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TEACHING LISTENING MICRO-SKILLS TO ENHANCE EFL LISTENING
COMPREHENSION

Tesis para optar al grado de Magíster en Lingüística con mención en Lengua
Inglesa

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Abstract

This thesis reports on a study focused on teaching listening micro-skills to EFL Chilean students. The present study aims to examine the effects of teaching listening micro-skills on EFL students' listening comprehension performance. This study looks to give insights in the area of second language acquisition, as well as proposing a strategy for teaching listening comprehension through the use of listening micro-skills. The participants of this study were 26 high school students from a private school located in Peñalolén, Santiago de Chile. Participants were divided into two groups of 13 students. One of the groups was given awareness about listening micro-skills while the other did not receive any treatment. The treatment consisted of 10 sessions of teaching and practicing 10 listening micro-skills in order to enhance listening comprehension. Both groups were tested at the beginning and end of the research intervention. The data obtained from the participants' tests was analyzed in order to determine the effects of teaching listening micro-skills on EFL learners' listening comprehension.

Key words: listening micro-skills, metacognition, metacognitive strategies, EFL listening comprehension

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In Chile, where English is learned as a Foreign Language, students have fewer opportunities to be exposed to the target language than students who are learning English as a second language. Due to this reality Chilean English learners are less exposed to listening materials. Although listening skills are very important in language acquisition, listening does not always receive the same attention as the other skills: reading, speaking and writing. For Chilean students, listening comprehension seems to be the most demanding skill and that is a fact that affects many learners where English is taught as a foreign language. As a consequence, there is a need to do more research in the area of listening comprehension, promoting language acquisition, presenting the appropriate methodology which may help learners to fill the gap of exposure to the English language. According to Vandergrift (2004), the literature base on listening strategy instruction has grown very little in recent years. Nevertheless, there has been some research on the factors that may influence students' English listening comprehension.

Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) suggest that teachers should provide a vast amount of opportunities for students to practice listening skills and to become actively engaged in the listening process. Along the same line, Chen (2013) concludes that consistent and systematic strategy instruction integrated into

listening instruction is recommended to help students develop metacognitive awareness and control of their own listening comprehension process.

The Chilean Ministry of Education in its English teachers' textbooks (Alvarado, 2014) focuses mainly on the organization of the listening activities, rather than providing listening strategies that may help students to develop a better listening comprehension performance. On the other hand, according to the national evaluation system of learning results called Simce (Sistema de Medición de la Calidad de Educación), which is a standardized test taken by students every two years, in the 2012 English SIMCE test Chilean students were ranked in the lower level A1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), results indicate that students can recognize familiar words and very basic phrases concerning themselves, their families, and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clear. These results reflect the lack of effectiveness of teaching and practicing listening skills. According to Teng (1998) in his study of listening comprehension strategies, students should be instructed in listening and not only be exposed to EFL listening without any training.

Listening has been defined as an active and purposeful processing of making sense of what we hear (Helgesen, 2003). Rost (2002) defines listening as a mental process of constructing meaning from spoken input. In terms of EFL listening comprehension, Krashen (1985) in his Input Hypothesis suggests that it is important for the learner to listen to a large amount of spoken English

that is relatively easy. According to Krashen's suggestion, learners can build up self-confidence and acquire new words that allow them to be part of some new and different communicational environments. In recent years EFL literature suggests the use and development of language learning strategies in order to provide learners with tools to develop their listening comprehension (Berne, 2004; Carrier, 2003; Chamot, 2004; Clement, 2007; Graham, Santos, & Vanderplank, 2011; Liu, 2009).

Sheerin (1987) points out that instruction in listening has too often been associated with testing, focusing on the product of listening rather than giving strategies that may enhance learners' listening comprehension performance. As stated above, EFL Chilean students are tested every two years to score their English language competence, considering listening comprehension as an indicator of language proficiency. In order to improve EFL learners' listening comprehension, some researchers have suggested the use of listening learning strategies as an effective way to develop listening comprehension (Chamot, 2004; Clement, 2007; Graham, Santos, & Vanderplank, 2011; Liu, 2009).

Learning strategies has been defined by Chamot (2004) as the conscious thoughts and actions that students take to accomplish a learning goal. In addition, Oxford (1990) makes a comprehensive view of learning strategies. She classifies the strategies into two groups: direct or cognitive strategies, which learners apply directly to the language itself; and indirect or metacognitive strategies, in which learners manage their own learning process. In terms of

teaching listening comprehension, Richards (1983) states that the aim of teaching listening is to provide opportunities for the learner to acquire particular micro-skills.

This thesis reports on a study focused on teaching listening micro-skills to EFL Chilean students. The study was carried out in order to determine whether teaching listening micro-skills has any significant effect on students' listening comprehension performance. This thesis looks into the process of EFL listening comprehension, expecting to provide insight in the area of second language acquisition, as well as proposing a strategy for teaching listening comprehension through the use of listening micro-skills. The major motivation of this study was to obtain insights into the process of teaching listening comprehension to Chilean high school students. This study was based on a study about the impact of awareness raising of listening micro-skills on EFL learners' listening comprehension enhancement by Rezaei and Hashim (2013)

Teaching listening micro-skills is expected to have a positive effect on students' listening comprehension performance. The study carried out and reported in this thesis was conducted with two different groups: an experimental group and a control group. The data was collected at the beginning and end of the research intervention applying a pretest and a posttest that assessed the participants' listening comprehension performance. Then the data was analyzed, the difference between the scores of the pretest and the posttest for each group was compared in order to determine whether teaching listening

micro-skills has any positive effect on students' listening comprehension performance.

1.2 Objectives

1.2.1 General Objective

- To determine whether teaching listening micro-skills has a significant effect on students' listening comprehension performance.

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

- To establish the improvement rate of the control and experimental groups.
- To determine which group has improvements.

1.2.3 Research Question

Does metacognitive awareness about listening Micro-skills have any significant effect on the scores of tests of students of 11th grade from a private school on their listening comprehension performance?

1.2.4 Hypothesis

Teaching listening micro-skills has a significant effect on students' tests scores.

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

2.1 What is listening?

Wipf (1984) explains that listening is an invisible mental process, making it difficult to be described. In this mental process listeners have to be able to:

- Discriminate between sounds.
- Understand vocabulary and grammatical structures.
- Interpret stress and intention.
- Retain and interpret the stress and intention within the immediate as well as the larger socio-cultural context of the utterance.

On the other hand, Rost (2002) defines listening, in its broadest sense, as a process of receiving what the speaker actually says. In order to do so, listeners must construct and represent meaning, negotiate meaning with the speaker and respond and create meaning through involvement, imagination and empathy. Rost also explains that listening is a complex and active process of interpretation in which listeners match what they hear with what they already know. In addition, Kline (1996) defines listening as the process of receiving, attending, and understanding auditory messages; that is, messages transmitted through the medium of sound. These definitions indicate the process of how listeners receive and decode the meaning of a message in terms of EFL listening comprehension listeners associates what they hears with a mental

representation of the given message activating previous knowledge related to the context of the message.

According to Mendelsohn (1994), listeners must also know how to process and how to judge what the illocutionary force of an utterance is, that is, what a string of sounds is intended to mean in a particular setting, under a particular set of circumstances, as an act of real communication. In addition, Anderson and Lynch (1988), referring to successful listening, explain that understanding is not something that happens because of what a speaker says, but the listener has a crucial part to play in the process, by activating various types of knowledge, and by applying what he knows to what he hears and trying to understand what the speaker means. In addition, Brown (2001) says that it is widely admitted that listening comprehension is not merely the process of a unidirectional receiving of audible symbols, but an interactive process.

There has been a long debate about which of the four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) is the most important for the learning and acquisition of a second or foreign language. Morley (2001) and Rost (2001) say that a large proportion of L2 research findings indicate that listening is the most important skill for language learning because it is the most widely used language skill in normal daily life. Oxford (1990) explains that the listening skill develops faster than the other skills and can facilitate the emergence of the other three language skills. The importance of listening in EFL learning is that it

allows the intake of input that can be very significant for language acquisition. Listening is an active process in which the listener selects and interprets information in order to define what the speakers are trying to express.

2.2 The significance of listening in EFL classrooms

Listening is the most frequently employed skill in daily language use. According to some studies, the time we spend in communicating divides into 50 percent listening, 25 percent speaking, 15 percent reading and 10 percent writing Mendelsohn (1994). So it is logical to pay more attention on teaching listening comprehension in EFL and ESL teaching contexts. In addition, listening is now regarded as an important skill in both EFL classrooms and SLA research. Richards (2003) explains that the view of listening has changed since the 1970's from being considered a very discrete skill to a more connected skill adopting new theoretical models of comprehension from the field of cognitive psychology in the 80s and 90s. According to Richards, it was in that period when applied linguists began to borrow new theoretical models of comprehension from the field of cognitive psychology.

In terms of listening instruction, Weaver (1972) pointed out that most of teacher's attention goes to the expressive areas of speaking and writing rather than the receptive areas of listening and reading. As Blair (1982) mentioned, there was not a huge demand for listening from instructors and educators until recent times. However, Vandergrift (2004) stated that the literature base in

listening strategy instruction has grown very little in recent years. Therefore, we could find new research in the listening area due to the new interest in exploring the factors that might or might not affect EFL listening comprehension (see for example, Vandergrift (2007)).

The significance of listening is that it helps us to understand and interact with the world around us and is one of the necessary parts in creating successful communication.

2.3 The importance of Listening Comprehension

The interest in listening comprehension in language teaching arose in the 1970's when Gary (1975) stated that a focus on listening comprehension within the first stages of second language learning and teaching allows the creation of four different types of advantages: cognitive, efficiency, utility, and affective. The cognitive advantage of listening at an initial stage of second language learning allows the learners to develop a more natural way to learn the language. In relation to that, Krashen (1981) explained that learners first go for meaning in language acquisition and acquire structure as a result of understanding the message. If students concentrate on speaking in initial stages they leave little room for listening and, as a result, little room for comprehension.

The efficiency advantage of listening comprehension is that L2 learners are not immediately requested to speak, paying more emphasis on

comprehension. Here, it is important to expose students to good models of language such as the teacher and realistic recordings.

The usefulness or utility advantage of the receptive skill for the process of L2 learning is supported by the fact that adults spend 40% to 50% of communication time listening. The affective advantage refers to not forcing students to speak English immediately when they have just started learning the L2. Instead, when this pressure does not exist, learners can relax and stay focused on developing the listening skill, which helps the emergence of the other language skills.

It can thus be noticed how these concepts about listening comprehension have evolved in the last thirty years, integrating the social aspects of language and especially the relation between speaker and receptor (Nunan, 2001).

The importance of listening comprehension is that helps listeners to understand the world around them and is one of the necessary parts in making successful communication. In addition, listening comprehension plays an active role in communication and in the process of acquisition of a second language.

2.4 Listening Micro-skills

According to Richards (1983), the aim of teaching listening comprehension is to provide opportunities for the learner to acquire particular micro-skills. He presents a taxonomy of listening skills mentioning some micro-

skills which were taken from a variety of sources, including needs analysis, discourse analysis, and related research (e. g., Clark and Clark 1977, Leech 1977, Schank and Abelson 1977, Marslen-Wilson and Tyler 1980, Dore and McDermott 1982, Clark and Carlson 1982). The next table shows micro-skills for listening comprehension.

Table 1: Listening micro-skills (Taken from Richards 1983, p.219 -240)

Micro-Skills: Conversational Listening

1. Ability to retain chunks of language of different lengths for short periods.
2. Ability to discriminate among the distinctive sounds of the target language.
3. Ability to recognize the stress patterns of words.
4. Ability to recognize the rhythmic structure of English.
5. Ability to recognize the functions of stress and intonation to signal the information structure of utterances.
6. Ability to identify words in stressed and unstressed positions.
7. Ability to recognize reduced forms of words.
8. Ability to distinguish word boundaries.
9. Ability to recognize typical word order patterns in the target language.
10. Ability to recognize vocabulary used in core conversational topics.
11. Ability to detect key words (i.e., those which identify topics and propositions).
12. Ability to guess the meanings of words from the contexts in which they occur.
13. Ability to recognize grammatical word classes (parts of speech).
14. Ability to recognize major syntactic patterns and devices.
15. Ability to recognize cohesive devices in spoken discourse.
16. Ability to recognize elliptical forms of grammatical units and sentences.
17. Ability to detect sentence constituents.
18. Ability to distinguish between major and minor constituents.
19. Ability to detect meanings expressed in differing grammatical forms/sentence types (i.e., that a particular meaning may be expressed in different ways).
20. Ability to recognize the communicative functions of utterances, according to situations, participants, goals.
21. Ability to reconstruct or infer situations, goals, participants, procedures.
22. Ability to use real world knowledge and experience to work out purposes, goals, settings, procedures.
23. Ability to predict outcomes from events described.

