THE IMPACT OF THE INCORPORATION OF IMAGES ON THE DESIGN AND
IMPLEMENTATION OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION TASKS AMONG EFL
LEARNERS IN A COLOMBIAN HIGHER LANGUAGE EDUCATION INSTITUTE

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Trabajo de grado presentado como requisito parcial para obtener el título de Licenciado en la Enseñanza de la Lengua Inglesa

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LICENCIATURA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DE LA LENGUA INGLESA

PEREIRA

2009

RESUMEN

El propósito del presente estudio es el de reportar el impacto que tiene la inclusión de imágenes en el diseño e implementación de actividades de comprensión oral, al igual que describir las diferentes percepciones de los sujetos de estudio al estar expuestos a este tipo de actividades. De igual manera, los objetivos propuestos en este estudio apuntan a informar acerca de la importancia del conocimiento declarativo en el desarrollo de competencias de escucha. El estudio se llevó a cabo en una universidad pública ubicada en el centro occidente colombiano, con siete estudiantes de diferentes programas académicos que asisten a los cursos de inglés ofrecidos por la universidad a través del instituto de lenguas extranjeras de la misma. Dichos estudiantes fueron expuestos a actividades de escucha diseñadas por los investigadores, quienes a su vez forman parte del cuerpo docente del instituto en mención; el periodo de exposición a las actividades fue de dos meses aproximadamente. Los resultados obtenidos indican que las imágenes promueven el uso de estrategias cognitivas y memorísticas entre los estudiantes mientras son expuestos a actividades de escucha apoyadas por dichas imágenes. Además, se evidenció un cambio en las percepciones de los sujetos con respecto a dichas actividades y se demostró que una vez activado el componente cultural y lingüístico, los niveles de comprensión oral y participación activa se incrementaron. Por lo tanto, el presente estudio proporciona información crucial para los docentes de inglés como lengua extranjera en el diseño e implementación de actividades de comprensión oral y en los procesos de seguimiento y valoración del desarrollo de competencias comunicativas.

ABSTRACT

The present study aims to report the impact of the incorporation of images on the design and implementation of listening comprehension tasks as well as describe participants' perceptions when being exposed to these tasks. In the same line, the objectives of the present study aim to inform about the importance of the declarative knowledge in the development of listening competences. The research was conducted in a state university located in the growing-region of Colombia with seven Spanish speaking students from different academic programs, who attend English courses at the foreign languages institute of the university. Such students were exposed to listening tasks designed by the research team, who also belong to the language institute teacher's staff; such exposure took approximately two months. The results obtained reveal that images foster the use of cognitive and memory strategies among students as they are exposed to image-supported listening tasks. Furthermore, a change in learners' perceptions towards listening tasks was evidenced since prior linguistic and cultural knowledge is activated, increasing listening comprehension proficiency and active involvement. Therefore, the present study provides essential information for EFL teachers about the design and implementation of listening comprehension tasks and sheds light on different alternatives for assessing and evaluating the development of communicative competences.

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INTRODUCTION

Learning and teaching English as Foreign Language, especially in an academic setting such as a college, demand a thorough reflection on issues that hinder optimal development of language competences such as problems referred to receptive and production skills. Thus, the present study emerged from concerns related to listening comprehension problems among some college learners who study English as a foreign language in a higher language education institute from Pereira, Colombia. That is, previous surveys, observations and staff meetings conducted on behalf of the present study suggest that some learners experience high levels of anxiety, reluctance towards listening comprehension tasks, and poor performance on the development of the listening skill, mainly regarded to the lack of awareness from teachers and learners on the use of listening strategies. Therefore, the results of the current research paper provide significant information for facilitators on the design and implementation of listening comprehension tasks that positively affect learners' performance and perceptions, appealing to students' linguistic and cultural background.

In this paper it is demonstrated that the incorporation of images on the design and implementation of listening comprehension tasks fosters the use of listening strategies throughout tasks' stages. In addition, learners' perceptions about facing listening tasks are modified since the awareness on the use of strategies increases confidence and motivates active participation. Thus, learners can use images as a guide to follow the thread of audio recordings. Moreover, the samples of the tasks designed for the present study may serve as a guide for facilitators to create their own versions, according to learners' proficiency levels, context, styles, and especially, their cultural background. The present study illustrates how cultural background is activated through well selected images in order to stimulate mental associations between the content of audio scripts and their schemata. The present study also proposes other alternatives for assessing comprehension different from traditional gap filling or multiple choice exercises as well as important information to

conduct further research on the grounds of developing linguistic competences through the incorporation of images.

As aforementioned, the present research paper reveals how facilitators and learners can be supported with tools for the understanding and development of listening competences. Thus, it is worth to mention that the presentation of the activities designed for this research project gradually increases the demands of the tasks focusing on the process learners' go through rather than on results to measure proficiency. As a result, this study provides a different perspective about other studies related to listening barriers and use of listening strategies. However, the current research paper supports what some theoreticians state about tasks design and implementation. Furthermore, important information about visual materials is also included throughout the present paper in order to guide facilitators in the selection of images to design their own listening tasks, as suggested by the current study.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: In section 1, a statement of the problem in which issues related to listening comprehension are portrayed, followed by the rationale of the project in which the institutional, local and general relevance of the study is clearly described. Moreover, a subsequent section that presents the research questions that are the core of the present study, followed by theoretical foundations to have a clear understanding about issues concerning listening comprehension, listening barriers, strategies, tasks, as well as audio and visual materials. Subsequently, the steps followed in the collection and analysis of data as well as the context, instructional design and participants are clearly described in a section called methodology. In addition, the results of the present study are illustrated in section 6 under the three main findings provided by this research.

Finally, the present study includes a section in which the findings revealed are compared and contrasted with other theories and studies; another section in which instructional and research implications are suggested; and a section that provides the conclusions of the research paper, followed by the bibliography and samples of the tasks designed that may serve as a reference for English pre-service and in-service teachers.

1. Statement of the Problem

Years of experience as English learners and teachers at the Local State University of Pereira (Colombia), allowed us to observe numerous problems concerning teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), especially in the development of communicative skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Therefore, after some observations and reflections conducted in teaching and learning environments at the University Language Institute (ULI), we evidenced a lack of awareness from teachers and learners in the use of learning strategies. That is, some facilitators do not properly guide learners in the use of the target language in a meaningful way by what Bruner (cited in Cameron, 2004) called scaffolding (guiding learners throughout the learning process); thus, learners' interlanguage (the language learners use as they approach to the target language), profiles, and prior knowledge are not considered. In addition, some of the problems learners find regarding listening activities are suggested by Scrivener (2005) such as the speed of the speakers, the lack of vocabulary, the different accents, the attitudes expressed and the scanning of specific information. Therefore, the problem to address throughout the present study is related to some issues involved in listening comprehension at ULI such as learners' reluctance towards listening activities, high levels of anxiety when being exposed to audiovisual material, and poor performance in listening comprehension tasks.

As a result, since some teachers at ULI do not properly raise awareness in the processes listening conveys through the design and implementation of tasks, learners' performance is affected experiencing the difficulties aforementioned. Hence, some learners at ULI adopt a reluctant attitude that eventually blocks their learning process towards the activities that involve listening, especially with recorded material. Such learners have expressed in some surveys that the audio material they have been exposed to is difficult to understand since the accents, the length, and the speed of some recordings affect their level of comprehension, supporting what Scrivener (2005) argues. Therefore, the type of input used to perform listening activities at ULI must be carefully chosen, as Lightbown and Spada (1993) propose, according to learners' characteristics such as their context, styles, motivation, age,

language level, beliefs, and opportunities to practice the target language. In that sense, it is important to consider that ULI's students belong to a non-native context in which the exposure to the English language is somehow limited; though multimedia and Internet offer a variety of choices, there is a little communicative need since such language is mainly used in artificial scenarios such as the classes taken at ULI for about 5 or 6 hours per week. In addition, since today's society is highly influenced by technology, some ULI's learners are attracted by the latest trends in the use of multimedia (video games, Internet, movies, I phones, mp4s, etc.) which leads them to interact in a more visual way while being also exposed to aural input. Consequently, the main problem evidenced along observations conducted at ULI is not the material itself but rather the task that is implemented by some teachers. Thus, we could observe that the little reflection teachers make on tasks' design, which do not fit learners' context, interests and needs, affect negatively learners' interest and performance in listening. In that sense, learners' levels of anxiety increase whereas their success in listening comprehension decreases as it is evident on the reflections shared by some facilitators during University Language Institute's staff meetings. Some teachers express that some ULI's students seem to feel more confident with the comprehensible input provided along the classes in their speech, articulated with a neutral accent, and the aid of communication strategies such as the use of true cognates (words with similarities in both the first and target language) as well as the use of body language. However, during the exposure to audio material, either authentic or modified for learning purposes, learners experience frustration as they are not appropriately guided for interacting with authentic listening material. Nevertheless, although the media offer a wide variety of authentic meaningful input (TV series, movies, news, Internet documents, and music); learners are not equipped with key elements to interact autonomously with this sort of input. Therefore, proficiency and interest on listening comprehension tasks are significantly constrained among some learners who attend courses at ULI.

2. Rationale

As the statement of the problem illustrates, teaching and learning English in a non-native context (Pereira, Colombia) may imply certain constraints since students interact in a monolingual community, which does not demand the knowledge and mastery of a second or foreign language to fulfill basic needs. Thus, the development of communicative skills such as listening comprehension and oral production are affected by the little room left for the practice of the foreign language.

Therefore, Colombian teachers must start developing creative ways to provide students with the tools they need for a better performance in the target language, taking into account what Lightbown and Spada (1993) suggest regarding students' styles and beliefs. That is, facilitators must consider field independent learners, who need to be guided holistically, and field dependent who pay attention to specific details to understand, keeping in mind the thoughts students have about the manner in which they are guided. Similarly, facilitators and learners must be aware of the current national demands in English proficiency for college undergraduates and professionals. Accordingly, the Colombian Ministry of Education established the National Program of Bilingualism 2019 in order to endorse and improve the quality of English instruction in educational institutions, adapting the Common European Framework of Reference for Foreign Languages (2001) for the design of National Standards. Therefore, students of the Local State University of Pereira who attend courses at ULI need to demonstrate the necessary competences in English in order to achieve institutional, local and national goals.

In that sense, the current study aims to provide important information regarding ULI's student's performance and responses towards listening tasks that are designed and implemented according to learners' context, styles, and proficiency level in English. Thus, instructional implications that support the development of competences in listening comprehension are provided in the present study. Namely, data collected after learners' exposure to audio materials provided by the institute (New Headway audio CDs) and other audiovisual materials taken from the Internet with the support of images. Such findings may also provide cues about listening

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problems EFL learners face according to Lynch's work (2008) such as dealing with accents, pronunciation, idioms and expressions, language rhythms, grammar and vocabulary in context, and rhyming sounds from both native and non-native English speakers.

Consequently, the results of the present study can provide ULI with essential information for teachers' professional development regarding the design and implementation of listening tasks. In addition, ULI's students can be benefited in their learning process with important information about performance in listening activities. Finally, undergraduate students of the Licenciatura program at the Local State University and other universities may also find significant data to analyze issues related to listening comprehension problems, instruction and assessment.

