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Ciencias Sociales y Humanísticas

PROYECTO DE TITULACIÓN

“PROJECT-BASED LEARNING: ENHANCING THE
LISTENING INSTRUCTION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM AT AN
ECUADORIAN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL.”

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DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this research work to my family, so they always support me in every decision of my life. Besides, they have sacrificed and contributed to my life. I also dedicate this research study to my colleagues and close friends, who have always encouraged me to reach my goals. It is also important to mention my thesis co-worker, Nathy, for working arduously with me.

Lorena Sinche

It is an honor to dedicate this research study to my family, who has continuously supported me and made great sacrifices and contributions to strengthen me as a person and as a researcher. I also want to dedicate this work to my colleagues and professors, who kindly have inspired me to accomplish my goals, and to my dear close friend and researcher, Lore Sinche, who has taken an active role in developing this research study.

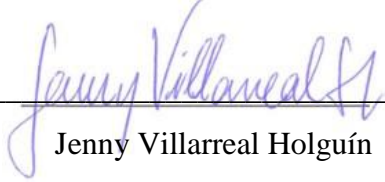
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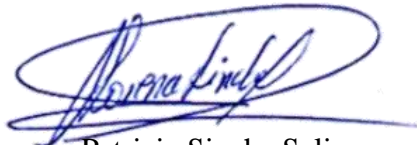
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ABSTRACT

This qualitative descriptive case research study explores EFL Teachers' perceptions on the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) instruction in the development of listening comprehension tasks and offering insights on how to improve its instruction in an Ecuadorian public high school.

Guided by one general research question and three sub-research questions, the study examined the perspectives of five teacher-participants at a public Ecuadorian high school to obtain valuable insights to strengthen the process of teaching listening comprehension. This qualitative study employed an inductive approach to define themes and concepts to discover patterns and relationships connected with the data collected: interviews, planning reviews, and classroom observations. The findings revealed that teachers felt enthusiastic about implementing the PBL as a learner-centered approach and recognized the importance of listening comprehension for language use. In this regard, even though teachers did not plan strictly listening comprehension tasks, they combined the listening skills with other macro language skills to improve learners' listening comprehension ability. Nevertheless, assessing listening skills has been the most challenging task for teachers, adding to the lack of technological resources that some teachers and learners face, lessening expected results.

Components of this research study can be helpful for other school districts and educational institutions that share the same methodology to promote similar workforce capacity in teaching EFL listening instruction.

Key Words: Project-based-learning, listening instruction, learner-centered approach, teachers' perceptions, listening comprehension

ABSTRACTO

Este estudio de investigación de caso descriptivo cualitativo explora las percepciones de los profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) sobre la implementación de la instrucción del Aprendizaje Basado en Proyectos (PBL) en el desarrollo de tareas de comprensión auditiva además de ofrecer ideas sobre cómo mejorar su instrucción en una escuela secundaria pública ecuatoriana.

Guiado por una pregunta de investigación general y tres preguntas de sub-investigación, el estudio examinó las perspectivas de cinco profesores participantes de una escuela secundaria pública ecuatoriana para obtener información valiosa para fortalecer el proceso de enseñanza de la comprensión auditiva. Este estudio cualitativo utilizó un enfoque inductivo para definir temas y conceptos para descubrir patrones y relaciones conectados con los datos recolectados: entrevistas, revisiones de planificación y observaciones en el aula. Los hallazgos revelaron que los maestros se sintieron entusiasmados con la implementación del ABP como un enfoque centrado en el alumno y reconocieron la importancia de la comprensión auditiva para el uso del idioma. En este sentido, aunque los profesores no planificaron estrictamente las tareas de comprensión auditiva, combinaron las habilidades auditivas con las otras macro habilidades para mejorar la capacidad de comprensión auditiva de los alumnos. Sin embargo, evaluar las habilidades auditivas ha sido la tarea más desafiante para los docentes, sumada a la falta de recursos tecnológicos que enfrentan algunos docentes y alumnos, lo que reduce los resultados esperados.

Los componentes de este estudio de investigación también pueden ser utilizados por otros distritos escolares e instituciones educativas que comparten la misma metodología a fin de promover una capacidad laboral similar en la enseñanza de la comprensión auditiva del inglés como lengua extranjera.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje basado en proyectos (ABP), instrucción auditiva, enfoque centrado en el alumno, percepciones de los profesores, comprensión auditiva

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B2: A Level of English from the CEFR.

CEFRL: Common European Framework of Reference for Language.

COVID-19: Coronavirus Disease.

EF: Education First.

EFL: English as Foreign Language.

HURIER: hearing, understanding, remembering, interpreting, evaluating, and responding.

PBL: Project-Based Learning.

RQ1: Research Question 1.

RQ2: Research Question 2.

RQ3. Research Question 3.

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CHAPTER I

1 INTRODUCTION.

1.1 Aims and Rationale.

Teaching practices have changed, not just in Ecuador but worldwide, due to the pandemic. In the case of Ecuador, the Ministry of Education adopted Problem-Based learning as an alternative for teaching because it is considered an excellent strategy to keep students in contact and active in their learning.

Because of the pandemic, there have been some criteria of English teachers about the implementation of PBL in the classroom. For that reason, the researchers decided to know about EFL Teachers' perceptions and attitudes regarding implementing Project-Based Learning (PBL) instruction in developing listening comprehension tasks.

On the one hand, the researchers are interested in knowing how listening skills are improving and the perceptions of this skill by teachers. Listening is challenging but not necessarily unachievable, so student success will depend on the teachers' motivation to aid in the improvement of this skill (Chang & Chang, 2018).

On the other hand, we want to know some challenges that some teachers faced by using PBL as a method for teaching during this pandemic. Unfortunately, some teachers did not know how to implement and manage PBL in their English classes. As with every change in our life, new learning methods bring some difficulties, so we wanted to know their primary challenges and how effective PBL was during the lockdown.

Additionally, this research will also contribute to a vision of PBL for Ecuadorian teachers and how teachers can implement it in their PBL planning. These types of practices will help learners to have a better understanding of the English language.

1.2 Research Question.

What are EFL Teachers' perceptions and attitudes regarding the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) instruction in the development of listening comprehension tasks in an Ecuadorian public high school."

Sub-research questions:

- What are the teachers' perceptions about teaching listening skills?
- What are Ecuadorian public teachers' thoughts about implementing PBL as a learner-centered teaching approach to improve students' listening comprehension?
- What are the challenges and the limitations teachers have found while implementing PBL in listening comprehension tasks in EFL?

1.3 Research Objectives.

1.3.1 General Objective.

The objective of this study is to explore EFL Teachers' perceptions and attitudes with regards to the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) instruction in the development of listening comprehension tasks in an Ecuadorian public high school."

1.3.2 Specific Objectives.

- To analyze current EFL teachers' perceptions about teaching listening comprehension skills.
- To reflect on Ecuadorian public teachers' thoughts about implementing PBL as a learner-centered teaching approach to improve listening instruction in EFL classrooms.
- To contribute to this public high school's EFL teachers implementing the PBL to support listening instruction.

1.4 Overview of the inquiry.

Chapter 1 consists of the introduction of the study, aims, rationale, and the research questions and sub-questions.

Chapter 2 includes the context of the study that mentions the institution where the research took place and instructors in charge of the process. It also focuses on the need for this research project.

Chapter 3 describes the literature review and previous studies on listening and PBL (Project-Based Learning).

Chapter 4 explains the methodology required for the process of this research. It also explains the rationale for the application of qualitative procedures and techniques along with this study.

Chapter 5 contains the data collected and displayed in various tables mentioning the themes and codes gathered from the instruments used.

Chapter 6 presents and discusses the findings obtained from the data collection of this research and contrasts it with previous studies.

Chapter 7 summarizes the findings concerning the questions and presents the study's limitations, future directions, and other research areas.

1.5 Significance of the study.

We consider this study important because it will address teachers towards better teaching practices because it has its bases on the experience of teachers. Also, applying this type of research encourages teachers to be reflective and think of their daily teaching.

CHAPTER II

2 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

2.1 Introduction.

2.1.1 Definition of the problem.

Teaching English During the COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging for teachers because of new ways and unknown teaching environments. English methods have been implemented in EFL classrooms. In the case of Ecuador, Project-based Learning grabs the attention due to its application during this new reality.

This study will be carried out with EFL teachers who are part of an Ecuadorian secondary school. These teachers come from different backgrounds. The Ministry of Education required them to change their traditional way of teaching and implement the Project-Based Learning (PBL) approach since it is now part of the curriculum.

The teachers' ages are between 28 and 42 years old. All of them are bachelor's in EFL, three of them have a Master's degree, but only one Master's is in EFL, the other masters are in research. The English proficiency level of these teachers is B2. Most of them have found it challenging to work with this teaching method, and listening instruction is a significant issue of concern. It is worth mentioning that English is deficient in Ecuador. It is in the 93rd place of the ranking of EF among 100 countries around the world and 19th in Latino America. (El Universo, 2020)

Nonetheless, the debate continues about the best strategies for the management of listening instruction. The studies presented thus far provide evidence that the listening field has experienced several hurdles. Even though listening is one of the most commonly assessed English skills, it is also the skill infrequently taught, revealing that educators' instructional practices do not endeavor to listen efficiently and explicitly (Emerick, 2019).

Current research suggests that listening needs more exploration since, according to Jones (2014), listening is one of the most challenging skills, particularly when learning a second language. Emerick (2019) conceives listening as an active component in processing and acquiring information. This process enables learners to enhance their comprehension and develop more profound reasoning levels, that is to say, matching what they already know (prior knowledge) to new pieces of information. In this regard, the role of PBL is crucial. PBL implementation seeks to help teachers overcome language barriers and encompasses an open-minded approach that encourages teachers and learners to work collaboratively to construct knowledge.

The purpose of this study is to explore EFL Teachers' perceptions of the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) instruction in the development of listening comprehension tasks and offer insights on how to improve its instruction in an Ecuadorian public high school.

2.2 The institution, its students, and instructors.

For this thesis's development, the researcher chose a public high school located in the heart of Loja. The institution has approximately 2800 students. Five Teachers Agreed to work on this research voluntarily. All teachers have a bachelor's degree in Teaching English as a foreign language.

2.3 The need for this research project.

The pandemic has changed our lifestyle, and educators had to look for new alternatives to continue the learning process. Thus, PBL has been implemented in the teaching-learning process to create students' independence because not all students can have online classes due to internet connection. Before the pandemic, teachers did not use PBL as a mandatory part of education, but now its use is mandatory. So, teachers had to start working knowing nothing about PBL. Likewise, they did not know how introduce listening into PBL, and some students do not count on resources to apply listening skills. This study will also show the teacher's perception of the implementation of PBL in the EFL classroom for teaching listening instruction.

2.4 Conclusion.

Listening is one of the most challenging skills to develop, and in this research, we want to know the perspectives that teachers have of this skill, but this time in relation to the use of Project-based learning. It is significant to have a deeper view from public teachers and know their feelings about applying this new learning alternative in COVID-19.

CHAPTER III

3 LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review explores recent research regarding teachers' insights about pedagogy and best practices for listening instruction. This literature analysis focuses on the steps involved in teaching listening and how they can be implemented with the PBL approach to enhance listening comprehension. This review (a) analyzes the historical background of listening, (b) explores research-based listening instructional design and strategies that facilitate students listening comprehension, and (c) explains the importance of the PBL approach as a practical component in developing listening comprehension thanks to meta-cognition procedures in autonomous listening learning and listening comprehension.

3.1 Historical Background.

Listening is one of the four essential language teaching skills that states that listening involves a process in which oral language turns into meaningful communication (Ngo,2019).

Nonetheless, listening was not an essential skill because speaking and writing were the predominant skills before the 1970s, so teachers did not pay much attention. They emphasized more productive skills than receptive skills (Şendağ et al., 2018). Recent research shows that teachers consider Listening necessary, but they focus more on the product than on the result (Emerick, 2019).

