

# LICENCIATURA EN INGLES

## FINAL RESEARCH PROJECT

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### Topic:

**LISTENING COMPREHENSION THROUGH MODIFIED INPUT AND IN AN ESL  
CLASSROOM**

### Title of the project:

**“HOW TO MAXIMIZE LISTENING INPUT WITHOUT SACRIFICING  
COMPREHENSION”**

### Type of Final Project:

**ACTION PLAN**

## **Acknowledgments**

“And, when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it.”  
**Paulo Coelho, The Alchemist**

In this special and important moment for me, I stop for a second and think about the people who helped me achieve this long-awaited goal. I feel from the bottom of my heart the sincere desire to thank them and make them part of this achievement.

Thank you, my beloved God, for the gift of understanding and for showing me the right way in this life.

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## ABSTRACT

Input refers to all the information, samples of the language, and the context the learner is exposed to (either written or spoken). When trying to learn an L2 input is a key factor, as it is essential for acquisition to take place. However, for learning to occur input must be comprehensible.

There are different types of input, like modified and unmodified, and different means of receiving that input. In the L2 classroom, this input can be transmitted through receptive skills, one of these is listening. Listening is related to attention. The importance of developing listening comprehension skills focuses on the fact that if the listener pays attention, the message he hears can be decoded and comprehended, and eventually, the acquisition will take place.

This work aims to present an action plan in the format of a didactic sequence in which different strategies and procedures are to be presented to maximize the listening input to promote comprehension.

The proposal presented in this project pretends to be a source of analysis and study, in which some data are re-signified, others are discovered or are related in different ways to each other, being a fundamental purpose to guide towards a path of the contribution of our career and profession as a teacher.

### Key words

Input- comprehensible input – listening skills- listening strategies- acquisition.

## CONTENTS

<b>Repositorio Digital de la UFASTA</b> .....	2
1 Chapter I.....	7
1.1 Introductory Paragraphs .....	7
1.2 Research Context .....	10
1.3 Statement of the Problem.....	11
1.4 Rationale/ Justification.....	12
2 Chapter II.....	14
2.1 General Objective.....	14
2.2 Specific Objectives.....	15
2.3 Expected Results .....	15
2.4 Literature Review .....	15
2.4.1 What does it mean to comprehend something? .....	15
2.4.2 Hearing and Listening.....	17
2.4.3 Listening in language acquisition .....	18
2.4.4 Listening Comprehension.....	19
2.5 What models to apply? .....	21
2.6 Theoretical Approaches .....	23
2.6.1 Input, the key factor.....	25
2.6.2 Modified or Unmodified?.....	27
2.6.3 Top-down, bottom-up or both? .....	28
2.7 The Learner .....	31
2.8 The context.....	31
3 Chapter III.....	32
3.1 Methodology.....	32
3.2 Project Approach.....	32
3.3 Data sources.....	34
4 CHAPTER IV.....	34
4.1 The Planning.....	34

4.2	Materials and Activities.....	36
4.3	Strategies.....	38
5	CHAPTER V.....	39
5.1	Presentation of the Action Plan .....	39
	DIDACTIC SEQUENCE:.....	40
	Class n° 1 Taste this! .....	42
	Class n° 2 Watch it, read it.....	46
	Class n° 3 Wish me luck! .....	50
5.2	Tips for Teachers .....	55
	5.2.1 How can I help? .....	55
5.3	Conclusions .....	56
6	Bibliography .....	61

# 1 CHAPTER I

## 1.1 INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPHS

When we are asked about how to acquire a second language the answer is inevitably linked to “input”. When we are asked about how to receive that input, the answer is closely connected to listening. Input is, basically, one of the most outstanding points when it comes to the acquisition of L2. In fact, throughout our lives as teachers we are constantly investigating different pedagogical techniques to make input more evident by facilitating their processing and therefore promoting the acquisition of L2. As for the ability to listen, even when it is known to be an essential skill to work in class, it is not really reinforced and exploited, and despite this we want our students to magically communicate orally when by nature to begin to speak, we first have to learn to listen.

However, for the learner to achieve his or her communicative purpose the amount of input is not decisive, since not everything that the student receives through the input is learned, there must also be a process of internalization, decoding, information processing, and comprehension. In the classroom environment, it is assumed that this linguistic flow, to which the learner is exposed, occurs in a communicative context. That is, it is what the learner hears, reads, or sees (in the case of sign languages) and attends to interpret a message. This action by which input is received is carried out through the receptive skills which are listening and reading.

Learning another language means nothing less than acquiring a complex cognitive ability, which in turn involves other abilities, the two ones mentioned before, listening and reading, and two productive skills, speaking and writing. Through these four abilities, we can perform different actions like understanding messages, communicating with others, recognizing sounds, and most importantly: learning a language.

While it is true that the acquisition of these four skills is common, both to the mother tongue (L1) and to a second or foreign language (L2), the differences between both situations are evident. We summarize them below following Lopez García (2002):

a) In the mother tongue, it is mainly taught to read and write. In the teaching of an L2, it is taught above all to speak and to listen;

b) In the mother tongue, we understand much more than we are capable of expressing. On the contrary, what we are able to understand orally in an L2 is not so far from what we would be able to say in it;

c) In acquiring the mother tongue, what was believed important until recently was knowing the code. The L2 learner is most interested in the use made of the code.

From this, it follows that of the four skills that are involved in learning an L2, listening has a fundamental role, since of the two functions that the organ of hearing can perform, i.e. hearing and listening, it is the second one that has the greatest interest in didactics of languages. This does not mean that the first is irrelevant; on the contrary, it is indispensable so that the second can take place. In other words, it is necessary to hear to be able to listen and it is necessary to pay attention to what is heard to be able to comprehend.

Therefore, to what extent is this listening skill essential for learning a language? We can conclude that listening is a relevant topic for all of us who want to learn an L2, as one of the salient factors of spoken language processing, since there is no spoken language without listening. Although of the four skills we teach in the classroom, this is the least valued, it is an important part of how we build our understanding of a second language. With all of this in mind, we will try to develop an action plan to put comprehensive listening into practice.

Comprehensive listening is a complex cognitive skill that imposes on the listener the challenge of processing what was heard in real time, and very often, without the possibility

of listening again to verify understanding of the message. From the first years of life, humans seem to develop this skill effortlessly in their mother tongue or L1, however, developing listening in a second language or a foreign language (L2), usually imposes great challenges and difficulties on learners, (Tafaghodtari, 2016). This difficulty has led teachers and researchers to ask themselves some questions that need to be answered concerning the function of input in SLA. It is quite clear that the simple exposure to linguistic information is not enough. For instance, we can devote a great deal of time listening to the radio in Chinese, but that does not mean that at the end of this period we will be in a position to speak or even understand Chinese. In this connection, specialists in the topic of input tell us about the different types of input that we can count on to facilitate the learning process of our learners. The central question in this project is how to implement that input in the classroom using comprehensive listening. This implies that input should be modified or adapted in some way so that actual learning may take place. In this respect, Krashen (1985) asserts that for acquisition to occur, input should always be comprehensible and slightly above the student's language level. Then, how do we transfer these concepts to the classroom? In this sense, this research project seeks to give an answer to some of those questions.

Anyway, we cannot talk about just one kind of input. The input can be modified (simplified or elaborated) or real/ unmodified (authentic material). Some authors advocate the use of authentic materials. Others advocate for the use of modified input. Our task will be to design the necessary strategies through an action plan to be carried out in a classroom, so we can maximize modified input without sacrificing comprehension. It was preferred to work with modified input because it is the kind of material that is used in the Institution where this action plan will be carried out, therefore our task will be to maximize the advantages of this learning material without sacrificing comprehension through the strategies we will develop for this purpose.

This research provides the design of a project in which, didactic strategies will be implemented to facilitate the teaching of English. The focus will be on listening



comprehension activities, which will be carried out within the framework of the Input Hypothesis and one of the receptive skills that is listening, using the target language as a basic element in communication, allowing interaction and generating in students the need to communicate.

This project aims to help, on the one hand, students by improving their learning performance in the English subject and, on the other, teachers by helping them rethink their practice trying to bring the best methods, strategies, or activities to the classroom for our students to find meaningful and comprehensible input.

For all this to occur, learning must be constructive, that is to say, it must be integrated into the intellectual framework of the student, incorporating the new knowledge to what he already has (cf. "theory of prior knowledge or schemata")<sup>1</sup>.

This topic and other underlying questions increase interest on the impact of input and its implementation in the context of the English classroom and will be conducted to achieve the Bachelor of English degree. It also intends to contribute to the career and provide some guidelines to improve the quality of the input we provide to our students to enhance learning.

## 1.2 RESEARCH CONTEXT

The context where the implementation of this action plan will take place will be in a private school, Centro Educativo Franciscano Colegio San Francisco de Asís is the selected population. The institution is a private, mixed school, with religious orientation

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<sup>1</sup> According to (Cook, 1989), these are "mental representations of typical situations,...used in discourse processing to predict the contents of the particular situation which the discourse describes. The idea is that the mind, stimulated by key words or phrases in the text, or by the context, activates a knowledge schema, and uses it to make sense of the discourse."

(Catholic and Franciscan), which provides education at three levels: initial, primary, and secondary. It also provides an innovative teaching model that combines technology (each classroom has interactive whiteboards), academic strength, personalized education, and training in values for children from 3 to 18 years old. It is located in the downtown in the capital city of La Rioja. The secondary school consists of ten courses in the morning shift. All of them have English as a foreign language subject, which is also one of the core subjects and the school prepares students to take Cambridge international exams. The school provides this service since 2015; it is a process in constant development; therefore, we are trying out some strategies, which sometimes turned out to be positive and others not so much.