The present study aims to report how EFL college students' performance and perceptions regarding listening comprehension are affected after the exposure to listening tasks that incorporate images. The purpose of the current study is to provide essential information for facilitators in the design and implementation of listening tasks that foster learners' interest, decreasing levels of anxiety. In addition, the present study also intends to provide important information about the role of learners' linguistic and cultural background in their performance of listening tasks.

3. Questions and objectives

Main Question:

What does the incorporation of images in listening comprehension tasks tell us about ULI students in the recognition of aural information?

Sub-Question 1:

Which are ULI students' perceptions towards listening comprehension tasks that involve images?

Sub-Question 2:

What role do prior linguistic and cultural knowledge play on the design of listening tasks that involve images?

Main Objective:

- To report how ULI students' performance in listening tasks is affected after the exposure to listening tasks that incorporate images.

Specific Objectives:

- To inform about students' responses when facing listening tasks that incorporate images.

- To describe the role of prior linguistic and cultural knowledge on the design of listening tasks that involve images.

4. Literature review

According to Nunan (1997), several theoreticians consider listening as a communicative skill that started to gain importance in English Language Teaching (ELT) from the 1980s on, after Krashen's comprehensible input theory and other theoreticians' studies related to listening comprehension. Since then, a great deal of studies about listening comprehension have been held in order to provide important information related to issues such as listening conceptualization, categorization, strategies, problems, activities and materials which will be discussed throughout this chapter.

4.1. Definition of terms

To begin, it is important to consider the different definitions provided by other theoreticians in terms of listening as a skill. Howatt and Dakin (cited in Yagang, 1993) consider EFL listening as "the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation, his grammar and his vocabulary, and grasping his meaning" (p.1). In addition, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001) illustrates listening comprehension as an activity whereby a learner "receives and processes a spoken input produced by one or more speakers" (p. 65). In that sense, both definitions agree that there are some strategies involved that an English as a Foreign language (EFL) learner must perform such as skimming (get the general idea), scanning (get specific details), predicting (make inferences), among others, in order to cope with meaning during an interaction and be able to follow the thread of any speech event. Therefore, the Common European Framework (2001) highlights the necessity to take into account some general competences involved in listening comprehension activities such as knowledge of the world, sociocultural and intercultural awareness, and ability to learn in order to develop communicative language competences. That is, language users need to be aware of the linguistic (formal system of the language), sociolinguistic (language use in a specific context) and pragmatic (functional use of the language) components of the target language in order to interact effectively with other language users. Consequently, listening

comprehension involves not only the discrimination of sounds and accent variations or the recognition of lexical and grammatical items, but also the context in which the speech events occur as well as the social and pragmatic implications. As proposed by Saricoban (1999), listening refers to a number of basic processes, which may depend upon linguistic competences, previous knowledge of the world, and psychological variables. The author's definition can be interpreted as the implementation of bottom-up and top-down approaches which are commonly applied in listening comprehension activities. According to Nunan (1997), the bottom-up approach refers to a linear process that starts from the comprehension of the specific (the phoneme) to the general (the text), as it is explained in one of his articles

> According to this view, phonemic units are decoded and linked together to form words, words are linked together to form phrases, phrases are linked together to form utterances, and utterances are linked together to form complete meaningful texts. In other words, the process is a linear one, in which meaning itself is derived as the last step in the process. (p.1)

According to Nunan's view (1997), the bottom up approach focuses only on the identification of isolated language items as a way to understand the entire text. On the other hand, Nunan (1997) explains the top-down approach as the reconstruction of the original meaning, supported by cues such as the contextualization while being exposed to the text and the incoming sounds. Thus, the listener starts from the general, in a holistic process, in which all the linguistic elements are used as tools to obtain meaning. Nevertheless, Scrivener (2005) argues that the two approaches are not implemented in isolation but rather articulated, either consciously or unconsciously, when learners are exposed to listening activities. Consequently, listening can be defined as a receptive skill that involves complex mental processes of association between the oral information that is heard and the learners' prior linguistic and declarative knowledge, supported by the context embedded in the recorded text so that meaning can be grasped rather than the mere discrimination of sounds.

4.2. Listening comprehension barriers

Listening comprehension has been considered as one of the skills that need more attention in terms of facilitating and using effective listening strategies that guarantee the acquisition of strong competences. Moran (2005) comments that from teachers' and students' point of view, the level of listening comprehension is lower compared to other skills. It has been evidenced that listening comprehension requires more exposure since learners are used to listening to the modified input that teachers and textbooks provide rather than the authentic input from native speakers of the target language. Consequently, different myths from facilitators as well as learners have been observed around this issue. Even though listening comprehension still requires deeper analysis, some research studies have focused on the reasons and causes that affect listening comprehension as well as learners' performance.

To begin, learners can easily understand the teacher's discourse after being exposed for a period of time; however, if the listening task demands considerable level of comprehension from the audio script, learners do not experience a great deal of understanding. This is in part because learners have not received adequate guidance that ensures their listening progress since both practice and evaluation have been done without any reflection on how to listen to English (Moran, 2005). Field (1998, cited in Moran, 2005) supports this idea by arguing that the default method of teaching focuses more on the result or answer learners obtain rather than on how learners arrived to that answer. Moreover, teachers' and learners' lack of awareness about the effective use of listening comprehension strategies may lead them to wrongly think that during the listening task, learners need to understand every single word from the aural information they receive. For instance, learners find a listening task difficult to understand because they consider that the speaker speaks too fast. However, some learners and teachers do not realize that sometimes this misunderstanding is the result of the influence of other factors such as hesitations, pronunciation, pauses, different accents, among others, that may be the cause of low levels of comprehension, Wenden (1986, cited in Hasan, 2005). Additionally, regarding listening problems learners find during the exposure to a listening task,

Underwood (1989, cited in Yiching Chen, 2005) identified some of the major problems learners experience such as:

- The lack of control over the speed at which speakers speak
- Not being able to get things repeated
- The listener limited vocabulary
- Failure to recognize the signals
- Problems of interpretation,
- Inability to concentrate,
- Established learning habits (p.3)

The relevance of this study has to do with the relationship the researcher found between these problems and learners' culture and education. She argues that those learners who have been exposed to education that emphasizes storytelling and oral communication are better at listening comprehension than those whose educational instruction has been based on reading. Underwood (1989) also reports that learners who speak a language that has stress and intonation almost similar to the target language, have fewer difficulties than learners whose tone and rhythm in their mother tongue are far different from the language they are learning.

Another aspect that is commonly found in classrooms has to do with the number of repetitions of the same audio script learners are allowed to listen to. The problem with repetitions, as Ur (2003) argues is that in real life, these types of listening repetitions do not happen. Language users need to do their best to somehow manage situations with only one portion of listening. Thus, listening in the classroom in some cases differs from everyday speech. That is, in order to have access to meaning, when having a conversation, listening to the radio, watching a program on television, among others, learners hardly ever have the chance to ask for repetition or ask the speaker to stop each time they do not get the intended message. Instead, language users take advantage of different strategies such as identification of key words and events to extrapolate relevant information, eye contact, body language, intonation, among others. From this perspective, learners need to be exposed to authentic material that guarantees their success once they have the opportunity to interact in the natural environment of the target language. Nevertheless, it is important to take into account that implementing fully authentic

material may sometimes lead to frustration and lack of success because everyday conversations involve different tenses, structures, pronunciation, and accents which demand high proficiency level. Consequently, the listening for elementary students would be something incomprehensible if the task and materials are not carefully chosen (Moran, 2005).

Moving from task implementation and its design to the cognitive processes learners have to go through during the exposure to the aural information, Goh's (2000, cited in Chen, 2005) findings shed light on listening comprehension problems associated to three cognitive processing phases (perception, parsing and utilization stages) proposed by Anderson (1983,1995, cited in Chen, 2005). The **perception stage** refers to problems learners find where they do not recognize familiar words, do not pay attention to the next part because they are still thinking about the meaning of what they heard; do not get anything from the beginning of the listening, As a result, learners experience lack of concentration. The **parsing stage** focuses on the fact that listeners "quickly forget what they heard" and is "unable to form mental representations from the words heard"; which leads to the misunderstanding of the rest. The **utilization stage** refers to "the understanding of words but not the intended message" and "the confusion to get the key ideas in the message."

In addition, dealing with demands and cognitive processes during the exposure to a listening task may have an effect on learners' performance and feelings. Some studies, including King & Behnke's (2003), have supported the idea that during the stages of a listening task (pre-listening, while listening and post listening stages), learners experience variations of state of anxiety regarding task requirements. Thus, in some cases learners' feelings towards the listening task are negatively affected. King & Behnke (2003) examined a hypothesis and found responses to a couple of research questions in their study of patterns of state anxiety levels and the feelings towards the listening task before, during and after the exposure to a listening test in which seventy-one undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory speech course, voluntarily took part in the project. The researchers hypothesized that state anxiety levels would be low prior to the exposure to the task, progressively increased during the task, and decreased significantly following the task. In the first and second research questions, researchers explored variations of task- directed affect as well as

variations between anxiety and performance prior, during and after the exposure to the listening task.

King & Behnke (2003) implemented the following procedures once they asked participants to take the test. There were assessments of levels of state anxiety and feelings towards the listening task before playing the audio or stimulus, two minutes into the listening, six minutes into the stimulus; at the conclusion of the stimulus tape, and at the conclusion of the fourteen item test following the stimulus tape. It is important to highlight that during the listening, the audio tape was paused for about a minute in order to provide participants enough time to complete the assessment and measurement described in the five-item anxiety measure and the four-item affect measure.

As a result, King & Behnke (2003) found some relevant arguments in their study, such as the variation of state levels of anxiety in listening caused by cognitive backlog (the amount of information learners have to retain taking into account the length of the audio and task requirements), the difference between listening and psychological pattern of public speaking, the dislike for the assignment and the negative correlation between anxiety and listening performance.

Regarding the variation of state levels of anxiety, the authors illustrated that such levels increase while learners are exposed to the listening task. That is, since the task is long and demanding the cognitive load increases; nonetheless, these levels of anxiety decrease at the end when the task is completed. The authors also pointed out that while the pattern of state anxiety of public speaking (psychological pattern) is evidenced before the performance, patterns of listening anxiety are more related to the ones evidenced during the performance (physiological pattern).

On the other hand, related to the feelings towards listening task, the authors reported that as students have to remember information while exposed to the task and deal with its requirements, demands and length of audio, the result of this communication load leads to the dislike of the assignment. The researchers noticed that there were significant negative correlations between anxiety and listening performance found during the listening activity, in contrast to the ones observed

before and at the end of task which showed no significant factors of correlation. Therefore, the important element is that anxiety measures give clear perception of the differences of performance evidenced while learners are exposed to the task.

Consequently, this study contributes to our thesis about the careful selection of the audio material and the criteria to design the listening task taking into account the amount of information learners have to remember, the length of the audio and the task requirements in order to avoid negative feelings towards the assignment as well as reducing the communicative load (cognitive backlog).

To conclude, based on the research that has been conducted on L2 listening problems and our criteria, we have evidenced that listening barriers start from the fact that some learners have been exposed to listening tasks that do not implement appropriate strategies nor adequate guidance. Besides, some teachers do not emphasize on the listening process, which is of gradual acquisition, and every effort is valued in terms of the results or products. Additionally, learners are not taught how to listen to English and they lack awareness and knowledge to apply a particular strategy.

