# UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DE AMBATO

# FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS HUMANAS Y DE LA EDUCACIÓN

# CARRERA DE PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

**Informe final del trabajo de Titulación previo a la obtención del título de Licenciado/a en Pedagogía del Idioma Inglés**

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**Theme: "**Top-down and bottom-up strategies and listening comprehension"

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2024

## DECLARATION PAGE

I declare this undergraduate dissertation entitled "Top-down and bottom-up strategies and listening comprehension " is the result of the author's investigation and has reached the conclusions and recommendations described in the present study.

Comments expressed in this report are the author's responsibility.

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# BOARD OF EXAMINERS APPROVAL PAGE

## TO THE DIRECTIVE COUNCIL OF FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS HUMANAS Y DE LA EDUCACIÓN

The Board of Directors which has received the defense of the research dissertation with the purpose of obtaining the academic degree with the topic "TOP-DOWN AND BOTTOM-UP STRATEGIES AND LISTENING COMPREHENSION" which is held by Mayra Alejandra Chasiluisa Chicaiza undergraduate student from Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros, academic period September 2023 – February 2024, and once the research has been reviewed, it is approved because it complies with the basic, technical, scientific and regulatory principles.

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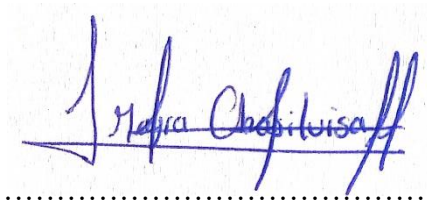
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# DEDICATION

To my beloved father Juan Manuel, who from heaven knows I admire his courage and responsibility, and the way he always encouraged me to study and become a better version of myself day by day.

To my mother, Clementina, who teaches me that no matter the circumstances, one should always focus on the positive side. I am grateful to her for showing me how brave a woman should be in times of adversity.

To my siblings, Mercedes and Segundo, who have become my second parents and have believed in me even when I didn't, and for doing everything possible to make me smile.

To my sister Fernanda, who has been my inspiration since I was a child and has supported me in every way. Thank you for sharing your wisdom and life experiences with me. You make me realize there is so much to learn and live

*Mayra.*

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**FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS HUMANAS Y DE LA EDUCACIÓN**

**CARRERA DE PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS**

**THEME:** "Top-down and bottom-up strategies and listening comprehension"

**AUTHOR:** Mayra Alejandra Chasiluisa Chicaiza

**TUTOR:** Dra. Mg. Chimbo Cáceres Elsa Mayorie

**ABSTRACT**

This non-experimental research analyzed the perspectives of undergraduate students on top-down and bottom-up strategies and their impact on listening comprehension. The survey was conducted with 70 participants, comprising 21 males and 49 females. The survey included 21 items on a Likert scale and 3 open-ended questions to gather data. The reliability of the survey was validated using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which resulted in a value of 0.830. The survey was also validated by two experts in the field. The findings revealed that the top-down strategies most frequently used by the students were schemata activation and note-taking. This indicated that brainstorming and prediction before listening could significantly improve listening comprehension. Additionally, taking notes could enhance students' memory while listening. The bottom-up strategies used with more frequency were recognizing transitional words and cognate recognition. Conversely, grammar analysis was used the least, suggesting that focusing on specific words can help comprehend a listening text. The study also found that the metacognitive strategy most commonly used was monitoring, while planning was less frequently used. Therefore, planning needs to be emphasized in classes. The research also highlighted the importance of socio-affective strategies such as self-motivation and cooperation. Lastly, the study identified the most likely causes of problems with listening comprehension.

*Keywords: listening comprehension, top-down and bottom-up strategies, listening factors, metacognitive and socio affective strategies,*

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**RESUMEN**

Esta investigación no experimental analizó las perspectivas de los estudiantes universitarios sobre las estrategias de arriba hacia abajo y de abajo hacia arriba y su impacto en la comprensión auditiva. La encuesta se llevó a cabo con 70 participantes, 21 hombres y 49 mujeres. La encuesta incluyó 21 artículos en una escala Likert y 3 preguntas abiertas para recopilar datos. La fiabilidad de la encuesta se validó utilizando el coeficiente Alpha de Cronbach, que resultó en un valor de 0,830. La encuesta también fue validada por dos expertos en la materia. Los hallazgos revelaron que las estrategias top-down más utilizadas por los estudiantes fueron la activación de esquemas y la toma de notas. Esto indicó que la lluvia de ideas y la predicción antes de escuchar podrían mejorar significativamente la comprensión auditiva. Además, tomar notas podría mejorar la memoria de los estudiantes mientras escuchan. Las estrategias bottom-up utilizadas con más frecuencia fueron el reconocimiento de palabras de transición y el reconocimiento cognado. Por el contrario, el análisis gramatical fue el menos utilizado, lo que sugiere que centrarse en palabras específicas puede ayudar a comprender un texto de escucha. El estudio también encontró que la estrategia metacognitiva más utilizada fue el monitoreo, mientras que la planificación fue menos utilizada. Por lo tanto, la planificación debe ser enfatizada en las clases. La investigación también destacó la importancia de las estrategias socioafectivas como la auto-motivación y la cooperación. Por último, el estudio identificó las causas más probables de problemas de comprensión auditiva.

*Palabras clave: Estrategias top-down y bottom-up, estrategias metacognitvas y socio afectivas, factores de escucha, compresión auditiva*

# CHAPTER I

## 1.1. Research background

For the elaboration of this research study on top-down and bottom-up strategies and listening comprehension, prior studies and data from different sites such Google scholar, Research Gate, and ERIC were considered. These sources were chosen because they allowed to develop a deep analysis of both variables and were developed in the last five years. In the end, they focused om the relationship between top-down and bottom-up strategies and listening comprehension supporting the development of the research work.

To begin with, the article elaborated by Larandang et al. (2023) had the purpose to analyze how students' listening skills improve after being taught top-down and bottom-up strategies. The total population was 21 participants whose native language was Indonesian. This study employed a pre-experimental research that included a one group pre and posttest. They participated in 5 weeks of training in top-down techniques such as inferring information, identifying the general idea, building prior knowledge and collecting keywords. The results reflected that the post test results were higher than the pretest results. Therefore, top-down strategies proved to be of great help to boost listening skills.

Manihuruk and Sidabutar (2022) held a research where the aim was to investigate whether using top-down and bottom-up strategies would have a significant impact on the listening skills of students. This research was conducted using quantitative experimental research methods. The study's population consisted of third-semester students from HKBP Nommensen, Pematangsiantar University. Two classes, comprising a total of 60 students, were randomly selected as samples. The experimental group (Class I), consisting of 30 students, was taught using the top-down and bottom-up strategy, while the control group (Class II), consisting of 30 students, was taught without using the top-down and bottom-up strategy. Data was collected using a test, and the Kuder Richardson formula (KR21) was used to ensure the test's reliability. The results showed that using top-down and bottom-up strategies had a significant effect on students' listening skills.

In the same line, Nha and Dung (2020) sheds insights on undergraduate students listening strategies and how often they are employed unconsciously at the Saigon International University. The sample was 115 undergraduate students under the English major. This study followed a mixed approach that included the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. The former was collected using questionnaires while the latter was gathered using semi-structured interviews. The results pointed out that English students preferred cognitive strategies while listening. These included listening for main idea and details, using learned vocabulary and grammar, distinguishing different kinds of input and attending to new words in the audio script. Metacognitive and socio affective strategies take up the second and third place respectively.

Munir (2022) developed a study with the aim to find out the difficulties faced by students in listening. This research used descriptive research method and was conducted at a senior high school in Polewali Mandar, West Sulawesi. Thirty-one students from the eleventh grade were selected as research subjects through a random sampling technique. The data was obtained from a questionnaire and an interview. The results obtained from the data analysis about the difficulties that students face when doing listening comprehension are; lack of vocabulary, students' interest in English, pronunciation, lack of concentration, accent, speaker talks too fast, topic changing, and they don't trust themselves.

Ngo (2019) conducted a study aiming to explore changes in listening strategy use of a group of 27 English language learners when receiving an 11-week LSI intervention in the Vietnamese context. Evidence provided from focus group interviews shows that the students reported using listening strategies more appropriately and in a variety of tasks post-LSI. These changes were discussed in connection to the culture and the English learning and teaching context in Vietnam. This study called for creating a learner-focused environment where students are mediated by their teacher, peers and learning materials to develop their listening strategy use. The effectiveness of strategy instruction was context-dependent, however, the consideration of context when investigating the impact of listening strategy instruction (LSI) seems to be neglected.