The plan will be carried out among students from the secondary school 4<sup>th</sup>- year course. In the case of listening skills, the proposals have not always been enough, the activities have been at times tedious, besides, the courses are numerous, and so it is not possible for everyone to participate or listen integrally. The proposal aims to offer students input that produces meaningful learning for them.

### 1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The main point of this research is to develop an action plan to apply in the classroom to reinforce comprehensive listening, through actions presented for this purpose and, on that basis, analyse the effects that modified input has on student's achievements in ESL.

In this connection, students' personal needs and motivation are crucial since there is a set of variables involved in the learning process (context, cognitive style, attitudes, learning strategies, effort, etc.). In addition, there is a series of conditions, which are shared by all the learners; however, we are no stranger to the fact that in our group of students, we are dealing with individual learners who have their own attitudes and possess their own personality and aptitude for language learning. In fact, learning also depends in

part on the responsibility of teachers to motivate students. Since it is about helping and guiding so that learners are responsible for their own learning and therefore become more autonomous.

Regarding socio-affective factors, it is noteworthy that the interest, the student's attitude towards L2, and the positive feedback they may receive from the teacher or their self-confidence will not modify their intellectual capacity, but certainly, they will play as important a role as cognitive factors.

For all the aforementioned, the problems identified are the following:

- Inadequate techniques and strategies in promoting listening skills.
- Insufficient listening input and lack of updating and/or revision of the listening strategies by the teacher.
- Lack of motivation of students.
- Lack of interest in listening activities.
- Difficulty recognizing explicit data, inferring, and making a critical assessment.
- Poor performance in listening comprehension skills.

#### 1.4 RATIONALE/ JUSTIFICATION

Taking into account the present project about modified input in relation to the listening skill in an ESL classroom; the main motivation probably lies in the need to highlight the importance of the input in the classroom promoting its comprehension, without ignoring that not because of giving a great deal of input, the student will learn or comprehend. For this to happen, input –among other factors- must be comprehensible. In the name of this need, this basis is justified by the procedures that should improve the awareness of the teaching-learning process by teachers and students, making it clear that learning a second language is not the result of a single factor, but of several variables of different types.

The main topic in this project is how to implement input-based strategies and how to create and put a course of action into effect, in addition to seeing how this important component in language learning affects students. This investigation is carried out because a real need was perceived that represents a possibility of making teachers and students aware of the importance of the components of language learning in the classroom and how input interacts with these components, for learners to gain the best learning achievement through comprehensible input.

Comprehensible input is all the information students can understand even though they do not understand all the words and structures it contains. According to Krashen's Language Acquisition Theory (Wilson, 2011/2012) giving students this type of information helps them acquire language naturally, rather than consciously learning it.

The achievements and objectives to be achieved in this investigation, or at least to set a precedent, have to do with making a diagnosis of the present time of the plan or course of action to be applied in a class, as well as observing students in their environment when dealing with the proposed plan.

Academically, it will contribute to the generation of a way of thinking and readapting models and concepts whose results could become the cornerstone for future teaching plans and syllabuses in teachers' implementations.

This research would help the educational community by improving students' learning performances in the English subject and would shed light on how the correct choice of strategies and input (even if it is only the material that is requested in the School) included in the correct planning would affect positively to the betterment of foreign language management.

The importance of this plan of action lies in the fact that will allow us to work with modified input in a communicative context in the English classroom; it will help us generate spaces for reflection that will permit us to make adjustments and improvements to the way the English language is being taught through the listening skill. Moreover, headmistresses

and collaborators can become mindful to support the importance of the implementation and application of different strategies to reinforce listening input as an important part of the curricular development of the English subject.

The method utilized will be an Action Plan, that is to say, a didactic sequence will be presented implementing three different strategies to work with modified input to maximize comprehension.

With this type of project, we will try to plan and organize all the tasks and activities necessary to achieve an educational objective. It is important to clarify that, the theories and approaches that will be treated in this work should be understood as a method that is readapted, that is to say, it readapts its pedagogical principles and methods so far applied trying to optimize them comprehensibly, it is also adapted to the particular needs of the group of students.

## 2 CHAPTER II

### 2.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The aim of this study is:

To implement didactic strategies to reinforce listening comprehension in the context of a Franciscan education ESL classroom with 4<sup>th</sup>- year secondary school students from the CEF Centro Educativo Franciscano Colegio "San Francisco de Asís" in the city of La Rioja, Argentina, who are learning English as a foreign language with a B1 level.

To investigate, analyse, and think critically regarding the impact of input in the classroom by observing students in their environment; the effect that the input has upon learners without sacrificing their comprehension.

## 2.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To improve the techniques and strategies when promoting listening skills.
2. To update and/or revise the listening material by the teacher.
3. To promote motivation on the part of the students.
4. To promote interest in listening activities.
5. To improve strategies so that students can recognize explicit data, infer and make a critical evaluation.
6. To increase performance in listening comprehension skills.

## 2.3 EXPECTED RESULTS

Applying strategies for the development of listening skills will allow students to promote the comprehension of these receptive skills; to achieve good comprehension, greater interpretation and reflection when interacting with the material presented so that they can actively communicate in and out of the classroom; besides it will also help them feel self-confident when doing listening activities and interacting with peers and teachers.

## 2.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.4.1 WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO COMPREHEND SOMETHING?

This is a great question and has many edges. How is it possible to expose students to a relevant input for their linguistic development, and at the same time, give them tools to process and assimilate it? How does the individual's listening skill affect learning? To what extent is this skill essential for learning a language?

Regarding the first assumption, in order to get to know something we need to comprehend it. When we talk about comprehension, we mean understanding or justifying something. Therefore, comprehension is the ability to achieve an understanding of things. For the acquisition of a second language in a formal context, first we have to comprehend it. However, for this to happen we must also teach our students to develop their comprehension skills through the different activities that we strategically plan for our classes. We also highlight the importance of linguistic materials provided in the target language. That is why we talk about presenting comprehensible input. The Input Hypothesis by Krashen (1985) is practically the starting point of all theories about input.

Regarding the second assumption, naturally, if the ability to hear is diminished by some physical impediment, the learning of an L2 suffers. At least as regards as listening comprehension and, consequently, also speaking which is its equivalent as a productive skill.

Regarding the third assumption, if the objective pursued is oral communication with other people, we should say that listening comprehension is closely associated with oral expression without which it cannot be conceived; it is, so to speak, its corresponding receptive skill. Although, it is the first language skill that occurs according to the natural order of acquisition of the mother tongue, but not necessarily the first that develops among learners of a second language because they already know how to read and write in their L1. Therefore, this skill in some way, is already developed and it would be necessary to stimulate it in the L2 so that it can produce comprehension. In any case, to learn an L2, learners always have to start from receptive skills -listening or reading- since speaking and writing without the other two would be impossible.

In this sense, the listening skill requires learners to have many opportunities to practice it from the earliest stages. The so-called “peripheral learning” or “osmosis learning” makes the teacher's informal speech the best material that can be used in the classroom to practice listening comprehension (Ur, 2008) since the feedback it produces in the learner can help improve their speaking skills.

From all of the above, it can be inferred that, with the development of comprehensive listening through appropriate input strategies, not only the ability of listening would be acquired, but also the productive ability of speaking would be developed and enriched.

#### **2.4.2 HEARING AND LISTENING**

The first process that leads to listening is hearing. Hearing is the sense that allows the reception and conversion of sound waves, which are experienced as pressure pulses. Beyond this conversion process of external stimuli to auditory perceptions, hearing is the sense that is often identified with our affective experience of participating in events. Unlike our other primary senses, hearing offers unique observational and monitoring capacities that allow us to perceive life's rhythms and the “vitality contours” of events (Stern 1999, 2011).

While hearing provides a basis for listening, it is only a precursor for it. While both hearing and listening are initiated through sound perception, the difference between them is essentially a degree of intention. Intention involves several levels, but initially, intention is an acknowledgment of a distal source and a willingness to be influenced by this source (Allwood, 2011). To make this clearer, hearing is the sensory faculty to achieve the perception of sound waves. It is a passive action that depends on the physical condition of the ears. In fact, the ear works non-stop 24 hours a day, even when we sleep. Hearing is an involuntary act.



On the other hand, listening is paying attention to what is heard. It is a voluntary act, which means that there must be intentionality on the part of the subject, in other words, we can choose between listening or not. Has it ever happened to you that while in class you did not pay attention or you were not interested in what the teacher said and then you did not even remember the topic that was discussed? In this case, you were not listening to him, although you were hearing.

### **2.4.3 LISTENING IN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION**

As we have seen, listening is an integrated voluntary act that requires a series of abilities to achieve comprehension. These in turn are related to different processes that serve as the basis for the development of linguistic processing (semantic and pragmatic processing).

It is known that under normal circumstances, from a neurological point of view, we are all capable of acquiring our L1 successfully. That is, in almost all cases we acquire our L1 first in an oral mode that involves different actions. We acquire the ability to use oral language through an immersion process that involves the abundance of "listening." For instance, in the case of deaf children, who do not have a functional hearing, they also go through the same essential acquisition process, relying more on visual input and visual coding of oral input (Rost, 2011).

