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**“EXPLORING HOW FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT THROUGH PLICKERS
IMPROVES 9TH-GRADE STUDENTS’ LISTENING COMPREHENSION SKILL
FOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION”**

Tesis para optar al grado de Magíster en Innovación de la Enseñanza, Aprendizaje
y Evaluación del Inglés

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List of Acronyms

CEFR : Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

CEPPE: Centro de Estudios de Políticas y Prácticas en Educación

EFL : English as a Foreign Language

ESL : English as a Second Language

MINEDUC: Ministerio de Educación

Abstract

This research aims to explore how formative assessment enables 9th grade students to improve their listening comprehension skills for specific information using an interactive platform called "Plickers". To carry out this action research, three instruments were applied: class observation to analyze the students' responses to the feedback given by the teacher; formative assessment tests, which were applied after each session of the listening comprehension activities for specific information; and finally, a Likert scale, which was applied at the end of the intervention to identify the students' perception of the formative assessment using the "Plickers" application. All the data gathered was analyzed through 3 different techniques: descriptive analysis, thematic analysis and inferential analysis. The findings showed that the students gradually improved their listening comprehension skills after having received the corresponding feedback. Regarding their perception after the intervention, it can mention that students exhibited a positive opinion, considering the three 3 main dimensions assessed, which were the formative evaluation, the listening comprehension and the use of the "Plickers" platform

Key words: Formative Assessment, Listening comprehension, Plickers

Resumen

Esta investigación tiene como objetivo explorar cómo la evaluación formativa permite a los estudiantes de 1° año de enseñanza media a mejorar sus habilidades de comprensión auditiva para obtener información específica utilizando una plataforma interactiva llamada "Plickers". Para llevar a cabo esta investigación- acción se aplicaron tres instrumentos: la observación en clase para analizar las respuestas de los estudiantes a la retroalimentación dada por el profesor; las pruebas de evaluación formativa, que se aplicaron después de cada sesión de las actividades de comprensión auditiva para obtener información específica; y, por último, una escala de Likert, que se aplicó al final de la intervención para identificar la percepción de los estudiantes de la evaluación formativa mediante la aplicación de "Plickers". Todos los datos reunidos se analizaron mediante tres técnicas diferentes: análisis descriptivo, análisis temático y análisis inferencial. Los resultados mostraron que los estudiantes mejoraron gradualmente sus habilidades de comprensión auditiva después de haber recibido la retroalimentación correspondiente. En cuanto a su percepción después de la intervención, se puede mencionar que los estudiantes mostraron una opinión positiva, considerando las tres principales dimensiones evaluadas, que fueron la evaluación formativa, la comprensión auditiva y el uso de la plataforma "Plickers".

Palabras clave: Evaluación formativa, comprensión auditiva, Plickers

CHAPTER I: Introduction

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Circumstances of the study

According to the Chilean Ministry of Education (MINEDUC,2016), Communicative language teaching in Chile considers language as a means of conveying meaning and as a tool for interaction in which the message and the use of the language are relevant, and the topics, meaningful and interesting for the students. This teaching emphasizes the integrated learning of the four English language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) so that students can communicate effectively and meaningfully in different situations and for a variety of communicative purposes.

The international alignment chosen for secondary students in the English subject in the Chilean EFL classrooms corresponds to that defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR,2010), which is accepted internationally as a way of establishing criteria and standards for skills in a given language. The learning that the students should achieve in English at the end of the 10th grade corresponds to a level located below the Intermediate level, which provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to finally achieve a command of the English language equivalent to level B1 in 12th grade, which means that they should be able to use English to communicate their ideas and opinions in basic situations and varied communication skills, such as having a conversation about familiar topics. However, most students who study in public schools do not achieve this language level. There are a number of reasons why students do not achieve this expected level in English language learning. Many of them are demotivated when facing the subject, recognizing themselves as having few skills or few tools for learning.

After having reflected on some specific actions that could be developed to contribute to the improvement of students' English listening skill, this action research aims to implement a methodology based on the use of formative assessment carried out through an interactive platform called Plickers to help students improve their listening comprehension skills.

1.1.2 Background Information

This research is aimed to be developed with a group of students from a public school located in the city of Concepción, a place that hosts around 1600 students annually, which in turn teaches from preschool to high school levels. The first year of high school is divided into 4 courses of around 35 students per group. In general, the students show a lack of motivation to learn English, which is reflected in their low

level of participation, and in the evidence of the low assessments results. These low results lead to students finishing the last year of their secondary education without the necessary English language skills to face higher education, where the learning of this second language is part of the majority of colleges degrees to which they apply.

1.2.3. Identification of the Problem

Formative assessment can be understood as gathering, assessing, and using information that helps teachers taking decisions to enhance the teaching-learning process. It is feedback given to students so that they take corrective actions about their performance, directed towards improvement. This feedback can promote the students' motivation and learn according to their needs. (McMilan, 2007).

According to Agencia de Calidad de Educación, Formative assessment is a process whose approach considers assessment as part of everyday classroom work, uses it to guide the teaching-learning process, and makes timely decisions that benefit students. Centro de Estudios de Políticas y Prácticas en Educación (CEPPE, 2018) indicated that Chile has focused on providing excessive resources in standardized external assessments and has forgotten the importance of learning from diversity and improving internal assessment in schools, thus emphasizing the importance of summative assessment, providing little evidence of formative assessment as a complementary process in a classroom.

The Chilean reality shows that 9th grade students' academic results achieved in the English language, specifically in the listening skill is very low, as it is the skill that gets less feedback from teachers. On one hand, teachers do not have time enough to provide support to students and not much training is given to them. On the other hand, Chilean schools use to work with a big number of students, 30-40 students per class. Therefore, it is challenging to plan activities in which the teacher can monitor all the students learning in one class. Consequently, teachers can hardly get an idea about the learning process and about how successful are the listening activities they plan.

In order to solve this problem. The following action research plans to carry out an innovative way to assess students formatively in the listening skill, through an interactive tool called Plickers. This platform will allow students to develop their ICTs abilities and to get instant feedback. "In education, ICTs play vital roles in facilitating teaching and learning, specifically with large classes. In order to achieve quality education in large classes, teachers have to take extra steps" (Shardama, 2013). This ICT tool called Plickers will enhance the students' motivation, moreover, will allow the teacher to assess effectively the listening skill for specific information during a short period of time.

1.2 Aims

General objective

To explore how formative assessment support 9th-grade students' listening comprehension skill for specific information through app Plickers.

SO1 To analyze how formative assessment improves students' listening comprehension skills for specific information through Plickers.

SO2 To identify the students' perception about using ~~the~~ formative assessment through Plickers.

CHAPTER II: Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER II: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 The role of Formative Assessment

Formative Assessment was first stated by Michael Scriven (1967), who proposed an evaluation without goals, which means that the final goal is not the evaluation of the objectives, but the evaluation of the needs of the user or consumer, which is why evaluation is conceived as a systematic and objective methodology of the value or merit of some object.

Scriven proposed that those forms of evaluation which contributed to the improvement of a developing programme should be considered as formative evaluation, while those forms of evaluation aimed at checking the effectiveness of the results of a programme should be considered as summative evaluation. As the goal of evaluation, Scriven mentions that evaluators must be able to arrive at justifiable value judgements rather than determine whether goals have been achieved. The implementation of their method sets out a process involving the following actions:

- Assessment of the needs of both the learner and the society in which he/she is inserted
- Review of the goals. Goals should be formulated according to the previous needs and should be feasible and well-founded
- Comparison of cost and version and effectiveness with other alternatives
- Evaluation of people and the programme itself
- Evaluation of the elements involved throughout the implementation of the programme.

According to Heritage (2010) Formative assessment is something that teachers do with and for students, as they engage with them in evaluation, therefore students and teachers are partners, both share responsibilities for learning. Formative assessment provides evidence for improving student learning.

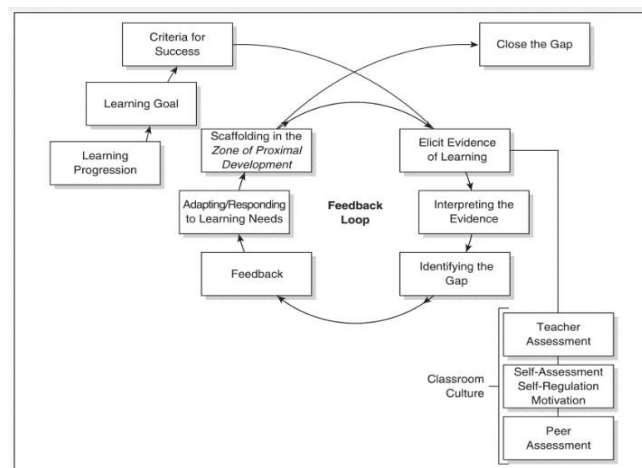


Figure 1. The Process of Formative Assessment (Heritage, 2010)

Figure1 shows the process of formative assessment, which begins when the teacher identifies the learning objective for a lesson or a sequence of lessons and determines the criteria for success. The learning objective is derived from a learning progression and identifies what the student will learn during the course of a lesson or lessons. The success criteria identify what is needed to meet the learning objective and are used as a check on learning. Before the lesson begins, the objectives and success criteria are shared with the students, the success criteria are the guide for learning while the students are involved in the tasks.

Moss & Brookhart (2009) stressed that “The primary purpose of formative assessment is to improve learning, not merely to audit it. It is assessment for learning rather than assessment of learning” (p.6).

Andrade & Heritage (2018), according to their experience as researchers, concluded that formative evaluation is one of the most powerful and effective tools that teachers have at their disposal. Elements of formative evaluation include clear criteria and objectives, evidence of learning as feedback is developed, feedback actions, and review. Conversations with students, diagnostic assessments, self-assessment, co-evaluation, new technologies, among others, can be used to give, on one hand, feedback to students about the next steps in their learning, and on the other hand, to give feedback to teachers about adjustments to instructions that need to be made.

