



Perspectives of EFL Students in Listening

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Abstract

This descriptive study analyzed the perspectives of EFL students in listening. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected through a survey to 72 university participants (48 females and 24 males), whose ages range from 20 to 26. Results demonstrated that the most difficult sources learners have are that they do not understand better neither when listening to some topics of their interest nor when listening to a recording at once. Likewise, even if anyone says something slowly or native speakers because their vocabulary knowledge is not enough. Learners understand their teachers mostly but they suggested they cannot discriminate among phonemes or minimal pairs. The listening comprehension strategies students use are that they listen to authentic recordings such as podcasts, series, movies and YouTube audios. They prefer listening to songs focused on their lyrics meaning to recordings from textbooks. Finally, the listening comprehension activities students have been exposed the most are: filling in blanks, summarizing information orally, talking and comparing answers among classmates. Additionally, pupils would rather their teachers to provide them with the listening transcripts when looking for specific details. This research is of great interest to any EFL teacher who seeks to improve listening skills to make their students better and more independent learners.

Keywords: Perspectives, EFL students, listening skill, listening strategies, listening comprehension.

Resumen

Este estudio descriptivo analizó las perspectivas de los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera en la habilidad de escuchar. Se recolectaron datos cualitativos y cuantitativos a través de una encuesta a 72 participantes universitarios (48 mujeres y 24 hombres), cuyas edades oscilan entre 20 y 26 años. Los resultados demostraron que los estudiantes tienen más dificultad para comprender y no entienden mejor cuando escuchan algunos temas de su interés, así como tampoco al escuchar una grabación a la primera vez. De la misma manera, aún si alguien les habla lento o a nativos del idioma porque su conocimiento de vocabulario no es suficiente. Los alumnos entienden a sus maestros mayoritariamente, pero sugirieron que no pueden discriminar entre fonemas o pares mínimos. Las estrategias de comprensión auditiva que los estudiantes utilizan consisten en escuchar grabaciones auténticas como podcasts, series, películas y audios de YouTube. Prefieren escuchar canciones centradas en el significado de sus letras a grabaciones de textos. Finalmente, las actividades a las que más se ha expuesto son: llenar espacios en blanco, resumir información oralmente, hablar y comparar respuestas entre compañeros. Además, a los alumnos les gustaría que sus profesores les proporcionen los textos de los audios cuando buscan detalles específicos. Esta investigación es de gran interés para cualquier profesor de inglés como lengua extranjera que busque mejorar las habilidades auditivas en sus estudiantes para convertirlos en mejores alumnos y más independientes.

Palabras clave: Perspectivas, estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera, habilidad auditiva, estrategias auditivas, comprensión auditiva

Perspectives of EFL Students in Listening

Listening skills are essential in learning a new language. Tran et al. (2020) stated that listening skills are a key factor to correctly communicate with more people. However, it is sometimes the most difficult skill to develop and there are some difficulties and challenges EFL students face when they are learning a new language such as speed of information transmitted by another person, listeners' lack of vocabulary, lack of background knowledge, and listeners cannot recognize key signals in spoken language (Underwood as cited in Tran et al., 2020).

Anderson and Goh (2005) stated that the problems in the listening skill are because of a failure in the process of perception, parsing, and utilization. In this sense, Malyshkevych (2017) claimed that these processes are essential in listening comprehension because of the reconstruction of unclear speech sounds which are found in real-life listening context. Hence, the main condition for their effectiveness by learners in their overall proficiency in English is that their ability to use their existing knowledge of the language might be improved through special training.

Some similar problems were evidenced at the institution where the research work took place. One problem is that students seem to find it very difficult to understand what others say. Another problem is that English is seen as a subject that they have to pass or approve and not as a necessity. That is why, a lack of interest in learning English should be included in challenges and difficulties for listening skills.

There have been many research works that were conducted as descriptive studies about listening. For instance, one of those research works is a doctoral dissertation by Otte (2006), which main aim was to examine the outcomes of aural authentic texts on the listening comprehension of adult English-as-a-second language students and identify

the strategies advanced students used with authentic texts such as listening for the main idea, predicting, inferencing, and summarizing. The results indicated that the use of aural authentic materials texts in this course increased students' level of comfort when communicating in L2 as well as their comprehension ability and motivation to seek opportunities to listen to aural authentic language outside the classroom.