Kök (2018) assessed the relationship between students' listening comprehension strategy use and their listening comprehension proficiency with regard to the group, level, and degree of strategy use. Forty-four university students of an English Language teaching department comprised the study population. Three listening comprehension tests were given to participants with two-week intervals to measure their listening comprehension proficiency. To measure the students' listening comprehension strategy use, a listening comprehension strategy inventory developed by the researcher was used. Data analysis showed a positive correlation between the level of listening comprehension strategy use and listening comprehension proficiency. When different groups of listening comprehension strategy use of learners were taken into account, there was a statistically significant difference between the students' listening comprehension achievements in favor of the group with high metacognitive strategy use.

Hardiyanto (2021) conducted a research study to investigate the listening strategies employed by the students at the tertiary level in EFL setting. The study used descriptive approach which involved six students. They are the representative from the low, medium and high ability students. To achieve the objective of this research, the researcher used interview guideline as the instrument to collect the data. The findings showed that from those six strategies, there were only five strategies which are employed by the students; namely social strategy, cognitive strategy, compensation strategy, metacognitive strategy and affective strategy. From the result of this research, it can be concluded that memory strategy is not employed by the students.

Abdalhamid (2012) sheds insights on the listening strategies of advanced and intermediate second language listeners in English and compare the listening strategies of both groups of research participants. A total of 30 Arabic-speaking ESL learners were administered a listening comprehension test and a listening strategy use questionnaire. The results indicated that both advanced and intermediate listeners used metacognitive, cognitive, and socioaffective strategies. As far as cognitive strategies were concerned, the results revealed that the advanced listeners employed more top-down strategies than the intermediate listeners, whereas there were no significant differences in the use of metacognitive strategies. The results also indicated that cognitive strategies are the most powerful predictor of listening comprehension.

Linh (2021) studied the role of background knowledge in improving IELTS Listening scores for EFL students at Saigon University. The research was done by observing two groups of students learning Listening Module 3 at the institution. They were required to do the same test; however, while a group was constructed with pre-listening activities, the other simply listened and completed the task without preparation. The result showed little difference between the two groups in terms of efficiency, but most of the students in the first group were able to complete their test in the first time listening while some members of the latter group needed a second time. They were then required to complete a survey, including learning styles and attitudes. The results also tell us that EFL students pay much attention to pre-listening activities, and they believe such tasks can help them do their listening test better.

Solak and Cakir (2012) investigated the role of cognates in language teaching and material writing for Turkish learners of L2 English, in the present study, we developed a cognate based unit consisting of English-Turkish cognates and a parallel non-cognate unit. The cognate unit was used for the experimental group (N=48), while the non-cognate unit was employed in the control group (N=48). Finally, we assessed the performances of both groups in terms of listening and reading comprehension, and language use. The results indicated that there was a significant difference between the two groups in terms of reading, listening and language use performances. The findings suggested that cognates could be helpful in developing materials for Turkish learners of L2 English.

Joyce (2019) studied the relative importance of the linguistic and psycholinguistic components for listening. To address this issue, a number of linguistic and psycholinguistic sub-skills that are associated with L2 listening proficiency were selected and operationalized. This battery of discrete point measures, as well as two L2 proficiency tests, was administered to 443 Japanese university students. After the data had been subjected to descriptive and inferential analysis, the findings indicated that L2 listening comprehension is most closely associated with L2 syntactic knowledge, followed by the ability to recognize words in connected speech. The results also revealed that listeners at different proficiency levels process the language in decidedly different ways. Less proficient learners were discovered to be far more dependent on the linguistic and psycholinguistic subskills that are closest to the surface of the message. On the other hand, owing to the development of their syntactic knowledge and recognition of words in

connected speech, more proficient listeners benefitted from a greater interaction between their higher and lower level processing skills.

Kok (2023) led a research study aimed at finding the relationship between learners' listening strategy use and listening comprehension achievement concerning their proficiency level, gender, and field of study. The population of the study included 322 university students (99 males, 223 females) at B2 level of proficiency according to the Common European Framework of Reference, who were studying to specialize in Nursing, Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation, and Psychology in a university in İzmir, Turkey. Data were collected through a listening strategy inventory applied to measure learners' use of metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective strategies and a listening comprehension achievement test. Statistical analyses of the data revealed statistically significant positive correlations between listening strategy use and listening comprehension achievement (higher achievers used strategies more frequently). There were also significant differences between listening comprehension achievement and listening strategy use with regard to the aforementioned variables.

Jamaleddin (2014) aimed to distinguish the frequency of socio-affective strategies used by Iranian undergraduate students based on their gender. Oxford's strategy classification system (1990) that includes questions about the use of the strategies. The range of their age was 22 in both males and females. To analyze the result of the socio-affective strategies use frequencies were counted. The result indicated that although there were some similarities and differences between males and females while using socio--affective strategies, the differences were more in social strategies than affective ones. After gathering the data from the questionnaires and calculating the means of the two groups, we selected an Independent-sample T Test to compute the significant difference between the two groups. They also measured the effect size to prove the magnitude of the difference, that is, meaningfulness of the data. The result revealed that males had more tendency in communication than females.

Indriana (2019) conducted a research to find out: (1) the use of a social-affective strategy by students in the second semester at UMS. (2) The tendency of students to use indicators from social-affective strategies. The subjects of this study were second semester speaking class students at UMS, and the object of this study was focused on

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knowing students' interests using social-affective strategies. This type of research was qualitative. The method used was through observation, questionnaires, and interviews. Data analysis using data reduction, and conclusions or verification. The results of this study were that almost all students use socio-affective strategies, including: lowering anxiety, encouraging themselves, cooperating with others or empathizing with others.

Duong and Tran (2020) aimed to determine the English listening comprehension problems of Vietnamese high school students as perceived by students and their teachers. The research was conducted at a high school in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam with the participation of 368 eleventh graders who answered a questionnaire and 8 EFL teachers who took part in semi-structured interviews. Then the collected quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (i.e. frequencies/ percentages) and content analysis, respectively. Both the teachers and the students pointed out English listening comprehension problems relating to perception, parsing, and utilization. In particular, the students encountered phonological and lexical problems (i.e. high speech rates and challenging vocabulary), semantic and syntactic problems (i.e. long utterances), and discourse problems (i.e. implied meanings, unfamiliar topics, and organization of ideas). The results are discussed in relation to the Vietnamese EFL context, and some pedagogical implications are presented.

Syahreza (2019) carried out a study with the aim to find out what factors affect students' listening comprehension in the EnglishDepartment of Syiah Kuala University. Seventh semester students of English Department were selected as sample of this study. The method of this study was a quantitative descriptive study. The writer used a questionnaire which consist of 43 questions as an instrument of this study. The result of questionnaire become the main data of this study. The data was calculated by using statistical formula. The result of this study revealed that the most dominant factor affecting students' listening comprehension skill was failure to concentrate factor, content of listening text factor, listener factor, and linguistics feature lastly. Therefore, it is recommended for head office of English Department of Teacher Training and Education Faculty of Syiah Kuala University to upgrade the equipment used to conduct listening activity.

**Theoretical Framework**

**Independent variable**

**Pedagogy**

According to Kapur (2020), Pedagogy refers to what the teacher does in order to guarantee a successful learning process. The teacher's actions are concerned with some aspects such as theories, teacher's research and experiences, group reflections, education policies etc. which teachers will take into consideration during instruction. Another definition given to Pedagogy is the one by Tyagi (2019), who mentioned that it is considered an applied science. This is because the knowledge obtained from learning and teaching practices derives in valid and essential knowledge. This knowledge is just a complement to this discipline, therefore, it should always combine theoretical and empirical knowledge.

The role of the student in Pedagogy is primary since although learning goals are established in relation to teachers' decisions, learners become responsible for their own learning and attitudes (Tirri & Tom (2007). In the same line, students can control in some way their learning by setting goals and analyzing how far they have come to accomplish them. On the other hand, Tzenios (2022) claimed that a student centered classroom does not expect students to set goals rather they are expected to participate, interact and collaborate between each other. The teacher becomes a facilitator that lead the class and is open to questions.

Husbands and Pearce (2012) presented the following principles for effective Pedagogy: the voice of pupils is really important, adequate pedagogies build upon teachers 'actions, knowledge and beliefs, establishing learning outcomes, it also requires students' prior knowledge and experience, the use of scaffolding, interaction patterns, the development of higher order thinking skills, the use of assessment, and create inclusive classrooms. Similarly, Ramakrishna and Devi (2020) proposed these principles: transparency, inclusion, motivation, consistency, and quality assurance.

meaning of spoken and written languages, as well as understanding the context in which certain words are used (McQuerrey, 2018). Additionally, Webb (2018) mentioned that Linguistics is a beneficial tool, because it gives to the students the opportunity to learn how speech and sound work, how sentences are structured, the power struggle in open discourse, how people convey meanings in speech writing and how people have the ability to learn multiple languages.