4.3. Listening strategies

Facing listening tasks require the use of specific strategies that facilitate learners' comprehension, depending on the tasks' demands and learners' level of proficiency. Thus, it is important to identify those strategies and their effectiveness during the exposure to listening tasks. Teng (1998) analyzed the use of listening comprehension strategies among 51 college freshmen of a Taiwanese university who studied English as a foreign language; with a low-intermediate English level. The author argued that learners have little room to interact in English with native speakers of the target language, that they present constant reluctance to learn the target language due to the demands for joint entrance exams, and that they evidence unreflecting and passive learning styles. Teng (1993) suggested that, from a set of six strategy categories (compensation, cognitive, metacognitive, memory, social, and affective), there are ten strategies of regular use among the participants of his study. Such strategies, presented in a descending order according to the frequency of use,

are: Paying attention, translating, transferring, delaying speech production to focus on listening, using other clues, taking risks wisely, using linguistic clues, semantic mapping, repeating, and formally practicing with sounds and writing systems.   In addition, Teng (1998) also found that the ten strategies of less use among listeners are: Writing a language learning diary, cooperating with proficient users, using music, using a checklist, using laughter, rewarding yourself, planning for a language task, developing cultural understanding, using relaxation techniques, and listening to your body.   As a result, the author concluded that the strategies most highly used are those related to cognitive and metacognitive processes, whereas those under the affective category are rarely used since, according to the author, Taiwanese learners are more passive and unreflecting.   Moreover, the study also highlights the consistent use of participants' native language to assist listening comprehension since learners tend to use their prior linguistic knowledge in order to understand what they listen, even in a different language.

On the other hand, regarding listeners' level of proficiency, some differences were found throughout Teng's study (1998) in the use of listening strategies. First, the author suggests that the more listening strategies are used, the more proficiency in listening comprehension is evidenced. Secondly, the study also highlighted the importance of "seeking practice opportunities" in order to be an effective listener by taking advantage of the interaction with native or more proficient users as well as with the media (films, TV, internet, etc.). Finally, Teng's (1998) findings remark that effective listeners tend to use more the strategies of summarizing and highlighting, which allow them to draw conclusions constantly, concluding that those listeners pay more attention to the overall message rather than ineffective learners do.   In that sense, the study suggests that exposure to EFL listening is not enough if the appropriate guidance on how to listen is not provided. Consequently, Teng's study (1998) sheds light on the importance of raising awareness on the appropriate use of listening strategies regarding issues such as the role played by L1 (first or native language), learning styles, learners' profiles, learner's proficiency levels, and affective factors in listening comprehension. Such issues will allow us to determine how the use of listening comprehension strategies is affected by the incorporation of images in the design of listening tasks.

In consequence, it is necessary for learners to develop specific strategies to cope with listening activities so that meaning is grasped with a communicative purpose. For instance, Nunan (1997) suggests that different types of activities must be planned for a single listening text; an initial stage in which the context is identified, followed by the association of such context with specific events, and a final stage for discriminating specific aspects of those events. Furthermore, Dunkel (2007) emphasizes the importance of using strategies such as the elicitation of learners' background information about the text to be heard, the predictions made before being exposed to the recording, the skipping of unnecessary information, the identification of misunderstood information, the constant checking of comprehension as being exposed to the script, and the maintenance of a conversation by making appropriate responses. Therefore, activities carefully planned with a focus on the implementation of such listening strategies, empowers learners with the necessary tools to perform better in a listening comprehension activity. Otherwise, learners will not be able to deal with some common listening comprehension problems that, according to Yagang (1993), experts have identified through research such as coping with the message to be listened, the speed of listening texts, unfamiliar situations, constant topic variation, linguistic features (pronunciation patterns, use of idioms, and ungrammatical sentences), the speaker's accent, among others. On the other hand, Yagang (1993) also reports the issues Anderson and Lynch (1988) suggest as hindering comprehension such as the lack of sociocultural, factual and contextual knowledge. Besides, the author also argues that, since EFL language learners devote more time on reading than in oral interaction, their exposure to listening material is not enough to develop the strategies previously mentioned and henceforth achievements in their listening comprehension are not evidenced. Moreover, other environmental factors may also impede an effective comprehension such as noise levels, acoustics, quality of the recording, etc.

Consequently, EFL learners find listening difficult to cope with due to the multiple problems stated above, to the extent of creating not only affective but also cognitive barriers that arouse several consequences such as the lack of interest through listening activities, frustration when the message is not understood at once, fear to interact with peers or native speakers, the need to read a script to follow the thread of any listening text, among others. Accordingly, teachers need to plan

activities that foster listening strategies and provide enough support to ponder the different problems EFL learners may find to cope with listening comprehension.

4.4. Listening tasks

Teachers need to plan activities that foster listening strategies and provide enough support to ponder the different problems EFL learners may find to cope with listening comprehension. First, it is important to consider what Dunkel (2007) implies in terms of listening activities, in that pre-listening, while listening, and post-listening stages must be included and carefully planned. Thus, learners can be provided with the general background and key vocabulary in advance, filter out the information that is not needed, and exercise the short and long-term memory after being exposed to the listening text in order to have a better level of comprehension. Secondly, Nunan (1997) proposes a list of features to be considered when planning listening activities:

- The materials should be based on a wide range of authentic texts, including both monologues and dialogues;
- Schema-building tasks should precede the listening;
- Strategies for effective listening should be incorporated into the materials;
- Learners should be given opportunities to progressively structure their listening by listening to a text several times, and by working through increasingly challenging listening tasks;
- Learners should know what they are listening for and why;
- The task should include opportunities for learners to play an active role in their own learning;
- Content should be personalized.(p.1)

According to Nunan's layout (1997), materials, strategies, opportunities, purpose, contents, and pacing need to be carefully chosen and provided by facilitators when designing listening tasks. In that sense, the materials used to support these tasks, either adapted or designed, play also an important role in order to meet all the concerns discussed along this chapter. Thus, Saricoban (1999) proposes the incorporation of a sort of visual backup to enhance comprehension as well as the importance of awareness on environmental clues such as gestures, tones of voice, or expressions that may contribute in their comprehension. In addition, Yagang (1993) highlights the importance of using pictures and diagrams to help listeners guess and imagine.

Accordingly, as listening comprehension requires the development of cognitive skills, facilitators need to consider the type of EFL learners under their guidance before designing listening tasks. According to Rost (2002, cited in Dunkel, 2007), listening appeals to listeners' personal and mental sensitivity in order to interpret what the speaker conveys. Thus, the author proposes four orientations to categorize types of listening which are: Receptive listening, in which the listener focuses on what the speaker is transmitting; constructive listening, in which the listener builds his/her own interpretation of the message; collaborative listening, in which face to face interaction takes place to negotiate meaning with the speaker; and finally, transformative listening, in which meaning depends on the involvement, imagination, and empathy with the speaker. In that sense, facilitators must be aware of the type of listening learners are expected to face in order to design suitable tasks. That is, the demands of the listening activity need to enhance the types of listening proposed by Rost (2002, cited in Dunkel 2007) as well as fit learners' interests, skills, prior knowledge, and level of proficiency in a guided process, as Nunan (1997) proposes:

> In designing listening tasks, it is important to teach learners to adopt a flexible range of listening strategies. This can be done by holding the listening text constant (working, say, with a radio news broadcast reporting a series of international events), and getting learners to listen to the text several times, however, following different instructions each time. They might, in the first instance, be required to listen for gist, simply identifying the countries where the events have taken place. The second time they listen they might be required to match the places with a list of events. Finally, they might be required to listen for detail, discriminating between specific aspects of the event, or perhaps, comparing the radio broadcast with newspaper accounts of the same events and noting discrepancies or differences of emphasis. (p.1)

Consequently, listening comprehension activities that focus only on filling gaps or scanning specific words in a text, without a rationale, not only restrain the construction, the negotiation, or the creation of meaning but also constrain the development of mental processes that are crucial in the improvement of the listening skill in a foreign language. In that sense, facilitators are to implement listening tasks that involve real life situations such as messages left in answering machines, conversations on the telephone, radio and television broadcastings, among others. Such situations should be related to the learners' actual context as well as those real

life situations they are likely to face in the natural context of the target language. Therefore, the present study will be focused on the incorporation of visual material as an important tool in the design of listening comprehension tasks. As a result, it is important to shed light on what audio and visual material represent in listening comprehension.

4.5. Audio material

One of the aims of the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) Teacher is to foster Learners' interest toward the foreign language by taking advantage of the various resources that are available for this purpose. Audio Material is one important resource to take into consideration when it comes to having Learners exposed to the target language; yet it is crucial to keep in mind that the use of audio material in current EFL classrooms must be focused on developing Learner's skills for daily communication and interaction, not on preparing them to pass a listening examination (Thao, 2003).

Thao (2003) also argues that EFL Teachers tend to use modified audio material (material that is explicitly designed for teaching purposes) in order to make the material more intelligible to the students. However, modified material is often simplistic and/or unrealistic becoming unnatural for learners. Hence, Rogers (1988) suggests that there is great necessity to look for alternative audio material that can serve as a model of the natural use of the target language; in other words, audio material that is meaningful and helps foster communication. The more learners are exposed to the target language, the faster and better their learning process will be; though, it must be done carefully and without rushing Learners into language elements they are not prepared to deal with. It is advisable then to use audio material that has a positive effect on Learners' motivation (Richards, 2001); namely, audio material that provides authentic cultural information and arouses Learners' curiosity toward the target language. Audio material can not only consist of facts to be learnt; instead, it must encourage learners to understand and eventually use the target language (Shanahan, 1997), this can only happen if Learners feel they are learning something that is real: Living Language (a direct relation between the language classroom and the outside world).

The emphasis on foreign language learning has moved from a traditional approach (focused on the study of the language itself) to a communicative approach (learners acquire both linguistic and pragmatic competence). The application of audio material can promote effective communication by creating "a learning environment where students improve their language skills and acquire target culture" (Brauer, 2001).

The appropriate use of audio in EFL classrooms is crucial for optimal development of the learning process; that is to say Teachers are to be acquainted with the material in order to know how and when to implement it. The lack of knowledge with respect to the use of audio material (and multimedia in general) in the EFL classroom may lead to the misuse of this resource, which slows down and obstructs the learning process itself (Thao, 2003). Being in contact with audio plays an important role within the present project since it allows observers to analyze not only the reactions but also the different stages Learners go through when they are exposed to this kind of material, especially when it is provided along with images which are co-related to the audio itself.

Throughout the project, observers-researchers will use a wide variety of audio material that ranges from that which is adapted for specific teaching purposes (grammar, spelling, etc) to the authentic audio that involves daily activities in real life (conversations, radio programs, etc).

4.6. Visual materials

Visual materials are all the resources used by teachers in a learning environment to enhance learner's motivation and development of skills such as pictures, charts, realia, hand-made objects and even electronic and digital input (Jahangard 2007). According to this definition, a great set of resources different than a course book and the board, can be used in a learning environment to provide meaningful input that fits learners' interests and cultural background such as pictures cut from magazines and newspapers, graphic organizers that can be either hand-made or electronically designed, not only by the teachers but also by the learners, or

the surrounding objects into the classroom and out of it, many of which can be found right there or brought by the learners themselves. Additionally, the multimedia resources such as television programs, internet, documentaries, and movies also provide authentic and culturally rich input available for the learners and teachers at any time. In that sense, a listening task that involves any of the input mentioned empowers the learners, even from the earlier stages of the learning process, appealing to their interests and motivation.