Another paper that was found as part of similar studies was the one from Karagöz et al. (2017) which found out that students were more willing to listen to the topics that attract them, so that listening is a mental activity towards purpose. This author also mentioned that listening comprehension skills can be improved by teachers' assistance and the use of appropriate learning materials and activities. If students do not receive this support, they will find it difficult to comprehend when speakers use varied and unfamiliar accents, as well as the meanings of words which are not pronounced clearly and they will not remember words or phrases they have just heard (Karagöz et al., 2017; Öztürk, 2018; Pourfarhad, 2012; Ulum, 2015).

Even though there are some published descriptive studies on listening comprehension conducted in other countries, there were some of these types of researches developed in Ecuador (Alvear & Rizzo, 2017; Arce, 2020; Cabrera-Solano et al., 2020; Suarez & Anais, 2016). They emphasized their studies mostly in other listening skill issues. None of them focuses on perspectives of EFL students in listening. That is why, it is fundamental to understand what perception Ecuadorian learners have on developing this skill due to the importance of listening comprehension in academic contexts as well as daily life.

This research work was conducted at the Pedagogy of the National and Foreign Languages Major of Ambato-Ecuador. This major belongs to the public system of

higher education and aims to prepare future English teachers. There are seventy-two students (48 females and 24 males) who belong to the eighth and ninth semesters of this major and the subjects that they were taking were Research Development and TKT (Teaching Knowledge Test), classes A and B. They are young adults, ages ranges from 20 to 26 years old. Their level of proficiency in the target language is B2+.

Literature Review

Listening Components

Demir et al. (2021) mentioned that listening is the ability to recognize and understand what others are saying. This process involves the listener's understanding of a speaker's accents or pronunciations, the speaker's grammar and vocabulary, and comprehension of the meaning of what the speaker says. Listening is a skill that is developed in the lessons, so listeners should be able to do these things at the same time.

According to Widayat (2014), some components of listening skills are: discriminating between sound, recognizing words, identifying stressed words and grouping of words and identifying functions in conversations. Also, connecting linguistic cues to paralinguistic cues (intonation and stress) and to nonlinguistic cues (gestures and relevant object in the situation). All these features help to create meaning by using background knowledge and context to predict and then to confirm meaning. Additionally, these components include remembering important words, topics, and ideas, giving appropriate feedback to the speaker and reformulating what the speaker has said. Moreover, Babayiğit and Shapiro (2020) claimed that the components of listening comprehension require lexical and syntactic processing of rapidly changing of spoken language.

Listening Skills

Learning a new language is successful when people learn how to communicate using the target language. On the other hand, teaching a language is totally different because teachers help students improve their language skills. Ampa (2015) affirmed that listening skills should be taught before reading, writing, and speaking. Likewise, Syafii et al. (2020) explained that this skill involves several competencies such as the linguistic and non-linguistic competences. The linguistic competence includes vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Meanwhile, the non-linguistic competence includes the situational context and intentions of the speaker.

Yurko and Styfanyshyn (2020) suggested that the importance of listening in learning a language is undeniable, as it reveals to be the most frequently used language skill. The principal benefits of an effective language listening have been found to comprise successful communication, greater productivity, comfort in a foreign environment, awareness of intensive and extensive listening, and familiarity with accents and dialects. The key of listening skills enhancement is to involve learners overcoming the barriers when listening, implementing the acknowledged listening strategies, and becoming an active listener. Mustofa and Sari (2020) explained that the listening is often referred as the most important receptive language skill. It can also be considered an active skill, though. Listening in L2 can be highlighted as active skill when the listeners are given the target to succeed with complicated tasks, for instance interpreting stress and intonation, and distinguishing phonemes.

Hidrovo (2021) reported that some listening skills which must be overpowered are: perception, analysis and synthesis. The perception skill refers to the way people perceive a language which includes intonation, pronunciation, and other language

characteristics. The analysis skill which is based on how people get the main ideas or messages the speaker wants to convey, and the synthesis skill that is the way people make the relation between what they perceive and what they hear in their brains. The listener will be able to make inferences with the relation they made between language and concepts they can understand.

