collected information, summarized and at the same time made the respective analysis of the results. We made a description using measurements to be able to explain the main deficiencies that students presented in relation to the listening comprehension in the English language.

This research is explanatory too, because the objective is to find the reason for the existence of this situation. In this research the cause and effect of the relationship between the variables was analyzed and according to the results some activities were elaborated to help students in the moment they have to develop listening comprehension activities. At the same time teachers were provided with some examples of accurate teaching strategies to apply to their students in the classroom.

Explanatory research does not only describe the problem but also tries to find the possible causes, and additionally identifies the reasons why
students presented these difficulties in developing listening comprehension activities.

The focus of this research is qualitative and quantitative because we used interpretative methodologies such as interviews to teachers and surveys to students that enabled us to obtain real-world information that is faced day by day in the classroom, and also be able to determine with accuracy, the number of students that have the flaws in listening comprehension.

3.1 Methods and techniques

Among the research methods that we used in this project are the empirical, theoretical, inductive and deductive ones.

Theoretical methods

Analysis and synthesis

With the implementation of this method it was analyzed what were the possible causes for which the students of third educational academic year at “Unidad Educativa Bilingue Steiner” had problems to identify different phonemes through the listening comprehension activities, and in addition through the indicators we analyzed what teaching strategies can help teachers eradicate this difficulty.

Induction

We used the method of induction in the listening comprehension activities since it has been a cognitive skill that allows the human being to decode sounds. We applied teaching strategies according to the results obtained in the survey, to deduce which are the most adequate teaching strategies in order to improve the listening comprehension ability in the students.
Observation

With the implementation of this technique, it allowed us to observe the problem in a closer way by collecting important information and then arrived at the analysis to determine the event, object or situation. This method helped us to identify the problem in order to be able to discover the possible causes and what we are proposing for the improvement of the situation.

Research techniques

Different techniques were applied with the purpose of obtaining first-hand information such as:

Interviews to teachers

It was obtained information about the teaching strategies used by teachers in listening comprehension activities in the classroom. Each English teacher at Unidad Educativa Bilingue Steiner was interviewed with the purpose to reach valuable information that guided us as researchers to know which kind of activities on listening comprehension the teacher can apply and also to know the level of English the student has.

Survey to students

It was applied in order to collect information to know why student present difficulties, when making dictations, answering questions or simple conversations done by the teachers. At the same time, it showed us the general appreciation that students have about listening comprehension activities during the English classes.

Tests

There was the application of a pretest and a posttest, to have a clear idea about the teaching strategies previously used by the teachers during the listening comprehension activities in the English class.
In the pretest and posttest it was analyzed the listening comprehension skill of the students through activities such as matching, filling in the blanks, circling, true and false statements, according to their age and level.

3.2 Research Population and Sample

Sample:

The sample used in this work was selected to the total number of students (24) at third educational academic year at Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Steiner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total number of students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 Sample

3.3. Research Instruments

These are the instruments that were used in this research project:

Surveys to teachers
Surveys to students
Formative Tests
Summative Tests

3.4 Results / Findings and Analysis

The data in this research was gathered and organized according to the following factors: dates and achievements of the language components. The data is presented using word processor of Microsoft. The pretest, posttest, surveys to teachers and questionnaire to students are classified and interpreted by the researchers in order to give this project reliability and at the same time to make a deep analysis of the students’ reality based on the problems in listening comprehension.
3.4.1 Results of the Pre-test

Appendix A is showing the results of the pretest. The histogram is shown in graphic 1. The boxplot is shown in graphic 2.

Graphic 1 Result of the Pre-test

The students score ranges from two to nine, and most of the students are in the middle of the range.

Graphic 2 box plot of the Pre-test

The boxplot shows that there is no outlier.
3.4.2 Results of the Posttest

In the posttest most of the students are in the range from seven to ten and one student is in the lower range.

Graphic 3 Result of the Posttest

The boxplot shows the outlier that corresponds to the minimum score that was obtained for one of the student.

