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**LEARNING STRATEGIES APPLIED TO THE TEACHING OF LISTENING  
COMPREHENSION**

**Bagé  
2014**

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Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso apresentado ao Curso de Licenciatura em Letras – Português/Inglês e Respectivas Literaturas da Universidade Federal do Pampa, como requisito parcial para obtenção do Título de Licenciada em Letras.

Orientador: Prof<sup>a</sup>. Dr<sup>a</sup>. Kátia Vieira Morais

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“Só correndo o risco de novos caminhos pode o professor descobrir por si mesmo, se é ou não eficiente, se aqueles novos caminhos lhe convêm ou não.”

Carl Rodgers

## **ABSTRACT**

The theme of this work is the use of learning strategies applied to the teaching of listening comprehension in the classroom. We select strategies that could help teachers of English as an Additional Language to instruct their students while working with listening instruction and auditive input in their lessons. The objective of this paper is to present the results of a research developed in Bagé, Rio Grande do Sul, with first-year students at the Additional Languages course at Universidade Federal do Pampa (UNIPAMPA). The research consisted in explicitly teaching learning strategies to these students in order to help them increase their listening comprehension. In each class, we presented the objectives of the lesson and asked them to answer a questionnaire in which they exposed their level of comprehension and comments about the use of strategies. It was possible to observe that knowing the purpose of the listening activities beforehand helped them organize their ideas better, feel safer about exposing their thoughts and share what they understood. Besides that, results showed that students felt more confident about their abilities and were motivated to also apply what they learned outside the academic context.

Key-words: Teaching of English as an Additional Language - Teaching of Listening – Listening Purposes - Learning Strategies

## RESUMO

O tema deste trabalho é o uso de estratégias de aprendizagem aplicadas ao ensino de compreensão oral em sala de aula. Selecionamos estratégias que pudessem ajudar professores de inglês como língua adicional a instruir seus alunos ao trabalhar com ensino de compreensão oral e insumo auditivo em suas aulas. O objetivo deste estudo é apresentar os resultados de uma pesquisa desenvolvida em Bagé, Rio Grande do Sul, com alunos ingressantes do curso de Línguas Adicionais da Universidade Federal do Pampa (UNIPAMPA). A pesquisa consistia no ensino explícito de estratégias de aprendizagem a esses estudantes visando ajudá-los a aumentarem sua compreensão oral. Em cada aula, apresentamos os objetivos da lição e solicitamos que respondessem a um questionário em que expusessem seu nível de compreensão e comentários sobre o uso das estratégias. Foi possível observar que conhecer o propósito da atividade de antemão ajudou-os a organizar melhor suas ideias e sentirem-se mais seguros para expor seus pensamentos e compartilhar o que entenderam. Além disso, os resultados mostraram que os estudantes se sentiram mais confiantes sobre suas habilidades e ficaram motivados a aplicar o que aprenderam também fora do contexto acadêmico.

Palavras-chaves: Ensino de inglês como língua adicional – Ensino de compreensão oral – Propósitos da compreensão oral – Estratégias de aprendizagem

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>9</b>
1.1 Problematizing the issue .....	9
1.2 Objectives and methodology .....	10
1.3 Organization of the work .....	12
<b>2 LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	<b>13</b>
2.1 Listening Overview.....	13
2.2 Listening in Applied Linguistics over the years .....	18
2.3 Teaching Listening.....	19
2.4 Learning Strategies .....	23
<b>3 METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>27</b>
3.1 Data collection.....	29
<b>4 RESEARCH ANALYSIS</b> .....	<b>31</b>
4.1 Questionnaire 1 – First day of research .....	31
4.2 Questionnaires of the lessons .....	36
4.3 Final Questionnaire – Last day of research .....	41
<b>5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS</b> .....	<b>43</b>
REFERENCES .....	45
APPENDIX .....	47
ATTACHMENTS .....	52

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

The theme of this work is the use of learning strategies applied to the teaching of listening comprehension in the English as an additional language classroom. We present strategies that could help teachers to better instruct their students while working with listening instruction and auditive input in their lessons.

The theoretical basis of this paper anchor on the studies of the following researchers: Tricia Hedge, H. Douglas Brown, Michael Rost, Steven Brown, Christiane Goh, Ana Uhl Chamot, and Rebecca Oxford. These researchers point out that listening is an ability that can be taught if we focus on the teaching of learning strategies.

Among the topics highlighted in this work are the definition of the term listening, the role of listening in Second Language Acquisition and in Applied Linguistic studies over the years, the development of some learning methodologies, and the types of strategies that can be naturally developed by the students or explicitly taught by the teachers.

### **1. 1 Problematizing the Issue**

The experience of the researcher in teaching English started very early when she was still a student at a private language school. She was invited to work as a monitor in the school. Her functions included private lessons for students with learning difficulties or students who had missed classes for a justified reason. Among the many doubts and complaints that students brought to her, she could notice a high tendency of students saying that they found listening in English too complicated and that they could not understand anything they heard in the audios teachers utilized in class. The school followed the Communicative Approach and the teachers always did activities to activate students' prior knowledge on the topics and to link the themes with pictures and other relevant elements. However, to the researcher, that was clearly not enough; it was necessary to learn more about the teaching of listening, try something else, bring other activities to make students more aware of learning. A few years had passed and, when it was her time to teach, those questions still remained in the researcher's mind. How can teachers better teach listening? Is it possible? She

felt that she should look for more than what she already knew; from that necessity, this work emerged. She dedicated herself to the research of listening instruction trying to find something that could be more helpful for students than simply listening to an audio passage, answering content questions, and feeling as if they were constantly being tested (and failing, most of the times). It was necessary that students reflected on their learning process, took part on it consciously and developed their listening abilities since learning is, according to Hedge (2000), forty-five per cent dedicated to listening.

The initial idea for this research was to analyze student's answers for the listening activities during the eight-lesson period, in order to evaluate their enhancement in listening comprehension. As our readings of the literature review deepened though, we realized that this focus would not be appropriate. Following this procedure would be reinforcing the idea of right or wrong. We do not intend with this work though to measure students' percentage of right answers; we want them to realize that they are able to take part in the listening learning process as active participants. Teacher and student together should clearly build this path through the use of strategies but it is not supposed to be taken as a form of evaluation or testing.

Another important element to take into consideration is the fact that being a teacher in a private course most of the times leads the teacher to the use of audio material that is semi-authentic or totally produced with educational purposes. Thinking about this audience, teachers and students who feel uncomfortable with the teaching of listening, we developed this work not only to understand the types of auditory input, but also to help prepare students for situations in which they will face English language in use.

This problematization of listening teaching and learning leads us to take the journey to answer how explicit teaching of learning strategies applied to listening instruction can help teachers and students feel more at ease about listening activities in the English Additional Language classes.

## 1. 2 Objectives and Methodology

### *General Objective*

- Research the bibliography on listening instruction's development over the years;
- Study listening strategies.

### *Specific Objectives*

Apply explicit teaching of learning strategies to listening comprehension and verify whether:

- It helps students organize their ideas while taking part in listening activities;
- It decreases students' anxiety towards their level of comprehension of oral linguistic input;
- It increases students' self-esteem as additional language learners.

### *Methodology*

In order to explain how explicit teaching of learning strategies applied to listening instruction occurs, first we engage in researching the bibliography to have an overlook of how the fields of Second Language Acquisition and Applied Linguistics portray the teaching and learning of listening. Second, we design a qualitative research applied to the classroom in order to verify how students perceive their learning of listening and learning strategies. Briefly, we develop a eight-day lesson plan focused on listening instruction. Students were exposed to explicit teaching of learning strategies aiming to increase their listening comprehension. During the first and the last lessons we applied open questionnaires that intended to motivate students to reflect on their learning processes and how and/or if listening was a part of it. In the other five classes we included the teaching of strategies as we follow the steps described by Hedge (2000) including pre-, while-, and post-listening. In the end of these lessons, students received a questionnaire in which they should answer to multiple-choice questions about the content of each class. Participants could choose from three options- SIM, NÃO, and PARCIALMENTE. They could also add any comments that they considered pertinent in a blank space provided

especially for this reason. We explain the research methodology in more detail in chapter 3.

### **1. 3 Organization of the work**

In order to better develop the theme, this paper is divided in five chapters. The introduction, the first one, delimits the theme as well as justifies the choice, and presents the objectives of the work. Chapter 2 brings the literature review and is subdivided into sections: a) listening overview, b) brief overview of listening and linguistics, c) teaching listening, and d) learning strategies. In chapter 3, we approach the methodology used to develop the research. In chapter 4, we analyze and discuss the data. Finally, in chapter 5, we propose some reflections about the results, suggest possible future development of this work as well as we point out that the teaching of learning strategies may improve students' overall comprehension.

## **2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter, we present the theories to support a research on the teaching and learning of listening strategies. In order to be better organized, the topic is divided in three sections that aim to define the term listening, briefly show the history of this skill in applied linguistic methodologies over the years, and discuss how the teaching of listening strategies might be useful for students' enhancement of the listening skill. We believe that the analysis of these elements are important to understand why listening has spent many years as a neglected ability and how it is possible to change this reality now by applying different methods that have arisen in the past few years as the teaching through learning strategies.