**Methods and Approaches**

Approaches are well informed theories about the subject matter, the nature of language and the nature of language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). The former refers to the nature of language proficiency and the basic units of language structure. The latter deals with the cognitive processes and optimal conditions to employ these processes. Dincer and Dariyemez (2020) mentioned that there is not specific approach regarded as the best because is the teachers' work to study them in depth and analyze which one is adequate for a context. In the end, the aim is to prepare students to communicate effectively.

According to Wang (2019), methods involve the strategies and principles that a teacher uses in instruction. Closely related to this definition, AI-Taai (2021) defined methods as a set of performances to enact learning from students where teacher and learners remain in a continuous exchange of information and agreement. However, the method itself is not enough to achieve learning. This is the reason why Landoy et al. (2020) stated the following aspects to be considered when choosing any teaching-learning method: learners' skills, objectives, and content.

Turuthi et al. (2018) claimed that traditional methods are demonstration and lectures which did not guarantee real learning. There was not a focus on consistency of content neither attention to students' learning styles, preferences, and time. The teacher's role in a traditional classroom is fundamental and he provides direct instruction, therefore, opinions and participation of students is reduced. According to EuroKids (2023), it is characterized by rote memorization and the use of drills. This means students were

expected to learn by heart, that is repeat lots of times something until it settle in their brains.

A modern teaching method is centered on the learner and on activities that enable the students' participation, therefore, curriculum planning and teaching depend on students (Jovanovic & Todorovic, 2020). Furthermore, Madina (2022) pointed out that modern methods in teaching should result in modern student thinking, value of tolerance and sociability. Students work in group projects, participate in class, create portfolios during the learning process which make them active participants. They learn from these activities and are frequently assessed (Lathan, 2021). Some examples are: flipped classrooms, inquiry-based learning, personalized learning, game-based learning.

**Language learning strategies**

Nunan (2003) defined strategies as conscious actions that learners take to achieve desired goals or objectives. Strategies are understood as a creative sequence of actions that learners actively use in order to attain a specific language goal. As learners continue learning and practicing how to use specific strategies, the strategies move from conscious to unconscious. In other words, strategies can become automatic and the learners are capable of applying these strategies at different levels with different materials. O'Malley and Chamot (1990) described learning strategies as peoples' behaviors and special thoughts used to learn, comprehend, and retain input. They classified these strategies into three categories: metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies and socio affective strategies. Pressley et al. (1987) claimed that the objective of using a strategy is beyond using the strategy adequately but to reach a specific goal such as: understanding a passage, solving a problem or communication.

Strategy instruction supplies students with appropriate tools and techniques to understand and learn new material or skills. With continued guidance and ample opportunities for practice, students learn to integrate information in a way that helps them to recall it at a later time, even in a different situation or setting (Luke, 2006). Cohen's (1998) approach to strategy training includes the following points: 1) Determine learners'

needs and the resources available for training; 2) Select the strategies to be taught; 3) Consider the benefits of integrated strategy training; 4) Consider motivational issues; 5) Prepare materials and activities; 6) Conduct explicit strategy training; and 7) Evaluate and revise strategy training.

Mandarani, (2016), on the other hand, mentioned a different model to instruct strategies. This model included the following process: in the pre-listening section, the teacher uses the bottom-up strategy to make students aware of grammar and vocabulary needed for the listening task. The setting and context will be determined by learners' prior knowledge which implies the use of top-down strategies. While listening, here, learners must engage with the text. The teacher guides listeners along the listening process and focus attention on difficulties. Top-down strategies help in making predictions to understand the message just heard. At last, in the post-listening section, both strategies require the teacher to ask question about the language and content in the message as some king of assessment.

The pre-listening strategies refer to the warm-up stage previous to the development of the class in which students get ready and prepare their minds for the topic of the lesson. This is usually very short and includes activities such as: brainstorming, predicting, listing, picture description, games, etc.

- Brainstorming: It is a group problem-solving method that involves the spontaneous contribution of creative ideas and solutions. This technique requires intensive, freewheeling discussion in which every member of the group is encouraged to think aloud and suggest as many ideas as possible based on their diverse knowledge (Bernstein, 2017).

- Predicting content: It is listening only to the first part of information or seeing a picture in order to predict what the whole information is about.

- Listing: It is an act or instance of making or including in a list.

- Picture description: A picture is shown to the students. They describe the pictures well.

The while-listening strategies are applied during the development of the lesson. They are usually accompanied by several activities in order to carry out the teaching-learning process. Some while- listening strategies are: matching, dictogloss, inferring meaning, summarizing (Ahmed, 2015). Other strategies can be: answering the information questions: what, who, when, where, why? how? taking notes, filling in the gaps, listen and draw.

- Matching: It is listening and relating specific words or sentences to pictures or other words or sentences to understand the context better and develop this English skill.

- Predicting content: It is listening only to the first part of information or seeing a picture in order to predict what the whole information is about.

- Dictogloss: "Dictogloss is a classroom dictation activity where learners are required to reconstruct a short text by listening and noting down key words, which are then used as a base for reconstruction." (British Council).

- Inferring meaning: Learners can deduce or conclude based on evidence and reflection of the information.

- Summarizing: It is listening to the whole information and being able to say a summary about it.

- Answering information questions: It is listening to the information and answering some questions in order to check the listening comprehension.

- Taking notes: It is taking notes about the main ideas that are heard.

- Filling in the gaps: It is listening and completing information with specific words.

- Listen and draw: It is listening to the description of something, it could be a place, thing, animal or anything related to the class; especially vocabulary. Then, students follow the description and draw it as they imagine it. The picture does not have to be exact.

The post-listening strategies include the evaluation of the activities and strategies applied during the teaching learning process by means of the lesson plan. They include speaking activities about what the students listened or learned; writing activities about

what they listened to, test and quizzes about the lessons; and doing exercises about matching or answering questions about the listening activities

**Metacognitive**

In the early 1970s, John Flavell used the term metacognition for the first time. He mentioned that metacognition refers to the people's knowledge about their own cognitive processes. He claimed that these processes are under organization, active supervision and regulation depending on the cognitive data (Flavell, 1976). According to Verezub et al. (2014), metacognitive strategies involve a process of monitoring, controlling and evaluating comprehension processes. These strategies help learners to take control of their learning because they are explicitly taught and developed on the thinking skills (Hornby & Greaves 2022).

According to Chamot (2005), executive processes used in planning for learning, monitoring one's own comprehension, production, and evaluating how well one has achieved a learning objective. These processes help learners to control their thinking and learning. They involve observable judgments, analyses and/ or regulations operated by learners in their own performance. Besides, these processes take place before, during and after learners' performance. According to Ortega (2022), planning facilitates goal setting, strategy implementation and time management. On the contrary, if learners do not plan what to do before listening, they lack of an overall view of the task. (Anthonysamy, 2021). Using prior knowledge, setting realistic listening goals, drawing a mental or written map of the main ideas to say are instances of planning.

Monitoring comprises the individual's ability to self-testing while performing a task. It is the on-line awareness of comprehension that allows the individual to evaluate and control his or her learning. Constantly checking understanding of incoming information along with the revision of the effectiveness of the message delivered account for this strategy. Evaluation refers to appraising the products and regulatory processes of one's own learning. It is a form of self-assessment whereby learners judge their achievement against their own criteria, in accordance to their own learning objectives and learning expectations (Chamot. 2005).

**Socio-affective**

Socio-affective strategies cover activities involving interacting with others or undertaking affective control to benefit a learning task (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). They are concerned with two main aspects including learners' interaction with other speakers and their attitudes regarding learning. In this sense, this strategy group is derived from the two facets including socio and affective strategies. The former consists of communicating effectively in a group, finding solutions to problems, commenting on each other's work and giving advice. While the latter comprises lowering anxiety, self-encouragement and taking emotional temperature.

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) added that comprehension, retention of information and learning depend upon social interaction and control over emotions. For instance, lowering anxiety, rewarding yourself, taking your emotional temperature, asking questions for clarification, cooperation and empathizing with other people. They stated that socio affective strategies involve the interaction of students between each other and how they regulate their emotions. To boost socio affective listening strategies, learners use various activities for their listening comprehension, such as asking for clarification and repetition, paraphrasing, motivating themselves to listen, learning to relax to lower anxiety before and during listening, and providing themselves with opportunities for listening (Goh, 2000).

Socio-affective strategies strongly consider the student's relation to society as a whole ranging from family to the global community. Learners who have developed their socio/affective strategies are likely to become more successful language learners. Awinindia (2023) affirmed that students give feedback and motivation to each other and work together to overcome difficulties which benefits language learning. Therefore, students focus not only on listening comprehension but also on their comfort in achieving goals in listening class. In addition, these strategies help students understand the target language by working together to reduce anxiety, control emotional temperature, and encourage themselves.