Graphic 4 box plot of the Posttest
Table one shows the number of students, the minimum score, the maximum score, the range, the mean, and the standard deviation of the pre-test and post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEST</th>
<th>NUMBER OF STUDENTS</th>
<th>MINIMUM SCORE</th>
<th>MAXIMUM SCORE</th>
<th>RANGE</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>STANDARD DEVIATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRE-TEST</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>8.60</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td>5.60</td>
<td>1.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSTTEST</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>8.93</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 Results in details of the Pre-test and Posttest
3.4.3. Analysis of the results

Questionnaire to the students

Sample: 24 students

Question One: Do you like English?

Graphic 5

Regarding question N.1. Do you like English? Twenty one students like English. Only two students did not like it. One student answered does not apply.
Questionnaire to the students

Sample: 24 students

Question Two: Do you like listening activities in English?

Graphic 6

Regarding question N.2. Do you like listening activities in English? Twenty three students like listening activities in English. Only one student chose does not apply.
Questionnaire to the students

Sample: 24 students

Question Three: Do you find interesting your English classes?

![Bar chart showing responses to the question: Do you find interesting your classes in English?]

Graphic 7

Regarding question **N.3. Do you find interesting your English classes?** Seventeen students found interesting their English classes. Only two students answered no. Five students chose does not apply.
Questionnaire to the students

Sample: 24 students

Question Four: Do you learn English easily?

Graphic 8

Regarding question N.4. Do you learn English easily? Nineteen students learned English easily. Only four students chose no. One student selected does not apply.
Questionnaire to the students

Sample: 24 students

Question Five: Do you usually understand English exercises?

Graphic 9

Regarding question N.5. Do you usually understand English exercises? Eighteen students understood English exercises. Only one student chose no. Five students selected does not apply.
Questionnaire to the students

Sample: 24 students

Question Six: Do the activities that the teacher use, help you to improve your listening?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do the activities that the teacher use, help you to improve your listening?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graphic 10

Regarding question N.6. *Do the activities that the teacher use; help you improve your listening?* Twenty students considered that the activities used by the teacher helped them to improve their listening. Only four students selected does not apply.
Questionnaire to the students

Sample: 24 students

Question Seven: Is your teacher using interesting videos in classes?

Graphic 11

Regarding question N.7. Is your teacher using interesting videos in classes? Eighteen students considered that their teacher used interesting videos. Four students selected no. Two students chose does not apply.
Questionnaire to the students

Sample: 24 students

Question Eight: Would you like to do more listening activities in your English classes?

![Bar chart showing the responses to the question]

Graphic 12

Regarding question N.8. Would you like to do more listening activities in your English classes? Twenty one students would like to do more listening activities in their English classes. Two students answered no. One student chose does not apply.
Questionnaire to the students

Sample: 24 students

Question Nine: Do you understand what the actors say when you watch a movie in English?

![Graph showing the understanding of actors in English]

Regarding question N.9. Do you understand what the actors say when you watch a movie in English? Sixteen students understand what the actors say when they watch a movie in English. Three students answered no. Five students selected does not apply.
Questionnaire to the students

**Sample:** 24 students

**Question Ten:** Do you understand your teacher when she speaks English?

**Graphic 14**

Regarding question **N.10. Do you understand your teacher when she speaks English?** Nineteen students understand when their teacher speaks in English. Three students chose no. Two students selected does not apply.
Questionnaire to the students

Sample: 24 students

Question Eleven: Do you like to speak in English?

Graphic 15

Regarding question N.11. Do you like to speak in English? 

Graphic N° 11 Twenty three students like to speak in English. One student selected does not apply.
Questionnaire to the students

Sample: 24 students

Question Twelve: Do you like to practice listening activities using the computer?

Graphic 16

Regarding question **N.12. Do you like to practice listening activities using the computer?** Twenty two students like to practice listening activities using the computer. Two students chose does not apply.
3.4.4. Interview to teachers

A set of questions focused on the Listening Skill was designed to ask each primary teacher at Unidad Educativa Steiner about the strategies they use in order to teach or develop listening comprehension activities.

**Question 1**

It was required for the teachers to answer the following:

Do you think that teachers should acquire new English Teaching Strategies for Listening Comprehension? Explain Why?

