

University of El Salvador  
School of Arts and Sciences  
Foreign Languages Department



*Undergraduate Research:*

Factors Influencing English Listening Comprehension in Foreign Language  
Department Classrooms (Advanced II Courses, Semester I 2012)

*To obtain the degree of:*

Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés, Opción enseñanza

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To my beloved Victoria.

Special acknowledgments to my professors: Matthew, Ana María, Mike, Peter, Mauricio, Ricardo, Claudia, JC, Rhina, & Homero; I appreciate all your support throughout the time I was a FLD student.

Martin

This work is dedicated specially to God almighty, for his guidance and support in the hardest time during my academic formation up to now. To my beloved and supporting parents: Rosario de Cea and Marvin Cea: they always supported me and encouraged me to reach my goals. Finally a I want to thank specially to my professors: Mike Carranza, Juan Carlos Cruz, Homero Llanes, Claudita Vides, Peter Salazar, Ana María Glower, Rhina Franco, and Mauricio Contreras; thank you all for your support pieces of advice and the great job that you carried out professionally. My special acknowledgements are to our advisor Matthew Alvarado, for being such patience and understanding leader with Martin and me.

Kathy

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## Abstract

Communication has two dimensions: speaking (expression), and listening (reception). Among the basic skills we need for success in life, listening is primary. Today, we know the importance of being good listeners, which not only enable us to be more efficient students or employees, but also give us the capability to build good interpersonal relations. Becoming a good listener make us more sensitive to the needs of the listener and hence, improve our competence as a speaker. It also makes us more sensitive to the needs of people in general. In the following chapters, this paper discusses the factors that influence English listening comprehension in Foreign Language Department classrooms. The paper states twenty factors as main obstacles that interfere in listening for comprehension. The study was carried out on the Advanced English courses of the Foreign Language Department. Students were assessed with a brief listening test taken from the TOEFL Preparation exam (Cambridge University Press, Third Edition). A survey gives us the perception of how often students feel affected by each of the twenty factors. Results and recommendations of the research are of significance and may prove beneficial to English language teaching in Foreign Language Department.

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## 1.1 Topic

Factors influencing English listening comprehension in Foreign Language Department classrooms.

## 1.2 Statement of the problem

Active listening is a communication technique that requires the listener to understand, interpret, and evaluate what they hear. The ability to listen actively can improve personal relationships through reducing conflicts, strengthening cooperation and fostering understanding. As we experienced during the time we were English as a foreign Language students, listening for comprehension is the skill that presents more deficiency as well as in teaching and learning, also among of the rest of the skills we learn (speaking, reading, and writing). This study explores the factors that contribute listening comprehension weakness in the Foreign Language Department students.

### 1.3 Significance of the problem (and historical background)

This work demonstrates that Foreign Language Department learners encounter listening problems whenever they are involved in listening activities, since students show a lack of exposure to native speaking environment. Listening for comprehension weakness is the main issue students present not only when they are studying English as a Foreign Language but also when they become professional in English majors. Preliminary, we asked a number of teachers and students from the Foreign Language Department about their weakness they have regarding the four macro skills. The majority agreed that listening is deficient; meanwhile the other three skills (speaking, reading, and writing) are better developed. Listening is an important macro skill, since we create output according to input that we get. In real life there is not always a second chance to get the message in a accurate way; for this reason Joan Rubin (1994) has shown his concern about the difficulty when understanding spoken English and he has developed a review of second language listening comprehension research in an attempt to give some important factors that should be taken into account in the teaching learning process to avoid any failure.

### 1.4 Purpose

The main purpose of the research is to inquire the following research question that will lead it:

What are the factors that influence English listening comprehension in the Foreign Language Department learners?

### 1.5 Objectives

#### 1.5.1 General:

- To discover the factors that influence English listening comprehension skill in Foreign Language Department learners.

#### 1.5.2 Specific

- To determine what the current problems are in English Teaching that make listening a weak skill.
- To identify the causes which provoke student's failure in listening skill.
- To demonstrate how harmful for the students it is to have a poor listening skill.

## 1.6 Statement of the Hypothesis and Variables

Since a qualitative analysis of the present conditions of teaching-learning listening for comprehension at FLD, the work will be guided by one working hypothesis only.

Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

- *Students that are exposed to real spoken English in everyday situations will develop better their listening comprehension skill.*

In the previously stated hypothesis, the following variables are found:

### 1. Independent variable

*The exposure to real spoken language*

The indicators of the former variable are these:

- Vocabulary
- Accent
- Fluency
- Accuracy

### 2. Dependent variable

*Better acquisition of listening comprehension skill*

The indicators we find in the previous variable are:

- Better grades
- Enhance communication
- Speaking improvement
- Eloquence

## 1.7 Justification

In a preliminary view of English as a Foreign Language teaching, investigators have noticed that the teaching of listening skill is still the weak link in the language teaching learning process. This research has its importance because there is not much information regarding the weakness of the listening skill. Despite of the fact that students improve the basic elements of English Grammar and vocabulary, their listening comprehension is often weak, to a certain extent it has been recognized that while students integrating skill in reading, writing, translating, have been improved, the listening and speaking counter parts have been left behind. Goh (1999) in her research "*How much do learners know about the factors that influence their listening comprehension?*" identifies twenty factors that influence listening and comprehension.

