UNIVERSIDAD INTERNACIONAL DE LAS AMÉRICAS
VICERRECTORÍA ACADÉMICA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES

IMPLEMENTATION OF BRITISH ACCENT AS A TOOL TO BOOST THE LISTENING COMPREHENSION OF FIFTH GRADERS AT COLEGIO INTERNACIONAL SEK COSTA RICA DURING THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2022

Thesis Submitted to Obtain the Bachelor in English with Concentration in Teaching

GLORIANA BARRANTES MURILLO

THESIS MENTOR: M.SC. DINIER AMADOR SERRANO

SEDE ARANJUEZ

JULY, 2022

Abstract

The following research study focuses on the improvement of listening comprehension skills in British English in fifth grade students at Colegio Internacional SEK Costa Rica through the use of different pre-listening activities. The purpose of the research was to identify the main factors that affected the listening comprehension skills and, consequently, choosing the best pre-listening activities to work on the main weaknesses of the students. Throughout the research, a pre-test was first conducted to determine the factors and the grade of impact they had. Then, the activities were applied in order to help them improve in specific areas while measuring the obtained results with a post-test after each. Later, there was an open questionnaire for students to express themselves and to obtain the complete information and conclusions. Throughout the application of the instruments there was a final triangulation of data to evaluate the effectiveness of the applied activities as a tool to improve students' listening skills in British English.

Resumen

El siguiente trabajo de investigación se centra en la mejora de la destreza de comprensión de escucha en inglés británico en estudiantes de quinto grado del Colegio Internacional SEK Costa Rica a través de actividades previas de escucha. El objetivo de la investigación fue identificar los factores que afectan la destreza de comprensión de escucha para luego elegir las actividades previas más apropiadas para trabajarlas las principales áreas débiles con los estudiantes. A lo largo de la investigación, se llevó a cabo una prueba inicial para determinar los factores y su nivel de impacto. Posteriormente, se aplicaron las actividades para mejorar en áreas específicas mientras se iban midiendo los resultados a través de pruebas luego de cada actividad. Más adelante, se aplicó un cuestionario abierto final donde los estudiantes se expresaron acerca de cómo se sentían para poder obtener los resultados y las conclusiones finales. Durante la aplicación de los instrumentos se trianguló la información para evaluar la efectividad de las actividades aplicadas como herramienta para mejorar la destreza de escucha en los estudiantes en inglés británico.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements 2
Dedication 3
Declaración Jurada 4
Carta de Aprobación del Tutor 5
Solicitud de Defensa del Estudiante 6
Cédula de Identidad 7
Carta del Revisor 8
Abstract 9
Resumen 10
CHAPTER I 16
Introductory Framework 16
1.1 Problem Statement 16
1.2. Objectives of the investigation 17
1.2.1 General Objective 18
1.2.2 Specific objectives 18
1.3 Justification of the study 18
1.4 Antecedents 20
1.5 Scope 24
CHAPTER II 26
Theorical Framework 26
2.1 The Role of English Accent in English Teaching 27
2.1.1 British versus American Accent 27
2.1.2 Comprehension of English for Nonnative Speakers 29
2.2 Listening 30
2.2.1 Listening versus Hearing 31
2.2.2 Listening as an Active Skill 32
2.3 Listening Comprehension Process 33

2.3.1 Elements of the Listening Process 33
2.3.2 Listening Comprehension Skills 34
2.3.3 Barriers that Affect Listening Comprehension 35
2.4 Teaching Listening Comprehension 38
2.4.1 Role of the Teacher 38
2.4.2 Role of the Student 39
2.4.3 Interactive Teaching 40
2.5 Didactic Strategies 41
2.5.2 How are Didactic Strategies Applied in Class 42
2.5.2 Resources Used by Teachers 48
CHAPTER III 52
Methodological Framework 52
3.1 Research Approach 52
3.2 Research Design 53
3.3 Information Resources 54
3.3.1 Primary sources 54
3.3.2 Secondary sources 55
3.3.3 Tertiary Sources 56
3.4 Analysis Categories 56
3.4.1 British Accent 57
3.4.2 Listening Comprehension 57
3.5 Data Collection Instruments 57
3.5.1 Observation Checklist 58
3.5.2 Pre-Test Survey 58
3.5.3 Post-Test 59
3.5.4 Questionnaire 60
3.6 Collection Data Process and Data Analysis 60
CHAPTER IV 63
Data Analysis 63
4.1 Analysis and Interpretation of the Results 63
4.1.1 Observation Checklist 63
4.1.2 Pre-test 68

4.1.4 Questionnaire....88
CHAPTER V.... 91
Conclusions and Recommendations.... 91
5.1 Purpose of the Conclusions.... 91
5.2 Conclusions.... 91
5.2.1 Identify the main factors that affect British listening comprehension in fifth graders when preparing for Cambridge Test. 92
5.2.2 Apply interactive activities that allow students to improve their listening skills with British accent. 93
5.2.3 To asses student improvement through listening activities in British accent.....95
5.3 Restatement of the Research Question.... 96
5.4 Unexpected Results 97
5.5 Recommendations 98
Annexes 101

Table of Tables

Table 1 ..... **74**

Students who like listening exercises **74**

Table 2 ..... **81**

Number of times they listened to understand in Activity 1 ..... **81**

Table 3 ..... **82**

Number of times they listened to understand in Activity 2 ..... **82**

Table 4 ..... **83**

Number of times they listened to understand in Activity 3 ..... **83**

Table 5 ..... **84**

Number of times they listened to understand in Activity 4 ..... **84**

Table 6 ..... **85**

Number of times they listened to understand in Activity 5 ..... **85**

Table of Figures

Figure 1..... 65
Distribution of the students according to their gender.....65
Figure 2..... 68
Exercise completion.....68
Figure 3..... 69
Students opinion about English class.....69
Figure 4..... 71
English Areas.....71
Figure 5..... 72
English Areas.....72
Figure 6..... 76
Elements that affect understanding process.....76
Figure 7..... 79
Frequency of English familiarization.....79
Figure 8..... 86
Average Listening Times.....86
Figure 9..... 87
Elements in Listening Comprehension.....87
Figure 10..... 88
Elements in Listening Comprehension.....88

CHAPTER I

Introductory Framework

In this chapter, the problem statement will be developed by making emphasis on listening comprehension with the implementation of British accent in English learners of fifth grade. It turns challenging to English private school learners to understand British accent in fifth grade when they have only been in contact with American English pronunciation in their daily basis. Afterwards, the objectives will be mentioned from general to specific in order to answer the research question. Chapter I also includes the justification of the study, the background, and the scope.

1.1 Problem Statement

English national programs and lesson plans made by MEP (Ministerio de Educación Pública) have been suffering changes and adaptations throughout the years. The government has been looking for the best ways to structure their curriculum, so that their students become competent enough to fulfill the future job demands they will face in their adulthood. On the other hand, private schools, especially bilingual schools in Costa Rica, normally have a well-structured and balanced curriculum that enhances the four main skills students must learn in their whole process. Unfortunately, there has always been a gap between public and private schools in terms of bilingualism, as well as in the time it takes students to have an appropriate level of comprehension and therefore, oral production.

The idea of mentioning private schools in this research is because it is well known that many private schools have a very complete curriculum and study guidelines that include the

development of the four main skills for learning English; however, sometimes listening is taken as a passive skill that is developed through the practice of the other skills. There are cases, in which listening is not practiced individually and there are not enough lessons dedicated to this specific skill to be developed as an active and well-practiced process. Therefore, the main importance of developing listening appropriately is that it is a key element in the communication process that students require to communicate naturally with others. Part of the communication process demands the oral comprehension of the message that the speaker is transmitting to the listener; that is why, it is so important to give this skill the importance it really has. Listening is not something that students can acquire or understand if they do not practice it. Part of practicing it implies listening to other accents like the British accent that we may find in movies, TV series, songs, TV shows, and even when speaking to foreigners. If students are not exposed to all this variety of sources, they will not be able to understand English fully, as they are expected to in order to communicate in the future. Consequently, by considering the importance of listening comprehension as one of the main skills teachers have to dedicate time to, this research leads us to the following question: "How can British accent be implemented in students of fifth grade to improve listening comprehension skills at Colegio Internacional SEK during the second quarter of 2022?"

1.2. Objectives of the investigation

The objectives of this project provide a guide for the investigation and analysis process that will be developed. They state, in detail, the aspects that will conduct all the research. They will be mentioned from general to specific.

1.2.1 General Objective

To analyze the use of British accent to improve the listening comprehension of fifth graders at SEK International School Costa Rica during the second quarter of 2022.

1.2.2 Specific objectives

1. To identify the main factors that affect British listening comprehension in fifth graders when preparing for Cambridge Test.
2. To apply interactive activities that allow students to improve their listening skills with British accent.
3. To assess student improvement through listening activities in British accent.

1.3 Justification of the study

Throughout the years, Latin Americans have been acquiring English as their second language since the current global job demand requires to master such language and all of its areas. Communication is described by Keyton (as quoted by Buyukahiska, (2011) "(…) the procedure of conveying information and creating understanding between people." The communication process implies comprehending, as well as communicating fluently, orally and written, nowadays. That is the reason why bilingual schools are an excellent option for starting learning English during childhood.

Teaching English is not an easy task. Teachers have to make sure the four main skills in English are being taught. All the skills are necessary for an accurate communication process in English and listening development is one of the most important parts of the comprehension process, as we start oral communication. Queen refers to this as "a process of formulating

hypothesis about the character of the auditory input, then revising and refining successive hypothesis until a best hypothesis is chosen in the light of all information (phonetic, lexical, syntactic, and semantic) available" (1975 p. 9). All this process must be achieved accurately when teaching English.

It is fundamental for English learners to enhance their oral skills as much as they can. Bilingual schools in Costa Rica normally base their English curriculum in teaching American English pronunciation; therefore, their daily basis activities are planned and performed with American English accent. This line of work encloses students to learn and comprehend American English as their main accent, sometimes leaving behind the exposure to other English accents under the idea of avoiding confusion during early years learning. Students get used to one accent, so when they listen to a person speaking with other accent, they may find it strange or they even lack of understanding what the person talks.

Some schools offer preparation for English certification tests, as the case of Colegio Internacional SEK Costa Rica. This school offers Cambridge English tests preparation, which has different levels according to the age of the students. In sixth grade, they make the B1-Preliminary Test (PET) which enables them the chance to get their first English certification. Cambridge test preparation starts in fifth grade. Therefore, students for the first time formally get in contact with vocabulary, expressions, and different elements that vary between British and American English. Students face a big challenge and sometimes struggle when solving activities because it is hard for them to understand a complete conversation in a different accent such as British. Teachers take more time preparing their students and learning basic vocabulary because students are not familiar with the resources they are working with.

This investigation aims to identify the main factors that limit students when listening to the British accent as they start their Cambridge preparation. There may be multiple factors surrounding the school's curriculum in terms of resources or even at students' homes that may be limiting their learning abilities to comprehend the exercises in other accents. This investigation also aims to find a way to improve English listening comprehension in fifth grade students, so that the transition when starting the Cambridge test preparation in fifth grade becomes more satisfactory and less difficult for them. Students at Colegio Internacional SEK Costa Rica, as well as their teachers will obtain benefits out of the results of this investigation because they may find ideas and tools to improve their students' listening comprehension during the earlier years, so that the outcome will be better in their first Cambridge exam. This research will provide an analysis of the main factors implied through an interview with a fifth-grade teacher to analyze their point of view about the preparation the students are receiving in regards to their exposure to British accent. After that, the factors will be taken into consideration for proposing different activities and strategies for preparing the students in the listening comprehension area.

1.4 Antecedents

The first historical antecedent that was consulted was a book called Listening Comprehension in the Foreign Language Classroom. Terence Quinn and James Wheeler, Monash University (1975), based their study on how the skill of listening comprehension tended to be neglected and misunderstood for many years. They explained how it was seen as a "passive skill" that somehow was just developed and throughout time, Belasco, an academic teacher (1971) came to the following conclusion, "At the end of the 1960-61 Penn State Academic- Year

French Institute, I was rudely joined by the realization that it is impossible to develop so-called "speaking" ability and yet be virtually incompetent in understanding the spoken language" (p.3).

The authors mentioned how listening comprehension is now considered a highly active process and the purpose of their report was to point to directions this consideration might take. At the beginning, they highlighted the importance of listening comprehension as an independent skill; then, they outlined the set of principles from which they derived their approach; and finally, they presented some practical examples of some techniques they suggested. The research pointed to all the operation of speech processing, in which listening comprehension takes an important role. When they referred to activate a child's natural communication process, there must be a rich linguistic environment, they also mentioned that (…)We cannot control and train the mental processes by which a student acquires skill in listening comprehension. But we can control the environment in such a way as to maximize the possibility of the skill's developing by whatever means the learner's capacities provide" (p. 12).

The first international research that was consulted was written by Peng, Ellen and Wang, Lily in Rockville, Maryland, United States in 2019. Such study was about listening effort: Listening Effort by Native and Nonnative Listeners Due to Noise, Reverberation and Talker Foreign Accent During English Speech Perception. This investigation had the purpose of analyzing different environmental factors, as well as talker characteristics and listener language abilities that contribute to increasing the listening effort. For this research, they used a dual-task paradigm and a self-report questionnaire. There were one hundred fifteen native and nonnative adult listeners with normal hearing that went through different tests to measure their effort under different circumstances and environmental conditions in order to understand listening effort in a

wide range of realistic classroom acoustic conditions, as well as varying talker accent and listener English proficiency.

Listeners provided responses in the questionnaire immediately after they were put under different controlled conditions. They surveyed six dimensions of perceived listening effort: mental demand, physical demand, temporal demand, effort, frustration, and perceived performance. Fifty-six listeners were tested with speech produced by native American English talkers, and the others, with speech from native Mandarin Chinese talkers. Based on their first language learned, they were recruited in three groups: native English speakers, native Mandarin Chinese speakers, and native speakers of other languages. The results showed that native speakers of other languages increased listening effort more than the other two groups. They reported feeling more frustrated and less successful understanding Chinese-accented speech. Nonnative listeners reported more listening effort in physical demand and temporal demand than native listeners in speech comprehension under adverse acoustics. Nonnative listeners who shared the foreign talkers' accent reported no change in listening effort, whereas other listeners reported more difficulty understanding accented speech. As a conclusion, they mentioned that adverse acoustics required more effortful listening as measured subjectively. The other tool that involved speech comprehension was better capturing the negative impacts on listening effort from talker accent and listener language abilities. Definitely, there is a comprehension gap when we listen to an accent that we are not used to, especially if it is our second language acquisition and even if we think we have great mastery of a language, there are factors that affect.

The second international research reviewed was written by Juan Fernando Gómez and Claudio Díaz Larenas from Tecnológico de Antioquia, Colombia. This research article was written in 2020 and it was titled: The use of communication strategies and listening skills and the

relation to university students' English level. The investigation intended to identify the frequency of communicative strategies employed by university learners to overcome English listening comprehension problems in oral messages and to analyze the strategies in relation to the student's linguistic level. Some of the factors considered in the survey were memory, motivation, type of intelligence, personality, and gender. In addition, the participants were from different nationalities. There were 542 participants that completed the listening questionnaire from OCSI (Oral Communication Strategy Inventory). After data was analyzed, the findings indicated that the strategies most used corresponded to negotiation for meaning, nonverbal strategies, and word oriented.

A third international research was consulted, The Effects of Different Accents on Listening Comprehension in EFL Classes. The research was done for the International Journal of Society Researches in Turkey, 2019 by Buyukahiska. The study aimed to investigate a sample of secondary school students to evaluate and compare their listening skills in comprehending different accents of English. A group of 22 seventh grade participants took different listening tests. The results of the investigation were compared and evaluated in the sense of comprehension levels among different tapes. They discussed the necessity of developing awareness of different accents in EFL classes. Based on the results of the study, they proposed several practical implications for developing listening skills in EFL classrooms. The research was very complete, as it included British accents from different countries. Moreover, it explained the main background characteristics of the participants, the procedure that took place, and the instruments and charts explaining the results.

The first national thesis consulted was written by José Vargas Castro in Pérez Zeledón. It is a research for Universidad Latina de Costa Rica titled: Analyzing the Activities Applied to

Develop Learner's Listening Competence Level in the English Class in 10th Grade at Colegio Técnico Profesional San Isidro. The paper focused on three main variables: Listening competence, learning process, and listening instruction. These variables were analyzed in the literature review and an analysis of data was made. The findings gathered from the literature review and the data, provided information to enhance listening competence level.

The second national research consulted was titled: Factors that Influence the Implementation of Listening when Teaching Conversational English in Laboratories of Colegio Técnico Profesional San Isidro. Magaly Arguedas and Elena Castro made this study (2017) for Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica, Brunca Extensión, Pérez Zeledón Campus. This research analyzed how the listening skill is developed in the language labs when teaching conversational English in this institution. Arguedas and Castro based on how listening exercises where normally implemented in the language lab and how useful it was. They assessed the use and availability of listening materials that teachers have in the lab and how frequent they carried out listening activities. At the end of the analysis, they offered the English teachers a kit called "techno-listening kit" that contained a series of practical listening exercises to improve student's listening comprehension skill through the use of technological devices. The improvement of listening skills in the language lab is a great way to enhance comprehension. This research brought a variety of proposals for teachers to consider in their classes.

1.5 Scope

This research will be focused on the main factors that affect English learners to understand different accents such as the British, as well as listening activities in British accent to improve listening comprehension and fluent understanding in fifth grade students. This study is expected to achieve the following aspects by the end of the research:

- Provide theory for understanding the listening communication process related to English British accent.
- Identify the main factors that are limiting fifth grade students to have a clear and fluent comprehension of listening activities in British accent.
- Listen to different listening comprehension activities to evaluate student's comprehension level in fifth grade.
- Analyze the main words or sounds that are difficult for students to understand in order to find activities that can improve the weaknesses.

CHAPTER II

Theorical Framework

This chapter contains the theoretical aspects of the investigation that will be developed throughout the research. First, there will be an introduction to the general topic by describing the role of English accent in English teaching, where American and British accents will be framed according to Costa Rican context in teaching. After that, Costa Rican students will be categorized as nonnative speakers, while then contemplating their comprehension process and the main factors that influence that process. Later on, the concept of listening as a main skill will be developed. Its importance will be described, including the perception of listening as an active skill in teaching that has changed over time. Moreover, there will be a comparison between listening and hearing and how its difference is fundamental in terms of comprehension.

After defining the main concept of listening, the theory will be more specific when analyzing the listening comprehension process students go through when learning a second language. There are elements to analyze that lead to understanding, as well as relevant factors that can affect the listening comprehension process. In relation to the comprehension process, teaching will be more detailed. Interactive teaching for improving listening must be taken into consideration, along with the main role of the teacher and the one of the students. Finally, didactic strategies will be conceptualized and defined. In addition, the research will mention the suggested way to apply them in listening comprehension classes. One main part of didactic strategies are the resources normally used by teachers, which will be also stated in this project for later proposing some other activities to enhance listening comprehension skills in British English and expanding students` listening capacity.