Different Sources of Input for Listening

Bozorgian (2012) pointed out that the listening skill provides the primary impetus to initiate first, second and foreign language learning, and later the medium of communication to sustain the long and often tedious learning process. Therefore, not having the correct listening input, it is more likely for individuals not to accomplish long term goals. In this sense, Ždímalová et al. (2015) mentioned that teachers should expose their learners to different choices of resources such as: 1. Listening to audio recordings (on computer) from the course textbook or supplementary textbooks. 2. Listening to songs with a focus on their lyrics. 3. Listening to authentic recordings of native speakers (i.e. from YouTube, Spotify, Netflix, and podcasts, among others). 4. Listening while viewing the course DVD/video. 5. Listening to the teacher reading a text; and, 6. Listening while viewing a foreign language TV channel.

On the other hand, some of the aforementioned materials are not created specifically to be used in the classroom and they cannot be used at all levels either. However, they make excellent learning tools for students precisely because they are authentic, especially audio and video resources are the best examples because the variety of speakers and listening material can be a positive challenge to improve students listening skills. There are naturally a lot of different accents and ways of any language speaking. Thus, some speakers do not speak clearly and may be more difficult

to understand than others. It is not very useful to habitually keep listening to conversations on the same topics only. Learners should listen to different topics that they are interested in as well as topics they are not familiar with because it is a good way to become a fluent language listener (Djabborova, 2020).

Teaching Listening

Interest in strategy use and strategy teaching instruction derives from research over the years into ways of facilitating language learning (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Rubin, 1975; Wenden & Rubin, 1987 as cited in Schmitt, 2013). Schmitt (2013) argued that the contact between theory and application is found in Mendelsohn's strategy-based approach which is called a 'diagnostic approach', in which a listening lesson would involve pre-listening, listening and then an extended post-listening session. Therefore, gaps in the learners listening skills could be examined and redressed through short micro-listening exercises. According to Sah and Shah (2020), teachers have to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses in teaching listening comprehension and thus improve themselves for better and effective lessons. For instance, by learning that most teachers identify vocabulary as the challenge in listening, teachers could conduct lesson plans that could help students to improve their vocabulary.

Isanova and Ravshanova (2020) mentioned that students develop listening skills by completing thoughtful assignments, so teachers give tasks, such as: find information about listening to something specific in an article, retell the general content of what it was said from an audio, find confirmation from a listening exercise, or write a summary based on any recording material. Recordings that come from magazines, television, and news are used not only as a means of obtaining information, but also as a linguistic

object. This fulfills the task of giving meaningful content which is the context where language teachers work on.

Schmitt (2013) concluded that the teaching listening processes are complex, and listening comprehension is difficult in a second or foreign language. Many teachers either do not teach listening at all, or attempt to teach it, but doing so rather ineffectively. Teaching the listening skill has made a huge progress in the past years, and how teachers should teach it by using different approaches and strategies. It now remains for materials writers and teachers not only to endorse the importance of a strategic approach to L2 listening instruction but to strike a balance between practice-focused listening skills work and practice in the use of strategies that will enhance their comprehension of the target language.

Furthermore, Shamsitdinova (2021) suggested that it is difficult to describe in detail all the possible problems to the successful teaching of understanding of speech by ear, such as an objectively complex text; noise due to which it is hard to hear; specific features of the speaker and so forth. There is likely to have one recipe to develop learners' skills which is to provide them with many opportunities to listen to different materials, get them used to different accents, pace of speech and noise.

Research Methodology

This research work was set up with a mixed approach that was qualitative and quantitative. According to Timans et al. (2019), a mixed approach combines qualitative and quantitative data collection and the analysis of information. In this way, it was quantitative because the aim was established to collect data and information that ended up with a statistical analysis. On the other hand, it was qualitative because it gathered descriptive data about students' perspectives on listening.

A descriptive study was conducted because the goal of descriptive research is to describe a phenomenon and its characteristics. Therefore, a survey was used to gather data. This sort of research is more holistic and often involves a rich collection of data from various sources to gain a deeper understanding of individual participants, including their opinions, perspectives, and attitudes (Gall et al., as cited in Nassaji, 2015).

Research questions:

1. What are the most difficult sources when listening?
2. What strategies do students use when listening for comprehension?
3. What activities have students been exposed to improve listening comprehension?

