

Task-oriented Activities as Alternative Assessment techniques to Improve English Listening
Comprehension

by

María Del Mar Reyes López

Universidad de Nariño

Faculty of Human Sciences

Linguistics and Languages Department

San Juan de Pasto

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María Del Mar Reyes López

Advisor

Diana Ibarra Santacruz

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RESUMEN

Este proyecto de investigación tiene como objetivo principal comprender la relación que existe entre el uso de actividades tarea-orientadas utilizadas como evaluación alternativa y el mejoramiento de la comprensión auditiva del Inglés en estudiantes de grado 11 de la Institución INEM de Pasto. Para ello se debe tener en cuenta que el problema investigativo nace de las dificultades observadas con respecto a la habilidad auditiva y a la forma de evaluarla.

Para el desarrollo de esta investigación es necesario resaltar la importancia que tiene la habilidad de comprensión auditiva en el aprendizaje de una segunda lengua, y por ende de implementar unas técnicas de evaluación alternativa que permitan que el estudiante desarrolle esta capacidad de una manera más efectiva.

Esta investigación presenta una serie de capítulos que permiten explicar claramente el problema investigativo, la hipótesis y los objetivos, así como sus fundamentos teóricos, marco conceptual y revisión literaria, y finalmente se presenta el aspecto metodológico.

Palabras clave: comprensión auditiva, evaluación alternativa, actividades tarea-orientadas.

ABSTRACT

This research project has as a main objective to understand the relationship that exist between the use of task-oriented activities as alternative assessment techniques and listening comprehension improvement in 11th grade students at INEM High school in Pasto. To that effect, it is necessary to consider that the research problem comes from the difficulties observed with regards to listening ability, and to the way of assessing it.

For the development of this research it is necessary to highlight the importance of listening comprehension in the second language learning, and thereby implement some alternative assessment techniques that allow in the student the development of this ability in a more effective way.

This project presents a series of chapters that allow to explain clearly the research problem, the hypothesis, and the objectives, as well as the theoretic foundation, conceptual framework, and literature review. Finally, the methodological aspect is presented.

Key words: Listening comprehension, Alternative assessment, Task-oriented activities.

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Task-oriented Activities as Alternative Assessment techniques to Improve English

Listening Comprehension

When learning English as a second or foreign language there are some skills to be developed in order to become proficient; one of those is listening comprehension as a fundamental and necessary part of the learning process. In this line, the following proposal points out to two relevant aspects; the first is to emphasize the significance of listening comprehension to help improve overall competence in the language, and the second, to incorporate alternative assessment through some techniques based on task-oriented activities which could benefit learning and teaching of this ability.

In this regard, it is considerable to think about some alternatives that allow the educator to optimize the process of listening comprehension among students. According to Hedge (2000), listening has an important role in everyday life, when people are engaged in communication, nine percent is spent on writing, 16 percent on reading, 30 percent on speaking, and 45 percent on listening. It shows the significance of teaching listening comprehension in ESL/EFL classrooms to encourage effective communication.

Now, the learning process is composed of many elements, among which is assessment as a fundamental aspect to take into account when teaching a language, as it provides both teachers and learners with information about the learning process. Assessment can be divided into two main types: traditional and alternative.

Traditional assessment refers to multiple-choice tests, true-false statements, fill in the gaps and matching exercises. However, those are considered as single-occasion tests which are not informative about the progress of a student or the difficulties he may have experienced while answering the test (Law & Eckes, 1995). On the other hand, Hancock (1990) states that

Alternative assessment focuses on the students' strengths, therefore enabling the teacher to get a more accurate view of students' achievement, of what they can do, and of what they are trying to do (p,11).

In other words, alternative assessment as part of the language learning process aims to provide feedback and support the student's learning from the beginning to the end, in order to observe the outcomes obtained, instead of just gathering information regarding students' achievements under specified conditions.

In addition, to implement an alternative assessment focused on listening comprehension, it is important to have a meaningful and interactive intervention during this process. That is, to motivate the direct use of the language in order to allow students to achieve linguistic and communicative goals. One way in which this can be achieved is through tasks. Celce-Murcia (1991) states that the purpose of language tasks is to give students practice in listening for information and then immediately do something with it (p.77). It means that the use of tasks can be an assertive and alternative way of assessing learners' listening skills.

For these reasons, this project is intended to propose the implementation of some task-oriented activities as alternative assessment techniques in order to improve listening comprehension in 11th grade students at INEM High school in Pasto.

Based on all these considerations, this proposal is divided into three parts. The first section seeks to expand the description of the research problem, the hypothesis, the statement of the problem, the objectives, the justification, and the limitations; in second place, is the analysis of aspects such as conceptual framework and the pertinent literature review; the third section presents the methodological aspect; and finally, in the third section, the schedule and budget for this project are presented.

Problem description

Assessment aims to measure and analyze the knowledge acquired by students, as well as to the narrow and non-isolated development between comprehension and production during the language learning (Ministerio de Educación Nacional, 2006, p. 13). However, it has been observed how the listening comprehension ability demands major attempts from some students, because there are some factors involved that could affect the learning process and its assessment such as: difficulties to follow directions, understanding oral texts, pronunciation misunderstanding, answering questions, lack of motivation, among others.

Rost (2011) states that listening is an active and important mental ability; it aids us to understand the world around us and it is one of the necessary elements in creating successful communication. Nevertheless, listening comprehension is not encouraged enough by some teachers, let alone assessed in the classrooms. This lack of assessment would not provide evidence to the teachers about student's needs, learning evolution, and feedback, and it affects directly the development of this ability in the students and their overall progress in their communicative competence.

In case listening is indeed assessed, some teachers still use the traditional pencil and paper exam or test that do not give a proper appreciation of the progress of the students listening ability. However, teachers should turn to other options such as alternative assessment. According to Barron (2006) alternative assessment "focuses on the recognition of the individual learning of the student and to the construction of a trial based on the observation, the establishment of objectives of learning, and relevant performance criteria" (p.94). For this reason, alternative assessment techniques may allow not only to improve teaching with a new and more effective methodology, but also to promote the language in an integral way.