Feedback is an important component of the formative assessment process as it provides information to teachers and students about how they are doing in relation to the learning objectives. From the point of view of the learners, formative assessment deals with the skills they need to develop, how close they are, and what they need to do next. Giving good feedback is one of the skills that teachers need to manage as part of good assessment. Another skill of formative assessment includes having clear objectives, clear lesson plans and tasks that communicate those objectives to learners. Giving effective feedback helps students to formulate new goals for themselves and to know what actions they plan to take to achieve those goals. Brookhart (2008).

2.2 Use of Technology in Education

Technology has been, on one hand, a key pillar that supports the teaching-learning process by giving opportunities to both, students, and teachers to be more efficient and carry out more productive activities. On the other hand, it enhances students` interest and autonomy.

“The use of technology in the classroom, and the speculation on ways that technology can impact student learning, is not a new phenomenon. In 1913, Thomas Edison predicted that books would become obsolete in schools. In an interview with newspaper reporter Fredrick James Smith, Edison (1913) told Smith that “books will soon be obsolete in the public schools. Scholars will be instructed

through the eye". (Angely & Valanides, 2015, p.3). "Technology has replaced, in any way the lack of resources in the classrooms, allowing the students to use new techniques and means of learning such as team working and social interaction. Moreover, it supports teachers to blend authentic material to teach the students' diversity" (Cosby,2012, p.9). Previous studies have reported that the use of ICTs in the classroom helps learners to be more motivated, independent, and autonomous. Khem,J & Guru Prasad,G. (2019). According to Bonk (2009), learning through technology offers the students a range of opportunities, since they can deal with their own learning, giving the teacher the role of tutor, guide, or mentor. In addition, the author suggests that textbooks and classrooms lectures have been replaced by ICTs, encouraging students` to address their personal needs, thus, empower learning, ~~with the consequence to~~ make them reflect on the impact of using technology.

Using technology in teaching contexts, promotes collaboration not only between students-teachers, or students-students, but also between teachers, since it allows them to work collaboratively with other educators, creating a highly engaging and relevant experiences in direct learners' benefit. (Cosby, 2012).

Accordingly, it is noted that using ICTs in the classroom, involves a variety of advantages which adjust to the new times, and students' characteristics.

2.3 "Plickers" application used as formative assessment.

Any test or any other system of information gathering, is a summative assessment if it meets the following two criteria: (1) it is administered at the end of some unit of instruction (e.g., unit, semester, school year); and (2) its purpose is primarily to categorize the performance of a student or system. In contrast to summative assessment, a formative assessment is another system to collect and interpret evidence of learning which is composed by two criteria. On one hand, it is a part of a unit instruction, on the other hand, it is used with the objective to identify students' strengths and weaknesses, and to help the teacher planning the next session with the purpose to guide learners in their own learning, giving them feedback, enhancing their autonomy, and helping them to be aware toward this process. (Andrade & Cizek, 2009). A way to collect such evidence is through the use of technology. "Assessment technologies are designed to give feedback to students about their progress, and to enable teachers to respond to the learning needs of each student with greater speed, frequency, focus, and flexibility. The features of student-centered assessment technologies include: (1) systematic monitoring of student progress to inform instructional decisions; (2) identification of misconceptions that may interfere with student learning; (3) rapid feedback to students, teachers, and others; and (4) information about student learning needs during instruction" (Russell,2010, as cited in Andrade & Heritage, 2018, p.77). Previous research has indicated that formative assessment has a positive impact on learners, reporting that the students retain more information, understand concepts more rapidly and are more enthusiastic about what they are learning. With formative assessment as one component in a thoughtful lesson plan, students often make new connections between curriculum topics, and discover links between these topics and the world

outside the classroom (Bayat, Jamshidipour & Hashemi, 2017).

“Plickers” is an interactive tool used to assess formatively. It is an application that teachers can download from a website called www.plickers.com. Through this platform, it is possible to project multiple choice or true- false questions on a screen, and the students answer by using a “QR” code provided by the teacher. Those answers are scanned through the teacher’s mobile phone by using Plickers application. In this way, the students’ progression can be seen on the board screen. Therefore, teachers and students can get general results immediately, having the opportunity to get feedback each other. Moreover, teacher can get statistic information through an Excel format, thus, allowing the students see their achievements (Plickers,2019)

Recently investigators have examined the effects of Plickers as formative assessment on students. These have demonstrated that it improves students’ learning, engagement, by creating an effective learning environment, engages students with feedback, making the class interesting, fun, and informative (Elmadi, Al-Hattami & Fawzi,2018). As Gurisik (2019) pointed out, a high school student interviewed indicated that when the cards closed each other, there was difficulty in getting them scanned. In cases when the Internet or computer

is slow, high school students do not experience any problems and this situation does not affect them. High school students’ opinions about whether they can easily see the answers from others’ cards are as follow; It can be seen when looked very carefully, it can be seen when one turns back, the shape of the cards and the places of the choices are different, the answers on the distant cards do not appear. This study results can be used as a reference when applying formative assessments by using Plickers. For instance, to think about a classroom arrangement to get more effective results.

2.4 Listening comprehension skill development

Listening plays an important role in communication; listening takes up 40- 50%; speaking, 25-30%; reading, 11-16%; and writing, about 9% of the total time in communication (Lynch, 2012).

Achieving a good level of listening comprehension has become a challenge for EFL students, since this is the most difficult language skill to develop, even so, the first ability students should develop rather than speaking, reading, and writing. For EFL learners, listening skill is the area in which they feel more insecure. One of the explanations is the lack of tangible evidence that they make progress in acquiring the skill. Another fact is that listening activities are carried out in real time; therefore, the students need to achieve the message at a specific time, making listening more complex (Field, 2009).

Vandergrift & C.M.goh (2012, p.22) “listening is an important skill; it enables language learners to receive and interact with language input and facilitates the emergence of other language skills”.

Accordingly, it is noted that enhancing learners' in developing listening skill is a crucial part in ELT process. There are a variety of resources such as, methodologies, strategies, activities that teachers can apply according to the students' characteristics and needs in order to make them succeed in their listening skill development.

2.5 Listening strategies

Teaching listening skill is standard practice today, with language teachers providing sessions that focus on this particular skill. There is a wide selection of listening materials available in the classroom, such as CDs, and the DVD or video. However, there is still much evidence that listening comprehension is undervalued. Students are rarely assessed on this skill, and the problems of many weak students go undiagnosed. The methodology of listening lessons has been little discussed, researched or challenged; and there is a tendency for teachers to work through different routines without total conviction (Field, 2009).

"Learning strategies, the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information" (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990).

"While-listening activities are the main activities of the listening tasks. Learners listen to the input and make decisions about the strategy to use according to the requirements of the task" Solak (2016, p.36)

Willson (2008) proposes some ideas for teaching listening strategies:

1. Strategy: Monitor performance while listening

1.1 How to teach it: Pause at regular intervals during the listening to check comprehension (students in pairs, groups or as a whole class). Ask questions such as Who said X? Why? What is the topic? Ask students if their answers are logical. (Example: Does it make sense that Russia's biggest airport is located in Monaco, as one student thought he'd heard?)

1.2 When to teach it / type of text: This is taught during the listening. The strategy should be taught only occasionally as the teaching of it interrupts the listening experience and can frustrate students. It can be done with any listening text, especially if the students are listening for gist, but it works better with slightly extended texts.

Since listening is an active process, this is also demonstrated in the while listening activities. At this stage, students use strategies to support what they listen to. There are two main reasons why these strategies need to be addressed by the teacher with a well-designed activity. The first reason, to help the learners to understand the passage. The activities are:

- provide a focus, showing students what is important about any given passage.
- allow them to perceive the text's structure (causes and effects, problems and solutions, etc);

- help them to 'chunk' the listening into sections or units of information.
- provide clues as to how they might respond.
- keep them concentrating throughout the passage.
- contribute towards the entertainment factor of the lesson by highlighting points of interest, irony, humour, etc.

Another reason is to show the students evidence toward their results, and to provide them with further practice in the improvements points Wilson (2008). Some authors have attempted to explain or classify different strategies to support listening comprehension (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Wilson,2008). However, they overlap with the assumption that there is not a best strategy for learning, it will depend on students' needs and how the teacher will tackle the potential of learning in every student.

2.6 Listening sub-skills

According to Solak (2016), there are various types of listening sub-skills to help listeners make sense of the listening text. Most used listening sub skills in language classrooms are:

- Listening for-gist: listening to get a general idea.
- Listening for specific information: listening just to get a specific piece of information.
- Listening in detail: listening to every detail and try to understand as much as possible.
- Listening to infer listening to understand how listeners feel.
- Listening to questions and responding listening to answer questions.
- Listening to descriptions: listening for a specific description

Wilson (2008, p.83) points out "In recent years, psychologists have discovered some rather interesting things about our ability to focus on details at the expense of other information". In order to extract specific information or detail it is required to develop the ability to overlook what we hear and focus just on details. Some activities related to sub-skill of listening for detail are:

- Times, dates, numbers.
- Bingo.
- Spot the difference.
- A story told twice.
- Mixed focus.
- Hoarse whisperers.

Listening for detail is when we want to discover a specific piece of information; it is a way to help students to develop the skill of listening comprehension.

2.7 Listening skill in the National English Teaching Program

The SIMCE English test aims to evaluate the knowledge and skills achieved by students in the English Foreign Language sub-sector. For this purpose, an instrument will be used developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS), the leading body in this type of assessment.

The test measures basic and intermediate level skills in the knowledge and use of the English language and is aligned with international standards for students learning English as a foreign language. It is an objective, reliable and accepted evaluation tool internationally.