## 1.8 Scope and Limitations

The present investigation attempts to produce a change of attitude among students, professors, and Foreign Language Department authorities towards listening for comprehension skill. It is also expected that the work will encourage other researchers to turn the attention in that teaching learning deficiency. This is a descriptive research only, and it will show the data as found. The subject of this investigation is the Foreign Language Department population, taking as a sampling a number of 64 students. The research is also limited by the time researcher collected the data. This study took place from November 30<sup>th</sup> 2011 to June 8<sup>th</sup> 2012. Limitation of this study also includes a low possibility of having a huge number of participants in the sample. The inquiry therefore seeks to explore individual perceptions and to offer and interpretation of these, rather than to produce general data, which could be subjective to statistical analysis. Inevitably in a qualitative study of this nature, the researchers' own perspectives will influence, in a way, the kinds of data collected from the participants as well as other interpretations.

## 1.9 Definition of the Terms

The following terms are very used in this research. Their definitions are presented to clarify and justify their appearance. Even though these words might have other meanings, only the meanings that concern the research are presented.

**Deficiency:** the state of needing something that is absent.

**Diagnosis:** investigation or analysis of the cause or nature of a condition, situation or problem.

**Listening:** to hear something with thoughtful attention.

**Skill:** the ability to use one's knowledge effectively and readily in execution or performance.

**Technique:** the systematical procedure by which a complex or scientific task is accomplished.

**Weakness:** powerlessness revealed by an inability to act.

**Metacognition:** knowledge about own thoughts and the factors that influence your thinking.



## Chapter Two

### 2 Theoretical Framework

Listening is defined as the act of hearing, or paying attention [Old English *hlystan* a word from Germanic vocabulary].

According to Howatt and Dakin (1974), listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This process involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation, the speaker's grammar and vocabulary, and comprehension of meaning. An able listener is capable of doing these four things simultaneously.

Thomlison's (1984) definition of listening includes "active listening," which goes beyond comprehending as understanding the message content, to comprehension as an act of empathetic understanding of the speaker. Furthermore, Gordon (1985) argues that empathy is essential to listening and contends that it is more than a polite attempt to identify a speaker's perspectives. Rather more importantly, empathetic understanding expands to "egocentric pro-social behavior". Thus, the listener altruistically acknowledges concern for the speaker's welfare and interests.

Ronald and Roskelly (1985) define listening as an active process requiring the same skills of prediction, hypothesizing, checking, revising, and generalizing that writing and reading demand; and these authors present specific exercises to make students active listeners who are aware of the "inner voice" one hears when writing.

Language learning depends on listening since it provides the aural input that serves as the basis for language acquisition and enables learners to interact in spoken communication. Listening is the first language mode that children acquire. It provides the foundation for all aspects of language, and it plays an essential role in the processes of verbal communication.

According to Bulletin (1952), listening is the fundamental language skill. It is the medium through which people gain a large portion of their education, their information, their understanding of the world and of human affairs, their ideals, sense of values, and their appreciation. In this day of mass communication, much of it oral, it is of vital importance that students are taught to listen effectively and critically. According to second language acquisition theory, language input is the most essential condition of language acquisition. As an input skill, listening plays a crucial role in students' language development. Krashen (1985) argues that people acquire language by understanding the linguistic

information they hear. As a result, language acquisition is achieved mainly through receiving understandable input and listening ability is the mean that allow us to achieve understandable language input. Given the importance of listening in language learning and teaching it is essential for language teachers to help students become effective listeners.

Good listening skills are not only crucial to formal and informal learning, they are also the basis for building good interpersonal relationships at work and in social situations. The number of personal development books and commercial courses that teach effective listening is further evidence of the realization that listening is a vital but much neglected communication skill (Goh, 1999). Listening is a complex ability and it involves more than understanding what words mean. Communication scholars Wolvin and Coakly (1996) identified five types of listening purposes:

- *Discriminative*: Listening to distinguish auditory and/ or visual stimuli. It is basic to all listening purposes.
- *Comprehensive*: Listening to understand the message. It forms the foundation for listening therapeutically, critically and appreciatively.
- *Therapeutic*: Listening to provide someone with the opportunity to talk through a problem.
- *Critical*: Listening to evaluate the message.
- *Appreciative*: Listening to obtain enjoyment through the works and experiences of others.

Listening is the most frequently used communication skill. Studies have shown that people spend at least 40% of our communication time engaged in listening, and the rest of the time speaking, reading and writing (Wolvin and Coakely, 1996). Listening has long been a mean of learning in our educational system, where classes and tutorials are still the most common modes for the delivery of content and the exchange of ideas.

Between the 1940s and 1960s, the dominant view of listening comprehension was that it has less importance than the other skills, which assumed that comprehension was built up step-by-step from phonetic sounds and syntax. This was also called the "text-driven" view of comprehension. Now days, it is widely known that listening is the primary skill in everyday verbal communication. Despite of the fact that listening is so indispensable, it is the skill EFL students learn with more difficulty in teaching-learning EFL.

Factors that influence listening comprehension have been discussed by many authors in the last decades. In recent studies, many researchers have been interested in determining the effects that

specific factors have on the success or failure of learner comprehension during listening. An extensive review of this area of research by Rubin (1994) identified five factors on listening: text, task, interlocutor, listener and process. Insights on how listening comprehension may be influenced by these external and internal factors are extremely useful. In the teaching-learning process, listening is one of the hardest skills that help to determine how well students learn a new language.