### **2.1 Listening Overview**

Here we define listening according to the literature following the concepts proposed by Rost. He explains that "listening is the term used in language teaching to refer to a complex process that allows us to understand spoken language" (ROST, 2001, p. 7). It is considered rather complex especially because it is not possible to measure directly and accurately how much a person comprehends while listening to a linguistic input. We also present 1) the processes that happen in the mind while codifying linguistic input, 2) the definition of bottom-up and top-down processes described by Rost (2001), 3) the types of spoken language (monologues and dialogues) explained by Brown (2007) and 4) the seven characteristics of spoken language that affect listening comprehension (clustering, redundancy, reduced forms, performance variables, colloquial language, rate of delivery, interaction and stress, rhythm and intonation) also presented by Brown (2007).

Let's first explore the processes that happen in the mind while codifying linguistic input. Even though it is impossible for the teacher to analyze the processes happening in students' minds while they take part in a listening activity, due to advances in neurological studies, it is possible to have a glimpse of how these processes might work. Brown (2007) brings a summary of eight processes adapted from Clark & Clark (1977) and Richards' (1983) studies. The processes involve 1) identifying the components of speech, 2) the type of speech, 3) the objectives of the

speaker about the message, 4) recall of schemata, 5) the relevance of the information given and, finally, 6) the retention of the message, that is, in which parts and how the brain will memorize what was just heard. Besides the first and the last processes all the others happen simultaneously, without a pre-determined sequence. As we can see the mind deals with a considerable number of factors in a very short period of time while these processes happen. Besides the linguistic input, in order to comprehend what is being said, listeners also deal with other “clues” like the context, the relationship with the speaker and their background knowledge. These cognitive and affective mechanisms involved in the process of listening lead to the conclusion that listening is an interactive process. As Brown (2007) explains it is “clearly an interactive process as the brain acts on the impulses, bringing to bear a number of different cognitive and affective mechanisms”.

Listening is also one of the most important means of acquiring a second language. Brown (2007) reminds us that through listening reception it is possible to internalize language and understand linguistic information, a factor that is fundamental to produce language. The relevance of listening can be seen in classrooms too once students tend to do more listening than speaking in class. Hedge (2000) mentions that listening is the most utilized skill for communication, being usually used intertwined with speaking, writing, and reading.

After reviewing the definition and concepts of the term listening, as well as observing some cognitive processes that happen in the brain during the act of listening, it is necessary to present other relevant studies concerning listening comprehension to further explain how the complex process of listening comprehension develops in one’s mind. In the sequence, we introduce the speech-process theory, then the types of spoken language and the factors that make listening difficult. Finally, we analyze the types of listening.

According to speech process theory, there are two processes that a person does in order to comprehend listening and reading. They are called bottom-up and top-down. Hedge (2000) mentions the works of Bever (1970), Clark and Clark (1970), Conrad (1985), Marslen-Wilson and Tyler (1980), Cherry (1957) and Neisser (1982) as the pioneers in the study of bottom-up process. It is a process in which listeners use known elements in the speech in order to understand the utterances being produced. The listener organizes the speech in structures “in terms of words,

phrases, clauses, sentences and intonation patterns” (HEDGE, 2000, p. 230), and the listener also tries to infer meaning from any clues available in speech. Richards (2005) affirms that the basis for bottom-up processing is in the grammatical and lexical competence that the person has. This happens because the listener tries to identify any familiar elements, like words for example, in the input and uses his grammatical knowledge to relate the elements between the sentences.

The other process, top-down, differs from the previous one because it does not rely on elements present in the speech itself, but in the prior knowledge that the listener has. This knowledge is originated in one’s background experiences in the language. Contextual clues are fundamental for top-down process once in some situations grammatical knowledge is not enough to infer meaning because the listener lacks information that is in a specific context and underlies the speech itself. Goh (2003) cites Eysenck’s (1993) studies which show that the brain usually utilizes both processes simultaneously, that is, they do not exclude each other; otherwise, bottom-up and top-down are complementary, in so-called parallel processing.

Besides the processes that occur in the brain while a person tries to comprehend a linguistic input, we should consider the external factors that might affect listening comprehension. Firstly, Brown (2007) mentions the two types of spoken language, monologue and dialogue, as factors to take into consideration. Knowing the characteristics of each type of spoken language is fundamental for the teacher because he/she will be prepared to better instruct students on the most appropriate choice of strategies for each situation. According to Brown’s definitions, based on Nunan (1991b), monologues can be planned or unplanned. Planned monologues have continuous speech used for a certain length of time. As an example, we can cite lectures, news broadcasts, readings and speeches. Unplanned monologues present more performance variables and redundancy. Long stories in conversations and impromptu lectures are some examples of this type of monologue.

Dialogues, can be subdivided in two: interpersonal and transactional. Social relationships are exchanged in interpersonal dialogue, that is to say, there is interaction between the speakers. Even though there might be interaction in transactional dialogues too, we follow Brown’s (2007) conception which states that its objective is mainly to bring factual information. Both cases demand familiarity between the speakers, for they open space to inexplicit references in the discourse. If

the speakers do not share the same contextual knowledge, misunderstandings may happen. We believe these divisions appropriately

The analysis of listening characteristics of spoken language is also to be considered for it prepares teachers to understand and recognize the various types of difficulties students may face while learning to listen in English. Scholars such as Dunkel (1991), Flowerdew & Miller (2005), Richards (1983) and Ur (1984), (2007) have studies analyzing all of them aiming to classify these characteristics. Based on these studies, Brown (2007) points out eight characteristics that, if not well interpreted, may turn comprehension impossible: clustering, redundancy, reduced forms, performance variables, colloquial language, rate of delivery, interaction and stress, rhythm and intonation. We analyze these elements individually in the sequence.

The first characteristic of spoken language that makes listening difficult is clustering. A reader has the sentence as its principal unit of text organization, but the listener cannot rely on this element due to the memory's incapability or retaining long constituents. Brown (2007) suggests that teachers are careful to help students to retain groups of words instead of trying to retain long sentences or, on the contrary, every word that they hear. Internalizing the concept of clustering could be very useful, especially for beginners who tend to have high expectations about the amount of information they are supposed to comprehend.

The second characteristic of spoken language that may lead to difficulty in listening is redundancy. Brown (2007) explains that in normal speech, we tend to rephrase, repeat, elaborate, and insert phrases like "you know" and "I mean" when formulating our sentences. Listeners should be prepared to take advantage of this characteristic benefiting from redundancy to elaborate better their speech and understand better other people's speech too.

The third characteristic of spoken language that may hinder listening is the use of reduced forms. These forms can be phonological, for example, as when we join words together while speaking; morphological, when we use contractions like "I'm"; syntactic, when we use ellipsis; or pragmatic, as in the example that Brown (2007) demonstrates of a child who answers the phone and calls her mother in other room by reproducing the words "Mom! Phone!" simply using the two content words to summarize the whole sentence. Reductions may be a difficult factor for language

learners because they are usually exposed to the full forms of the words and sentences in a regular reading, writing, speaking classroom. Because of this, students do not tend to recognize the words, even the ones they know, when they are not pronounced as they were expecting.

The fourth and fifth characteristics of spoken language that may cause problems to the development of listening are performance variables and colloquial language. The way speakers of English as first language perform language in unplanned discourse may make comprehension difficult for speakers of English as an additional language because they may not be familiar with the pauses, hesitations, corrections, and false starts that are normal in this type of informal context. Additional language speakers may also not be prepared to deal with slang and cultural knowledge that is shared by the speakers of a certain place but unfamiliar to people who do not have shared experiences with the place or context. These elements affect comprehension and could also lead to misunderstandings.

The sixth and seventh characteristics, rate of delivery and stress, rhythm, and intonation of the English language also present difficulties to listeners of English as an additional language. Brown (2007) reports that as they conduct research over the years they hear from many additional language students that these characteristics mentioned are problematic. Additional language students tend to think that English as a first language speakers speak too fast. Concerning to stress, rhythm and intonation of English, additional language learners have difficulty with stress-timing which might lead them not to understand elements like sarcasm, solicitation and praise. In both cases the fact that it is impossible to rewind the conversation and listen again to what was said makes it even more challenging for students turning, consequently these two characteristics into the biggest difficulties students may have.

Finally, the last characteristic of spoken language Brown (2007) brings as problematic to additional language listeners is interaction. According to him, being a good listener is also being a good responder because in most of the listening interactions the person will need to negotiate meaning, clarify information, follow a turn-taking structure and attend signals with someone else.

Knowledge of the processes that occur in the brain as well as the extrinsic factors that influence listening comprehension are fundamental for the teacher to take into consideration when preparing a lesson on listening because they carry an

explanation for lots of the doubts, insecurities, and difficulties that learners have. The teacher should use this knowledge as a helping element when preparing his/her classes.