Students' knowledge and skills in recognizing sounds from the English language and to identify explicit information In the listening comprehension section, the ability to recognize the particular meaning of words in context given will be assessed , and differentiate between words of similar pronunciation.(Simce Inglés, 2010)

As this test is available for 11th grade students, it is essential that lower levels such as 9th graders could develop the skill of listening for specific information, in order to face this test where the students should demonstrate their abilities to listen for explicit information.

CHAPTER III: Method

CHAPTER III: Method

3.1 Type of research

. “Action research is a systematic process of solving educational problems and making improvements” (Tomal, 2010, p.10). According to Koshy (2005) Action research is considered constructive research, since the researcher, through planning, builds his knowledge about a topic of his interest. This is a process through which the researcher learns and can share his knowledge with those who may benefit.

The following study corresponds to an action research since it tries to explore how formative assessment supports students in their listening comprehension skill development through the use of an app called Plickers. Accordingly, the mentioned elements such as formative assessment, listening comprehension skills for specific information and Plickers, were rigorously chosen after a deep reflection in which a teaching-learning process was planned in detail, and carried out in benefit of students, with the purpose of trying to improve in students one of the most important skills of the English language. Therefore, it can be said that its paradigm is qualitative since it requires the students’ participation in the study, the researcher is involved in the study, and tries to find out ways to support the participants. In this sense, the process of how to carry out the methodology is more relevant than the results achieved.

On the other hand, the scope starts being exploratory due to the fact it is the first time this kind of action research is carried out in the current context. Consequently, it will become descriptive since there will be a detailed exploration regarding the process and methodology of formative assessment and the effectiveness of students’ learning. Finally, it is noted that the puzzle is mechanical because of the demonstration of a different way to assess which implies many potential benefits ~~employing~~ an interactive tool.

3.2 Participants

The sample for this action research corresponds to a purposive sample since the research question was formulated and addressed according to the students’ needs. The question fulfills certain criteria such as formative assessment, ICTs, listening comprehension. Purposive sampling means selecting groups to study based on the research question (Mason, 2002). The sample is made up of five participants in an age range from 14 to 15 years old, who study in different schools located in the city of Concepción, whose level of English corresponds to level A2 according to the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR). The fact of having chosen this kind of participants is due to ninth grade students need to develop communicative competences in English language, therefore, I believe that the first step to develop communication is reinforcing the receptive skills first, in this case

listening comprehension. Having said that, it should be noted that it is a convenience sample as well. (Taherdoost, 2016)

3.3 Research question and objectives

3.3.1 Research question

How does formative assessment support 9th-grade students' listening comprehension skills for specific information through app Plickers?

3.3.2 General objective

To explore how formative assessment support 9th-grade students' listening comprehension skill for specific information through app Plickers.

3.3.3 Specific objectives

SO1 To analyze how formative assessment improves students' listening comprehension skills for specific information through Plickers.

SO2 To identify the students' perception about using the formative assessment through Plickers.

3.4 Stages of the action research study

This intervention developed in this action research last two weeks. It was divided into six 50-minute sessions, which were carried out every other weekday. In each session, the students developed pre, while, and post-listening activities focused on getting specific information, based on a specific topic for each session. Each activity was previously introduced and explained by the teacher. In the post-listening activity, the students were given a formative assessment in which ~~they answered~~ multiple choice questions or true-false statements using a printed QR code ~~and~~ previously provided ~~from~~ the teacher for their answers. These responses were scanned through the teacher's mobile phone. The formative assessments results were immediately recorded on the Plickers platform both, individually and collectively. At the end of the class, the researcher showed the students just the general results to give them feedback about their performances.

Each class started with the teacher's feedback, telling the students about their strengths and weaknesses shown during the previous class, enhancing them the

good qualities they have as students when participating during the class, and how they demonstrated such a good attitude through their commitment and responsibility.

The objective of the activities was the same for all the sessions: “to extract specific information from a recording, using thematic vocabulary”. Nevertheless, the learners tackled different topics in each class which involved different vocabulary in context. Finally, in the last session, the students were asked to complete a Likert scale in order to analyze their perceptions about formative assessment through the app called Plickers.

In the following table, there is a description of each session, the topics addressed, and the activities developed.

Sessions	Objectives	Activities
1	To extract specific information from a recording, using thematic vocabulary related “Free time”.	<p>Topic: “Free time”</p> <p>Pre-listening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vocabulary - Listening for specific information <p>While-listening (formative assessment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - True-False quiz <p>Post-listening (feedback)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher’s feedback
2	To extract specific information from a recording, using thematic vocabulary related “work”.	<p>Topic: “Work”</p> <p>Pre-listening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher’s feedback - Vocabulary - Listening for specific information <p>While-listening (formative assessment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiple choice quiz <p>Post-listening (feedback)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher’s feedback
3	To extract specific information from a recording, using thematic vocabulary related “weather and forecast”	<p>Topic: “weather and forecast”</p> <p>Pre-listening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher’s feedback - Vocabulary - Listening for specific information <p>While-listening (formative assessment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - True-False quiz <p>Post-listening (feedback)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher’s feedback

4	To extract specific information from a recording, using thematic vocabulary related “trains and travel	<p>Topic: “Trains and travel”</p> <p>Pre-listening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher’s feedback - Vocabulary - Listening for specific information <p>While-listening (formative assessment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiple choice quiz <p>Post-listening (feedback)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher’s feedback
5	To extract specific information from a recording, using thematic vocabulary related food	<p>Topic: “Eating out”</p> <p>Pre-listening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher’s feedback - Vocabulary - Listening for specific information <p>While-listening (formative assessment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - True-False quiz <p>Post-listening (feedback)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Teacher’s feedback
6	To extract specific information from a recording, using thematic vocabulary related colours and homework	<p>Topic: “Using colours to do homework”</p> <p>Pre-listening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vocabulary - Listening for specific information <p>While-listening (formative assessment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiple choice quiz <p>Post-listening (feedback)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Likert scale

Table 1: Description of each session, the topics addressed and the activities developed.

3.5. Data collection techniques

Three types of data collection instruments were used in the following action research: a classroom observation, a formative assessment quiz after each session, and a Likert scale at the end of the intervention. Each instrument is described as follows:

3.5.1. Classroom observation

As the sessions were divided into three stages: pre, while and post-listening, the teacher-researcher took notes, focusing on the three previously mentioned categories. Since the observation of each stage led to the next one, the teacher had the chance to reflect on how to improve it or what elements to keep in the next session.

In this sense, the observation will be carried out to collect some evidences about the students' participation during the process. One of the best ways to collect such evidence is through a narrative summary.

“Narrative summary is a written summary of the lesson that tries to capture the main things that happened during the course of it, such as how the lesson opened, the

sequence of activities that occurred, how the teacher introduced each activity, and so on”. (Richard & Farrel, n.d., p.95).

The intervention was carried out online, so the teacher had the opportunity to observe the students' performance and behaviour and make notes during the sessions. Therefore, as the students did not realize what the teacher was doing, they acted naturally and spontaneously

“Naturalistic observation is the type of observation people do not know you are observing them so they are likely to behave much more spontaneously, which makes for more ecologically valid data” (Norton, 2008, p.108).

3.5.2. Formative assessment quizzes

In order to analyze how formative assessment supported ninth-grade students' listening comprehension skill for specific information through the Plickers app, it was necessary to apply a formative assessment quiz after each session. These were developed on Plickers platform in the format of multiple-choice questions with three alternatives, and true-false statements. Each of the 6 quizzes consisted of five questions that students answered one by one through a QR code that they showed on their screens and scanned by the teacher from hers. The QR codes are provided by the platform. Each student has a different one, identified by the name and a number. As the QR code counts on 4 vertices, on each of them there is a letter from A to D that identifies it. Students must respond by showing the vertice of the letter that they believe is the correct answer ~~up~~.

As the teacher shared the screen all the time during the formative assessment, at the end of the quiz, she showed the students general results. Plickers platform provides general and individual results immediately. However, the teacher let the students know just the overall performance results in terms of percentages of achievement.

3.5.3. Likert scale survey

In order to describe the students' perception about formative assessment by using the app Plickers, it was used a Likert scale to collect the necessary data and interpret it later. "Rating scales can be used very effectively to measure students' attitudes, perceptions, or behaviors. There are two main types of scales that appear in items on a rating scale: Likert and Likert-type scales. A Likert scale begins with a statement and then asks individuals to respond on an agree/disagree continuum. The Likert scale typically ranges from strongly agree to strongly disagree" (Mertler, 2016, p. 241).

The following Likert scale was made up of nine statements, which were grouped into three dimensions: formative assessment, listening comprehension skill, and use of Plickers. There were also 5 balanced responses that represented levels of agreement: never, almost never, neutral, almost every time, every time. These five different responses were represented by different "faces" so students had to choose the one that represented their best choice.

It is relevant to mention that in order to help students get a better understanding of the statements of the Likert scale, this one was written in Spanish. Concerning the validation of this instrument, this Likert scale was validated by three professors from the Master program.

3.6. Data analysis techniques

To analyze the data gathered from these three instruments, a quantitative data analysis was carried out and different techniques were used.

3.6.1 Descriptive analysis, mean scores and standard deviations

In order to analyze how formative assessment supported students' listening comprehension skill for specific information through the app Plickers, a descriptive analysis was used to analyze students' results since they were asked to take a formative assessment by using the interactive tool Plickers after each listening comprehension session. After gathering the whole information, the results were interpreted and compared by using media scores and standard deviations. "This type of statistical analysis goes beyond the level of description and attempts to draw some conclusions from the data that you have collected. Specifically, this type of analysis would be used when you are testing hypotheses; for example, by making predictions such as looking to see if a teaching intervention improves student learning" (Norton, 2008, p.139).