2.1 The Role of English Accent in English Teaching

Throughout the years, English has become an important part of most Costa Rican schools. Every day, schools try to prepare more competent students in order to help them meet the main challenges that jobs offer. One of the main goals that schools have is for students to gain the ability to communicate fluently in English as a second language. A student that has the ability to speak and understand fluently, is a student that will have more opportunities in life. That is why, English has such an important role in schools and universities, nowadays.

It is well known that is Costa Rica, there is a big gap between private and public schools in elementary school levels. Private schools dedicate more lessons to English classes than public schools. Consequently, this makes the difference between these two options. Private schools have great competition among themselves; therefore, they offer different learning methods, resources, preparation, and even English certifications in American or in British English. Most Costa Rican schools, including public schools that form part of MEP (Ministerio de Educación Pública), include American English in their English curriculum. The number of lessons dedicated to English classes varies from one institution to another. There are even other school subjects that are taught in English to expand student's exposure to the language. English accent and pronunciation are key during English classes because it is fundamental for students to understand what they listen to. Schools usually enhance listening comprehension as one of the mains skills to develop.

2.1.1 British versus American Accent

Most English teachers base their lesson plans and their resources in standard basic American English, which it is used in class. As schools normally teach American English

pronunciation and accent, students are constantly watching videos, listening to stories, and working with American resources. It is known that languages are constantly changing, new words are commonly added and used, and others are lost. There are also dialects that are formed and types of slang that are renewing their vocabulary words to express more accurately. This is another reason why English students should always be in touch with updated resources. In schools that offer preparation for British Certification tests, students should be familiarized with both types of accent since early years, so that they can have a greater time frame to identify the main differences in English pronunciation between the two types of accent. As students listen to a conversation or a song, they should be able to identify the type of accent that is used. It is not common for teachers to explain the main differences between both types of accent; however, constant practice and contact with them, will give the students experience on identifying specific aspects, which will later be naturally perceived by students.

According to Mohammad Hashim (2017), there are four main differences between British and American pronunciation and the most obvious one is the accent. Algeo (quoted by Hashim) states that "When a British or an American talk, they identify themselves primarily by the tunes of their respective varieties" (p.2). English native speakers are able to identify the region where other people come from just by listening to their accent. The same happens in Spanish speaking countries. However, some people may think that this is not completely true because it is not the same to listen to a person speaking than listening to a person reciting a poem or singing and there may be changes depending on the oral production channel being used.

Hashim mentions that the first difference between British and American English is the rhotic accent. Merriam Webster dictionary defines rhotic as …"having or being an accent or dialect in English which an /r/ sound is retained before consonants and at the end of the word."

Rhotic accent is frequent in British accent, specifically in Scotland and in Ireland, and it is not present in American English accent. In this area, it can be mentioned the use of the alveolar flap [ɾ], which is only used by Americans, as well as the approximant [ɹ], which is used by Americans and by British. The second difference is the vowel pronunciation. There are some vowels that are changed in British accent, such as changes in diphthongs [əʊ] to [oʊ] and changes in vowel [ɒ] to [ɑː] and [ɔː], as well as other changes in vowel [æ] to mention some examples. The third difference is in consonant pronunciation, especially in the letter t, as it can be pronounced in American English, according to Gomez (2017), in six different ways including: aspirated sound [th], de-aspirated sound [t], glottal stop [ʔ], and glottalized stop [tʔ]. In each type of accent, there are variations. The last difference in accent is the change of stress in words. For example, there are changes in the accent o French loanwords. In most of the cases, American accent respects the accent in the last syllable as in French language. Other examples are the words ending in -ate, mostly verbs that have different stress pattern in both accents all depending on the length of the word, and the last example related to changes in stress are the suffixes -ary. -ory, -berry, and -mony. As it can be seen, these four main differences between both accents make a huge difference when listening to a person speaking in both languages. The capacity of students to understand these differences is not a short process, as it takes time, experience, and preparation.

2.1.2 Comprehension of English for Nonnative Speakers

Nonnative speakers that are learning English have many challenges to face in all the skills to develop. In the listening part, accents have an important role for comprehending a message. One of the main goals of students is to understand what a speaker says, and comprehension capacity is also measured depending on who you are listening to. Lev-Ari (2014) says that “Non-native speakers have lower linguistic competence than native speakers, which renders their

language less reliable in conveying their intentions." (p.1) Sometimes in schools, students understand better what their teacher say because they are used to his or her pronunciation and accent; however, when it is time to listen to a native speaker, they struggle when trying to understand this person because they are not used to other accents.

Ellis (1985) mentions that "non-native speakers' linguistic competence is typically inferior to that of native speakers" (p.3). Of course, this makes sense because it is not the same how a native speaker perceives English as how a non-native speaker does. However, there are non-native speakers that have great ease for learning a second language, almost as a native speaker, so basically, it all depends on each person. What is true is that the sooner the student gets involved with the second language in different ways, the greater will be his/her comprehension skill developed.

2.2 Listening

Nordquist (2020) defines listening as "the active process of receiving and responding spoken (and sometimes unspoken) messages." Moreover, poet Alice Duer Miller describes it as "taking a vigorous human interest in what is being told us" (p.3). The listening skill is one of the most important elements in the communication process. Consequently, it is important to master this skill. Olsen (2018) says that "without the knowledge or ability of listening, a message can simply be misunderstood" (p.2). Nowadays, there are companies that train their workers in listening skills because of the importance of their role as dealing with costumers. Listening has turned so important in the communication and speaking process, that it is considered an active skill. Workers become more productive when they have good listening skills. Having a good ability for listening helps people to understand better and to find what is expected from them. In

addition, it lets people have a good relationship with their co-workers by giving them support when needed. If the person is in charge of customer service, it will be useful to understand precisely what customers ask for and need. Additionally, when people have questions, they can answer more accurately and also, they can infer better what others say.

In the educational area, it is really important for students to master listening since early years, as well as other skills at the same time. The listening skill requires more concentration and energy than other skills. The key elements that are involved in the process of listening are: a sender, a message, and a receiver. Tyagi (2013) mentions that there are some key components that listening comprises such as discriminating between sounds; recognizing words and understanding their meaning; and identifying grammatical groupings of words and identifying expressions and their meanings. Moreover, connecting linguistic cues to non-linguistic and paralinguistic cues. In addition, using background knowledge to predict and to confirm meaning as well as recalling important words and ideas to transmit.

2.2.1 Listening versus Hearing

Sometimes people tend to confuse the term hearing with listening and it is important to mention its difference. Even though, there are some similarities among both terms, there are also big differences. One is more active and requires concentration and effort, while the other one is more natural and involuntary. In the process of communication, both are important. Psychologist Kristen Fuller (2021) says that hearing is a term that goes around the act of hearing sounds. Hearing is defined by Merriam-Webster as the “process, function, or power of perceiving sound; specifically: the special sense by which noises and tones are received as stimuli.” Hearing is not an active act, it is passive where we do not need to be focused or pay attention.

On the other hand, listening requires intentionally paying attention to the speaker, to the words and sounds with their meanings to develop a response. Listening is defined by Merriam-Webster dictionary as "to hear something with thoughtful attention." Since listening requires an active process, a person can decide whether to listen or not. The person can decide to hear sounds or to really pay attention to the meaning of the words to understand a message. Listening can be classified as active or passive. Active listening is when a person listens to connect with the message of the other person; for example, when a person tries to solve a problem with other, they exchange ideas and feelings through active listening. On the flip side, when passive listening takes place, the person does not want to participate from the conversation. This person is probably going be disconnected from the message, and will not pay real attention to the other speaker. He or she will probably just answer an opinion already kept in mind without really analyzing the message of the speaker in detail.

2.2.2 Listening as an Active Skill

Long ago, listening was perceived as a passive skill in the educational process. It was thought that listening was just one more part that was developed as the other skills were reinforced. As time passed, teachers started realizing that listening is an active skill that requires time to be practiced and that it has to be constantly put into practice, especially for nonnative English speakers who seek a fluent oral production. An active listener is a person that is interested in understanding what the other person says. This person is also aware that he or she has to process the message sent before answering that message. This process of verification is what turns a listener into an active one. Tyagi mentions that there are some active listening essentials such as: intensity, empathy, acceptance, and recognizing responsibility for completeness. It is relevant to contemplate all these elements because a person that really wants

to listen, not just hear, must show interest and feel empathy about the conversation. Moreover , this person will really get involved in what is being said and will give back a related response.

2.3 Listening Comprehension Process

In previous parts of the theoretical framework, it was mentioned the definition of listening by itself and all its benefits. However, there is another part that comes attached to it; that is, the listening comprehension. Ospina (2021) mentions that listening comprehension "…has the multiple processes of comprehension in language when it is understood, interpreted, and spoken) (p. 2). He says that it works by developing memory, attention, vocabulary, grammar and comprehension monitoring. People relate what they hear with their reality, so they will give sense to what they listen to. They will link the ideas together in order to give them a meaningful meaning. The listening comprehension process is something complex because it includes the listening process and then the comprehension skill process. They both are fundamental for following a good process of communication.

2.3.1 Elements of the Listening Process

Once understood and defined the term of listening, it is important to understand all the process of listening. Tyagi (2013) says that there are five stages that take place. The first one is hearing. In this stage, the person produces the physical, natural involuntary act of perceiving sounds. The brain stimulates and lets the person to focus on some, this is called attention, which is important for effective listening. The second stage is understanding. In this stage, the meanings of word are analyzed and perceived. The listener relates the meaning with the context of the conversation or the message. If the meaning is understood, the reception of the message is successful. The third stage of the process is remembering. This is an important part of the process

because it means that the message was not only understood, but it was also kept in the listener's mind. People's memory is selective so, what is remembered may be a little different to what the person originally heard.

The fourth stage is evaluating. At this stage, only the active listeners participate. At this point, there is a lot to analyze. First, the message is perceived and stored, but it is also perceived with the opinion of the sender and the effective listener is going to wait for the sender to finish all the message to start processing it. Sometimes, in this stage people perceive the intention of the message and stop paying attention because their mind starts formulating their response before time. If this happens, the comprehension process may be affected because the person changes listening for hearing, while keeping their mind busy thinking of their own point of view. The last stage of the process is responding. This stage is the one that determines if the message was successfully transmitted. Once the listener received and processed the message, he/she has to give the feedback of the message to the sender. Here is when the sender will make sure if the message was correctly sent and the process is completed at this point. Of course, the process continues while the sender and the receiver keep reproducing the stages once again each time until they finish the interchange of messages.

2.3.2 Listening Comprehension Skills

Ospina (2021) emphasizes on the main listening comprehension skills that form part of the cognitive level of learning. The first one is recognition. This skill requires connecting and recognizing the components of a message. This includes sounds, words, and different linguistic parts of speech like verbs, pronouns, and others. The second one is the selection. That is, when a person selects the most important words from the message; for example, the names of people, the

main actions that are mentioned, dates, or any other important details. This information is organized in level of importance. The final comprehension skill is the interpretation. At this point, the listener understands the information that was heard. The person can also detect the intention and the purpose of the message, the main ideas, and the most significant parts the speaker is transmitting.

The skills mentioned previously are part of the process of listening comprehension; however, there are other skills that can be taken into consideration. They can be practiced and applied in order to enhance the comprehension process and communication. One skill that can be put into practice is anticipating. When a person activates prior information in advance, he or she can advance on a specific topic in order to understand it better and have right bases and expressions. The next one is inferring. To be able to infer the information of the sender, the listener can pay attention to other non-verbal elements such as facial expressions and body gestures and movement that will be a complement for understanding and extracting the message even better. The last one is retention. It is a good skill that can be developed to remember the most important terms or ideas to know how to interpret them. To be able to get most of the message from the sender, these key words must be retained in the long-term memory.

2.3.3 Barriers that Affect Listening Comprehension

Listening comprehension by itself should be a fluent process that requires concentration, effort, analysis, and other elements in order to make it successful. However, there are different factors that sometimes affect or interrupt the process somehow, and listeners fail in the process of comprehending the correct message. Some of these factors are called barriers. Tyagi (2013) defines those barriers as “obstacles that stand in the way of effective listening, both within

outside the workplace" (p.6). Some of these barriers are the following. First, the physiological barrier includes hearing problems or deficiencies that can be treated. Other physiological barrier is when people have problems processing or retaining information.

The second type is the physical barriers. These are related to the environment and the distraction that can be produced, for example, noise, cigarette smoke, air conditioner. Other type of physiological barrier is the information overload, such as the phone ringing or receiving a message at the same time during a meeting. This makes you get distracted. In the case of a class, when students start asking out loud questions all at the same time, it is impossible to fully listen to one person at the time.

Another barrier is called attitudinal barrier. The first example of attitudinal barrier is when a person feels stressed or worried about a problem at work or at school. These emotions interfere when the person tries to pay attention to the speaker, even if it is important. A second example is when a person thinks that there is nothing to learn from the speaker, so it is not worth to pay attention. In these specific situations, the listeners become passive.

A fourth type of barrier is when there is wrong assumption. In this case, it is assumed that communication only depends on how the sender transmits the message, so there is no need to give feedback or respond to anyone. Senders, as well as listeners, have the role to make the communication process successful, not only one side. Even if the transmitted message was great, if the listener was not paying attention or does not give any feedback, the process will not be completed. Moreover, a fifth type of barrier is the cultural barrier. One example of this type is the accent of the sender, since it interferes with the capacity of understanding of the listener. This problem not only takes place within different cultures, but in the same culture like in big countries or when English students are used to American accent, and suddenly they listen to

someone speaking with British accent. They will not completely understand the message if they are not familiarized with the other accent.

The sixth type of barrier mentioned is the gender barrier. There are investigations that show that gender can be a barrier. For example, studies have revealed that women and men listen in a different way. Women pay more attention to the emotions, while man listen more for facts and content. However, this is not a very marked situation, it is something that can slightly interfere or change the communication process.

The seventh type is lack of training. Since listening is a skill that needs practice and training, it is not an inborn skill. This becomes a relevant barrier for students that do not train enough their listening skills. When listening was taken as a passive skill long ago, teachers did not dedicate enough time for it; therefore, students were able to manage other skills, but had poor listening ones. Becoming poor listeners interrupted the whole process of comprehension.

The last barrier that will be described is having bad listening habits. This is something very common. Most people are average listeners. This means that they may have some bad habits when listening to a person. For example, when a person is faking to pay attention during a meeting or a conversation. This person may nod or may express that is paying attention, but is really not doing it. This ends up in an interrupted process since the sender was able to transmit the message, but the receiver did not get it because there was lack of attention. Another example of bad habits is when a listener pays much attention to small details and starts processing them at the point that he or she loses track of the main idea of the message and gets lost in the conversation or meeting. Teachers as well as students should be aware of the existence of these barriers that may affect the learning process of the students. Old enough students should be able to recognize the main barriers that they consider affect o limit their comprehension process. Once

identified those barriers, teachers can help student to find ways to solve them or at list to minimize their effect.

2.4 Teaching Listening Comprehension

After investigating about the process of listening comprehension and the main barriers that can affect it, it is important to contextualize all this in the teaching branch. Some of the most important aspects to consider when thinking of a successful listening comprehension process, is the role of the teacher and the role of the student. Once having those roles clear, it is relevant to mention how interactive teaching can be successful when applied correctly according to the needs of the students and the teachers.

2.4.1 Role of the Teacher

There is no doubt that teaching listening can be a challenge for EFL teachers. Since spoken language is so quick, in seconds, it is not easy to get the ideas and understand them as easy as students may read a text. Djiwandono (2013) mentions that "(…)while written ideas are printed permanently, spoken discourse is basically encoded in a stream of sounds which exist only once within a very short time before they are gone" (p.36). Over time, many strategies and techniques have been proposed for teaching listening. Authors such as Hosseini (2013) mention that listening comprehension, despite being a key element in the process of communication, has sometimes been investigated less than other skills. Nowadays, teachers have learned that listening comprehension is a skill that must be put in practice as much as the other ones.

The role of the teacher in a listening class is very important. Teachers must bear in mind the type of real-life situations that their students might face in further years and try to adapt their

contents according to their needs. Of course, there are other factors to take into consideration such as the arrangement of the classroom, the number of students, the noise, and the level of the students. Students must be always motivated in class, so their minds are open to comprehend all the contents. It is the teacher's job to keep them interested in the class. Participation is another important element. Since listening requires listening skill as well oral production, it is necessary to have participative students in the class. When students find the exercises meaningful in their lives, they get interested. In addition, the teacher must be aware of the English level of the students in order to plan exercises according to them. Exercises should not be so easy that may end up boring them nor so difficult that may lead them to feel frustrated because they cannot understand or they cannot communicate fluently. Part of the teacher's role is to get to know well his/her students and to know the correct time to ask them to participate. Oral classes may turn stressful for students that have a lower level of English; that is why, the activities should be planned for all the students to feel comfortable and to make sure they understand.

2.4.2 Role of the Student

The role of the student is as important as the role of the teacher. It is the teacher's responsibility to keep students interested on their subject; however, students are just English learners that are willing to find a nice and productive way to take advantage of the class. Students are always seeking to have an entertaining class and listening-speaking classes have all the potential to become one of the favorite classes because they can be creative, interactive, and fun. Sometimes students are not aware of their English level. In a 20-student class, there might be students with great ease for learning and expressing in a second language, as well as others that may struggle a bit more.

It is common to see students that have more difficulty in oral production and listening comprehension to react in a more timid way in class. They usually participate less than others and they may feel uncomfortable when they try to speak and they are not understood by the others. All the process of learning a second language needs the development of the four English skills at the same time. They are all important and useful. However, there is no skill learned by default through other. They should all be practiced actively and there are exercises that put them in practice at the same time. There are many barriers that can affect the process of learning. Students from second cycle and on, are old enough to recognize their main difficulties and maybe, they can point them if the teacher makes a type of questionnaire to see to which ones, they feel more familiarized with. Students as well as teachers should be aware of these difficulties in order to find ways to improve them.

2.4.3 Interactive Teaching

Once analyzing the role of the teacher and the most important aspects regarding the position of the student, it is important the type of class that applies best for listening comprehension exercises. Listening comprehension classes must be interactive, so that students may be able to interact with their classmates in a fluent way. These classes must also be dynamic and not boring so that students do not get to lose their interest in the class. In addition, a really important aspect is that students must be able to understand different English accents. Most of the times, they get used to their teacher's accent and when they listen to another person speaking, they feel surprised or they may even think that the second speaker's accent may be inferior or somehow wrong. Djiwandono (2015) states that "…strictly speaking, there is rarely such a thing as a wrong accent: there are simply accents that are more or less removed from the original variety learned" (p. 20). Students should always get in touch with different English Accents;

however, in Costa Rica, they commonly study only the American standard and sometimes a little British. According to Djiwandono (2015), "(…) learners who have some experience in listening to and understanding a number of different accents are more likely to be able to cope successfully with further ones than those who have only heard one or two" (p. 20).