24. Ability to infer links and connections between events.
25. Ability to deduce causes and effects from events.
26. Ability to distinguish between literal and implied meanings.
27. Ability to identify and reconstruct topics and coherent structure from ongoing discourse involving two or more speakers.
28. Ability to recognize markers of coherence in discourse, and to detect such relations as main idea, supporting idea, given information, new information, generalization, exemplification.
29. Ability to process speech at different rates.
30. Ability to process speech containing pauses, errors, corrections.
31. Ability to make use of facial, paralinguistic, and other clues to work out meanings.
32. Ability to adjust listening strategies to different kinds of listener purposes or goals.
33. Ability to signal comprehension or lack of comprehension, verbally and non-verbally.

Micro-Skills: Academic Listening (Listening to Lectures)

1. Ability to identify purpose and scope of lecture.
 2. Ability to identify topic of lecture and follow topic development.
 3. Ability to identify relationships among units within discourse (e.g., major ideas, generalizations, hypotheses, supporting ideas, examples).
 4. Ability to identify role of discourse markers in signaling structure of a lecture (e.g., conjunctions, adverbs, gambits, routines).
 5. Ability to infer relationships (e.g., cause, effect, conclusion).
 6. Ability to recognize key lexical items related to subject/topic.
 7. Ability to deduce meanings of words from context.
 8. Ability to recognize markers of cohesion.
 9. Ability to recognize function of intonation to signal information structure (e.g., pitch, volume, pace, key).
 10. Ability to detect attitude of speaker toward subject matter.
 11. Ability to follow different modes of lecturing: spoken, audio, audio-visual.
 12. Ability to follow lecture despite differences in accent and speed.
 13. Familiarity with different styles of lecturing: formal, conversational, read, unplanned.
 14. Familiarity with different registers: written versus colloquial.
 15. Ability to recognize irrelevant matter: jokes, digressions, meanderings.
 16. Ability to recognize function of non-verbal cues as markers of emphasis and attitude.
 17. Knowledge of classroom conventions (e.g., turn taking, clarification requests).
 18. Ability to recognize instructional/learner tasks (e.g., warnings, suggestions, recommendations, advice, instructions).
-

These listening micro-skills for listening comprehension can help teachers to identify the micro-skills that would be most crucial for learners to develop in relation to the learning objectives. Brown (2001) states that through a checklist of micro-skills learners can get a good idea of what their techniques need to cover in the domain of listening comprehension. For teachers who plan a specific technique or listening module, the list of listening micro-skills helps to focus on clearly conceptualize objectives. In terms evaluation listening micro-skills can become testing criteria.

In order to determine which micro-skills should be practiced, Field (2010) proposes an approach based on micro-listening exercises which practice individual micro-skills of listening. These micro-skills are seen as competences that native listeners possess and which non-natives need to acquire in relation to the language they are learning. Some examples of such competences involve mastering the auditory phonetics, word-identification techniques, patterns of reference, and so forth. In addition, Richards (1983) states that in teaching listening, teachers can manipulate the input or the tasks set for the learner. This manipulation is directed toward developing particular micro-skills. According to McDonough and Shaw (2003), micro-skill components are different components of sound processing mechanisms. They also add that micro-skill components are the analysis of language sound consisting of linking and weak sounds.

From a teaching perspective, the use of listening micro-skills can provide EFL learners competencies that L1 speakers possess and which L2 learners need to acquire in relation to the language they are learning. The teaching of listening micro-skills aims to make listeners become aware of the listening comprehension process. This can be achieved through the promotion and constant reinforcement of listening micro-skills while practicing listening comprehension.

2.5 The process of listening comprehension

Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011), explain that listening comprehension is regarded theoretically as an active process where individuals concentrate on selected aspects of aural input, form meaning from passages, and associate what they hear with existing knowledge. Some authors such as Clark and Clark (1977) and Richards (1983), refer to this active process proposing eight processes that are involved in comprehension:

1. The hearer processes what can be called “raw speech” and holds and “image” of it in short term memory.
2. The hearer determines the type of speech event that is being processed.
3. The hearer infers the objectives of the speaker through consideration of the type of speech event, the context, and content.

4. The hearer recalls background information relevant to the particular context and subject matter.
5. The hearer assigns a literal meaning to the utterance.
6. The hearer assigns an intended meaning to the utterance.
7. The hearer determines whether information should be retained in short-term or long-term memory.
8. The hearer deletes the form in which the message was originally received.

According to cognitive psychology, comprehension can be defined as information processing (Matlin, 1998). Information processing is interpreting incoming information to make a response suitable within the context of an objective, problem, or situation.

The role background knowledge plays in comprehension has been formalized as schema theory (Rumelhart, 1980). Rumelhart (1980) describes the schema as a high-level conceptual structure or framework that organizes prior experience and helps us to interpret new situations. The key function of a schema is to provide a summary of our past experiences by abstracting out their important and stable components. Schemata play an important role in language and linguistic processing by helping to frame the semantic content of a situation. Even when linguistic input is sparse or vague, activation of the appropriate schema can aid in the comprehension and retention of linguistically

communicated material. Schema theory states that all knowledge is organized into units.

Wang and Gafurov (2012) explain that, according to the cognitive comprehension theory, schema means an abstract textual structure that the listener uses to make sense of the given text. The listener makes use of linguistic and situational cues and also the expectations he/she has about the new input to evoke schemata. When a schema has been evoked, it becomes a guiding structure in comprehension. If the incoming information is matched with the schema, then the listeners have succeeded in comprehending the text. In contrast, if they are not compatible, either the information or the schema will be discarded or modified by the listeners.

The principle of schema leads us to two fundamental modes of information processing: bottom-up processing where listeners build understanding by starting with the smallest units of language such as individual sounds or phonemes, and top-down processing, where listeners use previous knowledge of the situation, context, and topic experiences to anticipate, predict, and infer meaning . These two processes intersect to develop an interactive processing. Thus, models for listening process fall into three types: bottom- up processing, top-down processing and interactive processing. The next sections explain these three types of listening-processing.

2.5.1 Bottom-up processing

According to Norris (1995), bottom-up processing consists in decoding the sounds of a language into words, clauses, sentences, etc. using one's knowledge of grammatical or syntactic rules to interpret meaning.

Richards (1990) explains that bottom-up processing (BUP henceforth), refers to the use of incoming data as a source of information about the meaning of a message. In order to process this incoming data, the listener depends on his lexical and grammatical competence of the language. For listeners to assign meaning for incoming words, they use a mental dictionary as part of their own lexical competence.

According to Schwartz (1998) bottom-up strategies are text-based, which means that the listener relies on the language in the message; such as the combination of sounds, words, and grammar that creates meaning. In addition, Harmer (2001) states that BUP allows the listener to focus on individual words and phrases, and achieve understanding by stringing these detailed elements together to build up a whole.

Vandergrift (2002) states that listeners use bottom-up processing when they use linguistic knowledge to understand the meaning of a message. Listeners can thus build meaning from lower level sounds to words to grammatical relationships to lexical meaning with the only purpose to arrive at the final message. Rubin (1994) explains that bottom-up processing is activated

by the new incoming data. The features of the data pass into the system through the best fitting, bottom-level schemata. Schemata are hierarchically formed, from the most specific at the bottom to the most general at the top. In relation to the process of listening comprehension, Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011) state that listening is a process of decoding the sounds, from phonemes to complete texts. Thus, phonemic units are decoded and connected together to construct words, words are connected together to construct phrases, phrases are connected together to construct utterances, and utterances are connected together to construct complete, meaningful text.

Exemplifying the process of decoding the sounds, we can see how a chain of incoming sounds trigger schemata hierarchically organized in the listener's mind, so that the listener makes use of his/her knowledge of words, syntax and grammar in order to work on form. This process is closely associated with the listener's linguistic knowledge.

The process of decoding sounds is described by Clark and Clark (1977) as a set of actions performed by the listeners:

1. Listeners take in raw speech and hold a phonological representation of it in working memory.
2. They organize immediately the phonological representation into constituents, identifying their content and function.

3. They identify each constituent and then construct underlying propositions, building continually onto a hierarchical representation of propositions.
4. Once they have identified the propositions for a constituent, they retain them in working memory and at some point purge memory from the phonological representation. In doing this, they forget the exact wording and retain the meaning.

Bottom-up processing helps learners to understand language by looking at individual meanings or grammatical characteristics of the most basic units of the text such as sounds, words, intonation, grammatical structures, and other components of spoken language. Nevertheless, BUP is not thought to be an efficient way to approach a text initially, and is often compared with top-down processing, which is thought to be more efficient (Vandergrift, 2007).

2.5.2 Top-down processing

Top-down processing (TDP henceforth) is defined by Richards (1990) as the use of background knowledge in comprehending the meaning of a message. He notes several forms of this background knowledge:

- Previous knowledge about a topic.
- Situational or contextual knowledge
- Knowledge stored in long term memory in the form of schemata and scripts.

Lynch and Mendelsohn (2002) explain that top-down processing, in contrast with bottom-up processing, is holistic, which means that it goes from whole to part, and is focused on interpretation of meaning rather than recognition of sounds, words and sentences. They state that listeners actively formulate hypotheses, ask for meaning, and confirm or modify them where necessary.

Van Duzer (1997) states that top-down processing refers to the process by which a message is interpreted by using schemata, background knowledge and global understanding, to derive meaning from and interpret the message. Along the same line, Lingzhu (2003) points out that in TDP learners utilize their prior knowledge to make predictions about the text. In terms of EFL instruction, Alfaki and Siddiek (2013) state that activating prior knowledge refers to the activities and strategies that teachers used to bring out what students already know about a topic. In the same line, Mai, Ngoc and Thao (2014) state that teachers should apply a variety of schema construction activities which provide listening classes more enjoyable and especially immerse learners in their own listening learning. According to schemata theory, the process of comprehension is guided by the idea that input is overlaid by the pre-existing knowledge in an attempt to find a match.

In relation to schema theory, Harmer (2001) says that in top-down processing the listener gets a general view of the listening passage by

absorbing the overall picture of the listening topic. This is facilitated when the listeners' schemata allow them to expect and predict appropriately what they are going to listen about. In addition, Schwartz (1998) explains that top-down strategies are listener-based, as the listener taps into background knowledge of the topic, the situation or context, the type of the text, and the language. This background knowledge generates a set of expectations helping the listener to interpret what is heard and anticipate what will come next. In order to activate student's prior knowledge, Lingzhu (2003) suggests several activities such as:

- Word association tasks.
- Prior questioning.
- Make list of possibilities, ideas or suggestions.
- Look at pictures before listening.

Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) state that in top-down processing the brain makes general predictions based on a higher level, general schemata, and then searches the input for information to fit into these practically satisfied, higher order schemata. In terms of listening, the listener actively constructs or reconstructs the original meaning of the speaker employing new input as clues. In this reconstruction process, the listener employs prior knowledge of the context and situation within which the listening occurs to understand what he/she hears.

Gough (1972) explains that through top-down processing, listeners make inferences about what the speaker intended. A top-down model is an approach that highlights what the listener reflects to the spoken text itself. This approach claims that listening is made by meaning and proceeds from whole to part. Brown (2001) explains that top-down techniques are more connected with the activation of schemata, with deriving meaning, with global understanding and with the interpretation of a text.

Top-down processing is an effective way to approach listening comprehension, allowing listeners to focus on the big picture and general meaning of a listening text. As TPD relies on learners' previous knowledge, it is a useful approach that may lead learners to a better understanding of any specific listening task (Clement, 2007).

2.5.3 Interactive processing

The third mode of information processing is the interactive processing, which uses bottom-up processing and top-down processing in order to increase the comprehension of a listening text. In the early 1980s, it was generally assumed that only top-down processing was acknowledged to improve L2 listening comprehension (Vandergrift, 2004). However it is now more generally accepted that both top-down and bottom-up listening processing should be combined to enhance listening comprehension. In addition, Vandergrift (2003) says that listening comprehension is not either top-down or bottom-up

processing, but an interactive, interpretive process where listeners use both prior knowledge and linguistic knowledge in order to understand messages. He also explains that the listeners' degree of using BUP and TDP will depend on their knowledge of the language, familiarity with the topic and the purpose for listening.

2.5.4 Listening comprehension process within the classroom

In order to have a better understanding of how to use these three modes of information processing within the classroom, Brown (2001) explains and states the goals of some techniques for teaching listening comprehension to beginning-level listeners, some of them are:

Bottom-up exercises

- Discriminating between intonation contours in sentences.
- Discriminating between phonemes.
- Selective listening for morphological endings.
- Selecting details from the text.
- Listening for normal sentence word order.

Top-down exercises

- Discriminating between emotional reactions.
- Getting the gist of a sentence.
- Recognize the topic.

Interactive exercises

- Build a semantic network of word associations.
- Recognize a familiar word and relate it to a category.
- Following directions.

These listening techniques can be used by teachers in order to help EFL learners to become aware of how to listen. In relation to the activities and exercises for a lesson, bottom up exercises normally focus on sounds, words, intonation, grammatical structures, and other components of spoken language. Top-down exercises are more concern with the activation of schemata. On the other hand, interactive exercises promote the use of background knowledge and linguistic knowledge.

Considering listening comprehension as an interactive process, it can be assumed that we can use BUP and TDP processing in order to promote the teaching of listening comprehension focusing on language forms and at the same time activating learners' previous knowledge related to a specific listening task as a method of enhancing listening comprehension.