3.6.2 Thematic analysis

With the objective to support the descriptive analysis from SO1, a thematic analysis was applied, which focused mainly on aspects such as students' participation and feedback dimensions.

"The goal of a thematic analysis is to identify themes, i.e., patterns in the data that are important or interesting, and use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue. This is much more than simply summarizing the data; a good thematic analysis interprets and makes sense of it" (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017, p.3353)

3.6.3. Inferential analysis

The non-parametric Wilcoxon signed-rank test (Norton, 2010) was used to analyze the data of the study due the fact the sample size was small.

With the objective to support the analysis aforementioned, it was necessary to compare the True-False and Multiple Choice first and last tests.

3.6.4. Descriptive statistic analysis

With the aim to identify the students' perception of using the formative assessment through Plickers, a descriptive statistical analysis was used to interpret their responses. As (Norton, 2008) states, "Descriptive statistics offer a clear way of presenting the results of your action research. They have the advantage of being relatively easy to calculate either by hand or by using a calculator or Excel".

This descriptive statistics include a measure of central tendency called mode (Mo).

CHAPTER IV: Findings

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

As this action research was focused on exploring how formative assessment supports 9th grade students listening comprehension skill for specific information through Plickers, the data gathered through the action plan was analyzed to answer the following research question: How does formative assessment support 9th-grade students' listening comprehension skills for specific information through app Plickers?

Data analysis will be presented separately according to each specific research objective.

4.1 Specific objective 1: To analyze how formative assessment improves students' listening comprehension skills for specific information through Plickers.

In order to analyze how formative assessment improves students' listening comprehension skills for specific information through Plickers, it was necessary to apply three data analysis techniques. Firstly, a descriptive analysis of the students' quizzes results, which included calculating the standard deviation (SD) and their mean scores (MS). Moreover, an inferential analysis was done using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test, which is a nonparametric statistical test used to compare two paired groups and see if they are different from one another in a statistically significant manner. In this case, the students' results of both true-false quizzes and multiple-choice quizzes were compared. The information gathered is shown in tables to facilitate its interpretation, and the results are described as follows.

4.1.1 Descriptive Analysis of True-False Quiz results in lesson "Free Time".

The following analysis presents a description of the students' quiz results about the lesson "Free Time". In Table 2 it can be observed that the highest mean score in this quiz was found in S1 ("There are four different age groups that play water polo"), S 4 ("Water polo matches are played on Saturdays"), and S5 ("You need to bring a photo to register at the swimming pool"); all of them with a mean score of 0,6. The lowest mean scores were found in S2 ("Tyrone wants to join the under 14s club") and S3 ("The under 16s train on Monday and Thursday") with a mean score of 0,4. The global mean score in the True-False Quiz 1 was 0,52, which shows that there is not such a big difference between the data and the mean score.

Regarding standard deviation, the results indicate that all the students obtained a 0,55 in each True-False statement. It can be concluded that the standard deviation was less scattered concerning the students' mean scores.

True /False questions	Mean score (%)	Standard deviation (%)
S1	0,6	0,55
S2	0,4	0,55
S3	0,4	0,55
S4	0,6	0,55
S5	0,6	0,55
Overall results	0,52	0,55

Table 2 Mean scores and standard deviations of True-False Quiz about the lesson “Free Time”

4.1.2 Descriptive Analysis of the Multiple-Choice Quiz results in the lesson “Work”

The following analysis presents a description of the quiz results about the lesson “Work” in terms of the mean scores and standard deviations. In Table 2, it can be observed that the highest mean scores were achieved in Q1(“Does the speaker A enjoy his job?”) and Q3 (“Does speaker C like his job?”) reaching a score of 0,8. The lowest mean score was found in Q2 (“When does speaker B work?”) with a score of 0,2. The global mean score in the Multiple-Choice Quiz 1 was 0,52 which shows that there is not such a big difference between the data and the mean score.

Regarding standard deviation scores, the students showed the highest percentages in Q4 “What does speaker D say is the best thing about his job?” and Q5,” What doesn’t speaker E like about her job?”, which corresponds to a 0,55, while in Q1, Q2, and Q3 the scores were 0,45. The standard deviation global results show that the level of dispersion is not very high regarding the media.

Multiple Choice questions	Mean score	Standard deviation
Q1	0,8	0,45
Q2	0,2	0,45
Q3	0,8	0,45
Q4	0,4	0,55
Q5	0,4	0,55
Overall results	0,52	0,49

Table 3: Mean scores and standard deviation of Multiple-Choice Quiz about the lesson “Work”

4.1.3 Descriptive Analysis of True /False Quiz results about the lesson “Weather and Forecast”

The following analysis presents a description of the quiz results about the lesson “Weather and Forecast”. Table 4 shows the highest mean scores in S2 “In the east it is rainy all night” S3 “The weather in the west is rainy” with a score of 0,8. In S1

“The weather in the north is very windy and cold”, the mean score was 0, which was far the lowest score.

The standard deviation score in this class reached a score of 0,45 in S2 “In the east it is rainy all night” and S3 “The weather in the west is rainy”. However, the lowest score was 0 in S1 “The weather in the north is very windy and cold”, which means there was no variation in the scores.

The relation between the standard deviation and the mean scores show that the quiz results were moderately dispersed, attempting at narrowing over the course of the assessment where these started to narrow.

True /False questions	Mean score	Standard deviation
Q1	0	0
Q2	0,8	0,45
Q3	0,8	0,45
Q4	0,6	0,55
Overall results	0,55	0,36

Table 4: Mean score and standard deviation of True-False Quiz results about the lesson “Weather and Forecast”

4.1.4 Descriptive Analysis of Multiple Choice Quiz results about the lesson “Trains an Travel”

The following analysis presents a description of the Multiple-choice quiz results about the lesson “Trains and Travel”. Table 5 indicates that the highest mean score was reached in Q1 “Listening A: The speaker wants to go to...” with 1 point, and the lowest one was found in Q3 “Listening "C" The speaker wants to go to...” with a score of 0,2. Moreover, the standard deviation shows that in Q2 “Listening B: The speaker wants to go to...” and Q5 “Listening E: The passengers want to go to...” the students achieved the highest score with 0,55, and the lowest score one with 0 was found in Q1 “Listening A: The speaker wants to go to...” These results showed that the quiz results started with a high level of dispersion between the standard deviation and the mean scores, stabilizing during the rest of the responses.

Multiple Choice questions	Mean score	Standard deviation
Q1	1	0
Q2	0,6	0,55
Q3	0,2	0,45
Q4	0,8	0,45
Q5	0,4	0,55
Overll results	0,6	0,4

Table 5: Mean score and standard deviation of Multiple-Choice Quiz results about the lesson “Trains and Travel”

4.1.5 Descriptive Analysis of True /False Quiz results about the lesson “Eating Out”

The following analysis presents a description of the True-False quiz results about the lesson “Eating Out”. It can be observed in Table 6 a mean score of 1 in Q2 “There are two customers eating together” and Q3 “The two customers order the same starter”, these being the highest mean scores, but Q1 “The customers want two tables” exhibited the lowest result with a score of 0,2. With regard to standard deviation, in Q4 the highest SD score was 0,55, whereas in Q2 and Q3 the learners got a 0, which means that there was no variation in the scores compared to the media.

The figures demonstrated that the level of variation between mean score and standard deviation was quite large in Q1 and Q4, which means that the data spreads over a wide range of scores.

True /False questions	Mean score	Standard deviation
Q1	0,2	0,45
Q2	1	0
Q3	1	0
Q4	0,6	0,55
Q5	0,8	0,45
Overall results	0,72	0,29

Table 6: Mean score and standard deviation of True-False Quiz results about the lesson “Eating Out”

4.1.6 Descriptive Analysis of Multiple Choice Quiz results about the lesson “Using Colours to Do Homework”

The following analysis presents a description of the quiz results about the lesson “Using colours to Do Homework”. Table 7 showed the highest mean score in Q1 “To start you need...”, Q2 “First, I choose a different colour for...”, Q4 “This is a photo of some more...”, and Q5 “Finally, this last photo shows my...” with a media score of 0,8. The lowest mean score was 0,4 in Q3 “Here is a photo of my...”.

The standard deviation presents the highest score in Q3 “Here is a photo of my...” with a 0,55, which shows that the test scores are more spread from the Media. Furthermore, the four remaining Q1 “To start you need...”, Q2 “First, I choose a different colour for...”, Q4 “This is a photo of some more...” and Q5 “finally, this last photo shows my...” reached a SD score of 0,45, which means that scores are halfway distant from the Media.

Multiple Choice questions	Mean score	Standard deviation
Q1	0,8	0,45
Q2	0,8	0,45
Q3	0,4	0,55
Q4	0,8	0,45
Q5	0,8	0,45
Overall results	0,72	0,47

Table 7: Mean score and standard deviation of Multiple-Choice Quiz results about the lesson “Using Colours to do Homework”

4.2. Descriptive Analysis: Global analysis of the Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the True-False quizzes.

As two types of formative assessment were applied in this intervention: Multiple choice and True-False quizzes; it was considered that a global comparison of Means Scores and Standard Deviations would be useful to make some generalizations about the sample performance.

Figure 2 shows the students’ results achieved in the tests. The highest mean score was observed in class 5 with 72%, and the lowest mean score was achieved in class 1, which reported a 52%. This shows the students’ improvement in their test scores as a result of the intervention developed. The standard deviation ranged from 11% in class 1 to 38% in class 2. This information tells that there was a high dispersion of students’ results in the last True / False test scores.