Likewise, many teachers can feel that their students feel uncomfortable listening, and teachers adopt as a solution "more practice." Nevertheless, they do not consider more discernment to choose other alternatives to develop this skill (Graham et al., 2014). For that reason, learners need to develop autonomy in their studies' performance, so they should solve their problems by using new methodologies related to the dynamic of this world (Malkova & Kiselyova, 2014).

Teachers must use strategies that help students develop Listening skills, and metacognitive strategies are helpful for pupils. According to Al-Azzemy & Al-Jamal, (2019), listeners who use more metacognitive activities tend to develop their listening proficiency faster. Besides, they acquire a more fundamental understanding, which facilitates process control and saves the new information. Nevertheless, teachers have to plan, monitor, and evaluate students' progress to have favorable results with metacognitive strategies. Similarly, teachers must be sure of what material they use in their classrooms because they should articulate them according to their students' needs (Kennedy et al., 2014).

In this regard, many teachers have then adopted Project Based Learning to increase their teaching practices to get students ready for this new century (Revelle, 2019) (Revelle, 2019). Project-based learning is a constructivist model, and researchers gave many opinions about its appliance. It pretends to create learners' self-awareness and establishes students' independence (Ngo,2019).

Moreover, this approach engages students to investigate and solve real-life issues (Blumenfeld et al., 1991). According to Culclasure et al. (2019) Culclasure et al. (2019), PBL increases students' competencies more than traditional methods. PBL follows a cycle that includes an endless number of activities, and for this process, teachers act as facilitators. Ngo, N. (2019). For that reason, teachers' opinions are essential, so reporting teachers' perceptions about using a project-based approach could help them to improve their teaching practices. (Revelle, 2019). Besides, research in 2013 mentions that the use of PBL has a positive impact on students learning because it creates the right environment and relationships among students of work created an instructional environment that positively impacted student learning (Culclasure et al., 2019)

3.2 Previous Studies.

Even though listening is one of the most commonly assessed English skills, it is also the skill infrequently taught, revealing that educators' instructional practices do not endeavor to listen efficiently and explicitly (Emerick, M. R. 2019). A descriptive mixed-method research study developed by Emerick, M. R. (2019) utilizes a validated survey to explain American teachers' perceptions regarding the process of L2 listening instruction. It states that the more trained instructors are, the more time they spend explicitly teaching and shaping listening procedures. Furthermore, the quantitative data analysis also suggests that teachers usually coincide with the direct, explicit instruction to practice listening. On the other hand, qualitative data analysis claims that teachers who use passages extracted from the internet or design their listening texts incorporate more real-world's speech features, rather than the ones encountered in traditional textbooks. However, this correlation is quite challenging to comprehend.

Current research has demonstrated that listening materials generate a supporting role in learning and teaching L2 listening skills. Evidence suggests that visuals or captions facilitate non-native learners' listening comprehension proficiency (İnceçay & Koçoğlu, 2017).

Nonetheless, this support's consistency is in the discussion, mainly because it is precise to authenticate what content delivery mode is the most profitable for learners to

develop their listening comprehension. Ngo (2019) mentioned Chen and Chang (2011) had considered this fact a fundamental concern for practitioners to figure out how to identify and recognize the most appropriate and accurate content delivery formats for learners.

In this regard, the research study *Investigating the effects of multimedia input modality on L2 listening skills of Turkish EFL learners conducted by Volkan İnceçayl & Zeynep Koçoğlu* explored the impacts of one single (audio-only) and three dual-language learning material delivery modes (1) audio with video, (2) video, audio with target language subtitles, (3) audio and PowerPoint presentation on while-listening comprehension tasks (İnceçay & Koçoğlu, 2017). Research findings seem to be misleading due to multi-method data collection techniques, which were not incorporated since learners' performance was best in audio and PowerPoint presentation mode according to quantitative data analysis.

Additionally, the profound qualitative data analysis from verbal reports, in which researchers employed think-aloud protocols and semi-structured focus group interviews, revealed that learners did not effectively use the slides, photos, and images in the PowerPoint presentation. The last finding encountered consistency in quantitative and qualitative data, meaning scores were significantly lower in the lower audio-video with subtitles mode than in the other three types of input delivery modes. The participants' feelings involved anxiety, nervousness, and confusion when developing the three input types. The tasks demanded cognitive overload, which hindered the listening comprehension on a large scale.

3.3 Difficulties and Challenges of Listening Instruction.

Current research suggests that listening needs more exploration since, according to S. M. Jones et al. (2019), listening is one of the most challenging skills, particularly when learning a second language. Similarly, Bian et al. (2019) claim that albeit listening performs an essential role in learning languages, the literature on the second language (L2) pedagogy has not focused the necessary attention on it (Sandal et al. (2003) conceive listening as an active component in processing and acquiring information. This process enables learners to enhance their comprehension and develop more profound reasoning levels matching what they already know (prior knowledge) to new pieces of information. ((Bourdeaud'hui et al., 2018)

Furthermore, listening links inexorably to vocabulary knowledge. Research about listening corroborates that listening is closely related to reading vocabulary, which involves a process of knowing a word, recognizing that word (spoken and written form), and remembering its meaning. (Bian et al., 2019)

Additionally, for better understanding the role of listening and how it works, Bian et al. (2019) mention that Brownell (2012) divided listening into a set of skills through the HURIER, an acronym for hearing, understanding, remembering, interpreting, evaluating, and responding. This model considered the results from a thoughtful review of the literature and standardized tests that measure listening proficiency.

Consequently, interactive listening emerged, allowing the listeners to perform a more active role in communication settings in which individuals can request, clarify and negotiate the meaning. During this interaction process, individuals come up with solutions for particular issues and shape the speech to meet interactional expectancies (Bian et al., 2019)

For example, the HURIER makes it possible to assimilate listening and the subcomponents of this skill. It is an active and comprehensible process in which learners hear, understand, remember, interpret, evaluate, and respond to their exposed information. (Bourdeaud'hui et al., 2018)

3.4 Developing listening skills in the EFL classroom.

Regarding listening instruction in EFL classrooms, developing new techniques was a concern for educators many years ago, primarily because of their lack of knowledge and evidence in real research case studies. However, Bourdeaud'hui et al. (2018) mentioned that Cohen (2011) claims that teaching students listening strategies demands a careful and appropriate selection of activities that aim for their personal listening goals and promote their listening comprehension. It is also worth noting that listening training may empower learners to develop autonomy and turn themselves into self-controllers of their learning process and success (Ngo, 2019).

3.5 Project-Based Learning Approach.

The PBL mainly focuses on developing strategies for real-life contexts that promote reasoning and critical thinking Kavlu, A. (2017). In doing so, Bloom's taxonomy is a central component for making a PBL work. Therefore, PBL first addresses lower order thinking skills in which learners realize the topic, understand the situation, and draw their conclusions (lower thinking skills: remembering, understanding, applying). Once these activities have been done, students are pushed to the next level. They ideate, prototype, and develop practical solutions for problems encountered by using their creativity and collaborating with peers. In these stages, students move slightly into higher thinking skills: analyzing, evaluating, and creating (Sasson et al., 2018).

3.5.1 Project-Based Learning Approach before the pandemic.

Many views are related to learning a foreign language, and Revelle (2019) mentions that teachers need to adapt their knowledge to the classroom circumstances. At this time of the pandemic, teachers have to adopt alternatives like PBL that have been seen as tools to create students' independence. For instance, Sirotiak & Sharma (2019) claims that PBL adapts to teachers' and students' requirements. One of the benefits of PBL in the EFL classroom is that it integrates the four language skills, and during the process, it requires a great variety of activities (Pham, 2019). It means that students are exposed to the language in several forms.

3.5.2 Project-Based Learning Approach during the pandemic.

One significant shift that is revolutionizing education is the switch of on-site classes into online classes. The pandemic the world is facing has brought out the necessity of incorporating new approaches that promote significant learning and help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. In this respect, Project-Based-Learning (PBL) depicts a novel and productive approach easily suited for this purpose, promoting significant learning since its theoretical foundations belong to Situated Learning Theory (SLT). Its primary focus is integrating the human mind into the social context allowing the interaction to perform a focus element of negotiation and decision-making to solve a particular social conflict and where errors serve as a way of learning and acquiring experience to make better decisions (Fox, 1997).

Consequently, it seeks to enable learners to experience a concept and interpret how situations would most likely be helpful. This process facilitates instruction and supports learners in developing skills to practice outside the classroom in the real world. (Catalano, 2015). Therefore, being in contact with real-life situations facilitates the learning process and stimulates learners to exploit all their potential, inquiring what will happen and what consequences a particular action may have. In other words, knowledge is comprehensible and best acquired when it occurs through a real-live setting (Errington, 2011)

3.5.3 What exactly is PBL?

Project-based learning is a method that allows students to work with real-life products or problems. The objective is to answer a question, and it requires the collaboration and participation of all students. (Guo et al., 2020)

Also, PBL can be considered a scaffolding method that follows a series of steps to achieve a common goal. It also considers the inquiry and design cycle, which contains four phases.

1. **Inquire:** consists of looking for information, predicting what could happen, and desire to work on the project.
2. **Design:** In this phase, students plan, look for alternative innovations, and critique their work to have better results.
3. **Create:** It consists of building, gathering information, and analyzed data that was collected.
4. **Evaluate:** In this phase, students come to Conclusions, reflect, and communicate the results gathered.

3.5.4 Implementing PBL in a typical classroom

PBL provides instructors with an excellent opportunity to create interactive learning lessons to foster the development and creativity of learners. To make this happen, teachers need to be open-minded and flexible because, in the process, they must carry out a precise needs analysis that matches perfectly with the learning outcomes. (Jaleniauskiene, 2016)

Furthermore, developing PBL tasks in traditional instruction sometimes does not aim for the learning outcomes. The current reality in our context makes it possible to use technology to help learners achieve specific learning outcomes since online teaching facilitates students' learning. If teachers and students work together with technology, results can positively impact EFL listening instruction. (Jaleniauskiene, 2016)

Besides this, the PBL approach seems to be adaptable to online instruction. One exciting way teachers can incorporate and create meaningful lessons is by using PowerPoint slides of different everyday situations that respond to society's common issues or any other academic concerns that are familiar to their students. Besides this, teachers should always look further and analyze the many different perspectives that one project can hold to support students' decisions and guide them through the whole process. (Hursen & Fasli, 2017)

In addition, deciding the topic is essential, and teachers should align it with the course or project's learning outcomes, considering a real-world context in which learners can gain helpful knowledge to transfer it outside the classroom. PBL to be effective requires a well-conducted needs analysis based on the instructor and other professionals of the field experiences to generate concise lessons that prompt students to think critically, solve problems and use the target language during the process with a particular emphasis on a particular learning goal. (Sasson et al., 2018)

Lastly, PBL allows learners to play a central role in developing the tasks and activities provided in the project they will be displayed, being part of the solution, and doing their best to solve that issue using all the resources they have and exploring all the possibilities. The teacher's role here is to mentor or guide students' decisions and provide them with constructive feedback when it is needed. (Kavlu, A. 2017)

3.5.5 How is it different from the other methods?

PBL is different from other methods because it helps students gain new ideas by intensively observing and asking questions. Likewise, it improves students' innovation abilities and capabilities. It develops innovative thinking in students as well. Working on a project in groups encouraged them to increase communication and cooperation, having positive effects of self-monitoring to discriminate between effective and ineffective. (Barak & Yuan, 2021)

PBL approach is also different from others since it offers learners the opportunity to explore real-world issues, use their prior knowledge to make inferences about what is happening. In doing so, learners take an active part in the solution, inquire about all the possible solutions to solve a particular issue, illustrate and speculate on the consequences of each determination, and decide how to balance the situation creatively by integrating skills and educational resources around them. Lastly, instructors will always assist students as mentors or guides to stimulate their confidence and engagement. (Lin, 2015)

3.5.6 Teachers' experiences with PBL.

Teachers, who have applied PBL in the EFL classroom, mention that this approach makes students learn through authentic activities. These types of activities help learners increase their critical thinking by solving problems (Pham, 2019). Likewise, PBL allows teachers to create rational ideas to support students who have a low English level.