2.6 Strategies of listening comprehension

One of the methods in which learners can become actively involved in controlling their own learning is by using strategies. According to Krashen's input hypothesis (Krashen, 1985), it was believed that merely being exposed to

comprehensible input would improve listening skills and promote language acquisition. However, in recent years L2 listening comprehension research has shifted to focus on how learners manipulate this input. Understanding the strategies that EFL/ESL learners tend to use in order to overcome the difficulties they experience while listening has become an integral part of L2 listening research. Within the EFL learning strategies framework, researchers such as Mendelsohn (1995), Thompson & Robin (1996) and Vandergrift (1999) state that L2 listening research has been increasingly directed to clarifying listener's mental processes and identifying facilitative strategies.

In particular, Vandergrift (1999) proposes that strategy development is important for listening training because strategies are conscious means by which learners can guide and evaluate their own comprehension and responses. Defining language learning strategies, Oxford (1990) explains that language learning strategies are the techniques that learners employ to improve the use of the target language information.

In addition, O'Malley, Chamot and Kupper (1987) categorize strategies into two groups: cognitive strategies directly related to the auditory information consist of an array of top-down and bottom-up exercises such as elaboration, inferencing and translation. Metacognitive strategies refer to methods used to help learners understand the way they learn.

2.6.1 Metacognitive strategies

Metacognitive strategies involve knowing about learning and controlling learning through planning, monitoring, and evaluating. Anderson (1983, 1985) describes metacognitive activities such as attending to special aspects of the input, and analyzing ongoing comprehension related to the task demands. According to Vandergrift (1987), metacognitive strategies are generally considered to be applicable across a variety of tasks, whereas cognitive strategies may be more tailored to specific learning activities.

2.6.2 Cognitive strategies

Anderson (1983, 1985) explains that cognitive strategies are related to comprehending and storing input in working memory or long-term memory for later retrieval. One of the principal cognitive strategies that Anderson (1982) describes is elaboration, in which individuals connect new information to information that has previously been stored in long-term memory, or analyze and relate meaningfully connected portions of the input.

2.6.3 Socio-affective strategies

There is a third category of language learning strategies called socio-affective strategies, which describe the learning that takes place when learners interact with classmates, ask the teacher for clarification, or use specific techniques to lower their anxiety. According to Vandergrift (1999), social-

affective strategies involve either social interaction or affective control over learning.

One of the most important ways to help learners achieve successful listening is to guide them to raise their awareness on their listening problems and use effective listening strategies. Considering this, Vandergrift (1999) and Rost (2002, p. 202) identify some strategies that are used by successful listeners:

- Predicting: Effective listeners think about what they will hear. This fits into the ideas about pre-listening mentioned earlier.
- Inferring: It is useful for learners to “listen between the lines.”
- Monitoring: Good listeners notice what they do and don’t understand.
- Clarifying: Efficient learners ask questions (What does ___ mean? You mean _ ?) and give feedback (I don’t understand yet.) to the speaker.
- Responding: Learners react to what they hear.
- Evaluating: They check on how well they have understood.

Strategies can be seen as the ways in which learners approach and manage a specific task. At the same time, listeners can learn effective ways of approaching and managing their listening. These activities seek to involve listeners actively in the process of listening comprehension through a set of conscious actions that help them to become aware of their listening problems.

For instance, when learners report using peer cooperation to achieve a learning goal or ask the teacher for clarification.

2.7 Metacognitive Awareness

Metacognitive Awareness means to be aware of one's own cognitive processes. In terms of EFL/ESL classrooms it means being aware of how students learn. Some authors such as Wenden (1998) and Oxford (1996) highlight the importance of being conscious about the learning process and how that can help learners to plan and organize their learning in a more effective way and, in doing so, become more autonomous and self-sufficient.

Vandergrift and Goh (2012) explain that metacognitive awareness refers to a state of consciousness of our own thoughts as we focus on a particular cognitive or learning situation. This observation is in line with Flavell (1979), who explained the learners' process of metacognitive awareness in two ways:

- The learner may experience a distinct thought or feeling apart from the regular train of thought.
- The learner may retrieve something from stored knowledge in relation to the train of thought.

Vandergrift and Goh (2012) explain a third way of demonstrating metacognitive awareness, which is the use of strategies for problem-solving, comprehension, and learning. These strategies are metacognitive as they

enable learners to change the way they learn and use language. For instance, strategy use refers to specific procedures or actions to make learning easier, more self-regulated, more effective, or more transferable to new situations.

In the EFL literature, the phenomenon of Metacognition has been addressed by using a series of related concepts such as: metacognition, metacognitive knowledge, learner beliefs, and consciousness-raising or awareness-raising. Considering this variety of constructs, Schraw (1998) highlights the fact that metacognition is a multidimensional phenomenon. For Cameron and Reynolds (1999), metacognition involves the deployment of high thinking skills like planning, monitoring, self-questioning and self-directing, to operate the various components needed for thinking and remembering, being these two processes fundamental concepts in language learning.

Vandergrift and Goh (2012) propose a metacognitive approach to listening instruction focus on learner-oriented listening instruction, they explain that the goal of a metacognitive approach to listening is to develop learners who:

- Understand the challenges of listening in a second language.
- Think about their learning development individually and collaboratively with others.
- Habitually make plans to self-direct and manage their progress in listening.

- Use listening strategies appropriately.
- Have greater self-efficacy and motivation.
- Can improve their listening proficiency to process aural input and engage effectively in oral interaction.

Vandergrift and Goh also explain that L2 listeners, who are trained under a metacognitive approach: are self-regulated learners who are aware of their own learning processes and the demands of their learning tasks. They have also developed key listening skills and a range of strategies to meet their listening needs in various contexts.

Teaching and developing metacognitive awareness may assist learners in learning how to listen and provide them the necessary tools to learn how to understand authentic short texts on topics related to their interest and level. The teaching of listening micro-skills is a strategy that promotes awareness about the listening comprehension process, resulting in a better understanding of auditory phonetics, word-identification techniques and patterns of reference and so forth.

2.8 The role of metacognition in L2 learning of listening skills

Chick, Karis and Kernahan (2009) explain that Metacognition is the process of thinking about one's own thinking or learning. It refers to the processes used to plan, monitor, and assess one's understanding and performance. Metacognition includes a critical awareness of:

- One's thinking and learning
- Oneself as a thinker and learner

While cognition is thinking or learning, the prefix “meta-” in this context means: at a later or higher stage of development and more comprehensive. Chick, Karis and Kernahan (2009) state that metacognition refers to active, higher-order processing through reflecting on, monitoring, self-regulating, evaluating, and directing the thinking and learning processes. In the same vein, Hacker (2009) states that metacognition allows people to take charge of their own learning. It involves awareness of how they learn, an evaluation of their learning needs, generating strategies to meet these needs and then implementing the strategies. In addition, Vandergrift and Goh (2012) explain that metacognition is to think about how we process information for a range of purposes and manage the way we do it. It is the ability to step back, as it were, from what occupies our mind at a particular moment in time to analyze and evaluate what we are thinking.

In terms of language teaching, Garb (2000) explains that the incorporation of metacognition into language teaching can instill a sense of duty and confidence into learners which enables them to self-direct their own learning. Furthermore, Mahdavi (2014) states that learning how to be mindful and manage one's own learning is not inherited, nor does it happen naturally

and overnight, but instead necessitates specific instruction of basic metacognitive skills and strategies.

Metacognition plays an important role in enhancing learners learning process. It is beneficial for EFL students to be instructed to employ metacognitive strategies for listening tasks such is the case of teaching listening micro-skills. Metacognition is exemplified when learners critically reflect on their knowledge about learning, before, during, or after a particular listening experience or task, promoting their learning as a result of these reflections.

2.9 A Metacognitive Approach to Listening Instruction

Vandergrift and Goh (2012, p.85) propose a metacognitive framework for listening instruction, based on Paris and Winograd (1990), which serves two important functions in language learning:

1. Self-appraisal or knowledge about cognitive states and processes.
2. Self-management or control of cognition.

They explain that self-appraisal occurs through personal reflections about one's ability and means to meet the demands of a cognitive goal. And self-management is executive in nature and helps to orchestrate cognitive aspects of problem solving. To address these functions, the metacognitive framework draws on three components: experience, knowledge, and strategies. As it is represented in figure 1 below.

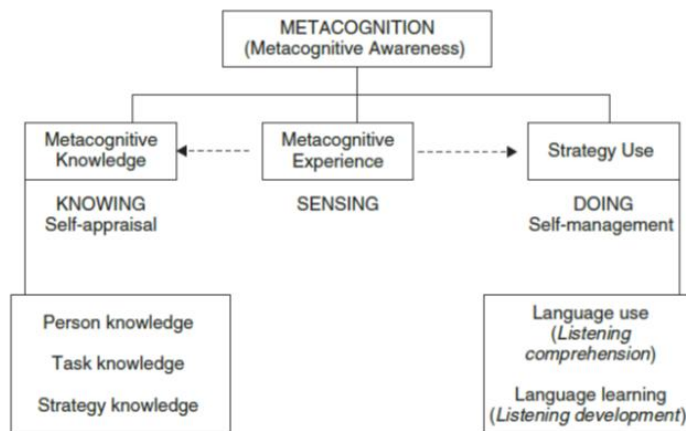


Figure 1. A Metacognitive Framework for Listening Instruction (taken from Vandergrift and Goh 2012, p.83)

According to Figure 1, the metacognitive experience refers to a thought or feeling that occurs to a person during and about the main thought. An example of metacognitive experience in a listening comprehension exercise is when listeners realize that they do not recognize the words they hear but remember a similar situation where they managed to solve a word recognition problem. On the other hand, metacognitive knowledge is divided into three components: first, person knowledge refers to the knowledge about how a learner learns and the factors that affect the learner's learning. Second, task knowledge is knowledge about the purpose, demands, and nature of learning tasks. In listening comprehension task knowledge includes knowing about features of different types of spoken texts, such as discourse structures, grammatical forms, and phonological features. Third, strategy knowledge refers

to know which strategies can be used to accomplish a specific learning goal (Vandergrift and Goh 2012).

Flavell (1979) explains that thinking and learning are accompanied by other conscious cognitive and affective experiences. Whether one thinks of experience as the main activity or train of thought, then a metacognitive experience is a thought or feeling that occurs to a person during and about the main thought. Vandergrift (2012) gives an example of metacognitive experience during listening, which is when learners realize that they do not recognize the words they hear but remember a similar situation where they managed to solve a word recognition problem. Listeners, confronted with an unknown sound may recall a strategy that they used before and use it again to manage the new problem. This can be called metacognitive experience.

Wenden (2002) suggests that metacognitive knowledge is a stable body of knowledge, though it may change over time as one acquires cognitive maturity and experience. As is the case with other aspects of socialization, this knowledge may often be acquired unconsciously through observation and imitation or consciously as learners listen to teachers, parents, or peers providing them with advice about how to learn. On the other hand, Davidson and Sternberg (1998) maintain that metacognitive knowledge allows problem solvers to better encode and represent the assumptions in a problem context and therefore better in listening tasks perform.

Flavell (1979) says that learners store three kinds of knowledge about cognition: person, task, and strategy. They can be explained as follow:

- Person knowledge: the knowledge a person has about him or herself and others as cognitive processors.
- Task knowledge: the knowledge a person has about the information and resources they need to undertake a task.
- Strategy knowledge: knowledge regarding the strategies which are likely to be effective in achieving goals and undertaking tasks.

Vandergrift (2012) explains that in the case of listening comprehension, task knowledge also includes knowing about features of different types of spoken texts, such as the respective discourse structures, grammatical forms, and phonological features of words and phrases as they appear in connected speech. Table 2 below illustrates the different types of metacognitive knowledge about listening.

Table 2: Metacognitive knowledge about listening comprehension

Metacognitive knowledge	Examples from listening
Person knowledge	
Knowledge about how factors such as age, aptitude, gender, and learning style can influence language learning. It also includes beliefs about oneself as a learner.	Self-concepts and self-efficacy about listening. Specific listening problems, causes, and possible solutions.
Task knowledge	
Knowledge about the purpose, the demands, and the nature of learning tasks. It also includes knowledge of the procedures involved in accomplishing these tasks.	Mental, affective and social processes involved in listening. Skills (e.g., listening for details, gist) needed for completing listening tasks. Factors that influence listening (e.g., text, speaker). Ways of improving listening outside class.
Strategy knowledge	
Knowledge about strategies which are likely to be effective in achieving learning goals.	General and specific strategies to facilitate comprehension and cope with difficulties. Strategies appropriate for specific types of listening. Ineffective strategies.

Note. Based on Goh (2002).

According to Marzano (1988), metacognition is part of cognitive development, and is both a product and producer of the latter. It enables learners to participate actively in regulating and managing their own learning, provides a personal perspective on individual learning styles and abilities, and is amenable to classroom instruction. In addition, Vandergrift (2006) says that

learners with high degrees of metacognitive awareness are better at processing and storing new information, finding the best ways to practice and reinforce what they have learned. In terms of listening comprehension, listeners who are aware of the use of listening strategies can manipulate that knowledge in order to interact within different communicative situations.

