

# STRATEGY TRAINING IN THE CLASSROOM TO IMPROVE LISTENING SKILLS

Strategy Training in the Classroom to Improve Listening Skills  
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### Abstract

Mexican students learning English as a second language (ESL) face difficulties in listening due to factors such as anxiety and lack of strategies to deal with listening. Some listening training sessions to provide learners with memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies like identifying key words, getting the main idea, making predictions, inferences that help them to comprehend the speaker's message and to manage this problem took place and results are reported here. The aim is to investigate whether providing explicit strategy training helps to improve listening skills, and how much influence the training has in the Intervention Group (IG) in comparison to two control groups (CGs). To that end, the IG and the two CGs were tested before and after receiving training and the scores were computed using a correlated samples *t*-test (*t*) as well as ANOVA (*F*) - statistics of group differences.

The ANOVA (*F*) outcomes indicated non- statistically significant differences in the three groups for listening skills. Correlated samples *t*-tests (*t*) findings showed non significant results for two groups (intervention group (IG) and control group one (CG1)) while for control group two (CG2) was the opposite. The results suggest that explicit strategy training is not the only factor that affects listening improvement. A positive increase in the use of memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies was found.

**Keywords:** listening, strategies, training



## Chapter I

### Introduction

According to Davis (2007), listening in the classroom is effective because students are receiving constant practice with specific objectives. In the classroom, students can interact with their classmates in pairs, teams, or groups. Through these interactions, students can use activities that involve listening comprehension. Some of these interactive activities are “greetings, questions, instructions, explanations, and anecdotes” (Davies, 2007, p. 77). A CD player is used so students are presented with key words, clues, descriptions, and summaries of a recorded passage. It is important that listening receives enough attention, as reported by O’Byrne and Hegelheimer (2009). However, listening is a difficult skill full of obstacles that prevent students from comprehending, as stated in Smit (2009).

According to other authors such as Luchini and Arguello (2009), first language (L1) acquisition studies have shown that L1 speakers are first listeners and later speakers. When learning a second language (L2), students have presented evidence on having more problems understanding a message through listening in comparison to other skills. Graham and Macaro (2008) argue that listening in a second language (L2) is a difficult skill to acquire (p.747). Seo (2005) notes that in order to improve listening the learner’s attention must be focused on the listening process. Hedge (2005) classifies factors that cause problems to listeners as internal and external (as cited in Luchini & Arguello, 2009, p. 322), and according to this classification Luchini and Arguello’s (2009) pre-interview data reveal that listening material, environment, affective factors (e.g. stress and anxiety), pronunciation (e.g. different accents), and skills are the biggest problems students have when listening (p. 326).

It is evident that L2 learners have different problems when listening, and intermediate Mexican students are not the exception. This may be due to similar factors mentioned above or

differences between English and Spanish language sounds. Mexican intermediate students need to learn, to practice and to be aware of English sounds pronounced to deal with the oral information received when listening to English speakers through strategy training of direct strategies. Thus, the goal of this study is to answer two research questions: a) Will explicit strategy training in an intervention group help students improve their listening skills more than in one control group? b) How much does explicit strategy training influence students' listening skills? Later on we will gather data from a pre- and post-Preliminary English Test (PET) results. The post-PET minus the pre-PET scores may present an increase in listening test scores, meaning improvement.

The intervention group (IG) received explicit listening strategy training, defined as the implementation of a continuous listening exercise of oral recorded input, where learners complete different activities containing a specific strategy written definition to use when listening; while on the other hand, the control groups did not. The explicit strategy instruction is important for students because it will make them aware of varied strategies to be used to deal with problems when listening and to choose and use them according to their own needs.

The findings from this experiment may contribute to future studies on strategy training to improve listening skills in intermediate Mexican students of English as a Second Language (ESL).

## Chapter II

### Literature Review

First of all, according to different authors such as Richards and Platt (1992:209); Wenden and Rubin (1987:19), Faerch Claus and Casper (1983:67); Stern (1992:261) (as cited in Murat Hismanogluin, 2000) in an attempt to make a merged definition from theirs, the present study defines *listening strategies* as specific plans, actions, steps, routines, thoughts, behaviors used by learners when learning with the knowing aim of comprehending through supporting and facilitating themselves to learn, remember, manage, retrieve, store, achieve, develop, and to improve the newly received oral information from and within the target language (para. 4)

Research on learning to listen, i.e. listening to others' oral speech to comprehend their message through identification of key words such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs; making inferences, predictions and guesses based on clues, analyzing linking words like *can't* (cannot) *won't* (will not) for negative statements, reading and listening at once to practice intonation, pronunciation that contribute directly so the listener conveys the listened message effectively (Carrier, 2003; Cross, 2009; Graham & Macaro 2008; Kohler, 2002; Luchini & Arguello, 2009; O'Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2009; Seo, 2005; Shang, 2008) agrees that good listeners use a mixture of top-down and bottom-up strategies (Manzhen & Shuooya, 2008; O'Bryan, 2009; O'Malley & Chamot, 1989; Seo, 2005; Shang 2008; Vandergrift, 1997). Top-down strategies imply the application of previous knowledge to new information in order to comprehend the message. Lower proficiency listeners tend to use bottom-up strategies, as stated in Graham and Macaro (2009), such as memory, translation, and identifying meaning word by word. However, studies on the effectiveness of strategy training, as far as I know, are rather limited (Carrier, 2003; Seo, 2005; Shang, 2008).

Cross (2009) has found that strategy instruction can be a way for students to face listening comprehension difficulties. Cross (2009) investigated fifteen Japanese students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and the cognitive strategies they used when listening. The results showed that some of the strategies used by the participants are top-down, implying a combination of prior and new knowledge in an attempt to create or generate new knowledge; and some are bottom-up, identifying phonemes, words and linguistic knowledge (p. 152).

Cross (2009) noticed considerable improvement in listening comprehension in the experimental group, but also found improvement in the control group which did not receive any listening strategy training. Oxford et al. (2004) argued that “a positive correlation exists between the strategies the students use and the students’ second language (L2) proficiency” (as cited in Cross, 2009, p. 153). Likewise, the findings of Chien and Wei (1998); Goh (2002); Smidt and Hegelheimer (2004) indicated that advanced students use more strategies in an extraordinarily free way to achieve a task than lower level students, meaning that good listeners tend to use strategies with efficacy and appropriateness to achieve the listening comprehension task, as if they have mastered them (as cited in Cross, 2009, p. 153).

Other empirical studies investigating listening strategies reported mixed results (O’Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2009; O’Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Küpper, & Russo, 1985; Oxford, 1990; Shang, 2008; Vandergrift, 1997; Wenden & Rubin, 1987).

A) Oxford (1990) showed evidence that high and low proficiency students use different direct strategies that focus on the target language and require a mental process such as memory, cognitive and compensation. Learners use memory strategies to put information in their brain, to keep it there, and to use it later (p.37); cognitive strategies to change, manipulate or transform the information received for a better comprehension (p. 43); and compensation to fill a lack of

knowledge using other clues such as intonation and noises to understand the message without using their mother tongue (p. 37); as well as indirect metacognitive strategies, “actions which go beyond purely cognitive devices and which provide a way for learners to coordinate their own learning process” (Oxford, 1990, p. 136).

B) O’Malley et al. (1985), Wenden and Rubin (1987) reported metacognitive and cognitive strategies that have been used (as cited in O’Malley, Chamot & Küpper, 1989, p.422).

C) O’Bryan and Hegelheimer (2009) showed that low- to mid-level students mostly rely on metacognitive strategies (p. 23). In contrast, a significant bias of higher proficiency students towards cognitive strategies, with a predominant use of the summarizing strategy which is a “direct cognitive strategy that focuses on the target language and creates structure for the input and output” (Oxford, 1990, p. 38) was also found.

D) Vandergrift’s (1997) findings, however, suggest exactly the opposite, providing evidence that advanced students used more metacognitive strategies, while low proficiency students used more cognitive strategies.

Shang (2008) demonstrated, on the one hand, that high proficiency students use more cognitive, and compensation strategies, which “manage the target language, when students face a lack of knowledge, through another form to say something without using their (L1)” (Oxford, 1990, p. 47). Low proficiency listeners, on the other hand, use more direct memory strategies, where the “students use their own knowledge to comprehend the input, make inferences considering the context, identify key words, and make predictions” (Oxford, 1990, p. 38); and less cognitive strategies, with the exception of the cognitive strategy of translation.

## **Improvement in listening**

Different strategies have been used by students when listening. Listening skills have shown to improve more in intervention groups (IGs) than in control groups (CGs). The groups have had small sample sizes. O'Bryan and Hegelheimer (2009) feel that the results presenting improvement may be reliably generalized if the number of participants is increased (p. 30).

Luchini and Arguello (2009) confirmed improvement in students' listening skills after strategy training. Students also reported improvement in comprehension after being taught listening strategies. Listening in L2 is difficult (Graham & Macaro, 2008, p. 747), but strategy instruction is useful to improve listening and to decrease the students' weaknesses (p. 774). In studies in which strategy instruction was shown to improve students' listening skills (e.g. Cross, 2009; Kohler, 2002; Luchini & Arguello, 2009; Smith, 2009), cognitive and metacognitive strategies were in focus.

Kohler (2002) implemented strategy training to decrease listening problems. Kohler's (2002) study was structured in such a way that training for the experiment group was first given frequently and then decreased over time so that students could become familiar with the strategy and were able to use them without being reminded (p. 70). He identified the decrease of strategy sessions as something that can impact results, a decrease in the frequency of training causes a decrease in the use of strategies (Kohler, 2002, p. 70). For example, listening comprehension with constant training sessions gives students more opportunities to practice and be aware of different strategies to achieve listening comprehension, while infrequent training sessions may cause students to just use the ones taught in that session and be unaware of the others they learned previously.

Kohler (2002) confirmed that training students on metacognitive strategies is indeed helpful. Students master the strategies so well that they apply them unconsciously to different tasks, rather than exclusively to listening.

### **Problems when listening**

Hedge (2005) classified factors that cause problems to listeners as internal and external (as cited in Luchini & Arguello, 2009, p. 322) of which Luchini and Arguello (2009) considered pronunciation, listening material, affective factors, and environmental factors in their study. Luchini and Arguello (2009) implemented a set of activities focused on listening skill strategies in a group of 40 students. Out of 40 students, six were randomly interviewed before and after the sessions to compare the data. Activation of general knowledge, concentration on specific important words, and guessing missed information were among the most used by students.