## **2.2 Brief overview of Listening and Linguistics**

It is not enough to know how listening happens in the brain or which strategies students might have available to use as they listen to something in an additional language. We need to think about the kinds of methodologies that may enhance our teaching of listening. It is undeniable that teaching methodologies and techniques have changed immensely over the years. Changes in society as well as new discoveries in science, psychology, and education have always influenced the methodologies teachers use in their classrooms. Bearing this in mind, we aim to present some important alterations on the role of listening in the teaching of languages over History until it reached the important position it has in modern languages teaching nowadays.

Rost (2001) mentions that until the nineteenth century language learning was formal and specially focused on reading and writing. Most activities were related to grammar description, translation, and sentence correction which is known as the Grammar-Translation Method and has been rather popular since then. It was only in the end of the century, during the Reform movement that reading and writing lost their dominance as the most important matter to the language teaching. This happened due to “a psychological theory of child language acquisition” (ROST, 2001, p. 7) elaborated by linguists and put to practice in the classrooms. As a result, speaking emerged as the fundamental target of second or additional or L2 language learning. Consequently listening was taken into consideration for the first time, even though it was still only a means to get to speech fluency and comprehension accuracy in order to better communicate.

Two contrastive theories of language learning arose and gained momentum: one that focus on imitation and the other that focus on the context of interaction. Bloominfield declares in his studies held in the 1940s that “one learns to understand and speak a language primarily by hearing and imitating native speakers”

(BLOOMINGFIELD, 1942 apud ROST, 2001), that is, he believed that language was acquired by imitation of the L1 speakers' speech. Linguists then created the Audiolingual Method based on the behaviorist approach and the idea that intensive input would "train" the learner and, consequently, lead him to create new hearing habits similar to the habits of the ones who were born in a language speaking community where the language he is learning is spoken. In contrast to this approach intrinsically linked to imitation, the situational approaches arose.

The Situational Approach is not concerned only with language itself. This approach takes into consideration the context in which language is produced and explains that meaning is created "from an integration of linguistic comprehension and non-linguistic interpretation" (ROST, p. 8, 2001).

As Rost (2001) explains about the listening background in language learning teaching and research, Noam Chomsky argued that language is learned innately; as a consequence of this conception the Natural Approach was generated. Its main belief was that the learner learns through an internal syllabus that is built from linguistic input. Opposite to this idea are Dell Hymes' (1971) studies focused on communicative competence rather than language competence. He claimed that the most important fact to consider is not language's internal structure but how it is actually used.

After Hymes' (1971) studies, the Sociological Approach became known. Apart from this, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) also became popular and listening was then recognized as a mean for language acquisition. Since then, it has been seen as a central part of language learning process.

### **2.3 Teaching listening**

As listening has occupied an important space in teaching methodologies, researchers came up with important works on how to apply techniques which would help students to enhance this skill in the classroom. In this section, we discuss the type of listening called comprehensible listening and the traditional steps of a listening activity which are activities of pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening.

The types of listening matter because they can listeners an objective to follow when codifying linguistic input. Goh (2003) mentions that in the 1990s Andrew Wolvin

and Carolyn Coakley identified five types of purposeful listening: discriminative, comprehensive, therapeutic, critical and appreciative, described by the researcher as it follows. We adopt these definitions in order to classify different kinds of listening. We do not create our own terms because this is not the purpose of the work. Besides it, we believe that these concepts will determine the differences among the types of listening.

Discriminative listening is used to separate audio and visual input; comprehensive listening focuses on comprehending a message; therapeutic listening is used to talk about problems; critical listening concerns to discuss about the ideas and appreciative listening has as an objective to enjoy other people's works. All types of listening are important but in the classroom, the most used type is comprehensive listening. Because of that we focus only on comprehensive listening in this work.

Let us illustrate better what we mean by the listener having an objective when listening to audio passages with some examples. Scholars agree that when one listens to an audio input he will have different objectives to reach depending on the situation. For instance, two students attending a lecture. One has never heard about the theme before and the other has a lot of background information but wants to know more about a particular detail of the topic. They will certainly have different target points. Goh (2003) calls these objectives as skills and Brown (2006) denominates them as purposes. The ideas are similar and we compare them. We choose to work with both scholars' ideas together because we believe that they complement each other. In order not to confuse students, however, we opted for utilizing only one of the names in the cases when the authors differed in their positions concerning to it. Our criterion was to choose the name that was simpler for students to understand.

According to Goh (2003), there are five skills that a listener applies according to his objectives when listening to an oral text. **Listening for details (1)** is used when it is necessary to understand specific information like numbers or key words. If the focus is not specific but a general idea of what was heard, it is identified as **listening for gist (2)**. If all the necessary information is not explicitly mentioned by the speaker and the listener needs to "fill in the gaps" or "listen between the lines" in order to understand it, it is possible to say that he is **drawing inferences (3)**. When only specific parts of an input, not the whole passage, are necessary to the listener, he will

**listen selectively (4)**, that is, choosing what is really important to him. Finally, it is possible to anticipate what the speaker will say next based on the evidence we already have, that is called **making predictions (5)**. These are the five skills.

Brown (2006), on the other hand mentions, only three skills denominated in his words as purposes: **listening for main ideas, listening for details, and listening and making inferences**. He claims that when a teacher proposes a listening activity in class it is fundamental that he/she shows clearly for the students what the purpose of the activity is. Listening tasks may cause anxiety in students if they do not know or are not clearly instructed on what the goal for the activity should be.

Brown (2006) states that a person always has a purpose when listening to any information in everyday life, consequently, depending on the purpose one has, the focus given to the listening passage should be specific to his/her needs. For example, if we listen to a weather forecast in order to know if it is necessary to take a coat or not, we will focus on the temperature, looking for specific information that helps us decide on taking the coat or leaving it at home. On the other hand, if we listen to a song for pleasure, for example, our focus will not be the same; we will probably concentrate less on specific details and more on the lyrics in a general aspect to understand the message of the song, or to the rhymes of the words to perceive its rhythm. Taking this into consideration, Brown affirms that it is necessary to teach students about listening purposes clearly. Telling students that there are different purposes for listening input was not common in the past since textbooks brought only comprehension questions to be answered without reflection about the process of listening and understanding. As a consequence, students did not know why they were listening; they just needed to get correct answers for post-listening questions.

Brown (2006) suggests some procedures a teacher should bear in mind when preparing a listening lesson. The teacher plays a conversation for the students more than once and asks them to set a different objective each time. The first time they should look for the main idea. The teacher can help students organize their ideas by asking questions like "What's the most important idea in this conversation?" or "What is the main thing they are talking about?" The teacher may put a few questions on the board. After this, the teacher should elicit that only a few key words are necessary to answer the questions proposed to understand the main ideas. In the next step, the

teacher plays the conversation again but requests specific points this time. Students are supposed to notice that their approach to a listening passage varies according to their objective. Finally, the teacher plays the conversation again asking for details that are not explicitly verbalized in the conversation, having students make inferences in order to answer some questions.

Many are the strategies teachers can use to help their students develop their listening skills; here we point out some of them. However, Brown (2006) calls attention to the fact that, even though strategies are important and useful, the number of possible strategies is very wide; therefore, it could be complicated to teach all of them. He suggests an approach proposed by O'Mally and Chamot (1990) which argues that a number of strategies should be selected and repeatedly taught. This is the guideline we use in order to create and apply this research. According to the author, the "idea of knowing the purpose of listening is a very effective first strategy to teach because it helps students organize and reflect on their learning." (O'MALLY and CHAMOT, 1990 apud BROWN, 2006, p. 6). That is, knowing their purposes students become more focused and consequently tend to improve their listening comprehension. Knowing the purpose for listening would be the number one listening strategy to teach as we prepare students to be more at ease with this skill.

The use of other strategies, based in other studies will be further explained in the following section of this chapter because before that we want to point out the stages of teaching listening. Hedge (2000) points out another important study to consider when preparing a lesson. It refers to the three stages of teaching listening described by her as pre-listening, while-listening, and post listening. These stages are important because each one of them is responsible for helping students develop their ability to understand spoken texts better once they help them activate background knowledge, organize their thoughts, and focus their attention.

When we plan a lesson, or a listening activity, we should use the first stage, pre-listening, to contextualize the activity and provide students with extra references that help them understand what they listen to in the sequence. There are many types of activities helpful for this stage. To cite a few we bring Hedge (2000) who lists: "... predicting content from the title of a talk; talking about a picture which relates to the text; discussing the topic; answering a set of questions about the topic; and agreeing or disagreeing with opinions about the topic" (2000, p. 249). These pre-listening

activities activate students memory of vocabulary related to the listening activity, make them position themselves about the topic, and make them relate the listening to their own experiences. The teacher can choose the option that best fits the purpose he/she has previously set for the activity. Only after students are prepared with enough background information, vocabulary to express ideas, and a context of the situation in which the listening takes place can the teacher move on to the next stage.

The second stage we should use is while-listening in which the audio is utilized. As in the previous stage, Hedge (2000, p. 252) mentions possible types of activities: "... ticking multiple choice items [...], filling in a chart, matching pictures with the text, or drawing a picture or making notes." These activities should help students organize the information they are listening as they listen to them. It is important to remind again that the teacher should be careful when choosing the activity, for it has to match with the objective he/she stated in the previous stage.