2.10 Conclusion of the literature review

In this chapter, an argument has been put forward that listening comprehension is an interactive process which can be enhanced by EFL learners through the use of different strategies that may allow them to develop a better understanding of a simple conversation or a listening text in general depending on the listener's language competence. The use of metacognitive strategies in EFL listening can enhance learners' listening comprehension performance through the activation of background knowledge by using schemata. Bottom-up processing and top-down processing converge on an interactive processing where listeners use both prior knowledge and linguistic knowledge in order to understand messages. One way to enhance EFL learners' listening comprehension, is to start teaching listening comprehension rather than practicing it. Although there is considerable understanding of the importance of listening comprehension, little is still known about the teaching of listening micro-skills. The teaching of listening micro-skills seeks to make learners aware about some specific micro-skills that may allow them enhance

listening comprehension. This thesis reports on a study that attempts to determine whether teaching listening micro-skills has a significant effect on students' listening comprehension performance.

Next chapter will describe the methodological procedures for the collection and analysis of data for this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The study reported in this thesis is quantitative in nature and it aims to contribute to our understanding of the importance of teaching listening micro-skills in order to enhance L2 listening comprehension in general, and promote the use of some listening micro-skills by Chilean learners of English in particular. The data was collected into two steps: at the beginning and end of the research intervention using a pretest and posttest. After collection, data was analysed through two statistical tests, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test and the Mann-Whitney U-test in order to establish whether learners benefited from the treatment and to attribute the learners' enhancement to the teaching of listening micro-skills.

In this chapter, a description is provided of the participants and settings for the research intervention, the procedures and instruments used to collect the data, a description of the research intervention and the procedures to analyze the data collected.

3.1 Participants and settings

The study took place in a private school located in Peñalolén, Santiago. The participants were 26 students of eleventh grade. Among the participants there were 11 women and 15 men. Their ages ranged from 16 to 17 years of age.

The participants belong to two different groups already organized by the school according to its own categorization system, which means that most of

the students come from the previous level together. Each group consists of 13 students. The designation of the experimental and control group was made randomly.

According to the curriculum of the school, students have three pedagogical hours of English per week, for the purpose of this study the intervention consisted of one chronological hour per week.

3.2 Data collection

3.2.1 Instruments

The instruments used to gather the data were a pretest and a post-test. The experimental and control groups took the tests at the beginning and end of the pedagogical intervention. The tests were the listening section of the English SIMCE test. This test was chosen because it tests the knowledge and skills that students of eleventh grade should have.

SIMCE is the national evaluation system of learning results (Agencia de Calidad de la Educación). The test is divided into five parts; each of them presents different texts and dialogues with questions related to them. It also contains general instructions on the cover and specific instructions at the beginning of every part. The listening section of the SIMCE of English is formed by two complementary materials: an audio and a booklet.

The audio is divided into five parts, each of them has a variety of conversations. In every part there is a pause that allows students to be prepared for the next part. The audio incorporates ten short conversations of two interventions and four conversations of medium length; each of them is listened to twice. Students should understand those conversations in order to understand the questions on the booklet. The booklet is also divided into five parts; each of them contains written questions related to the dialogues listened to from the recording. At the beginning of every part an example is presented in order to illustrate the way to answer the questions of that part.

The booklet presents ten questions related to short dialogues and five questions related to medium length conversations (see appendix A for a copy of the test applied). This test intends to measure the skills and knowledge that students of eleventh grade should have in the English subject. Considering that listening comprehension is an important part of the test and as the present study aimed to determine whether teaching listening micro-skills had a significant effect on students' listening comprehension performance, the test was expected to indicate any improvement in the participants' listening comprehension performance.

3.2.2 Class Material

The material used to teach listening micro-skills to the experimental group was taken from "Developing Tactics for Listening" (Richards, 2005). This

is an activity listening course that focuses on building skills in listening and conversation. The lessons taken from the book provide practice in conversation and listening in different subjects and situations. The material fulfills the purpose of the study giving students plenty of opportunities to recognize and develop listening micro-skills (see Appendix B).

3.2.3 Pedagogical intervention

The study was conducted over the lapse of twelve weeks, the same instruments and procedures were used in each lesson. Every lesson consisted in giving awareness to students about listening micro-skills focusing on two micro-skills per lesson. First, the micro-skills were presented to students through audio examples where they could see the micro-skill presented. Then, the thematic vocabulary was presented so participants could identify the needed words or concepts in order to work on the activities. Finally, participants worked individually in the class activity based on the “Developing Tactics for Listening”, which consisted in two units per class as it is shown in table 3 below. The first and last session of the experiment were used to administer the pretest and posttest, respectively.

On the other hand, subjects from the control group were not taught about listening micro-skills. Instead, they did the same listening activities as a class activity without receiving any treatment. Table 3 below summarizes the work

done during the twelve sessions of the research intervention considering the thematic units and the listening micro-skills studied in each session.

Table 3: Description of the intervention sessions.

“Developing Tactics for Listening” unit name:	Listening micro-skills	Number of sessions
Pretest		1
Unit 1: The Weekend Unit 2: City Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ability to guess the meanings of unfamiliar words from the context ➤ Listening for gist ➤ Understanding cohesive devices 	2
Unit 3: Renting a Car Unit 4: Parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Listening for specific information and important details ➤ Recognizing functions of stress and intonation in spoken language 	3
Unit 5: Restaurants Unit 6: Shopping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Listening to discriminate between distinctive sounds 	4
Unit 7: Air Travel Unit 8: Health Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ability to understand reduced forms of words in spoken language ➤ Listening for key words ➤ Recognizing the topic 	5
Unit 9: Work and Jobs Unit 10: Keeping Fit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Making inferences and understanding the speaker’s purpose 	6
Unit 11: invitations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ability to guess the meanings of 	

Unit 12: Small Talk	unfamiliar words from the context	7
	➤ Listening for gist	
Unit 13: Hobbies and past times	➤ Understanding cohesive devices	
Unit 14: Shopping Problems	➤ Listening for specific information and important details	8
	➤ Recognizing functions of stress and intonation in spoken language	
Unit 15: Hotel Services		
Unit 16: Movies	➤ Listening to discriminate between distinctive sounds	9
	➤ Ability to understand reduced forms of words in spoken language	
Unit 17: Fears		
Unit 18: Telephone Messages	➤ Listening for key words	10
	➤ Recognizing the topic	
Unit 19: Touring a City		
Unit 20: Airports	➤ Making inferences and understanding the speaker's purpose	11
Posttest		12

3.2.4 Procedures

Participants were grouped according to the categorization system of the school, and all of them belong to eleventh grade. The criterion to select both groups of learners was that students of eleventh grade are tested by the Ministry of education every two years in order to rank their English language competence.

The procedure to collect the data was divided into two steps using a pretest and a posttest. First, participants received an explanation of the nature of the study and their role in it. Then, the pretest was administered to both groups separately in order to collect the first data set. The pretest lasted 45 minutes divided in five sections with a total of 30 questions. Participants took the test in their classroom; the test was administered by the researcher. Before beginning the test participants were provided with a booklet with the instructions (see Appendix A) and an answer sheet for their answers. Instructions were clear as there were not questions about them, so participants took the test without any inconvenient. The audios of the test were played twice. The tools used for the application of the pretest and posttest sessions were: a radio and the printed tests.

The lessons consisted of two pedagogical hours (90 minutes). Nevertheless the intervention in each lesson lasted for only one chronological hour because the time left was used by the students and teacher in order to work on their regular contents.

After ten sessions of intervention the treatment was over so the posttest was administered to both groups, the results gave us the second data set. The procedure to administer the posttest was the same as the pretest. Both tests were scored using the answer keys given by “Agencia de Calidad de la Educación” institution in charge of the national “SIMCE” test.

3.3.1 Data Analysis Procedures

The data collected consisted of the scores obtained from the pretest and posttest. Gains observed between pretest and posttest for both groups were compared statistically with a Wilcoxon test. The Wilcoxon signed rank test is a non-parametric statistical hypothesis test used to compare two related samples and determine if there is any difference between them. This data analysis helped us to determine the mean scores of the pretest and posttest and compare them and see if there was any statistically significant difference between them.

Then, the gains between pre and posttests results from both groups were analyzed through the Mann-Whitney U Test in order to calculate the posttest gains of each group. Then, posttests gains were compared in order to determine whether the gains of the experimental group were higher than the gains of the control group. The comparison of the posttest gains attempted to determine the effect of teaching listening micro-skills on students' listening comprehension performance.

3.4 Data analysis

In order to determine whether teaching listening micro-skills had an effect on participants' listening comprehension performance the following analysis was conducted:

- The difference in scores between the pretest and the posttest was calculated for both the control and the experimental groups.
- The gains observed between the scores of the pretest and the posttest were compared.

First, the results of the pretest and posttest were compared. This analysis was made for both groups control and experimental. Then, in order to see whether the difference between the scores of the pretest and posttest in each group was significant, a Wilcoxon Signed-Ranks Test for related samples was carried out. Significant differences between the mean scores of the pretest and posttest were considered as indication of students learning listening micro-skills.

Second, in order to determine whether teaching listening micro skills has an effect on participants' listening comprehension performance, the gains between pre and posttests were calculated for each participant by subtracting each student's pretest score from his or her posttest score. To do so, a Mann Whitney U Test for independent samples was applied to compare the mean score gains in each group. This analysis helped us to focus on the improvements from pretest and posttest and determined whether metacognitive awareness about listening micro-skills have any significant effect on the scores of tests of participants.

In the next chapter, the results of the study will be presented.

Chapter 4: Results

The study reported in this thesis had two objectives (see Chapter 1.2): to establish the improvement rate of the control and experimental groups and to determine which group had improved better comparing the gains between pre and posttests. In order to do so, the results of the pretest and posttest were compared.

4.1 The effect of teaching listening micro-skills on students' listening comprehension performance

In order to determine whether participants from the experimental group achieved an improvement in their listening comprehension performance through the practice of listening micro skills, in each group a Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was applied to analyze the gains between pretest and posttest results. In the experimental group, the statistical analysis indicated that the mean posttest scores, Mean = 28, were higher than the mean pretest scores, Mean= 26. This difference was observed to be statistically significant $p = \leq 0.01$. In the control group, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test analysis indicated that the mean posttest scores, Mean= 24, were higher than the pretest scores, Mean = 22. This difference was observed to be statistically significant $p = \leq 0.01$. This indicates that participants in both groups obtained better results in their posttest in comparison to the pretest, and according to the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test the results were significant. In other words, the results obtained by both groups

in the posttest reflected an improvement on participants' listening comprehension performance. Table 4 below presents these results.

Table 4: Pretest and posttest results

Group	Pretest n=13		Posttest n=13		Wilcoxon Signed- Ranks Test	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Z	p
Experimental	26	3.42	28	1.40	-2.39	0.01
Control	22	4.66	24	3.68	-2.51	0.01

In the pretest, from a total of 30 questions, the average of right answers for the experimental group was 26 and for the control group was 23. These numbers represents an effectiveness of 86.6% for the experimental group and 76.6% for the control group. Effectiveness is related to the number of right answers obtained by participants in the pretest and posttest. According to these numbers, both groups obtained good results in the pretest.

In the posttests the results followed the same pattern. From a total of 30 questions, the average of right answers for the experimental group was 28 and for the control group was 25. These numbers represents an effectiveness of 93.3% for the experimental group and 83.3% for the control group. Considering these results, both groups had an increase of 6.7% in their performance in the posttest in comparison with the pretest. According to these numbers both groups performed better in the posttest that the pretest.

4.2 Posttest gains between experimental and control groups

In order to determine whether teaching listening micro-skills had a significant effect on students' listening comprehension performance, gains between the scores of the pretest and posttest were compared through a Mann-Whitney U-test. This test indicated that the posttest's gains of the experimental group were higher (Mean = 2.38) than the posttest's gains of the control group (Mean = 2.15). Despite that, the Mann Whitney U-test analysis concluded that this difference was not significant $U= 82$, $P= 0.92$. This can be interpreted as teaching listening micro-skills did not have a significant effect on students' tests scores. Table 5 presents the results.

Table 5: Posttest gains between experimental and control groups

Group	Experimental n=13		Control n=13		Mann-Whitney U- test	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	U	p
Gains in posttest	2.38	3.09	2.15	2.47	82	0.92

In summary, although there was an improvement in the participants' listening comprehension performance the analysis of scores indicated that teaching listening micro-skills did not produce a significant effect on students' listening comprehension performance. These results will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In this chapter, the results will be discussed in relation to the theoretical and empirical issues covered in Chapter 2. The study reported in this thesis has attempted to explore the question of whether teaching listening micro-skills has a significant effect on students' listening comprehension performance. In order to do this, two groups of students were tested before and after a pedagogical intervention. At the end of the study intervention, the gains observed in each group were compared and tested for significance.

As stated in the Introduction Chapter: 1, the major motivation of this study was to obtain insights into the process of teaching listening comprehension to Chilean high school students. This study was based on a study about the impact of awareness raising of listening micro-skills on EFL learners' listening comprehension enhancement by Rezaei and Hashim (2013).

Results obtained indicate that both groups made improvements at the end of the research intervention. However, the gains obtained by the experimental group were not higher in comparison with the gains of the control group.