Flavell (1979) in his research distinguished three types of metacognitive knowledge: person, task and strategy. These refer to the specific knowledge that individuals have about themselves as learners, the learning tasks they have to undertake, and the strategies that are most appropriate for accomplishing these tasks. Those ideas will lead Goh to carry out her study years later.

Goh in her study on a group of Chinese ESL learning reported twenty factors that she categorized under five characteristics: text, listener, speaker, task and environment, and she stated that many of the factors identified were related to text and listener characteristics. This is until now the most complete representation of the real factors affecting listening comprehension. Table 1 shows the twenty factors found by Goh.

## 2.1 (table 1): 20 factors that influence listening comprehension

Category	Factors	Description
1. TEXT	a. Phonological modifications	Features that might make it difficult to divide streams of speech, such as linking, stress.
	b. Vocabulary	The presence of familiar/unfamiliar content words. This includes English idioms, jargon and academic terms.
	c. Speech rate	The perceived speed or slowness at which words are produced.
	d. Type of input	Effects of features related to the specific text types, such as lectures, TV/radio news broadcast, stories, face to face conversations.

	e. Sentence length and complexity		Sentence types, such as simple sentences or long complex ones with embedded clauses.
	f. Visual support		Pictures, handouts, captions, subtitles that support the spoken text.
	g. Signposting and organization		The presence of macro- and micro- discourse markers.
	h. Abstract and non abstracts topics		Abstract topics dealing with concepts compared with those that describe events, people or objects.
2. SPEAKER	a. Accent		This is related to where a speaker comes from.
	b. Competence in speaking		The speaker's command of English, overall fluency, and their ability to interest listeners or facilitate their comprehension.
3. LISTENER	a. Interest and purpose		This is related to whether the information is crucial to the listener or can generate sufficient interest in them to continue listening
	b. Prior knowledge and experience		This includes specific knowledge about the topic being talked about
	c. Physical and psychological states		Fatigue, nervousness, anxiety, impatience, feeling relaxed and calm.
	d. Knowledge of context		A general sense of what the spoken input is about.
	e. Accuracy of pronunciation		Listeners who themselves do not pronounce certain words accurately may have problems

		recognizing these words when the speaker says them correctly.
	f. Knowledge of grammar	The ability to parse long complex sentences.
	g. Memory	The ability to retain what is heard or processed.
	h. Attention and concentration	The ability to direct one's attention to the task at hand and not to be distracted or discouraged when understanding is not immediately forthcoming.
4. TASK	Sufficient time available for processing	Time available between processing one part and the next or before responding.
5. ENVIRONMENT	Physical conditions	The presence of noise, the acoustics in a room, or the loudness of input.

Previous researches carried out at University of El Salvador regarding listening deficiency, show how learners consider the twenty factors found by Goh as a barrier that stop verbal communication (see table 2). However, according to the data most of them point five of those twenty factors as the most frequent problems they have when interacting, those are: vocabulary, prior knowledge, speech rate, type of input and, speaker's accent. Those factors will bring to the discussion in detail later from the data collected at the FLD.

As it is noticeable, listening has been a *neglected skill* since the beginning of English teaching, not only at the FLD but also the whole educational system in our country. Traditionally, teachers of English focused on passing on knowledge; their attention was on written examination scores and they paid much less attention to cultivating students' listening and speaking abilities. Although Salvadorian students have often learned significant amounts of grammar, and memorized many English words, they have commonly been unable to apply their knowledge to real life. Generally they have found it difficult

to make them understood in spoken conversation, as well as understanding what is said to them is often a challenge.

Currently, in the early stage of university English teaching in El Salvador, there are problems in listening teaching that may have their origins in high school where few students have been the recipients of listening teaching. Consequently students find it difficult to adapt to FLD English teaching. Often, these students are unable to understand what is taught in Intensive English listening classes because they do not understand the spoken content of the lessons. Frequently such students lose all confidence as EFL practitioners.

During their first year of college English, the problem of listening deficiency is not particularly noticeable since language teaching at this level tends to focus on vocabulary and grammar structure. However, when entering second year, when listening content increases and the range of listening texts increases, some students feel they have some understanding, but frequently they do not. While listening, they are struggling to grasp each word and the meaning of every sentence. Although they might hear every word, they are often unclear about speakers' intention, stopping their efforts to gain meaning.

According to Naizhao Guo (2006) listening comprehension is a complex psychological process of listeners' understanding language by sense of hearing. It is an interactive process of language knowledge and psychological activities. However, this process is not simply decoding the message; it also involves the combination of the decoding of the message process with its reconstruction as meaning (Ma Lihua, 2002). Although teachers of English at FLD attempts to teach listening and listening comprehensive competence, the results are often less than the expected. Listening for comprehension has been object of study in the last years at FLD. It can be mentioned at least three graduation works regarding listening as prior topic of interest.