Regarding the development of the linguistic process, there are many similarities between L1 and L2 acquisition. But it is also true that there are marked differences. The difference that concerns us in this project is the comprehension of listening, although understanding how L1 listening skills are acquired is important, we focus specifically on the listening comprehension of the L2. Thus, for the acquisition of an L1, it is simply necessary to be immersed in that context where since we are born, we are exposed to our language and the listening ability, despite not being formally taught, occurs rapidly. It

is a process that occurs naturally, we learn almost without realizing it. While for the acquisition of an L2 the listening ability occurs slowly, through a conscious process, in an educational environment with partial immersion and it is variable, since it depends on the person because to gain proficiency in an L2 sustained motivation and strong will are needed.

#### **2.4.4 LISTENING COMPREHENSION**

Understanding an oral message is not easy, it takes time and, if we have not listened to it carefully, we can lose an important part of the information that the interlocutor (teacher, another student or audio of the book) wants to tell us. It can also happen that, as we understand one part, we stop paying attention to the rest of the message. This also leads us to guess what else our interlocutor said.

Thus, decoding what we listen supposes (Douglas McKeating, n.d., p. 60):

1. Recognizing it as significant and understand it;
2. Retaining it in the short memory long enough for connections to be established;
3. Relating what has preceded it and/or to the following;
4. Storing it in the long memory and then only remember the essentials.

This involves not only the recognition of the lexical meaning but also the perception of grammatical phenomena such as word order, verb forms, different types of sentences, connectors, suprasegmental phenomena (accent, rhythm, intonation), etc. all of which happens, if not simultaneously, then very swiftly. That is, to understand what we hear is to understand the whole set of words and sound chains that make up a certain lexical context, i.e., what someone wants to tell us. Even more, it is also understanding the grammatical structure in which that idea is formed.

According to an article published on the internet about teaching skills (Estrategias didácticas para la enseñanza de un segundo idioma. Curso-taller Unidad III, 2014), this comprehensive listening process is highly complex and, to a large extent, is reduced due to our ability to guess what our interlocutor wants to say and our ability to select what is most important for us to hear. Moreover, the redundancy of language, as well as the linguistic context, makes it possible for us to understand incomplete messages, or even predict the end of a message without running the risk of being wrong. When we only hear what interests us, we can “tune out” because our ability to predict tells us what is coming next. Nevertheless, listening carefully also has its advantages because sometimes we miss our predictions and we are forced to change our expectations in light of what we hear.

Therefore, it is difficult to say when we achieve an understanding of an oral passage or not. Many times we understand without making any effort, we understand almost without realizing it. We do not get to thinking about sentence patterns or structures or overall meaning. Comprehensive listening simply occurs.

The interpretation of a message according to Rivers & Temperley (2008) is based on:

➤	the knowledge that we already have of L2;
➤	the degree of familiarity with the subject of the message;
➤	the knowledge of the real world that we share with the speaker;
➤	the relationship with the speaker and/or what we think of their attitudes and interests;
➤	the vision we obtain of the circumstances in which the message is produced, as well as those that preceded it;
➤	our knowledge of the cultural context in which it occurs, and
➤	the reading we make of paralinguistic features (speed of emission, duration of pauses, gestures, etc.).

In other words, all these factors play a fundamental role in the development of listening comprehension skills in L2. Familiarity and knowledge of L2 or knowledge schemata refer to the student's pre-existing knowledge of an L2 and which, when shared, will be taken for granted and therefore it will not be necessary to be completely explicit. Reception and understanding not only consist of analytical processes but also, to a high degree, of constructive processes. Although the acquisition processes are similar to those of an L1, all the phases and stages involved take longer, since it takes us longer to recognize familiar elements and see the relationships between the different components of the material we are listening to. Therefore, appealing to practice and what has been studied, we can conclude that the management of this skill does not happen overnight. It takes time. It takes practice. But it is not impossible.

Along the way, we are very likely to make mistakes at every stage of the process or the practice. We may come across chunks of speech that we do not understand at all, thus making it more difficult for us to predict and select with the same degree of confidence what is necessary to be able to process the message and then produce or reproduce it through the productive skills.

## 2.5 WHAT MODELS TO APPLY?

Listening is “the least researched of all four language skills” (Vandergrift 2006, 2012). L2 learners often regard listening as the most difficult language skill to learn (Hasan & Graham, 2017). One of the reasons might be that learners are not taught how to learn listening effectively (Vandergrift 2007, 2017). Another reason might be that the listener cannot refer back to the text in contrast to a reader who usually has the opportunity to refer back to clarify understanding (Stahr 2009, 2017).

Hence, the spontaneity of the communicative act of speaking and listening makes it difficult for the listener to go back to hear the message that he eventually lost, in this way

characteristics such as pronunciation, elision, assimilation, intrusion, and other paralinguistic elements are also lost. In the L2 classroom, not being able to "hear" the message correctly will lead the student to not be able to decode the text and as a consequence comprehension will not occur. For this reason, attention plays a fundamental role in listening activities in the classroom, since without this requirement, listening will not be fruitful: if the listener does not pay attention to an oral text, he simply hears and the interpretation of the message we mentioned above would not occur.

Therefore, the perception of oral texts will take place either by chance, i.e. without paying much attention to what we hear, for example when the radio is on while we are doing something; or when we pay attention to what we hear to extract certain information that is needed, for instance when someone hears on the news how much the dollar costs because they intend to buy.

If we take the step to the activity of listening it will be because we are guided by a specific objective, we are looking for something in particular. This is so, even in the case that we are moved by simple curiosity.

If we want to respect the processes that occur during the listening activity in the classroom, we must provide students with a purpose for listening, or allow them to find it for themselves. That is to say, this activity has to be meaningful to them, not simply completing a task to get a good grade, but something that catches their attention, that has to do with the real world and that they feel that outside the classroom it may be applied. It is also essential that the information or comprehensible input comes in different ways and formats. Recently, Lee (2019) has reinforced Krashen's theory by stating that a student's advancement in their level of competence depends on being able to receive information in the foreign language that is full of real meaning, that comes from authentic situations and that compels the student to use their previous knowledge to build new concepts. Thus, using the knowledge the learners already possess the next step will be comprehension and they will place themselves at a new level of competence.

In this sense, Rost (2011) points out that within the act of receiving oral information, first there is a receptive orientation where the message is taken as it is expressed. Next, the information contained in the listener's schemes is taken and from there the meaning is constructed and represented in a constructive orientation. Once this is done, within the collaborative orientation the meaning is negotiated with the receiver and a response is emitted that, through the transformative orientation of the comprehension, is loaded with the beliefs and experiences of the receiver.

As we can see, listening is not an easy process, especially in the context of learning a second language. It is clear that if the student does not achieve an appropriate level of comprehension of the message, it will be difficult for him to use the language to advance his learning. For this reason, the baggage of information he has is important so that, on that accumulation of knowledge, he will build new experiences and thus be able to interpret and decode the information.

As teachers, many of us think that it is inconsistent to propose listening comprehension tasks separate from those of speaking, but there are times in real life that listening comprehension is activated independently, for example when we listen to the radio or television, or when we casually intercept a conversation in which we do not participate and many more examples like these. Therefore, comprehensive listening is not just a nonsensical expression, in fact, for language acquisition to occur, the learner should be in constant contact with a comprehensive listening input; for communication to take place, there must be an interaction with another listener, the one who tries to understand –and make himself understood- through acoustic signals until comprehension occurs. The work of the listener is always active, he infers and negotiates to understand the message.

## 2.6 THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Different models refer to the listening comprehension process. It is known that when the processing of the message starts from the most general (previous linguistic knowledge, experiences, scripts, and schemes) to the most concrete (sounds, words, phrases, etc.) we are referring to the top-down techniques; we refer to bottom-up techniques when listeners first recognize phonemes, then words, then phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and then full texts.

At this point, it is worth asking ourselves whether comprehension is sufficient for learning to take place as Krashen (Input in Language Instruction, 1985, 2016) postulated, or on the contrary, whether something more is necessary. In this sense, in our plan of action, we are going to focus on the Input Hypothesis and the techniques mentioned above, selecting an accessible input to promote the comprehension of the language in the classroom.

Apropos Krashen's Input Hypothesis, which was part of his overall monitor model of L2 learning, has had a sustained effect on teaching approaches to listening. This hypothesis was developed as a corollary to what Krashen (1985) referred to as the natural order hypothesis. He suggested the idea that children learning their first language acquire grammatical structures in a pre-determined, "natural" order, and that some are acquired earlier than others. This idea has been expanded to somehow explain the acquisition of a second language in Krashen's theory of language acquisition: second languages are acquired "by understanding messages or by receiving comprehensible input" (Krashen's Comprehension Hypothesis Model of L2 learning: Notes by Vivian Cook, 1985). By receiving information (input) that is progressively more complex, the student naturally acquires the ability to listen.

This hypothesis has two direct results:

- Speaking is the result of the acquisition, not its cause. Speech cannot be taught directly, but rather emerges on its own as a result of building overall competence via comprehensible input.

- If the input is understood, and if it is given forcefully, the indispensable grammar the learner needs to learn is automatically provided. The language teacher does not need to teach the structures (syntactic or lexical) along a spectrum of learnability or difficulty, a natural order will be provided in just the right quantities and automatically reviewed if the student receives a sufficient amount of comprehensible input (Krashen S. , 2011).