Listening comprehension classes should always be adapted to the interest and reality of the students. As mentioned before, part of the responsibility of the teacher is to get to know his/her students for different reasons. One of them is to know their interests and needs. The main goal is to make the class meaningful enough so that students engage with each planned activity. Another important aspect is to make classes creative. Creativity is a useful tool because it makes students think and create beyond their knowledge, it lets them set their mind free to create, and show what they expect or just think about. Creative classes in which the same students create the speaking situations, where they propose the topics or where they plan things, will make them feel important and more interested in the class as they put in practice what they learn in a more natural way.

2.5 Didactic Strategies

When talking about didactic strategies, first it is important to define the term didactic in order to contextualize the strategies or recommendations for teaching listening comprehension. Medina (2012) defines didactic as "(…) a discipline of pedagogical nature that focuses on the teaching goals and compromise with the aim of better human beings through the understanding and permanent change of the social communicative developments, and the receiving and appropriate growth of the teaching and learning process" (p. 7). In other words, didactic can be defined as a discipline that uses strategies, techniques, and procedures to improve the teaching

process in order to visualize English acquisition as a significant learning process. Navarro and Piñeiro (2012) mention that didactic strategies should be seen as: "(…) on purpose organization of the teaching and learning process structure to achieve goals, in which students not only learn a subject matter, but also gain knowledge of other forgotten contents as the capacity of cooperation, respect for oneself and other`s differences, and value of people as human beings" (p. 234). Therefore, based on the definitions of didactic strategies, it can be mentioned that teachers are in charge of elaborating the ideal procedures to promote the best acquisition of the second language, so that their students will benefit and have equal learning opportunities in their listening comprehension classes.

2.5.2 How are Didactic Strategies Applied in Class

Regarding how didactic strategies are applied in listening comprehension classes, recent advances have been criticizing lessons through the idea that teachers are constantly testing listening rather than teaching how to improve it. It is important to evaluate and measure the level of the students, but it is also necessary to incorporate the teaching of listening strategies. Djiwandono (2015) mentions that it is important to prepare different useful situations that can help students to enhance their listening skills. The first situation that can be helpful is to listen to TOEFL or Cambridge recorded materials where students can skim options and predict what the people will talk about or ask. Then, it is also recommended to listen to a native speaker talking. In this case, it would be nice if the speaker has a different accent than the one the students learn, so they can also study his body language and then make comments about the differences they find in the accent. In addition, they can rephrase the message of the speaker in their own words. Afterwards, the third situation is to listen to a radio broadcast. In this strategy, students can guess missed phrases, they can infer details about of the general idea and something interesting about

this strategy is that students may listen to some colloquial language. Later, they can discuss expressions and informal speaking, which is very important in their communication process.

Once analyzed some general situations, there are also different ways in which teachers can incorporate listening strategies in their lessons. However, before implementing the strategies it is important to build student's basic listening skills, as well as their prior knowledge. This is not a simple process, it is not something that can be done quickly, as it takes time to enhance students' basic skills. Teachers must take into consideration that part of the listening process implies developing listening sub-skills.

White (1998) mentions that there are bottom-up and top-down skills; each one following a different process. The bottom-up process goes from bottom to top until it arrives to a message. Peterson (2001) says that in this process, the listener reaches understanding when he or she follows a sequence that goes from sounds to words to grammatical relations to lexical meaning. On the other hand, the top-down process requires the ability to think about prior information to understand the topic. Then, the listener is able to make predictions about what is going to be said; in other words, the listener can anticipate and deduce the final message. Buck (2001) mentions that he considers that people follow a unique sequence for processing information using bottom-up skills starting from the lowest to the highest level in a process in which people decode the phonemes first, then individual words, and then going higher in syntax to finally understand the meaning of the message.

Brown (2001) suggests that teachers should include both processes in their listening classes to understand better. By experiencing both processes, students will face a series of difficulties that will finally enhance their comprehension. According to Flowerdew and Miller (2005),

> …at the level of the group beginners, they are likely to need to spend more time on developing basic bottom-up skills for decoding. For more advanced learners; however, who have mastered basic phonology and syntax, emphasis on the development of top-down skills of applying schematic knowledge may be more appropriate, although even advanced learners need to work on bottom- up features of fast speech. (27)

Something important to mention is that teachers have to analyze micro skills depending on students' needs. The first thing to do is to identify the aspects that students are failing the most in order to have a clear idea of what can be improved. Some of the most common factors in daily class when listening to an exercise are the following. First, listening to reduced forms of English. It is very common for native speakers to include reduced forms in their oral speech, which represent a difficulty for listeners.

Second, stress, rhythm, and intonation. According to Brown (2001), stress, rhythm, and intonation are important aspects to pay attention to when listening to a speaker. Moreover, students should be attentive in order to identify when the speaker conveys messages like sarcasm, solicitations, or praises. Third, the rate of delivery of the speaker. Sometimes, students cannot follow the speaker if he or she speaks too fast. They try to concentrate and understand each word, but if they cannot follow the speed of the speaker, they lose it. According to Olaya and Mejía (2009), another limiting factor is the lack of vocabulary because listeners think they should understand every word they listen to and they do not know how to infer from context. It is important for learners to enrich the process of learning individual words. One more factor is the lack of concentration. Rost (as quoted by Olaya and Mejía, (1991) writes that learners lose their attention when the topic is not interesting, when they are not able to follow the conversation, or

when they feel worried about answering questions at the point that they do not have enough time to listen.

Brown (2001) presents the micro skills that are involved in listening. They absolutely depend, as mentioned before, on the needs of the group; therefore, the teacher can be able to choose out of the different ones that exist. Here are some of the most remarkable ones according to Brown. To retain chunks of language of different lengths in the short term memory, to discriminate among the distinctive sounds of English, to recognize English stress patterns, words in stressed and unstressed positions and rhythmic structure, to recognize reduced forms of words, to process speech containing pauses, errors, corrections and other performance variables, to recognize grammatical word classes, systems, patterns, rules and elliptical forms, to recognize that a particular meaning may be expressed in different grammatical forms, to recognize cohesive devises in spoken discourse, to infer situations, participants goals using real-world knowledge, to describe predictable outcomes, infer links and connections between events, deduce causes and effects, and detect such relations as a main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification. Finally, to use facial, kinetic and body language and other nonverbal clues to decipher meanings.

Olaya and Mejía propose some bottom-up activities that can be applied in class through different activities. First, they propose dictations. During the dictations, there are missing words that students have to complete. This helps them focus only on the missing word without felling stressed. Moreover, to practice numbers. Students have different options of numbers where they have to underline the number they listen to. In a topic like the professions, to mention an example, they have to tick the correct profession when they listen to the description of the profession. For the topic of daily routines, they mention that students can listen to a story, and

they have to get the missing verbs from the transcript. For verb tenses, students can listen to a sentence and they can tick the picture that contained the represented verb. Finally, the last example is to organize regular verbs in past tense according to its pronunciation /t/, / ɪd/, and /d/.

Before selecting an activity to do in class, teachers must set a specific objective that will be linked to the needs of the students. Teachers must consider that all the students learn in a different way, some their skills are more developed than others. However, it is important to measure, in overall terms, the general skills that the majority of the class need to improve, and then to work on the other skills that can be helpful in order to cover them all along the program. The more they practice, the better they prepare themselves throughout their comprehension process.

After working with micro skills, teachers can focus on more general didactic strategies depending on the level of the students. The strategies that will be mentioned are targeted to an intermediate English level and can be adapted to a simpler or a more complex level. Djiwandono (2015) proposes some strategies that will be taken into consideration in this investigation, as an idea to see if they can be applied further in elementary levels. The first strategy is to build the right schemata. In this type of strategy, the students will enhance their comprehension skills by joining reading and listening at the same time. For this, the teacher prepares students by telling them they will listen to a lecture about a topic. The idea is to get from the students as much as possible from that topic. Before listening, they will read a text about the topic in order to have previous knowledge about it. While listening to the lecture, they will relate what they already read with what they will listen to (p. 44). This fusion of the reading and the listening part will help them comprehend the text better.

The next strategy is to establish correspondence among sounds and written words. Students will enhance the comprehension of sounds and will familiarize with the accent of the speaker. Even better if the accent is a different one from the one they are used to. First, the teacher gives the students a handout where they will have the transcript of the text they will listen to. The teacher tells the students to pay close attention to the pronunciation of words while reading the transcript for the first time. After that, the teacher will give out a second handout where some general grammatical structures and parts of speech are omitted. Students have to complete the missing parts while listening for the second time. Once finished this exercise, the teacher will give out a third handout with very little text and student will fill in the missing text while listening for the first time (p.44).

The third strategy involves students' interaction, and it is based in cooperative learning. Students will learn from their partners. This is a very enriching exercise; however, it may work better for higher levels. To start, the teacher makes pairs. Then, the students will listen to an audio clip while taking notes of the information for later exchanging the main ideas of the text. When sharing the information, they must also mention the strategies that they used to get the spoken message. The main goal of students sharing the strategies is for them to learn from each other. Sometimes students do not know how to explain what they did, and the idea is to make them conscious about how their brain works. Since this strategy was tested in Djiwandono's research, the results were very interesting. Some of the strategies mentioned by the subjects of study were: listening carefully, thinking in English, using previous knowledge about the topic, taking quick notes, catching the key words, thinking about the topic before listening to activate prior knowledge and listening to the whole sentence before taking notes (p. 45).

There is another strategy used for making learners familiarized with spoken utterances at a normal rate delivery and it is the use of subtitles when listening to a video or part of a movie where people normally speak at a normal rate. The teacher will play the movie or video and will turn on the subtitles, so the students can match the subtitles with the speech. After a first attempt, the teacher will play the video again, but this time with the subtitles off. Finally, the teacher will ask different questions to the students for them to exchange ideas and answer the questions. The teacher will test how much information they were able to get (p. 46).

The last proposed listening strategy is to infer the missing parts. Inferring makes students think about what happened before by making up their own conclusions. This strategy is very useful because for inferring a part of a text, as students must comprehend what they listen to accurately. To start, the teacher plays only the last half of the audio and then tells the students to infer what happened in the first part. This strategy is important because sometimes listeners miss parts of a discourse and inferring helps them understand the general idea even if they have missed parts. At the end, students share ideas on how they were able to infer the missing parts, the clues that helped them, as well as the prior knowledge they had about the topic (p. 46). As a conclusion, it can be mentioned that all the strategies proposed by Djiwandono can be very useful for teachers to take into consideration in their listening comprehension classes. As strategies, they all involve different skills to be practiced. The activities can be used to teach them how to understand better through interactive practice using creative dynamics.

2.5.2 Resources Used by Teachers

Whenever a teacher receives a group, the teacher must take some time for pretesting students. The goal is to get an idea, in this case, of the English level of the students. Teachers

must be able to identify the students' main barriers that limit their learning process. Once the teacher has tested the level of the students through different activities, the teacher can have a clear idea on how to prepare his/her class. Preparing classes implies that teachers have to adapt the contents and select the resources that students may need. Resources support student learning process and help teachers to explain a topic, as well as to illustrate and put in practice the information. A teaching resource is defined by Kurdziolek (2011) as " a generic term used to describe the resources teachers use to deliver instruction" (p. 685). Teaching resources must always be adapted to the specific need of the students. A didactic resource is different than a material. It is important to state the difference because sometimes people get confused. The resource is something that is used for achieving an objective. On the other hand, a material is something that can be shaped or manipulated in making something and does not necessarily have a specific objective.

Gómez, S. (2010) mentions that students today were born in a digital era and they are considered "native speakers" of the digital language of computers, video games. and the internet. (p. 21). All of us grown-ups that were not born into the digital world have been adapted to the new technologies to be competent enough to understand younger people. The same happens in the teacher-student relationship because sometimes teachers do not know the interests of the students and how they may take advantage of technological resources. Teachers always have to be updated in order to understand their students and to guide them wisely in their use of technology.

Long time ago, audio tapes were a very common resource used by listening comprehension teachers, they were considered ideal for their lessons. Throughout time, these resources have been used less and now there are many other resources available that are more

modern and equally or even more helpful. Now that most students have been improving their technological skills through the use of computers and tablets for their virtual classes, it is easier for them to have access to different platforms and resources that can be included in class. What students really need for interactive digital classes is what they have been recently acquiring: an electronic device, internet access, and a set of headphones. For students, to get used to ICTs is no something difficult because they already have ease for everything that is digital.

On the other side, teachers have also been participating in webinars and trainings to be able to use efficiently new applications and web-based resources. It has not been easy for teachers to cope with technological challenges throughout time, but it is just a matter of having the right attitude to learn everything that is needed . Gomez, S. mentions that in teaching a foreign language "listening skills are very difficult to teach and master" (p. 30). However, the quantity and variety of material that can be found online is huge and it can be adapted to the basic needs of the students, as mentioned before. Teachers can simplify their lessons when they have resources like listening exercises with questions and answers, tape scripts, translations of texts, vocabulary exercises, videos etc.

Nik Peachey (2019) suggests different resources that are freely available for teachers and students who want to improve listening skills. The first one is an app called Lyrics Training, where teachers or students can choose a song in different languages, they can watch the video of the song, and then try to reconstruct the lyrics. They have some opportunities to complete the lyrics and they do not get bored while having a creative class. This exercise can be very interesting; although, the teacher must be conscious that students may complete the lyric without understanding its meaning, so it is also important to give some extra time to discuss the main

ideas of the lyrics, to talk about the details and take full advantage of all the elements of the activity.

Another suggestion is “Listen Notes,” which is a browser of podcasts with a wide variety of topics for teachers to assign or for students to look for according to their interest. This is a very useful resource because teachers can create many activities and exercises after listening to a podcast. They have authentic information, a natural pace for speaking, and a variety of accents that students can listen to (p.2). Moreover, according to Peachey, there is an app called Accent Rosie, and it is useful for students that use Facebook because it links to Messenger, and sends short audio clips. They should take notes of main ideas and then they send their notes back to see how much they got correct.

Once mentioned some options of teacher resources for using in class, it is relevant to say that teachers always have the choice to look for the best resources for improving in class. It all depends on the level of the students, the access they have to technology, and most important, to the needs of the students. Teachers have to act as analyzers for detecting what each group needs to improve. They have to implement strategies for specific needs and later, plan and adapt the necessary resources for those needs.

CHAPTER III

Methodological Framework

The process of research requires time for reading, as well as for investigating the main objectives mentioned in the first chapter. In this chapter, it will be described the type of research that has been elaborated and the different information sources consulted. In addition, there is a description of the instruments that will be used for collecting information, and the organization of the categories of analysis.

3.1 Research Approach

This research is classified as a qualitative research due to the nature of the investigation that takes place. Cresswell (2013) defines a qualitative research as "(…) a research method to explore and understand the meaning that some individuals or groups of people think come from social or human problems" (p. 28). The base of a qualitative investigations starts with one or more questions that will lead the direction of the investigation process. The information is collected and analyzed in order to be able to answer the research questions by the end of the process.

Another type of research is the quantitative research. Sibanda (2009) mentions that a quantitative research "focuses on gathering numerical data and generalizing it across groups of people" (p. 2). This type of research has a defined research question and all the aspects are designed before collecting data. Data are mostly numbers and statistics. In this type of project, the concepts are analyzed widely (p.3). Quantitative investigations require specific data and specific populations to study. It takes time to develop these investigations since the instruments

and the numbers should be precise in order to analyze the quantitative results. As a third type of investigation, there is the mixed type of research. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) mention that " (…) mixed methods combine qualitative and quantitative approaches in the methodology of a study (such as in the data collection stage)" (p. x). It all depends on the nature and the topic of the investigation to choose the most appropriate approach that a research must follow. Investigators should contemplate elements like the purpose of the research, the time they have to carry out the research, the population of study as well as the data collection process.

3.2 Research Design

The present investigation will be based on the action and descriptive types of research. Action research is defined by Cochran-Smith & Lytle quoted by Klein (2012) as a "(…) systematic, intentional inquiry designed to bring about practical improvements, innovation, change or development or social practice" (p. 297). In this investigation project, the action research is directed to the practical improvement of students; therefore, it is categorized in this type of research design. Additionally, this investigation also follows the descriptive type, since it is more analytic, and it is focused on a research question and the collected information will be analyzed and not precisely quantified. Monsen and Van Horn (2008) refer to descriptive research telling that "(…) descriptive research often illustrates a relevant, but nonquantified topic involving a well-focused research question. Once the research topic is identified, the research design is determined, the protocol is carefully developed, and a pilot study is undertaken" (p. 5). According to these authors, important examples of descriptive investigations are descriptive epidemiologic research and qualitative research studies.

An important part of the process of investigation of a qualitative nature is the observation. In this investigation process, an observation will take place while fifth students are participating in their English class, specifically when they start their Cambridge preparation for their first English certification next year. It is necessary to observe the English lessons to understand the dynamics, the strategies used, and the outcome of the students in class. After the observation stage, students will be pretested through a listening comprehension practice in British accent to measure their English level. Afterwards, they will complete a questionnaire to mention the main barriers or factors that they consider, limit them the most when trying to understand listening comprehension exercises in British accent. Later on, considering the main barriers this group of students has, the strategies that best fit their needs will be analyzed. Once selected the best strategies to cope with their specific needs, some material will be suggested for students to test and measure if there was improvement in the main difficulties they had in their listening comprehension skills. After testing some instruments, students will make a post test in order to organize the results and to verify if the suggested resources and strategies worked well for their preparation.

3.3 Information Resources

The information sources are very important to develop an investigation. There are different types of sources where information can be gathered such as written resources, people interviews, observations, among others. There are primary, secondary, and tertiary sources.

3.3.1 Primary sources

The first ones are the primary sources. According to Roe and Ouden (2018), primary sources “provide first-hand observation or investigation. They are produced by people who have

direct experience of the events or issues under discussion" (p. 32). Primary sources provide direct information of the topic under investigation. The books and journals consulted or even interviews made to people count as primary sources if they help to construct the investigation with important information. The primary sources of the present investigation are the students, as they are the object under study. They will provide the most valuable information since they are the ones that are going to be studied and the ones that will be tested and analyzed. Another example of primary source could be an interview to the teachers that work with the object of study group because they have first-hand information from the point of view of the teacher that is as important as the information provided by the students.

3.3.2 Secondary sources

The next type of sources is the secondary sources. Roe and Ouden (2018) mention that "Secondary sources are created by people who have indirect or second-hand experience of the subject" (p. 32). These resources are a little more distant that the primary sources. The knowledge of the authors is indirect and they do not bring first-hand access to the subject; however, the information is still related somehow. For instance, a person that reads a book and gives a perspective of the book in a magazine, newspaper, or any other publication is a secondary resource. This person did not write the information analyzed, he/she just mentioned it and is giving an opinion on the information.