## 2.2 (Table 2): Previous researches carried out at University of El Salvador regarding listening skills

*Improving Listening Comprehension through a systematic approach: the case of students from Consejo de Becas y de Investigaciones Científicas de la UES, 2008, carried out by Núñez Mancía, Rafael Oswaldo; Rubio Torres, Hugo Eduardo and, Torres Hernández, Catarino.*

*Techniques applied to evaluate the listening performance of students of advanced English II semester I-2008 at the Foreign Language Department 2008, carried out by Campos Rivera, Bessy Marina; Gomez Díaz, Sara Ines; Hernandez Ceren, Ana Cristina.*

*The factors that influence English listening skill on students from "Profesorado en Idioma Inglés para Tercer Ciclo de Educación Básica y Educación Media semester II-2010 from the Foreign Language Department at UES, presented by Martínez De La Cruz, Sandra Caridad; Ramírez González, Mario Isaac; and, Jiménez, Nelson Edgardo*

## Chapter Three: Methodology

### 3.1 Methodological Design

At the first stage of this project the researchers had to define the main factors that make listening comprehension a neglected skill among the students majoring at the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador. The project will be carried out using the qualitative research methodology since the researchers will explain the causes of the deficient listening comprehension skill in Semester I, 2012. Through this method, the researchers will highlight the problems that students have when listening for comprehension. In this chapter, the sampling techniques, the target population and informants, data collection procedure, data collection techniques and instruments, interpretation techniques, and budget are described.

As it is stated above, the type of research is descriptive and in order to collect the data, this method will permit the researchers to gather reliable source of data by the application of the different instruments, such as the questionnaire and a test. On the other hand, the descriptive method allows the researcher to describe the factors that take place in the field being studied.

### 3.2 Target Population

This study will take place at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador, on semester I, 2012. The target population to work on this research project will be the students of Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés, Opción Enseñanza and Modern Languages majoring from the University of El Salvador during semester I, 2012. The researchers will work with a sample population of 60 (approximately) students all of them from Advanced English courses. The Advanced English classes will be chosen randomly. The idea of taking a sample from advance courses is to support the main aim of this research project, which is to prove that Listening is the most neglected skill when learning English as a second language.

### 3.3 Data Collection Procedures

The procedure to collect data will be constituted by two stages: the first one will be a brief listening session of an everyday topic, and then students must have to complete a task according to the listening exercise. Second stage is a survey in which they have to point the factor(s) that interfere their listening to be successful. In this way the researchers will obtain both precise information from the prepared questions and further information from the interaction with the informants.

The survey is based on Goh's theory which mentions twenty factors categorized under five characteristics:

- 1- Text: this includes phonological modification, vocabulary , speech rate, type of input, sentence length and complexity, visual support, signposting and organization and, abstract and non abstract topic
- 2- Speaker: It is related with the accent and competence in speaking of the person transmitting the message.
- 3- Listener: this includes interest and purpose, prior knowledge and experience, physical and psychological states, knowledge of contexts, accuracy of pronunciation, knowledge of grammar, memory and, attention and concentration.
- 4- Task: it is related If the listener either has sufficient time available for processing or not.
- 5- Environment: related to physical conditions.

### 3.4 Level and design of the study

This research project attempts to include the level of scientific descriptive knowledge. The study is descriptive because it poses the general and external factors of the phenomenon. This research describes the data obtained by the surveys and their characteristics about the populations studied. The research describes the origin and characteristics of the problem. This type of research will permit us to have a better perception in natural behaviors concerning listening without affecting them.

The descriptive research gives the researchers the opportunity to remain focused on the target investigation and pay close attention on the strengths and weaknesses of the studied topic in order to implement a research design that allow the researchers to achieve the purpose of the research project. Being developed this way research will give us the advantage to include data collection and life experiences of the students taking the survey. The researchers will use the surveys in order to gather statistical information.

### 3.5 Research Method

This research follows qualitative parameters, since the "why" of the research will be investigated. The information collected will be analyzed through pie charts, tables and graphics. The collection of the data will be carried out through instruments such as a test on listening comprehension and a survey directed to the FLD students at the University of El Salvador.

### 3.6 Sampling, population of the study, instruments and procedure

This study will take place at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador, during semester one 2012.

- a) Sampling: The population will be the students majoring Licenciatura en idioma Inglés Opción Enseñanza and Licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas.
- b) Participants: The research involved two groups of Advanced English students, each group of 30 students approximately, majoring English Language teaching and Modern Languages on semester 1 2012.
- c) Instruments: The first source of data was questionnaire prepared by the researchers. The first part of the questionnaire will include a test to prove Advance English students listening comprehension, the second part will elicit information about the students' perceptions of themselves as listeners, and which of the 20 factors, mentioned above, influence their ability on this skill.
- d) Procedure: After we administered the test and the questionnaire, the data obtained was analyzed qualitatively. Data collected was presented in detailed as we discovered it.