Finally, post-listening activities are a closure of the process, they should extend the results obtained during while-listening stage and open an space in the lesson for the teacher to move on to the other skills (in this case, writing, speaking and reading) using the knowledge that students have just acquired. Here, the purpose seems to be the one of reflection and engagement with the information the students listened for. In other words, it is important to activate vocabulary and structure students will listen for as this helps them comprehend the while-listening process; however, that should be a building up process to allow students to be able to analyze critically the information they are able to grasp from the listening activity. In the following section, we focus on the stages of pre- and while-listening, that is, the process of comprehending input

## **2.4 Learning strategies**

In order to comprehend input in an additional language, we use some techniques that help process the information and turn this information into something meaningful. These techniques are learning strategies. As Oxford (1990, p. 7) defines them "learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more

transferrable to new situations”. That is, the learner has an active part in the process and the appropriate use of strategies can help him/her reach his/her objectives.

Another definition of learning strategy Brown presents fosters the concept of learner’s autonomy. According to Brown (2007, p.172), strategies are “...those specific ‘attacks’ that we make on a given problem, and that vary considerably within each individual. They are the moment-by-moment techniques that we employ to solve ‘problems’ posed by second language input and output”. By this, he implies that when facing a problem in second language, each individual is going to deal with the problem in a different way. The alternatives the person will choose depend on the skills and the knowledge that the person has. These alternatives are the strategies.

Oxford (1990) explains that there are three groups of strategies: memory, compensation, and cognitive strategies. They can be used by the learner to develop skills in foreign languages. The three types will be explained. It is important, however, to clarify that not all of the subcategories present in each one will be mentioned because they are not relevant to the objectives of this research. We will focus specifically on the ones used as bases for this work.

First of all, memory strategies are related to the storage of the information that the student develops about the additional language. They are also responsible for the capability of accessing these memories when it is necessary to use them. As our aim is not to work with information storage, we will not go deeper into explanation of this strategy.

Compensation strategies act as learners’ auxiliaries when they face situations in which they lack contextual or linguistic knowledge about the additional language. They are fundamental especially for beginner students since they help them become more independent to deal with the language. For more advanced students, they are also important in more complex contexts, for instance, when implicit or vague information needs to be comprehended. Oxford (1990) subdivides this group of strategies in two sets: **guessing intelligently** and **overcoming limitations in speaking and writing**. We utilized the first one in the development of this research. Our focus was given to the observation of non-linguistic clues, which she calls **using other clues**. This choice was made due to the fact that most students tend to ignore information that is not purely linguistic, but that usually contain important information for comprehension efficacy.

Finally, we present cognitive strategies. Oxford (1990) subdivides them in four sets: **practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning,** and **creating structure for input and output**. All of them are important but, again, it was necessary to choose a limited number to work with. We selected receiving and sending messages and creating structure for input and output, based on the help that they might give students to face the type of listening activities that are traditionally used in classrooms. Receiving and sending messages are divided into two sub-sets of strategies: getting the idea quickly and using resources for receiving and sending messages. Creating structure for input and output is divided into three sub-sets: taking notes, summarizing, and highlighting.

Let us remind, however, that the limited number of strategies chosen for this research is related to the aim defended by Brown (2006) in which he affirms that only a certain number of strategies should be chosen and constantly taught. We believe this is the most appropriate way to approach strategies without overwhelming students with new information.

Here we explain the sub-set of receiving and sending messages set that Oxford brings called getting the idea quickly. It is composed by two important strategies: skimming and scanning. While skimming consists in looking for the main ideas of an oral text without focusing attention on specific details, scanning has the opposite function, that is, to look for specific information that might be interesting for the listener for any particular reason. Oxford (1990) believes that teachers can use preview questions to help learners develop these strategies more efficiently. She suggests that the teacher gives fewer clues to students as their level increases; she also warns them to be careful when giving scanning questions in the target language because the possession of linguistic hints might influence students to look directly for this specific information in order to accomplish the task even if they did not understand appropriately what they heard. Another point stressed by her is that it is possible to integrate this strategy with another important strategy: taking notes.

Creating structure for input and output is another set of strategies Oxford suggests to be used in the classroom. It includes the strategies taking notes, summarizing and highlighting. Taking notes was chosen for this work because it is an important strategy that is not, according to the author, appropriately taught, “the focus of taking notes should be on understanding, not writing” (OXFORD, 1990 p. 86).

Basically she is saying that note-taking is not an advanced ability that involves highly developed writing skills as many students might think. Her claim is that it is possible to use it in all levels. For beginners, for example, it is appropriate to teach note-taking of key points rather in their first language than in the target language. Some students might have the habit of taking notes word for word; in this case, it will be good for them to learn new ways of doing this.

Oxford (1990) brings some examples of taking notes organization. The first one is the shopping list which is very simple and consists in "... writing down information in clusters or sets that have some internal consistency or meaning" (OXFORD, 1990, p. 87). Similar to the shopping list, but visually clearer, she cites the T-formation. The student needs to draw a T and use the crossbar of the letter to write the main information while both sides of the T will be occupied with more general information on the right and specific information on the left. Other two suggestions are the use of semantic maps, in which the learner writes the main idea and then links other details or related ideas to the main one by drawing arrows and lines; and the outline format that uses Roman numerals or letters and can be extended as much as it is necessary.

The set of strategies that Oxford (1990) denominated as using other clues, which is part of the compensation strategies, was fundamental in this work. According to the author, for beginner students as our participants, compensation strategies "may be among the most important" (OXFORD, 1990, p. 90). This happens due to the fact that they do not rely purely on linguistic knowledge of the additional language. Her first example is to pay attention to forms of address. The meaning of a conversation can be guessed by terms like "dear" or "professor", for instance, since they indicate the level of intimacy between the speakers or a type of status. She also mentions perceptual clues that can be audible, like background noise; or visual as elements possible to infer from what the listener can see. Listeners can always pay attention to background knowledge to help them guess the meaning of a conversation, not only in linguistic points, but also cultural, artistic, or political.

Chamot is another important researcher of learning strategies. She presents important issues related to studies in this area. For this research, in particular, it is important to report that scholars concluded that learning strategies are, mostly, impossible to observe. Thus, the only manner to find out if students are applying the

strategies is asking it directly to them. Naturally, this method raises controversy in the point of accuracy, but she argues that “Although self-report may be inaccurate if the learner does not respond truthfully, it is still the only way to explore the learners’ mental processing” (CHAMOT, 1998, p. 267). On the words of Grenfell and Harris (1998 apud CHAMOT, 1998, p. 267) “We work with what we can get, which, despite the limitations, provides food for thought”. The essence of their argument is that the data collected gives important information to be worked with, possibly leading scholars to new important discoveries on how people learn.

To sum up many are the methods and strategies one can use when thinking about listening instruction. The area has become very relevant in Applied Linguistic studies over the years, as a result, students and teachers can get the benefits of an instruction that tends to make students take active part of their learning with clear awareness of their role as listeners. According to our experience as a student, however, it is still not a reality in every classroom, especially at schools with a large amount of students. We hope that constant light given to this additional languages teaching point might change the situation in the future.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

Based on the analysis and reflection of the literature researched for this work, we decided to design a research that aimed to join both important classroom aspects: teaching and learning of listening. In order to think about the learning and teaching of listening, we develop three kinds of questionnaires based on the theoretical basis of the work, and proposed them for the students. We also created listening lesson plans and activities that we used to teach participants who joined the research. All the process creating questionnaires and listening lesson plans and activities counted with active participation of the researcher, not only to get the data to be analyzed, but also to analyze the data. According to current tendencies in Applied Linguistics research, by doing this investigation we get closer to the concept of qualitative, reflective, and interventionist research applied to the classroom.

According to Moita Lopes (1996) one of the trends of research in Applied Linguistics in Brazil is the teaching/learning of languages in the context of the classroom. One type of research deals with intervention, that is, a given classroom situation of teaching/learning can change as certain procedures and processes are put into place in the classroom setting. This is qualitative because it involves few students, and it can be ethnographic (action-research) if the teacher investigates his or her own classroom. In this research, we focus on the teaching/learning of listening in the context of the classroom, even though the researcher did not use her own classroom. We invited participants who study English at the university to have extra classes on listening. We created for this research group a classroom context for seven consecutive meetings in which we taught listening. As we taught, we collected data from how the students perceived their learning of listening in that environment.

The applied research, that is the listening classes, took place at Unipampa (Universidade Federal do Pampa) in Bagé, Rio Grande do Sul, during the period of June 6<sup>th</sup> to July 9<sup>th</sup>. We invited beginner level English learners who are undergraduate students from the Language and Arts: Additional Languages course (Licenciatura em Letras—Línguas Adicionais). We invited about 40 students. 10 students took on the research and only 3 students participated consistently. The students knew they could withdraw from the research at any time as it was written in the Term of Commitment (See APPENDIX A). Students' questionnaires were

organized in a list by their first names in alphabetical order and received numbers according to their position on the list. This list was based on the first meeting in which they answered questions about their educational background in English. Students who did not participate on this day but came in other meetings were placed in the end of the list and assigned numbers following the last name on the list.