PBL can encourage learners to use language skills learned from the English class and support learners' confidence in using English. Besides, using projects as part of the grading is an excellent strategy for teachers and students (Poonpon, 2017).

3.5.7 Learner-centered Approach.

PBL is quite different from traditional teaching approaches because it emphasizes learning through student-centeredness, and it can be interdisciplinary and can integrate a variety of real-world situations (Poonpon, 2017).

According to Abbasi & Hadadi (2014), Dewey (1938) stated that constructivism plays a fundamental role within PBL since its roots came from it; learners can interact and reflect on their ideas and experiences. Likewise, Choi et al. (2019). state that PBL focuses on learners' interests and needs fostering their autonomy, shifting the traditional teacher-centered approach.

It is worth mentioning that learner-centered instruction is a novel approach growing up continuously in the past three decades, strengthening its use. Doyle (2008) states a new conception of knowledge, passing from remembering and repeating information into developing strategies to find and use information appropriately (Ahmad, 2016).

3.6 Conclusion.

The success and effectiveness of proper listening instruction lie in selecting activities that promote authentic language and help students participate in active listening procedures. For example, the HURIER model analyses this process in detail, stating that active listening empowers learners to improve listening proficiency. Also, listening comprehension facilitates students' performance and promotes speaking; consequently, the relationship between these two skills generates meaningful communication. (Bourdeaud'hui et al., 2018).

In the same vein, training is crucial since it provides teachers with specific procedures that meet students' personal needs and fit in real-world settings. In this regard, the PBL approach allows teachers to design tasks and activities that promote the learners' autonomy, helping them develop and boost their learning strategies (Choi et al., 2019).

However, further research is necessary. The more in-depth exploration of listening as an open listening pedagogy is fundamental because of the need for an interdisciplinary understanding of the role of mindfulness and neurofeedback and the social relationships contained inside closed listening. Finally, neurofeedback and mindfulness enhance learners' ways of relating to their bodies that are part of open listening procedures, as discussed before (Schaefer, 2018).

CHAPTER IV

4 METHODOLOGY

Due to that hard reality that the world is facing regarding COVID 19, the Ministry of Education considered PBL necessary in the Ecuadorian curriculum. However, some problems arose when there were new changes, especially with students lacking internet connections. For that reason, we considered it essential to record teachers' perceptions and know their valuable perspectives about the use of PBL in their classes and its role in improving listening skills. In this chapter, we will describe the methodology used during this work.

4.1 Research Paradigm.

English teachers have many challenges developing listening skills, and its complexity has increased during this pandemic. New challenges arrived not only for students but for teachers too. Then, the target of this study was to know the EFL Teachers' perceptions of implementing Project-Based Learning instruction in the development of listening comprehension tasks.

The design for this research is an entirely qualitative approach. The researchers interpreted teachers' reality based on their experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Likewise, it involves knowing the participants' needs and collecting data, using instruments that help the researcher understand and explain the issue (Creswell, 2007). In this case, the qualitative approach supports knowing teachers' perceptions towards PBL in their EFL classrooms.

This study seeks to investigate teacher perspectives about implementing Project-Based Learning (PBL) instruction in the development of listening comprehension tasks, and the qualitative research questions that guided the study were:

What are the EFL Teachers' perceptions of implementing Project-Based Learning (PBL) instruction in developing listening comprehension tasks at an Ecuadorian Public High school?

4.1.1 Definition and rationale.

This research study starts by reflecting on how English teachers are managing listening in their classes. Working face to face is complicated to develop this skill, so we wanted to know how teachers deal with this pandemic. According to El Universo (2021), 90000 students left school during the academic year. One reason is the lack of connectivity of some students. Teachers must look for strategies that allow them to integrate all skills during the process.

Under those antecedents, we consider essential the use of a descriptive paradigm whose primary purpose is to know particularities of a social phenomenon. (Creswell, 2018).

4.1.2 Methodological stances.

4.1.2.1 The paradigm of the study: Constructivism, Ontological and Epistemological positions.

The researchers based this work on the constructivism paradigm for the ontological and epistemological positions. According to Creswell (2018), constructivism has some characteristics that have to do with understanding a phenomenon, contributions of different participants with different views. Also, it makes a theoretical generalization and social and historical construction.

This research also has an ontological position. This working paper is based on Listening and PBL, which allows researchers to be part of the nature of reality. Furthermore, the epistemological position starts from subjective viewpoints (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Both the ontological and epistemological positions provide significant findings along with this work.

4.2 Research Tradition.

This study employs qualitative research, as Bryman (2012) states that this kind of research effectively solves problems in the educational context. In the same vein, Creswell (2012) points out the valuable contribution of this kind of research into the educational field. It also seeks to bring about the boundaries between the phenomenon and the unclearly stated context. Yin (2003).

4.2.1 Type.

The research encompasses the descriptive Case Study Design, which allows the Exploration of a phenomenon in context, which uses different data collection methods to fully describe a particular case. Hew & Hara (2007).

4.2.2 Ascertaining the warrant for the study (Validity and Reliability)

For the warranty of this study, two components were necessary:

Validity: For the validity of this work, it was necessary to make a triangulation.

Reliability: The scheduled interview was revised for four English Teachers who, after checking and sending comments of the questions, correct them, finally approve the questions and validity of the instruments.

4.2.3 Ethical Considerations.

We consider two essential Considerations that (Kumar 2011) mentions in his book about ethical considerations:

Seeking consent: In the case of our participants, the researchers ask for their consent before starting the research. Likewise, all participants knew that their comments were under the analysis of the data. We also let them know what type of information we needed from them.

Maintaining confidentiality: All the information gathered is in context, and we do not give the participants information. Their names were anonymous, and they were codified.

4.2.4 Definition and characteristic.

The most helpful method for qualitative research is the inductive method this type of research. It is inductive reasoning that allows the researcher to analyze the data gathered from the participants. Creswell 2018 suggests that using the inductive method helps organize information because the literature becomes a tool to manage the research.

4.2.5 Methods of data collection.

Gathering information is an essential section of the research, and for obtaining it, Kumar (2011) mentions two types of sources, primary and secondary. In our research, we chose two primary sources which provide first-hand information, the interview, and the observation, and one secondary source that provides second-hand information, lesson plans.

Also, the interview, the observation form, and the planning revision went over a thorough revision of four experts on Teaching English as a Foreign language and in research. All experts are experienced teachers and have worked as university teachers. After checking the instruments and making corrections, they gave us a letter with their approval.

4.2.5.1 Interview.

To gather information, the interviewer should engage participants to give significant beliefs or opinions from their interactions (Kumar, 2011). For that reason, there is alignment between the interview with the objectives to obtain valuable information. Also, Its flexibility

characterizes an interview, so the interviewees generate answers that are coded and processed faster (Bryman, 2016)

For the presentation of this research, the researchers chose a semi-structured interview as Denzin & Lincoln (2011) in their book cited (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015) as the following "It is defined as an interview to obtain descriptions of the life world of the interviewee to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena."

An interview schedule was written to interview the participants through the platform zoom as an instrument for this data collection. As Kumar (2011) mentions that an interview schedule is a means for obtaining data while gathering information is the interview.

4.2.5.1.1 Interview Protocol.

According to Creswell (2018), having an interview protocol before obtaining the transcription, the researcher needs a plan that helps get good results.

What is the interaction pattern?

The interaction pattern is one person talking at a time. The interaction will be done as an individual interview so that the participants involved in the research feel free to give their insights. The researcher will ask the questions, and the participants will answer them based on their knowledge and experience. If the participants do not understand a particular question, the interviewer will kindly repeat or paraphrase the question so that the interviewee clearly understands it.

Who regulates this pattern?

The interview will be individual. The researchers will ask a question at the time. Then, the participants will reply question by question. The researcher will give them the freedom to expand their answers without any time pressure. This way, the participant has the time they need. The researcher will use the Zoom platform to record the interviews of the participants.

How is turn-taking managed?

The researcher will manage turn-taking. It will be an online, face-to-face interview with the participants to obtain valuable data about how PBL is done in the classroom.

4.2.5.2 Observation.

As we mentioned before, observation is another primary source that the researchers used to conduct this research work. Kumar (2011) claims two types of observations. One of them is participant observation, which consists of being part of the activities and coming to

conclusions. In contrast, non-participant observation consists of observers and takes notes during the process. In our research, we use non-participant observation.

In a qualitative observation, while the participants are doing the activities, the researcher takes notes and records information that can be significant for this type of research in an unstructured or semi-structured way that freely provides their views, opinions, and perspectives. (Cresswell, 2014)

4.2.5.3 Planning revision.

After finishing with the primary resource, we will continue with the secondary resource that we used. It refers to documents' records. In this case, it was a set of lesson plans that teachers used for their classes. According to Kumar (2011), information should come from different resources, including documents, to provide the researcher a better overview of the observation.

4.2.6 Triangulation.

According to Creswell (2012), triangulation involves getting information from different sources to corroborate evidence from different instruments. This process of corroboration affirms its authenticity by using different instances. In this case, we used the interview, the class observation, and the planning review.

4.2.7 Selection and handling of data.

In qualitative research, researchers select the participants they think could give information that contributes to its effectiveness. (Fraenkel et al., 2012). The sample chosen was intentionally selecting individuals, so Creswell (2012) states that Convenience sampling is suitable because the researcher can gather important data from their location. It is faster and low-cost.

4.2.8 Participants.

For this research work, five English teachers from a Secondary public high-school from Loja City agreed to participate in this qualitative research and give the information required for this thesis. Four teachers are non-native English speakers, and they have a degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. The fifth teacher is a native speaker with a professional background in nursing. However, she already has five years of experience in teaching English as a foreign language.

4.2.9 Selection and Sampling.

For the selection of the sampling, teachers accepted to work voluntarily to participate in the interview. Previously, teachers had agreed to be part of this research by signing an electronic consent form.

4.2.10 Background of the participants.

The participants for this research were two men and three women. All of the participants have to be English Teachers at a public high school and comply with minimal requirements, which are:

- ❖ Three years teaching English as a foreign language.
- ❖ Have a bachelor's degree in education with a specialization in English, or
- ❖ Have the B2 English Proficiency Level CEFR.

Participants will benefit from their reflection and findings to improve their current listening instructional practices through this research process.

4.2.11 Conclusion.

The entire study is qualitative research whose objective is to obtain teachers' perspectives in implementing Listening in PBL. For developing this research, it was necessary to use two primary sources, the interview and the class observation, and one secondary source, the review of lesson plans. Thanks to the instruments, the researchers could codify and reach conclusions.

CHAPTER V

5 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS.

5.1 Introduction of Results.

In this chapter, we describe the findings of the study by using tables and charts. We aimed to show precisely the data obtained from the participants' answers in the interviews. Also, the findings indicate how planning integrates several aspects of listening strategies and the PBL approach. In addition, classroom observations made it feasible to comprehend how teachers integrate listening instructions inside PBL tasks.

5.2 Presentation of Findings.

5.2.1 Interviews.

RQ1. What are the teachers' perceptions about teaching listening skills?

Themes	Codes	Times mentioned	Participants that mentioned
Theme 1: Goal of listening.	Understand the main idea.	3	2
	Understand a message.	2	1
	Comprehend.	7	2
Theme 2: Listening comprehension taught in your school these days.	Engage them to communicate.	1	1
	Lose the fear or the time to talk.	1	1
	Engage them to communicate.	1	1
	Get familiar with the language.	5	1
Theme 3: Challenges.	Challenging to encourage my students.	1	1
	Difficult skills for students, even for teachers to deal with.	1	1
	Increase their anxiety.	1	1

Table 5.1 Teachers' perceptions of teaching listening

Table 5.1 describes *Teachers' perceptions of teaching listening*, and it contains three themes. The first theme is the *goal of listening*, and inside it, there are three codes. The first code is *Understand the main idea*, three times was claimed, and two participants mentioned it. The second code is *Understand a message*. One person expressed it twice. Finally, the third code is *Comprehend*. It was claimed seven times for two people.