Hypothesis

The use of task-oriented activities as alternative assessment technique improve listening comprehension in 11th grade students at INEM High school in Pasto.

Problem statement

What is the relationship between the use of task-oriented activities as alternative assessment techniques and listening comprehension improvement in 11th grade students at INEM High school in Pasto?

Objectives**General objective**

To determine the relationship between the use of task-oriented activities as alternative assessment techniques and listening comprehension improvement in 11th grade students at INEM High school in Pasto.

Specific objectives

To identify the initial level of listening comprehension the 11th grade students at INEM High school have before implementing task-oriented activities as alternative assessment techniques.

To measure the positive and negative aspects about the implementation of task-oriented activities as alternative assessment techniques used to improve listening comprehension.

To establish the students' level after applying task-oriented activities as alternative assessment techniques.

Justification

It is appropriate at this time to mention that this research proposal will be framed in the strengthening research line of assessment, considering as relevant a study on how teachers of English as a foreign language assess the ability of listening comprehension.

Moreover, this proposal is meaningful because it presents the priority to improve listening comprehension in a second or foreign language. According to Peterson (2001), "through listening, learners can build an awareness of the interworking of language systems at various levels and thus establish a base for more fluent productive skills" (p. 87). For this reason, this research will allow to realize the importance of this ability, since without it, it would not be possible to make sense of what is heard. One way to help learners move forward is by providing adequate assessment during the teaching process that allows the teacher and learners to perceive the level reached by the students.

Considering alternative assessment techniques as a tool that point to improvement and optimization of the language, both of the process and of the results, Alvarez (2001) states that:

Alternative assessment is based on dynamic, participated, shared and continuous activities; it gives rise to the self and the peer evaluation and, through stewardship and commitment; the teacher is committed and involved with the student; and finally a real evaluation of the learning takes place (p. 20).

In addition, this investigation incorporates language tasks that serve as alternative assessment in order to improve the listening comprehension, considering tasks as a goal-oriented activity in which learners use language to achieve a real outcome (Willis, 2002). Therefore, in

the process of performing a task, the students are required to use their language knowledge so as to achieve the goal of listening comprehension. Moreover, it allows the teacher to make an observation about the students' progress not only on their development and improvement, but also to help in an interactive and meaningful way in their learning process.

Finally, the school level of proficiency eleventh grade students have in this high school will adapt better to the present study, since at this level they should be able to identify the idea and the general purpose of an oral text, people, situations, and places in simple conversations (Ministerio Nacional de Educación 2006, p. 26), aspects that teachers should take into account when assessing accordingly.

Limitations

In the development of this project there are some limitations to be considered. These limitations are related to resources.

It is possible that with the implementation of alternative assessment which involves listening, resources different from paper and pen are required, for example, the use of technological devices will be necessary, and is probable that teachers do not have a proper place, nor the tools to execute them.

Chapter II: Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework which consists on the theoretical foundation of the research is presented in the following chapter, considering that it will help to better understand the background, and the key concepts of the study, which are determining aspects for its development.

To that effect, it is necessary to give clear information about the concept related to language skills during English learning, in order to broaden the different concepts for listening comprehension in EFL. Subsequently, the concepts related to assessment, alternative assessment, task-oriented activities, and pedagogical implications will be addressed.

Listening Comprehension

Listening is one of the main skills to develop when learning a second language. According to Rost (2011) Listening comprehension in terms of language is the experience of understanding what the language heard refers to in one's experience or in the outside world, and sensing how any incoming burst of language enhances or suppresses one's current understanding (p,54). That is, listening ability helps not only to receive an understandable input, but also to make a complex process of interpretation which includes understanding the speaker's pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary.

For that reason, listening comprehension is defined as “an interactive process in which listeners are involved in constructing meaning, so the outcomes of any communication include renewed perceptions of self, other and the relationship” (Rost, 2011 p,95). This aspect allows the main objective in this research because it tries to take into account the importance of listening comprehension at the moment of learning a language since nowadays communication is the major aim for learning a foreign language. Therefore, a relevant integration of all linguistic skills is necessary.

Language Skills

To learn a language correctly, the four language skills must be mastered: speaking, listening, writing and reading comprehension. While writing, reading and speaking skills are

addressed by the teachers of the area with a direct instruction, they usually expect students to develop their listening skills on their own incidentally (Mendelsohn, 1984, p, 63). It means that teachers expect their students to learn listening skills in a natural way, without the instruction and the attention required.

For this reason, it is relevant in the language teaching to put together an adequate connection between instruction in listening comprehension, which implies the other skills already mentioned and assessment, since through this, it is possible to see the results obtained, and determine the aspects that deserve to be strengthened for its improvement.

Assessment in Teaching Process

This research focuses on alternative assessment. For this reason, the term *assessment* is presented as a main point, and how this has been defined according to its characteristics. According to Black & William (1998), “assessment refers to all those activities undertaken by teachers, and by their students in assessing themselves, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged” (p, 7). That is, the assessment process needs an active participation of all members of the educational field because only in this way it can be effectively developed.

Assessment is also an ongoing process that encompasses a broader domain. When a student answers to questions, provides comments, or tries a new word or structure, the teacher subconsciously makes an assessment of the student's performance, and which is ultimately evaluated by themselves, by the teacher, and possibly by other students (Brown, 2001). This means that to establish a correct learning environment, and in this case assessment, it is appropriate that it occurs in a way in which students are able to recognize both, cognitive and metacognitive abilities, doing a deeper analysis of what a foreign language learning

involves. Likewise, the intervention of an appropriate guide or teacher, must consider all the academic and personal factors of its students.

Alternative Assessment

After having mentioned some of the definitions for assessment, it is time to reference and focus on the main aspect of the study in question, and that is the alternative assessment.