The research consisted on eight classes, during approximately forty-five minutes twice a week. The structure of the classes followed a pattern. First, we present students with a pre-listening activity, usually a question for discussion, aiming to activate their background knowledge (See APPENDIX B). Then, the researcher presented an objective for the lesson and a listening strategy explaining explicitly the name and the concept of both. The researcher proceeded to the practical part in which students had some while-questions to answer about a listening passage. After the end of the activity, students discussed about the topic and their results, the researcher clarified the answers, and students answered a questionnaire with specific questions about the objectives and listening strategies of the lesson.

Even though the questions and activities were presented in English with the objective of having students closer to the target language, the questionnaires were all written in Portuguese. This decision follows Chamot's reminder (1998, p. 274) that "Beginning level language students do not yet have the proficiency to understand explanations in the target language of why and how to use learning strategies".

Considering the time available for the classes and the level of proficiency the students had, it was necessary to choose a group of specific strategies to be the focus of this work. The strategies were based on the objectives of the activities: whether it was listening for details, main ideas, making predictions or drawing inferences.

The audio tracks chosen by the researcher came from different sources. We used material from the textbooks *American Headway 2, Encounters – Beginner* and the website dedicated to listening study called *Randall's ESL listening lab*, which is recommend by Brown (2007) and also the website *English Listening by Lidget Green Incorporation*. The common characteristic among all of them was that they did not include videos. As we kept our focus on the reality of English courses in which teachers use the materials proposed by their schools, we decided to keep the audios

only semi-authentic, as the ones from the website, or developed directly for classroom instruction, as the ones from the textbooks.

### 3.1 Data collection

There were three types of questionnaires applied. Here we describe how we collected the data for each of them. The questionnaires provided for students in each class were returned to the teacher. Then they were organized and classified according to its content, in groups with similar answers. The first questionnaire was aimed to provoke some reflection and also find out how familiar students were with listening instruction; it required full answers written by the participants (See APPENDIX C). The questionnaires related to the lesson's activities were directly linked to the strategies and objectives of the class, giving students three possible answers: Yes, Partially or No. They were also provided some space in order to make any comments (See APPENDIX D). In the final day another open questionnaire was provided and students were invited to write according to their own experience (See APPENDIX E).

The chart below aims to identify more clearly how the activities were divided along weeks in which we applied the research.

Week	Week Day	Activity	Listening Purpose	Strategies
1	Wednesday	First questionnaire	-	-
2	Monday	Listening 1	Main ideas	Skimming, scanning and taking notes (T Form)
	Wednesday	Listening 2 Questionnaire 2	Main ideas and details	Scanning and taking notes (T Form)
3	Monday	Listening 3 Questionnaire 3	Main ideas and details	Skimming, scanning and taking notes (shopping list)
	Wednesday	Listening 4 Questionnaire 4	Main ideas and drawing inferences	Conceptual clues and taking notes

				(conceptual map)
4	Monday	Listening 5 Questionnaire 5	Listen selectively	Selective attention
	Wednesday	Listening 6 Questionnaire 6	Main ideas and details	Review of all the strategies
5	Monday	Final Questionnaire	-	-

## **4 RESEARCH ANALYSIS**

In this section we are going to analyze the data obtained during the research. The section is divided in three types of questionnaires: questionnaire 1, with open questions; questionnaires of the lessons, with multiple answer questions, and final questionnaire with open questions.

### **4.1 Questionnaire 1 – First Day of the Research**

In this section we present the results of the questions that students answered in the beginning of the research. Eleven students participated from the first day of application, which was destined to present the aim of the research, discuss about their previous experiences as listeners during their path as English students, and talk about some difficulties they might have had as additional language listeners. We consider this step rather important because students usually have high expectations concerning the results they should obtain when listening to English. For this reason, it is important to know what they believe learning to listen is, what kind of listeners they are, how they feel about the kind of learners they think they are in order to show them that good results in listening comprehension in an additional language can be achieved by beginner students.

Participants were provided a questionnaire with three questions. They are: “Durante o seu processo de aprendizagem, como costumavam ser as aulas focadas na compreensão oral (listening)?”, “Qual é o seu nível de satisfação com relação a sua compreensão oral em língua inglesa? Você se considera um bom ouvinte?” and “Por que você se considera um bom/mau ouvinte? Você utiliza alguma estratégia?”. As we posed the questions, we had the objective of making students think about their learning and also to find out how they dealt with or felt towards the theme of the research, that is, if they were familiar with learning strategies. We also wanted to know what feelings listening comprehension provoked in their self-confidence as additional languages students. Hedge (2000) points out that feeling confident is fundamental for additional languages students. The results will be discussed below.

1. *Durante o seu processo de aprendizagem, como costumavam ser as aulas focadas na compreensão oral (listening)? How your classes used to be in relation to listening?*

This question was created to verify the fact mentioned by most scholars who dedicate themselves to the study of listening comprehension, that this ability has been neglected in the classrooms for many years. Our students concluded their studies in high school in different periods from one year to twenty years ago. Their answers, however, were very similar (See ATTACHMENT A). From the 11 respondents, 5 reported that they had never had any kind of listening lessons at school. The ones who had some type of listening instruction made comments like “weak”, “traditional”, “questions and answers” and “verb to be” to describe their experience. It shows these students did not feel motivated or challenged by the education they had. When they mentioned that it was weak and focused only on the verb to be, it gives us an idea that these students expected to learn more than what they had been taught. However, it did not happen, consequently leaving them with lack of many linguistic and contextual knowledge that influences their comprehension as students of additional languages at the moment and as future teachers. Student 11 mentioned some information that is characteristic from the Audiolingual Method: in the rare occasions in which his teachers used audio materials it was focused on vocabulary acquisition not in the comprehension itself. These results were not surprising once we were expecting to face answers as the ones mentioned, as authors like Hedge (2000), Brown (2007), and Rost (2001) well pointed out in their studies. This lack of listening instruction confirmed by the students’ answers was one of the reasons why this topic was chosen as the theme of this work, as mentioned in the problematizing section of chapter 1.

Here we would like to highlight the participation of students 3, 5, and 6 because they were the ones who were frequent during all the research. Students 3 and 6 reported that they had never had listening instruction before the university and student 5, who had it, mentioned lack of motivation of students and teachers during middle school as one of the reasons why her experience was not helpful for listening instruction. During high school, she did not have any additional languages classes. It seems that these results show us that most of our students did not have much more listening instruction than the students who studied in the nineteenth century following

the formal methods essentially focused on grammar, writing and reading, as we brought in the literature review by Rost's analysis of the development of listening in applied linguistics over the years. Naturally, we have to consider possible external factors like the inexistence of a sound system in the schools as a factor that might affect teachers' practice. Although data like these are still alarming considering that current methodologies like the Communicative Approach have in listening an important basis for language acquisition.

*2. Qual é o seu nível de satisfação com relação a sua compreensão oral em língua inglesa? Você se considera um bom ouvinte? (What's your level of oral comprehension towards English? Do you consider yourself as a good listener?)*

This question proposed a reflection to the student about his/her learning satisfaction with listening and if he/she considered himself/herself a good listener. As we posed the question, we would like to find out what their self perceptions as additional language listeners were (See ATTACHMENT B).

Once more the answers were very similar. 9 out of 11 respondents considered themselves as bad listeners. Among their reasons to think so they mentioned expressions like "not having a good ear for English", "depends on the context" and "being complicated when the speaker speaks too fast". These answers reflect a lack of knowledge of listening strategies, since students believe that listening depends on facts like "having a good ear" or talking to someone who speaks slowly. If they were aware of strategies like perceptual clues and skimming they would know that, even with the limited linguistic knowledge they have now, they are able to understand information from audio input in English, specially in materials directed to their level of comprehension. The student who informed that her comprehension depended on the context might have previous knowledge of the strategy perceptual clues, since the context can give us many helpful information about what is happening in a listening text. It seems that if she learned more about the topic, she could certainly get better results in comprehension.

Two of our most frequent participants, 3 and 6 perceived themselves as bad listeners who understand only a few words. Even though they did not mention it explicitly we can conclude that this idea of understanding a few words as a synonym

of being a bad listener comes from the popular idea that a good listener is someone who understands every word of an utterance. Besides being too high, this expectation is also unreal. Hedge (2000) points out that we do not hear every single word even in our first language. On the other hand, participant 5 considers herself as an average listener because she is able to understand depending on the context and the vocabulary. Again we can see a glimpse of perceptual clues being naturally utilized by the students, that is, they are not aware that this is a strategy, but they use it in order to get the information they need. Student 7 was the only exception in the group, having reported that he understands listening input in English easily. His statement was justified in the third question in which he explained the reasons he considers influential for his feeling of being a good listener.

*3. Por que você se considera um bom/mau ouvinte? Você utiliza alguma estratégia?(Why do you consider yourself as a good/ bad listener? Do you use any strategy?)*

From these answers, we would like to find out the reasons why students had positive or negative impressions about their listening comprehension and if they were aware of the strategies they used or could use to become better listeners (See ATTACHMENT C). Most of them cited more than one cause, so that, the number of answers in this case was higher than the number of respondents, that was 11.