The second theme is *Listening comprehension taught in your school these days*, and it contains four codes. The first code is to make *them or engage them to communicate*, it was mentioned once, and a participant mentioned it. The second code is to *Lose the fear or the time to talk*. One person expressed it once. The third code is to *Engage them to communicate*. It was mentioned one time for one person. Finally, the fourth code is *Get familiar with the language*, and one person named it five times.

The third theme is *Challenges*, and inside it, there are three codes. The first code is *Challenging to encourage my students*, it was mentioned once, and one participant mentioned it. The second code is *Difficult skills for students, even for teachers to deal with*. One person claimed it once. Finally, the third code is to *Increase their anxiety*. It was reported once by one person.

Themes	Codes	Times mentioned	Participants that mentioned
Theme 1: strategies/ tools.	Virtual platforms.	1	1
	Audios.	16	4
	Traditional teaching.	1	1
	Intonation.	1	1
	Infer meaning.	1	1
	To be in touch with the language.	1	1
	Get familiar with the language.	1	1
	Read a story to our students and ask questions about this story.	1	1

	Display a transcript.	2	1
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Table 5.2 *Listening Comprehension Taught in Your School These Days.*

Table 5.2 describes *Listening Comprehension Taught In Your School These Days*, and it includes one theme. The theme's name is *strategies/ tools*, and inside it, there are nine codes. The first code is *Virtual platforms*, and one person mentioned it once. The second code is *audios*, and one participant said it once. The third code is *Traditional teaching*. It was claimed once for one person. The fourth theme is *Intonation*, it was said once, and a participant expressed it. The fifth code is *Infer meaning*. One person expressed it once. The sixth code is *To be in touch with the language*. It was cited one time for one person. The seventh code is *Get familiar with the language*, and one person mentioned it once. The eighth code is *Read a story to our students and ask questions about this story*, it was claimed once, and one participant mentioned it. Finally, the ninth code is *Display a transcript*; one person mentioned it once.

Themes	Codes	Times mentioned	Participants that mentioned
Theme 1: Why it is not effective.	Teachers don't have the necessary/appropriate tools to teach this skill.	3	2
	Students are not well prepared.	1	1
	Effectiveness is very low.	3	1
	The teacher needs to have some experience and also some training in some new methodologies.	1	1
Theme 2: How to be effective.	Give small, small audio activities for them to comprehend.	1	1
	Play an audio five times because I want them to understand.	1	1
	Effective when students comprehend one student's answer when students interact.	1	1
	They have to be exposed and they have to aim the target.	1	1

	The feedback they give you is going to tell you how to go on in the next class or in the next session of the class.	1	1
	Observe every day in all the classes.	1	1

Table 5.3 Effectiveness in teaching listening.

Table 5.3 reports about *Effectiveness in teaching listening*, and it contains two themes. The first theme is why it is not effective, and we obtained four codes. The first code is *Teachers don't have the necessary tools to teach this skill*, three times was claimed, and two participants mentioned it. The second code is *Students are not well prepared*, and one person expressed it once. The third code is *Effectiveness is very low*. It was claimed three times for one person. Finally, the fourth code is *that the teacher needs to have some experience and some training in some new methodologies*, and one person named it once.

The second theme is *How to be effective*, and it contains six codes. The first code is to *Give small audio activities for them to comprehend*. One person mentioned it once. The second code is to *Play an audio five times because I want them to understand*. One participant said it once as well. The third code is *Effective when students comprehend one student's answer when students interact*. It was claimed once by one person. The fourth theme is *They have to be exposed, and they have to aim the target*, it was said once, and one participant expressed it. The fifth code *The feedback they give you is going to tell you how to go on in the next class or in the next session of the class*, one person expressed it once. The sixth code is to *Observe every day in all the classes*. It was cited one time for one person.

Themes	Codes	Times mentioned	Participants that mentioned
Theme 1: When and How?	Dedicate some time.	1	1
	Most of the time.	1	1
	Organize time.	1	1
	Expose them to those kinds of environments.	1	1
	Listening since you start the class.	1	1

	Repeat the instructions.	1	1
	Encourage them to use the language.	1	1
	Focused on grammar and in writing skills.	1	1
	A role-play in a short dialogue.	1	1

Table 5.4 Dedication time to the listening skill.

Table 5.4 expresses *Dedication time to the listening skill*, and it includes one theme. Its name is *When and How*, and inside it, there are nine codes. The first code is *Dedicate some time*, and one person mentioned it once. The second code is *Most of the time*, and one participant said it once. The third code is *Organize time*. It was claimed once for one person. The fourth theme is *to Expose them to those kinds of environments*, it was said once, and a participant expressed it. The fifth code is *Listening since you start the class*, one person expressed it once. The sixth code is *to Repeat some instructions*. It was cited one time for one person. The seventh code is *to Encourage them to use the language*, and one person mentioned it once. The eighth code is *Focused on grammar and in writing skills*, it was claimed once, and one participant exposed it. Finally, the ninth code is *A role-play in a short dialogue*. One person mentioned it once.

RQ2. What are Ecuadorian public teachers' thoughts about implementing PBL as a learner-centered teaching approach to improve students' listening comprehension?

Themes	Codes	Times mentioned	Participants that mentioned
Theme 1: Teachers' requisite skill set to design PBL tasks and boost listening abilities.	Necessary tools.	1	1
	Aware of students' level.	1	1
	Listening exercises must be according to the students' English knowledge.	1	1
	Giving students a very few assignments.	1	1
	Giving them light instructions.	1	1
	Little work and longer time to finish.	1	1

	Student's needs.	1	1
	New methodologies.	4	1
	Flexibility.	1	1
	Have knowledge.	1	1

Table 5.5 Teachers' requisite skill set to design PBL tasks and boost listening abilities.

Table 5.5 describes *Teachers' requisite skill set to design PBL tasks and boost listening abilities*. It includes one theme with the same name, and it contains ten codes. The first code is *Necessary tools*, and one person mentioned it once. The second code is *Aware of students' level*, and one participant said it once. The third code is *Listening exercises must be according to the students' English knowledge*. It was claimed once by one person. The fourth theme is *Giving students very few assignments*, it was said once, and one participant expressed it. The fifth code is *Giving them light instructions*, and one person expressed it once. The sixth code is *Little work and longer time to finish*. It was cited one time for one person. The seventh code is *Get familiar with the language*, and one person mentioned it once. The eighth code is *Student's needs*, and it was claimed once, and one participant mentioned it. The ninth code is *New methodologies*. One person mentioned it four times. Finally, the last code is *Flexibility*. It was expressed once by one participant.

Themes	Codes	Times mentioned	Participants that mentioned
Theme 1: PBL Advantages as a Learner- Centered Approach.	To educate by themselves.	1	1
	Useful for the English area.	1	1
	Come to give many projects to my students more engaged, more engaged.	1	1
	They are free to explain what they have done or they have learned.	1	1
	It is so helpful to improve the student's skills and their comprehension.	1	1
	Get involved in the whole class.	1	1

	Encourage them to practice collaboratively.	1	1
	Students get involved in the whole process of learning.	1	1
	Autonomous learning.	2	2
	Integrate all the subjects in the same project.	1	1
	To educate by themselves.	1	1
Theme 2: Teachers' requisite skill set to design PBL tasks and boost listening abilities.	A little guidance by the teacher.	1	1
	Put a big effort to understand better what they are listening.	1	1
	Identify some issues learners are facing.	1	1
	Put a big effort to understand better what they are listening.	1	1
Theme 3: Learners Training.	Make connections with new, new knowledge, and background.	1	1
	They are exposed to use creativity, to engage with others to work collaboratively, and to express what they know they feel and the way they think.	1	1
	Contribute with their own ideas.	1	1

Table 5.6 PBL and its effectiveness for teaching listening.

Table 5.6 describes PBL and its effectiveness for teaching listening, and it contains three themes. The first theme is the *PBL, Advantages as a Learner-Centered Approach*, and inside it, there are eleven codes. The first code is *to educate by themselves*, and one person mentioned it once. The second code is *Useful for the English area*, and one participant said it once. The third code is *Come to give many projects to my students more engaged, more engaged*. It was claimed once by one person. The fourth theme is *They are free to explain what they have done, or they have learned*, it was said once, and one participant expressed it. The fifth code is *It is so helpful to improve the student's skills and their comprehension*. One person expressed it once. The sixth code is *to Get involved in the whole class*. It was cited one time for one person. The seventh code is *to Encourage them to practice collaboratively*,

and one person mentioned it once. The eighth code is *Students get involved in the whole process of learning*, and it was claimed once and one participant mentioned it. The ninth code is *Autonomous learning*. Two people mentioned each one once. The tenth code is *Integrates all the subjects in the same project*. It was expressed once by one participant. Finally, the last code is *To educate by themselves*, and it was reported once by one person.

The second theme is *Teachers' requisite skill set to design PBL tasks and boost listening abilities*, and it contains three codes. The first code is *A little guidance by the teacher*. It was mentioned once, and a participant mentioned it. The second code is *Put a big effort to understand better what they are listening to*, one person expressed it once. Finally, in this theme, the third code is *Identify some issues learners are facing*. It was mentioned one time for one person.

The third theme is *Learners Training*, and inside it, there are three codes. The first code is *Make connections with new, new knowledge and background*, which was mentioned once by a participant. The second code is *They are exposed to use creativity, to engage with others to work collaboratively, and express what they know they feel and the way they think*. One person claimed it once. Finally, the third code is *Contribute with their own ideas*. It was reported once by one person.

RQ3. What are the challenges and the limitations teachers have found while implementing PBL in listening comprehension tasks in EFL classrooms?

Themes	Codes	Times mentioned	Participants that mentioned
Theme 1: Challenge.	The lack of collaboration.	1	1
	The lack of motivation.	1	1
	English is given little attention to the big projects of the students.	1	1
	The most difficult part is to assess your students.	1	1
	Scared about listening.	1	1
	All the skills are focused on communication.	1	1

	Students communicate and let students learn from the activities that they do, like in a project.	1	1
	Don't have the confidence to ask.	1	1

Table 5.7 Challenges and the limitations teachers have found while implementing PBL in listening comprehension tasks in EFL classrooms.

Table 5.7 describes *Challenges, and the limitations teachers have found while implementing PBL in listening comprehension tasks in EFL classrooms*, and it includes one theme. The theme's name is *Challenges and limitations*, and inside it, there are eight codes. The first code is *The lack of collaboration*, and one person mentioned it once. The second code is *The lack of motivation*, and one participant said it once. The third code is *English is given little attention to the big projects of the students*. It was claimed once for one person. The fourth theme is *The most difficult part is to assess your students*. It was said once, and a participant expressed it. The fifth code is *Scared about listening, and one person expressed it once*. The sixth code is *All the skills are focused on communication*. It was cited one time for one person. The seven code is *Don't have the confidence to ask*, it was claimed once, and one participant mentioned it.

Themes	Codes	Times mentioned	Participants that mentioned
Theme 1: Positive Aspects	Successful because the students develop collaborative work.	1	1
	Students can develop small conversations in small groups.	1	1
	Students can interact with each other.	1	1
	All the students are involved.	1	1
	It's useful because it integrates as I said, It integrates all the subjects to cover the same topic.	1	1
	Students learn to solve problems and apply their knowledge in real-life situations.	1	1

	Confident about doing that.	1	1
	An opportunity for them to, to use their creativity, to use their knowledge and to maybe to look for the way to, to learn individually out in an autonomous way also, because they have to research	1	1
	Continue working on projects with them.	1	1
Theme 2: Negative Aspects	Face to face, it is difficult to get the materials to give their students, to make copies.	1	1
	I have not used it before PBL before the pandemic.	1	1
	I tried to work with projects, but because of the level of my students and the number of students, I try to use at least one or two per <i>quimester</i> .	1	1

Table 5.8 How useful has the PBL approach been during the pandemic.