**Cognitive strategies**

O'Malley and Chamot (1990) mentioned that cognitive strategies are those behaviors or actions in which learners interact with the material either using a mental or physical mode. Centro Virtual Cervantes (2023) emphasized that these are mental and done in a conscious or unconscious way that, in turn, facilitate language comprehension, storage of information and subsequent use. Consistent with this idea, Cameron and Jago (2013) explained that cognitive strategies serve to solve problems and accomplish objectives through the use of mental processes that manage thinking processes and content. The information can be broken down in its essential component, then integrate and rebuild the information in a significant way. Learners are allowed to think critically, understand the structure and components of the information, and identify relations and patterns to eventually build up deep understanding (Mendoza et al., 2023).

Cali et al. (2017) indicated that learners are expected to create connections between the just acquired knowledge and the prior knowledge in memory in a way that it creates a wider knowledge network. This process involves modifying existing mental schemes or developing new schemes if necessary. It allows learners to create their own structure in relation to the topic to be learned. Consequently, they classify information to achieve a clear representation, by exploring possible relationships between different components and the data to be assimilated. Another factor is repetition which is aimed to make a mental revision by analyzing the information read or listened with the objective of reflecting on the level of comprehension obtained. Hence, the transmission of information to long-term memory will become a smooth process. Mendoza et al. (2023) provided the following learning activities that are utilized with cognitive strategies: graphic organizers, concept maps, summary tables, flowcharts, summaries, underlining, memorization, problem solving exercises, analogies, brainstorming, paraphrasing, discussion, round table, simulation or experiments.

Weinstein and Mayer (1986) distinguished three types of strategies: strategies of repetition, elaboration, and organization. The first group consist of pronouncing, naming, and constantly saying the input received. This mechanism of our memory tries to keep

data in the working memory whilst it is transferable to the long term memory. The second group of strategies integrates the new input with the information stored in the memory and lastly, the strategies of organization that intend to combine the information selected coherently. In addition to them, there are strategies of selection which are about selecting the most relevant information in order to facilitate its processing.

**Top-down strategies**

According to Hedge (2001), these strategies are especially relevant because they provide the learner with the necessary context to understand the new information. Hedge argued that learners infer meaning from contextual clues and from making links between the spoken message and various types of prior knowledge which listeners hold inside their heads. Top-down processing constructs general predictions based on general schemata and then looks for information to fit into these schemata. The listener actively constructs the original meaning of the speaker using the new input. The listener uses previous knowledge of the context within which the listener happens to comprehend what he/she hears. Context includes knowledge of the topic, the speaker or speakers, and their connection with the situation and with each other and previous happenings. If the incoming information is unfamiliar for the listener, it cannot extract his schemata and he can only depend on his linguistic knowledge in listening comprehension. Thus, only depending on top-down processing may leads to the failure of comprehension (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983)

Brown (2007) mentions that there are other effective top-down strategies that can be used in the classroom with the purpose of solving the lack of information about the topic, for example: predicting the purpose of the speaker by the context of the spoken discourse, associating the new information with already existing cognitive structures (activating related information), identifying information presented by the teachers related to the meaning of the audio text. Campos (2022) added that top-down strategies in listening enables the listener to use key words to construct the schema of a discourse, infer the setting for a text, infer the role of the participants and their goals, infer causes or effects, infer unstated details of a situation, anticipate questions related to the topic or situation.

Schema activation involves mental representations of past experiences (schemata) and listening texts, both participate in a process where textual stimuli (e.g. headings) retrieve certain schema from memory (Li & Cheng, 1997). Nuna (2007) described prediction and brainstorming activities used to build schemata, brainstorming is a pre-listening activity used to generate ideas about a listening topic to make students familiar with the vocabulary in the text; meanwhile prediction involves looking at pictures or headings in a text and make guesses about the content. According to Nunan (2007), listeners should activate prior knowledge to ensure comprehension of listening texts. There is no explicit meaning in an oral text rather it is found in the listeners' mind when they actively build meaning using elements of the text and existing knowledge (Xie, 2005).

According to Piolat et al. (2005), notetaking is a complex process of shortening information for later use, it has two main functions: encoding and external storage. Siegel (2020) discussed that encoding involves perceiving and organizing information through notes meanwhile external storage is the act of reviewing the notes which contributes to retention and learning. Thuy (2020) mentioned that note taking does not lead to a better listening performance if there is a lack of independent practice. According to Thu et al. (2023), inferences are mental processes that listeners use to draw conclusion of a listening text. Inferences requires learners to integrate textual clues and prior knowledge to clarify confusing information in an audio, filling in missing information, identifying the coherence of a text. Guo (2015) showed that the effectiveness of implementing inference strategy is affected by learners' vocabulary. Foomani (2015) suggested that it is necessary to increase the depth of vocabulary knowledge through exposure to the target language and to set inferencing tasks in classes.

**Bottom-up strategies**

Brown (2000) stated that in the bottom-up process, the listener gains understanding following an order that is available from sounds to word grammatical relations to linguistic meaning. Listeners use bottom-up strategies when they use linguistic knowledge to understand the text, topic, or audio meaning. According to

Richards (2008), bottom-up refers to input as the basis for understanding the message. A bottom-up strategy can help the learner to understand the linguistics elements. This strategy is often discussed in receptive skills such as listening and reading as a process to reinforce critical thinking for successful listening comprehension (Kartika, 2020). Bottom-up processing is decoding the sounds one hears linearly, from the smallest meaningful units to complex texts.

Brown (2007) said the bottom-up focus on sentences, word stress, and the grammatical formula of spoken language. Grammatical knowledge is the knowledge about a variety of morpho syntactic properties such as tense, aspect, word order, subject-verb agreement, and articles" (Jeon & Yamashita, 2014, p. 165), A bottom-up strategy is also used by learners when they rely on specific components of the foreign language for comprehension. It involves building meaning from the sound heard. Sounds are changed into words, grammatical relationships, and upward until the meaning is created. In short, sound units connected to form words, phrases, utterances, and finally, complete meaningful contents. In other words, it needs the right sequence process to accomplish comprehension in listening. The language in the message is essential for the listener, it has to do with the combination of sounds, words, grammar that result in making meaning. This process moves from parts like the meaning of individual words to larger units of meaning as the listener gathers information gradually from the speech. In addition, language learning depends on intentional listening. For example, recognizing word-order patterns, listening for specific details, and recognizing cognates (Ascough, 2023).

Cognate recognition is a strategy used to recognize words that share form and meaning in two languages (Frances et al., 2021). Rodriguez (2001) pointed out that true cognates share form, pronunciation and meaning, while false cognates share form and pronunciation but differ in meaning. Soares et al. (2010) argued that true cognates are easier to learn due to the clear lexical similarities. Mulder et al. (2019) mentioned that learners who identify cognates between L1 and L2 have more opportunities to comprehend oral texts because learners are creating connections and finding similarities through word recognition. According to Ellis (2001), focus on forms approach is linked to explicit instruction of grammar rules and structures, it is a teacher centered approach with which learners memorize and apply grammar rules to learn. Cook (2008) made

emphasis on the idea that learners who are able to understand grammar rules have more opportunities to manage incoming information. Grammar explanations are not directly taught instead teachers uses listening and reading passages along with comprehension questions to teach English (Grahn, 2022).

**Dependent Variable**

**Language skills**

A language is a system of communication that people use to communicate with each other. This system is made up of written or spoken words (Dostert, 2009). English is the lingua franca, a language used for international communication. It has become the global language of technology and science (Hatchen, 2023). In the field of education, English is often mandatory in schools, high schools and Universities. It can be studied and it becomes English as a foreign language in countries where it is not the official language. English can be a second language in countries where it is the mother tongue.

There are four language skills which allow interpersonal communication: speaking, reading, writing and listening. they are divided into two categories: receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing). Listening involves listening attentively to what the speaker says. Hearing and listening are two different things, in the former you do not focus on any words but just nod along with what someone says. In the latter, you are completely engaged in the process of listening which means you do register words and often includes follow-up questions. Reading, on the other hand, seeks to understand a written word in a larger piece of text, this requires time and concentration. Speaking effectively is considered the most difficult skill but required in many areas. Lastly, proficient writing is not about writing heavy sentences that are not clear but being able to express your ideas shortly and coherently (Harappa, 2021).