Secondly, when including visual materials in listening tasks, the approach to be implemented determines the selection of the material and how effective it is as well as the procedures to follow. To begin, it is worth to analyze Ur's contrast (1984) between visual-aided and visual-based approaches which will be the basis of this research in the design of visual material. On one hand, visual-aided material refers to that in which the listening text is based on, such as the presentation in advance of a determined object whose history or description will be the content of the recording. On the other hand, the material specially designed with worksheets and pictures to mark responses or drawing conclusions based on the listening text is referred to as visual-based material. Based on Ur's explanation (1984), we will implement the visual-based approach in the design of listening tasks the participants will be exposed to. Moreover, some scholars such as Scrivener (2005) and Morley (1991) agree that, from the past 30 years, the top-down and the bottom up approaches (referred to as from general to specific and specific to general respectively) are the main bases to design listening tasks. In our specific case, Scrivener (2005) suggests the use of flashcards and picture stories as top-down activities since they provide a general perspective in the pre-listening stage of the activity to foresee the context.

Additionally, Morley (1991) supports the use of pictures since they enhance higher achievements in terms of contextual comprehension when listening tasks are held. Finally, a recent approach related to the use of videos in the EFL classroom, proposed by Ausubel (cited in Wilbershied and Berman, 2004) has to do with the design of advance organizers, which consist of screenshots taken from the video to be used as predictors or picture stories and provide contextual support to the information contained in the story. Therefore, the learners will have a resourceful tool to be checked as reminders of specific events that have been heard. As a result,

before designing the tasks and selecting the materials to be used, it is important to support that by a theoretical approach in order to analyze the methodology and determine the evaluation criteria to be applied.

5. Methodology

The present study is qualitative as it deals with participants' behavioral patterns concerning performance and perceptions towards listening tasks that incorporate images.

This research was conducted as a descriptive-interpretative case study since, as Yin and Stake (cited in Tellis, 1997) explain, the data was taken from multiple sources such as interviews and field notes, in which participants' viewpoints are taken into account. In addition, this kind of study is also multi-perspectival, as explained by Tellis (1997).

> Case studies are multi-perspectival analyses. This means that the researcher considers not just the voice and perspective of the actors, but also of the relevant groups of actors and the interaction between them. (p.1)

As a result, we started to design the case study protocol proposed by Yin (cited in Tellis, 1997) as we determined the required aspects: participants' background, theoretical principles regarding second language acquisition, setting where data was collected, object of inquiry, and our writing skills, among others.

5.1. Context

The study was conducted at the Local State University of Pereira (Colombia) which is located in the suburbs of the city with an area of 29,14 hectares, surrounded by natural landscapes. The university reports about 13.000 students registered at programs such as industrial, chemistry, electricity, informatics and mechanical engineering and technology; and others such as healthcare, teaching, arts and humanities, among others. The university also contributes in the development of competences in foreign languages such as French, Chinese Mandarin, German, and English through the courses offered at the University Language Institute (ULI). These courses are available for the University students, which can take English courses without any charge and for the citizens in general. ULI started as the result

of an agreement of the Superior Council of the Local State University in order to provide students with the necessary competences in English, as the instruction in this language was conducted as part of the curricula of each program. The Council's decision permitted the students to access to high quality English education, with no charge whatsoever, enabling students to perform successfully in a proficiency test requested by the University in order to graduate. In that sense, ULI attempts to enable participants in the development of competences in English as a Foreign Language so they are able to interact in the target language at different scenarios of their professional lives. ULI's methodology focuses on a competence-centered approach which involves the development of general and communicative competences in the target language. Hence, the institute offers a program consisting of 6 courses for technology students and 8 courses for the rest of the programs. However, the amount of courses will gradually increase up to 16 courses in order to grant a B2 proficiency in English as it is established by the Colombian Ministry of Education. The proficiency test required at the time of the present study is based on the Preliminary English Test (PET) that has international acknowledgment on the grounds of testing competences for independent users of English (B1 proficiency level). Moreover, ULI's resources consist of a staff of about fifty facilitators; classrooms distributed throughout the campus, including two audio-visual rooms (equipped with television set, CD players, DVD, and videos), and a computers room (with internet access); and text books provided by the university.

5.2. Participants

The subjects of the present project were seven Spanish-speaking students from different programs offered at the Local State University who voluntarily accepted to be part of the study. The participants of our study belong to different programs at the Local State University, whose ages range from 17 to 24 years old; three of them attend a course 5 (pre-intermediate level) and four of them attend a course 7 (intermediate) at ULI. However, their actual proficiency levels in English are varied, two of them have a pre-intermediate level (A2), other two participants report an intermediate level (B1), and three of them present lower levels (A1). The participants attend 40-hour courses guided by two of the researchers of the present project once a week during 5 hours per class.

5.3. Instructional design

The listening tasks designed for the purpose of the present study were implemented throughout three stages (pre, while, post listening stages) as proposed by Dunkel (2007), so that data was collected during participants' exposure before, during and after the tasks. That is, a first stage in which the visual material was selected for designing worksheets (see annexes), posters, and flashcards to be incorporated in the tasks, regarding the content of the recordings (audio and video) and the participants' cultural background. In that sense, some images were used in the pre-listening stage to elicit participants' information about the topic, content, or socio-cultural features embedded in the recording. In addition, screenshots were taken from the videos used in some of the tasks during the while-listening stage so that participants could make associations for further activities; these images were included in the sequence in which the audiovisual input was presented. Moreover, other images found on Internet were presented to participants according to the recording sequence. Nevertheless, some tasks did not involve sequence but rather used the images to raise awareness on specific information mentioned along the script; so that participants should match images with propositions, check boxes for identifying people and events, or take notes under the images to grasp main ideas. Finally, participants' level of comprehension was evidenced through group questioning, group and individual retelling, pair-work discussions and written summaries, comprehension questions, true-false statements, role playing possible subsequent scenes, and charting. Furthermore, the post-listening activities proposed permitted the participants to use the input grasped to perform in oral and written discourse activities, thus integrating comprehension and production skills.

5.4. Data collection procedures

After going through the theory that is covered in the literature review, we started to design the listening tasks to be implemented within the regular classes at the institution. For this design, we used audio recordings taken from the material provided by the institution (course book CDs) as well as from some Internet sources. We also used images that were either included in the handouts (pictures, photos) or

shown to the participants before they listened to the actual recording (flashcards, hand-made posters). Then, we implemented the tasks designed during the classes that were guided by two of the researchers; these classes were held once a week for a period of 5 hours. Each session devoted to the implementation of the task spent about 30 minutes. Subsequently, two of these sessions were videotaped by the non-participant observer so that the data collected was used as field notes. As Emerson (1995) suggests, field notes are "accounts describing experiences and observations the researcher has made while participating in an intense and involved manner". After having implemented the tasks for seven classes, a semi-structured interview (see annexes) was conducted and video-taped; in this interview, participants described their impressions and achievements regarding their performance in the tasks. Thus, the time devoted for designing and implementing tasks, video-taping, and conducting the interviews was two months.

5.5. Data analysis

We analyzed the data collected based on grounded theory (codifying, grouping, categorizing, and drawing conclusions) in order to answer the research questions and report our findings so that further research could be conducted. The process of data analysis was divided into four steps as follows:

First of all, we watched the videos of the recorded sessions and the videotaped interviews to have an overall idea of the elements that we could not notice at first (attitudes, behaviors). Then, we made the transcriptions from both the interviews and the video-taped sessions. In addition, we gave each participant a code (no real names were used); each code consists of four items, the first two items refer to the question asked/answered and the other two refer to the initials of the participant (e.g. Q1JM, Q2DC, Q3SA, etc.). This coding process was implemented to have a thorough list that could be used later to support both groups and categories. Then, we started to look for commonalities among the answers (samples) provided by the participants; these commonalities allowed us to build groups, which were later organized in an outline to be used for the construction of the different categories of the study. Finally, we wrote the findings section, which was the result of the analysis of each category.

5.6. Role of the researchers

Our role as researchers was that of participant and non-participant observers. That is, two of the researchers worked on the design and implementation of the tasks throughout the classes observed since they were also the facilitators in charge of each group. As for the third researcher (non-participant observer), he was in charge of conducting the interviews and recording some of the sessions.

6. Findings

6.1. Images foster the use of learning strategies during the exposure to listening comprehension tasks.

After analyzing the answers provided by the participants in the interview, we found that the incorporation of images fostered the use of cognitive and memory strategies among participants during their performance in listening comprehension tasks. Based on Oxford's model (1990) for learning strategies adapted by Teng (1993), we will describe those that participants used at each of the tasks' stages:

6.1.1. Cognitive strategies: During the pre-listening stage, some images and key vocabulary were introduced in order to elicit information about the audio script. Thus, the participants used prediction and contextualization strategies regarding their background knowledge such as cultural information and declarative knowledge prompted by the input provided (images). The following samples were taken from the interview in questions 1, 4 and 7 (see annexes) in which the participants expressed how the prediction strategy, supported by images, was utilized.

In the first sample, the participant describes how she relates the images to a possible script by picturing the story in her mind before listening, so that she builds her own version of the script and then she compares that version with the actual story.

> Q1LR: "(…) uno antes de escuchar ve las imágenes, analiza, mira mas o menos sobre que puede ser la historia, ya como que… se sitúa en un lugar, entonces pues escucha y ya sabe mas o menos de lo que están hablando."

According to the second sample, the participant SA uses the images as a guide for identifying and predicting the context of the audio script when he points out that "(…) las imágenes le ayudan a uno a guiarse, le…le dan a uno un contexto (…), entonces ya sabe uno de que tema van a hablar, o de que tema están hablando (…)". In sample three, PG expresses that she relates images with what she knows so she can build a general idea of the story, as she mentions "con relaciones; yo miro

las imágenes y entonces más o menos me hago como una idea de lo que voy a escuchar (…)". In addition, the participant JM points out that as soon as he sees the images he starts to predict the aural information before the recording is played. As a result, the images permit them to build their schemata (mental linkages) with new input (images) so they can predict what they audio script is related to.

> Q7JM: "Mm... Pues... si e... es, es interesante porque... algunas veces podemos empezar viendo las imágenes sin escuchar nada y desde, desde ese mismo momento podemos empezar a predecirlo; y luego de que ya, eh... reproducen el *listening*, es muchísimo mas fácil ya…comprenderlo todo; las imágenes definitivamente son muy útiles."

On the other hand, they complemented the use of prediction strategies with contextualization, as it is evidenced in the samples below. Such samples relate to questions 1, 3, 4, 5, and 7, from the interviews, in which three out of seven interviewees described how the contextualization strategy was stimulated by the incorporation of images in the listening tasks.

In the sample below, DC depicts how he focuses on the situation of the story, based on the images he sees ("carro") and the words he listens to, by placing himself in the context. Hence, the data reveals that images prompt the association with already known vocabulary that is grasped from the audio script. Consequently, the connections made by the participant enable him to build the context in which the story takes place.