Table 5.8 describes *How useful has the PBL approach been during the pandemic*. It contains two themes. On the one hand, is *Positive Aspects*, and inside it, there are nine codes. The first code is *successful because the students develop collaborative work*, and one person mentioned it once. The second code is that *students can develop small conversations in small groups*, and one participant said it once. The third code is that *students can interact with each other*. It was claimed once by one person. The fourth theme is that *all the students are involved*, it was said once, and one participant expressed it. The fifth code is *it's useful because it integrates all the subjects to cover the same topic*. One person expressed it once. The sixth code is *that students learn to solve problems and apply their knowledge in real-life situations*. It was cited one time for one person. The seventh code is *that they have been confident about doing that*, and one person mentioned it once. The eighth code is *an opportunity for them to, to use their creativity, to use their knowledge, and to maybe to look for the way to, to learn individually out in an autonomous way also, because they have to research*, and it was claimed once, and one participant mentioned it. The ninth code is *Continue working on projects with them*; two people mentioned once each one.

On the second hand is the theme *Negative Aspects*, and it contains three codes. The first code is *Face to face; it is difficult to get the materials to give their students to make copies*. It was mentioned once by one participant. The second code is *I have not used it before PBL before the pandemic*; one person expressed it once. Finally, in this theme, the third code is *I tried to work with projects, but because of the level of my students and the number of students, I try to use at least one or two per quimester*. It was mentioned one time for one person.

5.2.2 Planning Review

RQ1. What are the teachers' perceptions about teaching listening skills?

<i>Parameters</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
The planning sets clear goals and indicators of performance considering active listening tasks.	10	20
The planning involves tasks that use higher thinking skills to help students develop their listening skills.	15	15

Table 5.9 Planning Review: What are the teachers' perceptions about teaching listening skills.

Thirty lesson plans were reviewed and analyzed to comprehend how teachers planned PBL tasks to foster and improve listening instruction. However, only twenty of the lesson plans focused on reading and writing skills rather than listening tasks. Besides this, the lesson plans include both lower and higher thinking skills. The application of lower thinking skills is due to the learners' low English level and their reality.

RQ2. What are Ecuadorian public teachers' thoughts about implementing PBL as a learner-centered teaching approach to improve students' listening comprehension?

Parameters	Yes	No
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The planning addresses appropriate the PBL methodology for language instruction.	30	0
The planning develops appropriate tasks for developing listening considering the English level and reality of students.	10	20
The planning fosters the learner-centered approach, motivating learners to research and figure out how to solve real-life situations.	30	0

Table 5.10 Planning Review: What are Ecuadorian public teachers' thoughts about implementing PBL as a learner-centered teaching approach to improve students' listening comprehension.

PBL approach is an essential component in planning. All the lesson plans addressed its methodology for language instruction. Nonetheless, the majority of tasks focused on developing reading and writing skills. Listening tasks integrated the speaking skills, involved warm-up discussions, and learners were required to understand messages to communicate their ideas properly. Finally, the tasks were designed to foster a learner-centered approach since learners had to do some research to comprehend better and answer questions correctly.

RQ3. What are the challenges and the limitations teachers have found while implementing PBL in listening comprehension tasks in EFL classrooms?

Parameters	Yes	No
The planning employs updated material that promotes the alignment between the PBL and different listening sub-skills. (Making inferences, listening for the gist, listening for specific information, and extensive listening).	10	20
The planning incorporates PBL tasks that allow monitoring of the students' progress.	30	0

Table 5.11 Planning Review: What are the challenges and the limitations teachers have found while implementing PBL in listening comprehension tasks in the EFL classroom.

Even though PBL was an essential component in planning, only ten lesson plans include tasks that help learners develop listening comprehension strategies. These tasks mainly focused on listening for the gist and listening for specific information. Regarding monitoring, all the lesson plans included a final product aimed at specific learning outcomes aligned to a particular performance indicator to assess learners' progress.

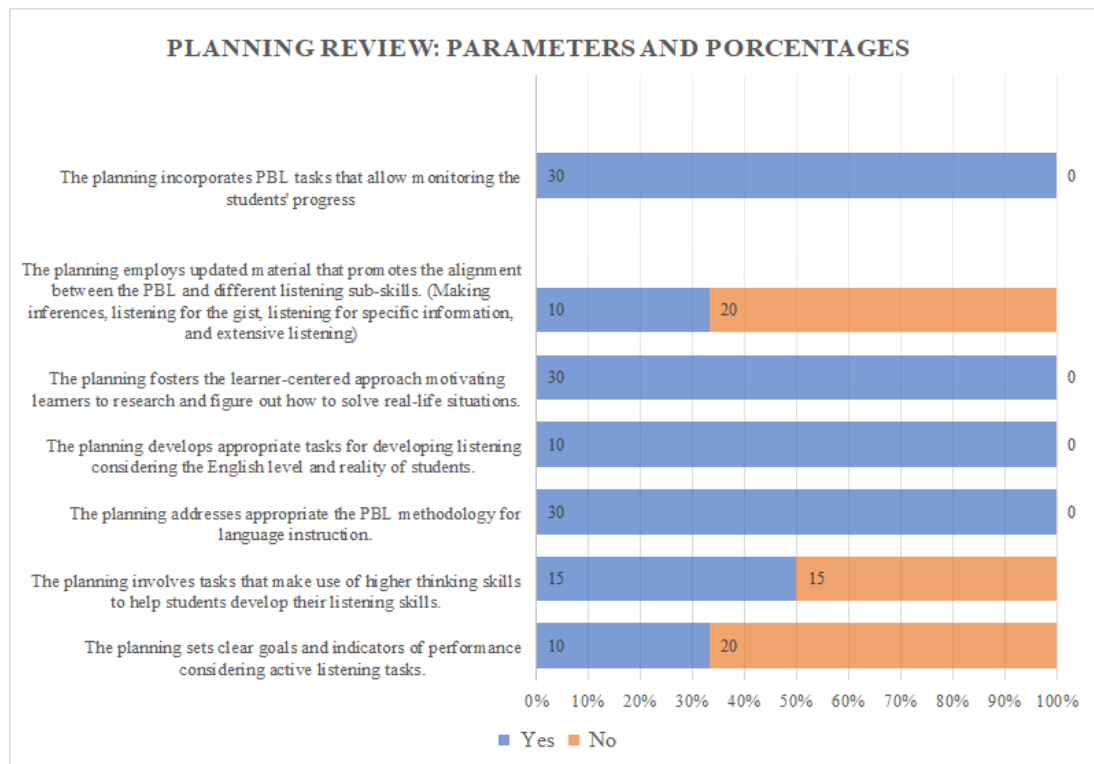


Figure 5.1 Planning Review Parameters and Percentages Overview.

5.2.3 Classroom Observation Findings

RQ1. What are the teachers' perceptions about teaching listening skills?

Indicator	Yes	No
1.1. The teacher prepares listening skills following the PBL steps.	3	2

Table 5.12 Classroom Observation: What are the teachers' perceptions about teaching listening skills.

After watching and analyzing classroom instruction, only three teachers included listening skill within the lesson. Two teachers did not include listening tasks and focused on other skills.

RQ2. What are Ecuadorian public teachers' thoughts about implementing PBL as a learner-centered teaching approach to improve students' listening comprehension?

Indicator	Yes	No
The teacher includes listening tasks as a core component of the PBL.	3	2
The teacher introduces new alternatives (authentic - adapted material) to develop listening skills.	5	0
The materials employed by the teacher focus on a learner-centered approach.	5	0
The materials employed by the teacher foster students' autonomy development and independence.	5	0
The materials used by the teacher support students' learning and provide opportunities for feedback.	5	0

Table 5.13 Classroom Observation: What are Ecuadorian public teachers' thoughts about implementing PBL as a learner-centered teaching approach to improve students' listening comprehension.

Five indicators have helped comprehend how teachers integrate the PBL as a learner-centered approach to boost listening comprehension skills. In this context, three teachers included listening tasks in their class, considering listening comprehension essential for language learning. However, two teachers did not focus on listening tasks but only on reading and writing tasks.

Furthermore, all the teachers showed their creativity when using PBL as a learner-centered approach since they incorporated a mix of carefully selected authentic and adapted material. Regarding class conduction, three out of five teachers performed the following activities:

At the beginning of the class, students watched a video of something related to the topic of the PBL project, followed by a warm-up discussion. In doing so, the teachers asked learners some comprehension questions to ensure learners' understanding.

Then the use of short dialogues promoted learners' focus on listening, trying to listen to the gist, or listening to specific information. Dialogues made it feasible for learners to figure out the grammar point the teacher would address in the class. It is worth mentioning that the topics selected were familiar to learners and encouraged them to pay attention and understand the material to participate actively and interact in the class.

Finally, the class included some tasks in which learners worked by themselves. Once they finished, they had to submit their answers to their teachers. This strategy allowed teachers to realize students' progress, clarify mistakes, offer precise feedback, and motivate learners to do their best.

RQ3. What are the challenges and the limitations teachers have found while implementing PBL in listening comprehension tasks in EFL classrooms?

Indicator	Yes	No
The teacher plans, monitors, and evaluates students' progress.	5	0
The teacher manages unforeseen problems.	5	0

Table 5.14 Classroom Observation: What are the challenges and the limitations teachers have found while implementing PBL in listening comprehension tasks in EFL classrooms.

Challenges and limitations teachers have experienced when implementing PBL in listening comprehension tasks links to assessment. Even though teachers had clear criteria, it was challenging to evaluate students' listening comprehension due to the number of students

and the limited time for instruction. Only five or three students could participate. The others had to send evidence of their work so that teachers could assess later.

The teachers designed precise tasks for the forty-minute class and clarified instructions when learners did not comprehend tasks, likewise, they supported their learning by giving extra instructions, and in some cases, they made use of listening transcripts to ensure comprehension and helped learners develop the tasks.

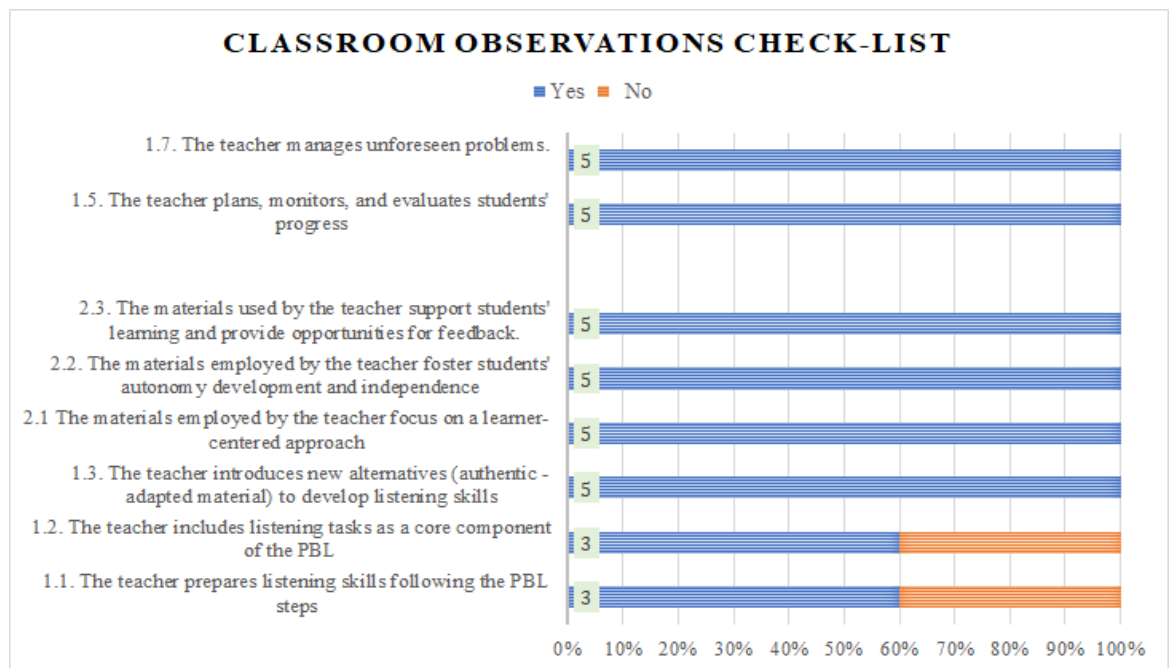


Figure 5.2. Classroom Observations check-list General Overview

CHAPTER VI

6 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

Conducting this research study has been challenging, trying to answer one research question and three sub-research Questions, however, thanks to the information provided by the teachers who kindly participated in the study. It compares three different sources of data: interviews, planning reviews, and classroom observation. Analyzing these three instruments has contributed to finding an answer to the research question proposed in this study.