Most of the teachers answered it in a positive way saying that in their opinions is mandatory for teachers to be updated and start learning and applying strategies that can help students to overcome problems in listening comprehension. Also they mentioned that as teachers they have to make their students exercise the brain and get ready to be concentrated and also to deal with other difficulties, such as noise, teachers’ voice, etc; that can disturb student’s work.

**Question 2**

It was required for the teachers to answer the following:

Do you believe that the current strategies that English teachers use to develop the listening skill, promote a meaningful learning on the students? Explain

The teachers considered that according to their reality all of the current strategies they are applying to their students are according to the students’ needs, also they considered that each group is totally different and the level and ages influence a lot. On the other hand, they are conscious that some of
the listening activities that teachers in general apply are just drills that involve repetition and in that case it cannot be considered meaningful at all.

Also they mention that nowadays there are a lot of schools that have good programs based on meaningful learning. They suggested teachers should develop activities that engage all their students as much as possible.

**Question 3**

It was required for the teachers to answer the following:

Indicate the steps you follow in the class before the listening comprehension activities.

They answered that they start with a warm up that can be songs, or story telling in which the students have to listen to different stories read by the teacher and then they have to answer questions related to the story they were listening to. They always evaluate the listening process before, during and after the activities. Teachers said that steps are developed according to the level. For example, in some cases teachers make the students to predict according to the pictures or the main topic the listening is going to be about. Most of them mentioned that first they explain the instructions and play the activity three time: listening to the activity, development the activity, and the last one for checking and correcting it.

**Question 4:**

It was required for the teachers to answer the following:

What strategies do you use in your classes for improving listening comprehension?
In general the teachers answered that the strategy they always use is to engage students through songs according to their level and topic. Also they mentioned other strategies they use: First, listening for details, then listen for the main idea, listening to make inferences and listen for predictions. After that, the teacher start asking questions about the information they heard and then he gives student time to complete and check the activity they are developing. The school has a Reading platform in as students read and listen to each story. Using the same platform the students can choose the character they want to play. First, they have to listen to the dialogues and then role play the character.

**Question 5**

It was required for the teachers to answer the following:

What do you recommend teachers when they are having difficulties in the application of listening comprehension activities in the classroom? They recommended that first the teachers should evaluate the activities before they are presented to the class. Also they considered that it is very important to make sure that the activities will engage the students and they suggested us that we should always think about our students’ interests when selecting the material for them. In general each teacher gave recommendations according to the level they are teaching.

For example, the teachers who work in kindergarten said that in order to catch the students’ attention the teachers have to motivate them not only with audio but also with visual aids. Another teacher mentioned that it is really important to check listening comprehension: Before, while and after listening to make sure that students understand the activity. In addition, they suggested that teachers should practice *brain gym* activities in advance to make the students get a better concentration.
3.4.5. Analysis Questionnaire to students

During the research process also was designed a questionnaire with twelve questions in order to obtain information that helps us to have a clear idea about how they feel when they have to listen to someone speaking in a foreign language, in this case English. It is important to mention that all the twenty four students participated in this activity.

The questions measured the answers in a scale from Yes, No and No apply. The results were the following:

1. Do you like English?

It was the first question and the results that were obtained show that twenty one students agreed they like English. Only two students do not like it, and one of them answered does not apply.

Analysis:

With this result we could figure out that most of them really like English and they feel really excited about learning a foreign language because they mentioned that they travel a lot to the United States and they want to speak in English when they are there. Others said that their parents speak in English and they like to communicate with them using the language. On the other hand, the two students who answered no supported their opinions saying that for them it is really difficult to understand English during the listening comprehension activities.

2. Do you like listening activities in English?

It was the second question and the results that were obtained show that twenty three students agreed, they like listening activities in English. Only one student chose does not apply.
Analysis:

We could realize that almost all the students do not feel afraid about listening activities in English. They mentioned that it is really interesting for them to understand what people say in English. The student who selected no said that for him it is really hard to decode the message when people are speaking in English.

3. Do you find interesting your English classes?

Seventeen students found interesting their classes in English. Only two students chose no and five students chose does not apply.