On comparing the pre-interview and post-interview data, it was obvious that there was a decrease in the number of difficulties students face. For example, environmental noises which distracted listeners and raised their anxiety were ruled out by moving the class to an air-conditioned classroom. Similarly the number of students per group was reduced, and lessons were divided in pre-, while-, and post-listening sections. A set of activities with phonological features to help understand pronunciation was implemented by substituting, omitting, and adding difficult and different sounds to these activities and exercises (Luchini & Arguello, 2009, p. 329).

Seo (2005) examined a group that received strategy training of three specific strategies: identifying key terms, elaborating, and inferring. Another group which did not receive any training was also examined. Similar to the study by Kohler (2002), the results showed more significant improvement in the intervention group than in the control group.

## **Suggestions to improve listening**

Wenden (1991) suggests a series of steps to follow before and during the listening strategy training. (a) Identifying in advance which strategies students know and use in order to help students be aware of the mental process through talking about it; (b) teaching students to use strategies; (c) explaining how helpful they are; (d) motivating students to use them; and (e) providing feedback so students use them adequately (as cited in Seo, 2005, p. 67). Seo (2005) has mentioned that some students have strategies, but they do not use them. Seo (2005) has encouraged instructors to give as many examples and opportunities for students to practice and assess the effectiveness of the strategies as possible. Thompson (1995) has advised the instructor to encourage students to hypothesize, predict, infer, and think in the context of the main idea of the text (p. 138) (as cited in Seo, 2005, p. 68).

Luchini and Arguello (2009) proposed that students need to be taught listening first by considering strategies such as identification of key words, content words, linking words, making predictions, guessing, and inferring. Identifying key words is a strategy that focuses attention on individual words in order to introduce, illustrate, and conclude based on the given text. The content words strategy focuses the student's attention on nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in the given text. Linking words help to focus on joining words together usually in the form of contractions such as *won't* and *isn't*. Making predictions can be used to link prior knowledge with the given text; based on this connection, the reader can begin to infer information that is not explicitly stated (Blass, L. & Pamela Hartmann, 2007, p. 9), make educated guesses focused on the intonation, rise and fall of the speaker's voice (Blass, L. & Pamela Hartmann, 2007, p. 8).

Naiman, Frohlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1978; Rubin, 1975; and Takeuchi, 2003 (as cited in Graham & Macaro, 2008, p. 751) suggested studying good listeners, identifying the strategies



they use, and then teaching those strategies to ineffective listeners. They also suggested that strategies need not to be instructed individually (one strategy per activity), but integrated (strategy that implies other strategies within it) to have better results. Graham and Macaro (2008) also mentioned that, although strategy instruction has been focused on metacognitive strategies, there is not a strong consensus regarding which parameters should be considered for the listening strategy training. They proposed the urgent incorporation of a program based on the students' needs that uses different strategies that help them to connect and assess as well as use the strategies on future tasks. Cross (2009) advised that strategy instruction needs to be planned in such a way that the teacher is merely the provider of input, and students are autonomous users of strategies.

Listening requires constant practice through different strategies that help students deal with listening difficulties. Results from these studies have provided evidence of improvement in listening skills, and the plea for the incorporation of a strategy training program that helps learners master listening skills.

Graham and Macaro (2008) stated that strategy instruction has been focused on metacognitive strategies, for instance, Kohler (2002) focused on metacognitive strategies and found evidence that strategy training can potentially help improve listening skills (p. 67). Kohler (2002) stated that more empirical studies are needed to assess the success of strategy training to find a difference in groups that can help to improve and direct the learning process.

### **Limitations of previous studies**

Previous studies have shown some limitations of generalizable outcomes such as a small number of participants and training sessions, lack of a pre-test or both a pre- and a post-test, and students' awareness of strategies.

Cross (2009), Luchini and Arguello (2009), O'Bryan and Hegelheimer (2009), and Seo (2005) remarked that results should be considered cautiously due to the small number of participants. Cross (2009) warned that small group results tend to be magnified and data can be distorted (p. 163).

The small number of training sessions could limit results according to Luchini and Arguello (2009). Cross (2009) adverted that the insufficient hours of strategy instruction for an intervention period of ten weeks was also a limitation and Graham and Macaro (2008) agreed that a long term strategy instruction would produce a greater difference in their study.

Kohler's (2002) main limitation was caused due to the lack of a pre-test administered to his participants, (as cited in Graham & Macaro, 2008, p. 754). Luchini and Arguello (2009) proposed the application of a listening test before and after the intervention to gather quantitative data and then combine it with qualitative data rather than limit it (p. 338). O'Bryan and Hegelheimer (2009) both supported and disagreed with previous studies because little change was perceived on strategy awareness from students during the intervention and the "translation" that was expected to be diminished and reflected in the thinking aloud procedure was used unconsciously and more frequently in writing (p. 29).

More limitations were found in previous studies. For example, Luchini and Arguello's (2009) believed that improvement in their participants' listening was achieved not just due to the four training sessions of listening instruction, but due to the participants' positive awareness of the factors that inhibit their listening such as pronunciation and environment (p. 338). Other limitations mentioned by Cross (2009) were the familiarization with the type of task that participants developed during the intervention, the level of difficulty of the exam, and the many strategies provided instead of more input practice (p. 163-165). The strategy instruction in

Graham and Macaro's (2008) investigation was not totally sure to be taught identically to each group when the researchers were not in the group. The main reason was that the researchers observed just some and not all the lessons. During the lessons observed, they helped instructors, when having a shortage of confidence on strategy instruction, providing feedback. Moreover, no clear evidence of which strategies are more useful due to the lack of a designed tool to identify them (p. 773). Shang's (2008) participants commented negatively after having taken the listening test. For example, learners commented that they continued having problems when listening and that more exposure to real listening could help them achieve listening comprehension. Moreover, Shang's (2008) findings applied only to Taiwanese learners, so results cannot be generalized due to differences in both native and target languages (p. 41).

Several limitations were mentioned above; this study with intermediate Mexican students learning English, whose native language is Spanish, differed regarding direct strategies as a tool to work out obstacles to comprehend English oral texts. Finally, strategic activities and a preliminary English test (PET) were used. According to the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR) a PET corresponds to learners who have developed the following abilities:

I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on concurrent affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear. (p. 26)

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

#### **Design**

The design was quasi-experimental consisting of two stages. The first stage, prior to the real experiment to increase validity, involved the application of the strategy questionnaire (see Appendix A & B pp. 42-43) and student background questionnaire (see Appendix C p. 46) to two pilot intermediate proficiency level groups to identify time for application and instructions to fill in these instruments, questions for clarification or misunderstanding of writing, at a public college of languages in Toluca, Mexico. The application took place during the students' regular English class.

#### **Designed overview: Intervention and Control Groups**

The second stage was the intervention, designed to have ten one-hour training sessions, an intervention (IG) and two control groups (CGs), three times a week, with seven, six, and five participants, during the learners' English class, meeting the same days, times, and in the same classroom and level they were in at the time. The three groups answered the pre- and post-PET, student's background questionnaire and informed consent form. Intervention group (IG) and control group one (CG1) answered the strategy questionnaire considering Oxford's (1990) classification, the intervention group answered explicit strategic activities to improve listening and the strategy chart after each session, while the control groups answered the activities to practice listening. Data were compiled after concluding the intervention.

#### **Classroom**

The classroom was equipped with several chairs and lights, and the supplies were equal to the number of students in the classroom. Each classroom had one desk and one CD player.

The classroom was quiet and all external noise such as traffic noise did not interfere with the intervention.

### **Participant Population**

The population for this study was contacted through the Academy Secretary Department from the institution of the target participants and defined as Mexican intermediate learners who study English as a second language (ESL) in Centro Internacional de Lengua y Cultura (CILC) at Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México (UAEM) during the sampling time frame.

#### **Participants for the pilot instruments.**

There was a total of thirty Mexican students participating in the piloting of questionnaires, 22 were between the ages of 18-23, and enrolled at a college of languages in Toluca, Mexico. They had to take six hours a week of English classes as part of one of the mandatory subjects for the Teaching/Translator English or Teaching/Translator French bachelor's degree program, with 2-4 years learning English and studying English up to an hour after class. The other eight students, in a second group (G2), with different majors, ages 24-37, took a one-hour English class Monday through Friday. All thirty students, male and female, intermediate level, were asked to answer the pilot questionnaires designed for this study. The piloting of these instruments did not affect their English class evaluation.

#### **Participants for the intervention and control groups.**

The participants had a similar profile to the eight students of group two who took part in the pilot stage cited above. Eighteen Mexican students, ages 18-37, enrolled in CILC at UAEM, taking ten hours during a week of English classes in the afternoons, with 2-5 years learning English and studying English 1-3 hours after class were recruited for the experiment. All

eighteen students with different majors, twelve male and six female intermediate level, were asked to answer all the instruments designed for this study.

### **Materials and Procedure**

Data were collected and computed after the intervention from all the students' answers compiled from the designed materials such as the background questionnaire, strategy questionnaire, strategy chart, pre- and post-PETs to interpret findings. The intervention took place during ten days from October to November 2010.

#### **Strategic activities.**

Strategic activities designed for the listening strategy training were selected and adapted from the intermediate *Inside Out Student's Book* by Kay, Sue and Vaughan Jones (2000) and the *Inside-Out Work Book* by Kerr, P. (2000). These materials were chosen to be different from the ones the students used in their regular class so that the designed activities reflected the proficiency level, and to avoid familiarization with the topics and listening activities. The topics for the activities were: Friends, Dating, Relax, Adrenalin, and Kids. Pre-listening, while-listening, and post-listening stages were considered. The listening texts were 1:00-3:45 minutes long.

The strategy listening training took place three times a week. Strategies were taught integratively in the listening activity during each session. During each of the ten planned sessions, the listening strategy training was divided into three stages:

#### *Stage one: pre-listening.*

The introduction was given through a strategic activity. This included reading a sentence or title, speaking about the sentence, title or a topic, or one minute of listening to the beginning of an excerpt related to the listening task, so learners could identify the topic, key words, content

words, linking words, predict, guess, or infer ideas of what they would listen to. The type of interaction was all class, i.e. any participant could express ideas in a voluntarily manner. This stage was generally twenty minutes in length.

Instructions were given before the listening exercise when providing the listening task. In case students had any questions, the instructor clarified it, but did not help with the meaning of words.