Participants

The participants of this research work were students who belong to a university in Ambato-Ecuador. They study in the eighth semester of the Pedagogy of the National and Foreign Languages Major and whose ages range are from 20 to 26 years old. There are 48 females and 24 males. They all consider themselves mestizos and most of them belong to the middle-class. These participants were selected because they have been learning English for some years; therefore, they have been exposed to different methods, approaches and strategies on how to become good listeners. Also, they have learned the language for teaching reasons, so they know how to develop the listening skill with the future students. This group of students is currently developing their research works. Thus, many of their thesis topics are related to the one the researcher is conducting now. There was no student excluded to be part of this study; hence, it is feasible to proceed with it.

Instruments

A survey was the instrument used and applied to all 72 students. Therefore, it was set up in order to know three main points; what the most difficult sources were when listening, what strategies students use when listening for comprehension and what activities students have been exposed to improve listening comprehension.

The questionnaire contained 29 items with Likert scale, which included multiple choice and 3 open-ended questions. According to Casas et al. (2003), a survey uses a set of standardized questions where data is gathered and analyzed from a representative sample of population, or a large universe. It also helps researchers to explore, describe, predict, and explain a series of features. Thus, this instrument is a technique that is used to collect and interpret data which allows having descriptive answers from a certain group of people of the research work. Finally, the survey was validated through the coefficient Cronbach's Alpha which resulted in 0.753 that means all questions from the instrument had acceptable reliability. All this process helped the researcher to obtain relevant information regarding the listening skill.

Data Analysis

Firstly, the data was collected to then analyzed and processed through SPSS statistics in order to display the results in a table with the means. The survey results were grouped to contrast to the literature review and reach a conclusion.

Ethical Considerations

For this descriptive study, the participants consent was necessary. In this sense, Shrader-Frechette (1994) claimed that research and working with human beings is a big responsibility; therefore, the principles of any study are respect for the people involved in the object of the research and confidentiality of participants. The search for the good of those involved with informed consent and approved by the authorities and students of

the institution seeking the benefit and progress of the same, and finally justice as the main objective of this research study to achieve maximum benefits and minimize harm and error.

As stated by Barrow et al. (2021), researchers must ensure that potential participants understand that they have the right to decide whether or not to participate in research studies voluntarily and declining their participation at any time without fear of penalty. Also, self-determined participants must have the ability to ask the researcher questions and the ability to comprehend questions asked by the tester.

Results

This section presents the results of the data obtained from the survey to answer these three research questions; What are the most difficult sources when listening? What strategies do students use when listening for comprehension? and What activities have students been exposed to improve listening comprehension? The following information will help to contrast with the similar studies from other authors.

Research question number one: What are the most difficult sources when listening? Results showed that the main problems are that students understand better when they listen to some topics that they are interested in with a mean obtained of 3.21. This reflects that even though students are interested in topics, their listening skills are poor. That was why, they stated that they do not understand a recording completely at first listening with a mean of 3.59 as well. Another thing to point out is that learners understand better if anyone speaks slowly with a mean of 3.42. Students claimed that they understand more when they listen to their teachers with a mean of 4.36, which might mean that their teachers speak at a slower pace than the normal one because they want to be understood in classes.

Another difficulty pupils face is that they just understand some single phrases or words when they listen to something with a mean of 3.53. This can be explained with students' responses when they say they think they understand speakers of English in a certain percentage because their vocabulary knowledge is not enough with a mean of 4.11. Also, students suggested that they can discriminate among sounds like, phonemes; e.g. wash /wɒʃ/; worked /wɜ:kɪd/ with the same mean of 3.53. These university students are teachers to be but they cannot even understand what a speaker means if he/she is using almost similar words either, like in minimal pairs; e.g. Ship / Sheep; Cat / Cut with a mean of 3.56.

Finally, Table 1 demonstrates the results of this section. Thus, some specific codes were used to understand the survey's answers, i.e. 1. Nothing, 2. Partially, 3. A little bit, 4. A lot, and 5. Completely.

Table 1.