It is worth mentioning that the interviews allowed us to understand how teachers conceive listening, how it is being taught these days at school and the role that PBL plays to support teachers and learners in developing listening. Planning review has also been essential since it has provided clear examples of class activities. Likewise, classroom observation has made it possible to learn how teachers teach listening and sometimes links to PBL.

Comprehending public secondary school teachers' perceptions about teaching listening and how PBL learning contributes to enhancing the skill mentioned above in a public high school can be summarized into one research question:

What are EFL Teachers' perceptions and attitudes with regards to the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) instruction in the development of listening comprehension tasks in an Ecuadorian public high school

In the same vein, three sub-research questions guide the obtention of relevant data:

- a. What are the teachers' perceptions about teaching listening skills?
- b. What are Ecuadorian public teachers' thoughts about implementing PBL as a learner-centered teaching approach to improve students' listening comprehension?
- c. What are the challenges and the limitations teachers have found while implementing PBL in listening comprehension tasks in EFL?

6.2 Discussion

6.2.1 Findings from the Interviews.

6.2.1.1 Theme 1: Teachers' perceptions of teaching listening.

RQ1. What are the teachers' perceptions about teaching listening skills?

6.2.1.1.1 Theme 1: Teachers' perceptions.

Code 1: Goal of listening

- ❖ Understand the main idea.
- ❖ Understand a message.
- ❖ Comprehend.

The goal of teaching listening

Teachers claim that listening aims to understand and comprehend the main idea or message in a listening activity.

Code 2: Why/How to teach listening?

- ❖ Make them or engage them to communicate.
- ❖ Lose the fear or the time to talk.
- ❖ Engage them to communicate.
- ❖ Get familiar with the language.

Another perception is the reasons why we teach listening. For this question, the interviewees mention that teaching listening is to make students engage with this skill, give them time to talk, engage them to communicate, and get familiar with the language. To achieve this objective, on the one hand, teachers need to expose students to those kinds of environments, apply listening activities since the teacher starts the class, give clear instructions and encourage them to use the language.

Code 3: Challenges

- ❖ Challenging to encourage my students
- ❖ Difficult skills for students, even for teachers to deal with
- ❖ Increase their anxiety

Likewise, since this pandemic, teachers also mention that they find it tough to encourage their students with listening skills. It has not been a challenge only for students but also for teachers. During this pandemic, teachers have to deal with the lack of resources. Unfortunately, many students do not have the digital devices or internet connection to accomplish their duties. This problem provokes students to increase their level of anxiety and low performance in listening skills.

6.2.1.1.2 Theme 2: Listening comprehension taught in your school these days.

Code 1: STRATEGIES/ TOOLS.

- ❖ Virtual platforms.
- ❖ Audios.
- ❖ Traditional teaching.
- ❖ Intonation.
- ❖ Infer meaning.
- ❖ To be in touch with the language.
- ❖ Get familiar with the language.
- ❖ Read a story to our students, and ask questions about this story.
- ❖ Display a transcript.

STRATEGIES / TOOLS.

For teaching listening, teachers have taken several alternatives from traditional teaching methods to strategies that help students give meaning to the listening activities. They mention that they use strategies that improve students' intonation and make them infer meaning while listening. Besides, teachers claim that the objective is that students can be in touch with the language and get familiar with the language. Hence, they consider it necessary to apply activities like reading a story to their students and asking questions. Also, in some cases, they display the transcript to their students. Likewise, they use various techniques like virtual platforms and audios to perform the listening skill better.

6.2.1.1.3 Theme 3: Effectiveness in Teaching Listening.

Code1: Why it is not effective?

- ❖ Teachers don't have the necessary tools to teach this skill.
- ❖ Students, eh, are not well prepared.
- ❖ Effectiveness is very low.
- ❖ The teacher needs to have some experience and also some training in some new methodologies.

Listening activities are ineffective when teachers do not have the necessary tools to teach students or are not well prepared. Also, teachers mention that effectiveness is

very low. Also, teachers need to have some experience and training in new methodologies that allow students to succeed in their activities.

Code2: How to be effective?

- ❖ Give small, small audio activities for them to comprehend.
- ❖ Play an audio five times because I want them to understand.
- ❖ Effective when students comprehend one student's answer when students interact.
- ❖ They have to be exposed, and they have to aim the target.
- ❖ The feedback they give you is going to tell you how to go on in the next class or in the next session of the class.
- ❖ Observe every day in all the classes.

When talking about the effectiveness of listening activities, teachers have different perceptions about it. One teacher says that it is better to give small audio activities for students to comprehend. Also, another teacher says that she plays an audio five times because she wants them to understand. Thus every time they listen, they understand new words. The effectiveness of listening is when students comprehend one student's answer when students interact.

For that reason, students have to be exposed, and they have to aim at the target. Likewise, the feedback students give teachers will tell them how to go on in the next class or the next session observed every day in all the classes.

6.2.1.1.4 Theme 4: Dedication time to the listening skill.

Code1: When and How?

- ❖ Dedicate some time
- ❖ Organize time
- ❖ Expose them to those kinds of environments.
- ❖ Listening since you start the class
- ❖ Repeat some a going to repeat some instructions
- ❖ Encourage them to use the language
- ❖ Focused on grammar and in writing skills
- ❖ A role play in a short dialogue

When teachers were asked for the time they dedicate to listening skills, some did not mention a specific time, but they said they organize time and expose students to different kinds of environments. Other teachers mentioned that they use listening skills since the class starts. Additionally, teachers claimed that to succeed in listening activities, they need to give clear instructions and repeat them until they can use them. Finally, a teacher mentioned that he also focused on grammar and writing skills apart from listening.

6.2.1.2 Public teachers' thoughts about implementing PBL as a learner-centered teaching approach to improve students' listening comprehension.

RQ2. What are Ecuadorian public teachers' thoughts about implementing PBL as a learner-centered teaching approach to improve students' listening comprehension?

6.2.1.2.1 Theme 1: Teachers' requisite skill set to design PBL tasks and boost listening abilities.

Theme 1: Teachers' requisite skill set to design PBL tasks and boost listening abilities.

Codes:

- ❖ Necessary tools.
- ❖ Aware of students' level.
- ❖ Listening exercises must be according to the students' English knowledge.
- ❖ Giving students very few assignments.
- ❖ Giving them light instructions.
- ❖ Little work and longer time to finish.
- ❖ Student's needs.
- ❖ New methodologies.
- ❖ Flexibility.
- ❖ Have knowledge.

According to teachers and their thoughts, designing PBL tasks that boost listening abilities requires some considerations to aim at a particular goal. First, students should be provided with all the necessary tools for completing a task. Second, teachers should bear in mind the students' level so that the tasks and listening exercises are according to the students' English knowledge. Third, students should be given little work and a long time to finish, and

instructions must be clear for them considering students' backgrounds. Fourth, the self-preparation of teachers is essential. They should be well prepared and have the knowledge and foremost be immersed in workshops about new methodologies to create effective strategies or plans according to students' needs.

6.2.1.2.2 PBL and its effectiveness for teaching Listening.

Code 1 PBL Advantages as a Learner-Centered Approach

- ❖ To educate by themselves.
- ❖ Useful for the English area.
- ❖ Come to give many projects to my students more engaged, more engaged.
- ❖ They are free to explain what they have done or they have learned.
- ❖ It is so helpful to improve the student's skills and their comprehension.
- ❖ Get involved in the whole class.
- ❖ Encourage them to practice collaboratively.
- ❖ Students get involved in the whole process of learning.
- ❖ Autonomous learning.
- ❖ Integrates all the subjects in the same project.

According to teachers and their thoughts, designing PBL tasks that boost listening abilities requires some considerations to aim at a particular goal. First, students should be provided with all the necessary tools for completing a task. Second, teachers should bear in mind the students' level so that the tasks and listening exercises are according to the students' English knowledge. Third, students should be given little work and a long time to finish, and instructions must be clear for them considering students' backgrounds. Fourth, the self-preparation of teachers is essential. They should be well prepared and have the knowledge and foremost be immersed in workshops about new methodologies to create effective strategies or plans according to students' needs.

Code 2: PBL Barriers.

- ❖ A little guidance by the teacher.
- ❖ Put a big effort to understand better what they are listening.
- ❖ Identify some issues learners are facing.

Teacher 1 said: "The students have to make a big effort because, in the PBL, there is little guidance by the teacher, so the students have to put a big effort to develop that skill and try to understand better what they are listening to." PBL seems like a flexible approach that easily adapts tasks to support students' learners.

Besides this, due to the pandemic, teachers are not working face to face with their students, so they find it difficult to identify common issues learners could be struggling with within their studies.

Code 3: Learners Training.

- ❖ Make connections with new, new knowledge, and background.
- ❖ They are exposed to use creativity, to engage with others to work collaboratively, and to express what they know they feel and the way they think.
- ❖ **Contribute** with their own ideas.

Developing autonomy is not an easy task for teachers, and the key to successful PBL is learners' training. Teachers as facilitators should promote strategies that allow learners to learn effectively using their creativity and express themselves by sharing their thoughts and ideas and being self-directed learners.

6.2.1.3 Challenges and the limitations teachers have found while implementing PBL in listening comprehension tasks in EFL classrooms.

RQ3. What are the challenges and the limitations teachers have found while implementing PBL in listening comprehension tasks in EFL classrooms?

6.2.1.3.1 Theme 1: Challenges and limitations you have encountered when applying PBL to develop learners' listening skills.

Code 1: Challenges.

- ❖ The lack of collaboration.
- ❖ The lack of motivation.
- ❖ English is given little attention to the big projects of the students.
- ❖ The most difficult part is to assess your students.

- ❖ Scared about listening.
- ❖ All the skills are focused on communication.
- ❖ Students communicate and let students learn from the activities that they do, like in a project.
- ❖ Don't have the confidence to ask.

Teachers' insights have brought up some challenges when implementing PBL in listening comprehension tasks in EFL classrooms. These challenges entail a lack of collaboration and motivation. Some students feel scared about listening and do not have the confidence to ask the teacher; consequently, it lessens their engagement. Additionally, the fact that learners do not give English the required attention means that they sometimes find it challenging to work on big projects. Furthermore, assessing represents a challenge for teachers. Even though there are many formative assessment tools, their time with students is not sufficient to evaluate them to obtain a specific insight or result about their performance and how listening has been assimilated.

Unlike downsides, some perks are working effectively and supporting students' learning. One of these is that listening tasks make it possible for learners to focus on communication and all skills work together to aim for this target.

Code 2: Limitations.

- ❖ The lack of electronic devices by some students (do not have a computer, some students do not have a good internet connection).
- ❖ They are not using the language because they do not have the opportunity to practice.
- ❖ We cannot take advantage of the use of body language.
- ❖ The main difficulty is that we cannot interact face to face with our students.