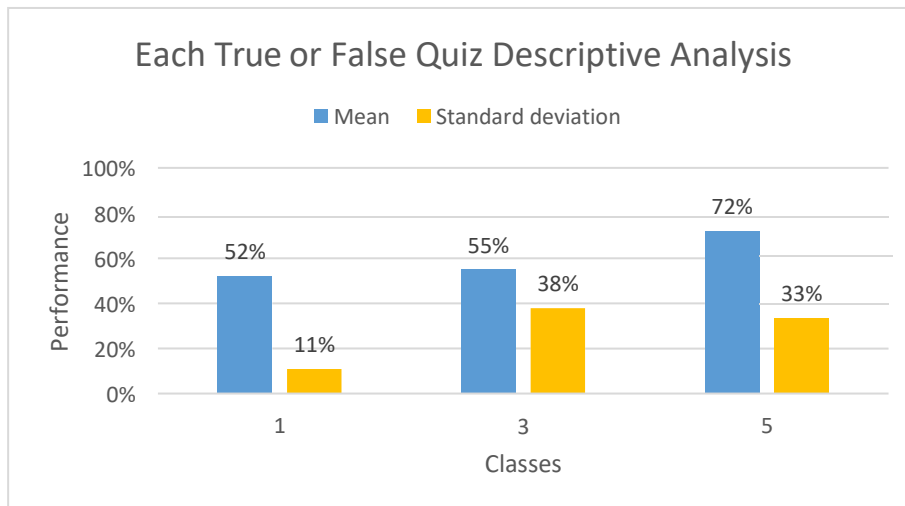


Figure 2: Comparison of Mean scores and Standard Deviation in the True / False Formative Assessment

4.2.1. Descriptive Analysis: Global analysis of the Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the Multiple Choice Quizzes.

Figure 12 displays the students' score results on each multiple-choice quiz. These quizzes were carried out in classes 2, 4, and 6. According to the mean scores, it can be observed that the highest score was achieved in the third test with a 72% of achievement in average, and the lowest score average was found in the first multiple

choice test with a 52%. This increase in the Media score shows that students improved their performance all along the intervention process. Regarding standard deviation scores, it can be mentioned that in test 1 and 2, students' scores were somewhat similar and closer to the media, while in test 3, a higher dispersion of students' scores is observed.

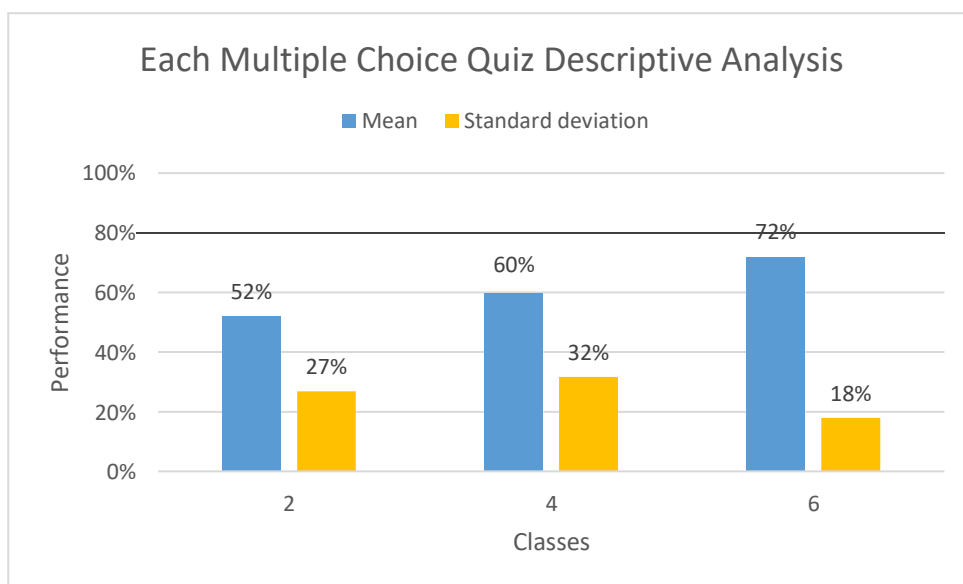


Figure 3: Comparison of Mean scores and Standard Deviation in Multiple Choice Formative Assessment

4.3. Wilcoxon signed-rank test for statistically significant group differences between the first and last True or False and Multiple choice tests.

Even though it was observed an improvement in the students' listening comprehension skill after the intervention, the sample size was small (N=5). For this reason, it was necessary to use the non-parametric Wilcoxon signed-rank test to find out if these differences in terms of improvement were statistically significant.

In Table 8, the results of the non-parametric Wilcoxon test for both True-False quizzes results taken by the five students are presented. This demonstrates a 95%

of confidence interval, which means a 0,05 level of confidence. Finally, the result $T=3$

demonstrates that according to $T(0,05)$, there is not a significant discrepancy between True – False results first and last test.

True – False first test	True – False last test
Sample: 5 students Level of confidence: 95% Level of significance: (0,05) $T(0,05) = 1$ $T = 3$ $T > T(0,05) = 3 > 1$	

Table 8: Wilcoxon test results comparison between True-False first and last test.

In Table 9, the results of the non-parametric Wilcoxon test for both Multiple-choice quizzes results taken by the five students is presented. This demonstrates a 95% of confidence interval, which means a 0,05 level of confidence. Finally, the result $T=4$ demonstrates that according to $T(0,05)$, there is not a significant discrepancy between Multiple Choice results first and last test.

Multiple choice first test	Multiple choice last test
Sample: 5 students Level of confidence: 95% Level of significance: (0,05) $T(0,05) = 1$ $T = 4$ $T > T(0,05) = 4 > 1$	

Table 9: Wilcoxon test results comparison between Multiple choice first and last test.

4.4 Classroom Observation Thematic Analysis

In order to support the descriptive analysis aforementioned, the teacher-researcher observed each lesson and took notes during each session of the intervention, focusing mainly on dimensions such as feedback and students' participation. Table 10 shows the main findings regarding this aspect. A thematic analysis was done based on the information registered.

Session 1			
Categories	Subcategories	Frequency	Example of comments
	Teacher's Feedback	2	<i>"I gave students feedback about best strategies they could use for improving their listening comprehension."</i>
Pre listening activities	Students' participation	4	<i>"In the first session, the students were not willing to participate during the pre-listening activities. They were not used to share with each other. I think that this situation will improve in the coming days".</i>
Post listening activities	Teacher's feedback	1	<i>"I showed the students their results and analyzed with them the problems they faced in the listening comprehension of specific words. I explained to them the word meanings and its language functions".</i>
	Students' participation	2	<i>"They all agreed that next class they would try to switch on their cameras and to participate". They agreed that they had never used QR codes in their classes, and were anxious to use them".</i>
Session 2			
Categories	Subcategories	Frequency	Sample
Pre listening activities	Teacher's Feedback	2	<i>"I told my students that their listening comprehension skill was weak, so I asked them they were going to listen to the audio as many times as necessary in the pre-listening activity in order to get more familiar with the vocabulary".</i>
	Students' participation	3	<i>"I realized that in this second session, the students' attitude changed. They switched on their cameras and they started participating more by answering the questions I asked."</i>

Post listening activities	Teacher's Feedback	2	<i>"My students commented that it was difficult to identify the role of the speaker in the recording sometimes. I told them that in order to participate more, they should listen to the audio more times until they were able to understand the message".</i>
	Students' participation	3	<i>"They said that the audios were not difficult, but sometimes they got confused. They agreed when the teacher asked them if they consider necessary to listen to the audios one more time".</i>
Session 3			
Categories	Subcategories	Frequency	Sample
Pre listening activities	Teacher's Feedback	2	<i>"I told the students that a good way of understanding the message in a listening was to focus their attention on reading the questions carefully before doing the activities, because that would help them to identify the correct answer better".</i>
	Students' participation	3	<i>"I noticed the students seemed to be more willing to participate. They said they liked the idea of reading the questions carefully before starting the activities"</i>
Post listening activities	Teacher's Feedback	2	<i>"I analyzed with the students the mistakes in Q1 about vocabulary. The students acknowledged they required more concentration to go ahead with the rest of the rest of the quiz. I told them that they made mistakes due to factors they need manage by practicing frequently.</i>
	Students' participation	4	<i>"They claimed to understand the audios but maybe they tried to answer the questions so fast. They realized and mentioned that it was not necessary to respond until they are sure about the correct answer".</i>
Session 4			
Categories	Subcategories	Frequency	Sample

Pre listening activities	Teacher's Feedback	1	<i>"I persuaded students one more time to make sure they had understood the information before answering questions. They had the opportunity to ask for listening to the audios the times it was necessary"</i>
	Students' participation	2	<i>"I observed the students were more confident. I chose some students to respond, and they answered the questions correctly. They seemed to be more secure. During this session, they dared to ask after listening to the audio one more time".</i>
Post listening activities	Teacher's Feedback	2	<i>"I checked with students the quiz results, specifically question number 3, which was the one that got the most wrong answers. I insisted one more time on telling them the importance of reading the questions carefully before answering them"</i>
	Students' participation	2	<i>"The students mentioned that now, they know about the strategy to read the question carefully before answering, however, they said that sometimes they forget it because they are very concentrated trying to understand the audios".</i>
Session 5			
Categories	subcategories	Frequency	Sample
Pre listening activities	Teacher's Feedback	2	<i>"I told the students that underlining key words would help them to find the answer once they listen to the recording. In that way, they would be able to pay attention to what specifically was being asked".</i>
	Students' participation	4	<i>"In this session, the learners were able to connect the topic with their own experiences and they talked more in class. They seemed to be interested when comparing the vocabulary topic in English with Spanish. They underlined key words on questions".</i>

Post listening activities	Teacher's Feedback	2	<i>"I observed that the students were more confident. I showed them the questions which had wrong answers and I gave them feedback about the right answers. I gave them some tips to recognize key words".</i>
	Students' participation	3	<i>As they mentioned that this topic "Eating out" was more interesting for them, they paid special attention to some expression and could understand the difference between "A table for two" and "Two tables"</i>
Session 6			
Categories	Subcategories	Frequency	Sample
Pre listening activities	Teacher's Feedback	2	<i>"I made the students reflect about their performances during the intervention, and how my work had been focused on analyzing the wrong answers to try to make them using different strategies to become better listeners".</i>
	Students' participation	4	<i>"In the last session, the students worked more relaxed. They dared to respond, sometimes they made mistakes, however, they continued participating actively in class".</i>
Post listening activities	Teacher's Feedback		<i>"The students said this had been the most difficult audio, as only one person spoke, and it was not easy to identify the key response. I told them that despite all that they had got a 70 % of achievement, and that meant they had improved their listening comprehension skill".</i>
	Students' participation	4	<i>"The students pointed out that it was the first time they were provided with strategies to improve their listening comprehension skills. They also mentioned that the different topics tackled were interesting for them".</i>

Table 10: Thematic analysis from class observation with students' participation and teacher's feedback dimensions.