Different language skills should be used by learners to increase the development of each skill. It is illogical to detach skills when doing an activity in a specific lesson. The use of different skills can make the activities more meaningful, motivate learners, and create interesting contexts. According to Snow (2005), listening can be used to improve other skills such as reading or speaking skills in all classes and listening can gain from specific skills such as pronunciation. It is emphasized that developing listening skills with

pronunciation is an effective strategy that should be used in English classes. In this way, it is recommended that teachers instruct and improve listening by mixing it with pronunciation

**Receptive skills**

Holmes (2019) highlighted that receptive skills are developed first when learning a second or foreign language. However, receptive and productive skills keep a close relationship because the majority of times they support each other. For example, listening well can boost the development of speaking. When interacting with native speakers, troubles emerge, maintaining a conversation takes more effort and often learners feel pressured due to lack of knowledge about connected speech or idiomatic expressions. In this case, listening needs of real time processing because there is not much chance of returning to the text just heard in contrast to reading where there is a text to rely on. The best way to nurture receptive skills is exposure to authentic material such as magazines, music, books, or radio programs (Kozhevnikova, 2014).

Input is the language learners will listen or read but have not understood yet. When the information is already processed, then it becomes intake (Rhalmi, 2019). Language learners should be exposed to lots of input, especially in second language acquisition where incidental or intentional learning depend on input. Listening input contains the following types of knowledge: language use, phonology, grammar and vocabulary (Rost, 2005). Learners benefit from input if certain conditions are taken into account. For example, learners should be motivated in the listening, the level of difficult, the quantity and quality of input, and attention (Ellis & Shintani, 2014).

According to Richards (2015), productive skills do not develop from comprehension skills. He mentions that there are two factors to bridge the gap between receptive and productive skills. The first factor is the noticing hypothesis which involves being able to recognize new forms in the input to be acquired. The reason is that learning takes place once learners notice something in the input. Incorporating new linguistic knowledge into language competence relies on learners' conscious state of input features.

**Listening skill**

Nunan (1995) pointed out that listening is considered the cinderella skill in language learning because a language learner, in the end, should be able to speak and write well to be successful. Gillian Brown and others during the 1980s were able to demonstrate the importance of the abilities to listen and speak. The role of comprehensible input was of great help since listening is the skill that provides input. The purpose of listening often involves different processes and strategies, for instance, listening for the general idea of the sports program is different to listening for specific information about a job advertisement.

There are three aspects in the listening process according to Wolvin and Coakley (1994), in receiving, the combination of aural stimulation and visual stimulation is received by the listener. Furthermore, the listener will listen and recognize what the speaker is saying. Attending is focusing perception on a certain stimulus. When the listener only focused on the message that speaker convey, it is called attending the message. There are many stimulus around the listener. These stimulus may be external such as speaker's words, noise in the class, or may be internal for example; headache, thought about something, etc. Assigning meaning is an interpretation or understanding of the stimuli heard and or seen and attended to. In this aspect, the listener's goal is to get the meaning as similar as possible to what speakers says. Moreover, the listener has to know that translating word to word is not necessary because not every word is essential to the message. Listener only have to look for general meaning to avoid mistake while understanding what speaker says.

**Listening comprehension**

Buck (2001) argued that listening comprehension is also the process of constructing meaning heard. Listening comprehension activities typically address many listening functions, including recognition, orientation, comprehension of main ideas, understanding and recall of details (Richard & Schmidt, 2002). Furthermore, all definition of listening skill relates to the level of listening mastery, such as listening for academic purposes, which can be a special subject at the university level.

According to O'Malley et al. (1989), listening comprehension is regarded as an active process where the listener uses cues from the context and prior knowledge and at the same time numerous strategies to make meaning. Ospina (2021) claimed that listening comprehension is linked to cognitive learning since it involves comprehension monitoring, vocabulary, grammar, memory and attention. Learners need to have access to linguistic knowledge since the message is presented in a sequence that connects sounds and words into ideas. Another characteristic of listening comprehension is that auditory skills are needed because the listener will be asked to reflect on the message or give a comment. The role of listening comprehension in oral communication is essential because it leads the way for the communication process. This process include verbal and nonverbal cues draw upon the language in the message (Deregozu, 2021).

Morley and Lawrence (1971) described the following principles for teaching listening comprehension: Goals should be clear in listening comprehension lessons, these should be planned from simple to complex steps where the listener is given direction as when what and how to listen. The listener must be involved in the listening comprehension lesson which means he has to write his answers and comments on the performance. This aids to maintain students' motivation and awareness. Learners should be handed the written material before playing the audio. The emphasis should be on reinforcing memory development. The reason is because one of listening objectives is to work on students working and long term memory. These lessons should not focus on testing rather these have to teach. Checking students' responses is considered to be a form of feedback.

Anderson (1995) offered three stages of listening comprehension: perceptual processing, parsing, and utilization. In the first stage, the attention is on the sounds stored in the ultra-short-term memory. The listener, here, focuses on meaningful sounds and contextual information that help to construct and interpret meaning. The parsing stage is determined by several factors such as topic familiarity, quality of input, linguistic knowledge. The listener creates mental representations of the incoming words that will be stored in short term memory. Finally, the utilization stage where the upcoming input is compared or contrasted with existing knowledge in long-term memory to make meaning and guarantee interpretation and comprehension.

Shorasul (2019) described a three stage model of learning to listen: before listening, listening, and after listening. In the first stage, students made assumptions about the content and existing knowledge is updated. This immersion can be done by using discussion of issues related to the topic, using its title to make assumptions about the content, true or false statements, filling tables, and making assumptions using pictures. At this stage, lexical and grammatical difficulties have to be eliminated. While listening, the audio is played twice with the aim of preliminary acquaintance and to obtain general understanding.

Underwood (1989) stated seven causes or factors to efficient listening comprehension: control of speed of delivery, listeners cannot always have words repeated, listeners have limited vocabulary, listeners may fail to recognize the signals which indicate that the speaker is moving from idea to another, listeners lack contextual knowledge, listeners cannot concentrate in a foreign language, learners may have established certain learning habits.

- Listeners cannot control the speed of delivery. Many English language learners believe that the greatest difficulty with listening comprehension, as opposed to reading comprehension, is that the listener cannot control how quickly a speaker speaks.

- Listeners cannot always have words repeated. This is a serious problem in learning situations. In the classroom, the decision as to whether or not to replay a recording or a section of a recording is not in the hands of students. Teachers decide what and where to repeat listening passages; however, it is hard for the teacher to judge whether or not the students have understood any particular section of what they have heard.

- Listeners have a limited vocabulary. The speaker may choose words the listener does not know. Listeners sometimes encounter an unknown word, which may cause them to stop and think about the meaning of that word and thus cause them to miss the next part of the speech. Munir (2022) indicated that the speaker in an audio may use vocabulary the listener does not know and it makes the listener unable to get the point of the audio.

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- Listeners may fail to recognize the signals, which indicate that the speaker is moving from one point to another, giving an example, or repeating a point. Discourse markers used in formal situations or lectures such as "secondly" or "then" are evident to listeners. In informal situations or spontaneous conversations, signals are vague as in pauses, gestures, increased loudness, etc. These signals are not missed by proficient learners.

- Listeners may lack contextual knowledge. Sharing knowledge and common context makes communication easier. Even if listeners can understand the surface meaning of the text, they may have considerable difficulties in comprehending the whole meaning of the passage unless they are familiar with the context. Nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions, nods, gestures or tone of voice, can also be easily misinterpreted by listeners from different cultures.6.

- It can be difficult for listener to concentrate on the text. In listening comprehension, even the shortest break in attention can seriously impair comprehension. Concentration is easier when students find the topic of the listening passage interesting; however, students sometimes feel listening is very tiring even if they are interested because it requires an enormous amount of effort to follow the meaning.

- Students may have established certain learning habits, such as a wish to understand every word. By tradition, teachers want students to understand every word they hear by repeating and pronouncing words carefully, by grading the language to suit their level, by speaking slowly and so on. Consequently, students tend to become worried if they fail to understand a particular word or phrase and they will be discouraged by the failure. It is thus sometimes necessary for students to tolerate vagueness and incompleteness of understanding

Some students face difficulties interfering with their listening process, especially those learning English as a foreign language in non-native settings. They get confused when they listen to a foreign language conversation. Students are used to their mother tongue with their family or friends, so they will have difficulty learning to listen in English According to Trant and Duong (2020), this is known as a learning habit students establish because they have been accustomed to the fact that teachers tend to grade the language for them. Teachers pronounce and repeat words slowly so that the students are able to understand what they say. Even the shortest break in attention can seriously impair comprehension (Xuyen, 2018).

## 1.2. Objectives

**General objective**

- To analyze students' perspectives on the use of top-down and bottom-up strategies in listening comprehension.

**Specific Objectives**

- To identify the types of top-down and bottom-up strategies used by learners.