*Stage two: while-listening.*

Students listened to an original text to get a general idea of the topic or to complete the strategic activity required. It took fifteen minutes and was given to the entire class.

*Stage three: post-listening.*

Students could speak or write for fifteen minutes about the topic they had listened to using strategies such as *summarizing*, *getting general ideas*, *relating* input to previous or similar situations, *matching* pictures with extracts or new vocabulary to *paraphrases* and *definitions*, or even *reading and listening at the same time* to retain information, to familiarize with new vocabulary from the given text, or to *practice intonation* and *pronunciation* (see Appendix F p. 50).

After the post-listening stage, students filled out a chart (see Appendix D p. 47) about the strategies they used to answer the listening task. This process usually took ten minutes and was applied only to the intervention group.

The topic, the strategy, the type of question and answer varied according to the text book used for the intermediate level and the targeted strategies for each session.

Each listening activity was played from one to three times, depending on what students required, exposing them to as many opportunities as possible to comprehend and catch more information.

### **Pre- and post-listening PET.**

A listening comprehension Preliminary English Test (PET) was administered to the three groups prior to and after the listening strategy training experiment. The tests, pre-PET (time one) and post-PET (time two), were two original versions taken from the Cambridge English for Speakers of other languages (ESOL). The PET was composed of twenty-five questions divided into four parts with sections one, two, and four being multiple choice, and section three being fill-in-the-blank. Test performance was graded on a scale from 0 to 100.

During the listening comprehension pre- and post-PET, students listened twice to each part, the first time to get a general idea, and the second time to answer the questions on the test. Each of both tests took approximately thirty minutes.

### **Pre- and post-strategy questionnaire.**

A questionnaire considering some of the Oxford's (1990) strategy classification on listening strategies was given to the students in intervention group (IG) and control group one (CG1) after the pre- and post-listening comprehension PET (see Appendixes A & B pp. 42, 43).

### **Student's background questionnaire.**

A ten-question questionnaire asking for age, English proficiency level, years spent learning English, and hours spent studying English after class was administered before the intervention to identify general participant characteristics that showed evidence of them having similar profiles (see Appendix C p. 46).



### **Strategy chart used while listening in each session.**

A chart was designed to identify the strategies participants in IG used after having answered the listening strategic activities in every intervention session. This chart replaced a journal or a think-aloud activity that had been used in other experiments because the methodology used for this experiment was quantitative (see Appendix D p. 47).

### **Informed consent form.**

The IG and CGs were asked to sign an informed consent form. It was pointed out that the investigation would affect 20% of their whole English evaluation, specifically focused on listening and for intervention and control group one. The 20% is considered from the post-PET results, and not from the training. Students could refuse to participate in the experiment at any time without being punished; and their names were made anonymous and changed to an assigned number (see Appendix E p. 48).

### **Analysis Plan**

Tests of group differences were applied to determine the difference between the results of the pre-training and post-training PET administered to the intervention group (IG) and control groups (CGs). A one-way ANOVA ( $F$ ), “a logical extension of a  $t$ -test ( $t$ ) where you have more than two groups to test whether the scores of three or more groups differ statistically” (Larson-Hall, 2010, p. 139) and a correlated samples  $t$ -test ( $t$ ), measuring the pre- and post-PET scores of the same people tested at two different time periods to see if they had performed better or worse at the second time period were used. The purpose was to find out whether explicit strategy training will help to improve listening skills more in the IG than in the two CGs. To test reliability, some of the same questions with a different wording in different parts of the questionnaires were used. Descriptive statistics were used to report the mean ( $M$ ) sample scores

and the ( $M$ ) of gain scores, the degrees of freedom ( $df$ ) and the ( $t$ ), the ( $F$ ) and the ( $p$ ) values. The alpha level ( $\alpha$ ) was established at .05, and calculators available on line were used to compute the results such as <https://faculty.vassar.edu/lowry/VassarStats.html>. Reports of effect size were included as suggested by Larson-Hall (e-mail communication, January 4th, 2011) using the website <http://www.uccs.edu/~faculty/lbecker/>.

Thus, an intervention group received ten sessions of explicit strategy training in listening with three hours of overt strategy instruction applied in the pre- and while-strategic activity time of twenty minutes per session during the ten training sessions, and two control groups without any overt strategy instruction. An informed consent form was administered to all participants before the intervention (see Appendix E p. 48).

Materials were selected from a textbook according to the level of the students, a pre- and post-adapted strategy questionnaire were applied, a pre- and post-PET were applied, and strategies such as identification of *content words*, *key words*, making *inferences*, *predictions* and *guesses*, *summarizing*, *paraphrasing*, identifying *general ideas*, *practicing intonation* and *pronunciation* were the focus. A CD player was used to deliver information. Given the fact that previous studies found a difference between groups, I infer that a difference in groups with a small effect size may be derived.

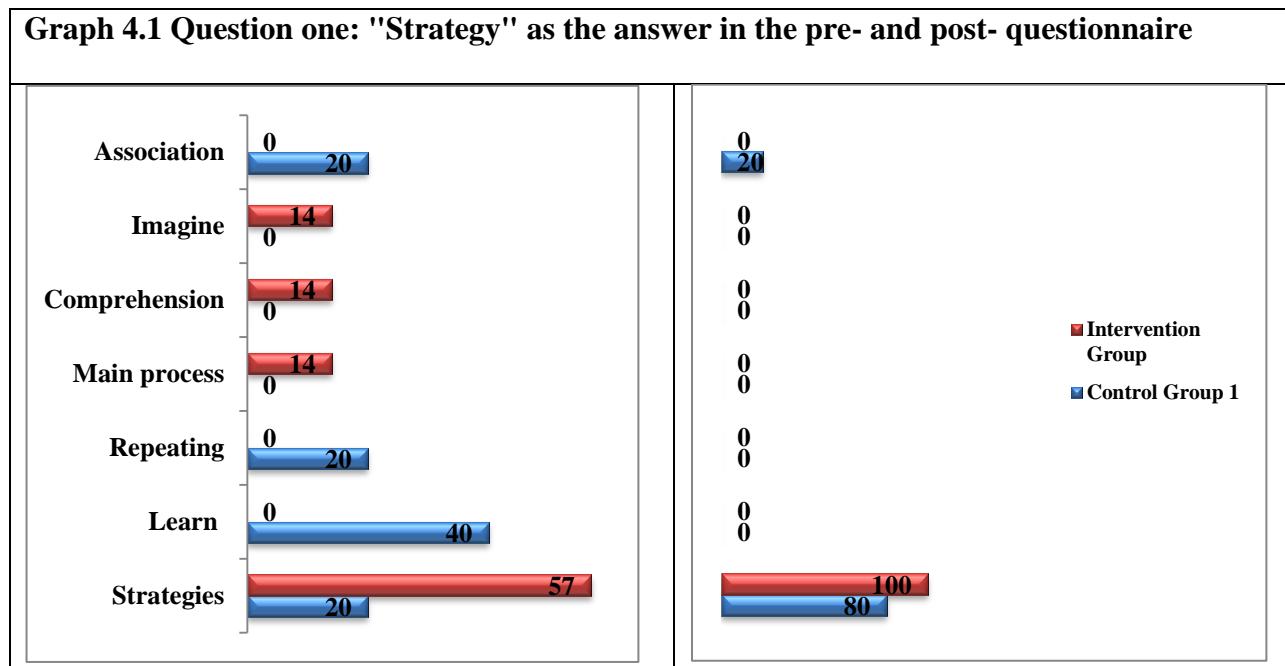
## Chapter IV

### Results

**1) Will the explicit strategy training in a group help students improve their listening skills more than in the non explicit strategy training groups?**

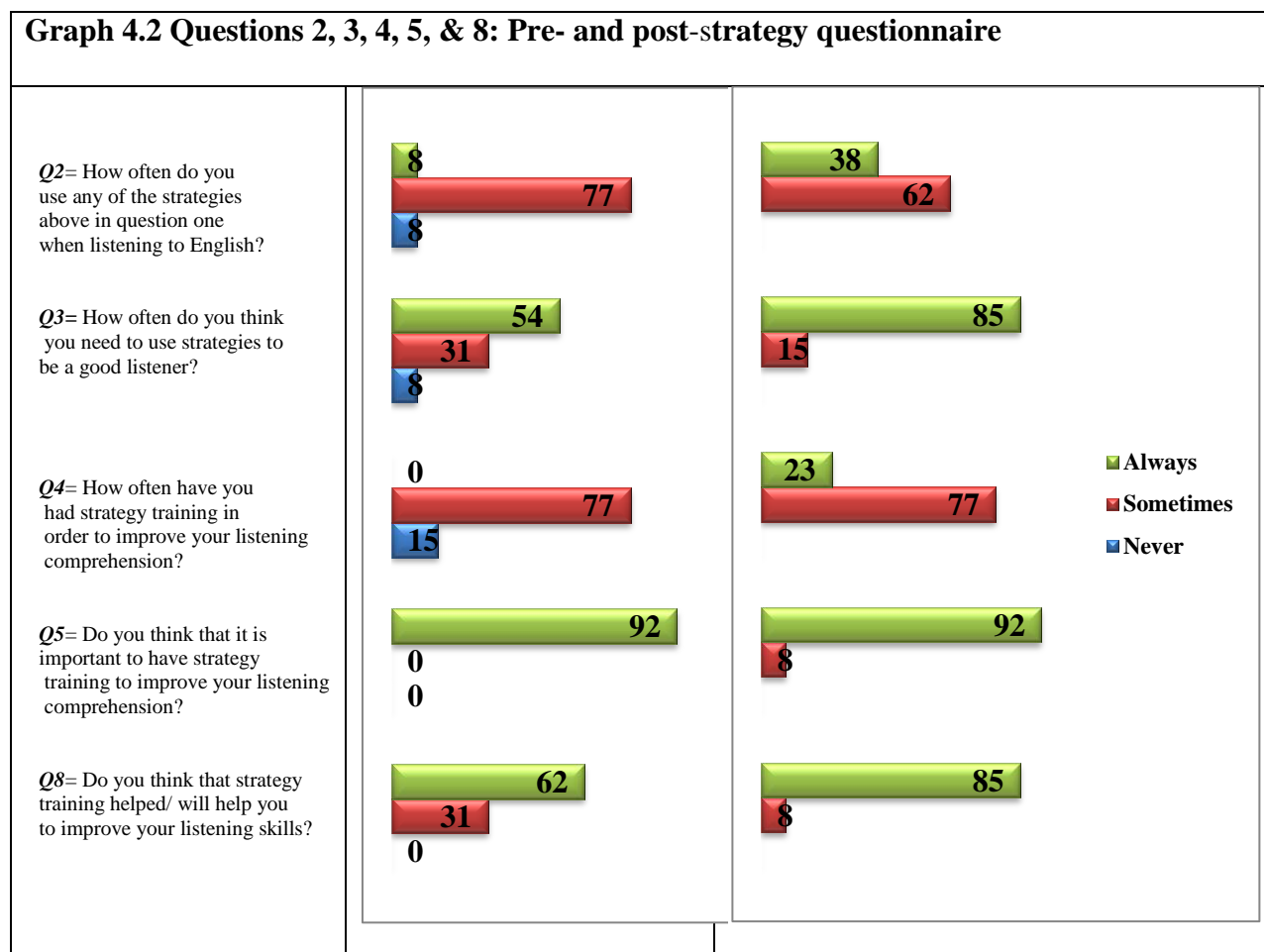
#### Pre- and Post-strategy Questionnaire

Graph 4.1 presents the percentages for the answers of question one “strategy” in intervention group (IG) and control group one (CG1). To compare the findings for the pre- and post-questionnaire, participants’ answers were listed and counted to calculate percentages according to the number of participants per group.