In this sense, according to this theory, the learner receives all this flow of information through the exposure to comprehensive listening of the target language and it is not necessary to resort to grammatical structures since the student by a natural order, which is predictable, will collect these structures, he will decode them and incorporate them into his knowledge.

### **2.6.1 INPUT, THE KEY FACTOR**

When trying to establish the role of input in SLA, Krashen (Krashen, Input in Language Instruction, 1985, 2016) states that learners progress in their knowledge of the language when they comprehend language input that is slightly more advanced than their current level. Krashen called this level of input "i+1", where "i" is the learner's interlanguage<sup>2</sup> and "+1" is the next stage of language acquisition. Gass (1997, p. 12) posits that "the concept of input is perhaps the single most important concept of SLA. It is trivial to point out that no individual can learn a second language (L2) without input of some sort". Input can be also defined as "the language which the learner is exposed to (either written or spoken) in the environment" (Lightbown & Spada, p. 12).

Therefore, all the information, samples of the language to be learned, and the context that makes up the input could also be applied in the case of the one who is learning a second language, both to listening comprehension and written comprehension, and

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<sup>2</sup> The term interlanguage (IL) refers to the learner's independent language system (Selinker).



does not take into account other aspects that form the linguistic context. These aspects can also facilitate comprehension, although they are not treated specifically as linguistic input, for example the gestural language that accompanies the production.

All the information students receive from around them is used to learn the target language. This may explain why learners may be using new language forms without being fully aware of it. Because if the context provides all the elements, for example, information, material, strategies, ultimately the input, and also if the didactic sequence, the strategies, the stimulus by the teacher and the motivation by the students are at the service of learning, then this will occur almost naturally.

Therefore, not only the flow and exposure to the input are central, but also the context and the learners play an important role when all these aspects interact so that comprehension occurs.

According to Ellis (1994, 2015), “a number of researchers see comprehensible input as a major causative factor in L2 acquisition”. For instance, Long (1996, 2015) asserts that “language acquisition entails not just linguistic input but comprehensible linguistic input”. Krashen (2015), tells us about the comprehensible input: “We acquire language in only one way: when we understand messages in that language, when we receive comprehensible input”. His input hypothesis states that, the comprehension of messages is necessary for acquisition to take place and that comprehensible input is a necessary condition for second language acquisition. What is more, comprehensible input is the language that can be understood or comprehended by the learner even though some structures and vocabulary may not be known. Hence, when a significant input occurs, and affective filter permits, the student can comprehend. Therefore, the acquisition is inevitable, because the mental process of language automatically works like any other process.

Finally, we will conclude this section dedicated to input, which is one of the central points in our study, quoting Krashen (Krashen, Input in Language Instruction, 1985, 2016):

“we acquire language and develop literacy when we understand messages, that is, when we understand what we hear and what we read, when we receive comprehensive input”.

Nevertheless, other factors such as evidence of incorrect production (for example, the request for clarification after an erroneous intervention of the learner), conscious learning and formal instruction or social and emotional circumstances would also affect acquisition. In addition, the input is not only presented in only one way. There are different types of input that can be used to help students understand. In our project, we are going to deal with modified input.

### **2.6.2 MODIFIED OR UNMODIFIED?**

As for the type of input, this in turn interacts with the learner and the context. The linguistic input can refer to the mother tongue, the second language, the third language, and so on and can be of several types, but we will only mention one of them, specifically the one that we are going to address in this work.

Therefore, we refer to the kind of input that is modified so that the learners have enough comprehensible input or that would be the output that native speakers direct to foreigners, comparable to the speech teachers use in a language classroom, i.e. it is simplified speech so that learners can follow the lesson with ease. More precisely, modified input is the type of input that L2 learners receive and it is often modified to make it more comprehensible. In fact, this type of input can be subdivided into two: *-simplified*, in the form of less complex vocabulary and syntax and, *-elaborated* in which unfamiliar linguistic items are offset with redundancy and explicitness (Yano, Long, & Ross, 1994, 2016). This can be done in different forms, like repetitions, paraphrase of words or sentences, and reduction of sentence length and complexity, among others. As explained by Long (2007, 2016), elaborated texts (written or aural) can be designed by adding redundancy and regularity (also refer to as transparency) to a text, and often more explicit

signaling of its thematic structure, followed by gradual removal of the modification provided as learner proficiency increases. He also suggests four ways to make input comprehensible: by modifying oral or written input, providing linguistic and extra linguistic context, orienting the communication to the simple form and modifying the interactional structure of the conversation.

In this course of action, we choose to work with modified input, since it is the type of material to which the student is exposed in the classroom. Perhaps these texts have modifications in their thematic structure, redundancy, and repetition, but they are also authentic material. Authentic means that, even though the texts themselves may be scripted or semi-scripted, they are rather close to what the student would experience, either through reading or listening, in a real-life situation. That is, the listening passages and the activities that the learners have to complete are in general similar to what the students would carry out in their L1, and the texts include examples of the language spoken at its normal speed, accents, hesitation, ellipsis, fillers and assimilation. However, whatever input is used in the classroom, it will allow students to put into practice what they have already learned.

In sum, comprehensible input is related to more than just language development and curriculum content, therefore the teacher will need to emulate the types of input students receive on a daily basis, taking into account the contributions of the different authors for the different types of input.

### **2.6.3 TOP-DOWN, BOTTOM-UP OR BOTH?**

On the one hand, for input to be relevant to learning, it must be genuine in its linguistic use and motivating in its content. Because if it is not genuine, learners run the risk of forming false hypotheses; if it is not motivating, they will not pay attention to detail. That is to say, an input away from a real-life situation will cause the student to feel

frustrated when trying to understand what he hears, for example in a song or movie or if he has to interact with someone else who speaks English as a second language or even a native speaker. If the text he hears is not motivating, this will lead the student to only perform the involuntary act of hearing, while the act of paying attention, i.e. listening, will not be present, therefore the input will not be comprehensible.

On the other hand, if the material to be used in the classroom is modified, to be used as spoken language study material, it must present complex and spontaneous dialogues, produced between native speakers, in the form of informal negotiations of daily life. That is, it has to be meaningful for the student to find that he can apply it outside the classroom or that he can apply it in any aspect of everyday life, such as when he hears a song in English and can at least infer what it is about and understand it.

Therefore, for this action plan, we will rely on Krashen's Input Hypothesis and on top-down and bottom-up techniques, trying to give a twist on the strategies we have worked on so far without sacrificing comprehension. It is expected that the course of action presents strategies to take advantage of the resources we have in the classroom, which are many, and that it is not just about activities that we have to do because they are in the book, but when doing them, attention, comprehensive listening and active listening are involved to produce this change that makes us realize that we understand what we hear, that we can process and decode it and therefore we will also be able to respond.

Thus, since no two students are the same, each student has their own strategies to use when learning something. In the case of listening, although there are students who may not need to be guided because they have a certain ability to understand an oral text, in any case, to improve what they already have, it is necessary to teach them specific strategies to sharpen this ability; and if there are students who have not developed this ability, it is necessary to teach them to discover and utilize some strategies to help them process, keep, and remember new information.

For this reason, we are going to use two types of cognitive strategies in this project to develop listening skills: top-down and bottom-up processing. The terms top-down and bottom-up refer to the ways someone can process, decode, and finally understand a listening text. According to Richards (1990, 2019): Top-down processing relies on prior knowledge and experience to build the meaning of a listening text using the information provided by sounds and words. To arrive at the meaning of a text, the listener draws on her knowledge of the context topic and the situation and relates it to the aural input. Top-down listening skills include: listening for gist, main ideas, topic, and setting of the text, sequencing the information, prediction, guessing, inferencing. Often the starting point is to give listeners a clue of what they are going to hear, either through pictures, questions, or brainstorming so they can obtain a general idea. The most common activities are questions, use of strategies and comprehension problems, comprehension work in pairs.

The other process would be the opposite of the previous one: Bottom-up processing helps students recognize lexical and pronunciation features to understand the text. Because of their direct focus on language forms at the word and sentence levels, bottom-up exercises are particularly beneficial for students who need to expand their language repertoire. As they become more aware of linguistic features of the input, the speed and accuracy of perceiving and processing aural input will increase. To develop bottom-up processing, students could be asked to: distinguish individual sounds, word boundaries, and stressed syllables, identify grammatical forms and functions, recognize contractions and connected speech, recognize linking words.

When there is an interaction between these two, we speak of the interactive model (López). That is, the listener processes language simultaneously at different levels - phonological, syntactic, pragmatic, and semantic. The listener uses their prior knowledge to make predictions but needs information in the text to confirm their expectations. That is, the text is understood by integrating data from the top-down and the bottom-up, interacting between the different sources of information as clues are collected in the text, and gradually, clarifying our understanding of the message.

Preference for one type of processing depends on the purpose of listening (e.g. listening for specific information vs. the general idea), level of proficiency, the context of the listening event, etc.

## 2.7 THE LEARNER

As students, we may notice that our classmates may be better or worse at learning a language than ourselves, even when we are all exposed to the same input; we all study from the same material and we are all immersed in the same context.

As teachers, we know that in our classes, not all students behave in the same way. Although we teach using the same style for all students, not everyone receives input in the same fashion. Some students may prefer to work alone because they get better results, while others will find it easier when they work in groups. Some students will study by heart while others will opt for learning by doing exercises. Some students will be more dependent on the teacher or the course material; however, others will tend to be more autonomous.