- To determine the strategies employed by students for listening comprehension

- To examine the factors that affect listening comprehension

**Fulfillment of objectives**

This research aims to analyze the students' perspectives on the use of top-down and bottom-up strategies in listening comprehension in the higher levels of the PINE major at Universidad Tecnica de Ambato. To achieve this primary goal, three specific objectives were outlined to investigate how the independent variable affects the dependent variable.

To determine the types of top-down and bottom-up strategies that the participants use in listening comprehension, a research study was conducted, analyzing the outcomes of previous authors who had used the top-down and bottom-up strategies to ascertain whether these results were favorable or unfavorable. Subsequently, it was necessary to

establish and investigate the key categories for each variable. Following this, the author conducted a survey and created a specific section concerning the types of top-down and bottom-up strategies in listening comprehension, enabling students to respond based in their needs. Subsequently, the author analyzed and compared the survey results to determine the participants' choices.

To identify the strategies used by learners in this study, first, an examination was conducted to determine the most common listening strategies. Subsequently, using the same previously described survey, another specific section was created for the students to select from a range of strategies the ones they use the most. The results were then analyzed and compared, and as a results, the author obtained the most frequently employed strategies by the students.

To outline the factors that affect their listening comprehension, first, previous information from authors regarding the factors they identified affected listening comprehension was analyzed. Next, a third section was created in the survey based in these factors identified by previous authors, allowing students to respond according to their needs. Finally, the gathered information was analyzed and compared, ultimately yielding the expected results.

# CHAPTER II

## METHODOLOGY

## RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

### 2.1 Materials

To elaborate this study, the use of both, human and technological resources were considered necessary. The human factor who was represented by students from sixth and seventh semester from Pedagogia de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros major at Universidad Tecnica de Ambato. Regarding technological resources, the use of cellphones, laptops, google forms, and SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) software were used to manipulate incoming data. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program is used to conduct validation procedures, employing statistical measures such as Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

### Instruments

The research was conducted using a survey as a technique and a questionnaire as an instrument, this survey was administered to 70 students. The questionnaire was structured and divided into three sections considering three primary research questions: What are the types of top-down and bottom-up strategies that students use? Which metacognitive and socioaffective strategies students use for listening comprehension? What are the factors that affect listening comprehension?

The survey consisted of 21 items with Likert Scale, and 3 open-ended questions. The first section addressed the types of top-down and bottom-up strategies students use with 7 questions along with an open-ended question. The second section focused on the type of listening strategies students use comprising 7 questions and one open-ended question. Lastly, the final section was about the problems students have with listening comprehension which comprised 7 questions and one open-ended question.

**Population**

       A total of 70 pre service teachers in Pedagogia de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros major at Universidad Tecnica de Ambato actively participated in the survey in order to carry out the present research. There was a total of 21 males and 49 females, mostly identifying themselves as mestizos. Their age ranged from 21 to 25 years old. All students participated voluntarily. This study selected this population because they belong to higher levels of the major hence they are close to becoming English teachers and have acquired prior knowledge related to this research work. Further, they have been practicing listening as part of their preparation so they might be able to recognize aspects in listening this far. Lastly, they have been exposed to the use of technology including laptops, smartphones among others.

*Table 1*

*Population*

| Population | Participants | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 21 | 30 % |
| Female | 49 | 70 % |
| Total | 70 | 100% |

Note: Data obtained from the individuals who participated in the survey.

**Procedure**

       The first step was to carry out a deep research on both variables, this was the foundation to design a theoretical framework. Laster, after having read the information on the topic, three research questions were established following the pattern of the specific objectives and always having in mind the general objective. The survey was divided into three sections considering the two variables. The first section was called types of top-down and bottom-up strategies wherein the following strategies were included: inferencing, note-taking, schemata activation, grammar analysis, phonemic awareness, focus on transitional words, and cognate recognition. The second section involved the

listening strategies used in class such as metacognitive and socio affective strategies. In the former there are planning, monitoring, self-evaluating and self-testing strategies while in the later, there can be found cooperation, question for clarification, self-motivation strategies. The third section involves different factors that affect listening comprehension such as control of speed of delivery, listeners cannot always have words repeated, listeners have limited vocabulary, listeners may fail to recognize the signals which indicate that the speaker is moving from idea to another, listeners lack contextual knowledge, listeners cannot concentrate in a foreign language, learners may have established certain learning habits.

The questionnaire displayed 21 questions based on a Likert scale and 3 open ended questions. The survey was checked and validated by three experts in the field of languages and corrections were made. A pilot test was carried out to check the validity of the survey to 10 students, the Cronbach's Alpha value was 0.763. Consequently, the survey was administered to the higher levels of "Pedagogia de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros" using Google Forms. Later on, the data was analyzed and interpreted using the SPSS software. Once the data was obtained and well-organized in tables, the analysis and discussion of results were performed. During this stage, the author discussed the most relevant and least relevant findings, as well as compared and contrasted the information obtained with that reported by other authors. Finally, the research concluded with the development of the conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the investigation

## 2.2 Methods

### Mixed approach

This study developed on a mixed approach. Dawadi et al. (2021) mentioned that a mixed research build in various approaches which emerge from multiple research paradigms. Therefore, a mixed approach involves the combination of the characteristics of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. It was qualitative because the researcher administered a survey to gather information about the perception of students towards top-down and bottom-up strategies. In addition, it was quantitative since the results were processed numerically.

**Bibliographic and Documentary**

Harvard Extension School (2022) stated that bibliographic research encompasses the background reading and thinking behind research questions and hypothesis. The present research was bibliographic since the researcher collected data from different sources which contained previous studies related to the topic of this research. The sources of information were articles, books, journals. This allowed the study to have more information to support the two variables involved in this investigation. After collecting information, the researcher reflected on the theoretical concepts and previous investigations to support the development of this project

**Descriptive**

This investigation used a descriptive research approach that allowed the researcher to collect data through a survey and be able to describe the results and also determine their viewpoints. Hernandez et al. (2009) mentioned that descriptive research focuses on people, situations, contexts or events to describe their properties, characteristics, profiles through a deep analysis. This type of research involves data collection, analysis and presentation (Harish, 2021). Surveys are utilized to collect detailed information on some actual phenomena to explain certain practices or to develop a strategic plan to improve them in the future. It generates answers in numerical data that allows the research to carry out a statistical analysis to discover what the data is conveying.

**Research questions**

1.  What are the types of top-down and bottom-up strategies that students use?

2.  Which metacognitive and socioaffective strategies students use for listening comprehension?

3.   What are the factors that affect listening comprehension?

# CHAPTER III

# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

## 3.1 Analysis and interpretation of the results

This chapter describes the data collected through the survey and aims to answer the three research questions. The data was processed with the SPSS software to calculate the mean for each item and organize the results based on each research question.

1.   What are the types of top-down and bottom-up strategies that students use?

2.   Which metacognitive and socio-affective strategies students use for listening comprehension?

3.   What are the factors that affect listening comprehension?

*Table 2*

*Types of top-down strategies and bottom-up strategies*

| Item | Mean |
|---|---|
| **While listening I write down key words for later use in oral or written tasks.** | **3,81** |
| **While listening, I use information in the audio to draw conclusions.** | **3,36** |
| **Before completing a listening task, I predict content and I brainstorm ideas.** | **3,84** |
| **While I am listening, I analyze the structure of sentences (e.g. I (subject) play (verb) soccer (object).** | **2,97** |
| While I am listening, I concentrate on individual words and their pronunciation (e.g. listening for word stress, intonation, pronunciation patterns). | 3,49 |
| **While I am listening, I focus on transitional words (e.g. however, finally) that often show changes in the conversation or organization of ideas.** | **3,73** |
| **I recognize words from other languages that have similar spelling, meaning and pronunciation with words in English (e.g. hotel (English) and hotel (Spanish) while listening.** | **3,37** |

*Note*: The means were obtained from the following scales: 1. Never, 2. Rarely, 3. Sometimes, 4. Often, 5. Always.

**Analysis and interpretation**

Question number one: What are the types of top-down and bottom-up strategies that students use? Regarding the types of top-down strategies, the results of this survey demonstrated that learners tend to frequently predict content and brainstorms ideas with a mean of 3,84. This strategy is schemata activation and takes place before actually listening to the audio. It was found that students write key words while listening (note taking) with a mean of 3,81. It is one of the most frequent activities students do since writing down key words takes less time. Further, learners do not tend to make inferences using information from the audio with a mean of 3,36.

According to the survey results, it is evident that students are inclined to use their experiences and previous knowledge to be prepared to listen to the audio through brainstorming. Pre listening activities like brainstorming and predictions facilitate the comprehension of the upcoming text. It is noteworthy that a great number of students see useful to take key points from the listening to better understand and remember easily the information.