Hamayan (1995) establishes that alternative assessment refers to the procedures and techniques which can be used in the context of instruction, and that can easily be incorporated into the daily activities of the school or classroom (p,213). This emphasizes the students' strengths, instead of looking at the weaknesses and what they do not know. Also it can provide the opportunity for the teacher to detect his/her students' weaknesses and strengths. Moreover, it allows evaluating students in their normal activities in class since students can apply the language in real situations; they can be more imaginative, and it takes into account students' needs in specific contexts.

Up to this point, it is relevant to differentiate between the alternative and traditional assessment. While the first is view as a process that considers the styles, strengths, abilities and learning rhythms of students, the traditional assessment on the contrary is seen as a more systematized and quantitative result which refer to conventional methods of testing that only use pen and paper with multiple-choice, true or false or matching type test items. Traditional assessment happens to be useful for gathering information regarding students' achievements under particular conditions, but they fail at the moment to afford information about students' motivations, their interests and their learning strategies (Genesee & Hamayan, 1994).

For all these aspects, this investigation intends to determine the contribution of alternative assessment for the English listening comprehension improvement, specifically focused on listening comprehension, in order to foster students' development of this skill.

Alternative assessment techniques

Alternative assessment techniques have some characteristics. They are based on course objectives, evaluate actual student performance, involve students in the evaluation process, and have a set of criteria that describe the desired achievement and that students should be aware of (Opp-Beckman & Klinghammer, 2006). It allows highlighting the advantages and benefits of alternative assessment techniques and how integrating them into instruction can be beneficial and advantageous for EFL teachers.

Continuing with the term of alternative assessment, Huerta (2002) states that alternative assessment provides information on the strengths and weaknesses of each individual student (p. 339). Therefore, it is important to apply these techniques since it will go towards the individual strengths that each student has. If adapted, all these techniques mentioned above might contribute in a significant way to the development of listening comprehension, which also involves the other communicative abilities. In this way and working cooperatively, they will foster the development of the listening ability in an effective and integral way.

Task orientation

Many researchers interested in improving the English teaching have been studying the use of language tasks activities, currently considered the most effective means of promoting second language acquisition (SLA) in the classroom. Morley (2001) considers it relevant to focus on task-oriented instruction instead of question oriented, because the purpose is to engage

learners using the informational content presented in the spoken discourse, not just answering questions about it (p. 71). Tasks are used to promote the development of the language skills, and listening is surely one of them. Based on that assertion, students will be required to listen and immediately do something with the information received such as: follow directions, solve a problem, listening and take notes, and complete a task among others.

Therefore, if language tasks are implemented, learning could be more meaningful and natural because students will be able to use their previous knowledge to achieve a goal, and if new information is needed, the teacher will provide that knowledge in order to improve students' process and achieve the expected result.

Task-oriented activities

Morley (2001) states that language tasks feature specific listening and-Do communicative outcomes such as these:

- Listening and performing actions (e.g., command games and songs such as “Do the Hokey Pokey,” “May I?” “Simon Says”) Listening and performing operations (e.g., listening and constructing a figure, drawing a map).
- Listening and solving problems (e.g., riddles, intellectual or logic puzzles, real-life numerical, spatial, or chronological problems).
- Listening and transcribing (e.g., taking telephone messages, writing notes).
- Listening and summarizing information (e.g., outlining, giving the gist of a message either verbally or in writing).
- Interactive listening and negotiating of meaning through questioning/answering routines (e.g., questions for repetition of information, questions for verification, questions for clarification, questions for elaboration) (p,78).

Thereby, those listening task activities conducted directly through the use of language allow the students to practice and right away do something with that information. Morley (2001) states that these listening and language use tasks help students to build the following two things:

- A base of content experiences: this will help them to develop expectancies, increase their vocabulary, and build a repertoire of familiar top-down networks of background knowledge in the second language. This, in turn, increases predictive power for future communicative situations, including schemata (i.e., the larger-order mental frameworks that allow us to predict actors, events, action sequences, and alternative outcomes). These include formulaic speech routines and assumed elements in the physical setting.
- A base of operational experiences: this will help learners to acquire a repertoire of familiar information-handling operations in the second language that are applicable to future communicative encounters in that language (p. 78).

Pedagogical implications

This research project presents a proposal that can be included within an appropriate pedagogic methodology when teaching English as a foreign language, since it seeks to explore more motivating and interactive ways to teach and assess English listening skills. To achieve these objectives, alternative assessment is included, which, unlike the traditional assessment, focuses more on the process than on the results. To carry this out, task-oriented activities will be implemented, which will directly allow students to achieve objectives and acquire a better level, through tasks that require students to be entirely focused on the target language.

In the first place, it is important to consider that English teaching in the classrooms, whether elementary or high school, must be homogeneous and integral. This means that at the time of teaching it is necessary to provide sufficient bases of the language. To achieve this objective, it is essential that the four language skills such as writing, reading, speaking and listening are addressed as a whole, since only in this way will it be possible to see significant advances in the students.

One skill that is worth highlighting is listening comprehension. Morley (2001) states that one of the obvious implications for instruction is to bring students to an understanding that listening is not a passive skill, but an active receptive skill which needs special attention in language study (p. 72). In other words, aural comprehension deserves to be taken into account and encouraged during the teaching process because that would significantly help not only to improve the students' communicative competences, but also it would allow them to give themselves account of the function and use of language through practice and interaction.

In order to enhance the listening ability, it is important to realize that the use of traditional methodologies no longer have a place in the current classrooms, since every day the pedagogy is in a continuous change and progress. For this reason, it is intended to implement a more meaningful teaching, focused on the strengths of the students that reinforces the learning during the whole process.

Therefore, alternative assessment:

Is often intended to motivate students to take more responsibility for their own learning, to make assessment an integral part of the learning experience, and to embed it in authentic activities that recognize and stimulate students' abilities to create and apply a

wide range of knowledge, rather than simply engaging in acts of memorization (Hargreaves, Earl, & Schmidt, 2012, p.69).

The above implies that alternative assessment is a positive teaching practice, since it focuses on monitoring the student's individual growth instead of making comparisons among students, and consider their strengths instead of their weaknesses.