Not only opinions count, but they can also use the information as base for another point of view or for contrasting it to another topic. One example is the book "Academic Writing" that quotes relevant authors that define the types of sources, and the authors of this book give an opinion based on the quotation they made. Moreover, Roe and Ouden mention that secondary

sources can be classified as popular or academic material. Investigators should learn the difference between them, and, in the case of students, it is recommended for them to look for academic material when they are carrying out an investigation. It is important for teachers to explain the main differences between the types of resources to students. Students should manage and distinguish between the primary, secondary, and tertiary sources.

3.3.3 Tertiary Sources

The third type of sources is the tertiary sources. Roe and Ouden (2018) state that "These resources are often a useful place to start when researching a topic as they can help students locate primary and secondary resources" (p. 31). Some examples of tertiary sources include dictionaries, encyclopedias, almanacs, bibliographies, indexed, guidebooks, textbooks, and manuals.

The three types of sources are very useful during an investigation. Most of the times, investigators use the three of them because an investigation requires a lot of information and from different types. Investigators must be very careful when they choose their sources. They have to verify they are trust worthy and they must always keep in mind the type of source they are consulting as well as its purpose.

3.4 Analysis Categories

In a research, it is necessary to mention the categories of analysis, since these concepts summarize the main topics the investigation will be about. For the purpose of the research, there are two categories of analysis which are: British accent and listening comprehension.

3.4.1 British Accent

It is well known that English has different variations according to the region where it is spoken. In the case of British English, Huges (2012) mentions that "(…) it is strictly speaking, a geographical term referring only to the principal island of the United Kingdom (UK) the political term for the state that is composed of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland" (p. 1)

3.4.2 Listening Comprehension

According to Kim and Pilcher (2016), listening comprehension can be defined as "one's ability to comprehend spoken language at the discourse level -including conversations, stories and informational oral texts- that involves the processes of extracting and constructing meaning" (p. 3).

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments are commonly used to measure and to analyze different processes along a study. In the case of this investigation, the researcher will use different instruments to carry out the research that will be applied at Colegio Internacional SEK Costa Rica within a group of twenty-one fifth grade students. The instruments that will be used consist of an observation checklist to observe general aspects about a normal listening class with their English teacher to understand the common dynamic the teacher uses in class. Students will then complete a survey in which they will express how they feel about their English class in order to identify the main limitations from their points of view. Later on, the researcher will develop five different activities that will include pre-listening activities with the objective of improving the student's preparation for the listening activities and therefore, its understanding. After each activity, students will complete an instrument with closed and open questions to identify the main

difficulties in the exercise and the elements from the class that were helpful for them. Finally, they will take a post-test survey to measure if there was improvement throughout the activities and the applied activities.

3.5.1 Observation Checklist

Observation checklists are very useful when making an investigation. Kaptelinin (1999) mentions that there are activity and evaluation checklists, and they are usually combined with other techniques. They can help to identify the most relevant issues to be covered in an interview or to collect data in an observational study (p. 29). In this particular investigation, the checklist will be used during the observation phase, where the researcher will observe the natural development of an English class to determine the frequency of different class elements. The checklist will include elements like the participation of the students in the class. In addition, it will be considered the English accent the teacher uses, which is a key element for the results of the investigation. Furthermore, the interaction among the teacher and the students and some general comments that may rise from the observation phase. Consequently, it is expected to get a general view of the development of the class in order to analyze if such elements are present and how frequent. It is very useful to get an idea of how they affect or benefit the listening comprehension skills of the students and if they are somehow related to their comprehension process of English as a second language.

3.5.2 Pre-Test Survey

Once analyzed the class environment and the student-teacher interaction, there comes the pre-test instrument. Lange (2016) defines pre-test as a tool with which you can observe or grade topics before teaching them in order to have a starting point (p. 99). As the pre-test instrument,

the students will take a survey. Sheuren (2004) mentions that surveys are used most often to describe a method of gathering information from a sample of individuals (p. 9). He later states that “most surveys are not public opinion polls, but they are directed to a specific administrative, commercial or scientific purpose” (p. 10). In this case, a group of twenty-one students will be the specific population of the survey in study.

The pre-test survey will help the researcher to measure how the students feel about the class and also what they consider difficult out of the listening activities. Students will express if they like the class or not. Moreover, they will choose out of the options, the factors that mainly affect their understanding of the listening activities. During this point, the students will take a 10-question survey with open and closed questions. It is expected to gather data to determine the main factors that affect students in their listening comprehension process and the specific areas where they struggle the most.

3.5.3 Post-Test

The post test will be applied after five different activities. First, the pre-listening activities to enhance British accent preparation will be implemented before the listening exercises and further on, there will be an instrument applied as a post-test for each activity. It is expected for students to express how they felt after each listening activity. Consequently, the results will show if the activities applied helped them to overcome some of the difficulties they were facing. There are aspects to be analyzed like the times it took for them to understand the audio, elements like the pronunciation of the speaker, the speed, or even the class environment out of the which they have to choose the ones that were more difficult or made it difficult for them to understand. On the other hand, they will also select the ones that were easier for them to understand.

3.5.4 Questionnaire

After analyzing and identifying the main limitations that students have, it is important to measure if the pre-listening activities implemented during the lessons were useful enough to enhance their preparation to develop their British listening skills appropriately and with less difficulty. By the end of the process, the students will complete a questionnaire. Kristensen (2010) defines a questionnaire as "a tool for improvement of the working conditions for thousands of employees and for increasing the productivity of the companies" (p.149). It is expected that the completion of the questionnaire shows the activities that were more useful and which ones not so much to let students better understand the exercises they are working on for their preparation process for the Cambridge certification.

3.6 Collection Data Process and Data Analysis

The process of collecting data is very important in an investigation. All the results, conclusions, analysis, and recommendations will be based on all the gathered information in the research. To start, there will be an observation, where the researcher will get a general impression of the development of a normal English class at Colegio Internacional SEK in fifth grade. The observation will be specifically in a listening comprehension class, where the class environment will be observed; in other words, the interaction among the students and the teacher, their active participation in the class, and the frequency in which they speak in English. Furthermore, it will be observed the attitude of the students towards the class, if they feel comfortable, and if it seems that they understand the instructions and the exercises. Moreover, the accent and pronunciation of the teacher will be taken into consideration, since their listening comprehension classes include exercises in British English; consequently, it is important to get an idea of the accent they

normally use to interact. The researcher will complete a checklist to establish the frequency of all the mentioned aspects.

As a second step, after observing their usual development of the class and completing the checklist, the students will be given a 10-question general survey as a pre-test with open and closed questions regarding their feelings about the English class. They will comment if they like the class or not, what they like the most or the least about it. In addition, if they consider they have difficulties for the listening comprehension exercises done in class and what they think makes it harder to understand. The objective of this survey is to determine how the students feel towards the class, and to get an idea of their prior knowledge and impressions of the class.

Later on, as a third step, the researcher will work on five different pre-listening activities to anticipate and to prepare the students better towards the listening activities. Each activity will be carried out on a different day, about a different topic. After each listening activity, they will complete a performance instrument that is equivalent to the post-test of each day. The first one will be about professions. The researcher will introduce the vocabulary words of the professions through descriptions. Once the students have the background of the professions and their possible changes in pronunciation in British accent, as well as some changes in their names, the objective is to make it easier for them to understand the listening exercise that develops a whole conversation about professions. Once the students complete the first activity, they will fill in the instrument that will ask about their performance in the listening exercise. The questions will be about the aspects they found hard to understand and the time it took to them to answer. The same instrument will be completed after each activity.

The second activity is about telling time topic. The students will get a whole explanation on how telling the time changes from American English to British English and that there are

different ways to tell it, and they are all accepted. After the students do some pair work practicing telling the time in different ways, they will complete the listening exercise where they have to tick the box of the time mentioned in a conversation. At the end, they will complete the instrument to measure their performance. The third activity will be about food. Students will brainstorm ideas about different types of food, and they will describe them. After that, the researcher will include some food from the listening activity to reinforce vocabulary and its changes in the accent in some specific cases. Once the students feel familiarized with the vocabulary, they will work on the listening exercise in which two people have a conversation about different dishes and they have to select the mentioned one. Once finished the activity, they will complete the performance instrument.

The fourth activity will be about weather. Students will show their prior knowledge through questions the researcher will ask to them. Then, they will do an outdoor game where they act according to the instructions. After all the vocabulary is clear and practiced, they will continue with the listening exercise and the completion of the performance instrument. The last activity will be on school supplies vocabulary. To activate prior knowledge, they will play a Kahoot and then they will match the names with the pictures of the supplies. After doing that, they will do the listening exercise where they have to answer the questions according to the conversation, and finally, they will complete the performance instrument. Once all the activities are performed and evaluated with the performance instrument after each of them, the students will have a final questionnaire to complete. It is similar to the pre-test survey but with some different questions related to what they considered was useful out of the pre-listening activities they made. The main purpose is to extract their performance opinions to measure how useful the pre-listening British English activities were.

CHAPTER IV

Data Analysis

4.1 Analysis and Interpretation of the Results

In the following section, all the instruments mentioned in the previous chapter will be explained in more detail. There was a total of twenty-one students in a class of fifth grade who participated in the investigation. The students' names will not be mentioned, but they will be called S1 for Student 1, and, therefore, with the same sequence. The question that this researcher aims to answer is: How can British accent be implemented in students of fifth grade to improve listening comprehension skills at Colegio Internacional SEK during the second quarter of 2022? Therefore, all the phases of the process will be explained, that is the observation checklist, the pre-test, the post-test, and finally the questionnaire results in order to come up with some important conclusions and recommendations that may be implemented in the school to improve the listening comprehension skills in British English of the current students, as well as of future generations.

4.1.1 Observation Checklist

The first part of the data collection process was to observe the class in their natural environment with their formal teacher. It is relevant to consider some general aspects of the students. Colegio Internacional SEK Costa Rica is a private bilingual and international school. Students normally receive ten English lessons a week; approximately two lessons a day, and they also have other classes in English like Science. Considering the number of lessons they have in

English as a second language, it can be expected for these students to have an adequate, fluent and competent English level.

The main purpose of the observation was to understand the dynamics of the class and to know the common interaction among the teacher and the students. The first thing that was noticed, was that the distribution of the class. They were sitting in five rows, all facing to the front. The class has a really good illumination with windows in the right side of the class. It is big enough for the students to hang their backpacks and to have good space for moving freely around the class. Their lockers are outside; therefore, they constantly move in and out at specific times to get their textbooks. The population consisted specifically of twenty-one students out of the which ten were girls and eleven were boys. They were sitting in specific spaces assigned by their tutor teacher, who based on the student's needs to choose their seat. Their tutor mentioned that there was only one student (a boy) with educational support that was sitting in front of the class. This student requires extra support when explaining instructions and also special attention when he is solving an exercise; moreover, he needs to be encouraged and motivated all the time to solve the exercises with more confidence. Figure 1 below shows the class distribution according to their gender.

Figure 1

Distribution of the students according to their gender

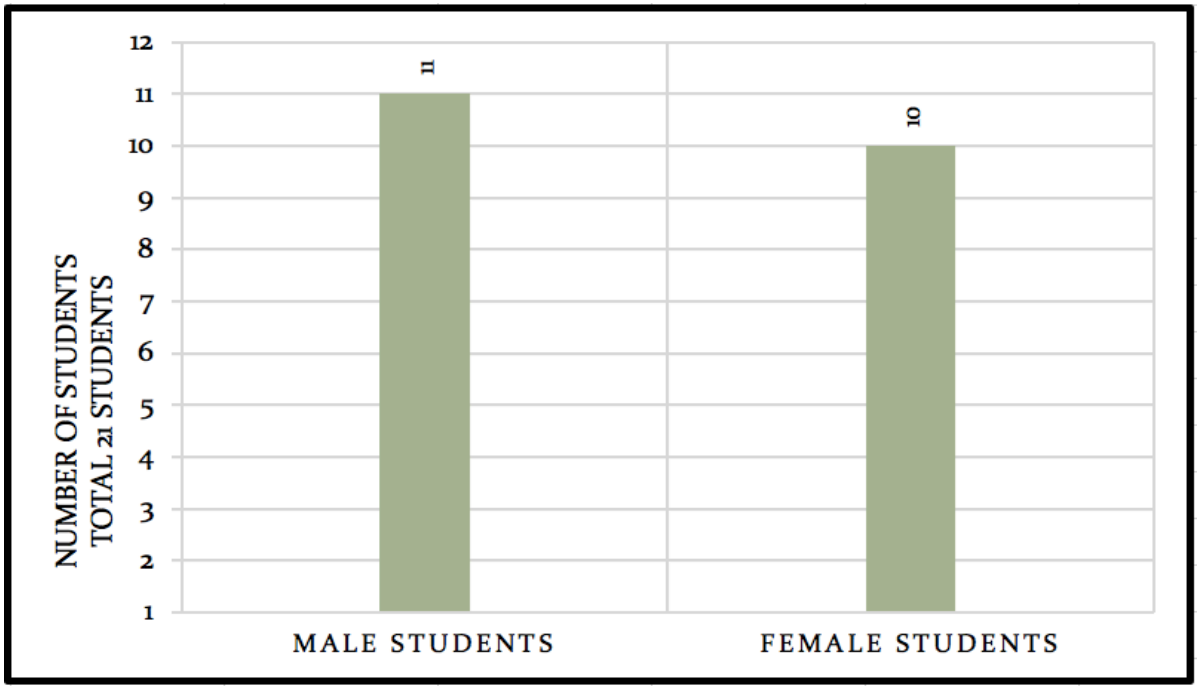


Figure 1 Male and female students in the English class. Source: Researcher's own creation

Once described the population, the dynamics of the class will be analyzed. The first relevant aspect is that the teacher communicates in English all the time. This was something expected, as it is a bilingual school; therefore, teachers must speak in English all the time and they should avoid translation. Moreover, they should find a way to explain concepts by using other ways like explaining by using other words, gestures, pictures, examples, among others. This teacher spoke in American English. Although, she is not a native speaker, she speaks very fluently and with very pleasant pronunciation for everyone to understand. She has a good voice projection, good volume, good articulation of sounds, and a fluent-fast speed when speaking. When she explained or repeated something, she slowed down. As the teacher communicated fully in English, the students were supposed to communicate in English, as well all the time. However, there were some students that spoke in Spanish in a first instance, until they were told to speak in English. Others started to speak in English and since they had a long idea to explain, they tried to

end it up in Spanish. The teacher encouraged them to communicate in English and she helped them a lot to complete their ideas in English. There was only one girl that started speaking in Spanish and when the teacher said: "English please," she preferred not to participate even when they teacher offered help. It is possible that she felt embarrassed for having a person observing the class.

When the teacher started the class, she said that the class would be related to sports. When the teacher asked for volunteer participation for answering random questions about sports, only seven students raised their hands and six of them were boys. Most of the boys answered that their favorite sport was soccer. One of them said football and the others corrected him by telling it was called soccer, as football is for "American football." It can be seen that the participation was low and mostly from boys, as maybe it was not such an appealing topic for girls. After students shared their ideas, it was time for the teacher to start explaining the exercise. That day, they were doing a listening exercise about sports. When the teacher said they were going to do a listening exercise, some students made sounds like disliking the activity, as when someone thinks something is boring. The others did not say anything, but they paid attention and seemed to be interested in the activity. Even though, some of them did not look excited, they all seemed to understand the instructions provided by the teacher all the time. She said that they were going to listen to a news report and that they had to circle the letter with the correct description.

Besides the introductory questions, there was no other pre-listening activity or reinforcement for the exercise. The exercise was a news report in British English at a fast speed and people talked about different sports. The teacher gave them a handout and played the audio on the smart board with high volume. Judging by the faces and expressions of the students, most of them showed difficulty the first time they listened to the conversation. Around seven of them

said “what?” in the middle of the exercise when they did not understand parts of it. Only three students were able to complete the whole exercise. The second time, nine students were able to answer the questions. The teacher then gave some clues for the most difficult questions. Later, they listened to the audio for a third time. This time, other six students were able to complete the exercise. Three students said that there were questions they definitely could not answer. At the end, they checked together, and the teacher repeated some of the script slower and with her pronunciation, so the students could understand the missing questions. She explained some vocabulary words and everything was clearer for them. They gave their opinions about the exercise and said that it was hard to understand. At the end, every student was able to complete the exercise at his/ her own time, and with the right support, but it was evident that this type of exercises was difficult for them to understand fluently.

Figure 2 below shows the number of students who were able to complete the whole exercise the first time the audio was played, as well as the second and the third time, as well as the number of students who completed it only with the help of the teacher.

Figure 2
Exercise completion

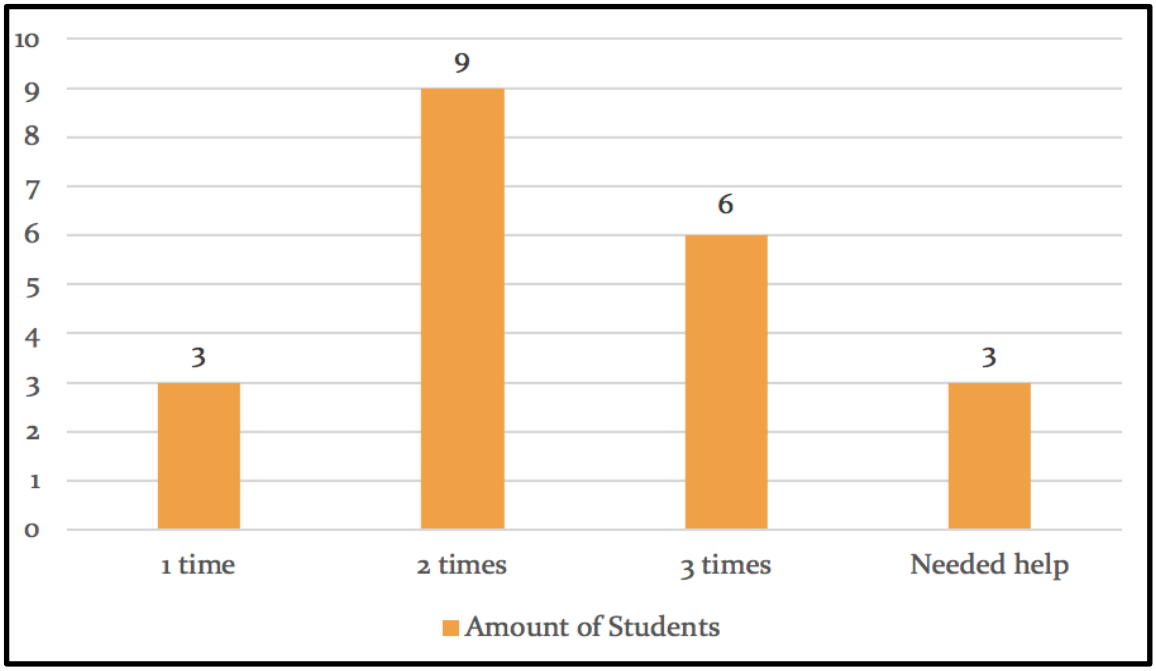


Figure 2 Number of times it took to students to complete listening exercises. Source: Researcher's own creation

4.1.2 Pre-test

The main purpose of the pre-test was to measure the background of the students, to identify the elements that according to their point of view are affecting them the most, as well as to scan if they were familiarized with the British accent in other context; for example, by watching movies, videos, or listening to songs in English or any other way. Then, the English areas they liked more or less. Before starting the pre-test, it was explained to the students that they were going to complete some questions about how they felt in the class, and that they did not have to worry if their answers were not positive. In addition, the researcher made clear that it was important for students to be honest when answering. With the very first question that said: Do you like English class? Why? Some of them started to look at each other in a nervous way

and to their teacher. The teacher said: It is nothing personal, so do not worry if you answer no, just be honest. Some of them laughed a little, because it seemed they did not want the teacher to feel bad if they answered no. Someone asked: May I write so-so? The researcher said "yes, but explain why."