Graph 4.2 shows the comparison between the pre- and post-questionnaire percentages calculated for questions two, three, four, five and eight in IG and CG1. Answers per each frequency were counted and divided according to the number of participants in each group, but

merged ( $7+6=13$ ). For example, *Q2* had one answer in *always* in the pre-questionnaire and five in the post-questionnaire, so  $1/13=8\%$  and  $5/13=38\%$ .



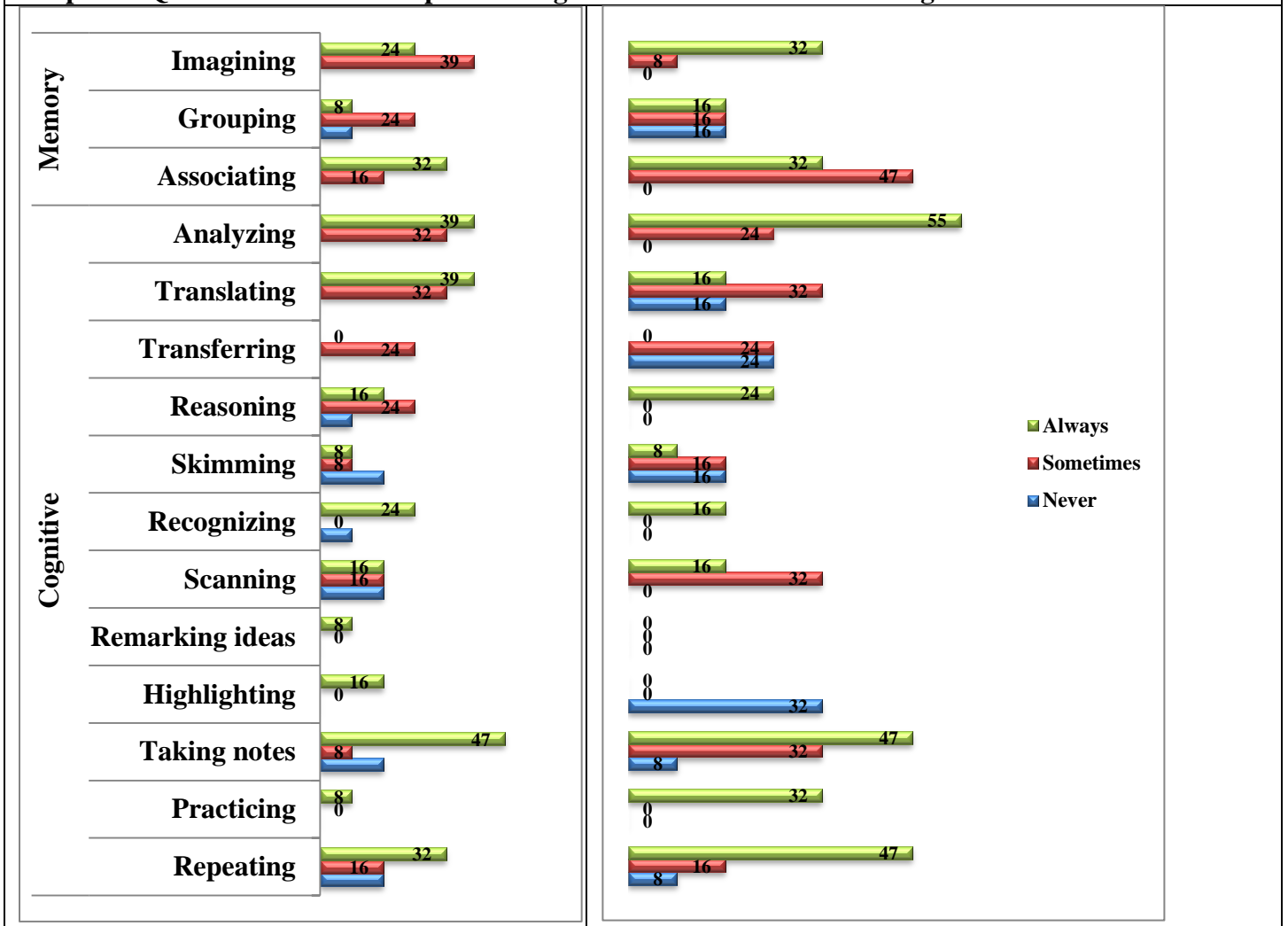
Graph 4.3 (p. 22) shows a comparison of the pre- and post-strategy questionnaire participants reported to use when listening. Answers were counted per type of strategy and divided by number of students in both groups. Strategies reported were classified obtaining an (80%) per cognitive and a (20%) per memory.

Table 4.1 (p. 21) shows the totals per type of strategy and per frequency students reported in the strategy questionnaire question seven, which was a classification of strategies proposed by Oxford (1990) where students put an *X* in the corresponding column according to the frequency

they use each strategy. In order to have the totals, the percentages per type of strategy and per type of frequency were added. Findings show that the use of memory, cognitive and compensation strategies increased in the always frequency in IG and CG1. Memory strategies such as associating with images and grouping in semantic fields show the highest increase in the always frequency with a 15.5% above the 34.5% and in relation to the sometimes and never frequencies that decreased. Cognitive strategies such as practicing, getting the main idea, breaking words and taking notes show an increase in always and in sometimes frequencies with a 23.5 % above the 27% and a 12% above the 65% obtained in the pre questionnaire. Compensation strategies such as guessing intelligently, removing first the wrong answers, false distracters and overcoming limitations through body language show an increase in the always frequency with a 15.5% above the 19%.

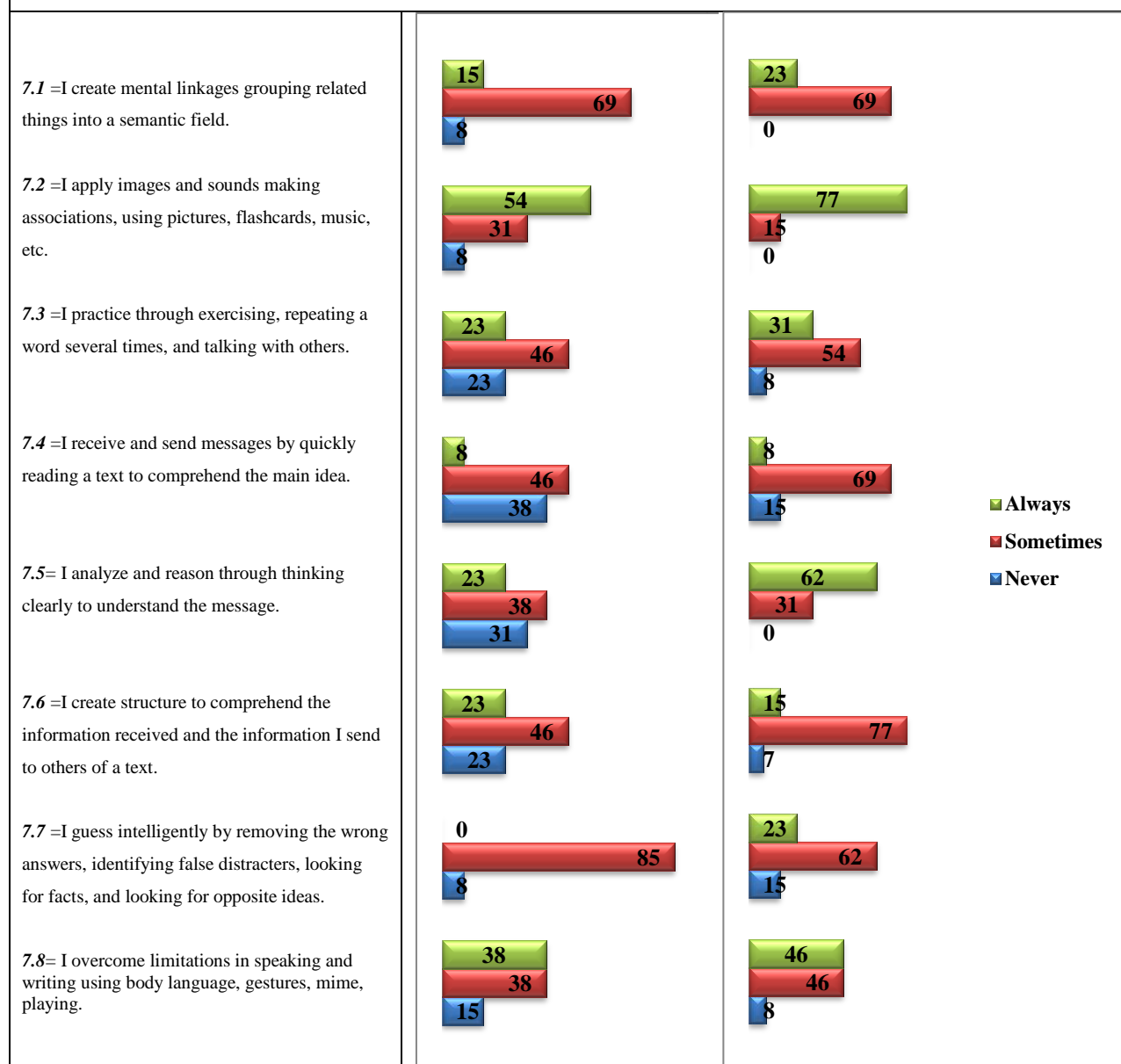
<b>Table 4.1</b>						
<i>Question seven: Total per type of strategy considering Oxford's classification</i>						
	<i>PRE</i>			<i>POST</i>		
<i>Type</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>
<b>Memory</b>	<b>34.5%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Cognitive</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>
<b>Compensation</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>61.5%</b>	<b>11.5%</b>	<b>34.5%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>11.5%</b>