Analysis:

The majority of the students consider very interesting to be in their English classes because they feel motivated to learn and practice this language. The students who selected no supported their answer mentioning that English sometimes is difficult to understand and also they said the vocabulary is complicated.

4. Do you learn English easily?

Nineteen students learnt English easily. Only four students chose no. One student chose does not apply.

Analysis:

The students who chose the option yes said that English is very easy for them because they travel a lot and they are in contact with the language. The students who chose the option no said learning English is very hard because they do not have enough vocabulary, making it difficult for them.
5. **Do you usually understand English exercises?**

   Eighteen students agreed they understand English exercises. Only one student chose no. Five students chose does not apply.

**Analysis:**

   The students who chose yes said that the instructions are easy to understand because the teacher explains several times what they have to do. The student who chose no, said that for him is really hard to understand the instructions at first.

6. **Do the activities that the teacher use, help you improve your listening?**

   Twenty students considered that the activities used by the teacher help them to improve their listening. Only four students chose does not apply.

**Analysis:**

   The students who chose yes mentioned that they like the listening activities that the teacher provides them because the teacher uses technological resources and the students feel comfortable using and practicing with them.

7. **Is your teacher using interesting videos in classes?**

   Eighteen students considered that their teacher uses interesting videos. Four students marked no. Two students answered does not apply.
Analysis:

The students who chose yes feel really motivated because the listening activities are really connected with technology such as videos, audios, etc. The students who chose no said that sometimes the videos are too long and difficult to understand.

8. Would you like to do more listening activities in your English classes?

Twenty one students answered they would like to do more listening activities in their English classes. Two students chose no. One student marked does not apply.

Analysis:

The group in general felt really interested in practicing and doing more listening activities, because they said that practicing at school will help them at the moment they have to interact with native speakers in order to understand what they say in a common conversation.

9. Do you understand what the actors say when you watch a movie in English?

Sixteen students answered they understand what the actors say when they watch a movie in English. Three students chose no. Five students selected does not apply.

Analysis:

The students who chose yes mentioned that when they are watching movies they understand what the actors say most of the time. The student who chose no considered it is too difficult to understand the dialogues of the
movies, they said they can do it with subtitles but if the actors speak so fast it is really hard for them.

10. Do you understand your teacher when she speaks English?
Nineteen students answered they understand when their teacher speaks in English. Three students answered no. Two students selected does not apply.

**Analysis:**

The students who chose yes mentioned that they understand when their teachers speak in English because they use the vocabulary that is involved in the unit or lesson they are checking, so it is not difficult for them to understand what their teacher says. The students who chose no said, that for them is difficult when the teachers speak fast because if they are not paying attention they do not understand their teacher’s instructions.

11. Do you like to speak in English?

Twenty three students replied, they like to speak in English. One student chose does not apply.

**Analysis:**

The students who chose yes commented that they like to speak in English because they feel excited about communicating in a foreign language with their teachers and peers.

12. Do you like to practice listening activities using the computer?

Twenty three students like to practice listening activities using the computer. One student replied does not apply.
Analysis:

The students, who chose yes, mentioned that they learn more when they visualized the activities in the computer. They said that for them is really interesting and interactive to do activities using technology and in this case using tools such as computers and platforms.

3.4.6. Analysis of the Pre-test

In order to evaluate the students in the listening skill, a pretest with different kind of listening activities was designed with the main objective of checking and evaluating the students’ listening comprehension. The activities were based on the students’ age, level and topics their teacher was working with them in the regular classes.

The pre-test had six questions.

In question number 1:
The students had to listen to stories, and after that they had to write true or false.

In question number 2:
The students had to look at a picture and then listen and number.

In question number 3:
The students had to listen and circle the correct sound of some pictures.

In question number 4:
The students had to discover what activities some kids do after school.

In question number 5:
The students had to listen to and draw the time.
In question number 6:
The students had to listen and circle the correct answer from the options that were provided in that activity.

During the application of the pretest the results were the following:
In question number 1:

Listen to the story. Write true or false.