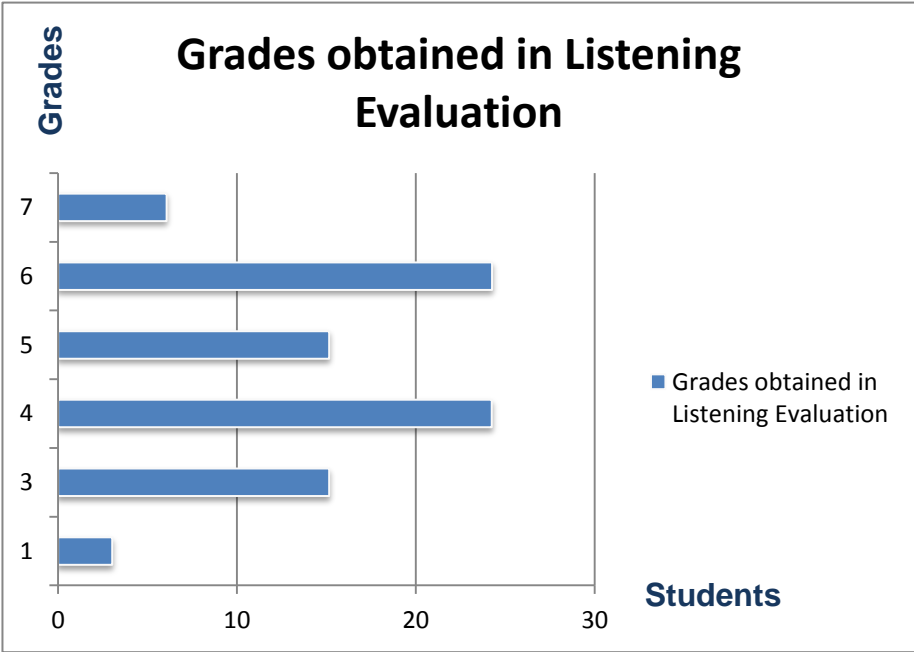
# Chapter Four: Data Analysis

## 4.1 Data Analysis and Interpretation

After collecting all the data from the questionnaires and the tests, these findings were analyzed. The information, obtained from the questionnaires and the tests was compared to determine the level of concordance between the twenty factors mentioned before and FLD learners' difficulties in listening skills. Based mainly on Goh's previous studies, this research identifies twenty factors that the students believed had influenced their listening for comprehension skill over the years. These factors have been further organized into five categories according to their common characteristics. The categories are text, speaker, listener, task and environment.

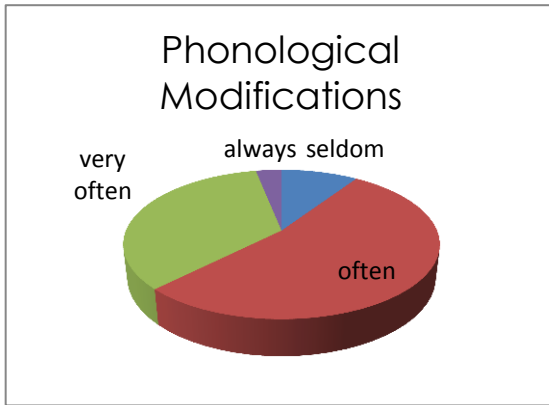
### 4.1.1 Students Listening Skill Overview

The first instrument was a listening test of ten multiple choice questions prepared by the researchers. The test was taken from the TOEFL preparation, third edition. And it was administered to 64 students of advanced courses. The test demonstrates that listening for comprehension has been a neglected skill for years in English learning process. After evaluating the results, the researchers noticed that none of the students got a perfect score, qualified with a ten in Salvadoran educational system. Test results showed that more than fifty percent of them failed the exam. (Horizontal axis shows frequency, and vertical axis shows grades)



## 4.1.2 Factors which influence learning listening comprehension

The second instrument consisted of a survey in which the researchers listed the twenty factors mentioned by Goh that influence in learners' listening for comprehension.



### Factor 1: Phonological Modifications

This factor refers to the difficulty to divide stream of speech, such as linking, and stress. Six students reported this factor as "seldom" (9.3%). Thirty four said that "often" (53.1%). Twenty two students said that this factor affects them "very often" (34.3%). And two students said that this factor "always" affects them (3.1%).



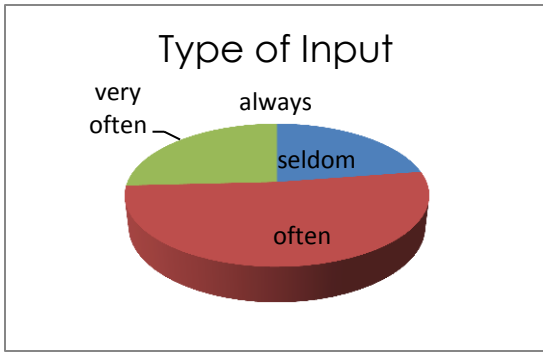
### Factor 2: Vocabulary

Vocabulary is related with the presence of unfamiliar content words, such as idioms, jargon and academic terms. Four students reported as "seldom" (6.2%). Twenty four reported as "often" (37.5%). Twenty two students said that affects them "very often" (34.3%). Finally two students felt "always" affected by this factor.



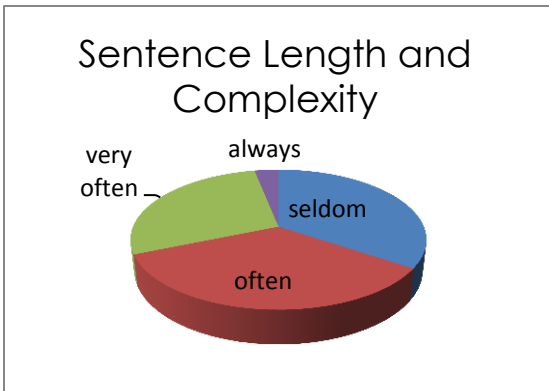
### Factor 3: Speech Rate

Speech rate refers to the perceived speed or slowness at which words are produced. Out of sixty four, eight students reported as "seldom"(12.5%). Thirty four students as "often"(31.25%). Twenty students reported it as "very often" (31.25%). Finally, two of them said that are "always" are affected (3.1%).