Accordingly, task-oriented activities, included as alternative assessment techniques, would benefit the teaching process because through its practice and use the students will reach the second language competences expected. According to Willis (1996) a “task” can be defined as an activity where the target language is used by the learner for a communicative purpose (goal) in order to achieve an outcome (p,23). This means that task-orientation allows the students to practice the target language using a task which has a specific objective, a proper content, a particular procedure, and a variety of outcomes.

These activities place the learners in a real-world situation where oral communication is essential for doing a specific task. During this process, the teacher may provide feedback about the learners’ language accuracy. In brief, these techniques can be useful for language teaching because it fosters an authentic learning where the students perform a series of activities which motivate them and make possible a successful task achievement.

Literature Review

At this moment, it is relevant to present the related research studies that were addressed from the same concepts, as well as their contributions to the research and the education field.

The first study is a research made at the Linguistics and Languages Department at Universidad de Nariño; it is, called “The need of integrating the four skills and the current alternatives in assessment in EFL settings” by Enríquez (2012).

This work aims to provide some practical and theoretical ideas about the trends, not only for experienced teachers, but also for the new ones; the purposes discussed here are focused on the ways that teachers can handle all four language skills, and how they implement innovative strategies as a complement to the process for its philosophy of teaching (p,9). In other words, this research aims to highlight the importance of using current alternatives when assessing the four communicative skills. Therefore, this project contributes significantly to the present study because it presents alternative assessment as a trend model, which is able to improve students' performance regarding future communicative situations.

Also, this project presents some theories that argue the integration of the four skills in English learning such as reading, writing, speaking, and finally listening comprehension in which this research proposal is focused, considering this ability as one of the most important at the moment of learning and teaching a language.

A second investigation around this research is *Alternative Assessments and Students' Perceptions in the Foreign Language Classroom* by Bachelor in the year 2015.

This research intended to find alternative assessments that reflected not only the learning process but also students' motivation. Foreign language teachers will need to develop new assessments, and this data provided information to discuss and encourage collaborative efforts (Bachelor, 2015). The purpose of this research was to examine the perceptions of first-year, high school foreign language students concerning the impact of alternative assessment types; in order to achieve this purpose, the experimental group's summative assessment scores were compared to the scores of the control group who did not receive interventions in order to guide the development of future assessments, and in this way to move away from traditional methods.

This work aims to demonstrate that instead of being grammar-centered, teachers should design effective assessments with a communicative focus while continuing to cover essential grammatical concepts and typical vocabulary. Also, in this project the author presents the need for foreign language teachers to develop alternative ways to assess students in a more communicative way, in order to achieve a better performance in listening and speaking activities. Those possible assessment types that would facilitate this change include Dynamic Assessment, Task-oriented Assessment, and Formative Assessment using peer- and self-evaluations.

Chapter III: Methodology

For the development of this chapter it is necessary to consider the research paradigm, and the design and type of research to be carried out, since those aspects determine the different elements needed in order to reach the objectives of the study; also, context, population and sample, and data collection will be presented in order to continue with the techniques and procedures for data analysis, and finally discussion and conclusion.

Paradigm

The present study takes as a referent to the Positivism also known as Logical Positivist paradigm, since it holds the scientific method as the only way to establish truth and objective reality (Kawulich, 2012). In this case, it is pertinent because the study pretends to determine the contribution of alternative assessment techniques for the English listening comprehension improvement by way of objective purposes, allowing the research a proper development.

Creswell (2014), states that some social research problems call for specific approaches, if the problem requires the identification of factors that influence an outcome, the utility of an intervention, or understanding the best predictors of outcomes, then a quantitative approach is

best (p, 50). Accordingly, the paradigm already mentioned allows an appropriated development of the study, since through quantitative research will be possible to establish the improvement and progress of the students' listening comprehension, using data collection techniques such as pre and post-tests, and statistical considerations in order to analyze the information and shape the knowledge.

Type of research

This quantitative research characterized for establishing a direct contact with the group of study, will be framed by a quasi-experimental design. Considering that it seeks to determine if a specific treatment influences an outcome, the design and conduct of quasi-experimental outcome studies in social work can be of significant value (Thyer, 2010). In other words, this design will allow to know the positive aspects when using alternative assessment techniques for improving the English listening comprehension in this specific group, because it can provide an initial screening of the possible effectiveness of interventions. Besides, the study will enable not only to contribute to the educational field, but also enhance the aspects for which the problem research and the objectives were proposed.

To carry out this type of research, it is necessary to propose an intervention in a unit of analysis that can be individuals, couples, groups, organizations, or communities; in this case the high school INEM Luis Delfín Insuasty was selected. According to Thyer (2010), if the program or intervention is really effective, those clients should have completed good outcomes (p.11). That is to say, that through this type of research, the possible effectiveness of the research proposal applied in the unit of analysis could be corroborated at the end of the study, allowing the possibility to improve or modify the educational practice towards its innovation.

Apart from analyzing and studying reality in an objective way, the quasi-experimental design provides the researcher with the opportunity to engage participants through the application of pre-tests and post-test (Chapin, 1946). This process allows to first identify and diagnose, and second to establish the progress and improvement obtained. It means that this kind of research allows a systematic comparison between the post treatment outcomes with the results of the pretreatment assessment, where both assessments must be conducted in a very similar manner to be legitimate.

Ultimately, this type of research allows to clarify the problem situation that is required to improve, in this case to determine the result that could be obtained through the application of alternative assessment techniques for the improvement of the listening comprehension ability, considering this last aspect as the primary objective of study.

Context

The selected population is the high school INEM Luis Delfín Isuasty Rodríguez in the city of Pasto, Nariño, located on Av. Panamericana Cr 24, which attends the levels of pre-school, basic, and diversified media (academic and technical). This high school focuses its work on the integral formation of students. It has a total of 4,523 students in its installations, and provides its services to a population that, on average, belongs to a social stratum level two.

The campus has a total of twelve degrees of education, from pre-school to eleventh grade. Having in high school 16 courses in sixth grade, 15 in seventh grade, 13 in eighth grade, 12 in ninth grade, 15 in tenth grade, and 13 in eleventh grade.