Difficult sources when listening

Items	Mean
When I listen to my teacher, I understand	4.36
When I listen to a classmate, I understand	4.11
When I listen to a foreigner, I understand	3.58
I can understand a long, complex audio	4.10
I understand a recording completely at first listening.	3.59
I have to repeat a recording more than twice to understand it.	3.89
I understand some single phrases or words when I listen to something.	3.53
I understand better when I listen to some topics that I am interested in.	3.21
I understand better when I listen to some topics that I have some prior information.	4.29
I understand better when I listen to speakers who use American accent.	4.48
I understand better when I listen to speakers who use British accent.	4.42

I can use my own words to summarize what the speaker said in an audio recording.	4.10
I understand if a speaker speaks slowly.	3.42
I think I understand speakers of English in a certain percentage because my vocabulary knowledge is not enough.	4.11
I think I understand speakers of English in a certain percentage because my knowledge of the topics is not enough.	4.55
I can discriminate among sounds (phonemes; e.g. wash /wɒʃ/; worked /wɜ:kɪ/).	3.53
I can understand what a speaker means if he/she is using almost similar words (minimal pairs; e.g. SHIP / SHEEP; CAT / CUT).	3.56

Research question number two: What strategies do students use when listening for comprehension? Results showed that the strategies students/teachers use the most are that learners listen to authentic recordings of native speakers (from podcasts, series, movies) with a mean of 4.08. Also, they listen to authentic recordings of native speakers (from YouTube) with a mean of 4.23. These two results demonstrate that the interviewees prefer listening to authentic listening material. In addition, students listen to songs with a focus on their lyrics meaning with a mean of 4.56. Something to remark in this part is that the respondents stated that the practice of listening to some recordings from the course textbook with a mean of 3.40 is not very popular among them.

Finally, Table 2 shows the results of this section. Hence, some specific codes were used to understand the survey's answers, i.e. 1. Never, 2. Hardly ever, 3. Sometimes, 4. Often, and 5. Always.

Table 2.

Strategies for listening comprehension

Items	Mean
I listen to some recordings from the course textbook.	3.40

I listen to some recordings in computer from supplementary books.	3.41
I listen to songs with a focus on their lyrics meaning.	4.56
I listen to authentic recordings of native speakers (from YouTube).	4.23
I listen to authentic recordings (podcasts) of native speakers (from Spotify).	3.68
I listen to authentic recordings of native speakers (from podcasts, series, movies).	4.08
I listen to a recording while I read the transcript of the audio from DVD/video.	3.85

Research question number three: What activities have students been exposed to improve listening comprehension? Results demonstrated that the activities students have been exposed to the most were that learners fill in blanks with information after listening to an audio with a mean of 3.89, as well as they talk to their classmates and compare answers to check the listening comprehension activity with a mean of 3.77. These two activities plus this one that their teachers request them to orally summarize information whenever they have any listening activity with a mean of 3.51 highlight that the teachers make their learners use various ways for them to understand what they listen to. On the other hand, students say that their teachers do not provide them with the transcripts of the listening activities they listen to in classes with a mean of 2.85. This means that teachers are not using this activity that might help students have a better picture of what they are listening, especially when they listening for specific details.

Finally, Table 3 displays the results of this section. Therefore, some specific codes were used to understand the survey's answers, i.e. 1. Never, 2. Hardly ever, 3. Sometimes, 4. Often, and 5. Always.

Table 3.

Activities to improve listening comprehension

Items	Mean
I fill in blanks with information after listening to an audio.	3.89

I talk to my classmate and compare answers to check the listening comprehension activity.	3.77
I record my voice with different activities during classes.	3.30
My teacher provides us with the transcripts of the listening activities we listen to in classes.	2.85
My teacher requests us to orally summarize information whenever we have any listening activity.	3.51

To reinforce the three research questions on students' perspectives in listening, table 4 presents the open-ended questions results. Most learners (43) stated that the best ways they learn to develop their listening skill is by listening to different audios (recordings and music in English) and watching different video recordings (movies, series, interviews, vlogs and videos). Likewise, 38 participants claimed that the sort of resources they use to learn to develop their listening skill the most is by listening to podcasts in Spotify or YouTube. Additionally, 36 interviewees expressed that the sort of strategies they use the most to learn to develop their listening skill is by repeating a recording a certain number of times. Finally, 20 students reported that they listen for gist (understand the general meaning of a recording, without paying attention to specific details).

Table 4.