Trying to identify the different factors that influence learners when learning L2 in large courses is not an easy task, but it is possible to reach everyone by trying to apply various strategies from time to time so that everyone has a little bit of what they like and it is not "always the same" activity for everyone.

## 2.8 THE CONTEXT

Situational factors relate to the environment in which learning takes place and affects both the nature of the input and the strategies used by learners.

In a formal context, the exposure and contact with the target language to be learned are usually limited to the language classroom. This language is not that of the society in which the learner lives. For instance, it can be either a subject matter, or used as a social or professional tool, or as a means of communication in the learner' community.

In our project, the context will be that of the classroom, a formal context, but we will pretend that the English classroom is an island where the only means of communication is this target language to work with modified input in listening comprehension using top-down, bottom-up and interactive strategies.

### 3 CHAPTER III

#### 3.1 METHODOLOGY

Formerly, the problems, objectives, and theoretical framework had been established to use the project in the classroom. This implies the selection of the type of design and how it would be applied to the selected context, as well as the techniques used in the development of the planning instrument. Subsequently, the type of investigation needs to be determined.

#### 3.2 PROJECT APPROACH

This project circumscribes within the action research methodology since its purpose is to describe a series of actions that teachers carry out in their own classrooms for purposes such as: curriculum development, professional development, the improvement

of educational programs, planning systems and student behaviour in the classroom as well as monitor what we do and evaluate the modified action. These activities have in common the identification of strategies that are to be implemented and later subject to observation, reflection and change. The process that the researcher goes through to achieve understanding is a spiral of action research cycles consisting of four major phases: “planning, acting, observing and reflecting” (Zuber-Skerritt, 1991). For this reason, according to what has been mentioned, the result of this project will be the elaboration of an action plan.

Therefore, to give an overview of how students feel about working with listening input in ESL classes, it will also allow us to address the topic of how to maximize input without sacrificing comprehension as the goal of action research is to improve processes. The idea of classroom action research was introduced by Stenhouse (1975) and promoted by Elliott (1991) and others who recognized the concept of a ‘teacher as researcher’. They suggested that research in educational practice should be carried out by the practitioners themselves and not by outsiders or external agents. They advocated a research that does not aim to replace ‘the practitioners’ thinking with expert knowledge but on the contrary intends to build on it and support it’ (Altrichter, 1993, p. 48).

So as to achieve the objectives and solve identified problems, the relevant data will be put into action - as mentioned in chapter I- in a private secondary school, Centro Educativo Franciscano “Colegio San Francisco de Asís” situated in the capital city of La Rioja through participant observation. The project will be done with the intention of improving the teacher’s own practices taking into account that educational action research will focus on visualizing and solving the problems faced by the teacher to put their pedagogical values into practice. It supposes a simultaneous reflection on the means and the purposes. Precisely for this reason, for the development of this design some outstanding points have been taken into account, namely, the action plan, the implementation in the main scenario that is the classroom, the observation of the process and finally the evaluation and reflection.



Therefore, the qualitative approach will be used, since its objective is primarily to gain an understanding of opinions and motivations, as well as understanding the perspective of the participants and deepening their experiences, opinions and meanings. Analysing certain situations, events and certain phenomena manifestation is how a descriptive study finds its purpose (Sampieri, 2010). Finally, regarding Arias (2006) according to how the purpose of the studied object is approached; this is classified as exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. A descriptive research will be what characterizes a fact, a phenomenon, an individual or group in order to establish its structure or behaviour.

### 3.3 DATA SOURCES

The present plan of action will be accomplished having as a source of information the use of theoretical foundations through bibliographic materials, which will allow us to possess a mature knowledge on the subject to be addressed. Likewise, we will access face-to-face sources, observation and research in the classroom in order to obtain specific data necessary for the evaluation and reflection of the material and the presented plan, taking responsibility and safeguarding of the institutional (School) and personal (Students) sources with which we will work.

## 4 CHAPTER IV

### 4.1 THE PLANNING

The process of teaching initiates with planning. The value and importance of schematizing are well-known. In this sense, the teacher arranges a diversification of activities in order to design a teaching process. On the ground of this, Jack Richards (2001) in his book *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching* points out that the curricular development includes the course of actions used to determine the needs of a group of students; develop the purposes and objectives of a program that meets the identified needs; determine a syllabus, an appropriate course structure, teaching methods and materials and carry out an evaluation and review of the established program.

For this reason, we are going to use the action plan as a planning tool used for the management and control of tasks or projects. As such, it functions as a roadmap that establishes how the set of tasks necessary to achieve the objectives and goals will be organized, guided, and implemented (Significados.com."Plan de acción"). Within what is a plan or course of action we find the didactic sequences that are a set of organized, systematized, and hierarchical actions that enable the development of concepts, skills, and attitudes. They are made up of a series of activities of progressive complexity, which are presented in an orderly, structured, and articulated manner. To plan a didactic sequence, it is necessary to clearly determine what contents are decided to address so that the activities are consistent with what is to be taught and are linked to each other by configuring an ordered sequence in which each activity is related to one or more activities earlier and later (¿Qué son las secuencias didácticas?, 2017).

Notwithstanding, some schools have an area of coordination of the English subject that is the one that carries out a survey and, on that basis, they choose the books and editorials that are then applied to the different groups of learners, making us considering whether such books were selected following students' necessities or not.

It is important to mention that even when textbooks are designed by knowledgeable people, not all of them fit every student's needs, and so it will be up to the teacher to develop a plan that encompasses various actions to try to reach all students.

Consequently, in his work *The Learner-Centred Curriculum*, Nunan (1998) proposes that needs analysis is the starting point. Once the teacher meets the course, it begins the process of the subjective needs analysis, considering methodology, learning styles, and strategies preferred by the students.

In closing this section, it is necessary to mention that some parts of the strategies that will be used in this plan of action, have been previously used in other research studies and adapted to the requirements of the present work. It is also worth mentioning that many quotations used were own translations.

## 4.2 MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES

Assuming that the goal of teaching listening comprehension in the classroom is to prepare the student to be able to participate adequately in real-life situations where he has to understand what he hears or what his interlocutor says, the greatest challenge for the teacher is to develop activities based on the type of text and the processing that is required in real life, so that students get used to processing information in a similar way as a native speaker does. In this sense, the type of text is closely connected with the communication channel through which it is transmitted, i.e. the spoken language.

For this reason, oral texts should be selected that faithfully reflect the features and properties of oral language (they do not necessarily have to be texts taken from real life) that is to say, this is the input to which the students will be exposed in the classroom and, on the other hand, prepare students to process each type of text in a similar way that native speakers do. Rost (1990, 2011) argues that a listener will become progressively more competent as he increases: the amount of language he can understand at one time; the range of events that he can reasonably interpret; his awareness of comprehension difficulties; his attempt and ability to transform cases of misunderstanding or deficient comprehension into acceptable comprehension.

Hence, in order to train competent listeners, the teacher must plan activities that, on the one hand, help to develop the processes that underlie oral comprehension (decoding and construction of meaning) and, on the other hand, provide students with the necessary strategies so that students can cope with real-life situations involving listening comprehension.

Due to the importance of the activities in the development of listening comprehension skills, comprehension activities help learners process information or input, as they would in real life.

The comprehension activities will be grouped into four types, based on the contributions of Gil-Toresano (2004), Rost (1991) and Field (2008), these are: attentive listening, selective listening, global listening and interactive listening.

- Attentive listening: these activities are intended to keep the student interested and attentive, thus they are characterized by introducing tangible, visual and immediate themes, and by presenting clear procedures for the student. To practice attentive listening, Gil-Toresano (2004) proposes activities such as following instructions, or simple troubleshooting where the input is presented in small quantities and the student has to give an immediate answer.
- Selective listening: this is the most common practice in L2 classes, it is developed through activities focused on the comprehension of specific information. These activities, therefore, are aimed at students to: a) make predictions from the information and select fragments of the input to support that prediction; b) become familiar with the organization of different types of speeches; c) direct their attention to the selected information while listening; d) check their understanding due to the multiple reproductions (Rost, 1991, p. 81).

- Global listening: these activities are intended for the student to grasp the general idea of the text, that is, to stimulate the complete or total representation of the meaning. This type of activity does not require understanding specific details.
- Interactive listening: these activities are about situations that involve participation by the interlocutors: a) since time is limited and shifts are short, in case of lack of comprehension or misunderstanding, the listener does not have time to think of alternative meanings; b) the listener also does not have time to control their comprehension, although, on the other hand, he can ask the speaker to explain or repeat; c) the listener must determine when the other's turn ends and it is his turn to speak; d) the way the interlocutor-listener processes the information influences the way in which this same interlocutor, but in his role as speaker, responds and interacts with the other (Field, 2008, pp. 69-70).

With these contributions in mind, we will focus on explaining the strategies to deal with the skill under study and then go directly to the action plan.

### 4.3 STRATEGIES

The role of comprehensive listening in the classroom is fundamental since our students receive the oral message, either from the teacher or partners or from other means through listening. If the message is not clear or if they do not understand it, then comprehension and learning are achievements that will not be fulfilled.

For our students to achieve the objectives proposed in the planning, we must provide them not only with comprehensive input but also teach them strategies so that they are capable of solving the communication problems that may arise. These strategies are procedures or resources that will allow learners to achieve meaningful learning, will allow them to build their knowledge, overcome obstacles and learn to study. For this to happen, linguistic knowledge must be present.