> Q1DC: "…con esas ayudas visuales pues...uno se ubica mas en el contexto, se ubica mas en…se escucha por ejemplo…ve un carro…ve la imagen…se escucha carro…se ubica en lo que está pasando; es una ayuda muy buena para ubicarse en la situación de la conversación…"

The participant JM states in question 3, that he uses the images and his prior knowledge to contextualize the story and increase his lexicum. The sample below suggests that the combination of images and prior knowledge activates the capability of contextualizing the information and raises awareness on new words that emerge in the task.

> Q3JM: "…el conocimiento previo es necesario porque contextualizando, que es lo que debe hacerse en Ingles con la ayuda de estas imágenes, uno aprende las palabras y... las memoriza inmediatamente; y es una muy buena forma de aprender... léxico. "

In sample three, the participant SA acknowledges the construction of a context to the images when he says "(…) las imágenes me permiten entonces crear el contexto de lo que estoy escuchando", which enable him to make connections with the key words he listens, as portrayed in the phrase "(…) y ya busco las palabras claves (…) de ese mismo contexto."

Finally, the last sample allows us to evidence how the images guide concentration and focus to skip non-relevant information after the listener has determined the context in which the audio script takes place.

> Q7SA: "Me parece bueno, primero le muestran a uno las imágenes y como decía entonces ya le permite a uno ubicarse en un contexto para ya después uno escuchar; ayuda... a (…) en la concentración, a "focalizar" mas la atención en ese tema."

Thus, the incorporation of images allowed listeners to be aware of the use of prediction and contextualization strategies to enhance concentration as their brains make connections between prior knowledge and key words heard.

6.1.2. Memory strategies: According to the participants' responses, logical associations between images and what they were listening were made in order to comprehend the content of the listening tasks. Some participants also recognized some words they considered essential to identify the context of the aural information. The samples presented below refer to questions 1, 4, 5 and 7 from the interview (see annexes), in which six out of seven participants expressed how mental linkages, associated to the memory strategy, were made.

In the first sample, the participant SA speaks about the ease to relate what is heard in the sample to the images, he points out that "(…) las imágenes le ayudan a uno a guiarse (…) y le permite a uno crear una conexión lógica…mas fácil". In consequence, the use of images serves as a means to stimulate the construction of mental connections.

In the second sample, the participant LR describes how the images help her make sense of what she listens to by making mental linkages; she says "(…) y voy poniéndole lógica, voy poniéndole lógica con respecto a las imágenes y lo que voy escuchando." According to the excerpt, the interaction with the images while the recording is played permits the organization of ideas in a coherent way.

In the third sample, the participant expresses that the adequacy of the sequence in which the task is presented allows him to analyze each image to have an overall idea. That is, the layout in which images are presented before the recording is played stimulates the connections made during the exposure to the audio.

> Q7DC: "Una secuencia adecuada (...) eh... ya que... primero nos muestran las imágenes y después el listening entonces yo... primero analizo las imágenes "ah, eso es tal cosa", después ya con el listening le pongo lógica. "

In the fourth sample, the participant highlights the importance of the sequence in which images are presented as the recording is played. Namely, the layout of the images serve as a route throughout the events presented in the audio script, so that general comprehension is enhanced as the story is visualized in their minds.

> Q7PG:"Pues que si digamos las imágenes están en el orden en que va... la cinta de *listening*, pues es mas fácil porque (...) pues, ya tiene como unas pautas para saber como donde se va ubicando a medida que, que va escuchando."

In the next sample, the same participant reports that the inclusion of images facilitate and support her listening comprehension while being exposed to the audio material. The excerpt below illustrates how images serve as important reference to identify cues such as events, people, or key words found in the recording to scaffold general comprehension.

> Q5 PG: "(…) y ya luego digamos escuchando, si escucho algo relacionado a la…a la imagen me dirijo a la imagen y ya me hago como a una idea general pues de…de lo que esta pasando."

In the sixth sample, the participant describes the ease to understand the situation that takes place in the recording since he is able to extract keywords from the images used. Thus, the data proves that learners who are exposed to listening tasks supported by images can identify key words essential for understanding the context of the audio script.

> Q1JM: "La verdad es mucho mas…er…fácil comprender la situación en la cual el listening se está desarrollando porque por lo general uno encuentra palabras claves que con la ayuda de la imagen ayuda a comprender todo el contexto en general, entonces para mi…hacer un listening con imágenes es completamente…er…estratégico".

In the following sample, the participant states that the implementation of images within the listening task gives her more confidence to understand the task itself; that is, she is able to make logical associations between images and listening content in order to follow the thread of conversations and locate herself into the context where the situations takes place.

> Q1LR: " Pues… me siento mas segura porque …uno antes de escuchar ve las imágenes, analiza, mira mas o menos sobre que puede ser la historia, ya como que… se sitúa en un lugar, entonces pues escucha y ya sabe mas o menos de lo que están hablando. Uno mira las imágenes y ya, pues, como que se sitúa, así sea por una palabra o para coger una idea global"

In addition, the sample below suggests that keywords grasped from the images allow the contextualization of the information in order to understand a great deal of what is said in the recording.

> Q3SA: "Lo relaciono es... eh... mas que todo s... seria por lógica de... de lógica del contexto, osea, la imagen y... lo relaciono con las palabras claves de lo que estoy escuchando. "

In sample nine, the participant states that even though there are situations in the recording that he may not recognize at once, the keywords drawn with the support of the images help him improve his level of comprehension. Consequently, in order to comprehend the content of the recording, it is not necessary to understand

every single word; instead, the association between grasped words and images lead to an overall comprehension.

> Q4DC: "Pues de por si cuando uno escucha, puede que uno no entienda todo, pero coge algunas palabras, unos…como unos "tips", entonces al usted ver las imágenes como que puede desarrollar mas fácilmente de que era de lo que estaban hablando, o lo relaciona."

In the last sample, the participant reports that while he is exposed to the recording, he scans key words related to the image in order to give meaning to the picture. Therefore, the images convey more than what is shown in the picture depending on the content of the story and the impact on listeners. For instance, the picture of a tree can be related to nature, the woods, or a park if it is presented without any other support. However, the listener gives a conventional meaning after the exposure to a story that places that tree in a specific context. As a result, different personal interpretations become a single meaningful interpretation regarding the oral input received.

> Q4 SA: "(…) ya busco las palabras claves de…del…de ese mismo contexto, entonces si estoy viendo un árbol comienzo a buscar entonces palabras como hoja, rama, depende de lo que estén hablando."

6.2. Learners' perceptions towards listening tasks are positively affected when images are incorporated.

The participants expressed their feelings before and after the exposure to listening tasks supported by images. Therefore, we identified the barriers that block learners' success in listening comprehension tasks and how these barriers can be overcome with the incorporation of images. Some participants expressed that they used to feel blocked and nervous due to the different accents of the recordings, the tasks' demands, the speed of the recording, and external noise that limited their level of understanding. In addition, the data collected permitted to evidence that the incorporation of images lowers participants' level of anxiety, making a deep impression on what listening tasks convey. The samples below were taken from the answers to questions 2, 5 and 6 in the interview.

In the first sample, the participant points out that English accents (American-British) in listening tasks difficult his level of understanding as he has been exposed to a determined type of accent. Thus, the lack of exposure to a variety of aural input inhibits learners' performance, therefore limiting their level of comprehension and affecting their level of confidence.

> Q2JM: "(...) es muy difícil porque los listenings…como usted debe saber
> están…erm…pues…son diferentes…por el acento, puede ser británico, puede ser americano,
> entonces se puede complicar (...)"

In the next sample, the participant JM also states that external noises interfere with his concentration during the exposure to the listening task. Hence, he expresses that his level of concentration and understanding is blocked as he gets distracted by sudden noises. He comments about comprehension that "(...) puede ser variable porque en el momento uno puede estar escuchando ruidos entonces puede distraerse o simplemente no comprender palabras (...)". As a result, environmental distractors (noise) need to be considered during the exposure to a recording since in a real-life interaction this interference occurs. Thus, selective listening (skipping distracting noise) must be enhanced among listeners by raising awareness on the setting in which the listening task takes place.

In the following excerpt, the participant PG describes her struggle to deal with the speed of the speakers as she thinks that every single word in the recording must be understood. PG states that she finds herself in the need to follow the pace of the speakers; though she admits that important information is missed during this process. In that sense, the audio recordings used for specific tasks must be selected regarding listeners' level of proficiency, especially if the audio material is authentic. Moreover, the tasks' demands must be gradually increased to get listeners familiar with different pacing, which is likely to happen in real life situations.

> Q5PG: "(...) mientras está haciendo el ejercicio uno si va comprendiendo pues como lo que
> está pasando, pero como es... tan rápido...o sea como tiene uno que ir… a la velocidad que
> va…escuchando entonces muchas veces deja como ideas aparte (...)"

Nevertheless, some participants reported that their preconceptions concerning listening comprehension barriers were affected after the incorporation of images into listening tasks. Namely, the samples below suggest that participants' confidence increased although their levels of engagement varied throughout the tasks.

In the next sample, LR's response reveals that the images foster analytical skills and help understand the main topic of the story. That is, the images allow the participant to identify key words, to be aware of the context of the story, and to grasp the general idea of the content; thus, the level of confidence towards the listening task increases if there is a constant interaction between both visual and aural input.

> Q1LR: " Pues… me siento mas segura porque …uno antes de escuchar ve las imágenes, analiza, mira mas o menos sobre que puede ser la historia, ya como que… se sitúa en un lugar, entonces pues escucha y ya sabe mas o menos de lo que están hablando. Uno mira las imágenes y ya, pues, como que se sitúa, así sea por una palabra o para coger una idea global"

The excerpt below supports how the contextualization images provide reinforces confidence towards listening tasks. For instance, in the phrase "sin las imágenes tal vez…se siente uno más inseguro", the participant DC states that the absence of supportive images makes him feel less confident.

> Q1DC: "Me siento mas seguro ya que ahí con esas ayudas visuales pues...uno se ubica mas en el contexto, (…) se ubica en lo que está pasando; es una ayuda muy buena para ubicarse en la situación de la conversación, de lo que está escuchando…porque sin las imágenes tal vez…se siente uno más inseguro."

In the sample below, the participant SA explains that the images make him feel comfortable with listening tasks due to the contextual information they provide, allowing him to make logical connections before and during the exposure to the recording. Hence, the images guide learners in the construction of mental mapping that enables them to identify the context where the story takes place.

Q1SA: "Pues es más cómodo porque las imágenes le ayudan a uno a guiarse, le…le dan a uno un contexto (…) entonces ya sabe uno de que tema van a hablar, o de que tema están hablando y le permite a uno crear una conexión lógica…más fácil"

In addition, the same participant expresses in the excerpt below that the implementation of images in listening activities lower his level of anxiety. He states that "no se siente uno como tan perdido, tan ansioso" to report that his performance and level of engagement improved.

Q6SA:"(…) pienso que las imágenes le dan a uno mas seguridad. Es mas cómodo la actividad, no, no se siente uno como tan perdido, tan ansioso…entonces le quita a uno ansiedad las imágenes".