On the other hand, the bottom-up strategies that students use are: learners tend to recognize transitional words and true cognates. The focus on transitional words appears with a mean of 3,73, here students listen to specific linking words to recognize when the conversation or talk in changing or introducing ideas. Learners tend to recognize words from other languages that have similar spelling or pronunciation with words in English (cognate recognition) with a mean of 3,37. It was found that students do not analyze the structure of sentences with a mean of 2,97.

According to the survey findings, the most widely employed bottom up strategies transitional words and cognate recognition. This is because these words are easier to recognize in a listening text. They show how a text is structured and often students rely on their mother tongue to understand certain ideas if the words are similar in structure and meaning. Analyzing grammar appears in last place so it can be inferred that analyzing how sentences are formed take more time and a high level of grammatical knowledge.

*Table 3*

*Strategies for listening comprehension*

| Item | Mean |
|---|---|
| **Before a listening task, I check my learning goal and how to accomplish it.** | **3,39** |
| **While I am completing a listening task, I analyze my answers.** | **4,04** |
| **After completing a listening task, I analyze my performance.** | **3,64** |
| I test myself to know my weaknesses and strengths in listening comprehension. | 3,41 |
| **I work with friends to complete listening tasks.** | **3,34** |
| I ask for clarification and feedback in listening tasks. | 3,26 |
| **Before listening, I look for ways to relieve stress or anxiety and to encourage myself.** | **3,39** |

*Note*: The means were obtained from the following scales: 1. Never, 2. Rarely, 3. Sometimes,4. Often, 5. Always.

**Analysis and interpretation**

Question 2: Which metacognitive and socioaffective strategies students use for listening comprehension? Regarding metacognitive strategies, there were two strategies that were the most frequently used: monitoring and self-evaluation. It was found that learners analyze their answers while listening with a mean of 4,04. This makes learners check the functionality of his/her performance while engaged in a task. Similar to the aforementioned strategy, self-evaluation with which students analyze their answers after listening with a mean of 3,64. Lastly, one strategy considered important and necessary to do before any task is planning, and it received a mean of 3,39.

According to the survey findings, it can be summarized that students use the monitoring strategy while and after listening because this allows learners to know what they are not doing correctly or their strengths at the moment of listening. On the other hand, the planning strategy took last place suggesting that learners do not frequently check the learning goal and how to accomplish it thus missing such an important opportunity to plan how to listen.

Socio affective strategies, meanwhile, obtained the following values: in the first place, the use of self-motivation with the aim to help learners lower anxiety and making

positive statements about themselves with a mean of 3,39. This strategy seems to be an option for students who feel pressure before a listening class, and that opt for ways to stay focused and calm. The next strategy is cooperation with which students work with somebody else in a listening task with a mean of 3,34.

According to the results in this survey, self-motivation and cooperation between classmates seemed to be the most widely employed strategies. Both strategies obtained higher means which means they are used frequently by the participants in this study. This is because students can work better to comprehend listening texts if they do not feel pressured or if they have someone to rely on or ask for help.

*Table 4*

*Factors affecting listening comprehension*

| Item | Mean |
|---|---|
| I cannot deal with the speed of delivery of an audio | 2,93 |
| I have trouble with the times the audio is replayed | 3,24 |
| **I struggle to recognize the signals that indicate the speaker is moving from one idea to another** | **2,84** |
| **I find it difficult to understand a listening text due to my limited vocabulary** | **3,53** |
| **I find it difficult to concentrate in a foreign language** | **3,20** |
| I lack contextual knowledge | 3,16 |
| **I wish to understand every word I hear** | **3,46** |

*Note:* The means were obtained from the following scales: 1. Never, 2. Rarely, 3. Sometimes, 4. Often, 5. Always

**Analysis and interpretation**

Research question 3 is aimed to what are the factors that affect listening comprehension? The results showed that the first factor that seems to affect students' listening comprehension was having a limited vocabulary with a mean of 3,53. Next, it was found that students struggle with wishing to understand every word in a listening audio with a mean score of 3,46. The students reported not being able to concentrate while listening with a mean of 3,20. Fewer participants struggle with recognizing the signals that indicate the speaker is moving from one idea to another like secondly, or after with a mean score of 2,84.

These answers were expected, because many times students have not been exposed too many new words and have not used then in context, therefore they cannot recognize them. There are learning issues like the wish to hear every word and be able to get the meaning of individual words while many time the meaning of a text relies on more factors like the context, the speakers' intention etc. concentration is another factor that heavily affects the way students listen since they feel pressure to listen to people speaking in a foreign language and they lose control and focus. There are certain words in audios that signal when something is going to start or show examples of something. These words are clear changes and define the structure of an audio.

**Table 5**

**Open-ended questions**

| Question 1 | Answer | Total |
|---|---|---|
| What type of top-down and bottom-up strategies do you use the most in listening comprehension? | Schemata activation | 33 |
| | Note-taking | 24 |
| | Summaries | 4 |
| | Linking words | 6 |
| | Phonemic awareness | 2 |
| | Listening songs | 1 |
| | Total | 70 |
| **Question 2** | **Answer** | **Total** |
| What other strategies do you utilize for listening comprehension? | Online platforms | 35 |
| | Listening to authentic materials | 32 |
| | Integrating listening with other skills | 3 |
| | Total | 70 |
| **Question 3** | **Answer** | **Total** |
| What other factors do you think affect listening comprehension? | Listeners' interest | 23 |
| | Socio-cultural competence | 18 |
| | Time limits | 13 |
| | Rate of speech | 10 |
| | Control over hearings | 5 |
| | Type of listening | 1 |
| | Total | 70 |

*Note*: Quantitative information taken from the survey

Table number 5 contains the answers to the open-ended questions that helped reinforce the research questions.

The first open question, what type of top-down and bottom-up strategies do you use the most in listening comprehension? The research findings provided insight into which strategy is the most and least used. Schemata activation received the majority of responses with 33 students agreeing that it is used frequently. Also, note-taking was reported as highly used by students with 24 students favoring it. Linking words was selected by 6 students. Then, 4 students shared their preference for summaries. Finally, a small portion of students identified phonemic awareness and listening songs as they preferred ones. Two students selected phonemic awareness and just one students favored listening to songs.

Perhaps the most significant finding was the fact that schemata activation and note-taking were the most used strategies among all of the mentioned strategies in this study. This suggests that between top-down and bottom-up strategies, students were inclined to use top-down strategies.

The second research question, what other strategies do you utilize for listening comprehension? The study findings showed that a significant number of students stick with two strategies, these are: online platforms and listening to authentic materials. Consequently, online platforms were the most common strategy with 35 students. It was seen that listening to authentic materials emerged as the second most used strategy with 32 students acknowledging its use. Finally, only 3 students reported integrating listening with other language skills.

The results casts a new light on the use of online platforms in classes since the participants already mentioned using it by themselves. Second, the role of authentic materials in listening was clearly highlighted because students preferred listening to real world material for listening comprehension. On the contrary, the integration of listening with other skills did not received much attention, this could be attributed to the fact that listening is often taught and practiced alone.

The third research question, what other factors do you think affect listening comprehension? Based on the results, the 23 participants mentioned that rate of speech is another factor affecting listening. A great number of students, namely 18, mentioned

having troubles with time limits. Socio cultural competence was encountered as a challenge by 13 students. In addition, 10 students reported listeners' interest as a difficulty. Then, 5 students mentioned that control over hearings also poses a problem. Lastly, 1 student mentioned that types of listening is another challenge.

From the short review above, key findings emerge:  the speed at which the speakers in listening text speak and the time limits in listening task were factors that students cannot control and often depend on the material and teachers' decisions.

**Discussion**

The following research questions were established to explore students' perspectives on the use of top-down and bottom-up strategies, specifically its role in listening comprehension.

This study aimed to answer the following research question 1: What are the types of top-down and bottom-up strategies that students use? Upon analysis, it was found that schemata activation and note-taking were the most utilized top-down strategies. The strategy used with low frequency was inferencing. Larandang's et al. (2023) study reported that building prior knowledge and note-taking have proven successful in boosting the students listening comprehension, specifically in developing the main idea. However, Abdalhamid (2012) reported that listeners employed mostly inferencing and schemata activation strategy. The author found that learners use inferencing strategy when they do not know all the words or they do not understand the overall meaning of the sentence. In addition, Hardiyanto (2021) investigated the effectiveness of note-taking to overcome listening difficulties. The author found that the respondents mostly write down notes of unfamiliar words or key words to keep moving forward in the listening text. The results contribute insights with regard to the role of previous knowledge in understanding an oral text and taking notes as a way to overcome difficulties in listening. On the other hand, it is important to highlight that inferencing did not receive much attention despite being of great help when students do not understand the overall meaning of the sentence.