Besides, the type of education imparted in this establishment is based on the model of "learning by doing" or assessment by competencies, taking into account that the research study can be in favor of the educational model implanted institutionally.

Population and sample

The students of the high school INEM Luis Delfín Isuasty Rodríguez are the population in this research proposal, specifically the students of the eleventh-two grade since they will be the ones who will be offered the intervention in this research. The sample or analysis unit in this investigation is integrated by 38 students, between 15 and 18 years old, who attend the course during the morning shift.

It is important to mention that this population and sample was selected under some criteria. The first one refers to some observations made in this group, where it was possible to realize how the listening comprehension ability was developed during EFL lessons, which would yield results in terms of the methods or techniques used to teach and assess. The second one alludes to the students English level at this grade, since task-oriented activities require a major effort, making eleventh grade more appropriate to develop them in comparison to lower levels.

Accordingly, the students need to be motivated and encouraged to improve their language skills in order to reach a better level, considering necessary the teachers' intervention for its development. In other words, teacher must be committed in this process through different activities such as alternative assessment to make possible the students' mastery of the language, underscoring the importance of improving the listening comprehension ability.

Data collection

In this study, the techniques and procedures used to gather information are determining elements for its development. The research techniques that form the body of research methodology are applied to the collection of information about various aspects of a situation, issue, problem or phenomenon (Kumar, 2011, p.30). In other words, the techniques are the only

way to obtain the information required to reach the work objectives and to understand the phenomenon.

On the other hand, the instrument refers to simply devices for obtaining information relevant to the research project that are submitted to a sampling of population from which information is desired (Walliman, 2004). That is to say, the instruments are those tools used directly with the sample in order to reflect the information required.

In this sense, and considering the paradigm, the type of research, and the sample of population, the next techniques and instruments will be used for the development of the study proposal:

Tasks.

This technique is divided in two parts the Pre-test and Post-test, which will be administered through task-oriented activities one at the beginning and one at the end. This technique is considered as an evaluative model which provides information about the performance of the same group of students before and after instruction, meaning that a comparative analysis of the two set of tests; data provides a clearer picture of the intervention impact (Popham, 2003, p.151). Besides, the pretest and posttest designs are employed in both experimental and quasi-experimental research and can be used with or without control groups.

In this study the Pre-test is used to collect specific data administered before the intervention in this case task-oriented activities as alternative assessment techniques, it begins measuring the participants' listening comprehension level, while the Post-test is administered after the intervention to measure the participants' improvement. In this sense, it can be compared

with results of the test administered at the beginning to assess the change or improvement during the last one.

The pre-test and post-test will be developed through a task-oriented activity, which are usually organized in three phases, the pre-task, the during task, and the post-task (Figure 1.)

According to Ellis (2003):

The first phase is pre-task and concerns the various activities that teachers and students can undertake before they start the task, such as whether students are given time to plan the performance of the task. The second phase, the during task phase, centres around the task itself and affords various instructional options, including whether students are required to operate under time-pressure or not. The final phase is ‘post-task’ and involves procedures for following-up on the task performance (p,80).

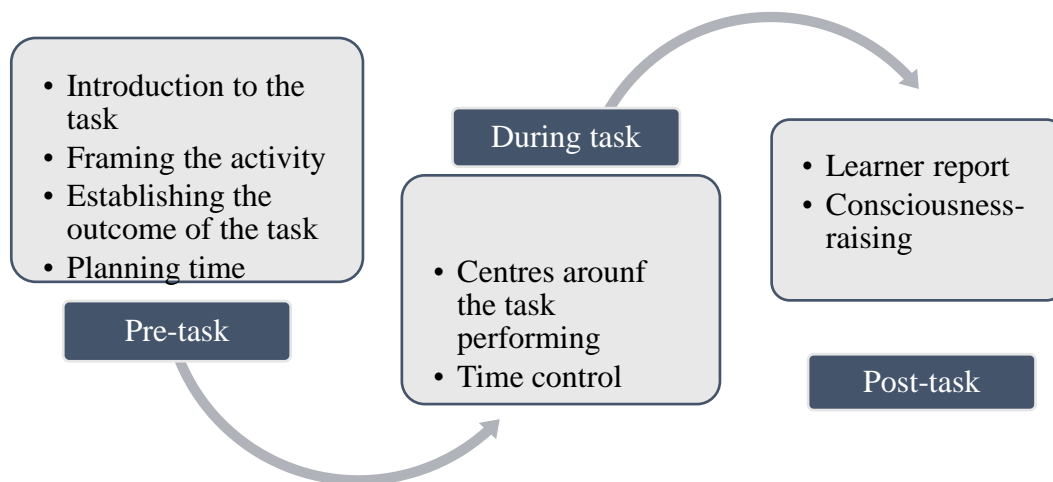


Figure 1. Task activity framework (Ellis, 2003).

Assessment.

Assessment technique is used in this research because it allows to collect information which is more effective when it reflects an understanding of learning as multidimensional, integrated, and revealed in the student's performance (Stassen, Doherty & Poe, 2001). Therefore, this technique is useful to collect data from the student's outcomes during the tasks-oriented activities and can give quantitative information.

According to Mertler (2001), rubrics are typically the specific form of scoring instrument used when evaluating student performances or products resulting from a performance task (p, 7). For this reason, the instrument to be used by the researcher is the rubric as a suitable way to obtain accurate information, considering some aspects and components during its design such as task development criteria, rating scale, and score. During the development of the data collection, the researcher has the possibility to set out the results in a quantitative score using analytic rubrics which gives holistic scoring of specified characteristics of a product (Allen, 2008), in order to reach the first and third objective of the study.

Questionnaire.

A questionnaire aimed to students and teacher is conducted to collect quantifiable information related to the task-oriented activities as alternative assessment, in order to determine the positive and negative aspects during its implementation. Rowley (2014) states that a questionnaire mostly used in conducting quantitative research, wants to profile the sample in terms of numbers, or to be able to count the frequency of occurrence of opinions, attitudes, experiences, processes, behaviours, or predictions (p.309). For those reasons, a questionnaire is

useful since it allows the research to establish the students' and teachers' opinions about task-oriented activities as alternative assessment.