In the next sample, the participant JM states that after interacting with the listening task, he feels more confident as he is able to identify key words associated to the images provided. In that sense, the level of confidence raises as the listener can identify the context in which the story occurs.

Q2JM: "(…) con la ayuda de imágenes uno solamente necesita escuchar una palabra y…con algo de contextualización uno se siente mucho mejor…después de haber hecho la actividad"

In the last sample, the participant DC acknowledges the improvement in his performance when interacting with recorded material to the incorporation of images in the tasks. He asserts that "(…) antes… pienso que era mas bajo (referring to his comprehension level), porque obviamente había menos nivel ahí…mas nivel de dificultad al no tener esas ayudas (...)". Therefore, the data suggests that, as learners' level of comprehension improves, their confidence also increases.

6.3. The activation of listeners' linguistic and cultural background facilitates comprehension and fosters learners' involvement throughout the tasks.

Samples taken from the video-taped sessions permit to evidence how facilitators use images to guide participants throughout the listening tasks. The data illustrate how images are used to activate participants' prior linguistic and cultural

knowledge in order to make predictions, present new vocabulary, raise awareness on language use, and assess group and individual comprehension during the pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening stages. Furthermore, group's involvement is noticeable as participants demonstrate willingness to contribute by giving their opinions, answering questions, or sharing experiences. The evidence will be presented as follows:

6.3.1. Activation during pre-listening stage:

In one of the video-taped sessions, the facilitator shows some printed images related to shopping malls, a stadium, and touristic places from the growing coffee region of Colombia (Panaca theme park, Ciudad Victoria mall, Hernan Ramirez stadium) in order to activate participants' cultural knowledge, as they can relate those places to personal experiences. Therefore, the next sample evidences how these pictures trigger participants' interest towards the task as they are familiar to the places shown.

> Facilitator (F): "(…) or do you know these places?"
> Learners: "Panaca"
> F: shows another picture and a learner says "Victoria city"
> F: "and what is this?"
> Learners: "Panaca"
> F: "and what is this?"
> A learner: "Expensive!" "Expensive!" (referring to Panaca)
> Leaner: "stadium"
> F: "what is the name of the stadium?"
> Learners: " Hernan Ramirez"
> PG: " Hernan Ramirez Villegas"

In the same video-taped session, the facilitator shows other printed images of fast food and encourages participants to share in group their food preferences when they visit the places previously presented. In the following sample, it is evidenced how easily participants engaged in the task by identifying their favorite meals in the images. Code switching is also evidenced in the words "empanada" and "salchipapa" (typical Colombian food) as these words belong to participants' native

context. Nonetheless, other English words such as "hot dog", "ice cream", and "hamburger" were also mentioned demonstrating participants' range of vocabulary for their level.

> F: what about the food… you eat when you go to these...those places?" "do you eat this?"
> **After that, facilitator shows some fast food images to learners:**
> (…)
> F: "hamburger?, hot dog?, Salchipapa?, empanadas?(Learners laugh when they listen salchipapa and some move their heads saying yes), empanada
> J: laughs
> PG: moves her head saying yes when she listens to the word "salchipapa."
> Learner: "ice cream"
> F: "what do you eat?"
> Learners: "Ice cream"
> F: "ice cream? You like ice cream"
> Another learner: Hamburger
> F: "Hamburger?"
> PG:"Salchipapa"
> F: "Salchipapa?" Ok what do you eat?" (asking another learner).
> Learner: "Hotdog"

Then, in the same session, the facilitator presents some foreign dishes such as "Koftas", "Kebabs", "Fondue", and "Rosti", in order to present new vocabulary related to the audio script content. In the next sample, the facilitator asks participants to repeat the words introduced as the image is shown. In the following excerpt, the facilitator also describes what these dishes consist of so that other important vocabulary is also introduced such as "lamb", "pot", "melt", and "fork". Then, the data shows how acquired cultural information helps in the process of presenting new key vocabulary.

> F: (the facilitator points out the two pictures) "they are made of meat, of meat of…lamb (…) they are prepared with …eh meat of lamb (…) do you like it?"
> Some learners: "Nooo!" others "maybe" another learner "I like it"

F:"Fondue is a dish… in a pot you put cheese…cheese…you put cheese and the cheese you know with the fork you start …eh is melted, the cheese is melted here so with the fork you start taking out…the cheese. And finally, Rosti"

Lrs: "Rosti"

F: "Rosti,

Lrs: "rosti"

F:"which is prepared with meat and potatoes as you can see…meat and potatoes…so I'm going to point it out…to point out one and you tell me the name."

Lrs: "koftas, kebabs, Fondiu, fondue"

In the sample bellow, it is evidenced how the facilitator emphasizes the repetition of new words in order to put them to practice. Thus, the participants can compare some features of their own culture with new elements of foreign cultures (food) by using drills as images are shown.

(…)and now, these are some dishes…food from other…countries. So for example these are called Koftas…repeat koftas (Facilitator points out the image and its word written on the board)

Lrs: "Koftas"

F: " and Kebabs"

Lrs: "kebabs"

F:" Kebabs, and what about this? Fondue!"

Lrs: "Fondue"

F: "Fondue, reapeat!"

Lrs: "fondue"

In the next excerpt, the facilitator describes some images and asks participants to identify other images incorporated in the worksheet. When the word "pyramid" is elicited, participants as well as other learners, mispronounce the word. Thus, awareness on language use is raised as the facilitator recasts the word mentioned and asks learners to repeat while pointing out the images.

F: "these are temples, snow, this is someone looking like a book, like an old book, you know, these are?"

Lrs: "koftas, beach"

F: "beach"

Group: "/pairamids/" "Egypt"

F: "Egypt? or how do you call this?"

Group: "piramides" " pyramids"

F: Pyramids! Repeat!

 PG and J: "Pyramids."

6.3.2. Activation during while-listening stage: In the following excerpts, it can be illustrated how images are used to raise awareness on language use as well as to assess group and individual comprehension. For instance, the first sample permits to portray how pronunciation mistakes arise after the exposure to the images and the recording and how immediate feedback is provided. Consequently, participants PG and J manage to overcome the mistake they made.

PG: (hesitating) "woolly hat" (she mispronounces this word).

F: "How do you pronounce it?"

PG and other classmates: "W<u>oo</u>lly hat" (with the sound /ɔ: /)

F: (correcting) "Woolly hat!" /wʊli/

PG and J repeated it accurately.

In regards with individual and group assessment to determine levels of comprehension, the excerpt to follow shows the way participants use check boxes to associate images with descriptions made by three different people along the recording. The facilitator asks participants as a group to report who talks about the topics embedded in the images. The answers obtained from the participants reflect their accurate level of comprehension as they successfully identify each character (Silvia, Fatima, and Karl). Therefore, it is evidenced how association between visual and aural input were made.

F :(…) "who talks about temples?"

Group:" Silvia" (SA, remains quiet an looks at the facilitator as well as J. PG is erasing something from the worksheet).

F: "Who talks about snow?"

SA: "Karl" (puts a tick on his answer).

 F: "who talks about the old book like in a museum?

Group: "Fatima" (J moves her head in agreement with the group).

F: "who talks about Kebabs?"

SA: "Fatima"

F: "Who talks about skiing?"

SA: "Karl"

In addition, the sample below provides more evidence on the way assessment is conducted while the listening task takes place. At this point, participants' level of understanding is checked as they are asked to identify the image that is not related to the description heard. In that sense, PG and SA demonstrate an optimal comprehension level since both answered correctly, even though SA does not answer aloud. As a result, the data evidences how learners incorporate the word previously presented ("cruise") to their vocabulary range with the aid of the image (Sylvia's image) in order to make new associations.

F: "OK...so… based on that, which is the one that does not belong to…to Silvia's information?"

PG: "the cruise"

F: "what is the first one?"

PG: "the cruise"

F: "the cruise? (addressing the group) "Do you agree?"

J: (Looks at the facilitator but does not say anything.)

F: "exactly! The cruise does not belong!"

SA: (ticks on Silvia's images)

F: "what about the second one?"

In a different video tape session, the facilitator assesses group comprehension by asking the whole group to use a single sentence to retell the audio script. As it is presented in the following sample, hand-made images are used to guide participants through the sequence of the story so the posters can serve as input to recall information. Hence, in order to have learners retell the information previously heard, they need to activate their prior linguistic knowledge (grammar and vocabulary) so that the facilitator can correct emerging mistakes.

FACILITATOR: "You're going to listen up again and you're going to do the same exercise we did at first, beginning the class. Create...but in this case it's not creating but retelling...this story as it happened, as the guy is telling to the officer...one sentence by sentence, but this time another person is going to start. (...) so, again, listen and follow the sequence, use the images to keep the sequence. Then you will use the images again to retell the story".

6.3.3. Activation during post-listening stage:

In the first sample, the facilitator uses a comprehension question to have participants discuss and think of facts that support their contributions by taking advantage of the images. For instance, when the facilitator asks about the reaction of one of the characters in the story, the participant LR stresses the phrase "(…) he was taking drugs or something like that..." to explain that the police officer did not believe the man's story.   According to this sample, it is evident that the participant understands the content of the audio script as she shows confidence when she answers the question with significant support.

> FACILITATOR: "Taking advantage of the images to remember some facts and to make correlations, let's go over these questions, OK?...let's go over those questions...now, erm... Did the officer believe his story? Yes or no, and how do you know?"
> GROUP: "No, he doesn't"
>
> FACILITATOR: "He doesn't?"
>
> GROUP: "He didn't"
>
> FACILITATOR: "He didn't...believe his story. How do you know?"
>
> LR: "Because of the question...that...if he was taking drugs or something like that..."
>
> FACILITATOR: "(interrupting)...Yes, because some of the questions he asked...Are you taking medications? You know..."

In the third sample, the facilitator asks two comprehension questions to the participants as a group, in order to elicit general information about the countries described in the recording. When the facilitator asks about Silvia's country, the group immediately uses the drinks shown in the images as a prompt to describe the country. Yet the participants PG and J remain silent as they are still working on the task. On the other hand, the participant SA utters "(…) museums and it's very hot and have the pyramids" to describe Fatima's country (Egypt). Hence, after the exposure to the recording and the images, the participant SA manages to combine

prior cultural information with the content of the story, leading to an optimal level of understanding.

> F: "What is Silvia's country like?" "One volunteer…one"
> Group: "The Silvia's country, people like the tequila, beer…"
> (PG and J continue focused on the task).
> F: "Let's going to Fatima."
> "What is Fatima´s country like?"
> SA: "(…) museums and it's very hot and have the pyramids"
> F: "the pyramids excellent!" and finally, what is Karl's country like?
> Group:" It's very cold"

In the following sample, the facilitator asks the participants to work in pairs to give suggestions to one another about one of the countries from the recording. The facilitator assesses individual comprehension by means of peer interaction so that participants use the information they recall from the images and the audio script. In the excerpt, the participant PG says that she recommends Mexico for the temples and the beaches. Thus, the activation of prior cultural background throughout the task's stages is complemented with the new information obtained from the recording. In that sense, oral production can also benefit from the process of the listening task since the corrections made, the interactions, and the new vocabulary enhances accuracy and confidence when speaking.