Perspectives Survey: Open-Ended Questions

Question 1	Answers	Total
What ways do you think you	Listening to different audios (recordings and music in English) and watching different video recordings (movies, series, interviews, vlogs and videos)	43
	Watching tv, videos, movies and series in English	9
	Listening to some recordings and interacting with others	5
	Listening to audio books about topics I like	4
	Watching movies with subtitles	3

learn to develop your listening skill the best?	Watching videos of native speakers talking about specific topics	3
	Practicing my listening skills	3
	Listening the audio of native speakers to familiarize with the words and the accents	2
	Total	72
Question 2	Answers	Total
What sort of resources (e.g. technological, native speakers, recordings, radio programs, etc.) do you use to learn to develop your listening skill?	Podcasts in Spotify or YouTube	38
	Different technological sources (apps for listening)	8
	Series and Movies	7
	Native speakers	6
	Vlogs from native speakers	3
	Different streaming services	1
	Twitch and game voice chats	1
	Ted talks	1
	Documentaries	1
	Audiobooks	1
	Apps (Castbox or Cake)	1
	Videogames	1
	Interviews	1
	Alexa	1
	Entertainment and Academic (BBC radio 1 and platforms)	1
	Total	72
Question 3	Answers	Total
What sort of strategies (e.g. listening for gist, do not translate things into L1, repeat a recording a certain number of	Repeating a recording a certain number of times	36
	Listening for gist	20
	Do not translate into L1	8
	Reading the transcript	4
	Listening carefully and paying attention to details	1
	Watching videos in original audio	1

times, etc.) do you use to learn to develop your listening skill or any other you use?		
	Ted Talks	1
	Reading subtitles for understanding specific information	1
	Total	72

Discussion

This study is an attempt to know EFL students' perspectives in listening. The findings are described in the questions below:

Question 1: *What are the most difficult sources when listening?* Djabborova (2020) suggested that learners should listen to different topics that they are interested in as well as topics they are not familiar with because it is a good way to become a fluent language listener. However, results showed that the first problem is that, students do not understand better when they listen to some topics that they are interested in. This reflects that even though students are interested in topics, their listening skills need more practice. That was why, they stated that they do not understand a recording completely at first listening. In this sense, Yurko and Styfanyshyn (2020) claimed that the key of listening skills enhancement is to involve learners overcoming the barriers when listening, implementing the acknowledged listening strategies, and becoming an active listener.

Another problem to point out is that learners understand better if a speaker speaks slowly and understand more when they listen to their teachers. In this regard, Schmitt (2013) concluded that teachers should teach the listening skill by using different approaches and strategies that must strike a balance between practice-focused listening skills work and practice in the use of strategies that will enhance their comprehension of the target language.

Other difficulties pupils face is that they just understand some single phrases or words when they listen to something and they think they understand speakers of English in a certain percentage because their vocabulary knowledge is not enough. In this respect, Widayat (2014) determined that some components of listening skills are: discriminating between sound, recognizing words, identifying stressed words and grouping of words and identifying functions in conversations. Also, connecting linguistic cues to paralinguistic cues (intonation and stress) and to nonlinguistic cues (gestures and relevant object in the situation). All these features help to create meaning by using background knowledge and context to predict and then to confirm meaning. Additionally, these components include remembering important words, topics, and ideas, giving appropriate feedback to the speaker and reformulating what the speaker has said.

Finally, respondents suggested that they cannot discriminate among sounds like, phonemes; e.g. wash /wɒʃ/; worked /wɜ:kɪd/ or they cannot even understand what a speaker means if he/she is using almost similar words either, like in minimal pairs; e.g. Ship / Sheep; Cat / Cut. In this situation, Shamsitdinova (2021) noted that it is difficult to describe in detail all the possible problems to the successful teaching of understanding of speech by ear, such as an objectively complex text; noise due to which it is hard to hear; specific features of the speaker and so forth. There is likely to have one recipe to develop learners' skills which is to provide them with many opportunities to listen to different materials, get them used to different accents, pace of speech and noise.

Question 2: *What strategies do students/teachers use when listening for comprehension?* Results demonstrated that the strategies students use the most on their own are that learners listen to authentic recordings of native speakers (from podcasts,

series, movies and YouTube). In this wise, Djabborova (2020) explained that some of the aforementioned materials are not created specifically to be used in the classroom and they cannot be used at all levels either. However, they make excellent learning tools for students precisely because they are authentic, especially audio and video resources are the best examples because the variety of speakers and listening material can be a positive challenge to improve students listening skills. There are naturally a lot of different accents and ways of any language speaking.