The study results indicate that the hypothesis that teaching listening micro-skills has a significant effect on students' listening comprehension performance could not be confirmed. On the other hand, results also indicate

that both groups improved their listening comprehension performance regardless of the intervention.

This chapter is divided into two main parts: the first one dealing with the factors that may have influenced the results of the study such as the importance of the exposure to the target language, the role of background knowledge in listening comprehension, the influence of small class size and listening strategy instruction. The second part of this chapter deals with the gains within and between groups covering the number of sessions for teaching listening micro-skills and the posttest's gains of the experimental and control groups.

5.1 Factors that may have influenced the results of the study

Results indicate that both groups improved their listening comprehension performance. This can be interpreted following Krashen (1985), who explained that mere exposure to comprehensible input would enhance listening skills and promote language acquisition. During the intervention both groups were exposed to the target language through the audio material and teacher's instructions and explanations.

Another factor that may have affected participants' listening comprehension performance is the participants' background knowledge, which plays an important role in comprehension, as suggested by Rumelhart (1980). According to background knowledge, the topics and contents of the lessons allowed participants to recall certain vocabulary and expressions used under

specific situations such as the weekend, transportation, parties, etc. This may have activated students' schemata allowing them to respond to different listening comprehension scenarios.

A third factor is the number of participants of this study, which was relatively small 26 participants divided into 2 groups of 13 - small class size. Working in small groups may have allowed students to pay more attention to the listening micro-skills or listening activities during the lessons.

5.1.1 The importance of the exposure to the target language

Considering the importance of exposition widely recognized in the literature, Dickinson (1996), each session of this study was designed to provide participants of both groups a constant exposure to the target language, from the simple greetings at the beginning of every session to a more complex task of listening comprehension, such as the development of a specific listening micro-skill. The result of this approach was the creation of a rich communicational environment among participants in the classroom.

There is agreement among researchers and teachers that a foreign language classroom should provide students with an environment in which real communication is encouraged in the target language, in which students learn through the language, not just about the language, and in which they focus on the immediate use of the target language as a communicative tool (Chambers, 1991; Franklin, 1990; Halliwell and Jones, 1991). A communicative environment

was promoted in classes for both groups encouraging participants to use the English language as much as possible. For instance, participants were able to discuss the topics of the lessons and give personal opinions about them.

The lessons planned for this study were entirely conducted in the target language, limiting the use of L1 just as a reference point as a way to help participants to construct knowledge in the target language. Some researchers have stated that L1 is recommended when the cost of the target language is too great (Cook, 2001). In addition, Swain and Lapkin (2000) stressed that using L1 to mediate target language learning can create a more affective learning environment. During the intervention applied in this study, some concepts were explained in L1 with the sole purpose to enhance target language comprehension among participants. Such was the case of the explanation of the ability to understand reduced forms of words in spoken language. In this case, students did not have a clear concept or idea of reduced forms of words in English, so, L1 was used to explain reduced forms of words and clarify any doubt. The used of L1 when explaining listening micro-skill may have allowed participants to learn a particular micro-skill that helped them later to answer the questions of the posttest, obtaining better results in the posttest than the pretest.

As the results in section 4.1 indicate, a significant improvement in participants' comprehension performance at the end of the study intervention in

both groups. It is possible that the constant exposure of participants to the target language during the intervention sessions helped them to gain confidence in the use and understanding of the target language, which may have helped them to improve their posttest performance obtaining better results. In addition, we could highlight the importance of the amount of input while learning English as a foreign language. Some authors like Larsen-Freeman (1985) suggest that learners who are exposed to most target language input exhibit the greatest proficiency, she suggests that quantity of input is of prime importance. As stated in section 3.2.1, participants of both groups of this study were constantly exposed to the target language through the class material and teacher instruction prioritizing the amount of comprehensible input while working with the experimental and control groups.

The material selected for each session of the intervention provided participants plenty of opportunities to be immersed in the target language, allowing them to move from one situational context to another completely different, for instance: the weekend, city transportation, parties, etc. The idea behind that technique was to give students the chance to practice the language beyond the classroom context and give them the needed communicational tools to interact properly in those contexts.

On the other hand, there are some authors such as Turnbull (2001), who believe that exclusive use of the target language in the classroom does not

have to be the goal. In addition, Stern (1992) proposes that L1 and target language use should be seen as complimentary depending highly on the situation and level in which a language is learnt.

In specific cases, the L1 was used with a few participants during the listening session, for instance, when participants were not able to understand instructions, their classmates were encouraged to explain them the instructions again and if they were not able to understand them, in these occasions the use of L1 was allowed, facilitating in this way the understanding of the task. This can be interpreted as the use of L1 in order to enhance target language comprehension among participants.

A study conducted by Brands (2011) about using the target language in the foreign language classroom at Dutch secondary schools, confirms the idea that the principle of applying the target language as language of instruction and communication in class is highly dependent of the context in which this occurs. In the case of Chile, this principle can be seen in some classroom settings where the use of the target language is reduced to just instructions, leaving students without the sufficient input to develop properly their communicational skills. For this study, it is possible that constant exposure to target language may have been the main cause for participants to improve their listening comprehension performance.

5.1.2 Background knowledge as an important role in listening comprehension

Another factor that may have influenced the gains between pretest and posttest is the activation of participants' background knowledge. As it was reported in section 3.2.2, the material used for the intervention sessions provided participants practice in conversation and listening in different topics and situations. Most of these topics were familiar to participants, allowing them to recall certain words or situations that enhanced comprehension. For instance, in session 5 of the intervention where the main topic was air travel participants activated their existing knowledge about air travelling mentioned words such as airport, fly attendant, customs form, and plane in order to use these words to enhance comprehension.

There have been some studies that have explored the potential relationship between prior knowledge and listening comprehension. For example, Muller (1980), investigated the effects on listening comprehension of locus of contextual visuals for different levels of aptitude of beginning college German students. He discovered that the students who had the contextual visual such as pictures or text before hearing the passage scored significantly higher on the recall measure than those in the visual-after and the no-visual groups. This was also the case of the tests used in this study, which provided pictures to participants before listening to the audio. In this part of the test most

of the participants obtained good scores that reflect their comprehension of the listening tasks.

In addition, some researchers such as Markham and Latham (1987), Chiang and Dunkel (1992), and Schmidt-Rinehart (1994) have claimed that background knowledge and topic familiarity can improve students' performance in listening comprehension. A more recent study carried out by Sadighi and Zare (2006), answers the following question: is listening comprehension influenced by the background knowledge of the learners? In a two-group study based on TOEFL preparation, the authors observed that the experimental group had a better performance as compared with the control group in their listening comprehension. They attributed this better performance to the result of the background knowledge of participants in the experimental group. The background knowledge that was tested in this study was related to the following topics: student housing, the ice age, old architecture, coffee drinkers, and photography.

According to the results of the present study and what the researcher observed in the intervention sessions, it can be said that participants responded better to a task that was contextualized through a picture or a small text than to the tasks where they had to listen to a whole conversation and then answer some written questions without using images or texts. This seems to be helpful

to activate their previous knowledge and as a consequence respond better in front of a specific listening task.

Similar phenomena happened while carrying out this study, especially when participants received instruction about a specific listening micro-skill. At the beginning, it took them a few lessons to get familiar with some listening micro-skills. For instance, when explaining cohesive devices during a listening comprehension exercise. First, participants were exposed to a conversation between two people, where they had to choose the suitable conjunction to complete the conversation. At the beginning, participants had a hard time trying to identify the right answer. Once this listening micro-skill was explained to them, it is likely that they activated some background knowledge about conjunctions or connectors that they had studied two years ago when they attended first secondary grade. Therefore, when they worked on tasks where identifying the cohesive device was essential in order to understand the overall conversation, they performed much better than the first time.

A recent study about the role of background knowledge activation in improving reading comprehension in an EFL setting, carried out by Alfaki and Siddiek (2013) concludes that text previewing is an effective strategy in activating learners' prior knowledge in reading an informational text which enhances their reading comprehension. Although this study focuses on a different language skill, the same procedure can be applied while teaching

listening, considering that reading and listening are both receptive skills. The important point here is to activate background schemata, in other words, i.e. students' experiences with previous knowledge of the topic of the listening. In addition to Alfaki and Siddiek, a study carried out by Mai, Ngoc and Thao (2014), about enhancing listening performance through schema construction activities, corroborates the relationship between schema construction activities and learners' listening performance.

5.1.3 Class size effect on listening comprehension

As it was informed in Chapter 3, this study had two groups of a total of 26 participants who belong to the same high school level. Normally, this number of students is the same number that attends English lessons.

We consider this fact to be an advantage while learning a language and beneficial not only for students but teachers as well. Some studies such as Gilstrap (2003) and McArver (2015) have concluded that there was an evident and significant relationship between class size and achievement in mainstream academic classes through the examination and analysis of academic data, such as grades and test scores.

On the other hand, class size is just one of the factors that may affect students' learning process. In Chile, schools have normally forty to forty-five students per class. Considering this, the results of this study can be considered as positively affected by having two groups of 13 students allowing the

researcher to pay attention to every student's needs and provide the necessary feedback to make students' performance improve.

Working with two small groups allowed the teacher to enhance communication and give feedback at the right time. In terms of listening comprehension, participants were able to listen to the audios without the annoying noise of a classroom filled with students, and focus easily on the listening activities. Indeed noise has been noted by Chen (2005) and Herington and Weaven (2008) confirming that having small group of students limits the noise, save time while performing a specific activity and allow teachers to concentrate on small numbers of groups instead on focusing on many individuals.

Based on the research results and the experience of working with both groups during the research intervention, we could assume that both groups were benefited by working in a small-size class, paying more attention to the listening micro-skills or activities in general.

5.1.4 The effects of listening strategy instruction on listening comprehension

As indicated in section 3.2.3 above, listening strategy instruction played an important role in this study. The experimental group received explicit or direct instruction about listening micro-skills, while the control group received an embedded instruction. As explained in section 2, direct instruction occurs when

students are informed about the value and purpose of a particular strategy. On the other hand, embedded instruction occurs when students are guided through activities and materials that are associated with a strategy but are not told of the benefits and applications of the strategy.

According to Chen (2009), in a study about students' strategy development demonstrated that direct strategy instruction could be integrated into the EFL listening classroom and might lead to positive effects for learners' understanding and use of listening strategies. In the present study, it is thus possible that the use of listening strategy instruction had a positive effect on the listening comprehension performance of participants of both groups.

When teaching listening comprehension to EFL students, it seems to be helpful to develop a holistic approach exposing students as much as possible to the target language while paying attention to their background knowledge as a tool to enhance language acquisition (Vandergrift and Goh, 2012). Other aspects that may affect students' listening comprehension are the number of students per class and the listening strategy used by teachers to enhance listening comprehension.

The results in 4.2 indicate that teaching listening micro-skills does not have a significant effect on students' listening comprehension performance. These results will be discussed in the next section.

5.2 Gains within and between groups

The second analysis of the results shows that the difference between the gains of the control and experimental was not statistically significant. As a consequence, the hypothesis that teaching listening micro-skills has a significant effect on students' listening comprehension performance could not be confirmed. Some factors that may have influenced on this result will be discussed in the following section, considering the number of sessions for teaching listening micro-skills and the gains of both groups.

5.2.1 Number of sessions for teaching Listening Micro-skills

As it was informed in the methodology section above, the estimated time for carrying out our intervention was of 12 sessions in 12 weeks. From these 12 sessions only 10 sessions were used to give direct instruction about listening micro-skills to participants of the experimental group. The sessions took place once a week, and in each of them two listening micro-skills were studied. The results of this study may be interpreted as indicating that one weekly session for a period of time of ten weeks is not enough to produce a significant effect on participants' listening comprehension performance.

This interpretation seems reasonable in the light of similar studies about enhancing EFL listening comprehension performance, where participants received the treatment for longer periods of time. This is the case of Rezaei and Hashim (2013), who carried out a study about the impact of awareness raising

about listening micro-skills on the listening comprehension enhancement. In their study, the classes were held for 20 sessions, with participants becoming aware of and practicing one micro-skill in every two sessions. They expected to find that awareness raising activities about listening micro-skills do not have any significant effect on the listening comprehension enhancement of the EFL learners. That is to say, participants were not benefited by the awareness giving activities. On the contrary, the results in this study proved that teaching listening micro-skills has a positive effect on students' listening comprehension performance. Consequently, they concluded that raising awareness of the EFL learners about different listening micro-skills enhances their listening comprehension significantly.

In another study carried out by Mai, Ngoc and Thao (2014) about enhancing listening performance through schema construction activities at Saigon Technology University, Vietnam, during 15 weeks. Participants had a 2 hours and 15 minute class meeting every week in which 40 minutes was spent on acquiring listening skill and 95 minutes on acquiring the other skills. Their study corroborated the relationship between schema construction activities and learners' listening performance.

The results of the present study may then have been affected by the short intervention considering that a longer intervention would have given

participants more time and opportunities to learn the listening micro-skills while practicing listening comprehension.