> F: asks PG "which country PG did you recommend to…J?"
> PG: "I recommend Mexico"
> F: "Why?"
> PG: "Because Mex…Mexico is a interest country… because has many many…history
> cities..places like..the Aztec Temples or has many beautiful beach…beaches and…"

As it is evidenced, the incorporation of images in the design of listening tasks permitted to evidence how the cognitive and memory learning strategies are fostered throughout the exposure to recorded material. Moreover, learners' perceptions towards listening tasks changed significantly when images were incorporated. Additionally, the incorporation of images in listening tasks stimulated the activation of listeners' linguistic and cultural background, facilitating comprehension and fostering involvement with the tasks.

7. Discussion

In the current study, results indicate that cognitive and memory strategies are frequently used during the exposure to listening tasks that incorporate images. Namely, prediction and contextualization in regards to cognitive strategies and use of key words and mental linkages, related to memory strategies. The results differ from Teng's findings (1998) which suggest that among the cognitive strategies used by EFL learners, translating, transferring, and paying attention stand as the most highly used. Teng's study does not consider the use of key words, the construction of mental linkages, the making of predictions and contextualizing as relevant as the present study proposes. The differences between our results and Teng's (1998) lie on the method used to foster participants' implementation of listening strategies. Teng (1998) exposed the participants to a single listening activity and then asked subjects to answer a questionnaire about the strategies used. In contrast, the current study was conducted during a process, in which the participants were exposed to listening tasks guided throughout stages, followed by an interview in which the participants reflected on the strategies used throughout the process. Nevertheless, both studies concur in that the exposure to EFL listening tasks is not enough if the appropriate guidance on how to listen is not provided.

As for the implementation of activities, the present study supports what Nunan (1997) and Dunkel (2007) state regarding appropriate guidance throughout the task that enhances the use of effective strategies. Specifically, the findings provided in this study acknowledge the importance of leading learners along the activities by provoking the making of predictions, associations, and conclusions. In the same line, Nunan (1997) suggests that the stages of a task should include the identification of the context, the association with specific events, and the discrimination of specific aspects. Moreover, the current study highlights the relevance of learners' background knowledge in the processes of elicitation, feedback, self-monitoring, and assessment. Similarly, Dunkel (2007) stresses the value of learners' declarative knowledge in order to elicit and focus on information related to the topic of the recording. For instance, the findings of this study reveal that images guide

concentration so that unnecessary information is skipped, in accordance to Dunkel's (2007) statement in terms of strategies used along listening tasks.

On the other hand, regarding learners' perceptions towards listening tasks, the present study shows that learners tend to feel blocked and nervous towards the tasks due to different accents of the recordings, tasks' demands, speed of the recording, and external noise that limits their level of understanding. Such finding confirms what Ur (2003) asserts about learners' constraints during the exposure to listening tasks such as dealing with foreign sounds, trying to understand every single word, following the rate and speed of native-sounding speech, asking for constant repetition, feeling overwhelmed with the demands of the tasks, and losing interest due to the length of some recordings, among others. In addition, the results obtained in the present study demonstrate that the incorporation of images lower participants' level of anxiety as their comprehension improves, confirming what Morley (1991) suggests about the use of pictures to achieve a higher contextual comprehension in listening tasks. Consequently, the current study reveals that learners' preconceptions concerning listening comprehension barriers changed after the incorporation of images into listening tasks. Specifically, the images serve as tools for listeners in the identification of key words and the context of the story in order to grasp general ideas, increasing their level of confidence towards the listening task. In contrast, Goh (2000, cited in Chen 2005) cites the stages proposed by Anderson (1995, cited in Chen 2005) to argue that during the perception stage, learners experience difficulties to recognize familiar words and follow the thread of the story since they stop to think about the meaning of isolated chunks. On the contrary, the current study reveals that if learners are guided throughout the task with the support of images the constraints portrayed by Goh are considerably reduced. In addition, the conclusions of the present study contrast King & Behnke's (2003) findings concerning the fact that the information, requirements, demands, and length of listening tasks cause learners to feel overloaded, leading to the dislike of the assignment. That is, the current study suggests that tasks' demands must be gradually increased to get listeners familiar with different pacing, exposing learners to different activities in which the information can be easily followed, thus reducing anxiety.

Finally, the results obtained confirm that the use of images activate learners' prior linguistic and cultural knowledge to raise learners' awareness on the target language use. These results are consistent with what the CEFRL (2001) considers relevant regarding listening activities such as learners' knowledge of the world as well as sociocultural and intercultural awareness. Furthermore, the present study also supports the comments by Anderson and Lynch (1988, cited in Yagang, 1993) in which the failure in comprehension is regarded to the lack of sociocultural and contextual knowledge. Additionally, according to the current study, facilitators can also use images to motivate learners' involvement and support assessment throughout the task's stages, rather than measuring comprehension quantavely through tests. This supports the findings by Haghverdi (2002), who states that some listening tests focus on the results rather than on the process. In the same line, the present study confirms the importance of including and carefully planning pre-listening, while listening and post-listening stages along the tasks, as proposed by Dunkel (2007). That is, general background and key vocabulary can be easily grasped throughout a well designed sequence, stimulating short and long-term memory. The present study reveals that the incorporation of images enhances comprehension along each stage when both prior linguistic and cultural knowledge are activated, coinciding with Moran's (2005) comments on the adequate guidance learners need to ensure success and self-reflection on the processes listening involves.

8. Instructional and research implications

The findings presented in the current study have important implications for teachers on the grounds of designing and implementing listening tasks that involve audios and videos. These findings propose the incorporation of images along the tasks' stages in order to activate learners' linguistic and cultural background so that predictions, contextualization, and mental mapping are provoked. In addition, the interaction between learners and tasks becomes more active since the procedures trigger learners' participation, involving them through constant elicitation. Therefore, learners' level of anxiety is significantly reduced since assessment of comprehension is conducted by means other than tests.

The research illustrates how images need to be informative enough to activate learners' schemata and at the same time be relevant enough to the content of the audio script. However, the quality of these images must be as optimal as possible in order to avoid confusions that may hinder accurate interpretations. Moreover, since the tasks are designed to foster either group or peer interaction, cooperative learning is also promoted. In addition, the sequential presentation of the task, in which pre, while, and post-listening stages are considered, serves as a guide to aid learners in the gradual construction of mental linkages. Hence, learners are able to use cognitive and memory strategies to grasp meaning from what they listen, leading to an active engagement as confidence increases.

The findings obtained in the current study also shed light on alternative procedures of assessing learners' comprehension. Namely, the design of handouts to associate images with specific information, the elicitation of general understanding through comprehension questions, group and peer interactions to retell events and transform the information grasped into discourse. In that sense, the evaluation method focuses on the process learners experience to achieve the expected results.

Finally, the present study also permitted us to evidence other concerns for further research regarding learners' participation, as some personality traits inhibit learners to answer orally during elicitations or group interactions, thus impeding

objective assessment on their performance. Additionally, since the tasks proposed are guided in a learning environment, further research could be conducted on how the tasks impact learners' autonomy when facing audio or visual input in different environments. Furthermore, new studies regarding the impact of incorporating images in the design of other type of tasks, such as writing, speaking and reading could also provide important information.

9. Conclusions

The present study aimed at reporting the changes observed on EFL learners from an English institute in a college setting, regarding performance and perceptions after the exposure to listening tasks that include images. The study was conducted concerning issues that hinder success in listening activities such as high levels of anxiety and reluctance towards these activities, exposed along the literature review section. The findings obtained suggest that the participants tend to use cognitive and memory strategies as images and recordings are associated. Additionally, participant's perceptions towards this kind of tasks were positively affected since levels of engagement and comprehension improved. Furthermore, the research reveals that the incorporation of images in listening tasks also activates learners' prior linguistic and cultural knowledge due to the associations made between images and previous experiences. Moreover, the design and implementation of listening tasks proposed in the current study allows learners to self-monitor their progress and provides facilitators with tools for assessing comprehension gradually so that the complexity of the tasks may be increased. For instance, instead of testing comprehension through quantitative methods (tests, exams), facilitators can use other alternatives such as comprehension questions, retellings, group and peer interactions, etc. Furthermore, the present study suggests exploration on how learners cope with listening comprehension in other settings different from the learning environment and how images can impact the development of other communicative skills. In summary, facilitators of English as a Foreign Language can be provided with key elements for guiding and assessing learners in listening comprehension throughout the design and implementation of meaningful tasks.

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11. Annexes

Interview

1. ¿Como se siente cuando esta expuesto a un ejercicio de "listening" que incluye el uso de imágenes?
2. ¿Como describiría su desempeño antes y después de exponerse a este tipo de actividad?
3. ¿Como relaciona su conocimiento previo con el material visual utilizado en las actividades de "listening"?
4. ¿De que manera utiliza las imágenes para comprender lo que escucha?
5. ¿Como describiría su nivel de comprensión durante y después de estar expuesto a la actividad?
6. ¿Que tipo de sentimientos o sensaciones experimenta durante la exposición a la actividad?
7. ¿Que opina de la secuencia en la cual se presenta la actividad?

WORKSHEETS SAMPLES
HALLOWEEN

Level: Low Intermediate
Aim: To make connections between images and information heard from a video in order to grasp both general meaning and specific facts.
Materials: 10 min. video "The haunted history of Halloween" taken from National Geographic – Images taken from the video itself – Images taken from other sources.
Key vocabulary: Celts, priests, Druids, Isles, harvest, boundaries, Sowing, dusk, dawn, haunt, offerings, costume, graves, bonfires, tea leaves, pagans, gateway, deities.
(Watch video here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSUxCt_oAWo)

Pre-listening stage
Look at the images below and try to guess how they are related to the information from the video. Example: Picture X costumes tradition in Halloween.
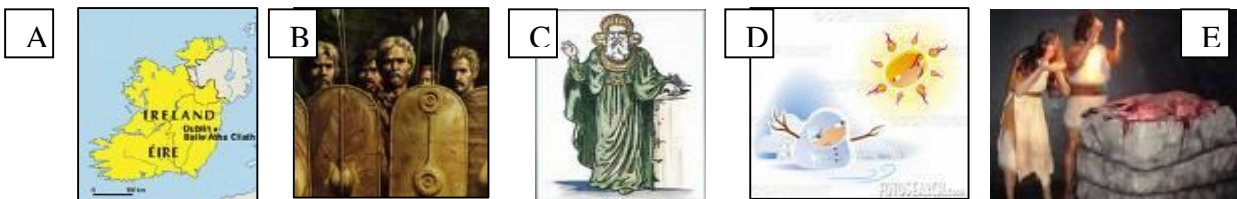
Picture A _____   Picture B _____
Picture C _____   Picture D _____
Picture E _____

While listening
Now watch and listen to the first 5 min. and check if your assumptions were right. If not, mention what they mean according to the information seen and heard.