Figure 3

Students opinion about English class

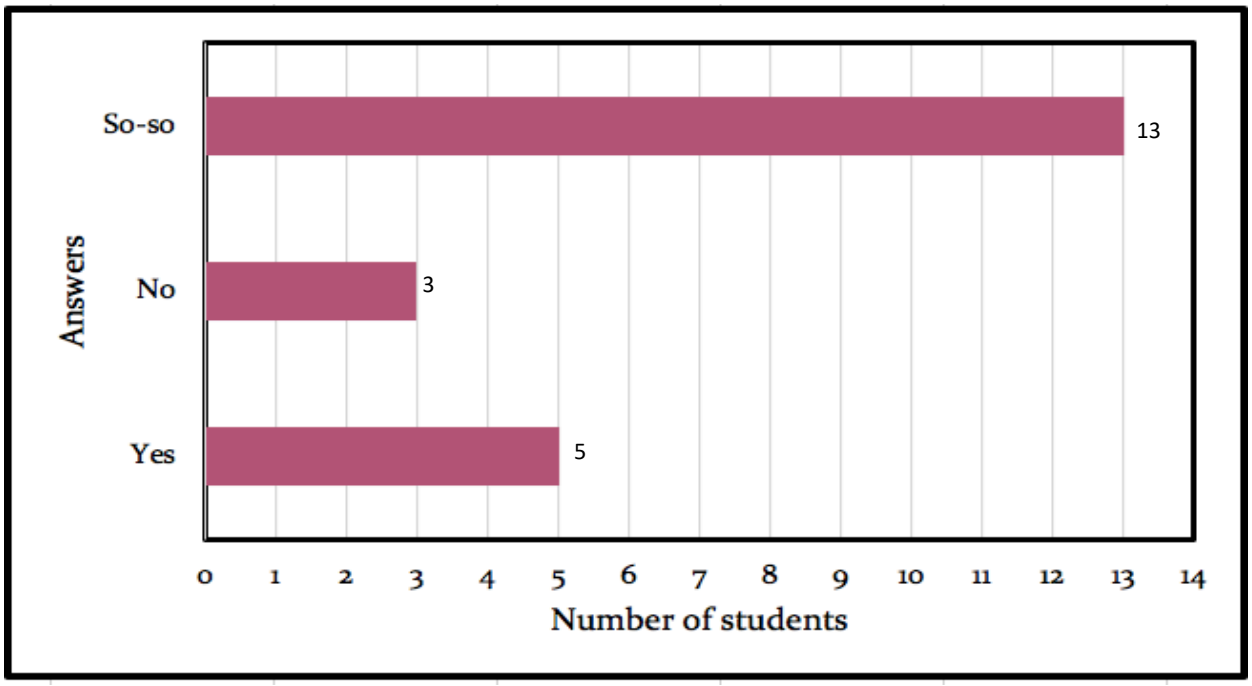


Figure 3 Answers provided by students whether they liked English class or not. Source: Researcher's own creation

In Figure 3 above, it can be seen that five students said they like English class, as they liked the teacher; student 3 said that her parents wanted her to speak more in English; and student 9 also thought about her parents and answered that it was her parents' dream for her to learn English. Moreover, students 1 and 12 said yes because they liked to speak in English and it was easy for them. Students 4, 14, and 17 of said no, they did not like English class because it was boring. Another reason was that they sometimes did not understand, and that it was difficult. Furthermore, thirteen students were not so sure and said so-so, for different reasons. They said

that sometimes they did funny activities, but sometimes the activities were boring. In addition, they stated that they had too many topics to study, and others said that they had to read too much and sometimes they fell asleep.

As a general idea, it can be concluded that most of the students somehow liked the class due to different reasons, but there were also reasons for disliking it. When the results of the pre-test were shared with the teacher and the researcher mentioned how the students felt, she said that she agreed with the students in the sense that this year, English class had increased its level. The books changed for ones with a higher level of English. Since this is an international school, Costa Rican books had to change to equal the English books used in other countries. The readings from the book are very long. They usually listened to the readings in American English and the teacher constantly had to stop when reading to explain each page and to make sure they were following the ideas. She accepted that leveling them this year has been a challenge and that even though, they have ten lessons a week, sometimes there is not enough time for covering everything they have to do. She also thanked in advance all the findings and the ideas to improve her student's listening skills.

Another question was about the English area they liked more. Curiously, most of them answered "listening" and rated it in first place of the areas with seventeen votes, then reading was in second place with three votes, and only one vote was for speaking. The teacher said that normally for the speaking area, they have a bimestrial speech where they have an assigned a topic and they have to speak for four minutes. This is part of their bimestrial test and sometimes they get very nervous. The answers reflected that only student enjoyed this type of assignments. In figure 4, it can be seen how students chose the English area they liked more.

Figure 4

English Areas

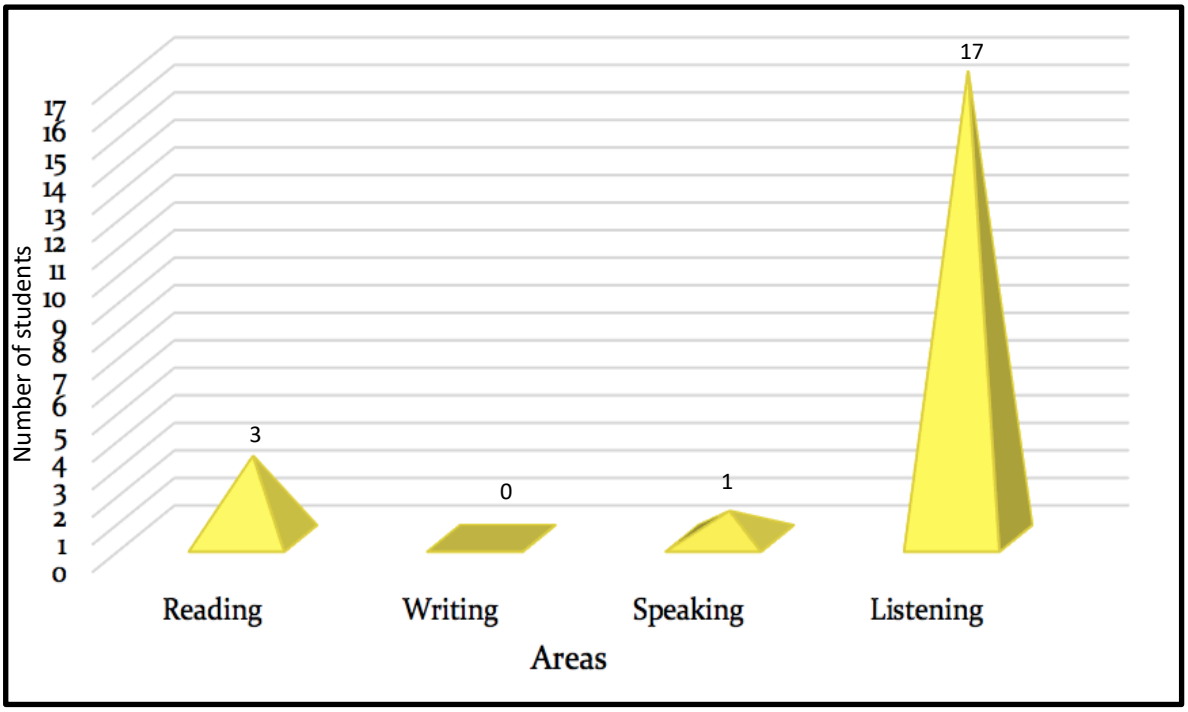


Figure 4 English areas students like more. Source: Researcher's own creation

On the other hand, it was also important to identify the area of English that students liked less. This is a very important finding because it is necessary for any teacher to be aware of this fact. In this case, eighteen students answered that their least favorite area was writing, then in second place two answered reading, and one student answered speaking. No one listed listening as the one they liked less. In further talk with the teacher, she confirmed that reading is an activity that turns really boring to them. At this point, they are supposed to write a well-structured paragraph that includes a topic sentence, from eight to ten supporting details, transition words, and a concluding sentence. They are really good at writing, but they do not like doing it. They have to be creative and express themselves and that is something that sometimes is boring for them. The teacher said that this particular result was expected.

Figure 5

English Areas

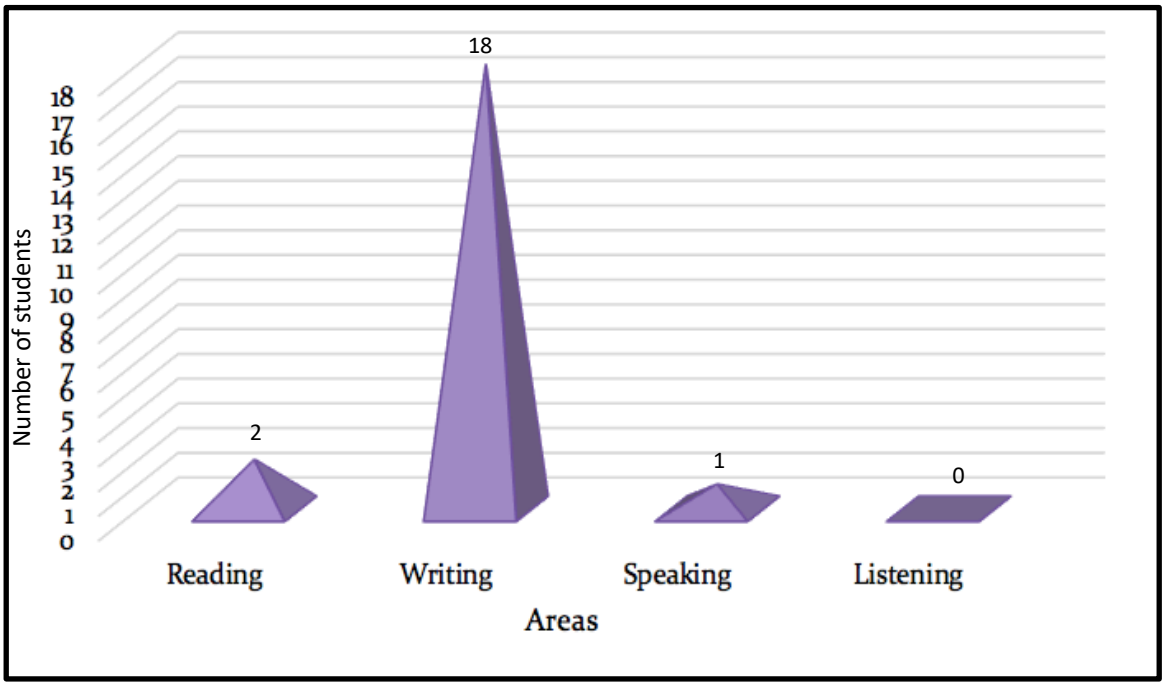


Figure 5 English areas students like less. Source: Researcher's own creation

Besides obtaining the result of the areas they liked more or less, they were also asked how they normally felt before doing a listening exercise. The options were: excited, interested, nervous, frustrated, or other. This was an important question because the feeling they have before doing an exercise reflects what they expect form it. Seven students mentioned that they felt frustrated; five, said nervous; and four, answered interested. Moreover, student 18 said "calm because I like British English." In addition, two other students said bored, and student 1 was the only one that answered excited. As it can be seen, there is a variety of feelings around solving the exercises. Only one student was excited about solving them, and the others were not so positive about it. This means that students already have an idea of what the exercise will be, or probably they already have on their minds that it is going to be difficult. It can be told, after knowing the answers given by seven students, that they felt frustrated and other four nervous, as they had a

negative attitude or sensation before listening for the first time. This result can be related to the beginning, when it was mentioned that students who are motivated can give better results. In this case, it would be important to work on the students' self-confidence and preparation to build the confidence they lack.

Students were asked if they liked the listening exercises, due to this investigation is primarily based on listening skills and, thus this was an important result. Six students said that they liked them, five students said "no," and ten answered "so-so." They were also asked for the reasons. Consequently, for example, from the ones that said "yes," student 6 mentioned that she did not have to read, so that was why she liked them and student 11 said that she liked to listen to other people speaking. Moreover, another reason was that they were fun. In addition, the students that mentioned "no," as well as the ones that answered "so-so," shared the same reason, which was "listening exercises are difficult." That means that a total of fifteen students consider listening exercises difficult to understand; this represents 75% of the students who really struggle to understand the listening exercises. This is a big percentage of the class that requires support. It is well-known that students constantly learn about new topics, or sometimes they struggle with processes like mathematics. In the case of English, the process is indirect; in the sense that it starts consciously little by little, for example learning some words. Then, they add the grammatical structure of a sentence. When time passes, they combine everything, and are able to understand the complete message. There comes a moment when they even infer meanings and ideas that they do not fully know and that is when comprehension is mastered at some level. However, this requires a lot of practice too.

Table 1 below shows exactly the distribution of answers to see how many students liked or not listening exercises.

Table 1

Students who like listening exercises

Answers:	So-so	Yes	No
Total of students	10 students	6 students	5 students

Table 1 Answers provided by the students in the pre-test. Source: Researcher's own creation

It is really important for a teacher or any researcher to understand the likes of the students. In this case, the attitude of the students made a big difference in their class participation. As it was seen, around the third part of the class participated in the first observation period. One of the goals is to encourage students to participate more and take advantage of its benefits. When students participate more, it means that they like the class, they understand the topic, and they are willing to share what they learned or know. There is a straight line between participation and understanding. Many teachers like to assess through oral activities or dynamics where students indirectly share what they learned. It does not have to be the typical written exam for the teacher to assess the topics. On the other hand, standardized written tests sometimes do not fully prove if a student was able to understand a topic or a skill. When assessing skills like listening comprehension, the student demonstrates understanding through different exercises. For example, just by having a coherent fluent conversation, a teacher can assess if the student is able to comprehend the message and therefore, to give an answer or to continue with the conversation itself. In the specific case of this investigation, students must improve in understanding of English with British accent, because they already understand American Accent. The differences are mostly in pronunciation, vocabulary changes, and language use. The teacher is not a native British accent speaker which makes it more difficult to assess their comprehension through oral

activities only. That is the reason why, the researcher needed to use the material from their Cambridge guidelines and to add some extra pre-listening preparation activities.

Once analyzed the areas they like or not, it was also necessary to consider the students' point of view regarding difficulty. They were asked about the factor they considered harder to understand during a listening exercise. The options were the speed of the speaker when speaking, the accent of the speaker, the vocabulary the speaker uses, and the volume of the voice of the speaker. Consequently, Figure 6 shows that most of the students, 20 out of 21 said the accent was the hardest part to understand from the exercises. Only Student 9 mentioned that for him it was the speed of the speaker what made it harder for him to understand. This question had four options and the fact that 20 students have answered the same, really determines that the accent and not having so much familiarization with it is a very limiting factor for them. Something interesting happened when the researcher was reading this specific question to the students, as they were practically all saying the answer aloud. When the researcher said: "Option A, the speed," it was heard as a choir: "No;" and when the researcher said: "Option B, the accent," it was also heard as a choir and louder: "Yes." Therefore, it can be concluded that it is truly a general issue for the class, and it has to be worked on.

Figure 6

Elements that affect understanding process

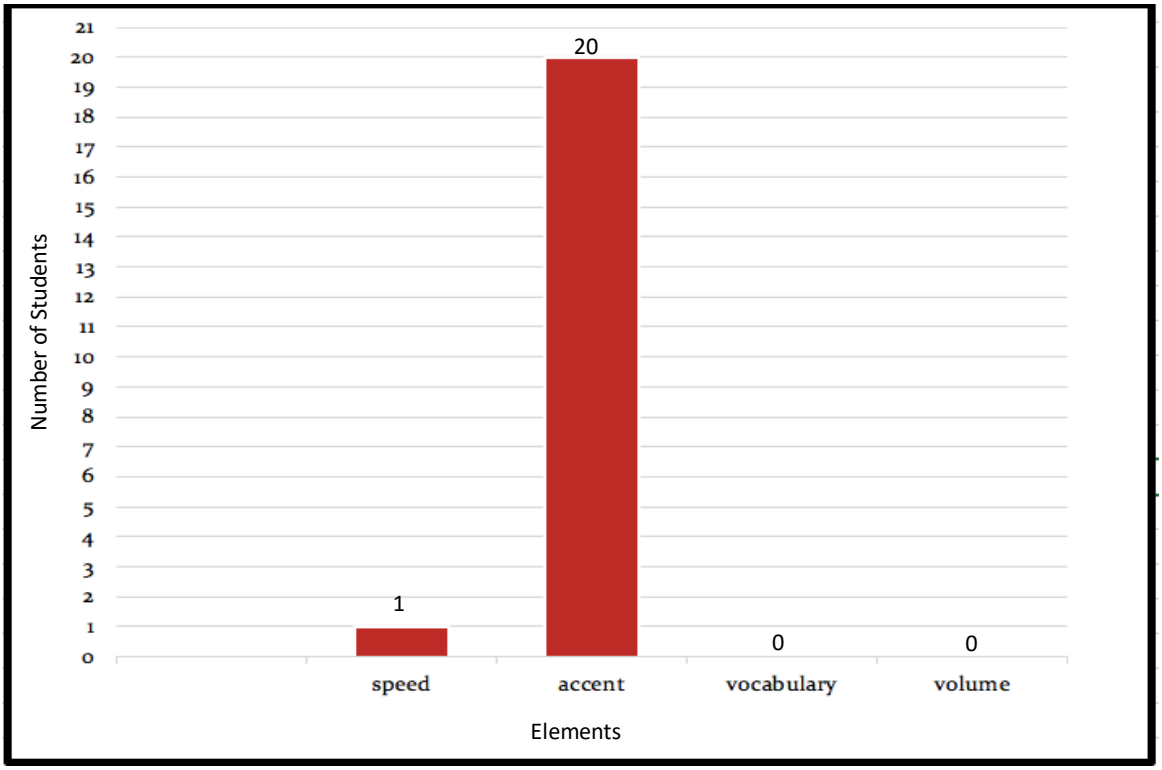


Figure 6 Answers of the hardest element to understand in a listening exercise. Source: Researcher's own creation

Another important aspect that is related to the comprehension process is concentration. Sometimes, students accept they did not understand something because they were not paying attention. On the contrary, it also happened that they really paid attention, but they did ~~do~~ not understand until the second or third time of trying. For those reasons, it was asked to them to answer the question: How much do you normally have to concentrate to understand a listening exercise? The options were: A. Too much, B. Much, C. Not so much and D. I don't have to concentrate. In the results, five students answered: Too much; fifteen answered: Much; and only one answered: not so much. It can be concluded that most of the students considered that they have to concentrate much to understand. The comprehension process requires concentration.