5.2.2 Interpretation of the gains for both groups

Both groups had relatively good results in their pretests and posttest (see section 4.1). Considering that effectiveness is related to the number of right answers obtained by participants in their tests. We can say that in the pretest the experimental group had an effectiveness of 86.6% and the control group had an effectiveness 76.6% both groups had an increase of 6.7% in their performance in the posttest.

It may thus be that in terms of gains the experimental group was limited by its good results obtained in the pretest, this may be reflecting a ceiling effect taking into account that four participants of the experimental group obtained the maximum score in the pretest and none of the participants of the control group obtained that. Ceiling effect is the point at which an independent variable is no longer affecting the dependent variable. In terms of the data of this study, teaching listening micro-skills did not reflect any effect on four participants of the experimental group.

In summary, some observations to be considered in the evaluation of the study are the following:

- The importance of the exposure to the target language while learning listening comprehension seems to be crucial and benefits learners providing them and environment in which real communication is encouraged, in which students learn through the language, and not just about the language.
- Background knowledge in listening comprehension can be enhanced with the aid of topic familiarity and visual context such as pictures, imagines and texts that would improve students' performance in listening comprehension.
- Teaching listening comprehension to small group of students help to reduce the noise, save time while performing a specific activity and allow teachers to concentrate on small numbers of groups instead on focusing on many individuals.
- Listening strategy instruction allows students to become more efficient, effective and autonomous listeners. In terms of teaching listening micro-skills, listening strategy instruction seems to enhance listening comprehension.

In the next chapter, a conclusion to this study is provided together with a summary of the findings, limitations to the study and suggestions for further research are provided.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The study reported in this thesis looked into the process of teaching listening comprehension to Chilean high school students through direct instruction of listening micro-skills. In order to teach listening micro-skills, 26 high school students from a private school were divided into two groups: The experimental group was instructed with a focus on awareness of micro-skill strategies and the control group was not instructed with a focus on awareness of micro-skill strategies. Both groups took a pretest at the beginning of the intervention and a posttest at the end of the intervention. Between the pretest and posttest both groups had ten sessions of one hour each, in which ten listening micro-skills were taught to the experimental group. In comparison, an embedded instruction on the listening tasks was given to the control group.

This study was designed taking into account evidence on listening comprehension and considering some listening micro-skills presented by Richards (1983). The main objective of this study was to determine whether teaching listening micro-skills had a significant effect on students' listening comprehension performance.

6.1 Main findings of the study

The gains between scores in the pretest and the posttest showed that both groups improved their listening performance. Nevertheless the difference between the gains of each group turned out not to be statistically significant. In

other words, teaching listening micro-skills did not have a significant effect on participants' listening comprehension performance.

The results seem to indicate that the mere exposure to the target language in a classroom setting may influence positively on students listening comprehension performance and promote acquisition. This finding is in agreement with Krashen (1982), who explains that the teacher is usually expected to use the target language as much as possible to provide comprehensible input for the learners. It was also observed during the intervention the benefits of using the target language between student-student and teacher-students; this created and provided a good EFL classroom environment motivating participants to use the target language in simple interactions most importantly thing allowed them to realize that they were able to speak and understand English according to their current English level. When participants were encouraged to use the target language they responded positively, especially while discussing the topics of the audio lessons. Therefore, the use of the target language seemed to have been benefited by the addition of a variety of strategies to facilitate comprehension and support meaning making.

Another explanation of the results is the important role that background knowledge plays while teaching listening comprehension to participants. We observed during the intervention sessions how simple topics such as food,

parties, the weekend, shopping etc. fostered words and ideas in participants that helped them to contextualize these topics in their daily life, as a consequence, they achieved a more meaningful knowledge of listening micro-skills.

Another factor that may have explained the gains observed between pretest and posttest was the benefit of working in a small class-size, which allowed students to receive a more personal instruction and worked without the distractions caused of a big class-size. This was a key factor while practicing listening comprehension. Therefore, in terms of teaching listening micro-skills class-size appears to be a significant means of improving student achievement.

Another issue observed in this study is related to the limited number of sessions that participants had in order to learn and practice the listening micro-skills. Considering, that one hour per session was probably not enough time to study and practice listening micro-skills.

Finally, listening strategy instruction facilitated the improvement of both groups at the end of the intervention. This finding goes along with Chen (2009), who demonstrated that strategy instruction could be integrated in the EFL listening classroom and might lead to positive effects for learners' understanding and use of listening strategies.

One possible explanation of why the gains observed between the pretest and posttest did not show substantial differences between each other may be

related to a ceiling effect caused by the relatively good results obtained by both groups in the pretest, leaving these results a small gap to be filled in terms of gains between the pretest and posttest considering that both tests consist only of 30 questions. Another explanation that can be pointed out is related to participants' intrinsic motivation which, according to what it was observed during the intervention, was almost always high as indicated by students' participation and willingness to practice English.

6.2 Limitations of the study

The first limitation of the present study is related to the number of sessions planned for this study. Being the present study a small scale study, it only considered ten sessions in order to give participants awareness about ten listening micro-skills.

The context of the study may have influenced on the results, as well. As it was informed in the methodology chapter, this study was carried out at a private school with a reduced number of students who already had some domain of the English language. This context differs from public schools where conditions are different, for instance: the number of students per class, where an English class can be attended by 40 to 45 students limiting the time that teachers have to give each student feedback. The number of hours for English instruction per week, may vary but normally public schools have only two hours of English lessons a week for high school students.

Another limitation was that both groups received instruction by the researcher and this may have produced a degree of bias. Ideally, the researcher would not have been involved in the classroom with neither the experimental nor the control group and each group would have received instruction from another instructor. In this way, a possible source of bias could have been avoided. This kind of bias when giving the instruction to both groups may have affected the results considering that the researcher may unconsciously put more emphasis while teaching the listening micro-skills to the experimental group, being this group more benefit than the control group. In order to avoid this bias effect in the present study, the researcher followed carefully the lessons plan prepared for each session of the intervention trying not to benefit one group over the other. Still, since results did not indicate that the experimental group had a higher improvement in their performance, it seems that such bias did not occur.

6.3 Suggestions for further research

The present study has provided evidence regarding the teaching of listening micro-skills to high school students. However, the current study has pointed out some aspects that require further research that need to be considered when teaching EFL listening comprehension.

First, for researchers who are interested in studying listening comprehension and the effects of teaching listening micro-skills, we suggest to

plan a longer intervention where listening micro-skills can be studied and practiced by participants more than one or two times during the research intervention. A longer intervention would also give more data to be analyzed allowing researchers to focus on different aspects of teaching listening micro-skills. Moreover, to plan a qualitative and quantitative research considering students' motivation and disposition towards the practice of listening micro-skills would allow researchers to have a more holistic perspective of the teaching of listening micro-skills.

Second, in order to obtain results which represent better the Chilean educational contexts, we suggest for further research to study the effects of teaching listening micro-skills in public schools. In public schools the number of students per class and hours of instruction are different from the number of participants and the hours considering for the present study.

Third, we suggest for further research to consider having one instructor for the experimental group and another for the control group, with this we try to avoid any bias that may affect the results of the study. It would also allow the researcher to have a more objective perspective of the participants and results of the research.

Fourth, for further research which follow a pretest and posttest design we suggest to choose the appropriate standardized test according to the English

level of participants, this would allow researchers to avoid any eventual ceiling effect as happened in the present study.

6.4 Final comments

The present study dealt with how metacognitive awareness of listening micro-skills may improve the listening comprehension performance of EFL high school students. The listening skill has been neglected for years by educators who have paid more attention to the outcome of listening rather than the listening process itself.

The present study is important as it looks into the process of listening comprehension and evaluates the potential benefits of teaching listening micro-skills in order to enhance learners' listening comprehension performance. Although the current study results did not validate our hypothesis that teaching listening micro-skills has a significant effect on students' tests scores, it opens an opportunity to explore new approaches to teach listening comprehension among Chilean EFL teachers and learners. As stated in section 2, listening comprehension plays an important role in language acquisition, hence the need to explore and study this area from an EFL perspective in our national context.

The teaching of listening micro-skills was complemented with the use of the target language, participants' background knowledge activation and listening strategy instruction. This study was centered on high school students due to the emphasis that the Ministry of Education has put on assessing

Chilean students' English language competence in the last few years. The present study allowed us to study EFL listening comprehension in our national context giving us insights of how certain variables of listening comprehension affect Chilean students. The results can also be seen as an indicator for future studies aiming for a better understanding of the listening comprehension process of EFL students in our national educational reality.

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Appendix A: Simce listening simple test



Simce Inglés 2014

III Educación Media

PAPER 2 Listening

Approximately 30 minutes

Additional materials:
Answer sheet

Time Approximately 30 minutes (including 8 minutes' transfer time)

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

There are 30 questions.

Each question carries one mark.

You will hear each piece twice.

While you are listening, write your answers on the question paper.

You will have 8 minutes at the end of the test to write your answers onto the separate answer sheet. Use a pencil.

Sample Test 2

Forma	
Serie	

--	--

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES



This is the SIMCE English Test,
Listening Test One We will stop for
a moment before we start the test.

Please ask any questions now because you must **NOT** speak
during the test. Now, look at the instructions for Part One.



UNIVERSITY *of* **CAMBRIDGE**
ESOL Examinations

English for Speakers of Other Languages

PV2

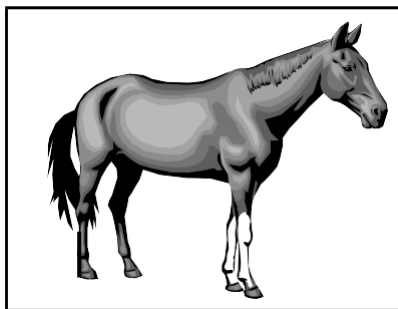
Part 1

Questions 1-10

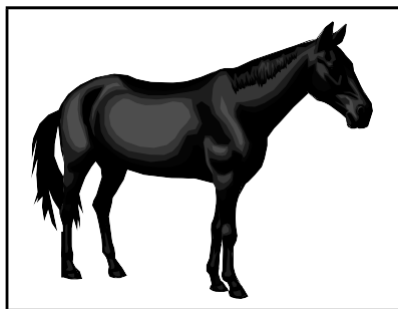
You will hear ten short conversations.
You will hear each conversation twice.
There is one question for each conversation.
For questions 1 - 10, put a tick (✓) under the right answer.

Example:

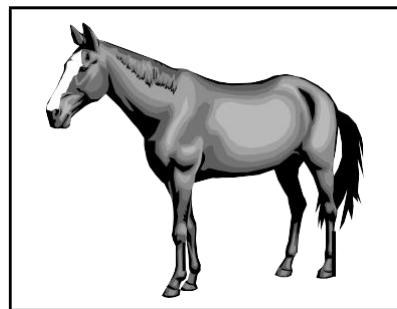
Which is the girl's horse?



A



B



C

1 How many children went on the school trip?



A



B

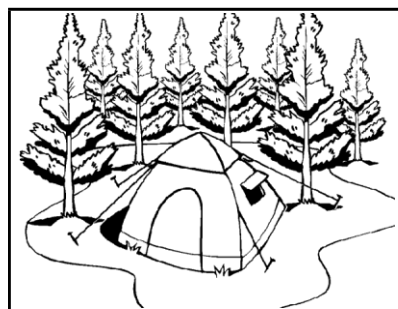


C

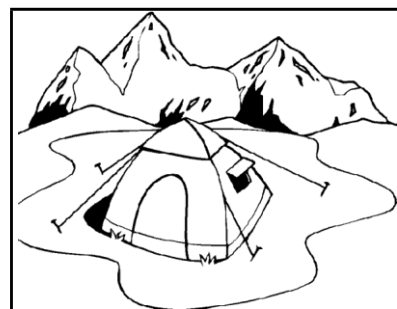
2 Which campsite did Josh stay at last year?



A



B



C

3 How much is the skirt?



A



B

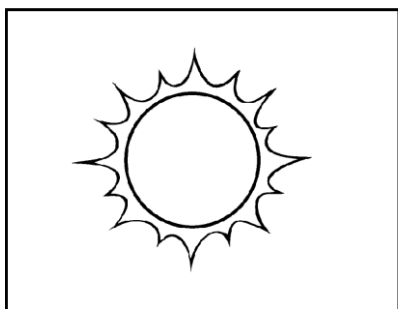


C

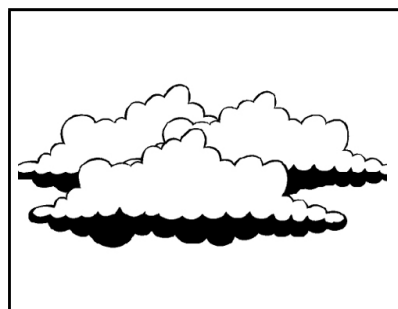
4 What's the weather like now?