**Graph 4.3 Question six: Pre- and post-strategies students use when listening**



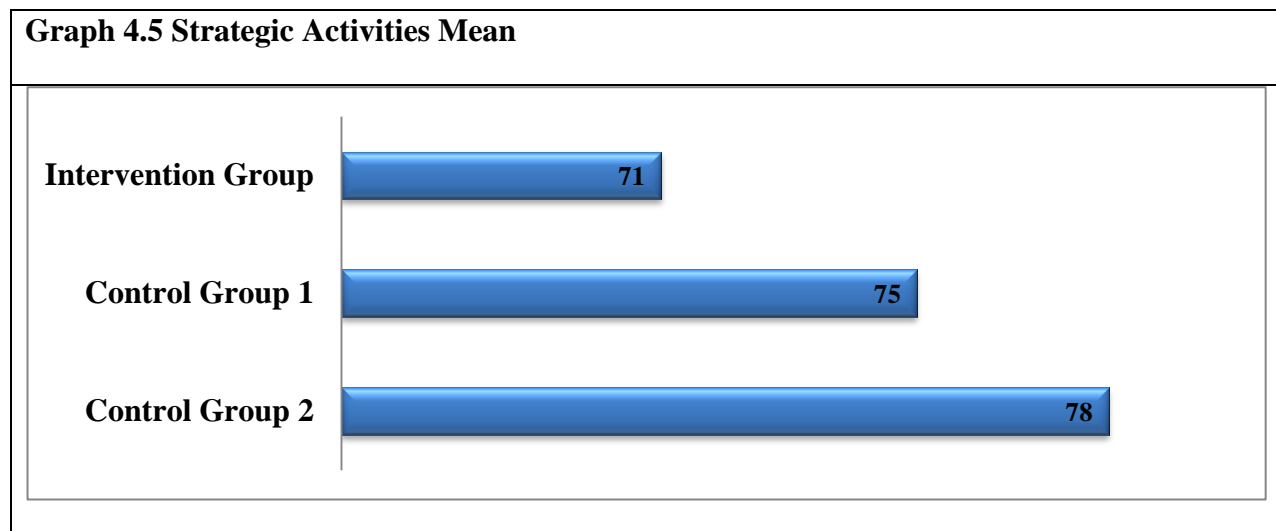
Graph 4.4 shows the comparison percentages of strategies participants used the most from the Oxford's (1990:38) classification in the pre- and post-strategy questionnaire. Answers were counted per type of frequency and divided by number of participants in both groups.

**Graph 4.4 Question seven: Pre- and post- The frequency with which participants used Oxford's (1990) strategies in IG and CG1**



## Strategic Activities

Graph 4.5 shows the mean percentages of activities done in each of the three groups, establishing CG2 as the most participative.



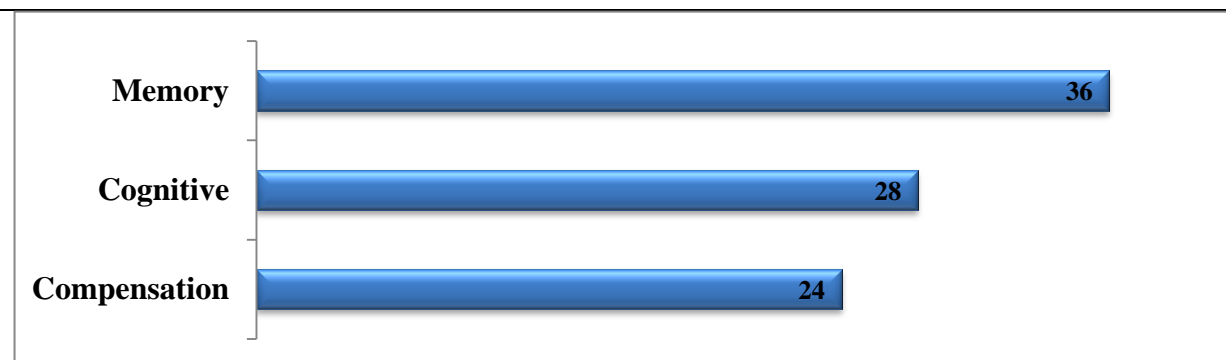
Graph 4.6 (p. 25) shows the mean in percentages per type of strategy students reported after each training session in IG. There was a total of seventy-seven strategy charts of which fifty-seven illustrates the (74%) of charts computed and derived from the participants' attendance to the sessions. In the charts, each question was computed separately to have a 100% of answers computed per question. To compute the strategies, the focus was on those marked as always used and considered as effective ones. To obtain the percentage, the percentages obtained per question in each of the eleven charts applied were added, multiplied with 100 (to obtain a 100%) and divided by 1100 (the total of the eleven charts of each question).

The percentages were obtained from the addition of the number of times participants reported have used the strategies and according to both the frequency *always* and its *effectiveness*. Then each strategy percentage was added according to its type (memory, cognitive and compensation) and the number resulting from the addition was divided by the number of the



given strategies to each type. Five strategies were given for *memory* and *cognitive*, and six for *compensation*.

**Graph 4.6 Strategy chart results per type of strategy in intervention group**

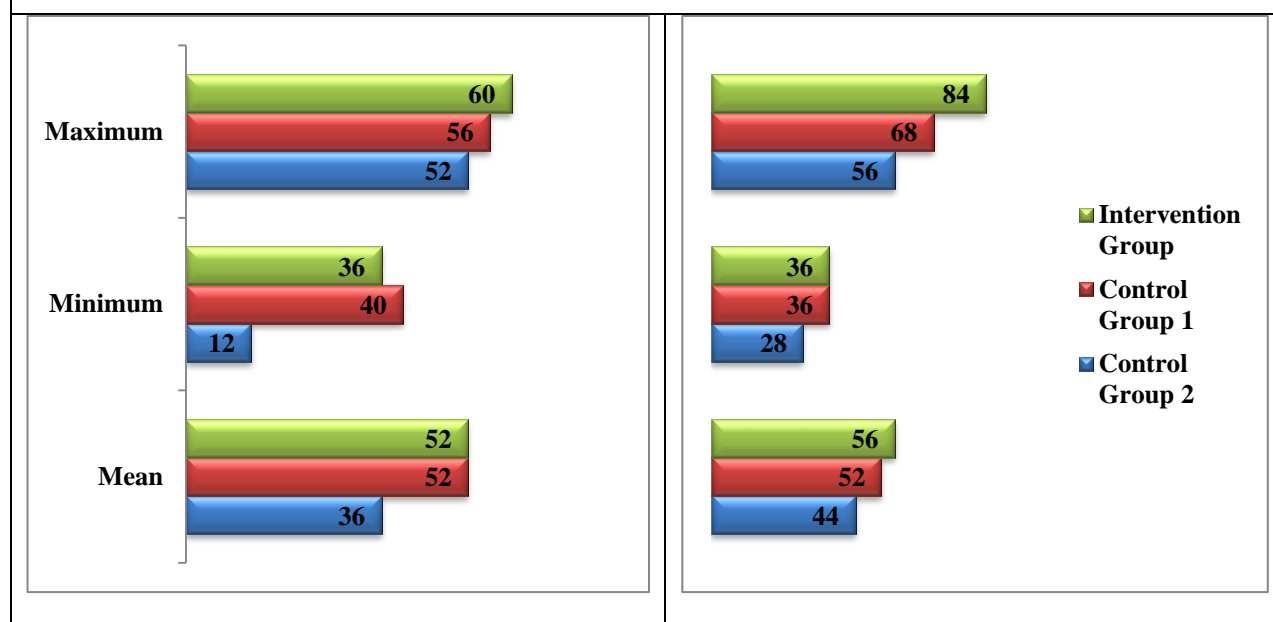


## 2) How much does explicit strategy training influence students' listening skills?

### Pre- and Post-listening PETs

Graph 4.7 shows the participants' maximum, minimum and mean scores defined from the number of correct answers on a scale of 25 out of 100 (see Tables C3 & D4 pp. 55, 56).

**Graph 4.7 Pre- and post-PET scores**



Whether the groups differing in treatment performed differently, comparisons among the three groups at once were made considering the mean gain scores per group.

The descriptive statistics for the groups were: Explicit strategy training (EST) in the IG,  $M=3.4$ ,  $sd=18.39$ ,  $n=7$ ; Non explicit strategy training in the CG1 (NESTCG1),  $M= 2.3$ ,  $sd=14.10$ ,  $n=6$ ; Non explicit strategy training in the CG2 (NESTCG2),  $M= 10.4$ ,  $sd=7.26$ ,  $n=5$ . In this case (ANOVA ( $F$ ) (2, 15) = 0.48,  $p= 0.62$ ), the  $p$  value is higher than the established ( $\alpha$ ) 0.05 thus the result is not statistically significant and consequently if the  $p$  value is not significant because it is higher than the ( $\alpha$ ) 0.05, the null hypothesis is true and must not be rejected (see Tables F6 & G7 pp. 58, 59).

To report the omnibus percentage variance (PV) effect size, a measure of dispersion, i.e. how much the scores are likely to differ from the mean value (manually done), the ANOVA output was used dividing the sum of squares between groups ( $SS_B$ ) by the total sum of squares ( $SS_B +$  sum of squares within groups ( $SS_W$ )) obtaining a between groups difference of (0.05 %) of the variance in scores which is not statistically significant according to the ( $\alpha$ ) 0.05.

A report of effect size Cohen's  $d$  is included and if it is one or larger the effect size will be large (Larson-Hall, e-mail communication, January 27, 2011). Effect sizes for all the comparisons using  $M$  and  $sd$  values in Cohen's  $d$  procedure showed small effects in: IG-CG1,  $d=0.06$ , and IG-CG2,  $d= -0.49$ ; while in CG1-CG2,  $d=0.7$  was moderate. This indicates that the explicit strategy training did not have a meaningful effect on the improvement of listening skills after the intervention indicating no statistically significant differences between the groups (see Table H8 p. 60).