Additionally, students stated that they listen to songs with a focus on their lyrics meaning, which means that they read the words and try to understand their content, too. Furthermore, they practice the listening skill by listening to some recordings from the course textbooks. In this fact, Ždímalová et al. (2015) mentioned that there are plenty of resources teachers should use to expose their learners. The author agreed that listening to audios from the course textbook or supplementary textbooks, as well as listening to songs with a focus on their lyrics help improve this skill. Nonetheless, the results were higher in listening to songs with focus on the lyrics meaning rather than the use of recordings from the textbooks.

Question 3: *What activities have students been exposed to improve listening comprehension?* Results showed that the three activities students have been exposed to the most were that learners fill in blanks with information after listening to an audio, they talk to their classmates and compare answers to check the listening comprehension activity, and their teachers request them to orally summarize information whenever they have any listening activity. In this respect, Isanova and Ravshanova (2020) mentioned that students develop listening skills by completing thoughtful assignments, so teachers give tasks, such as: find information about listening to something specific in an article; retell the general content of what it was said from an audio, find confirmation from a

listening exercise or write a summary based on any recording material. What it was found in the survey was the same that this author stated.

On the other hand, students say that their teachers do not provide them with the transcripts of the listening activities they listen to in classes. This item was one with the lowest means. Hence, Sah and Shah (2020) concluded that teachers have to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses in teaching listening comprehension and thus improve themselves for better and effective lessons. For this reason, teachers should include whatever is needed to support learners understanding into their lessons.

Conclusions

After comparing the data and literature, it can be concluded that even though learners are exposed to different materials, sources and ways of teaching, the listening skill is one of the most difficult and complex skills to develop. It is evident that teachers believe that the more practice they give in this skill, the better results they get. Experts stated there is no recipe to succeed in listening and yet teachers should discover students' weaknesses and strengths in order to overcome this issue by providing them with many opportunities to listen to different materials, get them used to different accents and pace of speech. In addition, when working with teachers to be, professors should allow their students to go deeper into items such as minimal pairs as well as phonemes in order to avoid confusion in listening among their future learners.

It may be inferred that the respondents preferred listening to authentic recordings, i.e. podcasts, series, movies, songs, etc. which is something that is more real than the typical audios textbooks provide. It can be seen that learners do this on their own at home and at their time. Hence, the results clearly demonstrated that exposing students to these strategies would be positive because they engage them to listen more and more with the materials they want and have. Consequently, the listening practice

can be enhanced not only as a classroom activity but creating an extensive listening culture among them. On top of that, students like to listen to songs with a focus on their lyrics meaning, which reveals that this well-known activity still works well when developing listening and they enjoy it.

It can be said that teachers provide students with different activities to improve their listening skills. Nevertheless, it would be good if teachers ask learners what is missing when they are practicing this skill. For instance, if teachers know that their pupils do not understand any section or part, they might give them the transcripts of the listening exercise. This may help students not to make them feel blocked and lost.

Limitations

This research work presented some limitations. One of them was that the survey could not be applied face-to-face. For this reason, a Google form survey was created which was time consuming. Getting, tabulating and reporting the gathered data took a while to get the correct results, as well.

Recommendations

For future research, it could be advisable to give the survey face-to-face; therefore, students may ask the teacher if there is something they do not understand. Also, anyone who is in charge of making the survey should keep on doing it on Google forms. Even though creating it is time consuming, the data is gotten instantly. Whenever the researcher is getting, tabulating or either reporting the results, do not feel frustrated. It is a process researchers go through in order to present their results to know their interviewees' perspectives in listening.

Over and above that, it can be suggested that the survey used for this study can be applied to larger groups of students because the more results that can be gotten, the more reliable results that can be presented. Also, the questionnaire can be used to gather

information from students of any educational level, i.e. elementary or secondary learners. Therefore, the results may differ among groups. Finally, bearing all these things in mind, if researchers might want to keep working on this topic, it could help them to uncover whether students of different levels of proficiency maintain the same listening difficulties like the one presented in this research or either there are many other issues.

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Appendix 1.

Excel Spreadsheet: Survey Results

Available upon request.