Although the PBL approach has shown to be effective working together with listening tasks, this reality can be different for those students who do not possess all the necessary devices for studying online and who pitifully do not have a good internet connection. As a result, all of these students do not have the opportunity to use and practice the language, and teachers cannot support their learning. One of the teachers said, "we cannot take advantage of the use of body language," and another teacher commented, "the main difficulty is that we cannot interact face to face with our students." After analyzing these lines and comparing data, it is clear that even though the approach is practical, these constraints are out of control

for teachers. What teachers can do is to give students with assignments with clear instructions and, in some cases, send transcripts of listening or audio files so that learners can work on the tasks.

6.2.1.3.2 Theme 2: How useful has the PBL approach been during the pandemic?

Code 1: Positive Aspects.

- ❖ Successful because the students develop collaborative work.
- ❖ Students can develop small conversations in small groups.
- ❖ Students can interact with each other.
- ❖ All the students are involved.
- ❖ It is useful because it integrates as I said, it integrates all the subjects to cover the same topic.
- ❖ Students learn to solve problems and apply their knowledge in real-life situations.
- ❖ They have been, like, confident about doing that.
- ❖ An opportunity for them, to use their creativity, to use their knowledge and maybe to look for the way to, to learn individually out in an autonomous way also, because they have to research will continue working on projects with them.

PBL approach during the pandemic has represented an essential component of students' and teachers' learning. After gathering some teachers' perceptions about this approach, it is explicit that they are intriguing. One positive aspect is collaborative work. Teachers mentioned that students had developed it due to the tasks PBL offers. These tasks involve small conversations in groups so that students can interact with each other.

Additionally, they can create their knowledge since PBL integrates all the subjects to cover the same topic. Learners have to solve problems and apply their knowledge acquired in real-life situations. These tasks promote their confidence in what they are doing and boost their self-study to answer common questions while working on a project to develop their research skills.

In summary, teachers demonstrated a positive attitude regarding the PBL. It looks like a successful approach that has drawn teachers' attention to feel the willingness to keep working with it.

Code 2: Negative Aspects.

- ❖ Face to face, it is difficult to get the materials to give their students, to make copies.
- ❖ I have not used it before PBL before the pandemic.
- ❖ I tried to work with projects, but because of the level of my students and the number of students, I try to use at least one or two per *quimester*.

The PBL implementation during the pandemic has also faced negative aspects. Remote learning has made it difficult for some learners, and the lack of interaction has been challenging for them. Teachers commented that cheating is currently a common practice among students, and it does not help them learn.

Other aspects involve the lack of experience of some teachers who have had to study hard to face this new reality and learn how to manage it effectively.

Finally, projects are an excellent way of learning. Still, some of the significant constraints are learners' English level and the number of students, making the process a little bit complicated for teachers since they struggle to support learners' learning.

6.2.2 Findings from the planning review.

RQ1. What are the teachers' perceptions about teaching listening skills?

6.2.2.1 The planning sets clear goals and indicators of performance considering active listening tasks.

The plans focus on reading and writing as core components of English instruction, stating clear indicators for developing the skills mentioned earlier. However, three out of five teachers integrate listening tasks with grammar awareness, and others (two out of five) integrate listening tasks with speaking activities. The indicators are not clear for these skills but mainly focus on language use.

6.2.2.2 The planning involves tasks that make use of higher thinking skills to help students develop their listening skills.

Some of the lesson plans promote higher thinking skills only for reading and writing. Most of the tasks involve a text followed up by an open cloze or reading comprehension questions. It is the case of three out of five teachers

RQ2. What are Ecuadorian public teachers' thoughts about implementing PBL as a learner-centered teaching approach to improve students' listening comprehension?

6.2.2.3 The planning appropriately addresses PBL methodology.

The lesson plans present activities that foster the learner's autonomy development, focusing on a topic familiar to learners and utilizing their prior knowledge as a starting point for task development. It is the case of five out of five teachers.

6.2.2.4 The planning develops appropriate tasks for developing listening considering the English level and reality of students.

All of the lesson plans consider the level and reality of learners but do not present explicit tasks for developing listening. It is the case of five out of five teachers.

6.2.2.5 The planning fosters the learner-centered approach motivating learners to research and figure out how to solve real-life situations.

- ❖ It associates content with a familiar topic for learners "Ecuador, my greatest wealth."
- ❖ It associates content with curiosity, security, self-care, respect, critical thinking, self-awareness, justice, equity, empathy, assertive communication, respect, and identity.

Most of the lesson plans start with a warm-up discussion that brings about an exciting and familiar situation for learners. They must reflect upon the situation, process the data, and come up with ideas and solutions. It is the case of 3 out of five teachers.

RQ3. What are the challenges and the limitations teachers have found while implementing PBL in listening comprehension tasks in EFL classrooms?

6.2.2.6 The planning employs updated material that promotes the alignment between the PBL and different listening sub-skills. (Making inferences, listening for the gist, listening for specific information, and extensive Listening)

Some plans align with reading and writing, not listening. They only align with reading comprehension to encourage learners to develop writing tasks more than developing listening comprehension. This case corresponds to two out of five teachers.

Some of the lesson plans align with listening for the main ideas and combine tasks with speaking activities, which is helpful for learners to make use of the language. Furthermore, some tasks align with listening comprehension for the gist and encourage extensive listening and promote speaking. This case corresponds to three out of five teachers.

Others align with reading and listening comprehension to encourage learners to develop speaking activities. This case corresponds to five out of five teachers.

Likewise, some plans include reading comprehension so that learners acquire input to interact in spoken contexts.

6.2.2.7 The planning incorporates PBL tasks that allow monitoring of the students' progress.

The tasks encompass a final product that allows the teacher to realize students' performance. For example, a final product may include creating videos and presentations that allow teachers to notice learners' progress. Other final products include writing productions.

Every lesson plan contains indicators as a way to measure learners' progress.

Indicator 1: Learners can grasp the general meaning of spoken texts set in familiar everyday contexts and infer changes in the topic of discussion.

This indicator links to listening comprehension development.

Indicator 2: Learners can effectively participate in familiar and predictable everyday conversational exchanges to complete a task, satisfy a need or handle a simple transaction, using a range of repair strategies.

This indicator makes teachers notice how students understand a context, and the way they react is a clear sign of their progress.

Indicator 3: Learners can respond to and build on other people's ideas on familiar, social topics by expressing opinions and feelings and clarifying meaning.

This indicator demands listening comprehension strategies to understand the gist or make inferences, cohesive, and coherent ideas within a conversation.

In conclusion, all the teachers have clear parameters to notice students' progress. However, only three out of five teachers have an explicit parameter for assessing listening.

6.2.3 Findings from classroom observations.

RQ1. What are the teachers' perceptions about teaching listening skills?

6.2.3.1 The teacher prepares listening skills tasks/activities following the PBL steps.

Three out of five teachers use it as part of their class. It means that listening is not considered as the core of the class.

RQ2. What are Ecuadorian public teachers' thoughts about implementing PBL as a learner-centered teaching approach to improve students' listening comprehension?

6.2.3.2 The teacher includes listening tasks as a core component of the PBL.

Three out of five teachers use listening; however, the listening activity takes an essential role in the final project, but it is not the core component of the activity.

6.2.3.3 The teacher introduces new alternatives (authentic - adapted material) to develop listening skills.

Five out of five teachers use adapted material from the internet. However, Nearpod, Liveworshets are used to develop writing and grammar, and three teachers use YouTube, audio from the book, and audio to develop listening.

6.2.3.4 The materials employed by the teacher focus on a learner-centered approach.

Five out of five teachers use a learner-centered approach, so they are just a guide for students.

6.2.3.4 The materials employed by the teacher foster students' autonomy development and independence.

Students worked on their own on the activities and then checked with their students

6.2.3.5 The materials used by the teacher support students' learning and provide opportunities for feedback.

Teachers provide learners with feedback in the final project, but it did not focus on listening only. It focused on the written part and short speaking mainly.

RQ3. What are the challenges and the limitations teachers have found while implementing PBL in listening comprehension tasks in EFL classrooms?

6.2.3.6 The teacher plans, monitors, and evaluates students' progress during listening skills.

Five out of five teachers did activities to check students' understanding and monitor students. They asked students answers, pause the audio, give students some clues for the listening activities, and teach vocabulary before the activities.

6.2.3.7 The teacher manages unforeseen problems regarding listening tasks.

Five out of five teachers during the class did not have problems with listening activities or internet connection, but one teacher records her class and sends students with slow internet, and another gives the scripts. Also, the number of students who connected is less than 75%.

CHAPTER VII

7 CONCLUSION.

7.1 Summary.

Ecuadorian English teachers in public secondary schools handle the challenge of implementing the PBL learner-centered approach to enhance English language use and foster practical listening comprehension strategies to boost students' learning. Nonetheless, teachers are not well equipped to deliver good listening pedagogy. However, it has become a benchmark for high school students who aspire to go to the university and do not have the required skills to succeed in the language. Teachers, students, parents, administrators, and members of the Ministry of Education acknowledge some changes to improve English Language. Likewise, Poonpon (2017) states that PBL performs a leading role in increasing learners' confidence to use the target language since a real-life problem constitutes a project as part of their learning, integrating skills that align all together at a particular learning outcome.

Furthermore, Revelle (2019) claims that PBL learner-centered approach prepares students for this new century, considering constructivism principles enabling teachers to design meaningful and practical tasks. Teachers' perceptions of this new contemporary methodology are essential in the conduction of this study to figure out how teachers are currently working with the PBL approach and how they are using it to promote listening comprehension strategies.

This research study also attempted to know the EFL EFL Teachers' perceptions and attitudes regarding implementing Project-Based Learning (PBL) instruction in developing listening comprehension tasks. During the study, the participants were collaborative and gave their opinions and beliefs. Likewise, they provided the documentation required for the good development of this research study.

7.2 Limitations of the study.

The particularity of the results in this research study is a limitation. First of all, the sampling was only five teachers. All teachers work in the same context, and they could have had different perspectives from teachers from other schools, especially from the rural areas where the internet is null.

Furthermore, as participants have control over the content of the data collected, we cannot verify the results objectively but subjectively due to its nature.

Another limitation was problematic for teachers to have all students connected—unfortunately, a significant number of students connected during the session. Likewise, while the teacher was explaining classes, some students were with their cameras off.

Also, teachers, especially those who have used PBL for the first time, did not have a clear panorama about the PBL.

Another limitation is that listening is not considered core in the class, and some teachers based their classes on reading, writing, and grammar.

Among the main results, we can highlight that listening is not considered as core in the development of the PBL. It takes part of it but not enough for good development of this skill. However, teachers mention that students need to be exposed to listening environments, apply listening activities since the teacher starts the class, and give clear instructions to encourage them to use the language.

In their desire to increase their students' English level during this pandemic, teachers have taken several alternatives from traditional teaching methods to strategies that help students give meaning to the listening activities. They mention that they use strategies like students' intonation and make them infer meaning while listening. They also add that it is better to give small audio activities for students to comprehend, plays an audio five times because she wants them to understand, thus every time they listen, they understand new words. The effectiveness of listening is when students comprehend one student's answer when students interact.

Likewise, the PBL approach has been effective in working together with listening tasks. Nevertheless, this reality can be different for students who have a good internet connection. Unfortunately, not all of these students do not have the opportunity to use and practice the language and support their learning. Besides, this type of approach gives students get a certain level of autonomy. Therefore, It is clear that even though the approach is practical, these constraints are out of control for teachers. What teachers can do is to provide students with assignments with clear instructions and, in some cases, send transcripts to read.

7.3 Future Directions and further areas of research.

This research study has the potential to answer some inquiries, but many other questions remain unanswered. It is worth mentioning that replication studies in other settings are essential to generalize the results of this research. Additionally, there could be an investigation into how much time is required to improve listening comprehension. This research might be considered for the English area of the high school, school administrators, and districts to determine the length of follow-up support for maintaining the growth of listening practice through PBL tasks.