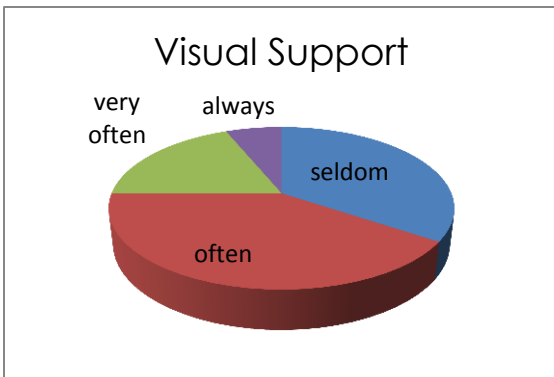
#### Factor 4: Type of Input

Type of input refers to the features related to the specific text types. Fourteen students reported "seldom" affected by this factor (21.8%). Thirty two students felt "often" affected (50%). Sixteen felt "very often" affected (25%).



#### Factor 5: Sentence Length & Complexity

This refers to the sentence types, such as simple sentences or long complex ones. Twenty two students felt "seldom" affected by this factor (34.3%). Twenty two reported as "often" (34.3%). Eighteen answered "very often" (28.1%). And only two reported as "always" (3.125%).



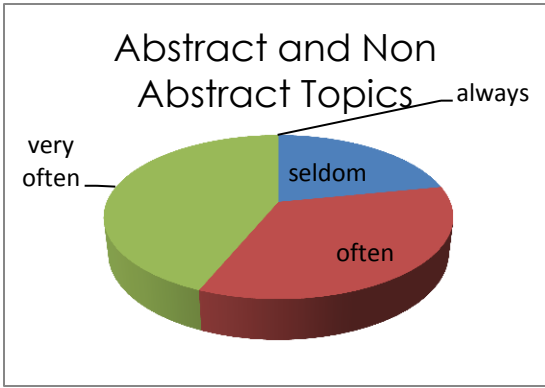
#### Factor 6: Visual Support

Visual Support is related to the lack of pictures, handouts, captions, subtitles that support the spoken text. Twenty two students reported as "seldom" (34.3%). Twenty six students felt "often" affected (40.6%). Two students reported as "very often" (18.7%). Finally, four students (6.2%) felt "always" affected by this factor.



#### Factor 7: Signposting and Organization

This is related to the presence of macro- and micro-discourse markers. Six students reported "seldom" affected (9.3%). Thirty four reported "often" (53.1%). Twenty two students felt "very often" affected (34.3%). Two students didn't answer (3.1%).



### Factor 8: Abstract & Non Abstract Topics

Abstract topics factor refers to deal with concepts compared with those that describe events, people or objects. Eight students felt “seldom” affected (12.5%). Thirty eight pupils (59.3%) reported “often” affected. Fourteen out of sixty four are “very often” influenced (21.8%). None of them felt “always” affected.



### Factor 9: Accent

This factor is related to the way speaker pronounces words influenced by the place of origin or social background. Six students reported “seldom” affected (9.3%). Thirty eight thought that are “often” affected (59.3%). Fourteen students felt “very often” affected (21.8%). Out of sixty four, four didn’t answer (6.25%).



### Factor 10: Competence in Speaking

This factor refers to the speaker’s command of English, overall fluency, and their ability to interest listeners to facilitate their comprehension. Four reported as “seldom” affected (6.2%). Twenty two students felt “often” influenced (34.3%). Thirty four students answered “very often” (53.1%). Finally, four students felt “always” affected (6.2%).

### Interest and Purpose



### Factor 11: Interest and Purpose

This factor is related to the listener's feeling of curiosity or concern about something that makes the attention turn toward it. Eight of the pupils (12.5%) felt "seldom" affected by this factor. Thirty eight students that are (59.3%) are "often" influenced. Fourteen answered "very often" (21.8%).

### no answer seldom



### Factor 12: Prior Knowledge and Experience

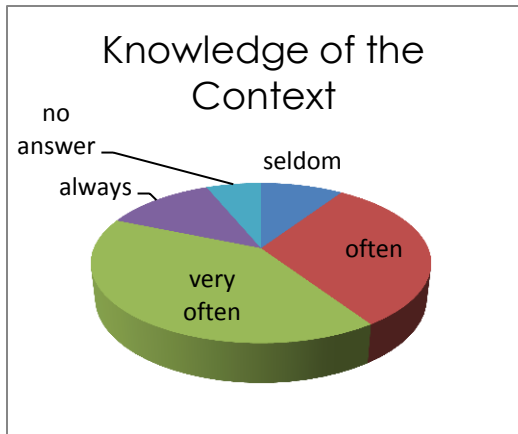
The twelfth factor refers to the lack of specific knowledge about the topic being talked about. Ten students reported "seldom" (15.6%). Twenty students felt "often" affected (31.2%). Twenty two students said "very often" affected (34.3%). Ten students reported as "always" (15.6%). Finally, only two students didn't give an answer (3.1%).

### Physical and Psychological States



### Factor 13: Physical & Psychological States

This refers to the physical and psychological status of the listener: fatigue, nervousness, anxiety, impatience, feeling relaxed or calmed. Six students reported as "seldom" affected (9.3%). Eight students considered "often" affected (12.5%). Thirty four students considered "very often" (53.1%). Finally, sixteen reported as "always" (25%).