It is important to emphasize that most of these students were first-year students and all of them had a basic level English or were beginner learners that their level is basic. Despite this, they seemed to have high hopes concerning what they supposedly have to understand when listening to the target language. The results below were organized in a table to show the reasons/strategies they lack according to the number of times they were mentioned in the responses. We lumped together reason and strategy because even though some students used different words to express their ideas, their answers can be placed in similar categories, which are vocabulary, high expectations towards their results, uses of strategies that they naturally apply or lack of any strategy or possible knowledge about their active role in the process of listening.

Number of mentions	Reason/Strategy
2	Words they do not understand, lack of vocabulary
2	Not having much contact with the language
2	Being unable to comprehend a full sentence, being unable to comprehend everything that is said
2	Watching movies with subtitles
1	Watching interviews and TV series in English
2	Listening to music in English
2	Searching for known words or key-words
1	Better understanding when there is a printed text to accompany the listening passage
1	Take English courses offered by the University
3	They do not do any specific things nor use any kind of strategy

Lack of vocabulary, directly reported by student 2, can also be observed in students' 1 and 11 answers. There is also the false idea that being a good listener is understanding every word they hear, just like exposed in students' 4 and 8 answers, who reported not understanding everything or every sentence. As it was expected by the set of characteristics of spoken language that affects listening, students reported problems related to clustering. Brown (2007, p. 304) explains it when he mentions that "sometimes second language learners will try to retain overly long constituents (a whole sentence or several sentences), or they will err in the other direction in trying to attend to every utterance".

The only student who considered himself as a good listener in question 2 reported in this one that he listens to music in English and he also watches movies and interviews without subtitles. This proves that he has contact with the language outside the classroom environment, on the contrary of students 3 and 9 who suggest the lack of contact with the language as a cause of their comprehension difficulties. Students 3, 5, and 6 do not mention the use of any strategy.

Overall, the students do not seem to have a clear understanding that in order to become a good listener in an additional language, the learner needs to take part in

the process of listening. Listening is interactive, one needs to pay attention not only to the linguistic elements but also to external elements like context and culture. They should also avoid focusing only on the knowledge they lack and try to focus on using their experience with songs, movies, video games and other leisure activities to help their additional languages learning.

In sum, before having classes focused on listening instruction, students demonstrated having a bad perception about their capabilities of understanding spoken language in English. Most of them showed lack of familiarity with the study of this aspect of the language over their school years. Consequently, they did not present much knowledge about learning strategies and its application to listening comprehension.

## **4.2 Questionnaires of the lessons**

In this section we are going to analyze data related to the teaching of learning strategies applied to listening comprehension. We applied questionnaires to every listening lesson we prepared. We analyze the questionnaire for each lesson.

### *1. First Lesson*

In the first lesson, second day of research, 9 students were present. This was the first contact they had with the teaching of the listening strategies in the research. The researcher taught three strategies: skimming, scanning, and taking notes using the T-Form. She gave them the concepts based on Oxford's (1990) view. She also explained that students would have objectives when doing the activities in class. In this one, listening for main ideas and listening for details were explained. The initial idea was to have two listening activities per class, but it became clear since this day that this would not be possible because of the time available to develop the activities. What happened was that most students did not arrive exactly on time, so the lesson started five or ten minutes after the time set and it could not be extended because their class in college started after the research in the same room. From this class on, only one practical activity was designed in the lesson plan. Listening 1 was used as an example of strategies and listening purposes with the teacher explaining and

eliciting answers from the students. Exceptionally in this day students were not required to fill in a questionnaire. This class was a preparation for the work with strategies itself that started in the second lesson.

## *2. Second Lesson*

In the second lesson, third day of research, 9 students were present once more. This was the second contact they had with the teaching of listening strategies and the first with a practical exercise of application. The researcher reviewed the three strategies (skimming, scanning, and taking notes using the T-Form). As Brown's (2006) recommendation, the strategies chosen were constantly reinforced.

Students attended a lesson in the pattern pre-, while- and after- listening and received a questionnaire with seven questions (See APPENDIX D). In general, the goal for asking the questions was to know if they understood the explanations of the strategies and if they could apply it to the activities. As mentioned in the introduction of this paper, when the project was being developed we thought about analyzing right and wrong answers; but this idea was abandoned. However, because our objective is not to evaluate or test students, but rather help them learn how to apply strategies themselves and feel active participants in their role of listeners. So after working on the listening activity they answered their questionnaires that contained the following questions: "Você entendeu o que é skimming?", "Conseguir utilizar a estratégia skimming durante a atividade?" "Você entendeu o que é scanning?", "Conseguir utilizar a estratégia scanning durante a atividade?", "A estratégia taking notes foi útil para você?", "Você acha que saber o objetivo específico do listening ajuda a melhorar sua compreensão?" and "Você já utilizava alguma dessas estratégias antes, mesmo que não soubesse denominá-las?". We analyse the results based on their answers below.

Six students reported that they understood what is skimming and used it during the activity; 3 marked that they understood and used it partially. When asked about scanning, 5 students said that they could understand it, and 4 understood it partially. From the total of 9 students, 4 reported having used scanning while 5 said that they used it partially. Only one student considered taking notes as partially useful, all the others said it was useful. Regarding the knowledge of the listening

objective before the beginning of the activity, 7 said it helped them enhance their comprehension while 1 answered No. 4 students reported having learned some of the strategies before, 1 knew them partially and 4 did not know.

It is possible to observe that the number of students who understood and utilized skimming, rather fully or partially, was the same. For scanning, however, the number of students who understood the strategy diminished in one person when it comes to utilizing it. At this first moment, knowing the objectives of the lesson was already pointed out as an important help in enhancing comprehension level. The number of people who already utilized the strategies before and the ones who did not was even, showing that some already had previous knowledge on the subject. Nobody commented, though, which were specifically the activities that they already knew.

## *2. Third Lesson*

The fourth day was dedicated to review the strategies they learned in the previous class. We considered reviewing fundamental for the development of the work because we wanted students to feel comfortable with the use of strategies they learned in the first lesson, before moving on to new strategies. Skimming and scanning explanations were repeated, but the strategy of taking notes was explained with a slight change: the T-form was substituted for the shopping list method. The objectives of the lesson were listening for main ideas and details. The listening passage was a semi-authentic listening extracted from a website in which speakers of English as L1 talk about pre-determined topics. In this case, a woman, who is a dental hygienist, described her routine.

A questionnaire was provided at the end of the lesson asking if students were successful in using the strategies (See APPENDIX F). The questions were: “Conseguiu utilizar a estratégias skimming durante a atividade?”, “Conseguiu utilizar a estratégia scanning durante a atividade?” and “A estratégia taking notes foi útil para você?”. We had 6 respondents. From these students, 4 utilized skimming and 2 utilized it partially; 3 used scanning, 1 used it partially, and 1 did not use it. Concerning taking notes, 5 used it and 1 reported using it partially.

We can notice that most students felt comfortable with taking notes, since all of them used it, even though one considered the use partial. Skimming was more utilized than scanning again, as in the previous lesson. We could infer that participants found it easier to identify general information than focus on small pieces of information as scanning requires.

The learning of the strategies scanning, skimming, and taking notes, although essential for students to have a good grasp of what they are learning, are strategies that take time to develop and put into practice. Students would need more time to internalize them. But the objective of the lesson was mainly to make students aware of them.

### *3. Fourth Lesson*

In the fifth day, we brought new strategies. We presented students with the use of conceptual clues and taking notes – conceptual map. The objective of the lesson was to draw inferences. The number of respondents was reduced to 3 and kept this way until the end of the research. It is relevant to note that students were invited to attend the lessons voluntarily and signed a term that assured them that they could leave the project at any time they decided without having to explain their reasons (See APPENDIX A). This is the common practice when we invite participants to research projects. So, it is not possible to affirm why students gave up. Nonetheless, thinking about what I could have done differently, maybe I would rethink the repetition of strategies on the previous lesson since participants in research tend to be attracted to flashing new material or ideas.

The questionnaire applied in the fourth lesson counted with three questions (see APPENDIX G). As multiple choice, students answered the following questions: “Você entendeu o que é ‘drawing inferences?’”, “Você entendeu o que são conceptual clues?” and “A estratégia taking notes foi útil para você?”. 2 students reported having understood conceptual clues partially and 1 totally. The three of them considered taking notes useful and understood what it is to draw inferences. This questionnaire brought a difference when compared to the others. As students were at that moment aware of a higher number of strategies than in the beginning, they were invited to answer a question in addition to the multiple answer ones. The

objective was for them to report any strategy that they utilized even if it was not the one taught in that specific class. The interesting fact in these results was that the same students who reported having understood conceptual clues partially mentioned this strategy in the space provided for them to report openly what they utilized. This happened because they were not sure about how to identify the name of the strategy, so they asked the researcher and by her explanation they decided that the strategy they thought they had not understood was, actually, the one that helped them the most.