Furthermore, schools might find it helpful to reduce teachers' resistance in implementing PBL tasks that promote an actual listening practice. Likewise, through a quantitative research study, they might also want to explore how digital tools of the twenty-first century and collaborative work can change teachers' attitudes and self-efficacy. Consequently, the administration can encourage future students to enhance their learning abilities to prepare themselves for high-level education and real-life communication taking advantage of the PBL learning principles.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

TITLE OF THE THESIS:

Project-Based Learning: Enhancing the listening instruction in the EFL classroom at an Ecuadorian public secondary school.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION:

Please indicate your position, check all that apply

- Program Administrator
 - Student/ Participant
 - Teacher/ Professor
 - Parents of participants under 18 years of age
 - Other, (please explain)
-

I

(your name) , have been invited to participate in this research study, which has been explained to me by Lorena Sinche Salinas and Jessenia Nathaly Rodríguez. This research is being conducted to create knowledge regarding the English as Foreign Language Field in Ecuador.

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore EFL Teachers' perceptions with regards to the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) instruction in the development of listening comprehension tasks and offer insights on how to improve its teaching in an Ecuadorian public high school

DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs qualitative research, as Bryman (2012) states that this research effectively solves problems in the educational context.

The participants

The population of this case study will be five English teachers from a public high school who will be asked to be part of this research voluntarily. The sampling strategy in this

qualitative study is purposeful sampling which endeavors an intentional selection of participants or sites that allow the researcher to learn or comprehend the central phenomenon

The participants have to be English Teachers at a public high school and comply with

three minimal requirements, which are:

at least 3 years of experience in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Have a Bachelor's degree in education with a mention in English

Have the B2 English Proficiency Level CEFRL

Participants will be interviewed. We will also observe them in class and review their lesson plans.

BENEFITS FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

Participants will benefit from their reflection and findings through this research process to improve their current listening instructional practices.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The only predictable discomfort or risk for the participant is the time for the completion of the interviews.

Please contact the researchers:

Researcher 1:

Name: Rodriguez Morales Jessenia Nathaly

e-mail: jenarodr@espol.edu.ec

phone-number: 0986902296

Researcher 2:

Name: Lorena Patricia Sinche Salinas

e-mail: lpsinche@espol.edu.ec

Phone number: 0985954000

CONFIDENTIALITY

I understand that any information about me obtained as a result of my participation in this research will be kept as confidential as legally possible. In any publications that result from this research, neither my name nor any information from which I may be identified will be included.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this study is voluntary. I understand and I am free to withdraw my consent to participate in this study or any specific activities at any time. I understand that neither my employment status, nor my academic status will be affected if I decide not to participate in this study. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research, and I have received answers concerning areas I did not understand. The data I provide in this study will remain anonymous. By signing this attached consent form, I signify that I understand the terms associated with the study. I willingly consent to participate in this study.

I accept

I don't accept

DIGITAL SIGNATURE

BENEFITS FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The only predictable discomfort or risk for the participant is the time for the completion of the surveys and/or questionnaires.

Please contact the researcher _____ (name of the researcher, telephone number and e-mail. If needed, also the name and e-mail of the supervisor)

CONFIDENTIALITY

I understand that any information about me obtained as a result of my participation in this research will be kept as confidential as legally possible. In any publications that result from this research, neither my name nor any information from which I may be identified will be included.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this study is voluntary. I understand and I am free to withdraw my consent to participate in this study or any specific activities at any time. I understand that neither my employment status, nor my academic status will be

affected if I decide not to participate in this study. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the research, and I have received answers concerning areas I did not understand. The data I provide in this study will remain anonymous. By signing this attached consent form, I signify that I understand the terms associated with the study. I willingly consent to participate in this study.

Signature of the Participant Date

Triangulation Tools:

- Interview
- Classroom Observation
- Planning Review

Interview Protocol

What is the interaction pattern – one person talking at a time, many people at one time, or a mix?

The interaction pattern is one person talking at a time. The interaction will be done as an individual interview so that the participants involved in the research feel free to give their insights. The researcher will ask the questions, and the participants will answer them based on their knowledge and experience. In case the participants do not understand a particular question, the interviewer will kindly repeat or paraphrase the question so that the interviewee clearly understands it.

Who regulates this pattern?

The interview will be individual. The researchers will ask a question at the time. Then, the participants will reply question by question. The researcher will give them the freedom to expand their answers without any time pressure. This way, the participant has the time he/she needs.

The researcher will use the Zoom platform to record the interviews of the participants.

How is turn-taking managed?

The researcher will manage turn-taking. It will be an online, face-to-face interview with the participants to obtain valuable data about how PBL is done in the classroom.

Participant's Interview Protocol

Interviewee: _____ Location: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Review the goal of the research and consent form information.

Ask if the interviewee has any questions or concerns.

Face to Face Interview Protocol

First, I'd like to thank you for taking the time to join us in this online interview. This interview is being recorded. After the interview, the data will be transcribed so that we reflect precisely on your responses.

I will be asking you to review the transcript at a later date. In doing so, I can make sure I accurately record and reflect on your thoughts and words. Please feel free to share anything you wish to add. I am engaged in learning more about your perceptions regarding how the implementation of PBL enhances listening skills. Specifically, I am interested in your thoughts regarding your classrooms' practices.

Introduction: Session 1.

Thank you for being willing to share your insights concerning implementing PBL in listening instruction. I would like to begin by having you tell me a little about yourself:

1. Tell me about your teaching context

How do you describe your school, students?

General Research Objective	
"The objective of this study is to explore EFL Teachers' perceptions and attitudes with regards to the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) instruction in the development of listening comprehension tasks in an Ecuadorian public high school."	
Questions	Observation Notes
Objective: To analyze current EFL teachers' perceptions about teaching listening comprehension skills	
<p>1. RQ1. What are the teachers' perceptions about teaching listening skills?</p> <p>Main Interview Question:</p> <p>What is the goal of teaching listening?</p> <p>Probe Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How is listening comprehension taught in your school these days? 2. What is your opinion about effectiveness in teaching listening? 3. How would you rate the dedication time to the listening skill? <p>*Can you explain? *Can you give me an example?</p>	
Objective: To reflect on Ecuadorian public teachers' thoughts about implementing PBL as a learner-centered teaching approach to improve listening instruction in EFL classrooms	
<p>2. RQ2. What are Ecuadorian public teachers' thoughts about implementing PBL as a learner-centered teaching approach to improve students' listening comprehension?</p>	

<p>Main Interview Question:</p> <p>I would like to know what you think about PBL and its effectiveness for teaching listening?</p> <p>Probe question:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the teachers' requisite skill set to design PBL tasks and boost listening abilities? 	
<p>Objective: To contribute to this public high school's EFL teachers regarding implementing the PBL as an approach to support listening instruction.</p>	
<p>RQ3. What are the challenges and the limitations teachers have found while implementing PBL in listening comprehension tasks in EFL classrooms?</p> <p>Main Interview Question:</p> <p>What are the challenges and limitations you have encountered when applying PBL to develop learners' listening skills?</p> <p>Probe question:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How useful has the PBL approach been during the pandemic? 	

Classroom Observation Guideline

Indicator	Yes	No	Examples Notes for Clarification
1. Teacher			
The teacher prepares listening skills tasks/activities following the PBL steps			
The teacher includes listening tasks as a core component of the PBL			
The teacher introduces new alternatives (authentic - adapted material) to develop listening skills			
The teacher plans, monitors, and evaluates students' progress during listening skills			
The teacher manages unforeseen problems regarding listening tasks.			
2. Materials			
The materials employed by the teacher focus on a learner-centered approach			
The materials employed by the teacher foster students' autonomy development and independence			
The materials used by the teacher support students' learning and provide opportunities for feedback.			

Planning Review Checklist

Parameters	Yes	No	Observations
The planning appropriately addresses PBL methodology.			
The planning sets clear goals and indicators of performance considering active listening tasks.			
The planning involves tasks that make use of higher thinking skills to help students develop their listening skills.			
The planning develops appropriate tasks for developing listening considering the English level and reality of students.			
The planning fosters the learner-centered approach motivating learners to research and figure out how to solve real-life situations.			
The planning employs updated material that promotes the alignment between the PBL and different listening sub-skills. (making inferences, listening for the gist, listening for specific information, and extensive listening)			
The planning incorporates PBL tasks that allow monitoring the students' progress.			

Monday, May 3rd, 2021

Ms. Mary Goodman
ESL Director, Unigran Florida
Unigran USA: unigranenglish@unigran.br
1804 Sherman Street
Hollywood, Florida 33020

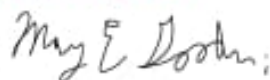
To Jessenia Nathaly Rodriguez and Lorena Patricia Sinche Salinas:

It was my pleasure and an honor to assist you with your research by allowing me to review the information in your documents for your MA TEFL thesis regarding PBL (Project Based Learning) in relation to Listening Comprehension tasks. I verify that I have reviewed the three parts- Planning Review Checklist, Classroom Observation Guideline, and Procedure & Interview Questions and found them to be impressive. I'd be very interested to find out some of the results such as which teaching methodology your interviewees found more success with: Project Based Learning on-line vs. PBL in-person (face to face) as they relate to Listening Comprehension.

I wish you every success on your thesis research endeavors. All the best!

Regards,

 Recoverable Signature

X 

Mary Goodman

Signed by: Mary E. Goodman

Guayaquil, April 19, 2021

Ms. Jessenia Rodriguez Morales

Ms. Lorena Sinche Salinas

Dear Jessenia and Lorena,

I was pleased to analyze the documents: Face to Face interview protocol, Classroom Observation Guidelines, and Planning Review Checklist that you plan to use in your MA. TEFL thesis study "*EFL Teachers' perceptions and attitudes with regards to the implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) instruction in the development of listening comprehension tasks in an Ecuadorian public high school.*"

I consider that the questions and statements are clear, direct and relevant to your research objectives. Besides, I think that your study will provide relevant findings to the Ecuadorian TEFL Community. Congratulations for undertaking the exciting research journey, and I hope you enjoy it!

Sincerely,



Escuela Superior Politécnica del Litoral
Karen Yambay de Armijos
FATIMA YAMBAY
CASTRO

Karen Yambay de Armijos, MA. TEFL
EFL Professor & Director
Academic Writing Center
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Quito, May 3, 2021

Ms. Jessenia Rodríguez Morales

Ms. Lorena Sinche Salinas

Dear Jessenia and Lorena:

I have analyzed your research tools: the face-to-face interview protocol, the Classroom Observation Guidelines, and the Planning Review Checklist that you intend to use in your MA TEFL thesis, "EFL Teachers' Perceptions and Attitudes with Regards to the Implementation of Project-Based Learning (PBL) Instruction in the Development of Listening Comprehension Tasks in an Ecuadorian Public High School."

I consider that the items included in your tools are clear and concise and comply with the proposed objectives. They should provide you with very relevant data.

Best of luck in your research. I look forward to seeing what you find!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Janine Matts".

Janine Matts

Linguistics Professor, PUCE





Intensive English Communication Program 814-865-7550
The Pennsylvania State University iep@psu.edu
112 W. Foster Avenue, Suite 401
State College, PA 16801

Monday, April 19, 2021

To Jessenia Nathaly Rodriguez Morales and Lorena Patricia Sinche Salinas,

I appreciate the opportunity to review the data collection tools proposal for your thesis. In particular, I found it most insightful to review the materials with you together. We reviewed three main parts of your project – namely, the interview protocol and questions, the observation guidelines, and the planning review checklist. After our discussions, I am confident that the research tools of your project will sufficiently triangulate the attitudes of ESL professionals toward PBL.

This research is critical for understanding how instructors perceive and enact PBL as well as for understanding how mandates from the Ministry of Education may impact the performance of professionals in the field. I am excited to see the results of this work, especially as it directly relates to my own research interests in pedagogical social psychology and language policy and planning.

Kind Regards

Dr. Jason Litzenberg

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