This question was over one mark. And the result was that eighteen students got a high score and six students had a score under 0.60 marks. In this activity the students had to listen to a conversation and then they had to read some sentences related to the dialogue they heard. After that, they had to answer true or false.

While the analysis was made, it was observed that in general the students were good at listening for details. The six students that got low scores were easily distracted. Some of them did not answer the question or left it incomplete.

In question number 2:

Look at the picture. Listen and number.

This question was over two marks and it was about a family physical description in which the students had to observe the members. After that, they had to number according to the order they heard. So in this activity the observation and listening skills were very important and students had to apply them. The results were the following: Fourteen students got a high score and ten students got a score under 1.50.

During the analysis it was noticed that the number of students who got low scores increased. Also when they were developing this activity they were confused and they asked the researchers to repeat that activity four times,
because they did not remember the order and they had problems with the numbers and the description of the picture.

In question number 3:

Listen and circle the correct sound.

This question was over two marks and required the students to observe pictures and listen to the sound that belongs to them. The results were the following: Ten students got a high score. Fourteen students got low scores. When this question was checked and analyzed it was realized that most of the students circled more than one option that means that they did not understand the instruction that was given because before they did the activity the activity was explained. During the development of this activity the students got confused and had problems decoding the sound of the letters.

In question number 4.

Listen what do these children do after school?. Write J= Julia, L= Lucas and S= Sonia.

This question was over two marks and required the students to listen to different children talking about the activities they do after school. Each kid said his name and described the activity they like to do, so the students had to listen to them and after that read the sentences related to the listening to mark the initial letter of the name of the children. As a result we obtained that fifteen students got high scores and nine students very low scores.

During the analysis of this question it was figured out that the students did not match the description of the activity. Some students were confused when they had to choose the correct letter that belongs to the name of the person who did the activity.
In question number 5.

Listen and draw the time.

During this activity the students were confused because they had to do two things at the same time. They had to listen to discover the activity that was performed and they had to draw the time in the clock. Most of them did not complete the activity or marked the time incorrectly.

In question number 6

Listen and circle the correct word.

Most of the students did this question correctly. It was observed that the students performed the activity better when they had the options to choose, in that way it was easy for them to circle the correct option because they could read it.

3.4.7. Analysis of the Posttest

In order to evaluate the students’ progress in the listening skill after the pretest evaluation, a posttest with different kind of listening activities was applied with the same questions and activities of the pretest having as a main objective the checking and evaluation of the students’ listening-comprehension progress.

The posttest had six questions.

In question number 1:
The students had to listen to stories, and after that they had to choose true or false.

In question number 2:
The students had to look at a picture and then listen and number.
**In question number 3:**
The students had to listen and circle the correct sound of some pictures.

**In question number 4:**
The students had to discover what activities some kids do after school.

**In question number 5:**
The students listen to and draw the time.

**In question number 6:**
The students had to listen to and circle the correct answer from the options that were provided in that activity.

In question number 1:
Listen to the story. Choose true or false.

This question was over one mark. And the result was that twenty two students got a high score and two students had a score under 0.60 marks. In this activity the students had to listen to a conversation and then read some sentences related to the dialogue they heard. After that, they had to answer true or false.

During the analysis it was observed that in general the students were good at listening for details. The two students that got low scores were easily distracted. In this opportunity all the students did the first activity nobody left it incomplete as in the pretest.

In question number 2:
Look at the picture. Listen and number.

This question was over two marks and it was about a family physical description in which the students had to observe the members. After that, they had to number according to the order they heard. So in this activity the observation and listening skills were very important and students had to apply
them. The results were the following: Twenty three students got a high score and only one student got a score under 1.50.

During the analysis it was noticed that the use of the strategies applied during the listening activities helped the students a lot because in this opportunity the 99.9% did this activity without problems. This time the students only listened to this activity three times. It is important to say that the environment was quiet. They were really concentrated.

In question number 3:

Listen and circle the correct sound.

This question was over two marks and required the students to observe pictures and listen to the sound that belongs to them. The results were the following: All the students got a score of more than 1.50.

When this question was checked we compared it with the pretest and we could notice that in this opportunity all of them understood what they were asked to do. In this posttest nobody circled more than one option as they did it in the pre-test. All the students were paying attention to the audio.