To identify if the IG, CG1 and CG2 differ on the pre- and post-listening PET, correlated samples *t*-tests were used. The difference in the explicit strategy training from Time 1 (pre-PET) and Time 2 (post- PET) tested with the correlated samples *t*-test showed the following: For (intervention group (IG) the mean (*M*) 3.42, standard deviation (*sd*) 18.39, total participants (*N*) 7). For (control group one (CG1) the mean (*M*) 2.33, standard deviation (*sd*) 14.10, total participants (*N*) 6). For (control group two (CG2) the mean (*M*) 10.4, standard deviation (*sd*) 7.26, total participants (*N*) 5). The 95% confidence intervals (CIs) for difference in means in IG [ 7.22, 15.81],  $t(6) = 0.49$ , ( $p = .32$ ). CG1's CIs [6.28, 11.69],  $t(5) = 0.41$ , ( $p = .34$ ). CG2's CIs [19.38, 12.96],  $t(4) = 3.2$ , ( $p = .016$ ) (see Table ES p. 57).

Results show a small effect size and a not statistically significant effect for difference between testing times in the IG,  $d=.40$ ; and CG1,  $d=.36$ ; and a large effect size and a statistical effect for difference between testing times in CG2,  $d=3.2$ ; using *t* values and *df* in Cohen's *d* procedure (see Table J10 p.62).

## Discussion

The study investigated whether explicit strategy training in a group will help students improve their listening skills more than in the groups without receiving explicit strategy training and how much the strategy training influence students' listening skills.

Comparing the pre- and post-strategy questionnaire in IG and CG1, outcomes show a significant gain percentage of (51.5%) over (38.5%) in relation to recognition of a list of different strategies applied within samples where “*strategy*” or “*strategies*” were the expected answers. The increase was a (43%) in the IG and (60%) in the CG1 (see Graph 4.1 p. 19). It is clear that in the IG, previous to the intervention, participants knew some strategies, but afterwards, participants increased their repertoire and awareness of more strategies to work out

listening problems. On the other hand, the comparison of pre- and post-questionnaires shows that CG1 used strategies, although they were not instructed to use them intentionally, i.e. making the students aware of them. The pre- and post-questionnaires were not applied to CG2, thus CG2 is not considered to compute the percentages. Nevertheless, similar to previous empirical studies researching on listening strategies mixed results (O'Bryan & Hegelheimer, 2009; O'Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Küpper, & Russo, 1985; Oxford, 1990; Shang, 2008; Vandergrift, 1997; Wenden & Rubin, 1987) were observed in this CG2. For example, some direct and indirect strategies in CG2's participants such as *practice* (a direct CogS), *interest* (an indirect AffS), *motivation* (an indirect AffS), and the *no pressure* (an indirect AffS) of getting a score required to approve the English course were identified. Furthermore, it was noticeable that *participation* (78%) – which will be considered as an indirect strategy- in this CG2 was higher than the observed in IG and CG1. These may have contributed to their listening development and even probably to diminish possible anxiety.

The increase in the usage of strategies, the participants' thinking of the need to use strategies to be effective listeners, and the continuous strategy training to improve their listening comprehension indicate that strategies are important for the participants in order to become good listeners and to improve their listening skills. This was confirmed in all the gain percentages (see Graph 4.2 p. 20).

Similar to Vandergrift (1997), participants in IG and CG1 mentioned having used more cognitive strategies than memory and compensation strategies when they are listening, and it shows that intermediate level Mexican learners tend to use more cognitive than memory and compensation strategies. *Repeating, taking notes, reasoning, and analyzing* out of the twelve cognitive varied strategies were the ones most cited and showed the highest gains in relation to

the pre- and post-usage reported (see Graph 4.3 p. 22). However, in memory strategies there was an increase in use in *imagining* and *grouping* out of the three memory strategies mentioned.

To increase validity in the use of the strategies question seven, *the frequency with which participants used Oxford's (1990) strategies in IG and CG1*, was included.

Graph 4.4 (p. 23) shows the increase in the *always* frequency in IG and CG1 use of memory, cognitive and compensation strategies classified according to Oxford (1990). Similar to Oxford's (1990) findings that low proficiency students use different direct strategies such as memory, cognitive and compensation; intermediate Mexican L2 learners were found to use different memory, cognitive and compensation strategies as well. Nevertheless comparing the pre- and post-results, the gained difference of (10%) found in cognitive strategies such as *practicing, getting the main idea, breaking words and taking notes*; reported from Oxford's (1990) classification provided to participants in question seven, suggests that cognitive strategies were more prevalent (see Graph 4.3 p. 22 & Graph 4.4 p. 23).

The increase in usage of strategies may be due to the attendance and the encouragement participants had during the intervention in the three groups, which varied slightly little among the groups, resulting in a groups' participation average of (75%) (see Graph 4.5 p. 24).

Results from the pre- and post-strategy questionnaire were compared to the strategy chart results obtained from the IG. Analyzing the strategies reported immediately after each IG session, there is some variation in terms of the strategies always used and considered as effective as Table 4.2 illustrates.

<b>Table 4.2 Strategies reported from the strategy chart applied after each intervention session in IG.</b>					
<i>Memory</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Cognitive</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Compensation</i>	<i>%</i>
<b>Grouping</b>	<b>(47.9)</b>	<b>Getting the main idea</b>	<b>(51.09)</b>	<b>Prediction</b>	<b>(33.09)</b>
<b>Identifying content words</b>	<b>(47)</b>	<b>Analyzing</b>	<b>(36.72)</b>	<b>Identifying</b>	<b>(28.72)</b>
<b>Key words</b>	<b>(32)</b>	<b>Taking notes</b>	<b>(27.45)</b>	<b>accents</b>	<b>(28)</b>
<b>New words in context</b>	<b>(26.09)</b>	<b>Recognizing patterns</b>	<b>(15.72)</b>	<b>Inferring</b>	<b>(22)</b>
<b>Linking words</b>	<b>(25.3)</b>	<b>Translating</b>	<b>(7.27)</b>	<b>Guessing</b>	<b>(21.27)</b>
				<b>Synonyms</b>	<b>(13.72)</b>
				<b>Switching to L1</b>	
<b>LI= Mother tongue (see Table I9 p.61 for more details)</b>					

Thus, memory strategies obtained the highest percentage and variation above the cognitive strategies. Cognitive ones were (8%) below the (35.65%) identified in memory ones, whereas compensation ones were the least used and reported (see Graphs 4.3 p.22, 4.4 p.23 & 4.6 p. 25). These findings contradict a little the trend on cognitive strategies found in question six and seven. But more importantly than the trend are the similar insights found to the ones reported by Graham and Macaro (2009) where lower proficiency listeners tended to use memory strategies; moreover, the findings here reinforce Oxford's (1990) ones where low proficiency students use different direct strategies such as memory, cognitive, and compensation.

The increase of a wide choice of memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies found after the explicit training period is considered because it may contribute to identify significant gains in scores in the post-listening PET.

How much explicit strategy training influences students' listening skills results shows findings similar to Cross' (2009) regarding improvement in listening comprehension in the

intervention group (IG) and in the control group one (CG1) which did not receive any listening strategy training, but practice. Findings here illustrate that the post-PET scores, in comparison to the pre-PET scores, presented the highest mean ( $M=56$ ) and the highest score out of 100 (.84) in IG, attributed to the evident increasing in use of strategies detected after the intervention. However, CG1 showed increases in the maximum scores, and CG2 in the maximum and mean, in spite of the fact of not having received explicit strategy training, but just listening practice (see Graph 4.7 p. 25).

Quantitative methodology was used to compare the gain scores among the three groups at once in the IG, CG1 and CG2, first participants' gain scores were computed through a one way ANOVA. Results derived from the ANOVA supported no significant gain differences, so it is concluded that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected, meaning that there is not a difference.

To compare the pre- and post-PET scores across the three groups, first participants' scores were computed through a correlated samples *t*-test. Results support that the correlated samples *t*-tests for the IG and CG1 pre- and post-PET scores did not differ significantly in the post-PET performance. Thus, it may be inferred that participants' listening comprehension was similar in both tests.

On the other hand, CG2's results found a significant gain difference ( $p=0.016$ ) between the pre- and post-PET scores performed where post-performance was better than the pre-performance. When (*t*) value is greater than two, a small *p*-value is derived, so the null hypothesis can be rejected, meaning that there is a difference.

The results provided evidence similar to what Carrier (2003), Seo (2005), and Shang (2008) mentioned in previous studies on the effectiveness of the strategy training - it is limited. This may be due to different variables, which were not studied such as the reliability of the

instruction in the three groups. The number of hours for training may have been insufficient for many strategies trained, and the lasting of one-hour sessions may have been also not enough. Moreover, the strategy questionnaire given in English and not in Spanish may have caused different interpretations from students on the strategies.

Regarding to the PET tests, the versions could be difficult for the participants' proficiency level. It would have been better to apply the test previously to two different levels, one upper and one lower than the intermediate level used to identify if it was adequate for the intervention and control groups. Furthermore, results should be considered cautiously due to the small number of participants in each group.

Focusing on the strategy chart used while listening in each session, it is concluded that the constant explicit training indicates an increase in the use of strategies at the end of the intervention. However, the raising awareness on strategies and the constant use of them are not the only factors to consider to improve listening skills as it is illustrated in the PET scores.

Some worthy considerations derived from the study are the increase in the use of strategies and the wide variety of strategies participants were aware of at the end of the intervention. Moreover the gains in use of strategies going from a trend of cognitive to a wide rate including the compensation and memory ones was also interesting. The increases in the intervention group (IG) having the highest score and the highest mean score may be attributed to the independent variable investigated, although more research should be done to participants individually. In general, the direct and indirect strategies provided evidence of small variations in gain scores in the three groups.



## **Implications in the Classroom**

Listening strategy training research agrees that it is helpful and that improvement has occurred more in intervention groups. Improvement implies active participation of different actors in the classroom when training strategies such as the instructor, the learner, the proficiency level and the learning style all interacting as a team. i.e. The instructor provides strategies as alternatives to achieve a goal and the learner due to his own characteristics will take the one (s) which works for him.