#### *4. Fifth Lesson*

Sixth day of research was dedicated to a new strategy, selective attention, and a new objective, listen selectively. It was also the last new strategy presented in class. We counted with three students and the questionnaire contained two multiple questions. The questions were “Você conseguiu utilizar uma ou mais estratégias para compreender o listening?” and “Você entendeu o que é listen selectively?” (See APPENDIX H). In this case, we did not direct them to a specific strategy but linked an open question for the ones who answered yes for the first question: “Cite quais as estratégias utilizadas”. We decided to let it freer for students to express their own ability in relating different strategies to different situations. The three students, regular participants 3, 5 and 6 mentioned before, reported having used strategies to understand the listening passage. Conceptual clues were mentioned twice and so was selective attention. A hundred per cent of them checked that they understood what it is to listen selectively. This strategy is important because it helps them to focus on information that is really important for them, trying to avoid the linguistic limitation they might have and using the knowledge that was provided about the topic.

#### *5. Sixth Lesson*

Seventh day was a review of the strategies. We believe that reviewing was an important step here to show students that one strategy does not exclude another; on

the contrary, they complement each other; which means that once they have the knowledge about the strategies they are free to apply them according to what they consider more appropriate in each environment in which they have to deal with listening comprehension. The researcher presented all the concepts to them and they had the opportunity to make questions to clarify any doubts. Only 2 students, 3 and 6, were present on this day. They listened to an audio passage and were asked to answer if they were able to use any strategies (“Você conseguiu aplicar alguma estratégia para melhorar sua compreensão da listening activity?”) (See APPENDIX I). A space was provided for them to cite the strategies they used. The following ones were mentioned once: skimming, key words (this was not formally taught but they already knew it and utilized it during the classes), scanning and selective attention. Conceptual clues were mentioned twice. We can observe that, as beginner students, the strategies which did not rely on linguistic knowledge were most utilized by them. Skimming and selective attention, which were the most reported in the previous classes were, also mentioned again appointing that these are the strategies that students seem to have learned the best.

Even though the number of students decreased over the development of the research, results show that, for the ones who kept attending the classes, strategies have little by little become the kind of knowledge that they know they can rely on when facing listening situations in English. If the research was applied to other levels, the results might have produced different data but, for these particular participants, we believe that the process of learning strategies applied to listening helped them organize their ideas and have a focus to direct their attention while listening to auditive input in English.

#### **4.3 Final Questionnaire – Last day of research**

The eight class closed the process. Three students were present, students 3, 5 and 6 who regularly participated of all the research. They were asked to answer an open questionnaire with their personal view about the whole process of the research and how it affected their learning (APPENDIX F). The questions we proposed were: 1. “Qual o seu nível de satisfação em relação à sua compreensão oral em lingual inglesa atualmente?”, 2. “Você acha que as aulas focadas em listening strategies

contribuíram para o desenvolvimento da sua compreensão oral? De que forma?”, 3. “Ter um objetivo para o listening foi útil para você? De que maneira?”, 4 “Você se considera um bom ou mal ouvinte?” and 5. “Sinta-se à vontade para fazer comentários, críticas ou sugestões sobre o desenvolvimento das aulas”. We intended to lead them to reflection about the process, especially by repeating question 4 of the first questionnaire. Their answers were very positive. It was interesting to see that they reported using the strategies they have learned in their lives outside the academy, as students 3 and 6 mentioned, to understand movies in English. Student 5 also brought an important issue that concerned the researcher during all this time: to enhance students` confidence. She said that she felt safe to give her answers and say what she understood. Feeling confident is an important step for students to develop their potential not only in relation to listening but during the whole process of learning an additional language, as it is well pointed out by Hedge (2000). For this reason, her comment is very interesting as well as student’s 6 suggestion of expanding the use of listening strategies to the teaching in schools and at the university. We would also like to focus on student’s 3 comment in which she affirms that she now has strategies to use, something that she did not say in the beginning. Student 5 complemented saying that having objectives for the listening activities made it more organized for them, helping comprehension.

Naturally, more time would be necessary in order to have more consistent results because the number of participants was not expressive and the duration of the research was short. On the other hand, even with few participants it is observable that students became more aware of their role as additional language listeners. They do not tend to be passive anymore, they apply what they know in order to get good results compatible to the level of English instruction they have, not only in college but also at home when watching movies or TV series, as reported in the final questionnaire by the participants

## 5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The decision of following a new path is always challenging and also a little frightening, once we never know where it is taking us or whether it is going to work or not. This work emerged from a necessity of helping students and teachers at the same time, by giving them both something to rely on while going through the process of teaching and learning listening comprehension. Of course, there are other techniques in use, like metacognitive studies (Goh, 1996), and many others will hopefully appear in the next few years, but we believe that this experience was valid and might be helpful for teachers who decide to dedicate themselves to the topic of how to teach listening.

We believe the objectives we proposed for this work were reached. We could see by the reports that students seem to have acquired higher self-esteem in their condition of listeners of an additional language as well as they felt less anxious and safer to express their experiences in listening and learning.

It was gratifying comparing the first reports of the students who attended the research until the end and the last ones. It is clear how they seem to be aware of their recently acquired knowledge, and the will they demonstrate to apply this as learning for life makes all the work worth it.

A negative aspect of this work results is that our first assumptions about students' complaint over not understanding what they hear in English and the lack of listening instruction are still reality, just as in the researcher's testimonial in the introduction of this work. Even after the field of Applied Linguistics has posed increasingly relevance on listening, the reality seems to remain the same, as it is possible to observe in the reports of questionnaire one.

About explicit teaching of strategies, the numbers were positive. Most of the students in all of the applications reported having understood and used the strategies during the exercises. Giving them a purpose for listening deserves to be highlighted as an important aspect of students' comprehension development. As Brown (2006) argues, we can see that it is necessary to teach students about listening purposes clearly.

We would like to mention once more that, for more conclusive data it would be necessary to apply this research to participants of different levels of knowledge. Still,

for the qualitative research purposes, the results we had were valid and proved that our claim that teaching learning strategies explicitly, as suggested by Oxford (1990), is in fact an effective way of having good results in listening comprehension.

Finally, we conclude saying that the path of learning strategies and listening instruction is still not popular, but we hope a change of perspective comes soon to enlighten this skill that is so utilized in everyday life, but at the same so underestimated when it comes to the teaching of languages.

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## APPENDIX

### APPENDIX A - Termo de Compromisso

#### **TERMO DE CONSENTIMENTO DE PARTICIPAÇÃO EM ESTUDO SOBRE "Estratégias para compreensão oral em língua inglesa"**

Entendo que fui convidado a participar do estudo para Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso de Licenciatura em Letras-Português/Inglês sobre estratégias para compreensão oral em língua inglesa realizado por Cristiane Barboza Lopes da Silva, orientanda de Katia Vieira Morais, professora do curso de Licenciatura em Letras-Línguas Adicionais: Inglês, Espanhol e Respectivas Literaturas da UNIPAMPA-campus Bagé.

#### A. OBJETIVO

Declaro que fui informado de que o propósito do estudo é investigar a eficácia do uso de estratégias de compreensão oral na língua inglesa.

#### B. PROCEDIMENTOS

Entendo que serei solicitado a participar de 2 encontros semanais de no máximo 45 minutos, em horário e local a serem combinados para realizar atividades de compreensão oral em inglês.

#### C. RISCOS E BENEFÍCIOS

Entendo que não há riscos decorrentes de minha participação neste estudo. Posso beneficiar-me com o estudo e o aprendizado de estratégias de compreensão oral podendo melhorar a compreensão oral em inglês.

#### D. CONDIÇÕES DE PARTICIPAÇÃO

- Entendo que posso desistir de participar do estudo livremente, a qualquer momento, sem consequências negativas.
- Entendo que minha participação neste estudo não será identificada e toda e qualquer informação revelada em pesquisa será tabulada anonimamente.
- Entendo que os dados deste estudo poderão ser publicados e que minha identidade será preservada.

Se, a qualquer momento, você tiver dúvidas sobre o presente estudo, entre em contato com Cristiane Barboza Lopes da Silva (cristiane\_lopesdasilva@hotmail.com).

Se, a qualquer momento, você tiver dúvidas sobre seus direitos como participante do estudo, entre em contato com o grupo de ética na pesquisa da UNIPAMPA.

\_\_\_\_\_

*Data*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Assinatura*

## APPENDIX B – Structure of the Class

\* TCC II – Pesquisa – Listening Strategies

Cristiane Barboza Lopes da Silva

Listening

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### *Pre-listening questions*

Do you like to go shopping? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you usually buy? \_\_\_\_\_

### *While-listening questions:*

#### *Listening for details*

Complete the chart

1) What is the woman looking for?

a)



b)



c)



2) Which colors does she prefer?

a) Black and blue

b) Red and white

c) Green and pink

3) Does she like the first option? Yes, she does. ( )

No, she asks for another one. ( )

4) How does she pay for it? a) Check ( )

b) Cash ( )

c) Credit card ( )

### *Post-listening questions*

a) Going shopping may be a different experience in other parts of the world. Is it similar to the conversation in your country? \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX C – Questionnaire – First day of research

\* TCC II –Pesquisa—Listening Strategies

Cristiane Barboza Lopes da Silva

Questionário 1

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Durante seu processo de aprendizagem, como costumavam ser as aulas focadas na compreensão oral (listening)?

2. Qual é o seu nível de satisfação com relação a sua compreensão oral em língua inglesa? Você se considera um bom ouvinte?