4.5 Specific objective 2: To identify the students' perceptions about using the formative assessment through Plickers.

In order to identify the students' perception about the use of formative assessment to improve their listening comprehension skills for specific information through the app Plickers, the students were asked to answer a Likert scale survey after the intervention. This survey was made up of nine statements, which were grouped into three main dimensions: formative assessment, listening comprehension skill, and use of Plickers. There were 5 balanced responses which represented levels of agreement: *never*, *almost never*, *neutral*, *almost every time*, *every time*. It is noticed

that this survey was analyzed with a measure of center tendency in a numerical data set called mode (Mo).

4.5.1 Descriptive Statistical Analysis Results of the Formative Assessment Dimension

4.5.2

In Figure 4, regarding Dimension A1 "*The formative assessment supports my learning*", 60% of the students reported that it did "*almost every time*", 20% said "*every time*" and another 20% were *neutral in their opinions*. The categories *never* and *almost never* did not get any score. In relation to Dimension A2 "*I like the teacher gives us feedback in each session*", the responses *never*, *almost never*, and *neutral* did not get any score; however, 80% of the learners chose the option *every time*, and a 20% said *almost every time*. Both percentages added together indicate students' positive attitude. Regarding Dimension A3 "*I like to participate in the feedback*", the responses *never*, *almost never*, and *neutral* did not get any response. Furthermore, an 80% chose *almost every time*, and 20% *every time*, which indicate that most of the students agreed with having participation in the feedback.

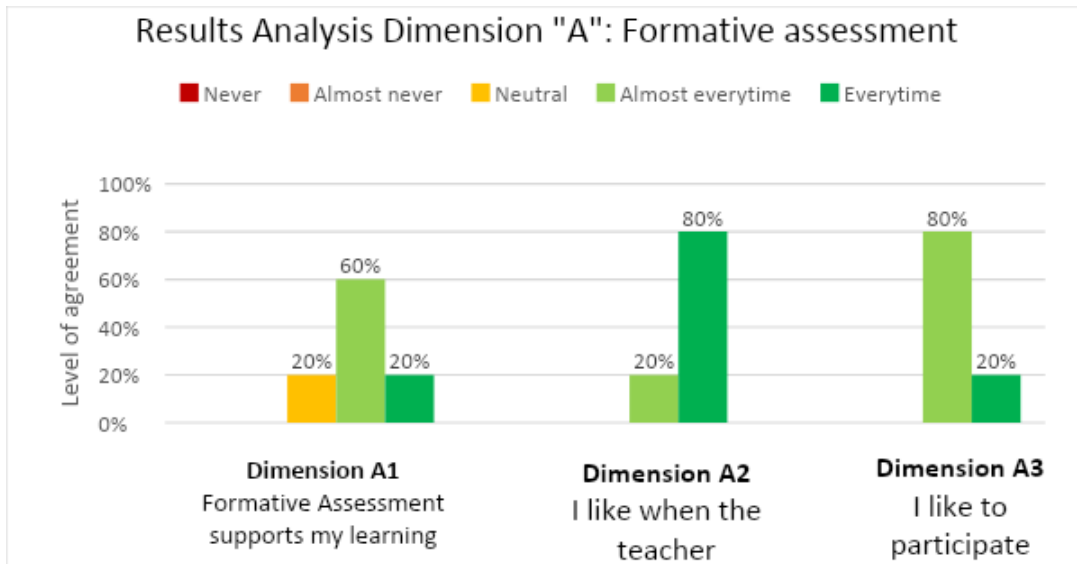


Figure 4: Formative assessment dimension, descriptive analysis

4.5.3 Descriptive Statistical Analysis Results of the Listening Comprehension Dimension

Figure 5 presents the results obtained from the students' responses analysis of the Listening comprehension dimension. In relation to Dimension B1 "Listening *comprehension activities are funny*", the most chosen answers were *every time*, and *almost every time* with a 40%, a 20% selected the option *neutral* and the statements *never*, and *almost never* did not get any responses. In Dimension B2 the statement "*I can comprehend the specific information better when we work on vocabulary in the listening comprehension activities*", a 60% showed a neutral opinion, the responses *every time* and *almost every time* got a 20% each one, and the students did not register responses in *almost never*, and *never*. As defined in Dimension B3 the statement "*It is easier when I listen to the audio and I can get familiar with the topic before starting the activities*", a 60% of the students informed a *neutral* opinion, a 40% of them chose *almost every time*, and the levels of agreement *every time*, *almost every time* and *never* did not get any answer.

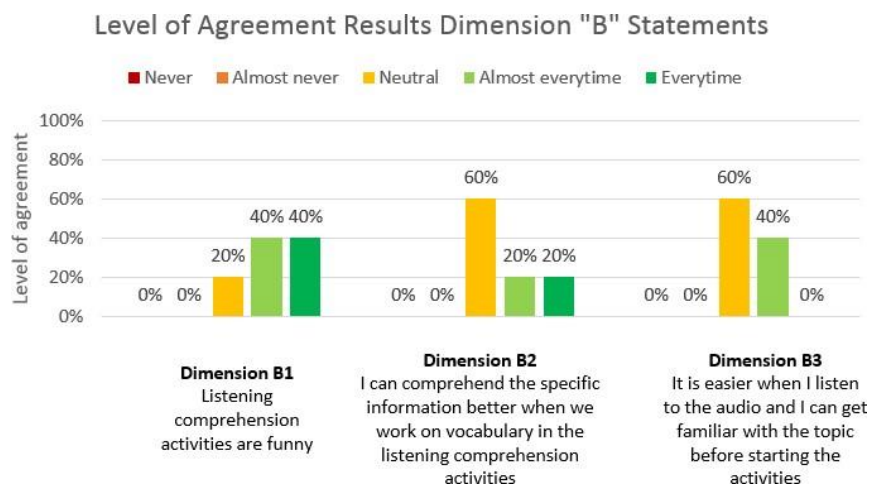


Figure 5: Listening comprehension dimension, descriptive analysis

4.5.4 Descriptive Statistical Analysis Results of the Use of Plickers Dimension

Figure 6 indicates that statement C1 “*The QR code from the platform is authentic*” from this dimension, concentrated responses like *every time* and *almost every time* shared the same percentage 40% , a 20% demonstrated being *neutral*, and the options *almost never* and *never* did not have a response.

Regarding statement C2 “*I like the idea of having my responses being anonymous by using QR codes*”, the students gave the same number of responses for the levels of agreement *every time* and *neutral* with a 20%, while the options *almost never*, and the *almost every time* and *never* did not have responses. Finally, in regard to dimension C3 “*I feel comfortable knowing that the teacher will only give us the overall result of the evaluations, not individuals*”, a big number of students chose the option *every time*, and just a small percentage selected *never*, and the levels of agreement *always*, *neutral*, and *almost never* did not get any answer.

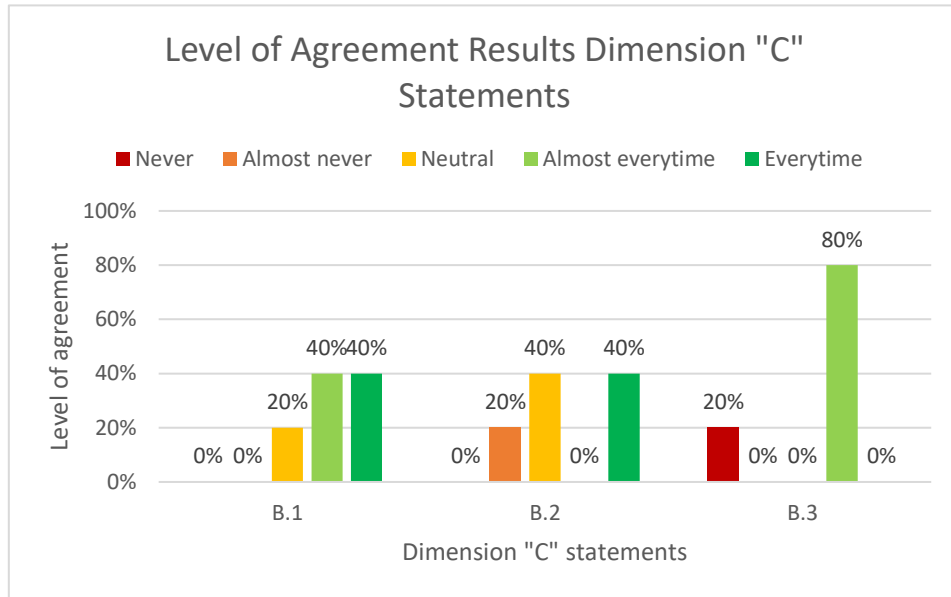


Figure 6: Plickers dimension, descriptive Analysis.