The instructor should be well informed on the different types of strategies to provide clear explanations and examples to make learners aware of the variety and different usages the strategies stand for. Consequently, instructors should encourage learners to reflect on their own learning, motivate them to look for a plan of action to develop or improve in listening learning and assess the effectiveness of the plan taken to apply it on other skills. Ideally, learners should be interested and motivated on learning strategies as new alternatives to work out on listening problems. In the opposite case, the instructor should encourage learners giving adequate feedback, talking about the strategies' usefulness with examples where learners notice the advantages of using them.

Proficiency level plays a role as well. High proficiency learners use strategies that imply the use of prior knowledge related to the new information to build new ideas; low level learners tend to use strategies such as translation from the target language to the first language, memorization out of context or even trying to understand every single word. Strategy training in the classroom implies the instructor considers learners' level to choose and adapt strategies according to the learners' needs. Furthermore, the strategies should be taught in an integrated way. i.e. learners need to learn strategies that entail other strategies. For example, instructors can

teach to learn through semantic fields where learners can group, organize and imagine. Instructors can teach to infer through key words, images and sounds in context. Teaching integrated strategies involve the use of different mental processes and learners will learn and use the ones which are effective or useful for them according to their own proficiency level and learning style.

Strategy learning implies different learning styles. i.e. every student learns in a specific way. For example, visual learners need images to facilitate learning, auditive learners need sounds, so for these type of learners, strategies should imply images and sounds. The instructor should provide a variety of strategies so learners choose, use and see the effectiveness of them with the expectancy that effective strategies identified may be used in other tasks and other skills due to their effectiveness.

To conclude, the interaction of different actors, the awareness on how to learn to learn and the continuous training may contribute to success on learners learning in an independent way. Learners may be more confident and positive regarding their learning because strategies will be alternatives to find adequate routes to learn at the moment and in the future.

## Chapter V

### Conclusions and Recommendations

In agreement with Kohler (2002), we need to find out more on the effectiveness of strategy training. The main reason is that although participants showed high increase in strategies awareness use, the results about improvement in listening skills are not statistically significant.

The improvement in intervention group (IG), control group one (CG1) and control group two (CG2) indicates that the strategy training is not the only factor that can help to improve listening skills, but also constant listening practice (CogS) and indirect strategies like affective ones- *interest, motivation, and lowering anxiety* - seem to play a role.

The IG, CG1 and CG2 choice and usage of strategies found could contribute to develop listening skills in spite of the fact of the explicit strategy training performed, so the improvement may be due to the constant practice (CogS) used in the three groups.

The instruction in L2 Mexican learners was not identical because of the features of each session. Sometimes participants arrived late and the listening texts were repeated, or sometimes participants missed the pre-listening stage but continued with the while- and post-stage. Thus, starting the session on time the group and activity done completely would be desirable for a future replication of this study.

In agreement with Luchini and Arguello (2009), there is a possible correlation between listening improvement and positive variables that contributed to decrease inhibitions when listening; it is concluded that interest, motivation, and participation specifically in CG2 may have helped participants improve listening skills. Yet further research is recommended to find out to what extent these variables contributed to show significant values in the CG2 correlated samples *t*-test.

The research, in accordance to Luchini and Arguello (2009), considers a further study gathering quantitative and qualitative data that really shows clearly written produced examples, where strategies students reported to use when listening are identified. The results of the same participants from a post-test applied to them a long time after the intervention in order to identify long-term memory of strategy awareness and use would also be interesting to consider.

Finally, similar to Cross (2009), Luchini and Arguello (2009), O'Bryan and Hegelheimer (2009), and Seo (2005), it is concluded that the results should be considered cautiously due to the small sample size. Moreover, the research agrees with Cross (2009) with respect to the short number of training sessions as well as with Graham and Macaro (2008) regarding the fact that a long term strategy instruction will probably derive in more significant results than the ones obtained.

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APPENDIX

## Appendix A: “Strategy Questionnaire” First part

**Instructions:** Your teacher will assign you a number. Write the number on the line instead of your name. **Student number:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

This questionnaire is part of a study investigating Mexican learners of English as a second language (L2). There are no right or wrong answers. Please, direct any questions to the teacher.

**Instructions:** Read the list of words and examples provided. Then complete the sentence number

one writing your answer with just one word. Many successful learners use them as “a plan of action designed to achieve a goal” . **Practicing, repeating, recognizing, recombining,**

**skimming, scanning, reasoning, analyzing, translating, transferring, taking notes,**

**summarizing, highlighting, grouping, associating, imagining,... Examples. When I listen...**

I **practice** answering different exercises.

I **repeat** an exercise several times to reinforce the structures.

I **recognize** key words to identify examples...

I **recombine** new words and structures.

I read quickly (**skimming**) before listening to get the main idea.

I listen to identify specific information (**scanning**).

I **reason** to comprehend making word- image relationships.

I **analyze** parts of words to guess meaning. For example, **un-** help- **ful**

I **translate** word by word into my native language.

I **transfer** information related to my real life. If the text is about music, I think my favorite music or concert.

I **take notes** of relevant information.

I **summarize** the text to have the main information.

I **highlight** new words, examples, key words, transition words (first, then, finally...)

I **group** words related to the same idea or topic (music: rhythm, lyrics, pop, band...)

I **associate** ideas to identify the topic.

I **imagine** the context of the conversation.

1.- These are all examples of \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B “Strategy Questionnaire” Second part

Student number: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Practicing, repeating, recognizing, recombining, skimming, scanning, reasoning, analyzing, translating, transferring, taking notes, summarizing, highlighting, grouping, associating, imagining,...**

**Instructions:** Read and circle one answer per question.

2.- How often do you use any of the strategies above when listening to English?

- a) Always                      b) Sometimes                      c) Never

3.- How often do you think you need to use strategies to be a good listener?

- a) Always                      b) Sometimes                      c) Never

4.- How often have you had strategy training in order to improve your listening comprehension?

- a) Always                      b) Sometimes                      c) Never

5.- Do you think that it is important to have strategy training to improve your listening comprehension?

- a) Always                      b) Sometimes                      c) Never

**Instructions:** In the following questions write your answer in the chart given.

6.- List the strategies you use when you are **listening**. Then below, add some others which have not been mentioned before.

Always	Sometimes	Never
Add some other strategies which have not been mentioned before.		

7.-**Instructions:** Below there is a classification of strategies proposed by Oxford (1990). Could you put an **X** in the corresponding column according to the frequency you use them?

		Always	Sometimes	Never
<b>Memory</b>	Example			
	1.- I create mental linkages grouping related things into a semantic field. <i>e.g. Food: milk, eggs, meat. Music: rhythm, lyrics, ...</i>			
	2.- I apply images and sounds making associations, using pictures, flashcards, music, ... <i>e.g. I associate the piano music sound with a piano flashcard, image...</i>			
<b>Cognitive</b>	3.- I practice through exercising, repeating several times a word, talking with others			
	4.- I receive and send messages through reading quickly a text to get the main idea. <i>e.g. I read to comprehend the message of a text and then I share with others this message.</i>			
	5.- I analyze and reason through thinking clearly to understand the message. <i>e.g. Analyzing a new word breaking it to guess its meaning. Un-help-ful. Looking for words with the same meaning. (synonyms)...</i>			
	6.- I create structure to comprehend the information received and the information I send to others of a text. <i>e.g. I take notes, I underline, I highlight, I remark important ideas. I identify clues and examples, ...</i>			
<b>Compensation</b>	7.- I guess intelligently removing first the wrong answers, identifying false distracters, looking for facts, looking for opposite ideas. <i>e.g. I eliminate an idea no related to the general topic.</i>			
	8.- I overcome limitations in speaking and writing using			

	body language, gestures, mime, performing, playing. <i>e.g. I Jump to remember the verb to jump.</i> <i>I smile to show that is the verb "to smile".</i>			
Direct strategy classification proposed by Oxford (1990)				

8.- Do you think that strategy training helped/ will help you to improve your listening skills?

A) Always

B) Sometimes

C) Never

## Appendix C

### Student Background

**Student number:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Read and circle one answer per question. There are no right or wrong answers.

Please direct any questions to the teacher.

1.- What is your level of education? Specify your semester on the line provided.

A) High school \_\_\_\_\_ B) Bachelor \_\_\_\_\_ C) Postgraduate \_\_\_\_\_

2.- What is your major?

\_\_\_\_\_ (please specify)

3.- What is your English proficiency level?

A) Beginner B) Intermediate C) Advanced

4.- What is your gender?

A) Male B) Female

5.- What is your age?

A) \_\_\_\_\_

6.- How many years have you been learning English?

A) \_\_\_\_\_

7.- Do you study English after class?

A) 1 hour or less B) 2-3 hours C) 3-4 hours D) More \_\_\_\_\_ (specify)

8.- What do you find most difficult?

A) Writing B) Speaking C) Reading D) Listening

9.- Are you doing something to improve your English?

A) Always B) Sometimes C) Never

**What? (specify)** \_\_\_\_\_

10.- I am satisfied with my progress in English regarding.

Ability	Always	Sometimes	Never
Writing			
Speaking			
Reading			
Listening			

## Appendix D

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

### Strategies used while listening in each session

Student number: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) Circle **Yes** or **No** if you used this strategy this time.
- 2) Circle **E** or **I** according to how effective was for you this time.
- 3) Put a tick to the strategies you used when **listening** according to the frequency. **A**=always, **S**=sometimes **N**=never.

Type	Strategy example While I listen, ...	This time				Generally			
		Used		E= Effective I=Ineffective		A	S	N	
		Yes	No						
Memory	1	I identify key words used in the passage to introduce, to exemplify, to conclude...	Yes	No	E	I			
	2	I pay attention to identify nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs.	Yes	No	E	I			
	3	I identify joined words such as won't, didn't, isn't, haven't, can't...	Yes	No	E	I			
	4	I place new words into a context	Yes	No	E	I			
	5	I group related words to the given topic	Yes	No	E	I			
Cognitive	6	I get the main idea of the whole passage	Yes	No	E	I			
	7	I recognize structures or patterns	Yes	No	E	I			
	8	I analyze expressions	Yes	No	E	I			
	9	I translate into Spanish	Yes	No	E	I			
	10	I take notes	Yes	No	E	I			
Compensation	11	I predict using previous knowledge and related to the passage based on the topic or title.	Yes	No	E	I			
	12	I guess without having a lot of information what the speaker will say at a certain interval of the passage	Yes	No	E	I			
	13	I infer from given evidence in the passage	Yes	No	E	I			
	14	I identify synonyms	Yes	No	E	I			
	15	I switch to the mother tongue	Yes	No	E	I			
	16	I identify accents from speakers.	Yes	No	E	I			







### Appendix F

Student number: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: Friends Unit 1

**Strategies**

**Content words:** “Different types of words nouns(people, places, things...), adjectives (old, tall...), verbs (actions or states like run, think, ...) and adverbs words that describe verbs, adjectives and other adverbs (always, friendly,...) that you need to recognize and understand”. Vestri, E. S. & Shelley, J. 2006.