3. Por que você se considera um bom/mau ouvinte? Você utiliza alguma estratégia?

## APPENDIX D – Questionnaire – Listening 1 and 2

TCC II –Pesquisa—Listening Strategies

Cristiane Barboza Lopes da Silva

Listening 1- Questionnaire

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

	SIM	PARCIALMENTE	NÃO	COMENTÁRIOS
Você entendeu o que é skimming?				
Conseguiu utilizar a estratégia skimming durante a atividade?				
Você entendeu o que é scanning?				
Conseguiu utilizar a estratégia scanning durante a atividade?				
A estratégia taking notes foi útil para você?				
Você acha que saber o objetivo específico do listening ajuda a melhorar sua compreensão?				
Você já utilizava alguma dessas estratégias antes, mesmo que não soubesse denominá-las?				

## APPENDIX E – Final Questionnaire – Last day of research

\* TCC II – Pesquisa – Listening Strategies

Cristiane Barboza Lopes da Silva

Questionário Final

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Qual o seu nível de satisfação em relação à sua compreensão oral em língua inglesa atualmente?

2. Você acha que as aulas focadas em *listening strategies* contribuíram para o desenvolvimento da sua compreensão oral? De que forma?

3. Ter um objetivo para o *listening* foi útil para você? De que maneira?

4. Você se considera um bom ou mau ouvinte?

5. Sinta-se à vontade para fazer comentários, críticas ou sugestões sobre o desenvolvimento das aulas:

## APPENDIX F – Questionnaire – Listening 3

Cristiane Barboza Lopes da Silva

Listening 3 – Questionnaire

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

	SIM	PARCIALMENTE	NÃO	COMENTÁRIOS
Conseguiu utilizar a estratégia <i>skimming</i> durante a atividade?				
Conseguiu utilizar a estratégia <i>scanning</i> ?				
A estratégia <i>taking notes</i> foi útil para você?				

## APPENDIX G – Questionnaire – Listening 4

Cristiane Barboza Lopes da Silva  
Listening 4 - Questionnaire  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

	SIM	PARCIALMENTE	NÃO	COMENTÁRIOS
Você entendeu o que é "drawing inferences"?				
Você entendeu o que são "conceptual clues"?				
A estratégia taking notes foi útil para você?				

Você utilizou alguma estratégia? ( ) Sim. Qual? \_\_\_\_\_ Não. ( )

## APPENDIX H– Questionnaire – Listening 5

TCC II –Pesquisa—Listening Strategies  
Cristiane Barboza Lopes da Silva  
Listening 5  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

	SIM	PARCIALMENTE	NÃO	COMENTÁRIOS
Você conseguiu utilizar uma ou mais estratégias para compreender o <i>listening</i> ?*				
Você entendeu o que é "listen selectively"?				

\* Cite quais estratégias foram utilizadas: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX I – Questionnaire – Listening 6

Cristiane Barboza Lopes da Silva  
Listening – Questionnaire  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

	SIM	PARCIALMENTE	NÃO	COMENTÁRIOS
Você conseguiu aplicar alguma estratégia para melhorar sua compreensão da listening activity?				

Se a sua resposta foi sim, qual(is) estratégia(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

Se a sua resposta foi não, o que você acredita que atrapalhou sua compreensão?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ATTACHMENTS

### ATTACHMENT A – Questionnaire 1 answers

1 – Durante seu processo de aprendizagem, como costumavam ser as aulas focadas na compreensão oral (listening)?	
Student	Answer
1	Foram muito fracas, na verdade, quase nula. O ensino de línguas no ensino fundamental e médio era muito fragmentado, focando principalmente no verbo “to be”.
2	Os professores geralmente trabalhavam a compreensão oral com música. Colocavam a música e pediam que os alunos dissessem o que estavam entendendo.
3	Não tive.
4	Eram unicamente com livros e Xerox apresentados pelo professor, sem a utilização de outros recursos.
5	Costumavam ser tradicionais e muito “atiradas”, pois os professores e nem os alunos se importavam muito. Tinha inglês porque tinha que ter! E no ensino médio diz magistério e não teve nenhuma língua adicional.
6	Nunca tive nada de listening.
7	No curso escutava, e respondia de acordo com o que fosse escutado.
8	As minhas aulas eram de perguntas e respostas, e também interpretação de texto. Nada de listening.
9	Na escola, estudei somente o básico do inglês, era somente frases com perguntas e respostas, eu decorava todas.
10	Não tive compreensão oral em nenhum período.
11	Não havia aulas focadas com compreensão oral, raríssimas vezes eram usadas músicas em inglês, mas visava mais o aumento de vocabulário.

## ATTACHMENT B – Questionnaire 1 answers

2 – Qual é o seu nível de satisfação com relação com relação a sua compreensão oral em língua inglesa? Você se considera um bom ouvinte?	
Student	Answer
1	Apesar do curso estar no início, sinto que em alguns aspectos já consigo entender algo, porém ainda não tenho um bom ouvido para o inglês.
2	Bem complicado quando o falante da língua fala muito rápido. Infelizmente não me considero um bom ouvinte.
3	Me considero um mau ouvinte.
4	Meu nível é baixo.
5	Me considero um “médio” ouvinte, pois depende muito do contexto e do vocabulário.
6	Algumas palavras, muito pouco mesmo.
7	Tenho muita facilidade em entender ou escutar.
8	Eu me considero mau ouvinte pois entendo só alguma coisa
9	Não tenho uma boa compreensão oral. Me considero um mau ouvinte.
10	Não tenho satisfação alguma com o inglês.
11	Baixo, e um mau ouvinte.

## ATTACHMENT C – Questionnaire 1 answers

3 – Por que você se considera um bom/mau ouvinte? Você utiliza alguma estratégia?	
Student	Answer
1	Porque ainda existem muitas palavras que não consigo identificar ouvindo, dificultando o entendimento. Sim, procuro sempre assistir a filmes legendados, tentando olhar o menos possível para as legendas.
2	Me considero um mau ouvinte pois meu vocabulário é bem pobre. Minha estratégia é tentar entender através do conhecimento de algumas palavras, que são poucas, contextualizando.
3	Porque não entendo a língua, tive muito pouco contato com a língua.

4	Me considero mau ouvinte porque não consigo compreender uma frase inteira, consigo compreender melhor se está acompanhado de algum texto.
5	Estou tentando através dos cursos que são oferecidos a universidade. E ouço muita música.
6	Mau. Não faço nada, não entendo nada.
7	Por só ouvir séries, músicas, entrevistas em inglês.
8	Mau ouvinte, não entendo tudo. Não uso nenhuma estratégia.
9	Me considero mau ouvinte porque nunca tive um contato maior com a língua inglesa, meu único contato foi na escola.
10	Nunca consegui organizar uma tática para vencer esta batalha, decorei a escrita de algumas palavras e foi só.
11	Porque compreendo muito pouco, pois necessita identificar palavras chaves e estar inserido no contexto para entender a ideia do que se fala e não exatamente o que se fala.

#### ATTACHMENT D – Final Questionnaire answers

1 – Qual o seu nível de satisfação em relação à sua compreensão oral em língua inglesa atualmente?	
Student	Answer
3	Na minha opinião, eu melhorei bastante.
5	Estou em um nível satisfatório.
6	Melhorando muito mesmo.

#### ATTACHMENT E – Final Questionnaire answers

2 – Você acha que as aulas focadas em listening strategies contribuíram para o desenvolvimento da sua compreensão oral? De que forma?	
Student	Answer
3	Ajudou, ou seja, estão contribuindo, pois ao assistir um filme procuro

	entender as palavras, individualmente, para chegar a uma interpretação mais profunda (com o conjunto de palavras).
5	Contribuíram muito. Aprendi estratégias que me auxiliaram bastante.
6	Sim e muito. Ajudou e tem ajudado bastante quando vou assistir um filme ou até mesmo uma série.

#### ATTACHMENT F – Final Questionnaire answers

3 – Ter um objetivo para o listening foi útil para você? De que maneira?	
Student	Answer
3	Ajudou porque a partir de um princípio é mais fácil a interpretação.
5	Foi útil sim, tudo se torna mais organizado e de fácil entendimento.
6	Muito. Com o foco é mais fácil saber o assunto.

#### ATTACHMENT G – Final Questionnaire answers

4 – Você acha que as aulas focadas em listening strategies contribuíram para o desenvolvimento da sua compreensão oral? De que forma?	
Student	Answer
3	Bom, pois hoje tenho estratégias que posso usar, antes não tinha.
5	Bom.
6	Bom.

#### ATTACHMENT H – Final Questionnaire answers

5 – Sinta-se à vontade para fazer comentários, críticas ou sugestões sobre o desenvolvimento das aulas.	
Student	Answer
3	Achei ótima a pesquisa, pois me ajudou bastante em saber interpretar melhor, ou seja, formas (ferramentas) que hoje posso usar para melhorar minha interpretação.
5	Eu gostei muito de todos os dias. Me senti segura para falar sobre o que havia entendido, pois a Cris é super atenciosa e paciente.

6	Achei muito válido e acho também que esse método deveria ser usado nas escolas e na própria universidade.
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