Chapter V: Discussion

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

This Action Research focused on dealing with two specific objectives, using different kinds of analysis, which will be discussed in this chapter.

5.1 Specific objective 1: To analyze how formative assessment improves student's listening skills for specific information through Plickers.

According to the findings that emerged in this action research, it can be concluded that formative assessment implemented on the digital app called Plickers helped the students to improve their listening skills for getting specific information; ever since the results demonstrated that the students made progress along the lessons. Plickers app proved to be a very effective tool as it provided effective, immediate, and efficient feedback to students. One study conducted by Zuhrieh and Sara Abd (2020) reported that students who had used Plickers in the classroom showed greater progress because it encouraged them to participate more actively; also, those students with difficulties got more motivated to participate and answer questions, as well as this app allows everyone to receive feedback and understand their mistakes.

The listening comprehension skill is a receptive challenging skill that requires constant training because the students need to be prepared to face it. In this study, formative assessment proved to be an appropriate type of assessment, since the students were provided with enough evidence of their own progress all along the different listening tasks they did, which led them to improve their performance and reach their goals. Moss and Brookhart (2009) argue that some of the effects of formative assessment are that students learn to collect evidence of their own learning and use this information to choose between growth strategies for success. Students not only learn to master their own learning skills but also increasingly see themselves as autonomous, confident, and capable individuals.

Even though the students from this study seemed to be quite shy at the beginning, they were able to express the difficulties they experienced in each listening test. These comments were analyzed by the teacher and used to provide students' feedback, which was mainly focused on teaching them strategies to achieve a better listening comprehension and identify specific details. For example, strategies were taught by the teacher to make students aware of the role and importance of being familiar with the topic by developing previous activities, such as pre-teaching vocabulary, and listening to the recording before taking the assessment. The students understood that it was an excellent strategy to improve their listening skill for getting specific information. Consequently, the teacher explained to them, how important feedback was in the formative assessment. One study conducted by Bayat, Jamshidipour, and Hashemi (2017) stated that teachers who used formative assessment in their classes reported that their students were able to retain more information, understand concepts faster, and seemed to be more enthusiastic with their learning.

On the other hand, technology is a tool that has a positive effect upon students' learning process, and this was not the exception. A preliminary study on the Role of ICTs in Promoting Learner Independence and Motivation in English Language Classes by Joshi and Poudel (2019), reported that the use of ICT tools had helped the students to be more independent and autonomous, as well as more motivated.

Even though Plickers and its QR codes was something new for the students, it was successfully welcomed. As Plickers is a special tool that allows users to collect on-the-spot formative assessment data, it was a great support since students got the results in terms of percentages immediately after they finished doing their listening tasks so it helped them to become aware about their mistakes. Accordingly, having provided formative assessment by using an online tool as Plickers helped the students to make progress in their results. Gurisik (2019) published a paper in which he concluded that high school students thought that answering questions using Plickers was fun and made them participate in formative assessment as if it were a game for them.

5.2 Specific objective 2: To identify students' perceptions about using formative assessment through Plickers.

The discussion of students' perceptions about formative assessment through Plickers is divided into three main dimensions.

Regarding the first dimension: **Formative Assessment**, most of the students agreed that formative assessment provided immediately through Plickers app after each online listening test supported their learning progress. In addition, they stated that they liked when the teacher gave them feedback in class about their progress. Moreover, they liked to participate in this feedback. Brookhart (2008) argued "Good feedback should be part of a classroom assessment environment in which students see constructive criticism as a good thing and understand that learning cannot occur without practice" (p.2)

Concerned with students' perceptions about the second dimension: **Listening Comprehension for Specific Information**, the participants pointed out mainly that it was easier to understand when they listened to the audio and they were familiar with the topic before starting the activities. Furthermore, most of them said that they could comprehend the specific information better when they worked on the pre vocabulary activities before doing the listening comprehension activities. Atas (2018) shows that there is a moderate correlation between vocabulary knowledge and listening comprehension. Additionally, the research participants stated that listening comprehension activities were funny, since the activities taken from www.britishcouncil.com were focused specifically on teaching teenagers.

In connection with the third dimension: **Use of Plickers**, in most of the cases, the students felt comfortable knowing that the teacher only gave them the overall results of the evaluations. Moreover, the participants liked the idea of providing anonymous responses by using QR codes. Finally, they said that QR codes are authentic, since it was the first time they used QR codes for learning at school.

In summary, regarding Specific Objective 2, the students' perception about using formative assessment through Plickers, it can be concluded that the students had a positive perception as they felt it provided real-time formative assessment that helped them to improve their performance.

5.3 Implications

This action research was focused mainly on the importance of using formative assessment and addressed important topics such as listening comprehension skills for specific information, and the use of Plickers as an interactive real-time assessment tool.

Unfortunately, Formative Assessment in our Chilean context is something difficult to develop in the EFL classroom, since most of the schools are focused on standardized evaluations which involve getting good marks from the students, in order to be ranked among schools with good academic performance within the educational context. However, these standardized evaluations do not allow teachers to know if the students are really learning or not.

This study will be useful for teachers who look for an innovative way to assess their students' learning, since it demonstrated how learners went ahead in their learning process by getting feedback from the teacher, which helped them to reflect upon the process, and learn new strategies to improve their performances in the listening skill for specific information by using an interactive tool called Plickers, which contributed to reduce time, making it much more effective, especially for large classes.

It is observed that our Chilean classrooms are characterized for having an important number of students, hence, it is quite challenging to assess our students formatively recurrently, either to give them praise or feedback. As a solution for these constraints, Plickers would be the appropriate tool, since the students would get real-time feedback, no matter the number of learners inside the classroom.

Consequently, Plickers proved to be more attractive for students, who demonstrated to be more motivated during the learning process. It is worth mentioning that the use of the Internet is not necessary for the students, since they use just a QR code for their answers, which is scanned by the teacher through a mobile phone. This point is quite relevant taking into account the reality of most Chilean schools, where connectivity is not always available.

5.4 Limitations

Even though this action research was originally designed for a specific context, which involved a whole large class from a Chilean public school, with high school students who had a low level of English, it was not possible to carry it out in its original plan since our scenario changed sharply because of the pandemic. As it is globally known, this year 2020, Chile as well as other countries were affected by Covid-19 pandemic, and the working conditions were not the same. The intervention was conducted online, with just 5 students from different schools. Despite that, this study continued being valid, considering that formative assessment is not frequently used in the Chilean EFL classrooms, as it was mentioned previously. Unfortunately, the only feature of using assessment as a means of generating better learning is the emphasis on summative assessment, grading and promotion regulations, and for that reason, there is very little clear evidence about formative assessment as a complementary process in the classroom.

Chapter VI: Conclusions

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

This action research focused on determining how formative assessment would improve students' ability to understand specific information by using an interactive platform. In order to carry out all these actions, different data collection and analysis techniques were implemented, which finally showed that the students improved their listening comprehension skill.

According to SO1, the descriptive analysis of the tests conducted at the end of each intervention session showed that the formative assessment helped students to improve their ability to understand specific information. To complement this part of the intervention, a thematic analysis was applied, through the researcher's observation, in which the moment of feedback and students' participation was mainly highlighted, which proved to be one of the key elements for the students to reflect and be aware of their performance, while helping the researcher to reformulate their teaching performance after the students' learning in each session. Having applied two different types of tests, it was necessary to make an inferential analysis, through a Wilcoxon signed-rank test, which determined that there was no significant difference between True – False and Multiple Choice results first and last tests.

In relation to SO2, in general, the students' perception evaluated in three dimensions, through a Likert scale, was positive, since in most of the aspects assessed, they agreed very much.

Firstly, in the dimension of, "formative assessment" the students stated that it supported their learning, while they liked when the teacher gave them feedback in each session, and they participated in the feedback.

Secondly, regarding the 'listening comprehension' dimension, most students strongly agreed that the listening comprehension activities were fun, consequently, they could better understand the specific information when working on vocabulary in the listening activities, and that it was easier when they listened to the audio before the assessment, since they felt familiarized with the topic.

Thirdly, regarding the "Use of Plickers" dimension, the majority of students said, on the one hand, that the Platform's QR codes were authentic, on the other hand, they liked that the answers, using these codes, would be anonymous, and finally, they said they felt comfortable, knowing that the teacher only gave the general results of each evaluation.

In conclusion, it can be determined that each element used in this research, whether it was formative assessment, listening comprehension, and the use of an interactive platform, played a key role in the positive results, considering that these were selected according to the present reality in the educational context to be studied.

Therefore, it can be stated that formative assessment helps students to improve their listening comprehension for specific information, through the Plickers interactive platform.

5.1 Personal reflection

As a reflection, I can say that this research became quite challenging, considering that this was a different year, where important decisions had to be taken, since we are facing one of the worst pandemics that humanity has ever experienced. Fortunately, I was able to continue with my research since the fundamental problem to be dealt with not only affects the context in which I work but is a country-wide issue. However, one of the most relevant challenges to be faced was the sample change, which was modified from a face-to-face environment to a virtual one, in addition to having to reduce the number of participants from 35, as originally planned, to 5 students.

The fact that I had to make these changes made me feel very hesitant at first. However, as the days went by, I realised that changing the sample or the context could still be of great contribution in the area.

The situation we are experiencing today due to the Pandemic, has presented us with an excellent opportunity to change the evaluation strategy, since through online classes, we have had the opportunity to venture into different platforms that help provide feedback to students, thus putting summative evaluation in the background.

5.2 Recommendations

The formative evaluation, in our country Chile, is a process that is inserted in the national curriculum. However, it has not been adequately implemented in the establishments.

This study will be a contribution to those in service teachers, who wish to improve their pedagogical practices, placing emphasis on student learning rather than on results through this type of evaluation, since student progress has been objectively demonstrated.