Sometimes, concentration is affected by different factors like the environment, the difficulty of the topic, and others. It this case, students made it clear that they considered the exercises difficult, especially due to the accent of the speaker. That was their personal appreciation; however, the observation also helped to determine that they also needed to reinforce vocabulary and changes in language use.

Related to the part of the difficulty, it was to determine if they were familiarized with the British accent. Consequently, they were asked if they watched movies, videos, or listened to songs in English. One of the best recommendations for English learning as a second language is to get in contact with it through different ways and not only during school time. It was mentioned before, the number of English lessons they have a week; nonetheless, it is also necessary to listen to different accents, different speeds, and different contexts, as for example in formal and informal speech. Movies, songs, videos, and even experiencing it through trips is a great way to get in contact with the language and to get familiarized with it. Students were asked how often they watched movies in English.

Therefore, Figure 7 shows that thirteen students answered almost never, four most of the time, four frequently, and only two occasionally. This means that most of them are only in contact with English during school time, which is a lot of time, but not enough for them to get familiarized with other contexts. In the recommendations of this investigation, this will be an important part to be suggested. Moreover, when they were asked if they understood the stories they read during the English class in American English, fifteen students answered most of the time, which means that they clearly understand English in a high level. The other options were balanced with two answers for frequently, two for occasionally, and two for almost never. It was

expected to them the stories they listened to in American English. This is also very helpful at the time for jumping to British English, but it is a process, and it requires time and a lot of practice.

In another question, they were asked if they identified easily when a person spoke in British accent. They were explained, for example, that if they heard someone speaking in the TV or if they travel to other country, if they were able to recognize a different accent. Sixteen students answered that most of the time they recognized the British accent. Only Student 20 answered frequently, two students answered occasionally, and other two answered almost never. It is a good sign to have sixteen students answering that they easily recognize the accent in other contexts. Their teacher said that sometimes when she played videos of grammar explanations in British accent by coincidence, some students have mentioned that the speaker has British accent. Figure 7 below shows the results of the last detailed questions and how many students answered each.

Figure 7

Frequency of English familiarization

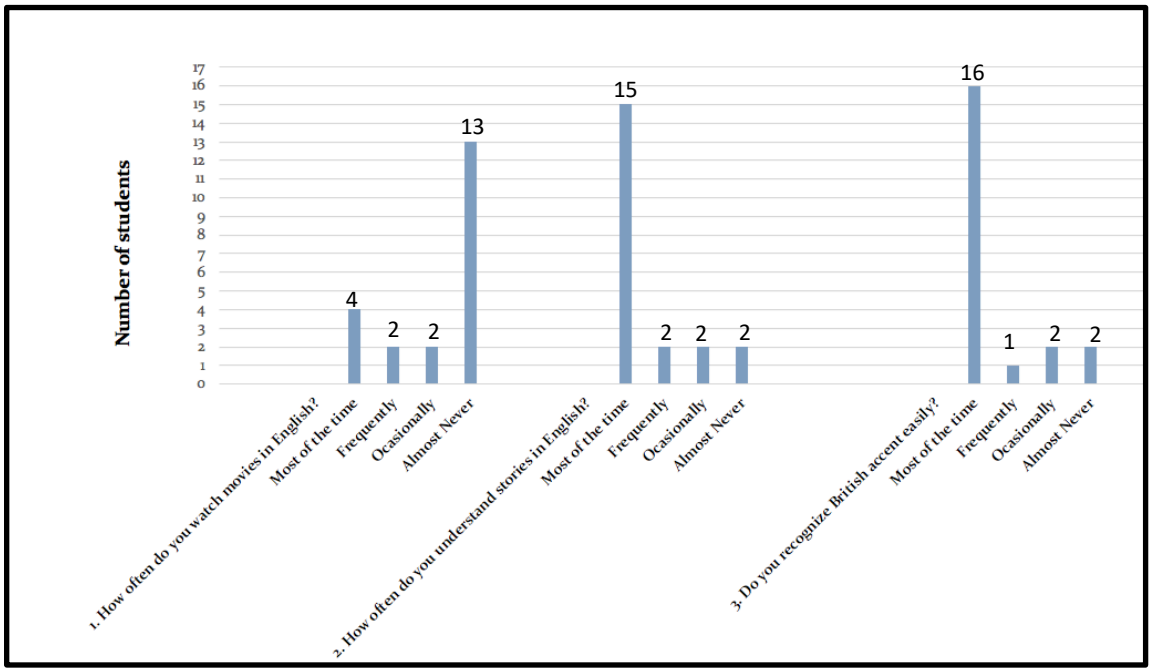


Figure 7 Frequency of students getting in contact with English and its recognition. Source: Researcher's own creation

After analyzing the pretest, it can be concluded that most students had a good level of English and they communicated fluently with the teacher, they also understood instructions, reading, and conversations in American English. They were able to identify the British accent in their listening exercises and they evidently like them. However, the accent and the pronunciation of the words are factors that limit the fluent comprehension of the exercises. That is the reason why the researcher focused on the pre-listening activities by familiarizing them with the major changes between American and British English in terms of vocabulary, as well as pronunciation of words, and different sounds they may find in the exercises. All these activities can be temporary preparation for them to train their listening skills.

4.1.3 Post-Test

As explained in the previous chapter, there were five activities planned to enhance students' preparation for their listening exercises. After each of them, they completed an instrument with questions about their performance in each activity. Each activity will be described in order to analyze the results from each activity. Later one, there will be a figure to get an average of answers from the five activities.

The first activity was about jobs and professions. The vocabulary was introduced thorough pictures that were shown on the smartboard. The pictures did not have the tags of the names, so students were the ones who told their names. There was a nice participation from the students. This time, most of the students including boys and girls raised their hands to tell the name of the professions and later to give a detailed description of what each person did. They did not know well about the "manager" and the "journalist," so they were cued with clues to help them build the concept of each one. In the first activity, all the vocabulary that was going to be in the audio was practiced. By the time they listened for the first time, they looked nervous and a little anxious. Maybe, they did not know that the pre-listening activity would help them so much.

The answers were checked with them and then, they completed the instrument where they were asked about the times it took for them to answer, the elements they considered that affected them more, and the ones that helped them more to understand. Finally, they were asked about the most important element to understand the exercise. The results for this first activity showed that after listening for the first time, eighteen students expressed that they understood some words, but not enough to understand the message. Three students understood some words, but they understood the whole message. There were no answers for the option of understanding all the words and message, and for the option of not understanding anything at all. After listening for the second time, sixteen students answered that they were able to understand the whole message.

Three students understood all the words and the message, and two students were not able to still understand the message. These two needed a third time to listen. Table 2 shows how times the students required to understand the whole message in Activity 1.

Table 2
Number of times they listened to understand in Activity 1

Number of listened times	1 time	2 times	3 times
Number of students	3 students	15 students	2 students

Table 2 Answers provided by the students in Activity 1. Source: Researcher's own creation

Besides the time it took for them to understand the whole message, according to the instrument, the element that affected them more was the pronunciation of the speaker with seventeen votes, and in second place, the speed of the speaker with four votes. The other elements were not mentioned in this activity. On the other side, the element that helped them to understand better the exercise was practicing the vocabulary in advance, in first place with ten votes; in second place was listening more than one time with eight votes; and in third place, when the teacher repeated parts of the audio in third place with three votes.

For the second activity, the topic was telling the time. Some examples were written on the board and students told the time as they knew. In this activity, girls had more participation than boys. Then, the researcher explained that in British English, it is common to tell the time in a different way. Therefore, they would learn and practice those different ways to tell the time. It was also explained that the word "quarter" changes a little regarding the pronunciation. Students were given a handout with clocks, and they practiced in pairs made by the teacher. They did not complain about the pairs, they actually liked the idea to work and practice with someone else. They had the chance to switch pairs after ten minutes. Later, the researcher explained the

listening activity, as they would listen to a conversation that mentioned times and they had to tick the box according to the question. This time, students looked less nervous. The explanations were left on the board in case they needed to consult them. The first time they listened to the audio, seven students understood the whole message at once. Ten required a second time to understand the message, and four required a third time. Table 3 explains better the results of times they had to listen to understand the whole message in Activity 2.

Table 3

Number of times they listened to understand in Activity 2

Number of listened times	1 time	2 times	3 times
Number of students	7 students	10 students	4 students

Table 3. Answers provided by the students in Activity 2. Source: Researcher's own creation

The elements that affected their understanding were the accent in first place with ten votes, in second place the speed of the speaker with eight votes, and in third place, three votes for vocabulary. This time, more students considered the speed of the speaker, and three students mentioned vocabulary because it took time for them to think; for example, that "quarter past eight" was 8:30 and taking time for remembering that made them paid less attention to the message. In addition, the element that helped more in this case, was listening more than one time with fourteen votes and in second place to practice the vocabulary before the exercise with seven votes.

In the third activity, students brainstormed about what they liked to eat for breakfast, for lunch, and for dinner. The researcher wrote the words on the board and then they played a guessing game where the researcher described some food and they had to guess the name. Some of these words were not so familiar for them. However, they were words that formed part of the

listening exercise. Then, there was a power point that showed the answers of the guessing game. In this activity, all the students participated. They actually liked it a lot. Afterwards, they proceeded to do the listening activity. The students looked more confident since they practiced a lot the vocabulary and descriptions of it. After the first time they listened to the audio, eight students were able to understand the whole message; ten, understood it after the second time; and three, required a third time to complete it.

Table 4 shows the times the students required for understanding the message of the exercise.

Table 4

Number of times they listened to understand in Activity 3

Number of listened times	1 time	2 times	3 times
Number of students	8 students	10 students	3 students

Table 4 Answers provided by the students in Activity 3. Source: Researcher's own creation

Regarding the element that affected them more, the accent was in first place again with seventeen votes and then, the speed of the speaker with four votes. On the other hand, the element that was more helpful was listening to the audio more than one time with ten votes. In second place, practicing the vocabulary with six votes, and in third place when the teacher repeated parts of the audio had five votes.

The fourth activity started by asking what the weather was today. Then, the students were taken outside for an outdoor activity, where the researcher made a line and the students had to jump over on side of the line if the answer was "yes" and to stay there if the answer was "no." Subsequently, they went back to the class to talk about the vocabulary practiced during the game and some words may vary in pronunciation. Afterwards, the listening exercise was explained, and

they started listening to the audio for the first time. This time, they had to complete with the missing vocabulary word from the options. The first time they listened to the conversation, 12 students were able to complete all the answers. The second time, the other nine completed the exercise. Neither of the students needed a third time to complete the exercise. This time, the exercise was shorter, and it had the options over. Table 5 shows the results of Activity 4.

Table 5
Number of times they listened to understand in Activity 4

Number of listened times	1 time	2 times	3 times
Number of students	12	9 students	0 students

Table 5 Answers provided by the students in Activity 4. Source: Researcher's own creation

The element that was harder to understand was the accent with seventeen votes and in second place, the speed of the speaker with two votes, and finally, the fact of getting distracted with two votes. The element that was more helpful for them was listening to the audio more than one time with fifteen votes and practicing the vocabulary with six votes.

The last activity was about school supplies. First, students were asked to mention the different school supplies they knew. Then, the researcher explained how some words changed or had different meaning in British English. Afterwards, they played a Kahoot to review the vocabulary. This activity had great participation from all the students. Subsequently, the researcher explained the instructions of the listening activity. The students looked confident because the vocabulary seemed easy for them. After listening for the first time, only four students were able to complete all the exercise. The students looked a little confused with two questions. Then, before listening for the second time, the researcher explained two words: "shelf" and "cupboard" that were confusing them. After listening for the second time, thirteen students

completed the exercise. Four students needed a third time to complete the exercise. Table 6 shows the results for Activity 5.

Table 6
Number of times they listened to understand in Activity 5

Number of listened times	1 time	2 times	3 times
Number of students	4	13 students	4 students

Table 6 Answers provided by the students in Activity 5. Source: Researcher's own creation

The element that affected more was the accent in first place with sixteen votes, then the vocabulary with three votes, and in third place the speed of the speaker. This time, the words that were confusing them placed the vocabulary in second place. The element that was more helpful for them was listening to the audio more than one time with seventeen votes and practicing the vocabulary with four votes.

As an average result, after listening to the first time to the audio, most of the students answered option B: understood some words they mentioned in the conversation, but not enough to understand the message. After listening for the second time, the answers were mostly C: understood some words and was able to understand the message, and option D: understood all the words and the message. Figure 8 above shows the average results of the number of times students needed to listen in order to understand the exercises.

Figure 8

Average Listening Times

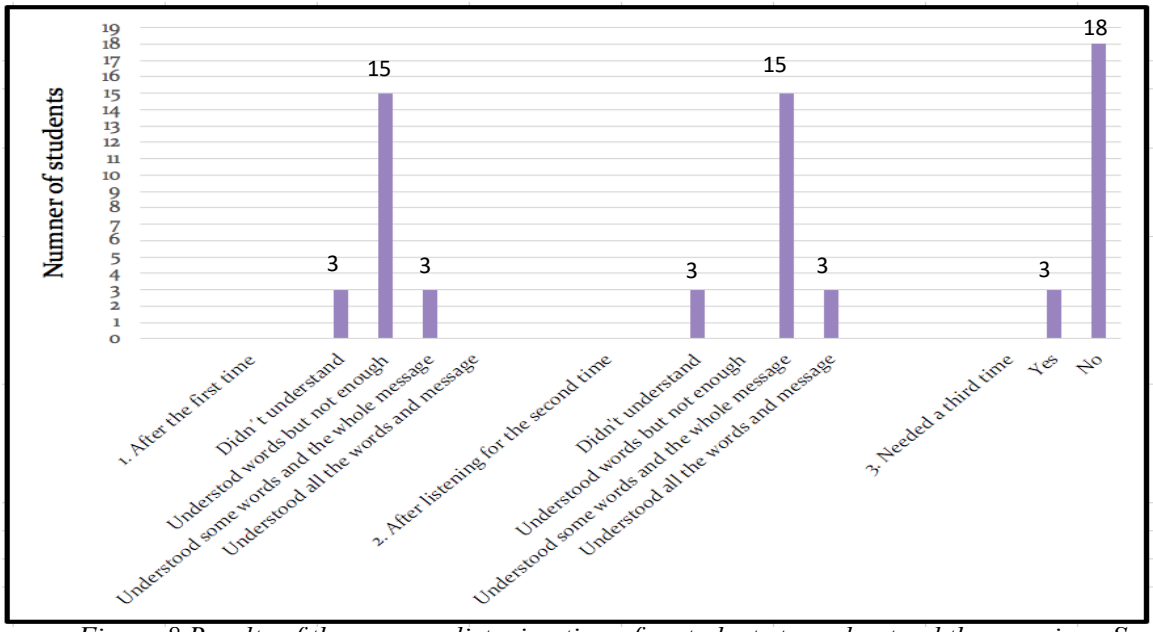


Figure 8 Results of the average listening times for students to understand the exercises. Source: Researcher's own creation

It can be concluded that most of the students really needed to listen to a second time to understand the full message, and a minority needed to listen to a third time to finally complete the exercises.

Figure 9 shows the elements that affected them more when listening to an exercise in British English. In figure 9, it is represented in the first place, the accent of the speaker; in second place, the speed of the speaker; in third place, the vocabulary that is used; and in fourth place the fact that sometimes they get distracted. Nobody mentioned the noise around the class. Regarding the noise of the class, fortunately the students worked quietly, and they knew how to respect the rules of silence when they were working on a listening exercise.

Figure 9

Elements in Listening Comprehension

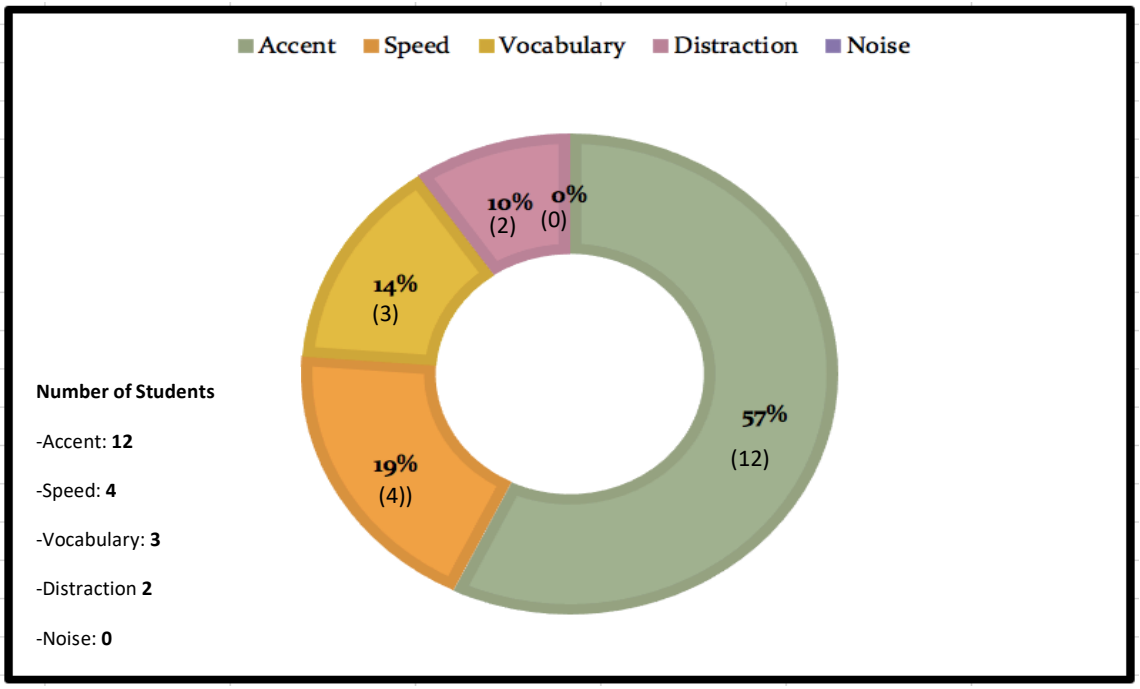


Figure 9 Elements that affected listening comprehension according to the post-test. Source: Researcher's own creation

All the students kept a nice behavior throughout the five performed activities. In addition, it could be seen that their participation in the activities was really active.