**Predict:** Use your own knowledge, knowledge acquired previously to guess meaning of new items. In Dictionary and Thesaurus online. Retrieved from <http://www.yourdictionary.com/predict>

**Imagery :** “Using visuals to understand or remember new information”. O’Malley, J. M. & Chamot, A. U. 1990

**Use of mental linkages- grouping :** “Organizing or classifying words according to its grammatical form”. O’Malley, J. M. & Chamot, A. U. 1990

#### Pre-listening

**Instructions:** Using your previous knowledge, predict some content words that you will probably listen in the text about a woman called Balvir talking about her close friend Lisa to Tim. One is done for you.



Adjectives	Nouns	Verbs	Adverbs
pretty	Job	Meet	Actually

**While listening:**

**Instructions:** Listen to the conversation and write YES or NO in front of the things they talk about.

1)How did Balvir and Lisa first meet?	
2)what do Balvir and Lisa have in common?	
3)How do Balvir and Lisa differ?	
4) What are their hobbies and interests?	
5)What do you do and talk about when you are together?	

**Second listeningInstructions:** Listen and choose the appropriate answer to the following questions circling one of the options A,B,C,D or E .

1.- How do Balvir and Lisa first meet?

A=working for her brother	B=working for her mother	C=working for her dad	D=working for her sister	E=working for a friend
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2.- What do Balvir and Lisa have in common?

A=they don't have a lot in common	B= they have a dog in common	C=they have a friend in common	D=they have a house in common	E=they have a car in common
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3.- Where does Lisa work?

A= in a hospital	B= in a building construction	C=in a primary school	D= in a casino	E=she doesn't work.
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**Post listening**

**Summary:** Synthesize what we listen to ensure retention of the information.  
O'Malley, J. M. & Chamot, A. U. 1990

**Instructions:** Write a summary of the conversation and then without reading your summary, talk with a partner about what in general the conversation was.

**Original text taken from** Kay, Sue & Vaughan Jones, 2000. *Inside Out Student's Book Intermediate*.Macmillan. p. 10 and 148.

## TABLES

<b>Table A1</b>					
<i>Strategic activities done per participant and mean per group</i>					
<i>Group</i>	<i>Participant</i>	<i>Activities Out of 10</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Mean per group</i>	<i>Mean % Per Group</i>
<b>Intervention Group</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>70%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>71.42%</b>
	<b>103</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>70</b>		
	<b>105</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>50</b>		
	<b>106</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>80</b>		
	<b>107</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>90</b>		
	<b>108</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>50</b>		
	<b>116</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>90</b>		
<b>Control Group 1</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>75%</b>
	<b>202</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>40</b>		
	<b>203</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>90</b>		
	<b>204</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>80</b>		
	<b>205</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>90</b>		
	<b>206</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>50</b>		
<b>Control Group 2</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>78%</b>
	<b>303</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>		
	<b>307</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>60</b>		
	<b>308</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>50</b>		
	<b>313</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>90</b>		

<b>Table B2</b>	
<i>Strategic Activities' Mean per group</i>	
<i>Group</i>	<i>Mean</i>
<b>IG</b>	<b>7=71.42%</b>
<b>CG1</b>	<b>7.5=75%</b>
<b>CG2</b>	<b>8=78%</b>

<b>Table C3</b>							
<i>Pre- Pet general results out of 100 scale</i>				<i>Pre- Pet general results out of 25 answers</i>			
<i>Grupo</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Grupo</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
<b>IG</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>IG</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>CG1</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>CG1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>CG2</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>CG2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>

<b>Table D4</b> <i>Post- Pet general results out of 100 scale</i>				<i>Post- Pet general results out of 25 answers</i>			
<i>Group</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
<b>IG</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>IG</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>CG1</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>CG1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>CG2</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>CG2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>



<b>Table E5</b>										
<i>Correlated samples t-test data results of the IG, CG1 and CG2</i>										
<i>Categorical Variables</i>	<i>Continuous variables</i>									
<i>Groups</i>	<i>Post-PET</i>	<i>Pre-PET</i>	<i>Ma-Mb</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p (one tailed)</i>	<i>CIs</i>	<i>0.95</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>Cohen's d</i>
	<i>Mean a (Ma)</i>	<i>Mean b (Mb)</i>								
<b>Explicit Strategy Training in IG</b>	<b>54.85</b>	<b>51.42</b>	<b>3.42</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0.32</b>	<b>(+-)</b>	<b>17.0317</b>	<b>18.3925</b>	<b>0.40</b>
<b>Non explicit strategy training in CG1</b>	<b>52.66</b>	<b>50.33</b>	<b>2.33</b>	<b>0.41</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0.34</b>	<b>(+-)</b>	<b>14.8032</b>	<b>14.1091</b>	<b>0.36</b>
<b>Non explicit strategy training in CG2</b>	<b>45.6</b>	<b>35.2</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0.016</b>	<b>(+-)</b>	<b>9.0339</b>	<b>7.2664</b>	<b>3.2</b>
<i>Note: One participant (206) in CG1 did not do the pre-pet. However, it is included with a 12 score, the average obtained from all the participants' scores.</i>										

<b>Table F6</b>				
<i>ANOVA Data Summary</i>				
	<i>Samples</i>			
	<i>IG</i>	<i>CG1</i>	<i>CG2</i>	<i>Total</i>
	<i>EST</i>	<i>NESTCG1</i>	<i>NESTCG2</i>	
<i>N</i>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.4286</b>	<b>2.3333</b>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Variance</b>	<b>338.2857</b>	<b>199.0667</b>	<b>52.8</b>	<b>202.4706</b>
<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>18.3925</b>	<b>14.1091</b>	<b>7.2664</b>	<b>14.2292</b>
<b>Std. Err.</b>	<b>6.9517</b>	<b>5.76</b>	<b>3.2496</b>	<b>3.3539</b>
<p><i>EST= Explicit strategy training NESTCG1= Non explicit strategy training in control group one. NESTCG2= Non explicit strategy training in control group two.</i></p>				

<b>Table G7</b>					
<i>Standard Weighted-means analysis</i>					
<i>ANOVA summary Independent Samples k=3</i>					
<b>Source</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>P</b>
<b>Treatment</b> <b>(Between groups)</b>	<b>205.7524</b>	<b>102.8762</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0.48</b>	<b>0.627968</b>
<b>Error</b>	<b>3236.2476</b>	<b>215.7498</b>	<b>15</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>3441.868</b>		<b>17</b>		

<b>Table H8</b>	
<i>Effect size effects using mean and standard deviation for all the comparisons in IG, CG1 and CG2</i>	
<b>IG-CG2,</b>	<b><i>d= -0.49</i></b>
<b>IG-CG1</b>	<b><i>d= 0.06</i></b>
<b>CG1-CG2</b>	<b><i>d= -0.71</i></b>
<i>Note: The mean and sd used were taken from the one way ANOVA results</i>	

<b>Table I9</b>									
<i>General results of each strategy used while listening in each session in the IG and total results in percentages per type of strategy</i>									
<i>Type</i>	<i>Question</i>	<i>YEA</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>YIA</i>	<i>YIS</i>	<i>NEA</i>	<i>NES</i>	<i>NIA</i>	<i>NIS</i>
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Memory</b>	<b>1Key words</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>53.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>2Content words</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4.09</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2.8</b>
	<b>3Linking words</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4.1</b>
	<b>4New words ic</b>	<b>26.09</b>	<b>48.18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1.5</b>
	<b>5 Group</b>	<b>47.9</b>	<b>35.3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1.8</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>35.65</b>	<b>38.27</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>1.34</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2.07</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2.04</b>
<b>Cognitive</b>	<b>6Main idea</b>	<b>51.09</b>	<b>33.54</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>7Recog. patterns</b>	<b>15.72</b>	<b>45.81</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3.09</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1.27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1.27</b>
	<b>8Analyze</b>	<b>36.72</b>	<b>40.09</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>9Translation</b>	<b>7.27</b>	<b>31.09</b>	<b>2.81</b>	<b>9.27</b>	<b>4.09</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2.81</b>
	<b>10Take notes</b>	<b>27.45</b>	<b>30.36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2.81</b>	<b>1.81</b>	<b>2.81</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1.27</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>27.65</b>	<b>36.17</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>3.03</b>	<b>1.18</b>	<b>1.17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1.07</b>
<b>Compensation</b>	<b>11Predict</b>	<b>33.09</b>	<b>42.63</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1.27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>12Guess</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>58.45</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>13Infer</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1.27</b>	<b>1.54</b>
	<b>14Synonyms</b>	<b>21.27</b>	<b>41.81</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3.09</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2.27</b>
	<b>15Switch to m.t.</b>	<b>13.72</b>	<b>31.09</b>	<b>1.54</b>	<b>3.09</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1.27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1.27</b>
	<b>16Accents f.s.</b>	<b>28.72</b>	<b>2.63</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1.27</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4.54</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>24.46</b>	<b>36.43</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>1.24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.42</b>	<b>0.96</b>	<b>0.84</b>
<b>YEA=Yes Effective/ Always YES= Yes Effective/Sometimes YIA= Yes Ineffective/ Always YIS= Yes Ineffective/ Sometimes NEA=No Effective/Always NES=No Effective/Sometimes NIA=No Ineffective/Always NIS= No Ineffective/Sometimes. m.t=Mother tongue f.s=from speakers</b>									

**Table J10**

*Calculated  $d$  and  $r$  using  $t$  values and  $df$  (separate groups  $t$ - test)*

<i>INTERVENTION GROUP</i>	
<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>
<b>0.49</b>	<b>6</b>
Cohen's $d$	Effect size
<b>0.4000833</b>	<b>0.1961554</b>

<i>CONTROL GROUP 1</i>	
<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>
<b>0.41</b>	<b>5</b>
Cohen's $d$	Effect size
<b>0.3667151483099655</b>	<b>0.1803509367907692</b>

<i>CONTROL GROUP 2</i>	
<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>4</b>
Cohen's $d$	Effect size
<b>3.2</b>	<b>0.847998304005088</b>