### Factor 14: Knowledge of the Context

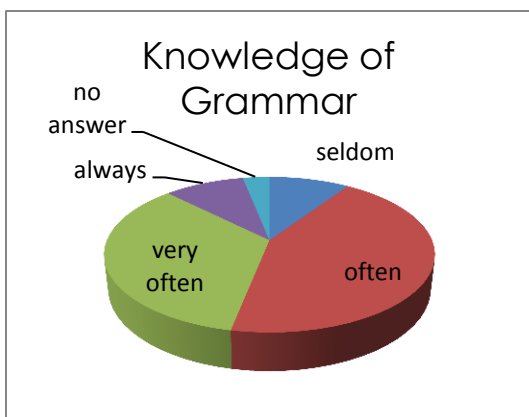
This refers to the general awareness of what the spoken topic is about. Six of the pupils (9.3%) said they were “seldom” affected. 31.25% of the 64 students that are 20 students think that they are “often” affected. 26 students said that they are “very often” affected for this factor and this represents the 40.625%. 8 students said that they are “always” affected and this is 12.4%. And 4 students didn't answer to say how affected they are with this factor, this is

6.25%.



### Factor 15: Accuracy of Pronunciation

Listeners who themselves do not pronounce certain words accurately may have problems recognizing this words when the speaker says them correctly, that is what this factor is about. Eight students (12.5%) reported as “seldom” affected. Twenty two students as “often” affected (34.3%). Eighteen students reported as “very often” (28.1%). Finally, sixteen students thought that they are “always” affected (25%).



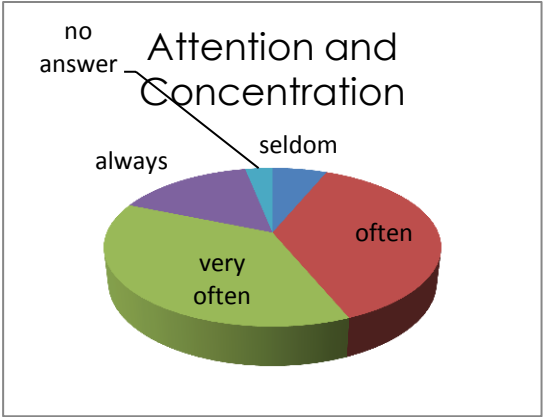
### Factor 16: Knowledge of Grammar

Knowledge of grammar refers to the ability to analyze long complex sentences. Six students considered “seldom” affected (9.3%). Twenty eight students felt “often” influenced (43.7%). Twenty two answered “very often” (34.3%). Six students considered as “always” affected (9.3%). Two of them didn't answer (3.1%).



### Factor 17: Memory

Memory is the ability to retain what is heard and processed. Eight students answered “seldom” (12.5%). Fourteen answered “often” affected (21.8%). Twenty two students said “very often” (34.3%). twenty reported “always” (31.2%).



### Factor 18: Attention and Concentration

Attention and concentration refers to the mental focus and undivided attention. Four students answered “seldom” (6.2%). Twenty four said that they are “often” affected (37.5%). Twenty four answered “very often” (37.5%). Ten students said “always” (15.5%). Finally, 2 students did not answer (3.1%).



### Factor 19: Sufficient Time Available for Processing

This factor refers to the time available for processing and understanding the spoken speech before responding. Six students reported this factor as “seldom” (9.3%). Eighteen answered “often” (28.1%). Twenty four students felt “very often” influenced (30%). Finally, sixteen students felt “always” influenced for this factor (25%).



### Factor 20: Physical Conditions

Physical Conditions is related to the presence of noise, the acoustic in a room, or the loudness. Two students said that they feel “seldom” affected (3.1%). Fourteen students said

that they are “often” affected (21.8%). Sixteen reported as “very often” (25%). Finally thirty two answered “always” (50%).

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# Chapter Five: Findings

## 5.1 Major Findings

At the conclusion of the research, the hypothesis previously stated was tested. Such hypothesis reads as follow: *Students that are exposed to real spoken English in everyday situations will develop better their listening comprehension skill.* By analyzing the results of the listening test section of the TOEFL examination, it was found that the results of the listening test were clearly evident. The results of the experimental test showed that more than the fifty percent of the students failed the exam. In addition, by making careful classroom observations, we can mention: first, students are unaware of the importance of listening comprehension. Secondly, students lack of active listening strategies and tend to be more efficient while writing or reading in English leaving aside the importance of listening. After data was analyzed, hypothesis mentioned above fail to reject.

## 5.2 Conclusions

Listening is undoubtedly a life skill. Good listening skills will not only help us effectively in our studies and prospective employment, but also enhance our ability to develop good interpersonal relationships. Based greatly on Goh's previous studies and also on some other authors, this paper gives all the factors that may interfere in listening for comprehension. Based on the findings, the researchers can conclude:

- Listening is a complex ability which involves more than understanding the meaning of words.
- Now days, English teaching is more focused on writing and reading, leaving aside the importance of listening, FLD does not have a subject that enable students to become more efficient in listening skill.
- The hypothesis *Students who are exposed to real-life spoken English in everyday situations will better develop their listening comprehension skill*, was proved at the end of the investigation. Evidently the practice on everyday verbal language will help learning of English.
- Most of the students fail listening for comprehension when they face a complex listening challenge or task.