Literature abounds concerning learning strategies. But in order to adapt them to the needs of this work, we are going to take what Vandergrift (Vandergrift, 1997) exposes regarding these procedures. He divides the strategies into two groups: cognitive and metacognitive strategies. In the first group we find the strategies that help the learner to carry out a task and to achieve a learning goal. Take for example, a student who is always listening to songs or programs in English, then he is using cognitive strategies. Vandergrift (Vandergrift, 1997) points out that these are strategies that the listener should develop to construct meaning and understand the message, these are: inference, elaboration, use of images, synthesis or summary, translation, transfer, repetition and note taking.

In the second group we find strategies that help the learner to become aware of the listening processes, regulate and supervise them. By way of illustration, consider the same student who listens to songs in English and who now wonders how much he understood of what he has just listened, then he is using metacognitive strategies. Following the same line of examples and explanations, the author divides these strategies into: planning, monitoring, evaluation, and problem solving. A cognitive activity is followed by a metacognitive activity that allows its development to be evaluated and monitored.

With all this in mind, now we are going to work on developing the action plan so that it can later be applied in our field of research.

## 5 CHAPTER V

### 5.1 PRESENTATION OF THE ACTION PLAN

An explanation of how it was made and on what basis is necessary for this sequence to be understood. The main engine of this project was how to maximize the listening input

without sacrificing students' comprehension. On that postulate, we began to investigate and work.

In the first place, it is an action plan of 3 classes, which do not necessarily have to be consecutive, but the idea is that one class should be given per week only with this type of input, to reinforce comprehensive listening.

On the other hand, the decision to work with the course book, which is a modified input, has to do with the School's project on how to work on English. This does not mean that the material does not have its authentic English section or that it is not possible to try to work with another type of input.

Each course at Secondary Level has a minimum of 5 hours a week of the English subject and, as mentioned above, students were not being helped to develop listening skills in the most enriching way.

Next, the didactic sequence *Sorry, I'm not listening* is presented, where for each moment of the class an explanation of what will be done is given. It is made clear that the strategies are tentative and that after their application in the classroom, the results and possible modifications will be evaluated.

**DIDACTIC SEQUENCE: *Sorry, I'm not listening!***

**SUBJECT: ENGLISH**

**COURSE: 4to ESO**

**Estimated time: 3 classes**

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Justification	Expected goals
<p>Among the different plans, there is the one made in the medium term: the didactic sequence. Its work, structure and components vary according to the point of view of its author.</p> <p>Since this document is prepared for 4th year-course students, this will be a suggestion of how to work with the listening skill in the classroom, having as a frame of reference the comprehensive input.</p> <p>In general, the practice and integration of the four skills are combined: listening, speaking, reading and writing, but in this particular sequence we are going to focus on listening comprehension, through dialogues; oral messages and vocabulary; pronunciation; questions; sentences and opinions. From there, the activities are considered as the active and orderly way of carrying out learning experiences.</p> <p>There will be three classes in which in each one we will apply a different processing model top- down, bottom-up and interactive (of course after being implemented, all this will be subject to evaluation and changes if required), cognitive and metacognitive strategies and the profile of the students.</p> <p>Also, as a proposal to create a listening comprehension workshop where this skill and different strategies can be addressed for students at the entire secondary level.</p> <p>On the other hand, we are going to work with a different sequencing than the classic one that is introduction,</p>	<p>At the end of these didactic sequences, the student will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify keywords.</li> <li>• Deduce the meaning of lexical items.</li> <li>• Use knowledge of the world, context, and topic to predict and confirm meaning.</li> <li>• Infer non-explicit information (fill in omitted information and establish referential relationships).</li> <li>• Interpret the intention of the speaker.</li> <li>• Integrate the information in the text with that of other sources (knowledge of the world, of the context, of the topic, etc.).</li> <li>• Discriminate paralinguistic elements.</li> <li>• Guess meaning from context.</li> <li>• Improve concentration to be able to perceive the message.</li> </ul>



<p>development and closure. As it is about comprehensive listening, we will have sequences, based on Scrivener (Scrivener, 2009) procedures, in which the tasks will be developed in such a way that this ability can be effectively reinforced without sacrificing comprehension.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the other's message.</li> </ul>
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**CLASS N° 1 TASTE THIS!**

<p><b>Relevant prior knowledge</b></p>	<p>Vocabulary: Food, taste, smell. Food and drink adjectives. Grammar: Present perfect and past simple.</p>
<p><b>Materials and resources</b></p>	<p>Prepare! Level 4 Students' book. Interactive boards.</p>
<p><b>Dynamics and groupings</b></p>	<p>Individual and pairs according to the activity.</p>
<p><b>Strategies &amp; Processing Model: Bottom-up</b></p>	<p>Comprehensible input will be given through the classroom listening material. Students are already working with the vocabulary and grammar but, the "i+1" will be given by the features of connected speech (assimilation, elision, etc.) and paralinguistic features which are closer to a more natural pronunciation. Apart from the cognitive strategies, also methodological will be promoted: problem-solving, motivation, checking of previous knowledge, development, consolidation and repetition will be included in this component. In this first lesson, we will use bottom-up procedure.</p>

<p><b>Planning</b> <b>Prediction</b> <b>Pre-listening</b></p>	<p>Before playing the audio, the teacher introduces the topic to the class, tells them that they are going to work with listening comprehension, and invites the students to make predictions about what will be happening based on the images projected on the interactive board: different types of food and a family. These are predictions about vocabulary, content, and other aspects that might appear in the text. The teacher explains that we do not listen for the sake of listening, but there is a goal, a purpose. What do I have to listen to? Where do I have to direct my attention? To the whole, to the parts? To both?</p> <p>Prediction questions: <i>Have you ever made a meal for everyone? Who was it for? What did you make? If you never did, who in your family did it, what did they cook and for whom?</i> The teacher guides, asks and models. She places them in context. She prepares them to listen. She also encourages them to share their experiences. She reminds them to respect turn taking.</p> <p>The teacher presents a short questionnaire on the board in advance of the audio, which is related to the images, this will help them predict: <i>1. What did the girl cook when she was younger? 2. Where does the boy get his recipes from? 3. Who is a vegetarian? 4. What meal can you only buy today? 5. What food does Sara not like?</i> They will begin to prepare to review selective and attentive listening strategies for the first stage of the task.</p>
<p><b>Listening</b> <b>to pick out</b> <b>specific small</b> <b>language</b> <b>details</b></p>	<p><b>First listening:</b> They are going to listen to five people talking about food. They have to hear some short extracts. <i>Read the questions and look at the pictures. What words might they hear in each extract?</i></p> <p>The teacher asks them to work in pairs, to read the questions and to make a list of the words they hear. However, the idea is not to memorize words or phrases.</p> <p>They are asked to pay special attention to the vocabulary that will lead them to complete the first activity. They do not have to complete it yet. They do not try to understand everything. They only need enough to make the list.</p>

	<p>This first listening also leads them to verify their predictions and to use the cognitive strategy when using prior knowledge of the language. The proposed activity induces them to process the information in order to decode the message and thus complete the assignment later. Probably, some students begin to complete the task with the first listening, even when they are asked not to. This is because this type of strategy requires certain knowledge about their own learning, which is necessary for the student to be able to make strategic use of their skills, selection and planning when facing their learning activities.</p> <p>To articulate with the second listening, the teacher suggests that each pair read for the whole class the words they have managed to understand from the first listening. Did they all manage to catch the same?</p>
<p><b>More careful listening for complex meaning</b></p>	<p><b>Second listening:</b> She plays the recording but pauses it after each excerpt for students to complete and choose the word they hear. The students will clarify doubts and try to understand the aspects that they had not yet understood: by catching and interpreting smaller parts of the text, learners fine-tune their understanding.</p> <p>The teacher reminds them of the strategies involved in this stage of the task: selective and attentive listening.</p> <p>The Teacher tells one student per pair to read one question out loud and proposes that the other one from the pair goes to the front and circle the corresponding option on the pictures. They answer the questions posed in the pre-listening. Check the answers.</p>
<p><b>Gist listening for attitudes</b></p>	<p><b>Third listening:</b> We continue with the same text. What else can we extract from it? In this stage, the activity is to interpret intonation, paralinguistic features</p>