As an instrument, closed questions will be used. Those will be organized around a set of predetermined questions that require measurement scales responses (Figure 2.), allowing in this way to apply 10 questions that reach the second objective of the study.

Question	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Do you think that...?		X			

Figure 2. Questionnaire format (Rowley, 2014).

Data analysis

At this moment, the data collected will be organized according to the pre and post-tests results and according to the answers given by students and teacher. To reach the research objectives, the data analysis method and process will be developed first by a chart and graphic obtained from the questionnaire, and second by means of a statistical test obtained from the analytic rubric results. Considering them as an appropriate way to prove the results, difference, or effectiveness obtained with the intervention.

The first objective intends to identify the initial level of students listening comprehension before implementing task-oriented activities as alternative assessment. For that reason, the use of rubrics will allow to obtain information during the pre-test, carried out through a task activity. In

this way, it will be possible to organize those results in a quantitative scales and scores, with the purpose of identifying the initial students listening comprehension level.

The next objective, to measure the positive and negative aspects about the implementation of task-oriented activities as alternative assessment techniques used to improve listening comprehension, will be addressed through a questionnaire. This process allows the research to find out which aspects students and teacher consider positive or negative about task-oriented activities. Those closed questions will bring quantitative information from the different opinions they have about this technique and its application. This data will be organized through a chart and graph, used to add emphasis, to show trends, or to make comparisons between different types of data (Rowley, 2014, p.327).

Finally, the third objective, to establish the students' level after applying task-oriented activities as alternative assessment techniques, will be determined also by the task activity used as a post-test. Using the rubric as a quantitative way to establish the students' level after applying the proposal.

In order to organize the results obtained from the first and second objectives, the instrument to be implemented is the students' t-test, which is used to determine the significance of the difference between the means of two sets of data, in essence the test compares the difference in means relative to the observed random variations in each set (Cherry & Phelps, 2012). The type of t-test used in this case is paired data, which is obtained from the same sample group but at different times, before and after the intervention, allowing to reach the first and third objective of this study.

Discussion and conclusion

After analyzing the pertinent conceptual framework and literature aimed to this research proposal, the following discussion and conclusions can be drawn:

Listening comprehension ability as a necessary part of EFL learning process, is a fundamental and significant skill when developing the language proficiency. For that reason, alternative assessment is an appropriate way to optimize the teaching process, allowing not only to improve the listening comprehension ability in the students, but also to encourage the language through task-oriented activities.

Enhancing listening comprehension as a communicative ability used in everyday life, it is important to highlight it as the one in charge of learners language awareness, which make possible to establish a base for more fluent productive skills such as writing or speaking. For this reason, this proposal allowed to realize the importance of this ability, since without it, it would not be possible to understand the language complexity and function.

Consequently, a suitable way to help learners go forward is by affording adequate assessment during the teaching process, allowing the teacher and learners to recognize the level reached. Therefore, to implement alternative assessment instead of a traditional one, allows to make better and optimize the language learning, not only during the process but also in the results. For those reasons, a real assessment of the students learning takes place since alternative assessment enable an interaction and participation through shared and dynamic activities, where the teacher is committed and involved with the student.

Now, with the application of task-oriented activities used as alternative assessment, it is possible to affirm that they can bring enough information about the learning process improvement because they are a meaningful and interactive way for teaching a second language,

allowing the students to achieve linguistic and communicative goals. During the process of performing a task, the learners are required to use their language previous knowledge in order to achieve an outcome and actually to use the target language. Besides, it facilitate the teacher to make an observation about the students' development and improvement out of an interactive and meaningful methodology.

In brief, the review of literature indicated that, learners should be provided with appropriate activities in which they be able to learn and understand English language, teachers should give learners the opportunity to practice their listening skills through tasks activities which actually can be an assertive and alternative way of assessing learners' listening skills. Being this proposal application suitable in the students listening comprehension improvement, since this ability is only developed through the target language practice.

Administrative Aspects

Schedule

Month / semester	Apr.	May	Dec.	Feb.	Feb.	Feb.	Apr.
Activities	A/17	A/17	A/18	A/19	B/19	A/19	A/19
1. Delivery of the preliminary draft for consideration by the Department committee.							
2. Approval of preliminary research project by the Department committee.							
3. Assignment of advisor.							
4. Make the corresponding corrections.							
4. Presentation of the research project to readers.							
5. Review and editing.							
6. Approval of the research project by readers.							
7. Defense							

Budget

Quantity	Concept	Unit cost	Costs
Photocopies and printings	150	200	\$30.000
Transport	30	1.600	\$48.000
Materials	4	20.000	\$80.000

Books	2	30.000	\$60.000
Unexpected materials	4	10.000	\$40.000
Total			\$258.000

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Appendix A: Pre-test, Task guide

Universidad de Nariño
Facultad de ciencias humanas
Departamento de Lingüística e Idiomas
Programa de Lengua Castellana e Ingles

Objective: to identify the initial level of listening comprehension the 11th grade students at INEM High school have before implementing the alternative assessment techniques.

Type of task: listening and transferring information: two kinds of information transfer are featured: *spoken-to-written* and *written-to-spoken*. The selected is *spoken-to-writing* (i.e hearing information and writing it) (Morley, 2001, p.79).

Task-oriented activity: listening and summarizing the gist of a short story, report, or talk in order to report it to a third person.

Task guide**1. Pre-task**

To introduce the students explaining them the activity parameters, and the outcomes expected from the task.

2. During task

- a. Listening the story called “The last movie I watched” (the students have the opportunity to listen the audio two times).