A

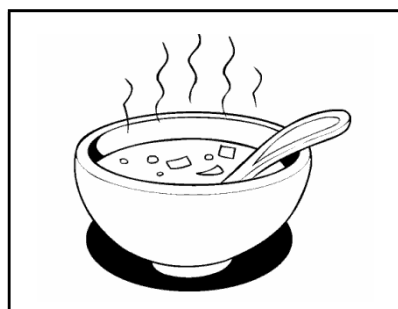


B

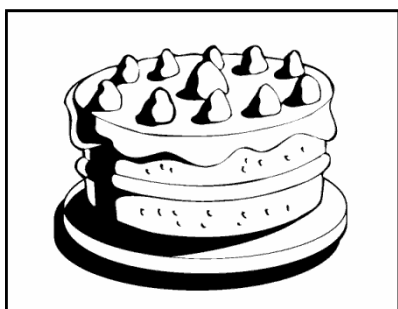


C

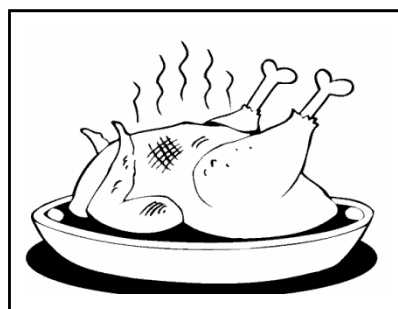
5 What will the girl cook?



A

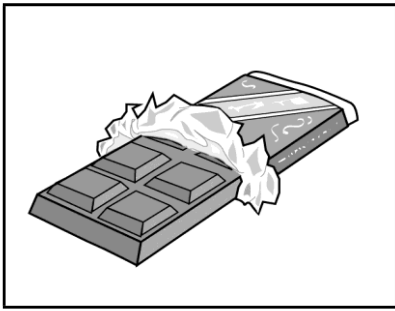


B

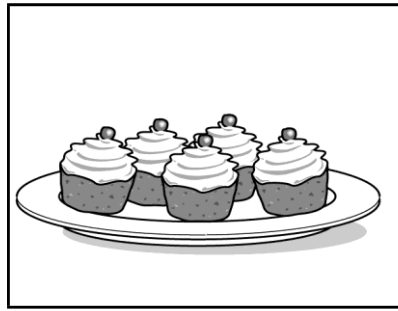


C

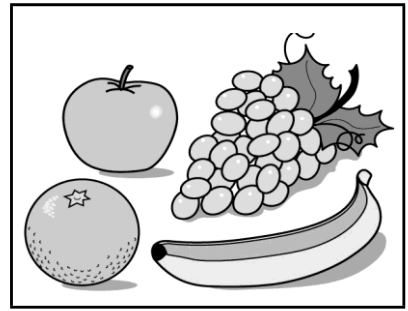
6 What's Jill's favourite food?



A

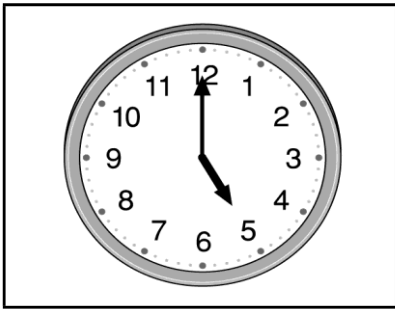


B

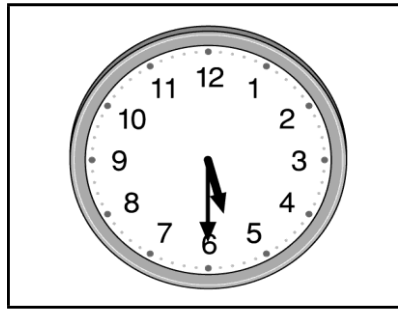


C

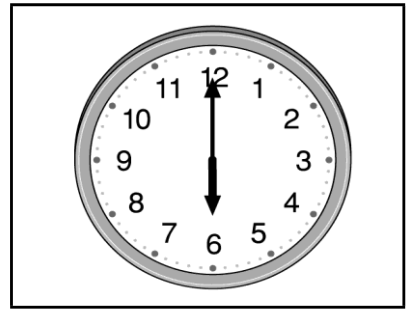
7 What time will Barry phone back?



A

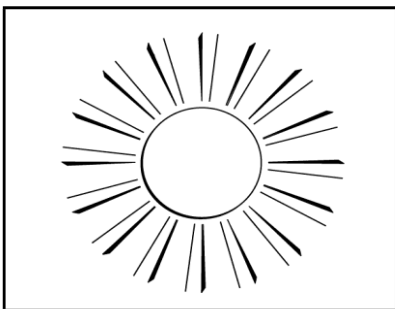


B

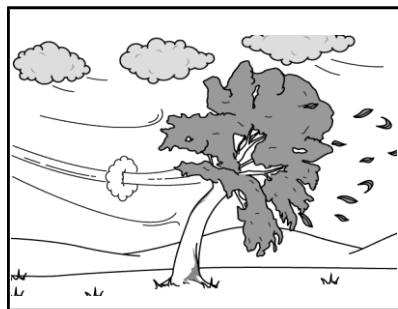


C

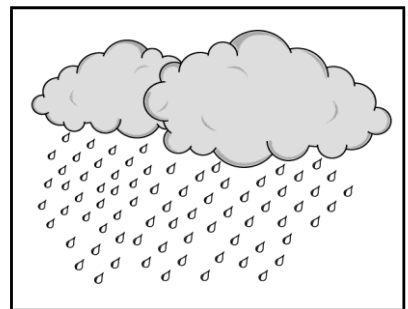
8 What was the weather like last weekend?



A



B

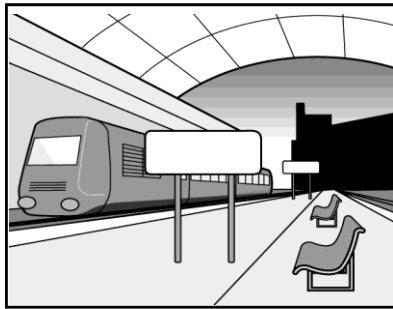


C

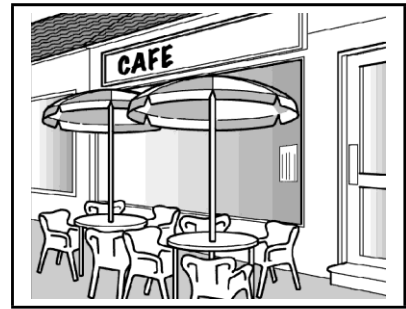
9 Where are they going to meet?



A

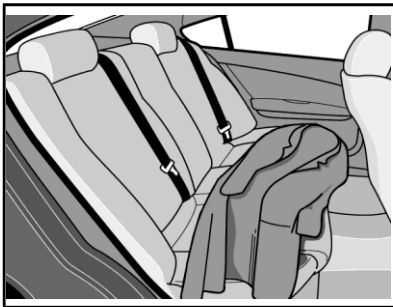


B



C

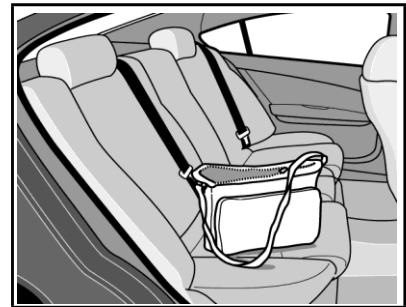
10 What's still in the car?



A



B



C

Part 2

Questions 11 - 15

Listen to Nick talking to a friend about his birthday presents. What present did each person give him?

For questions 11 - 15, write a letter **A - H** next to each person. You will hear the conversation twice.

Example:

0 Cousin

B

PEOPLE

PRESENTS

11	Mum	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td>A</td></tr></table>	A	bike
A				
12	Brother	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td>B</td></tr></table>	B	book
B				
13	Aunt	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td>C</td></tr></table>	C	cinema tickets
C				
14	Uncle	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td>D</td></tr></table>	D	clothes
D				
15	Grandmother	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td>E</td></tr></table>	E	computer game
E				
		<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td>F</td></tr></table>	F	mobile phone
F				
		<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td>G H</td></tr></table>	G H	money
G H				
			music CD	

Part 3

Questions 16 - 20

Listen to Tom talking to a friend about a sports afternoon. What sport did each person do?

For questions 16 - 20, write a letter A - H next to each person. You will hear the conversation twice.

Example:

0 Tom

D

PEOPLE

SPORTS

16	Sam	A	basketball
17	Jane	B	football
18	Paul	C	golf
19	Susan	D	horse-riding
20	Anne	E	skiing
		F	table-tennis
		G H	tennis
			volleyball

Part 4

Questions 21 - 25

Listen to Susie talking to her friend Matt about going to the cinema.

For questions 21 - 25, tick (☒) A, B or C.
You will hear the conversation twice.

Example:

0	Who is going to the cinema with Susie?	A Jane	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		B Sam	<input type="checkbox"/>
		C Pete	<input type="checkbox"/>
<hr/>			
21	Which film will they see?	A Sunny Day	<input type="checkbox"/>
		B Field of Green	<input type="checkbox"/>
		C Heart of Gold	<input type="checkbox"/>
22	They are going to the cinema	A by the market.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		B in the shopping centre.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		C opposite the park.	<input type="checkbox"/>
23	How will they get there?	A by car	<input type="checkbox"/>
		B on foot	<input type="checkbox"/>
		C by bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
24	Matt should meet Susie at	A 3.45.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		B 4.15.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		C 4.20.	<input type="checkbox"/>
25	The cinema tickets will cost	A f5.50.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		B f6.20.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		C f8.00.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part 5

Questions 26 - 30

Listen to James talking to a friend about a new music club.

For questions **26 - 30**, tick (☒) **A, B** or **C**.
You will hear the conversation twice.

Example:

0	The club is next to the	A cinema.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		B university.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		C park.	<input type="checkbox"/>
26	The club opened	A yesterday.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		B a week ago.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		C a month ago.	<input type="checkbox"/>
27	What did James like about the club?	A the good dancers	<input type="checkbox"/>
		B the fast music	<input type="checkbox"/>
		C the friendly people	<input type="checkbox"/>
28	At the club, you must not wear	A t-shirts.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		B jeans.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		C sports shoes.	<input type="checkbox"/>
29	Yesterday, James's ticket was	A f5.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		B f?.50.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		C f10.	<input type="checkbox"/>
30	The club stays open until	A 12.00.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		B 2 a.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>
		C 5 a.m.	<input type="checkbox"/>

You now have 8 minutes to write your answers on the answer sheet

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Appendix B: Developing Tactics for Listening

UNIT 1 The Weekend



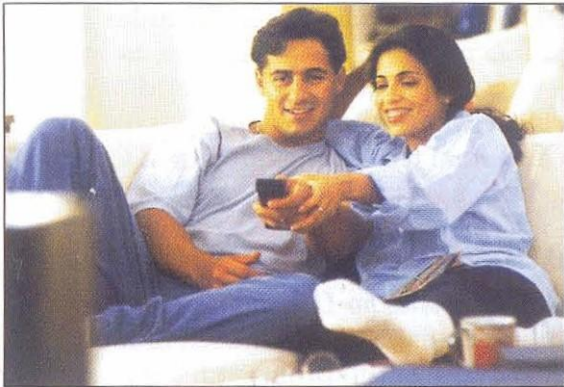
1. Getting Ready

What did you do last weekend? Check (✓) your answers and compare them with a partner.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> went to a movie | <input type="checkbox"/> went to the gym | <input type="checkbox"/> played a sport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> met a friend | <input type="checkbox"/> watched TV | <input type="checkbox"/> rented a video |
| <input type="checkbox"/> went on a date | <input type="checkbox"/> went to a disco | <input type="checkbox"/> played computer games |

2 Let's Listen

What did these people do last weekend? Listen and circle the correct answer.



- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. He
a. went dancing
b. watched TV | 4. He
a. played with his nephews
b. went out with a friend |
| 2. He
a. met a girl
b. went to his brother's house | 5. She
a. went to a party
b. went to a movie |
| 3. She
a. went to the gym
b. entered a bodybuilding competition | 6. She
a. rented a video
b. watched baseball on TV |

J. Let's Listen

Part 1

Did these people enjoy their weekend? Listen and check (w) the correct answer.

Yes No

1. D D
2. D D
3. D D
4. D D
5. D D
6. D D



Task 2

Listen again. What did each person do on the weekend? Circle the correct answer.

1. He
 - a. watched an adventure movie on TV
 - b. played video games
 - c. went to a movie
2. He
 - a. stayed at home
 - b. went to the beach for the weekend
 - c. went to the mountains
3. He
 - a. read lots of interesting magazines
 - b. used the computer
 - c. read an interesting book
4. She
 - a. played in a band
 - b. went to a concert
 - c. played tennis
5. She
 - a. stayed home and watched TV
 - b. studied for an exam
 - c. went out with friends
6. She
 - a. visited friends
 - b. went to the countryside
 - c. went out with friends

4. Let's Listen *D*

tm!jfl

People are talking about their weekends. How was each person's weekend?
Listen and circle the correct answer.



- | | | | |
|-------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. a. so-so | 2. a. disappointing | 3. a. tiring | 4. a. awful |
| b. terrible | b. pleasant | b. terrific | b. quiet |
| c. great | c. boring | c. wonderful | c. enjoyable |

Wj! j)

Listen again. Are these statements true or false? Check (I) the correct answer.

