

TEMPLATE FOR RESEARCH REPORTS

LISTENING WITH A PURPOSE

Presenter name: Herberth Alfonso Mendieta Ramírez
E-mail: herberthmendieta@usantotomas.edu.co
Cellphone number:
Type of presentation: Research Report



Issues: Meaningful pedagogical practices in the teachers of foreign languages work in the globalized world

Biodata: He is a Bachelor of Arts from Universidad Pedagógica Nacional and Magister in Education from Universidad Santo Tomás. He is English as a foreign language teacher and researcher. He currently works in curriculum, assessment and evaluation. He also helps with quality processes and teachers' support in higher education.

Presenter name: Katherin Johanna Rodríguez Silva
E-mail: katherinrodriguez@usantotomas.edu.co
Cellphone number:
Type of presentation: Research Report



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ABSTRACT

Qualitative research carried out at USTA Bogotá with the purpose to explore and describe the evaluation practices applied by the teachers at the ILFBL O.P. to develop and promote the listening skill. 70 students participated in this research which allowed us to have a general overview of our evaluation process and a specific comprehension of methodologies, strategies and results when facing the listening skill. The phenomenological analysis led to observe the real practices and how students provide meaning to this processes based on their own needs. The results showed that listening is connected to the development and improvement of language skills.

INTRODUCTION

Listening is a very important skill, not only for communicative purposes but also for the process of learning a foreign language; thus, with a low level of listening fluent communication, understanding and interpretation of ideas becomes less effective. In addition, there are some misconceptions about listening, due to it is commonly considered a receptive or even secondary skill by teachers and it is said to be difficult and sometimes annoying for the students.

At USTA, the evaluation of listening shows the lowest scores among the different skills and along the different terms, which means teachers should devote more time to develop this ability and to carry out research in order to find strategies and didactics to avoid fears and anxiety at the moment to promote and evaluate listening. Likewise, a solution to all these difficulties is to share and to motivate students to develop active listening strategies in class, reminding them that they are still involved in the learning process even when they are listening.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

It is essential to recognize that teaching listening can be challenging, and even more when we think on how to evaluate it. First, listening requires an active process of interpretation in which listeners try to understand the messages by using of the knowledge they already have despite they cannot control the vocabulary, the structures, the speed or the speaker. Second, improving listening requires not only time, practice and exposure to the language, but also the ability to understand phonology, to have a sufficient amount of vocabulary and to include the target language in the everyday life. Finally, as language teachers and evaluators, it is important to conceive ways to incorporate listening into our teaching and provide opportunities inside and outside the classroom for our students to be exposed to significant listening input.

OBJECTIVES OR RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- To characterize the listening evaluation practices at the ILFBL
- To establish didactic strategies to promote listening
- To relate the connection between listening and L2 skills development

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

At international level the Common European Framework of Reference sets criteria to evaluate the level of acquisition of a foreign language and provides guidelines about contents, objectives and levels. It defines evaluation as the degree of assessment to validate a foreign language acquisition including aspects such as validity, reliability and viability. At a national level different laws and policies support English teaching such as the law 115-1994 and the foreign language national plan. They both refer to evaluation and assessment as a level of acquisition and performance in a foreign language. At local level, different documents such as the PEI, the Curriculum Policy and the Students' Regulation define

evaluation as a process that includes the verification of results, participation, critical thinking and continuous improvement.

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research followed a descriptive and explorative model in order to characterize the evaluation of the listening skill at the ILFBL O.P. The scenario to develop this project was USTA-Bogotá and a group of 70 students from 17 to 23 years old and from English levels A1 to B1 according to the CEFR. The instruments used to collect data were surveys, interviews and a documental review. A phenomenological approach was used to analyze data. It allowed us to see the implementation of strategies and how students provide meaning to their learning processes in order to achieve their goals. Four categories were used to classify the information and they were: 1) structures and vocabulary acquisition, 2) communicative processes, 3) didactic strategies and 4) motivation and interests.

RESULTS

This research showed how the development of the listening skill in the English class has a didactic and methodological function that contributes to the development of competences and communicative abilities in the acquisition of a foreign language, due to the students have the possibility to improve by copying pronunciation, learning vocabulary, strengthening structures and even by motivating themselves to learn.

CONCLUSIONS

Some conclusions that came out from this academic research showed that:

- The development of the listening skill allows the students to improve pronunciation, stress and intonation.
- Listening promotes oral and written production
- Through listening the students are able to learn about intercultural aspects.
- With listening it is possible to generate autonomous learning proposals.
- The students opinion and adapting material is important when working listening, it allows to increase motivation and to get better results.

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