	<p>(aspects that do not involve words like sights, tone and pitch of voice, etc.), and features of connected speech (assimilation, elision, intrusion).</p> <p>This is done by playing and pausing the audio, allowing them to repeat after the pause occurs, words that have elision, assimilation, intrusion. They also concentrate on prosodic characteristics of the text. The teacher explains that, although it is an audio from the course book, it coincides with how it is spoken in real life in a similar situation.</p>
<p><b>Gist listening for overview</b></p>	<p><b>Fourth Listening:</b> They listen to the whole passage again. They have already paid attention to the details. Now, they listen to it fully.</p> <p>Pairwork: Answer the questions about you: At this point, learners get an overall impression of the content, the ideas (formed from the first words they paid attention to).</p> <p>The teacher asks the students to tell their partners about them in their own words with the following questions as a guide: <i>Did you cook when you were younger? And now? What is your favorite food?</i> The teacher exemplifies: <i>When I was younger, I made hamburgers and fries with my dad. They tasted very good. I don't cook much now, only on Sundays when I help dad make the barbecue. And uh .. well, actually my favorite food is cucumber tomato salad. I'm a vegetarian.</i></p> <p>Short-term memory is used in order to remember and use the specific vocabulary, intonation and expressions from the text. In pairs, they discuss the questions. One tells the other. If there is something they do not remember, the partner helps. They swap roles.</p> <p>The teacher walks around the classroom, acts as a moderator, sometimes intervenes, lets them speak, and allows them to compare their answers with the predictions they made at the beginning of class. Interactive listening is used, since there are speaker and listener (who in turn change roles), sometimes the</p>

	interaction is between the teacher and the students, sometimes between the students.
<b>Feedback on task</b>	At this stage it is worth wondering if the students were able to solve the tasks. If the answer is positive, we tie up loose ends, we carry out follow-up activities, and we review what we have learned. If the answer is negative, it means that the students need to listen to the text again.
<b>Reflections</b>	<p>Finally, referring to the metacognitive strategies, which are the ones that follow the cognitive ones, the learners reflect on what they have learned, how much they have learned, if they could be able to solve the problems posed.</p> <p>We create a poster on the interactive board or stick a poster on the wall where there are 2 questions: <i>What should I improve? What did I like and dislike about the activity?</i> Each one writes his opinion. They do it in L1, which reminds us of a Franciscan value: humility: we are all here to learn. Nobody knows more or is better than the other.</p> <p>This final activity will help the teacher evaluate the plan and improve it.</p>
<b>CLASS N° 2 WATCH IT, READ IT.</b>	
<b>Relevant prior knowledge</b>	<p>Vocabulary: Tv, films and literature. Easily confused words.</p> <p>Grammar: relative clauses.</p>
<b>Materials and resources</b>	<p>Prepare! Level 4 Students' book.</p> <p>Interactive boards.</p>

<b>Dynamics and groupings</b>	Individual and pairs according to the activity.
<b>Strategies &amp; Processing Model:</b> <b>Top-down</b>	<p>There is already a prior knowledge of vocabulary and grammar. The "i + 1" will be given by the ability of listeners to listen to detailed information and identify the speakers' attitudes and opinions.</p> <p>Strategies to consider: global and attentive listening. Cognitive strategies. Top-down procedure.</p>
<b>Planning Prediction Pre-listening</b>	<p>The teacher asks learners to work in pairs. She shows students on the board a photo of people watching a film in the cinema. According to the expression on their faces, answer the following: 1. <i>What kind of film are the people watching? How do you know?</i> 2. <i>How often do you go to the cinema? Who do you go with?</i> 3. <i>What good films have you seen at the cinema recently?</i> As they are describing the photos, Teacher reminds them to use present continuous. They share their ideas with the rest of the class.</p> <p>They will begin to prepare to use global listening strategies for the first task.</p>
<b>Gist listening for overview</b>	<p><b>First Listening:</b> The teacher plays the audio for the first time. The students are going to listen to an informal conversation where two people want to go to the cinema and try to reach an agreement on which movie to watch.</p> <p>She asks learners to listen to the conversation and identify what the characters are talking about. They have to identify and recognize the topic of the conversation, the general idea.</p> <p>She asks them to do a global listening of the context. <i>What happens in the conversation? Will they finally go to the movies?</i></p> <p>They do not have to pay attention to small parts of the text, but rather they have to make hypotheses of the information they may have missed.</p>

	<p>The cognitive strategy is activated by everything that has been worked in the introduction of the topic. They can already predict some possible words and phrases that might be used because of their knowledge of lexical sets associated with the topic.</p>
<p><b>Gist listening for attitudes</b></p>	<p><b>Second Listening:</b> With the second listening students' ability to listen for detailed information is tested. They have to identify the different attitudes and opinions of the speakers. They are listening to an informal conversation. Also, they have to notice paralinguistic features, features of connected speech: <i>What gestures do you think the speakers do in a given situation? What about the accent? How do they say certain words? What about the register of the conversation? Is it a formal or informal conversation?</i></p> <p>They use the selective and attentive listening processes.</p> <p>Through the responses, we reached an agreement on what kind of conversation it is and on the expressions that the speakers use.</p>
<p><b>More careful listening for complex meaning</b></p>	<p><b>Third Listening:</b> Before playing the audio students are asked to do the next task from the book. They have to decide whether the statements are correct or incorrect and correct the wrong ones.</p> <p>They call on memory to complete the activity. After a short time limit, the teacher plays the audio.</p> <p>After listening to the audio, the teacher tries to find out if they were able to catch the specific content. They confirm their guesses and check if they coincide with the answers they chose in the book. They check and correct their answers in case they were wrong.</p>
<p><b>Listening to pick out</b></p>	<p><b>Fourth Listening:</b> The Teacher plays the audio. Students have to interpret smaller parts of the text as they have to write down the expressions that are</p>

<p><b>specific small language details</b></p>	<p>used in the text to reach an agreement. As a pair, they have to work collaboratively.</p> <p>The teacher draws two columns on the board, on one side she writes <i>Giving reason</i> and on the other <i>Reaching agreement</i>.</p> <p>The students call out the expressions they could “catch” from the text. She pauses it if necessary. Teacher asks the students to infer when these expressions are used, she asks them in which column would the expressions go? <i>What expressions do we use to give reason? And to reach an agreement? How did you realize that the girl and boy in the dialogue reached an agreement?</i></p> <p>Strategies used: selective and attentive listening. Cognitive strategy. Metacognitive strategy: could learners manage different techniques to control their learning? If there was a good management of their listening strategies and techniques, then they could be able to integrate the oral message, deal with the different registers of the dialogue, and be aware of what was happening and what they should do to listen effectively.</p> <p>Activity: Prepare students to speak. They have to make a list of 4 films they would like to watch. They have to discuss the films and reach agreement on which one to watch. They have to use the vocabulary they have just learned and intonation, they are asked to imitate as much as they can the features of connected speech and the paralinguistic elements of the conversation.</p> <p>Check the task as a class.</p>
<p><b>Feedback on task</b></p>	<p>Feedback is given on the task. As long as the resolution has been positive, the class closing continue. Otherwise, the proposals are reviewed again, the teacher works with the students who could not solve the activities. The motto is that nobody is left without understanding the task.</p>



<b>Reflections</b>	<p>Students reflect on the effectiveness of the strategies they used to predict, infer, plan, and solve problems.</p> <p>The teacher evaluates and reflects on her performance in class. Was she clear in the instructions? Did all her students understand the assignments? Did she manage to detect those who did not understand the task?</p>
<b>CLASS N° 3 WISH ME LUCK!</b>	
<b>Relevant prior knowledge</b>	<p>Vocabulary: Verb + noun. <i>If</i> and <i>unless</i></p> <p>Grammar: Zero and First Conditional</p>
<b>Materials and resources</b>	<p>Prepare! Level 4 Students' book</p> <p>Interactive boards.</p> <p>Folders.</p>
<b>Dynamics and groupings</b>	<p>Individual and pairs according to the activity.</p>
<b>Strategies &amp; Processing Model: Interactive Model</b>	<p>Prior knowledge is essential, as they have to know in advance the vocabulary and the grammar. Comprehensible input is in the context in which students are going to work, in the material, in their schemata. Because beyond all theory, there must be an intention on the part of them, the desire to appropriate the knowledge.</p> <p>Cognitive and metacognitive strategies are used. Cognitive, as comprehension begins with the received data and from there the process of decoding. Problem-solving is another cognitive strategy. Metacognitive, as listeners plan strategies</p>

	<p>and apply features of oral language input that facilitate the comprehension of the listening input.</p> <p>Combined activities of top-down and bottom- up procedures, interactive model.</p>
<p><b>Planning</b> <b>Prediction</b> <b>Pre-listening</b></p>	<p>The teacher asks the students if they have any objects of luck. She asks them: <i>Do you have any object or something that you bring when you have an exam? Or, do you wear a special shirt when your favorite football team plays an important match? How do you feel if you forget to take it with you?</i></p> <p>Look at the photos on the board. <i>Can you name them? Are these objects related to luck?</i> The teacher shows on the board the images of a ladder, black cat, horseshoe and a 4-leaf clover.</p> <p>She tries to guide the students' attention towards what they are going to hear in the listening activity.</p> <p>Attentive and selective listening are needed.</p>
<p><b>Listening for specific information</b></p>	<p><b>First Listening:</b> Learners are going to listen to an interview about luck. The teacher now shows another photos and asks learners to look at them. <i>Which two photos aren't mentioned?</i> With this question, listeners already know that they should use selective listening: they need to obtain specific information, there are two photos that are not mentioned. <i>Which are they?</i> The context disappears. They focus on the detail.</p> <p>If necessary, they listen to the text again. Some of them are asked to read the questions out loud and choose the correct option. We check the answers.</p>

<p><b>Listening to predict the structure</b></p>	<p><b>Second Listening:</b> The teacher plays the recording again. This time the focus is on context, content and structure. Learners have to discuss possible organizational structures for an interview: the context where it takes place, whether it is a program on TV or radio. The linguistic register or whether the interview has an audience or not. This may help learners (also for other listening activities) to recognize the content and the structure more easily.</p> <p>Global listening is required oriented to the global understanding of the meaning and not to the achievement of concrete information.</p> <p>Once they form their hypotheses, i.e. the interview happens on television, has an audience, etc. they are asked to prepare to listen again and notice other details in the next stage.</p>
<p><b>Gist listening for attitudes</b></p>	<p><b>Third Listening:</b> At this stage learners have to identify the different attitudes and opinions of the speakers. <i>How do the speakers express themselves? Is it a formal dialogue?</i></p> <p>Also, they have to notice paralinguistic features, features of connected speech: <i>pauses, expressions. How do they say certain words? What expressions do they use to express their ideas? Does the interviewer seem astonished by what the interviewee says? How do we realize it?</i></p> <p>They use the selective and attentive listening process.</p> <p>Paying attention to these elements also helps them decode and understand different moments in the interview. If the audience laughs it is because something funny was said. If there is an exclamation, they are surely talking about something that surprises the listeners.</p>