In question number 4.

Listen what do these children do after school?. Write J= Julia, L= Lucas and S= Sonia.

This question was over two marks and required the students to listen to different children talking about the activities they do after school. Each kid said his name and described the activity they like to do, so the students had to listen to them and after that read the sentences related to the listening to put the initial letter of the name of the children. As a result we obtained that twenty three students got high scores and only one obtained a score under 1.50.
During the analysis of this activity we figured out that something that helped a lot was that the instructions were given by the researchers and then it was confirmed by some of the students in order to make them sure about it.

In question number 5.

Listen and draw the time.

This activity was over two marks. the students had to listen to the time and at the same time they had to look at the pictures in order to choose what activity was happening at the correct time. The results were the following: thirteen students got a score over 1.50. Eleven students got a score under 1.50 the students were better this time but it was figured out that for them was really hard to do two activities of listening comprehension at the same time. It was recommended to the teacher to take this aspect into consideration for the future listening activities.

In question number 6

Listen and circle the correct word.

All the students did this question correctly. It was observed that the students performed the activity without problems when they had the options to choose, in that way it was easy for them to circle the correct option because they could see the options.

3.5. Resources, timeline and budget

Resources

The resources needed in the present research project are divided in human resources and materials
**Human resources:**

The teacher in charge of the research
English Teachers
Coordinator
Students

**Materials**

Printed materials
Photocopies
Textbooks
Interactive boards
Worksheets
Markers
Projector
Computer
Internet
CD player
Videos
Platform
Tablets
Timeline

This research project has the following activity plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Elaboration of the research proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>First draft of the research proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Presentation of the research proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Class observations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Survey to students and interview to teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Application of pretest and posttest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Tutorial session chapter one presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Expanding information about chapter one.</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Tutorial session chapter two presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
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<td>Expanding information about chapter two</td>
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<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Tutorial session chapter three presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Tutorial session chapter three.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Tutorial session chapter four presentation. Final revision of the whole project.</td>
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Table 6 Activity Plan
Budget

Budget Summary

**Funding Agents:** Narcisa Auria Jiménez and Stephanny Miranda Barahona.

**Work Package Time:** Seven months

**Dates from:** March 2014 – September 2014

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<td>Printer</td>
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<td>3. - Materials and Supplies:</td>
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<td>Office supplies (pencil, pen, eraser, ruler, sharpener, etc)</td>
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<td><strong>GRAND TOTAL:</strong></td>
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CHAPTER 4

4. Final conclusions

Conclusions

This research study proved that the educational intervention using the teaching strategies in order to enhance listening comprehension in students of third basic year at Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Steiner was effective because the achievement of the students improved. The strategies used during this process were focused in order to help the students improve some of the listening problems they presented during the English classes. It means that the students felt comfortable doing listening activities through the implementation of the activities and strategies we used in the classroom.

The students used technological resources such as computers that helped them develop listening activities by using images. After that they had to do the listening activities based on what they listened and observed. This strategy we implemented in their classes showed us as teachers, that the students were engaged with them because they used technology and in that way they felt more connected and interested in all the details of this activity. Inside the classroom we proved that to play the listening activities three times for students of third grade was not enough because at that age they get distracted easily. That is why we decided as a strategy to play the listening five times. That way they had more opportunities to decode the information and at the same time to get familiar with the intonation and pronunciation of the speaker.

During one week we decided to put the listening five times as we proposed at the beginning of this project, but the last week we decided to put the listening activities only three times as the classroom teacher used to do. By doing this, we proved that our strategy really worked because the students did not have the problems they presented at the beginning, they felt
more confident about the activities and they comprehended easily the information conveyed by the speaker in the listening activity.

During the application of the pretest and posttest we could notice that without the application of our strategies the students got low grades in listening comprehension activities. After weeks of training and application in the classroom of our strategies the students could improve their self-esteem doing listening comprehension activities that according to the researcher is one of the most difficult skills to develop while learning a new language. At the same time we noticed that they felt more motivated and did the posttest obtaining better grades. These applications of strategies will be very useful for teachers of a foreign language that always find this kind of difficulties mainly in listening comprehension.