The last movie I watched

I really like *The Notebook*; it's a romantic classic. The story is about a poor boy, called Noah, who meets a rich girl, called Allie, and they fall in love over one summer. But of course there are problems. Allie's parents don't approve of Noah because he's poor and they get separated, then a lot of time passes before they can get together again. She goes away to college and he writes to her every day, but she doesn't get the letters. Then after quite a long time, Noah buys an old and white house which he promised to restore for Allie. He does it up and she sees a newspaper article about it and goes to find him again. Even when she is engaged with another man, she stills love Noah, and at the end they can be together again and live happy for many years. Noah is played by Ryan Gosling, who's my favourite actor, and he stops the film being too soppy – but you still cry a lot at the end. Rachel McAdams is really good too, as Allie.

Retrieved and adapted from:

<http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/listening/intermediate-b1-listening/my-favourite-film>

b. Take notes about the story and take into account aspects such as:

- Name of the movie
- How starts the story
- Names and main characters
- Kind of movie
- What is the story about
- The characteristics of places in the story
- The main plot
- The end of the movie

c. Summarize the story in a short paragraph.

3. Post-task

Examination and analysis of the language used during the task during through an oral presentation.

Appendix B: Post-test. Task guide

Universidad de Nariño
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Departamento de Lingüística e Idiomas
Programa de Lengua Castellana e Ingles

Objective: To establish the students' level after applying the alternative assessment techniques.

Type of task: listening and transferring information: two kinds of information transfer are featured: *spoken-to-written* and *written-to-spoken*. The selected is *spoken-to-writing*. (i.e hearing information and writing it) (Morley, 2001, p.79).

Task-oriented activity: listening and summarizing the gist of a short story, report, or talk in order to report it to a third person.

Task guide**1. Pre-task**

To introduce the students explaining them the activity parameters, and the outcomes expected from the task.

2. During task

- a. Listen the conversation called "YouTuber life" (the students have the opportunity to listen the audio two times).

YouTuber life

Do strange, funny or interesting things happen to you a lot? Are you good at telling stories? Can you imagine hundreds of thousands of people wanting to hear about your life?. That's what life is like for YouTube star, Jessii Vee. Her videos of funny stories about herself have been watched over 150 million times and subscribers to her channel grow every day. In just a month she can gain thousands of new subscribers, and videos that are only a few days old typically have 150,000+ views. Jessii's just a regular 23-year-old living in Ontario, Canada, with a talent for turning her life into her work, six days a week. 'My days change depending on if it's the beginning of the week or the end,' says Jessii. Typically, I'll spend all of Sunday thinking of ideas and planning videos that I want to film that week. Then, on Monday, I'll wake up early to start filming. Usually a video will take just over an hour to film, and I try to film around five, so it takes up most of my day. Then, from Tuesday to Friday, I edit them'. Jessii also says that people know when you only care about being popular. 'When you actually focus on something you love, you'll grow so much faster, trust me!'

Retrieved and adapted from: <https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/study-break/graded-reading/life-youtuber-level-2>

- b. Take notes about the story and take into account aspects such as:
- YouTuber name
 - Times people watched all her videos
 - Kind of videos she makes
 - Her age
 - Number of views she has in one video
 - Days she work during the week
 - Time she spends editing her videos
- c. Summarize the story in a short paragraph.

3. Post-task

Examination and analysis of the language used in the during task through an oral presentation.

Appendix C: Analytic Rubric

Universidad de Nariño Facultad de ciencias humanas Departamento de Lingüística e Idiomas Programa de Lengua Castellana e Ingles
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Objective: to identify and determine the level of listening comprehension that the 11th grade students at INEM High school have before and after implementing task-oriented activities as alternative assessment techniques.

A.

Analytical rubric for grading task completion during the pre-test		
Task development criteria	Rating scale	Score
Title of the movie	1-10	
Main characters	1-20	
Kind of movie	1-10	
Main plot	1-20	
Social aspects	1-10	
Name of the actor	1-5	
Name of the actress	1-5	
Organization of the writing composition (beginning, middle, end)	1-20	
Total score		

B.

Analytical rubric for grading task completion during the post-test		
Task development criteria	Rating scale	Score

Name of the YouTuber	1-10	
Her age	1-10	
The place she lives	1-10	
The topic of her videos	1-20	
The views she has in all her videos	1-10	
The time she works a week	1-20	
Time she spends editing her videos	1-10	
Number of views she has in one video	1-10	
Total score		

Appendix C: Task-oriented activities

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- 1. Type of task: listening and solving problems:** many kind of activities for eighter groups or individuals can be developed in this category. One is games and puzzles.
(Morley, 2001, p.79).

Task-oriented activity: word games in which the answers must be derived from verbal clues.

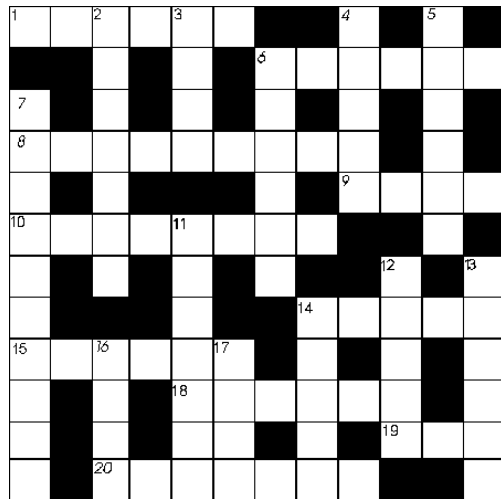
Task guide**1. Pre-task**

To introduce the students explaining them the activity parameters, and the outcomes expected from the task.

2. During task

- Listen the verbal clues related to “Culture” (the students have the opportunity to listen the clues two times).
- Take notes if it is necessary.
- Complete the crossword according to the verbal clues

Culture Crossword



Clues Across

1. To speak verse while others listen.
6. What poets write.
8. A group of musicians who play together.
9. Did not tell the truth.
10. The man in charge of making a film.
14. String instrument, between a violin and a double-bass.
15. Buy one at the box office, or booking office.
18. Tune, or air.
19. Perceive with the eyes.
20. Advertisements announcing cultural events (or other occasions).