In regard to bottom-up strategies, recognizing transitional words and true cognate recognition were the main strategies used by the participants in this study. They also mentioned that they do not generally use their grammatical knowledge to understand the meaning in a text. Joyce (2019) found out that higher proficiency learners can use their understanding of transitional words to locate boundaries. Through better identifying the lexical items, higher proficiency listeners were provided with syntactic and semantic constraints that aided in the recognition of subsequent words and enabled them to develop expectations of the forthcoming language. The second main strategy used by the participants is true cognate recognition. Solak and Cakir (2012) highlighted the importance of true cognates in listening comprehension. They reported that when exposed to new vocabulary in English, students resort to making a connection between their native

language and the target language. Mulder et al. (2019) argued that learners who identify cognates between L1 and L2 have more opportunities to comprehend oral texts because learners are creating connections and finding similarities through word recognition. Nowadays, grammar is taught through an implicit approach that focuses on meaning. Grammar explanations are not directly taught instead teachers use listening and reading passages along with comprehension questions to teach English (Grahn, 2022). Based on the results from the survey in this study, students do not analyze parts of sentences and the type of sentences while listening. Cook (2008) made emphasis on the idea that learners who are able to understand grammar rules have more opportunities to manage incoming information.

Question 2: Which metacognitive and socio-affective strategies students use for listening comprehension? The study results indicated that the majority of learners monitor their answers while listening (monitoring) and after listening (self-evaluation). The participants in the survey reported that they do not use planning in listening tasks. Kok (2023) reported that listening comprehension proficiency of those with high metacognitive outperformed those with socio-affective strategy preference. In other words, metacognitive strategy use is a better predictor of listening comprehension success. In this regard, O'Malley and Chammot (1998) mentioned that when learners verify and check their performance throughout a language task, they are able to work out what they understand and what they are still having trouble with. Tremble (2023) reported that teachers must allow students to use planning since it increase students' intrinsic motivation to perform a task and consequently helps checking their understanding. According to Ortega (2022), planning facilitates goal setting, strategy implementation and time management. The results suggested that cooperation and self-motivation strategies are frequently used by learners since these strategies focus on how to boost learners' comprehension of language through interaction and regulation of emotions. The students who were part of this study reported that they find ways to control their emotions and interact with others during a listening task. Indriana (2019) reported that almost all students use socio-affective strategies, including: lowering anxiety, encouraging themselves, cooperating with others or empathizing with others.

Question 3: What are the factors that affect listening comprehension? Based on the results of the survey, the majority of participants chose two factors that frequently affect their listening comprehension: limited vocabulary and wishing to understand every word in an audio. Duong and Trang (2020) observed that students lacked the necessary vocabulary knowledge to comprehend the listening texts fully. Underwood (1989) stated that listeners sometimes encounter unknown words, which may cause them to stop and think about the meaning of that word and thus cause them to miss the next part of the speech. It is thus sometimes necessary for students to tolerate vagueness and incompleteness of understanding. A large proportion of the students found it difficult to concentrate while listening in a foreign language. Syahreza' study (2019) revealed that the most dominant factor affecting students' listening comprehension is failure to concentrate factor, content of listening text factor, listener factor, and linguistics feature. Underwood also mentioned that it is easier for students to concentrate on a listening passage when they find the topic interesting. However, even if they are interested, listening can be tiring because it requires a lot of effort to understand. In addition, these results contribute insights with regard to the difficulties that students recognize such as not being able to deal with the content in a text due to the vocabulary knowledge and concentration which is a factor that could explain failure in listening comprehension.

# CHAPTER IV

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 4.1 Conclusions

Based on the analysis of the survey results, this research study can establish the following conclusions:

Among the type of top-down strategies, schemata activation and note-taking were mostly used by the students who participated in this survey because they involve they use of prior knowledge. It is interesting to note that learners brainstorm ideas and write down key words they recognize or find relevant. When they take notes, they identify relations between the information they just heard and what they have stored in their memory to build understanding. In regard to bottom-up strategies, recognizing transitional words and true cognate recognition seemed to influence students' listening comprehension. In general, these strategies make emphasis on individual words and how the information in a listening text is arranged and linked. By recognizing these words students are able to recognize the overall structure of the ideas as well as to distinguish the details in a listening text.

The main strategies applied for students in listening are divided into metacognitive and socio affective strategies. In regard to metacognitive strategies, monitoring and self-evaluating seemed to be proper options to check the listening performance throughout a task. It is notable that students are aware of the positive benefits of controlling their learning. However, planning is not often practiced because they are not given opportunities to do it. There are not pre-listening activities for students to plan and focus on their objective in listening tasks. Next, socio affective strategies were found directly connected to how students manage their emotions before listening and the interactions they have with their classmates.

It was possible to identify the factors that the interviewees had the majority of problems with. Having limited vocabulary and wishing to understand every word in a listening text, which are factors closely related to the learners' characteristics since the lack of vocabulary is the result of not being exposed to more authentic material with a

vast vocabulary and behaviors that interrupt the flow of learning such as wanting to get the meaning of a text word by word. Learners also faced difficulties with focusing on what they hear in a foreign language, which is the result of lack of interesting topics. Recognizing signals in a listening text was challenging for only a small number of students while listening. This not represents a problem for proficient students since they have been exposed to them before and are easier to spot in an audio

## 4.2. Recommendations

It is suggested to incorporate top-down and bottom-up strategies in listening training sessions so that students can become aware of these strategies and their contribution to the understanding of listening texts through the analysis of information at word level and the use of background knowledge.

A combination of the metacognitive and socio affective strategies can create a balanced approach for listening comprehension. Emphasis must be placed on the fact that in metacognitive strategies students fail to plan before a listening task. In the same line, the role of socio affective strategies that, in general, attempts to reduce the pressure students feel when having listening texts. So, a balanced approach could benefit how much the listeners understand before, while and after listening.

It is advised to not only train students in the use of these strategies but also to make an analysis in class of which factors students perceive affect their listening comprehension and what can be done to reduce their impact. Focusing on the lack of vocabulary and old learning habits that impede students from understanding the meaning of a listening text.

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# Annexes

## Annex 1

## Institutional approval

**ANEXO 3**
**FORMATO DE LA CARTA DE COMPROMISO.**

# CARTA DE COMPROMISO

Ambato, 07 de Septiembre 2023

Doctor
Marcelo Nuñez
Presidente
Unidad de titulación
Facultad de Ciencias Humanas y de la Educación

Yo, Mg. Sarah Iza, en mi calidad de Coordinadora de la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros, me permito poner en su conocimiento la aceptación y respaldo para el desarrollo del Trabajo de Titulación bajo el Tema: "Top-down and Bottom-up strategies and listening comprehension" propuesto por el/la estudiante Chasiluisa Chicaiza Mayra Alejandra, portador/a de la Cédula de Ciudadanía, 055063206-1 estudiante de la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros Facultad de Ciencias Humanas y de la Educación de la Universidad Técnica de Ambato.

A nombre de la Institución a la cual represento, me comprometo a apoyar en el desarrollo del proyecto.

Particular que comunico a usted para los fines pertinentes.

Atentamente.

Lcda. Sarah Jacqueline Iza Pazmiño, Mg.
Coordinadora de la Carrera
0501741060
0984060528
sj.iza@uta.edu.ec

**Annex 2**

**Survey**

Survey available upon request

**Annex 3**

**Cronbach's alpha validation**

<div align="center">

**Reliability Statistics**

</div>

| Cronbach's Alpha | Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items | N of Items |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|
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Note: Cronbach's Alpha Validity

**Annex 4**

**Turnitin report**

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**CHAPTER I**

**1.1 Research Background**

For the elaboration of this research study on top-down and bottom-up strategies and listening comprehension, prior studies and data from different sites such Google scholar, Research Gate, and ERIC were considered. These sources were chosen because they allowed to develop a deep analysis of both variables and were developed in the last five years. In the end, they focused om the relationship between top-down and bottom-up strategies and listening comprehension supporting the development of the research work.

To begin with, the article elaborated by Larandang et al. (2023) has the purpose to analyze how students' listening skills improve after being taught top-down and bottom-up strategies. The total population was 21 participants whose native language was Indonesian. This study employed a pre-experimental research that included a one group pre and posttest. They participated in 5 weeks of training in top-down techniques such as inferring information, identifying the general idea, building prior knowledge and collecting keywords. The results reflected that the post test results were higher than the pretest results. Therefore, top-down strategies proved to be of great help to boost listening skills.

Secondly, the article elaborated by Asma and Dina (2019) examined the listening comprehension strategies included in the English textbook from Kuwaiti schools. Cognitive, metacognitive and socio affective strategies were evaluated in addition to teaching practices. This study employed an analytical and qualitative approach that included observation and content analysis. The sample was 16 intermediate schools and 38 teachers based on random sampling. The 9th grade English textbook was the tool for data

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