## 5.3 Recommendations

As a result of the study carried out on the Foreign Language Department courses, researchers are able to make some suggestions that may have a positive impact on EFL learners. Some implications for improving the teaching of listening comprehension are outlined below:

- Make it a policy to have one lesson of listening session a week, which would be dedicated to the teaching of listening skills.

- Encourage students to have more contact with the verbal language. Listening is a complex skill that demands time and effort, however we as educators, can motivate learners by raising their awareness about the importance of good listening skills.
- Include more listening activities and evaluations. Advanced English learners can also be tested for their ability to evaluate the ideas that they hear. That would represent the important aspects of listening that can have an impact on an individual's learning and interpersonal skills.
- Improve the Language Laboratory for listening activities. The practice of listening would be easier and with short term results by including technology in the courses.

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# Annexes



**University of El Salvador**  
**School of Art and Science**  
**Foreign Language Department**

**Instructions:** You will hear one conversation and one talk; each listening is followed by questions about it. You do not need special knowledge of the topics to answer the questions correctly. Rather, you should answer each question on basis of what is stated or implied in the conversation. You may not take notes.

Listening 1

Now we will begin the first conversation, pay close attention to it and then answer the question.

- 1- What the man going to do during summer?
  - a) Attend classes
  - b) Hold down a part-time job
  - c) Go camping in Colorado
  - d) Dig on an archeological site
  
- 2- What is NOT done at Cooper Mountain?
  - a) Fossil collecting
  - b) Mapping strata
  - c) Laboratory analysis
  - d) Fieldwork
  
- 3- According to the man, why can't some of the summer classes be held during the academic year?  
\*CHOOSE 2 ANSWERS
  - a) Because too many students are interested in making them
  - b) Because field trips would keep students away from regular classes
  - c) Because professors are too busy to help students
  - d) Because weather conditions can make it difficult work
  
- 4- What objects might be found at a buffalo-kill site?
  - a) Buffalo bones and flint knives

- b) Buffalo skins and rifles
- c) Buffalo heard grazing near cliffs
- d) Buffalo meat being dried

- 5- What does the man imply about summer classes?
- a) They're more interesting than regular classes
  - b) They're more work than regular classes
  - c) They're more expensive than regular classes
  - d) They're more challenging than regular classes

## Listening 2

Listen to the talk and answer the question correctly. Please pay close attention.

- 1- What is the purpose of the talk?
- a) To examine the cause of population movement
  - b) To explain why humans started leaving Africa
  - c) To show how North America was settled
  - d) To outline the history of human migration
- 2- How did people survive the Ice Age in northern Europe and Asia?
- a) They moved south to avoid the cold
  - b) They made shelter, clothes, and fire.
  - c) They hunted migrating animals.
  - d) They took over unused land.
- 3- What does the speaker say about the invasion of occupied land by human groups?
- a) It is not related to human migration.
  - b) It is one form of human migration.
  - c) It occurred mainly in Europe.
  - d) It was practiced only when there was no free land.
- 4- What does the speaker say about human migration?
- a) It was done mainly by early tribal societies.
  - b) It appears to no longer be common.
  - c) It seems to be a basic human instinct.
  - d) It has been done only at certain times in history.

5- The professor briefly explains a series of human migration. Put the migrations in chronological order.

- WRITE THE LETTER OF EACH SENTENCE IN THE SPACE WHERE IT BELONGS. USE EACH SENTENCE ONLY ONCE.

- a) Humans crossed the Bering land bridge and spread throughout the Americas.
- b) Humans migrated from the savannahs of Africa into Europe and Asia.
- c) Humans spread through eastern Asia and South Australia.
- d) Humans have continued to migrate throughout the world.

1	
2	
3	
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Universidad de El Salvador  
 Foreign Language Department  
 School of Arts & Sciences

*"Factors influencing English listening comprehension in FLD classrooms"*

**Objective:** To gather information regarding the factors that influence English listening skill in EFL courses.

**Part One**

Mark with an "X" how often these factors affect your listening skill.

	Seldom	Often	Very Often	Always
1. The difficulty to divide stream of speech, such as linking and stress.				
2. The presence of unfamiliar content words, such as idioms, jargon and academic terms				
3. The perceived speed or slowness at which words are produced				
4. Features related to the specific text types				
5. Sentence types, such as simple sentences or long complex ones with embedded clauses				
6. Lack of pictures, handouts, captions, subtitles that support the spoken text				
7. The presence of macro- and micro- discourse markers				
8. Abstract topics dealing with concepts compared with those that describe events, people or objects				
9. Accent: Related to where a speaker comes from				
10. The speaker's command of English, overall fluency, and their ability to interest listeners or facilitate their comprehension				
11. The information is crucial to the listener or can generate sufficient interest in them to continue listening				
12. Lack of specific knowledge about the topic being talked about				
13. Fatigue, nervousness, anxiety, impatience, feeling relaxed and calm				
14. A general sense of what the spoken input is about				
15. Listeners who themselves do not pronounce certain words accurately may have problems recognizing these words when the speaker says them correctly				
16. The ability to parse long complex sentences				
17. The ability to retain what is heard or processed				
18. The ability to direct one's attention to the task at hand and not to be distracted or discouraged when understanding is not immediately forthcoming				
19. Time available between processing one part and the next or before responding				

20. The presence of noise, the acoustics in a room, or the loudness of input

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