<p><b>Gist listening for overview</b></p>	<p>Students work in pairs. For this activity, the teacher shows on the interactive board the task and asks them to copy in their folders.</p> <p>The activity consists of completing the notes that summarize what the speakers say. Students will have to write a single word or a short phrase in each box or blank.</p> <p><b>Fourth Listening:</b> They will hear the interview one more time. The recording will be paused from time to time.</p> <p>As they have already listened to the audio several times, they will make use of their short-term memory, global listening and selective listening, since some sentences must be completed with a specific word, while in others they must resort to context and the answer may be more flexible. In any case there must also be attentive listening. Cognitive and metacognitive strategies. The teacher will take into account collaborative work.</p> <p>Once the activity is finished, check the answers all together. For those responses in which they could resort to context, they are compared, they decide if the contextual meaning is correct even when the answers are slightly different. For answers in which specific information should be used, comprehension is also checked.</p> <p>Students who answered correctly are asked to help their classmates to do the activity again.</p> <p>Closing the section: they must prepare a written report of the interview in a limited time, about what the interviewee said about luck using if / unless and the vocabulary previously seen.</p> <p>Exchange reports with partners. They read and compare them. <i>What caught your attention in the interview and why?</i></p>
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<b>Feedback on task</b>	<p>Feedback is given on the tasks throughout the sequence. The teacher should always observe those weaker students and be attentive to their development in class and how they react to different tasks.</p> <p>The activities are reviewed again and again in case learners could not complete the tasks.</p>
<b>Reflections</b>	<p>The reflection on the part of the student is made on his own process: How much did I learn? Did the strategies I use help me? Did I feel comfortable working in pairs?</p> <p>As for the teacher, the reflection and balance are made on her performance in the classroom as a facilitator, or whether the material, the activities or the strategies used gave positive results or not. What changes can be made? What things can be left out? How can I improve and try to involve the students with the class?</p>

These proposed strategies can be carried out with another type of material, which can be authentic or other type of modified. It is about finding an order when doing the activities. The order shows a logical progression from an introduction to the text with simple activities to the more complex ones. These steps have a purpose, we set the task and play the recording and finally lead to a communicative activity based on the topic we are dealing with.

In fact, in his book *Learning Teaching*, Scrivener (2009) proposes to listen to the text three times. Whereas in this proposal, the text is listened to four times, since the audio must be listened to as many times as necessary, remembering that the ear is being trained to pay attention to certain information -something that we were not doing correctly, as explained in previous chapters- therefore, the more students practice, the faster they will decode and comprehend.

Finally, in this sequence of three classes, we work with a material that has been chosen by the English coordination team of the school where this plan will be implemented. It serves to prepare students to take international exams, but it is flexible, it can be used with songs or movie segments, or audio taken from real life. The point is, we wanted to make use of something that we had on hand. Also, it could be used in online classes.

## 5.2 TIPS FOR TEACHERS

### 5.2.1 HOW CAN I HELP?

- How do I develop an action plan for my students?  
Do not panic. Start by thinking about what you want them to achieve. Set the objectives. Look for the material. Look for the type of strategies you are going to use. Read. Study. Investigate.
- What if I cannot find something that meets my students' needs?  
Do not worry. Ask for help. Talk to your colleagues. Do observation and research in other classrooms and allow someone to observe you. There is always something that we are not taking into account. Having someone "watching" us can help us figure it out.
- What if in the pre- listening stage students tell me that they do not understand when they work with audios?  
Do not despair. Children very often say that. You always have to give them a hint of what they are going to hear. Guide them with questions. Put them in context. Show them pictures, videos, objects. Allow them to help you, for example, by pausing the audio when they hear a certain signal, in this way you will also prevent them from dispersing. Get them involved.
- What if there are noises outside that do not allow them to listen to the text properly?

Do not hurry. If the problem is not solved in a few minutes you should always have a back- up plan. Plan some activities in advance, or even games. Then try again so they can continue with the listening activity.

- What if the listening strategies do not work?

Do not suffer. Sometimes the strategies or activities we present may fail. In addition, there is no one student the same as the other: your strategies will not always reach everyone, hence the importance of varying from time to time.

- What do I do if I cannot carry out my plan as I designed it?

Do not get depressed. A plan reflects a process and tentative procedures and strategies. They are suggestions of how to work. A plan is flexible.

- What if the input is not comprehensible?

Do not scold yourself. Review the material. Check that it is consistent with the level of the students and their schemata. And if you have to go back a step, it will be to reinforce the intake and to move forward with more strength.

- What if the top- down and bottom- up strategies are not understood by the students?

Do not push yourself. Everything takes time. But the more you get your students to practice, the better the results. Or, you can also try other strategies. You can look for other study material or other texts.

- What do I do if some students understand and others do not?

Do not be disappointed. Each student has their time. I repeat what I said before, go back and explain again. Our students must leave the classroom feeling that they have understood the teacher's proposals. And do not forget to use the backup plan with fast finishers.

### 5.3 CONCLUSIONS

Looking back on the different sections that constitute this project; it is possible to state that the goals and objectives settled to address the problem identified by this work were successfully accomplished. The basis of this study represents the desire to maximize input without sacrificing comprehension by reinforcing listening skills, in the context of a 4<sup>th</sup>-year classroom at Centro Educativo Franciscano “Colegio San Francisco de Asis”.

Consequently, the objectives set confirm the findings of what we were not doing to improve listening input and promote listening strategies in the classroom. The effects of the context on English learning in secondary school can be optimized by changing some strategies, enriching the input, and trying to engage students. Also, another objective was justified that includes the reconsideration of pedagogical practice.

To highlight the conclusion of this work, it has been found that most of the students do not like working with listening activities, they find the tasks difficult to do and therefore, they do not like to practice them. This partly represents the absence of a common thread of procedures, methodologies, and strategies in the classroom proposed by the teacher.

The lack of comprehension determines the common topic that unites transversally all the other skills; all the skills are needed to be able to pass the different levels of the international exams, but also all the skills are needed to be able to perform different types of challenges in terms of the language itself, whether it is speaking and writing or listening and reading.

Similarly, it must be said that many teachers are in charge of going against the reinforcement of skills in students, perhaps without realizing it, in part because the hours of English in the classroom are few, a large number of students per course, or because the material is not captivating, etc.

Concerning the theoretical framework expressed above, it is important to say that, although everything mentioned is tried in the classroom, not necessarily everything is applied conscientiously, in fact, it is impossible to do everything if only one method is used



and, in the personal and professional experience of the author of this project, not all the procedures and abilities are strengthened in the same way: with some of them we work more than with others and generally we work with those we feel more comfortable with. If the aim is to reinforce comprehensive listening it is necessary to work only with that skill at least one class per week to create a work routine for students.

Besides, the strategies or methodologies to be used to work on different skills according to the students' needs had not been taken into account, but at the same time, the purpose of the lessons was for the students to speak the target language fluently without realizing that the most important thing for them to be able to speak was missing: listening.

Therefore, we must say that the problems raised are widely verified and that the proposed objectives will tend to solve or at least induce a change in the proposal of the planning and teaching sequences.

Finally, these conclusions serve to visualize the deficiencies in the use of procedures and actions that were not been carried out to effectively maximize listening input without sacrificing comprehension.

Thus:

- To improve the techniques and traditional strategies when promoting listening skills.

The procedures described in the action plan are reinforced. There is a common thread of the steps to follow and the methodology used. There is no need to fear a repetition of the text.

- To update and/or revise the listening material by the teacher.

The material is reviewed and re-adapted and the activities are updated. It is not just doing the "listening" section, but work on it more intensively.

- To promote motivation on the part of the students.

They are encouraged to pay attention, to work with a partner, to help each other, to switch roles. Since when there is an act of communication there must be at least two people, they are aware that they are listeners and speakers at the same time.

- To promote interest in listening activities.

They are explained in advance what they are going to do. They are given a clue of what they are going to hear so they do not feel they are lost.

- To improve strategies so that students can recognize explicit data, infer, and make a critical evaluation.

The action plan defines the actions to be carried out by the students. For instance, when they must pay attention to the whole or the specific information or when they must formulate hypotheses. They are invited to reflect on their listening strategies.

- To increase performance in listening comprehension skills.

In this sequence, only comprehensive listening is worked with a modified input, the student is induced to pay attention to certain features of the text; he is guided to pay attention to paralinguistic elements and characteristics of connected speech. Therefore, he is expected to improve listening comprehension performance.

In conclusion, working on this project was a challenging but thoughtful experience. Not only because we realized that in the classroom there are things that we are not doing quite well, but accepting those failures also leads us to want to improve our practice and enrich our lessons. We are teachers, but we are also learners, learning about language, methodologies, study material, people, and life. We realize that we have to find ways to learn alongside our students, but we also have the obligation to offer them the best of ourselves: to teach them in the best possible way. We must work for the students and also give them what they deserve: quality education, meaningful learning and unforgettable

experiences. St. Francis of Assisi proposes in one of his most emblematic phrases “*Start by doing what is necessary; then do what is possible, and suddenly you are doing the impossible*”. Let us work to make possible what we believe is impossible.

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