Now look at the whole video once and identify specific issues treated along the video as you watch it, based on the images below.
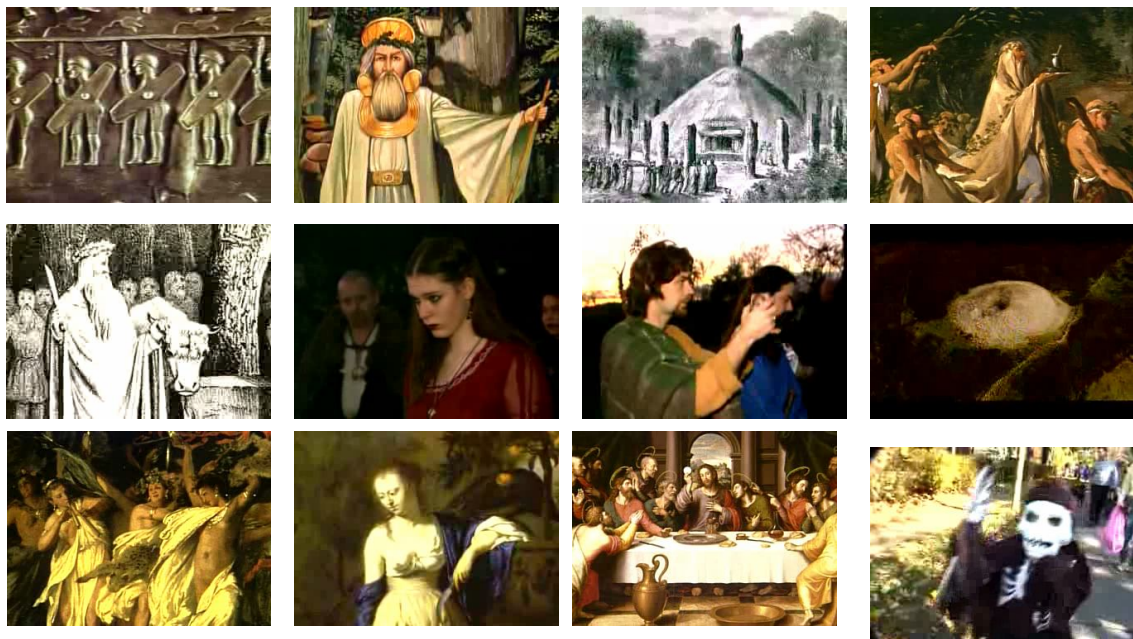
Compare with a partner the ideas taken from the video and the images. Share any information that was not grasped.

Post-listening activity

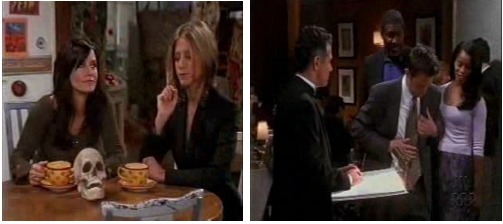**After watching the video and sharing information, write your own and your partner's ideas related to the next categories:**

Categories	Ideas
Ancient traditions	
People involved	
Beliefs	
Association with modern customs	

Now formulate two questions after analyzing the information in the chart and join another couple to ask them. Write your questions and the answers collected.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Finally, answer these comprehension questions and write a paragraph with your answers. Submit your written production to your teacher.
  a. What kind of modern traditions are practiced nowadays in Halloween?
  b. In what sense are they related to ancient traditions?
  c. Why do you think it became a children's celebration?
  d. How was it celebrated in the past and with what purpose?
  e. Why is it associated with spirits, ghosts, and witches?
  f. How has this affected your beliefs and opinions about this celebration? Why?

Answers:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

FAMOUS TV SERIES

Level: pre-intermediate
Aim: To make connections between images and information heard from a video in order to grasp both general meaning and specific facts.
Materials: 21 min. video "The one with the Holiday armadillo" downloaded from Ares– Images taken from the video itself – Images taken from other sources included wikipedia.
Key vocabulary: make a reservation, skull, spider, drums, armadillo, give a hug, Channukka.

Pre-listening stage
Look at the images below as well as the clues given and try to guess which TV series is. **Example: I think the series in picture X relates to the video because…_____**
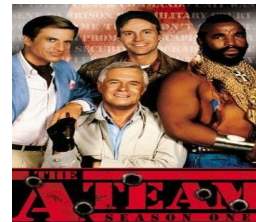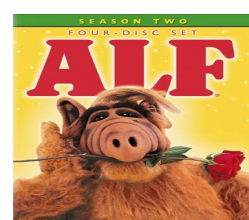
A	**B**	**C**	**D**
E	**F**	**G**	**H**

- It was originally broadcast from 1994 to 2004.
- It was created by David Crane and Marta Kauffman, and produced by Kevin S. Bright (Warner Bros.).
- It is an American sitcom about a group of people in the area of Manhattan, New York City.
- The show has been broadcast in more than one hundred countries.
- The series has been noted for its impact on everyday fashion.
- The Central Perk coffee house, one of the principal settings of the series, has inspired various imitations worldwide.

Answer:_____
_____

While listening
Now watch, listen, and check if your assumptions were right.

Now look at the whole video once and identify specific issues treated along the video as you watch it, based on the images below. Write ideas under each image about the situations or scenes that take place in the episode.

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Compare with a partner the ideas taken from the video and the images (scenes). Share any information that was not grasped.

Post-listening activity

After watching the video and sharing information, write your own summary of the episode. Use the information you got as well as the connectors of sequence.

Image	Ideas
	First of all,
	Then,
	After that, **Next,**
	Finally,

Now formulate two questions after analyzing the information in the chart and join another couple to ask them. Write your questions and the answers collected.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Finally, answer these comprehension questions. Questions in bold are for discussion.

    a. Why did Rachel get scared when she saw the skull? **What if that happened to you?**

    b. What did Chandler and Monica want to do at the restaurant? **Would you do the same?**

    c. Why did Phoebe give a spider to Joey?

    d. Why did Ross have to wear a costume of a Holiday armadillo?

    e. How do you celebrate Christmas? **Do you like it?**

    f. How different or similar is the way people from the video celebrate Christmas**? Which one is better for you? and Why?**

_____
_____
_____
_____
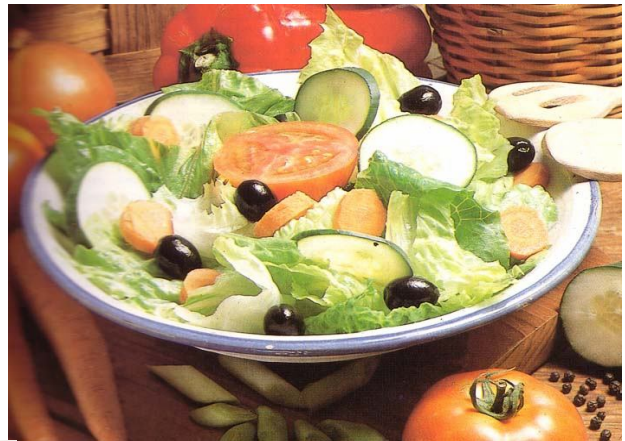
HOLIDAYS

Level: pre-intermediate

Aim: To associate images related to Colombian cuisine and holiday activities, in order to grasp information heard from the recording for both general meaning and specific facts. Then they will extrapolate main cultural points in order to compare them.

Materials: Images taken from Google, CD player, New Headway CD.

Key vocabulary: pottery, pyramids, Egypt, Switzerland, koftas, kebabs, fondue, rósti, woolly hats, snow boots.

PROCEDURES:

T will show some pictures to learners about holiday activities as well as typical food from our culture. Then, T will elicit information about where students go, and what they do in holiday.

Then, T will elicit and use new vocabulary based on other pictures.

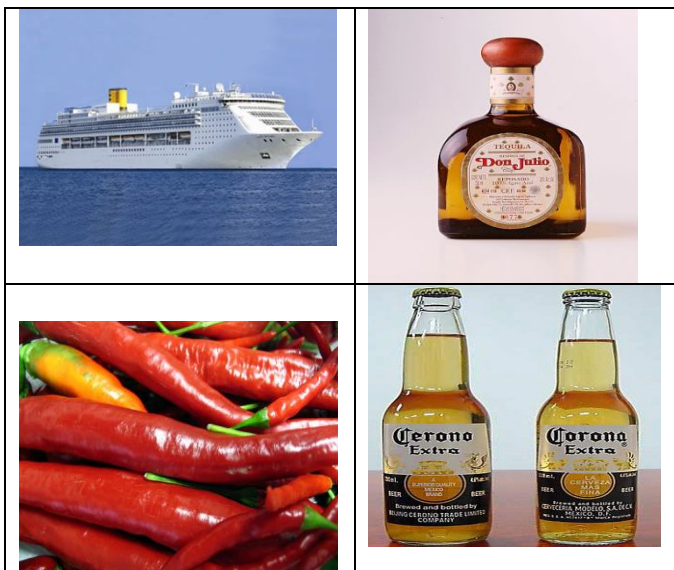| Mark with an X the picture that corresponds to the person.	Silvia	Fatima	Karl

Listen again and mark with an X the picture that doesn't belong to the information they give.
Then discuss with your partner: which country does each person belong to?

Silvia

Fatima

POST LISTENING
Now based on the information you obtained, answer the following questions:
What is Silvia's country like?
_____
_____
_____
_____

What is Fatima's country like?
_____
_____
_____
_____

What is Karl's Country like?
_____
_____
_____
_____

Finally, give a suggestion to your classmate telling him or her which country they SHOULD go on holiday.
E.g. *I think you **should** go to visit... because this country has...*

4

Karl

LISTENING TASK:
ARE YOU HAPPY?

LEVEL: Low Intermediate
FUNCTION: Compare and contrast
GRAMMAR FORM: Present Simple and continuous
AIM: To scan specific information related to two different lifestyles in order to find similarities and differences relying on some pictures to make associations.
RESOURCES: New Headway Intermediate 3rd ed. Audio CD, tracks 15, 17, 18; googled pictures.

Pre-listening

Look at the 2 pictures and discuss with your partner who might be happier and why. Guess what their job is.
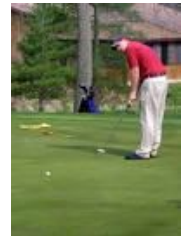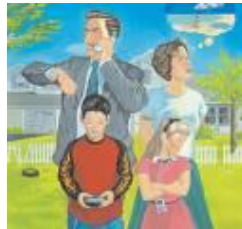
An accountant

A businessman

A lawyer

An actor

A paper boy

A messenger

While listening

1. Listen to the lifestyle description of Sidney Fisk who's 45 years old while looking at the pictures. Then, use the same pictures to retell Sidney's description orally (Track 2).

2. Now listen to another 45-year-old professional's description and do the same exercise using the next pictures. Then, retell the description using the pictures. (Track 3)

Post-listening

1. Complete the next chart with the information that you recall from the recording.

ITEMS	SIDNEY FISK	OTHER GUY
OCCUPATION		
MARITAL STATUS		
NUMBER OF CHILDREN		
WIFE'S OCCUPATION		
WORK SCHEDULE		
HOBBIES		
OTHER ACTIVITIES		

2. Now using the information from the chart and the connectors provided, write at least five sentences comparing and contrasting them. (Although, whereas, however, on the other hand, unlike, likewise, similarly, as well)
Example: <u>Both</u> occupations are very well paid <u>although</u> Sidney has less free time than the other guy.
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

3. What do these numbers represent in their lives?

11 – 14 – 45 – 8 – 2 – 60.000 – 7 – 50 – 4 – 7 – 1.000

4.Finally, discuss with your partner about the positive and negative aspects of being an undergraduate student and what kind of activities your profession requires from you; e.g. traveling, long hours in front of a computer, writing reports, etc.