4.1. Limitations and Problems

One limitation in this research was the noise from the outside where some people were building the cycle-via while we were applying this project that affected the concentration of the students

4.2. Recommendations

Photograph 3 taken by Narcisa Auria
1. The application of these listening comprehension strategies is recommended to English teachers that face this problem in everyday listening activities, because as teachers we need to take into consideration that we are not native speakers and our students need to get familiar with the sounds of the foreign language.

2. This research was guided using a single group, of third graders, but the strategies can be implemented in different courses thinking that they will be very helpful for the teacher and for the students.

3. In addition, consider the use of technological tools such as computers or listening platforms that make the application of the strategies more effective and easy, so the students focus on the listening skill process and do not waste time with distractors because they will feel more connected and interested when doing the activity.

4. It is recommended that all the English teachers create and plan their lessons in advance to improve the instructional process and apply the appropriate pedagogical models with the idea to achieve the purpose of improving the teaching of English language. (Nunan, 1999). We need to think that when we plan our classes everything is going to be in order and we are going to reach our objective easily.

5. All teachers should consider that decoding spoken messages in not an easy task, that is why we should train our students to take in our minds the more important or specific details of a conversation. We should tell our students that most of the time in all languages we have to listen carefully because in that way we can understand what people want or need. We have to focus our attention in the listening skill while we are learning a new language, as it constitutes one of the most complex and important skills.
6. It is advisable to implement in each English classroom a listening corner where the students will have the possibility to practice this skill and motivate the student to become interested in it. This will provide a benefit to the foreign language learning process. In that way the student will feel at ease by the time he is having his listening-comprehension activity.

4.2.1 Strategies to use in the classroom

Strategy 1
The students listen to the audio activity five times, so that they have the opportunity to decode the message that is conveyed in each activity.

Strategy 2
The students use technological resources to practice listening comprehension activities. They look at the pictures that show them a story while listening to what is happening in the story. Later the students have to do some listening activities about what they just observed and listened to.
Strategy 3
The students tell stories to their classmates and later one of the students with the information they listened to, has to mention the main details of the story proving that they have understood the listening comprehension activity.

Strategy 4
The students create a short role-play but they do not say any word just mimes and gestures. Then one student has to tell the others what is happening in the story. The rest of the class has to listen to the speaker. At the end, the teachers start asking questions about what they previously heard to prove if the students really apply their listening comprehension in the activity.

Strategy 5
One of the strategies that the students use during this project is the use of videos and songs that tell the students to follow different steps or movements. At the beginning the students did it by observing and listening to the instructions from the song. Then the students did it again but just listening to the instructions.

Strategy 6
To infer the speaker's message is one of the strategies used during the development of this project. In listening comprehension activities is important that teachers give the students the opportunity to infer what the speaker is trying to say, so in that way the students will be more attentive to the listening activity and could know if what they think about the listening message is right or not. If the listening activity takes place at the restaurant the teachers have to ask the student questions like: What do you think the boy is going to order? Does he like the food at the restaurant? Why? or Why not? Making these kinds of questions the students will feel more connected to the situation they are listening to.

Strategy 7
The dictation of vocabulary as a listening comprehension strategy is advisable to use in levels like second and third year of basic education because the
students are getting familiar with new sounds. Dictations make the students understand, recognize and differentiate the sounds of letters. By doing this, the teachers will have an idea of how many students have problems in the listening skill, but at the same time it is the departing point for searching for more listening comprehension strategies that can help the students improve the listening ability.

Activity for students of second or third year of basic education that can help to develop their listening comprehension skill:

Input: Dialogue between two people

**Objective:**

To understand and follow the conversation with its details in order to listen to specific information like, Where are they? Where are they from? What are they talking about?

**Strategies:**

1. To infer what is going to happen in the story.
2. To take key words that can make the listening comprehension easier.

In this way, the student will have a general idea about the story they are listening to. At the same time, they will be motivated to follow the sequence of events with greater attention.
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Lieve Behiels  Professor of languages at the University of Ghent, Belgium.
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