Clues Down

1. When musicians play in public.
3. It is used for recording on.
4. A type of rock which is "heavy".
5. He may produce novels, or even just articles.
6. Person who gives money to help the arts.
7. They wave sticks at musicians!
11. Places where you can watch films
12. They are seen on stage or TV.
13. Singers have strong ones, or beautiful ones.
14. Group of singers.
16. Short video film.
17. To try

Retrieved from: <https://linguapress.com/puzzles/xwd-s205-culture.htm>

3. Post-task

Examination and analysis of the language used in the during task through participation.

2. **Type of task: listening and performing actions and operations:** this type of task includes responses to things such as directions, instructions, and descriptions in a variety of contexts (Morley, 2001, p.79).

Task-oriented activity: listening and drawing a picture, figure, or design.

Task guide

1. **Pre-task**

To introduce the students explaining them the activity parameters, and the outcomes expected from the task.

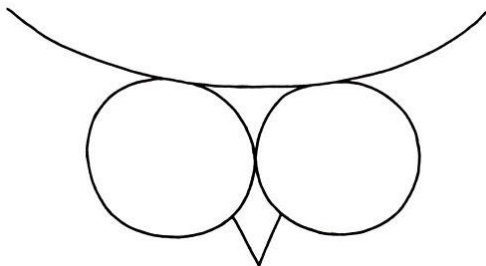
2. **During task**

- a. Listen the verbal directions related to “How to draw an owl ” (the students have the opportunity to listen the clues two times).
- b. Take notes if it is necessary.
- c. Complete the task according to the verbal directions.

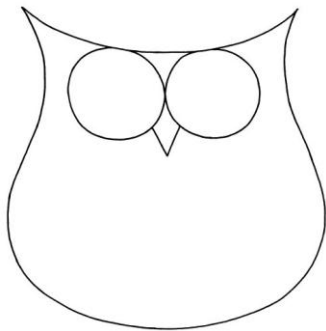
Step 1: At the top of your paper, draw a gently curving line that goes from left to right.



Step 2: Below the curved line, draw 2 large circles in the center for the owl's eyes. In between the owl's eyes, draw a 'v' for a beak.

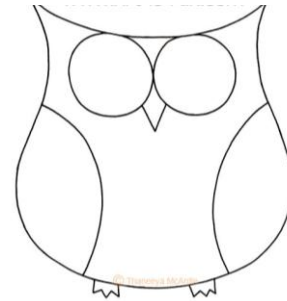


Step 3: Draw a gently curving line for the body, kind of like a U-shape that tapers at the top.



Step 4

Draw a pair of feet and 2 curved lines for wings.



Step 5: Now it's time to add groovy decorations!

Decorate the eyes and wings with shapes and patterns, like dots, flowers, waves, etc.



Step 6: Add more decorations to the owl's body. Let your imagination run wild!

Retrieved from:

<https://www.art-is-fun.com/how-to-draw-an-owl/>

3. Post-task

Examination and analysis of the language used in the during task through a presentation of the draws obtained.

- 3. Type of task: listening and transferring information:** two kinds of information transfer are featured: *spoken-to-written* and *written-to-spoken*. The selected is *spoken-to-writing*. (i.e hearing information and writing it) (Morley, 2001, p.79).

Task-oriented activity: listening and summarizing the gist of a short story, report, or talk in order to report it to a third person.

Task guide

1. Pre-task

To introduce the students explaining them the activity parameters, and the outcomes expected from the task.

2. During task

- a. Listening the audio “The story of Blue Jeans”, (the students have the opportunity to listen the audio two times).
- b. Take notes about the story and take into account aspects such as:
 - Time blue jeans have existed
 - The blue jeans creator name
 - The place where jeans were created
 - Whom those jeans were made at the beginning
 - The reason why jeans are blue instead of white
 - The name of the most popular brand of blue jeans
- c. Summarize the story in a short paragraph

The story of Blue Jeans

Blue jeans are the most popular type of clothing in the world; but they are not modern! In fact, jeans have existed for over 160 years. In 1853, a young tailor from Germany, called Levi Strauss, began working in San Francisco. One day, a miner told Levi that he could not find trousers that were strong enough for work in the gold mines. Levi decided to make some trousers out of canvas. However, the canvas was rather heavy and stiff. Levi therefore began to look for a different textile; soon he found a heavy textile from France; it was called serge *de Nimes*. Americans just called this de Nimes, and this name soon got reduced to denim. Denim was a bit lighter than canvas, but it was very strong. However, original denim was almost white, and miners did not like the color! Their denim trousers got dirty as soon as they began working!. Levi Strauss decided to use colored denim, and he chose dark blue. This was a radical new idea: "Blue jeans" had arrived!. Levi's jeans became so popular, that his company got bigger and bigger; soon. Today there are hundreds of different brands of jeans. Many top fashion brands, like Armani or Benetton, make their own blue jeans. But for real authentic jeans, "Levi's" are still the most popular brand.

Retrieved and adapted from:

<https://linguapress.com/intermediate/blue-jeans.htm>

3. Post-task

Examination and analysis of the language used in the during task through an oral presentation.

Appendix D: Questionnaire

Universidad de Nariño Facultad de ciencias humanas Departamento de Lingüística e Idiomas Programa de Lengua Castellana e Ingles
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Research project about the implementation of task oriented activities as alternative assessment techniques for improving listening comprehension in English

Objective: The questionnaire seeks to determine the teachers' and students' opinions about the implementation of task-oriented activities as alternative assessment techniques used to improve listening comprehension.

Name: _____

Researcher: _____

Date: _____

Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. Do task-oriented activities have improved in some way your listening comprehension skills?					
2. Do you think that task-oriented activities are motivational and meaningful for your learning?					
3. The use of oral texts, audios, and listening sources have improved					

<p>in some way your abilities to perform activities through tasks?</p>					
<p>4. After applying task-oriented activities which kind of strengths have you developed?</p>					
<p>A. Listening and performing actions or operations</p>					
<p>B. Listening in order to follow instructions</p>					
<p>C. Listening and transferring information</p>					
<p>D. Listening and summarize a story in a short paragraph</p>					
<p>E. Listening in order to solve problems</p>					
<p>F. Solve word games were the answers are derived from verbal clues.</p>					