Finally, Figure 10 shows in average the elements that helped the students to better to understand a listening exercise. They were able to choose more than one option. It can be seen that the majority of the students mentioned the fact that they practiced the vocabulary before the exercise. In second place and very close to the first, when they listened to the audio more than one time. In third place, when the teacher repeated parts of the audio. In fourth place when they did not get distracted, and finally, when there was complete silence in the class.

Figure 10

Elements in Listening Comprehension

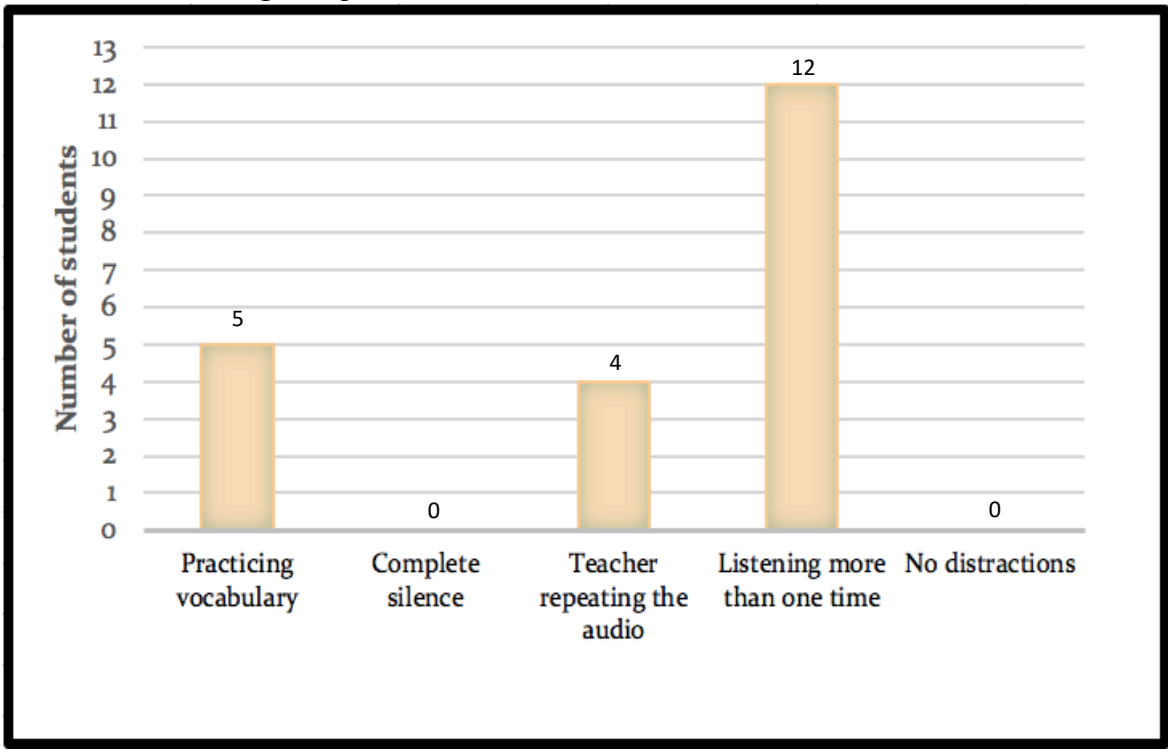


Figure 10 Elements that helped to improve the listening comprehension according to the post-test. Source: Researcher's own creation

4.1.4 Questionnaire

After completing the activities and the post-tests to get more complete results about the points of view of the students, there was a final questionnaire that was given to the students to fill in. The main objective of this questionnaire was to evaluate the pre-listening activities more in detail to see if they were helpful as preparation before doing the exercises. Since most of the questions were open, some of their opinions will be mentioned after each question to get a more complete idea of the results. First, they were asked if they liked the activities that were done before each listening exercise. All of them said yes and when they were asked to write their importance some of them mentioned that there were words that they did not know before and also that it was good to know how some of the words were pronounced in a different way.

Talking about Activity 1, the one on professions, the students said that it was helpful because they did not know what a *manager* was. In addition, some of them did not know what a *journalist* did and the descriptions of the different professions helped them to understand the descriptions of the conversations. Others mentioned that they have heard the vocabulary words before, but they did not know exactly how to describe what these people did.

For the second activity, the one on telling the time, they were asked if they knew how to tell the time in a different way. Three of them said yes and the rest said no. That means that most of them did not know how to tell the time or had heard about it before. They were also asked if they found it helpful to practice the time in pairs. All of them answered yes and the main reasons were because they liked to work in pairs and also because in pairs it was easy to practice. Another important reason was because they found it fun.

For the third activity, the one on food, the students brainstormed about different types of food. They were asked if they remembered all the words studied and most of them answered no. Moreover, the students mentioned that they learned some new words. Some of the repeated answers were green beans, pecan pie, and meatballs. Five of them wrote the word tomato because they did not know the pronunciation may change in British accent.

Regarding the fourth activity, the one that reviewed the topic of weather, they were asked how the activity had helped them to understand the exercise better. Some answered that they did not remember the weather words because they never used them. Others said that it was helpful to listen to the pronunciation of the words in British before the exercise. Another opinion was that the outdoor activity was fun and easier to remember the meanings of the words.

In the fourth activity, the one on school supplies, the students played a Kahoot, and they reviewed many words. They were asked if they found it useful, and all of them said yes because they liked games like Kahoot and also because they did not know some words. They mentioned the word *rubber* because in American English they called it *eraser* and they did not know it was also called like that in British English. Another word they mentioned was *bin*, that they knew as *trash can* or *garbage can.*

As a general closure, they had two more questions, the ninth one asked about the activity they liked more. The first place was the outdoor activity on weather, the second place was for the Kahoot, and the third place was for the pair work telling the time. This shows that students liked interactive and dynamic activities. Finally, the last question was how they felt about English class taught with those activities. Many of them answered happy, that they liked those activities as they were not boring as the usual ones. Others said that they were fun and that they liked to go outside to play and learn at the same time. It can be concluded that most of the reactions were positive because they involved activities that were more interactive and a little different from the ones they normally did in regular class that sometimes turned boring to them. The most important part is that besides the fact that they liked the activities, they felt they were also useful for their preparation stage, as such activities would make the listening comprehension exercises less difficult.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Purpose of the Conclusions

As part of a qualitative investigation, the results and conclusions will be supported by the triangulation of the observation checklist, the pre-test, the post-test, the questionnaire, and the theory from the theoretical framework. The conclusions and recommendations have the aim of providing information that can be valuable and useful when preparing students for their Cambridge preparation stages. All the information mentioned in this chapter was taken from the results obtained from the instruments applied and the observations made to the selected population.

5.2 Conclusions

In the following section, the information stated pretends to answer the three objectives raised at the beginning of the research, after having observed and applied all the instruments. First, the researcher identified the main factors that affect British listening comprehension in fifth graders followed by the application of interactive activities to improve their skills. Finally, they were assessed to see if the activities were helpful for their preparation. In the last sections, the triangulation will be made by including the instruments used, and then, the investigation question will be answered in order to give specific recommendations to improve listening comprehension skill in British accent.

5.2.1 Identify the main factors that affect British listening comprehension in fifth graders when preparing for Cambridge Test.

The first specific objective of the investigation was to identify the main factors that affected British listening comprehension. During the observation stage, the researcher was able to get a first view and idea of the students' feelings towards the class. The majority of the students answered so-so, due to two main reasons; that is, the class was difficult to understand and that it was boring with many topics to study. Later on, in the pre-test survey students mentioned that they liked listening exercises for different reasons, but they were difficult to understand. After asking them a series of questions, the main factors that affected their fluent understanding of the exercises were primarily the accent of the speaker, sometimes the speed, and other times, the changes in vocabulary meanings or pronunciation. Another important factor is the number of times they could listen to the audio. Most of them needed at least two times to listen to the exercise, which is the suggested time for the Cambridge preparation tests.

The results of the pre-test and some post-tests made it clear that one of the most limiting factors for students was the British accent. The pre-test showed that most of them are only exposed to English when they received their English classes in school. They normally did not look for other ways to improve their listening skills in English and even less in British accent. Starting from that fact, it is normal to consider British accent a limiting factor that affected their understanding of the listening exercises. If we add the other factors like the vocabulary changes in accent or in meaning, the speed of the speaker, and distraction, it is expected for them to show some difficulties when solving exercises, which were not solved in previous school years.

In regards to the factors that affected the students, during the post-test and in the final questionnaire, they expressed that they were able to overcome better the part of the vocabulary

when they reviewed the vocabulary before the exercises. Then, the part of pronunciation was also improved when evident changes in pronunciation in different words were anticipated to them. The speed of the speaker cannot be changed, but when they get to understand better the vocabulary and the context, the speed becomes a secondary factor that only requires practice. Moreover, in the questionnaire, the students were more specific when expressing if they liked the activities and if they found them helpful due to those factors. It was noticeable that they liked the activities when they answered *yes* and when they mentioned they were fun. They also considered them useful and helpful to improve in different areas of preparation, which consequently made the exercise solving easier.

5.2.2 Apply interactive activities that allow students to improve their listening skills with British accent.

The comprehension process is something that has to be improved from different areas at the same time. It takes time and requires specific work in the areas. Teachers cannot pretend students to understand a listening exercise in a second language easily at once, when they are not familiarized with the general topic, the accent, the speed, and with the changes that exist in an accent they really do not know and are not constantly listening to or practicing. It is understandable and valid for students to struggle in these activities when there are so many factors affecting them. For example, at the very beginning, the students expressed they had all those limiting factors at the same time. However, they felt more confident after the first activity, as they practiced the descriptions of the professions, they were able to review prior knowledge, and refreshed ideas on how to describe something and express it. Once they listened to the audio, when the professions were mentioned in the conversation, they did not have to draw their attention some much to the vocabulary, as they could focus on the general idea more easily.

The idea of implementing pre-listening and interactive activities before introducing a listening exercise, was ~~is~~ exactly to give the students the bases and bits of preparation for the process to become easier. In the exercise on the time, students expressed they had never listened to the time as: *half past eight* instead of the common *eight thirty* that they have studied since second grade. In addition, they learned the pronunciation of the word "quarter" in British accent, as well as "eight" that has some changes in pronunciation. If they had not been prepared for telling the time in such a way, most of them would not have understood anything from the conversation in from the exercise. The pre-listening activity in pairs, where they practiced different times, absolutely helped them when they were solving the exercise as their attention was not stopped by understanding the different times that were mentioned nor the pronunciation of some of the words, as it was different. They were now focused only on the fluency of the conversation and determining the correct answer out of the options. The same happened with the activities on food and ~~s~~chool supplies.

It is important to mention that the specific process of implementing pre-listening activities is very helpful for students that have never worked on listening activities in other language, or if they have never been familiarized with a new accent, such as the case of this particular population that has a good level of general English understanding, but not in British accent. The investigation showed that when the English areas were reinforced by parts and with activities that students liked and made them feel comfortable, they struggled less at the time of answering. If students get good preparation throughout fifth grade in listening skills, it is probable that next year, they will need less pre-listening activities or maybe different types of activities like vocabulary expanding ones, instead of vocabulary refreshing or explanatory ones.

5.2.3 To asses student improvement through listening activities in British accent.

The last specific objective of the investigation was not exactly to determine if the answers of the listening exercises were correct or incorrect, but to determine if they were able to understand the listening exercise in a specific time by reducing the main factors that were affecting them. For doing this, students had a pre-listening preparation activity, where an area or more were reinforced, and later the students completed the listening exercise. There was a total of five activities applied with the same post-test completed afterwards. The measured result was the time it took for them to complete all the answers, as well if the preparation was helpful for the exercise to become easier, and if they liked the previous activity. Of course, the answers were also checked together, and their questions were cleared up to make sure the exercise was completely clear.

There definitely was improvement from the pre-test to the post-test stage in most of the activities. Students took less time to understand the exercises and they felt more comfortable with the topics. Their facial expressions were different at the time of answering. This was an important observation that the researcher did. At the beginning, they seemed very confused with the class exercise and the pre-test survey. They constantly said “what?” in the middle of the exercise and their faces looked confused. As time passed, they seemed more confident about the exercises and they understood faster. It can be concluded that students felt happier with their self-improvement. Moreover, they liked the planned activities and said that they wanted normal classes to be more interactive and less boring. From the researcher’s point of view, it is necessary to continue including pre-listening activities throughout fifth grade in order to improve their listening skills.

5.3 Restatement of the Research Question

For the purpose of the research, the problem stated at the beginning of the investigation was: How can British accent be implemented in students of fifth grade to improve listening comprehension skills at Colegio Internacional SEK during the second quarter of 2022? In order to answer that question, there were different instruments used in different stages, as it was the pre-test stage to identify the main factors that were affecting the listening comprehension of the students. Moreover, five pre-listening activities were implemented with the aim of reinforcing relevant weak areas in students, with a followed post-test after each activity to measure if there was improvement. The activities were focused on reinforcing prior knowledge and basic descriptive skills, as well as on enhancing vocabulary in context, specifically in meaning and in British pronunciation, and finally, on making the activities appealing for the students in order to increase their interest on the English class. In the last stage, the students completed a questionnaire expressing with open answers how they felt by the end of all the activities. The activities were definitely well received by the students and all the results were positive in terms of upgrading their understanding, in most of the cases. Therefore, it can be affirmed that applying pre-listening activities before each listening exercise is a helpful way to implement British accent to improve listening skills in fifth graders at Colegio Internacional SEK Costa Rica.

According to the results obtained form he investigation, the specific goals that needed to be fully achieved in order to improve the students' listening comprehension process are the following:

- Activation of prior knowledge through brainstorming ideas about the main topic

- Introduction of variants in vocabulary meaning and pronunciation between American and British English
- Identification of differences in language uses in British English compared to American English
- General description of vocabulary or activities
- Implementation of interactive and appealing activities

The mentioned goals were all put in practice in a short period of time during the investigation and they all had positive impact on the students' performance. It is expected to obtain great results if they are completely implemented during the English classes.

5.4 Unexpected Results

One of the unexpected results, at the beginning of the pre-test stage, was that students chose listening as the area they liked most. It was not expected that an area that was difficult for them, was their favorite. On the other hand, most of them chose writing as the area they liked less. The former teacher of the students said that they were really good at writing, but curiously they did not like it. It means that if the students already like listening , with the proper motivation they would definitely show more progress in that subject because the attitude towards the class would be more positive. Moreover, another unexpected result was that students did not think the noise in the class or the environment was a factor that affected their listening. It was included in the instruments because previous investigations on the topic in theses and articles mentioned the environmental factors like the noise as a relevant one; however, in this case, they did not consider it important.

5.5 Recommendations

The following recommendations were formulated for the teachers of the particular population of students that formed part of this investigation; nevertheless, they can also be taken into consideration if there are other teachers that want to improve their student's listening comprehension skills.

The first suggestion to every teacher that wants to help his/her students to improve in an area is to take some time to let students express how they feel towards the class. This can be done at any point of the year. Since they already know the students, or if they do not know them yet, they can ask them some anonymous questions for them to express themselves. It is always very important for students to feel comfortable and to have a good attitude when learning. Once the teacher is aware of how they feel, then he or she can implement activities that are appealing for the students. Teachers should always be updated with the interests of their students. Students that feel motivated in the class, are students that will perform better. In the particular case of the population under study, they mentioned that the class was constantly boring, so it would be beneficial for the teacher to include more interactive activities. The teacher can even ask the students for options on activities they would like to do, so later such activities can be taken into consideration.

The observation part is also important to identify the factors or the topics that need to be reinforced with a group. In the specific case of the population under study in this investigation, it is important for the students to have more exposure to British English. The teacher could bring videos, movies, or songs in British English to be analyzed in class as a more relaxing activity and not as the usual evaluated activity done in class. The more the students get familiarized with the accent, the better understanding they will have on the exercises. Moreover, the teacher can

recommend home activities or projects, so students can practice more listening at home. This contact with British accent may be also implemented in previous school years, so that when they get to fifth grade to their formal preparation for Cambridge Tests, they are already familiarized with the British accent.

As part of the normal class routine, teachers constantly do warm-up activities. It would be very beneficial if some of those activities were pre-listening activities as the ones carried out by the investigation. In other words, activities with a very specific purpose in an area where students need to reinforce. For example, an oral activity about the description of a specific topic.

It is relevant, before every listening activity, to introduce or explain the changes in language use in British compared to American English. Students need to be aware and understand those differences like telling the time. Moreover, it is important to explain the changes in meaning or in pronunciation, so students can learn that those changes exist and they would not spend so much time trying to understand those changes at the time of the exercise. For more advanced students, those explanations can be reduced. Students can even be asked if they noticed the changes, but for beginner levels, it is important to anticipate those variants.

Every bimester or trimester, it would be favorable for teachers to make a type of post-test where students can self-evaluate and give their opinions about their personal improvement. Teachers could take the results into consideration in order to identify those students who need to reinforce more, and those who are improving faster. For students that are fast workers, the teacher can assign fun short class investigations or assignments that they can share orally with the rest of the class. It is important to have students always doing something productive and not wasting time.

One last recommendation for fifth grade teachers is to continue including specific pre-listening activities to prepare students better for their listening exercises. When they consider that the students have improved enough to stop anticipating vocabulary, variants, or pronunciation, then they can change the preparation pre-listening activities for activities that can expand their vocabulary. This given that they would be more complementing activities with new information, vocabulary, and language uses. By the time this group gets to sixth grade, it is expected to be prepared enough for their Cambridge Certification Test.

References

Buyukahiska, D and Uyar, A. (2019). The Effects of Different Accents on Listening Comprehension in EFL classes. International Journal of Society Researches.

Brown D. (2001). Teaching by Principles. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Calderón, R. (2020). Developing Listening Skills through the Use of Authentic Videos with Tenth Graders at Colegio Nacional Virtual Marco Tulio Salazar Santa Cecilia Branch.

Castillo, F. and Calero L. (2014). The methodological strategies in the learning process of the English language during the second semester of 2014. UNAN- Managua.

Castro, E and Arguedas, M. (2017). Factors that Influence the Implementation of Listening when Teaching Conversational English in Language Laboratories of Colegio Técnico Profesional San Isidro.

Creswell, J.W, (2013). Research Design.Thousand Oaks California: SAGE publications

Djiwandono, P. (2015). Teaching Listening Comprehension: Some Important Aspects for Material Development and Teaching Techniques.

Ellis, R. (1985). Understanding Second Language Acquisition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ferreira, F. and Patson, N. (2007). The good enough approach to language comprehension.

Fuller, K. (2021). The Difference Between Hearing and Listening. Psychology Today. Retreived from: https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/happiness-is-state-mind/202107/the-difference-between-hearing-and-listening

Gómez, J, and Díaz, C. (2020). Use of communication strategies and listening skills and its relation to university students. Recovered from Revista Complutense de Educación.

Gómez, S. (2010) Using Web resources to support teachers and students with the teaching and practice of listening comprehension. University of Valladolid. Encuentro, Revista de investigación e innovación en la clase de idiomas.

Hashim, A. (2017). The Difference between American and British Accents, Munich, GRIN Verlag.