As the reality of our country consists of working with a large number of students in the classroom, and with few technological resources in public education, Plickers is a totally recommendable interactive platform, since it allows to evaluate formatively a large number of students in a short time. Another important aspect is that the use of technology by students is not necessary, since they only use printed QR codes, which makes it attractive and motivating.

CHAPTER VII: REFERENCES

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Appendix

Listening comprehension task 1

Free time

Name: _____ Date: _____

Objective: To extract specific information from a recording applying thematic vocabulary related to "Free time"

Listen to Tyrone calling his local swimming pool and do the exercises to practice and improve your listening skills.

Activity 1

Do this exercise before you listen. Write the words in the correct group.

badminton	water polo	football
table tennis	diving	sailing

Water sports	Indoor sports	Outdoor sports

Activity 2

Do this exercise while you listen. Complete the registration form with Tyrone's information.

BROWNTON SWIMMING POOL REGISTRATION FORM
Name: Tyrone
Surname:
Age:
Interested in (sport):

Formative Assessment

- There are four different age groups that play water polo.
 - TRUE
 - FALSE
- Tyrone wants to join the under 14s club.
 - TRUE
 - FALSE
- The under 16s train on Monday and Thursday.
 - TRUE
 - FALSE
- Water polo matches are played on Saturdays.
 - TRUE
 - FALSE
- You need to bring a photo to register at the swimming pool.
 - TRUE
 - FALSE

Listening comprehension task 2

Work


Name: _____ Date: _____

Objective: To extract specific information from a recording using thematic vocabulary related to "Work"

Listen to five different people talking about their jobs and do the exercises to practice and improve your listening skills.

Activity 1.

Do this exercise before you listen. Write the correct word in the boxes below the picture.

shop assistant	teacher	dentist	cleaner
police officer	doctor	pilot	nurse
			
			

Activity 2.

Do this exercise while you listen. Complete the gaps with the correct word.

1. Speaker A works as a _____
2. Speaker B works as a _____
3. Speaker C works as a _____
4. Speaker D works as a _____
5. Speaker E works as a _____

Formative Assessment

1. Does the speaker "A" enjoy his job?
 - a. Yes
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. No
2. When does speaker "B" work?
 - a. Weekdays
 - b. Weekends and holidays
 - c. Summer holidays
3. Does speaker "C" like his job?
 - a. Yes
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. No
4. What does speaker "D" say is the best thing about his job?
 - a. Meeting different people
 - b. Visiting different places
 - c. The different weather
5. What does speaker "E" not like about her job?
 - a. The doctors
 - b. The sick people
 - c. The uniform

Listening comprehension task 3
Weather and forecast

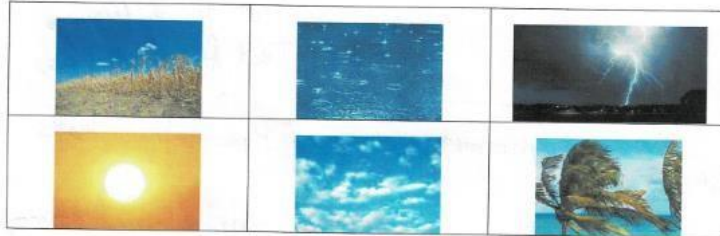
Name: _____ Date: _____

Objective: To extract specific information from a recording, using thematic vocabulary related to "Weather and forecast"

Listen to the weather forecast and do the exercises to practice and improve your listening skills.

Activity 1.

Do this exercise before you listen. Draw a line to match the pictures with the words below.



rainy	windy	thunderstorm
sunny	dry	cloudy

Activity 2.

Do this exercise while you listen. Write the word to fill the gap.

- Welcome to the weather forecast. Now, let's see what the weather is _____ today.
- In the north of the country it's very windy and cold. There is a _____ of some rain, too.
- The temperature is around 10 _____ centigrade.
- In the east it's rainy all day today, I'm afraid. There may be a thunderstorm in the afternoon. The _____ is a bit higher, at around 13 degrees.
- In the west and middle of the country the weather is dry _____ cloudy.
- The south of the country has the _____ weather today. It's cloudy most of the time but sunny this afternoon.

Formative Assessment

- The weather in the north is very windy and cold.
 - True
 - False
- In the east it is rainy all night
 - True
 - False
- The weather in the west is rainy
 - True
 - False
- The weather in the south is cloudy most of the time
 - True
 - False

Listening comprehension task 4

Trains and travel

Name: _____ Date: _____

Objective: To extract specific information from a recording, using thematic vocabulary related to "Trains and travel"

Listen to five different conversations at a train station and do the exercises to improve your listening skills.

Activity 1.

Do this exercise before you listen. Match the vocabulary with the correct definition and write a – d next to the number 1 – 4.

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 1..... platform | a. A small piece of paper to allow you to use a train or bus. |
| 2..... ticket | b. The place in a train station where people get on and get off trains. |
| 3..... single (ticket) | c. A ticket to travel to a place, but not to travel back |
| 4..... return (ticket) | d. A ticket to travel to a place and back again. |

Activity 2

Do this exercise while you listen. Complete the gaps with the correct word.

Listening A

The speaker wants to go to _____

Listening B

The speaker wants to go to _____

Listening C

The speaker wants to go to _____

Listening D

The train is going to _____

Listening E

The passengers want to go to _____

Formative Assessment

1. Listening "A" The speaker wants to go to...
 - a. Cambridge
 - b. England
 - c. London
2. Listening "B" The speaker wants to go to...
 - a. Mexico
 - b. Manchester
 - c. Munich
3. Listening "C" The speaker wants to go to...
 - a. Australia
 - b. Orlando
 - c. Oxford
4. Listening "D" The train is going to...
 - a. France
 - b. Italia
 - c. Exeter
5. Listening "E" The passengers want to go to...
 - a. Cambridge
 - b. London
 - c. England

Listening comprehension task 5

Eating out













Name: _____ Date: _____

Objective: To extract specific information from a recording, using thematic vocabulary related to "Food"

Listen to the conversation in a restaurant and do the exercises to improve your listening skills.

Activity 1.

Do this exercise before you listen. Write the correct word in the boxes below the picture.

fruit salad	cheeseburger	vegetables	cheese and biscuits	ice cream	pasta
chips	roast chicken	sausages	tomato soup	omelette	grilled fish

Activity 2.

Do this exercise while you listen. Complete the gaps with a word from the box.

1. A table _____ two, please.
2. Are you _____ to order?
3. What would you _____ for your starter?
4. I'd _____ French onion soup, please.
5. What _____ you like to drink?
6. I'll _____ a fresh orange juice.

Formative Assessment

1. The customers want two tables.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. There are two customers eating together.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. The two customers order the same starter.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. The customers order cold drinks.
 - a. True
 - b. False
5. Both customers order a desert.
 - a. True
 - b. False

Listening comprehension task 6

Using colours to do homework

Name: _____ Date: _____

Objective: To extract specific information from a recording, using thematic vocabulary related "Colours and homework"

Listen to the presentation about using colours to organise homework and do the exercises to practise and improve your listening skills.

Activity 1.

Match the two parts of the sentences and write a-f next to the numbers 1-6.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1..... You can use colour | a. from a library. |
| 2..... A stationery shop | b. to remember important things. |
| 3..... You can write on sticky notes | c. days, weeks and months of a year. |
| 4..... We borrow books | d. is red, white and blue. |
| 5..... The flag of Britain | e. coding to organise homework. |
| 6..... A calendar shows the | f. sells pens and paper. |

Activity 2.

Complete the sentences with the correct word.

1. The speaker uses _____ coding to organize her homework.
2. She suggests buying coloured pens, _____ and other stationery.
3. She chooses a colour for each _____.
4. History is blue so her folder is blue and her history _____ are on blue sticky notes.
5. Then she uses blue flags to mark the _____ she needs to read for history homework.
6. She uses coloured stars on a _____ to organize each subject's homework.

Formative Assessment

1. To start you need:
 - a. A few things
 - b. A lot of things
 - c. Nothing
2. First, I choose a different colour for:
 - a. All subjects
 - b. Math subject
 - c. Each school subject
3. Here is a photo of my:
 - a. Sticky notes
 - b. Folders
 - c. Calendar
4. This is a photo of some more:
 - a. Sticky notes
 - b. Homework
 - c. Laptop
5. Finally, this last photo shows my:
 - a. French homework
 - b. Math homework
 - c. Wall calendar






Escala Likert

Nombre: _____ Fecha: _____

Objetivo: Medir hasta qué punto los estudiantes están de acuerdo o en desacuerdo con las siguientes afirmaciones.

Instrucciones: Lea cuidadosamente las afirmaciones y escriba una "X" debajo del nivel que más represente su opinión.



	 Nunca	 Casi nunca	 Neutro	 Casi siempre	 Siempre
A. Evaluación Formativa					
1. La evaluación formativa me gusta porque apoya mi aprendizaje.					
2. Me gusta cuando la profesora nos da retroalimentación en <u>cada sesión</u> .					
3. Me gusta participar de la retroalimentación respondiendo a las preguntas que hace la profesora acerca de las actividades.					
B. Comprensión auditiva					
1. Las actividades de comprensión auditiva me parecen divertidas.					
2. Puedo comprender mejor la información específica cuando trabajamos el vocabulario en las actividades de comprensión auditiva.					
3. Es más fácil cuando escucho el audio y me familiarizo con el tema antes de realizar las actividades.					
C. Plickers					
1. Los códigos QR de la plataforma Plickers son auténticos.					
2. Me gusta la idea de que mi respuesta sea anónima usando códigos QR.					
3. Me siento tranquilo (a) al saber que los resultados que da Plickers son solo el porcentaje general de todos los participantes, no individuales.					