	True	False
1. a. She won a contest in a music store.		D D
b. She won a trip to Las Vegas.		D O
2. a. They went to a restaurant for dinner.	D	O
b. His friend has a very interesting job.	D	D
3. a. The park is very far from town.	D	D
b. They didn't see any wild birds or butterflies on the trip.		D D
4. a. There were a lot of interesting people at the party.		D O
b. The party ended early.		D O

U!NI If 2 City Transportation

1. Getting Ready

Check (✓) your own answers to the questions below. Compare answers with a partner.

How often do you use taxis?

every day

about once or twice a week

not very often

other: _____

When do you usually use taxis?

when I am in a hurry

when there isn't any other way to get somewhere

when it is raining

other: _____

How is the taxi service in your city?

excellent

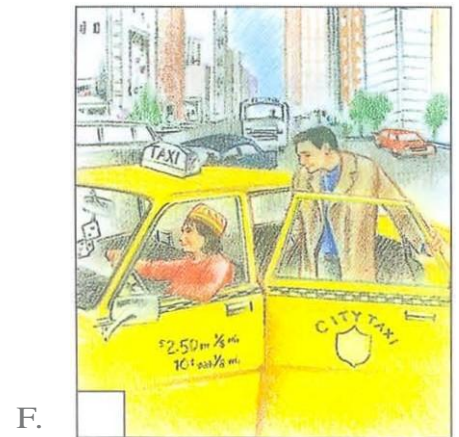
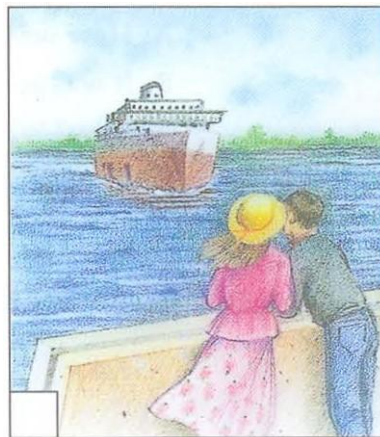
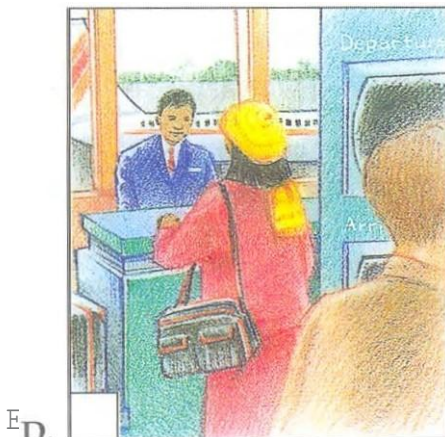
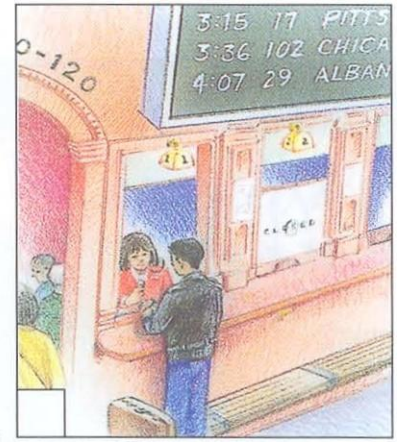
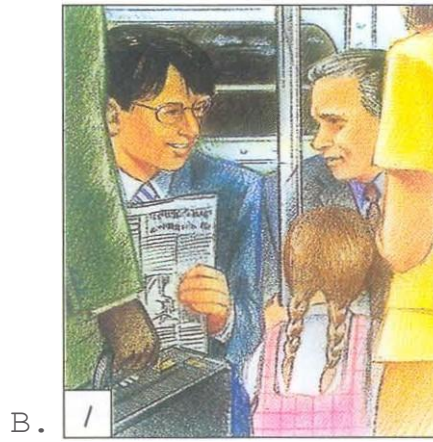
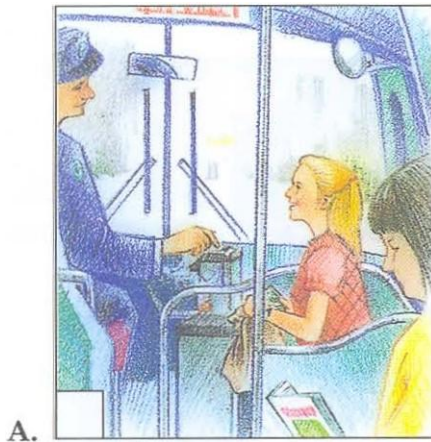
very good

okay

poor

2 Let's Listen

People are talking about transportation. Listen and number the pictures.



Task 1

Four hotel guests are calling for a taxi. Are these statements true or false? Listen and check (I) the correct answer.



True

False

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. The caller's flight leaves in four hours. | D | D |
| 2. The caller wants to go to another hotel. | D | D |
| 3. The caller needs to catch a train. | D | D |
| 4. The caller's friend is going to have a baby soon. | D | D |

iff!S,;i

Listen again. How much will each ride cost? Circle the correct answer.

- | | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1. a. \$14 | 2. a. \$12 | 3. a. \$15 | 4. a. \$18 |
| b. \$40 | b. \$20 | b. \$50 | b. \$80 |

4. Let's Listen *C.I.J*

WWJ

Visitors are talking about taxis. Listen and check (.) their opinions about taxi service.



	Good	Okay	Not good
1.	D	D	D
2.	D	D	D
3.	D	D	D
4.	D	D	D

t'®f1

Listen again. Circle the correct answer.

- The thing she hates the most is that the _____
 - taxis aren't air-conditioned
 - drivers drive too fast
 - drivers are rude
- The thing he likes the most is _____
 - the prices
 - that the taxis are clean
 - the drivers
- The thing he hates the most is that the _____
 - taxis are too expensive
 - drivers don't speak English very well
 - taxis are not very safe
- The thing she likes the most is that the _____
 - taxis are comfortable
 - drivers speak English well
 - taxis are very cheap

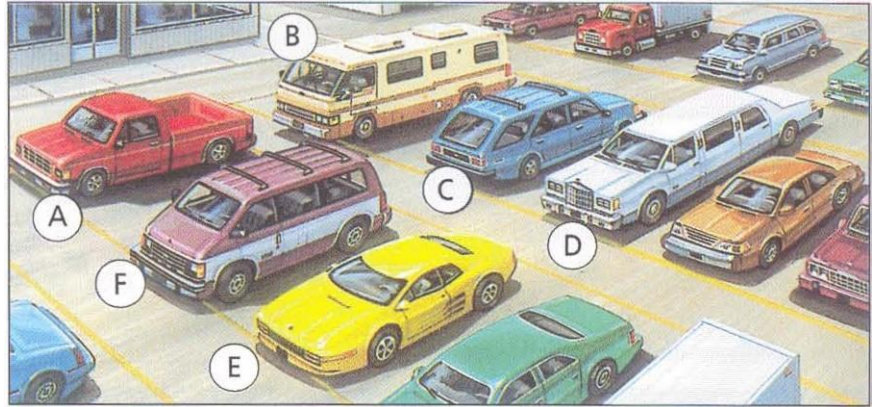
UNIT 3 Renting a Car



1. Getting Ready

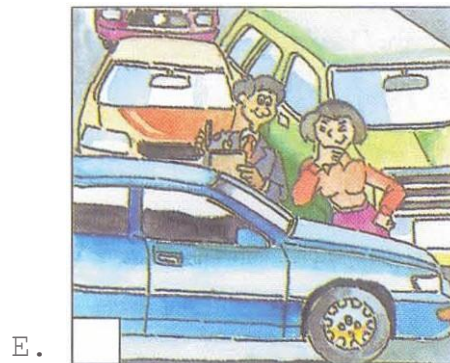
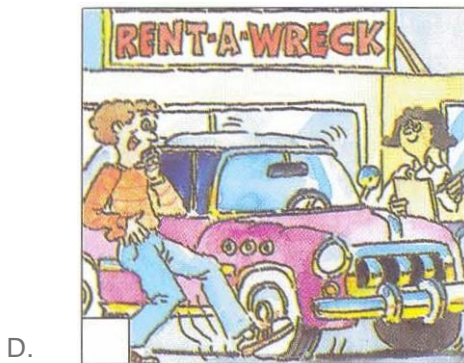
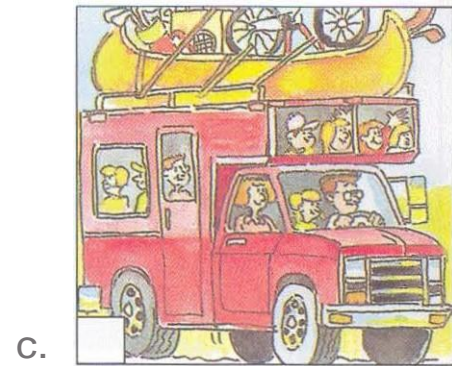
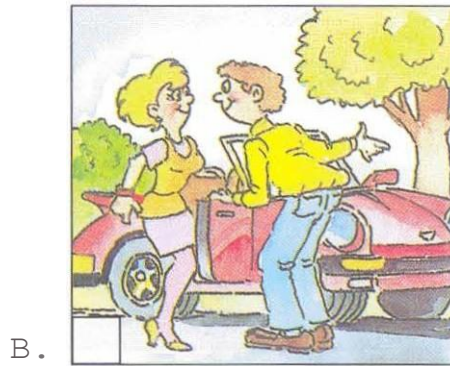
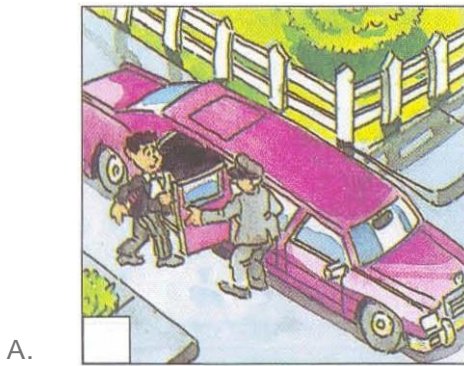
Write the letters of the vehicles next to the correct names. Compare answers with a partner.

1. stretch limo D
2. minivan
3. sports car
4. recreational vehicle (RV)
5. station wagon
6. pickup truck



2. Let's Listen t j

People are talking about vehicles. Listen and number the pictures.



3. Let's Listen

1 :1

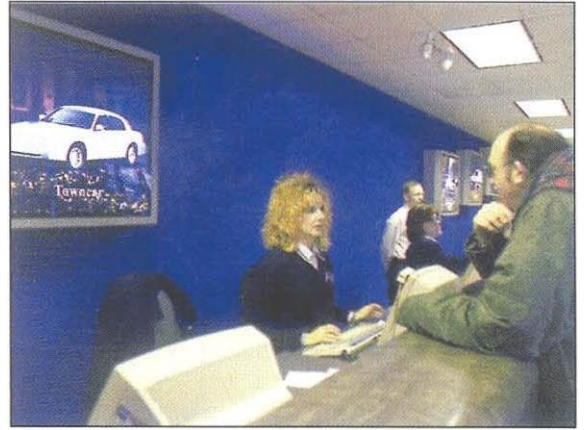
People are discussing cars at a rental agency. Listen and check (✓) the correct information.

1. Rental period Size Location
- weekend small city
- one week medium airport
- more than a week large

2. Rental period Size Location
- weekend small city
- one week medium airport
- more than a week large

3. Rental period Size Location
- weekend small city
- one week medium airport
- more than a week large

4. Rental period Size Location
- weekend small city
- one week medium airport
- more than a week large



flp! Jill

Listen again. Why does each person want to rent a car? Circle the correct answer.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. a. business | 3. a. business |
| b. pleasure | b. pleasure |
| c. business and pleasure | c. business and pleasure |
| 2. a. business | 4. a. business |
| b. pleasure | b. pleasure |
| c. business and pleasure | c. business and pleasure |

4. Let's Listen **W**

Task 1

A car rental agent is suggesting different options to customers. Do the customers accept or refuse the options? Listen and check (/) the correct answer.

	Accept	Refuse
1.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Wj!ifl

Listen again. Are these statements true or false? Check (/) the correct answer.

	True	False
1. A large car costs an extra \$5 a day.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. A city guide costs \$50.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
3. The customer is leaving on Saturday.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. The customer thinks that the cost of the accident insurance is reasonable.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. The customer is the only person that will be driving the car.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. The customer rarely rents a car.	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

UNIT 4 Parties

1. Getting Ready

Match each meal or party on the left with the correct description on the right.
Compare answers with a partner.



1. potluck dinner *JL*
 2. birthday party ___
 3. buffet ___
 4. surprise party ___
 5. barbecue ___
 6. snack ___
- a. A small, quick meal or something eaten between meals.
 - b. A meal in which each guest brings a dish.
 - c. Food is cooked outside on a grill.
 - d. A party where a person is given gifts and a cake with candles on it.
 - e. A meal in which all the food is prepared by the host or hostess.
 - f. A party which the guest of honor knows nothing about.

2. Let's Listen *n-*.

People are discussing parties. What kind of event are they talking about? Listen and circle the correct answer.

- | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. a. dinner party | 3. a. surprise party | 5. a. buffet |
| b. surprise party | b. birthday party | b. barbecue |
| 2. a. potluck dinner | 4. a. buffet | 6. a. potluck dinner |
| b. barbecue | b. birthday party | b. buffet |