Huges, A., Trudgill, P. and Watt, D. (2012). English Accents & Dialects. Hodder Education. USA.

Kaptelinin, V. and Nardi, B (1999). Methods & Tools: The activity checklist: a tool for representing the "space" of context. Vol 6, Number 4. p. 22-27

Kim, Y. and Pilcher, H. (2016). What is Listening Comprehension and What Does It Take to Improve Listening Comprehension? New York: Springer.

Keyton, J. (2011). Communication and organizational culture: A key to understanding work experience. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Klein, S. (2012). Action Research Methods: Plain and Simple. Palgrave MacMillan, United States.

Khuziakhmetov, A. (2016). Teaching Listening Comprehension: Bottom-Up Approach. Federal University, Kazan. International Journal of Environmental and Science Education. Vol 11. No. 8.

Kristensen, T. S. (2010). A questionnaire is more than a questionnaire. Scandinavian Journal of Public Health, 38(3_suppl), 149–155. https://doi.org/10.1177/1403494809354437

Kurdziolek,M. (2011). Classroom Resources and Impact on Learning.

Lange, H (2016). Achieving Teaching Quality in Sub-Saharan Africa: Empirical Results from cascade training. Bamberg. Springer Nature.

Lev-Ari, S. (2015). Comprehending non-native speakers: theory and evidence for adjustment in manner of processing. University of Chicago, USA. Online Research Article. Vol 5.

Medina, A. (2003). La Didáctica: Disciplina Pedagógica Aplicada. Madrid: Prentice Hall.

Monsen, E. and Van Horn, L.(2008). Research: Successful Approaches. Third Edition.

Moreno Mantilla, P. (2018). *Tesis*. Recuperado a partir de http://repositorio.ug.edu.ec/handle/redug/37302

Navarro, D. and Piñeiro, M. (2012) Didactic Strategies for Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Seventh and Eighth Grades in Secondary Schools in Costa Rica. Revista Káñina, vol. XXXVI, núm 2.

Nordquist, R. (2020). The Definition of Listening and How to Do it Well. Toughtco. Retrieved from: throughtco.com/listening-communication-term-1691247.

Olaya V. and Mejía D. (2009) Applying Bottom up Listening Strategies to Eight Grade in a public high school.

Olsen, Ch. (2018). Listening: Learn to Really Listen and Develop Active Listening Skills.

Ospina, D. (2021) Listening Comprehension. Retreived from toolshero:

https://www.toolshero.com/communication-skills/listening-comprehension/

Peachey, N. (2019). 10 Tools for Developing Students' Listening Skills. Oxford TEFL.

Peng, Z and Wang, L. (2019). Listening effort by native and nonnative listeners due to noise, reverberation and talker foreign accent during English speech perception. Journal of Speech, Language and Hearing Research. Vol 62.

Queen, T, Wheeler, J. (1975). Listening Comprehension in the Foreign Language Classroom.

Roe, S. and Ouden, P. (2018). Academic Writing: The Complete Guide. Third edition, CSP Books Inc. Canada.

Sibanda, N. (2009). Quantitative Research. School of Mathematics, Statistics & Operations Research. Victoria University, Wellington.

Scheuren, F. (2004). What is a Survey. Second Edition. United States.

Snow, B. G., & Perkins, K. (1979). The Teaching of Listening Comprehension and Communication Activities. *TESOL Quarterly*, *13*(1), 51–63. https://doi.org/10.2307/3585975

Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. (1998). Mixed Methodology: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches. SAGE Publications. Volume 46. London.

Tyagi, B. (2013). Listening: An Important Skill and Its Various Aspects. The Criterion: An International Journal in English. ISSN 0976-8165.

Ur, P. (2013). Teaching Listening Comprehension. Cambridge University Press.

Vargas, J. (2020). Analyzing activities applied to Develop Learners ‘ Listening Competence Level in the English Class in 10th Grade at Colegio Técnico Profesional San Isidro.

White,G. (1998). Listening. Oxford: Oxford University Press,7.

Annexes

Annex 1: Observation Classroom Checklist

Class Observation Checklist

Total of Students_____ School_____ Date_____

Boys:_____

Girls_____

	Most of the Time	Frequently	Occasionally	Almost never	Never
1. The teacher communicates in English all the time with the students.					
2. The students communicate in English all the time with the teacher.					
3. The students understand the teacher's instructions.					
4.The students have a good attitude towards the English class.					
5.The students participate in the class.					
6. The teacher speaks in British English accent.					
7. The teacher speaks at a normal speed.					
8. The listening comprehension exercises have an introductory pre-listening activity.					

9. The listening activities are in British English accent.					
10.The students seem to understand the listening exercises.					
Comments:					

Researcher Creation

Annex 2: Pre-Test

Name: _____ Date:_____

Pretest

1. Do you like English class? Why?

_____

_____

2. What English area do you like more?

A. reading

B. writing

C. speaking

D. listening

3. What area do you like less?

A. reading

B. writing

C. speaking

D. listening

4. How do you feel before doing a listening exercise?

A. excited

B. interested

C. nervous

D. frustrated

5. Do you like listening exercises? Why?

_____

_____

6. How much do you have to concentrate to understand a listening exercise?

A. Too much

B. Much

C. Not so much

D. I don't have to concentrate

7. Which option makes it harder to understand when you listen to a conversation?

A. the speed of the speaker

B. the accent

C. the vocabulary that is used

D. the volume of the voice

8. How often do you listen to movies or videos in British English?

A. Most of the time

B. Frequently

C. Occasionally

D. Almost never

9. When you listen to the stories in English class do you understand them?

A. Most of the time

B. Frequently

C. Occasionally

D. Almost never

10. When you listen to someone speaking in English, can you identify the British accent easily?

A. Most of the time

B. Frequently

C. Occasionally

D. Almost never

Researcher Creation

Annex 3: Post-Test

Name: _____ Date:_____

Post-Test

After completing the listening activity, answer the following questions. Mark with an X the answer or answers that best describe what you feel.

1. After listening to the activity for the first time you:

A. didn't understand any word they mentioned in the conversation.

B. understood some words they mentioned in the conversation, but not enough to understand the message.

C. understood some words and was able to understand the message

D. understood all the words and the message

2. After listening to the activity for the second time you:

A. didn't understand any word they mentioned in the conversation.

B. understood some words they mentioned in the conversation, but not enough to understand the message.

C. understood some words and was able to understand the message

D. understood all the words and the message

3. Did you need to listen a third time to complete the exercise?

( ) yes

( ) no

3. What elements affect your comprehension of the activity? Mark with an X the options. You can choose more than one.

( ) the pronunciation of the speaker

( ) the speed of the speaker when talking

( ) the noise around the class

( ) that sometimes you get distracted

( ) you don't know the vocabulary

4. From the same options, mark the one that affects you more.

A. the pronunciation of the speaker

B. the speed of the speaker when talking

C. the noise around the class

D. that sometimes you get distracted

E. you don't know the vocabulary

5. What elements help you understand better the exercise? You can choose more than one option.

( ) When we practice the vocabulary before the exercise

( ) When there is complete silence in the class

( ) When the teacher repeats parts of the audio

( ) When I listen more than one time

( ) When I don't get distracted

6. What do you think is the most important element to understand the exercise? Choose only one option.

A. When we practice the vocabulary before the exercise

B. When there is complete silence in the class

C. When the teacher repeats parts of the audio

D. When I listen more than one time

E. When I don't get distracted

Researcher Creation

Annex 4: Questionnaire

Name: _____ Date:_____

Questionnaire

1. Did you like the activities that were done before the exercises? Why?

A. Yes

B. No

Why?_____

2. Why do you consider them important?

_____

3. How did the activity of the professions help you in the listening exercise?

_____

4. Did you know how to tell the time in different ways before?

_____

5. Did you find it helpful to practice the time in pairs? Why?

_____

6. Did you remember all the food vocabulary that was practiced? Which words were new?

_____

7. How did the weather activity help you to understand the exercise better?

_____

8. Was it useful to practice the school supplies before the exercise? Why?

_____

9. Which activity did you like more? Why?

_____

10. How do you feel about English class now that we completed all these activities?

_____

Researcher Creation

Annex 5: Activity Lesson Plans

English

Group: 5B

Unit / Title	Contents	Objectives
Listening	1. Professions 2. Telling the time 3. Food 4. Weather 5. In my Classroom	1. To identify the descriptions of the professions through listening activities. 2. To enhance oral production and listening comprehension through telling the time activities. 3. To reinforce vocabulary as a pre-listening activity to prepare them for the listening comprehension activity 4. To identify weather vocabulary words in context and listening to the descriptions. 5. To match the vocabulary words from classroom supplies with the context situations.

Lessons	Activity	Resources / Materials
1 (50 minutes)	-To introduce the name of the professions with the use of pictures on the smartboard. - Then, have them repeat the name of the professions and describe in their own words what people do in each job. - Give them a worksheet where they fill in the blanks the name of the professions. - After that, play an audio where four professions are described. Students have to write the number of the picture on the line. Listen to the audio three times to make sure everyone can answer the questions. Finally, check together and discuss the answers.	• Worksheet • Smartboard
1 (50 minutes)	- Explain how telling the time can change for British people. Write some examples on the board and show the different ways to tell the time. Give them a photocopy with clocks telling different time. -Students practice questions in pairs by telling the time to each other according to the questions. -Finally, give them a worksheet where they have to listen to a conversation and they have to tick the box with the described option.	• Clocks worksheet • Time worksheet
1 (50 minutes)	-Ask students what they like to eat for breakfast, for lunch and for dinner to introduce the topic. Students share ideas orally and the teacher writes the examples on the board as a brainstorming. - Then, introduce the vocabulary for the listening activity by playing a guessing game: the teacher reads some descriptions and they have to guess what the food is. Show a Power Point presentation with the answers. The vocabulary is: sausages, green beans, meatballs, vegetable soup, pecan pie, hamburger, salad, banana milkshake, toasts, jam, eggs, tomato, sandwiches, pizza and chocolate cake. -Explain the listening exercise.	• Food Worksheet • Power Point

	They have to tick the box with the correct food description they listen to. They have pictures to look at the examples. -Play the audio three times and then check orally.	
1 (50 minutes)	- Introduce the topic by asking what the weather is like today. Students share ideas. The researcher takes the students outside and asks them to make a line. The teacher will mention different activities to do in different types of weather and mentioning the vocabulary words like: Who likes to drink hot cocoa during a rainy day while watching a movie? If they like the activity, they have to step forward, if they don't, they have to stay where they are. After introducing the vocabulary, have students repeat the words for pronunciation and tell them that in the listening activity, pronunciation may vary, but they have to be aware of the context. Give them a handout where they identify the vocabulary words and then complete a conversation with the words. Play the audio twice to make sure everyone gets the chance to complete. If they need to listen again, play it one more time.	• Weather worksheet
1 (50 minutes)	To introduce the topic, explain that some school supplies are called in a different way in British English for example: the eraser is called: rubber and sometimes the pronunciation changes. To activate prior knowledge, play a Kahoot with the vocabulary words where they have to match the name with the school supply. - Then explain that they will have a worksheet with pictures. There are going to be some questions. They have to look at the descriptions and answer the questions according to the conversation they are going to listen to. Play the audio twice to make sure everyone is able to mark the answer. Play it one more time if needed. Finally, ask students if they found it easy or difficult to do.	• Kahoot • School supplies worksheet

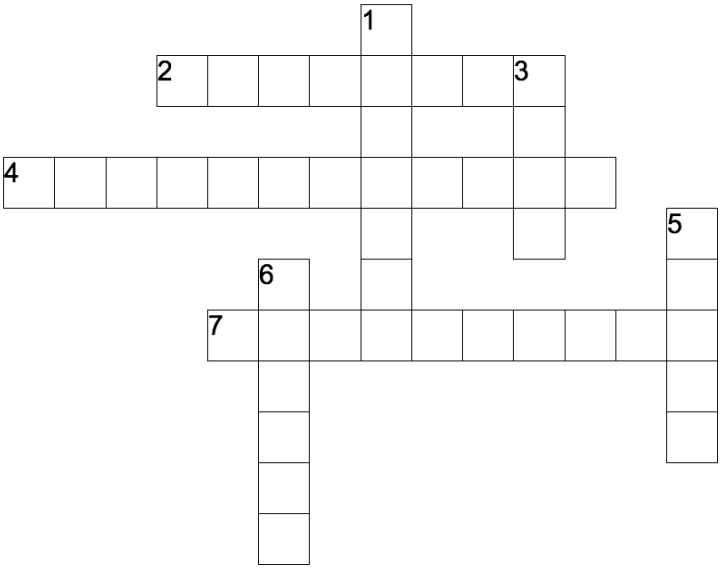
Researcher creation

Annex 6: Activity 1

Name: _____ Date:_____

Jobs

A. Look at the pictures and write the jobs.



B. Write the jobs from the crossword.

1. This person takes pictures of interesting places and people for magazines. _____

2. This person finds out about things that happen and then writes about them for newspapers and different television channels. _____

3. This person works in an office and helps other people to work well. _____

4. This person makes delicious things for people to eat in restaurants. _____

5. You go to see these people if you are ill. If you are feeling sick or sore, they can give you the right medicine. _____

6. This person can repair your car if there's a problem with its engine. _____

7. These people act on a theater and people go to watch them. _____

C. Listen and write the numbers of the job in part A.

a._____ b._____ c. _____ d._____

* Listening exercise based on Cambridge Preparation Material *

Annex 7: Activity 2

Name: _____ Date:_____

Telling the Time

A. Look at the clocks and practice telling the time with a partner.

1. _____

2. _____

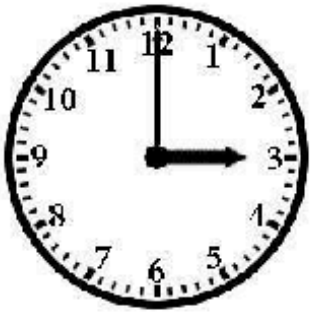
3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

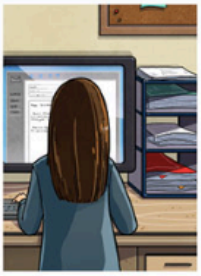


8. _____

9. _____

B. Listen and tick the box.

Example What's Kim's job?



A ☑ B ☐ C ☐

1 How does Kim go to work?

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

2 What time does Kim start work?

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

3 Where does Kim have lunch?

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

4 What was Kim's first job?

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

5 What does Kim like most about her job?

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

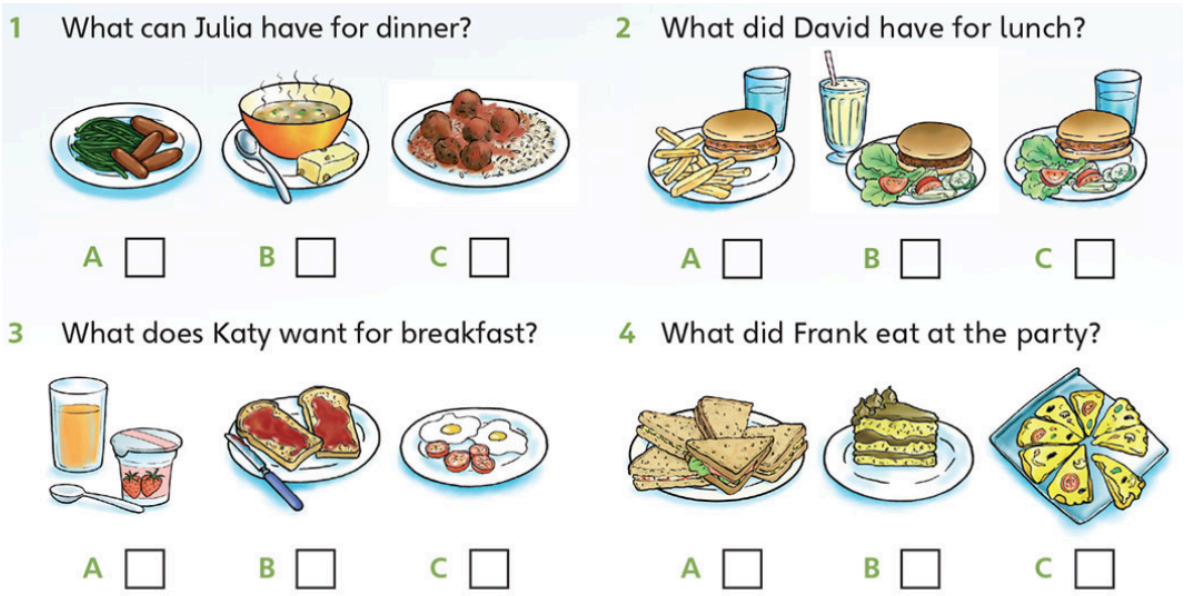
* Listening exercise based on Cambridge Preparation Material *

Annex 8: Activity 3

Name: _____ Date:_____

Food

A. Listen and tick the box.



B. After listening to the activity about food, mark the vocabulary words that you remember was mentioned in the conversation.

( ) spaghetti	( ) strawberry milkshake	( ) apple juice	( ) banana milkshake
( ) meatballs	( ) vanilla ice cream	( ) hamburger	( ) hot dogs
( ) salad	( ) green beans	( ) sandwiches	( ) nachos
( ) cheesecake	( ) pizza	( ) pecan pie	( ) chocolate cake

* Listening exercise based on Cambridge Preparation Material *

Annex 9: Activity 4

Name: _____ Date:_____

Weather

A. Find the weather words represented in the pictures and circle them.

warmcloudswetwindydryrainhotsunnystormfoggysnowcoldicerainbowtemperature

B. Listen and use the words from part A to complete the sentences.

1. Alex and his friend can't play volleyball if it starts to _____.

2. Dad and Daisy are talking about the noisy _____ last night.

3. Mr. and Mrs. Lime can see a beautiful _____ in the sky.

4. Dad wants Helen to remember there might be _____ on the ground.

5. Mom says it's dangerous to drive quickly in _____ weather.

6. John wants to go out and play in the _____.

*Listening exercise based on Cambridge Preparation Material *

Annex 10 : Activity 5

Name: _____ Date:_____

School Supplies

A. Listen and tick the box.

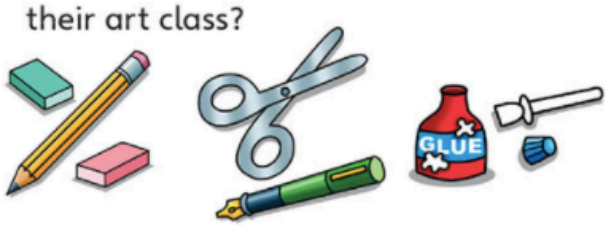
Example Where can William sit now?

A ☐ B ☑ C ☐

1 What's the first lesson today?

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

2 What should the students take to their art class?



A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

3 What did William forget to bring to school?

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

4 Where should the students put their dictionaries?

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

5 What kind of competition is it?

A ☐ B ☐ C ☐

*Listening exercise based on Cambridge Preparation Material *