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**FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS SOCIALES LICENCIATURA LA ENSEÑANZA DEL
INGLÉS**

**THE EFFECTS OF USING MUSIC VIDEOS AND SONG LYRICS
([HTTPS://LYRICSTRAINING.COM/](https://lyricstraining.com/)) ON TENTH GRADE STUDENTS' LISTENING
PROFICIENCY FROM LICEO SAN JOSE DE ALAJUELA.**

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OPTAR POR EL GRADO DE LICENCIATURA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS**

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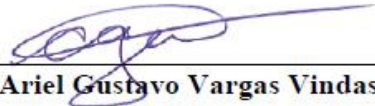
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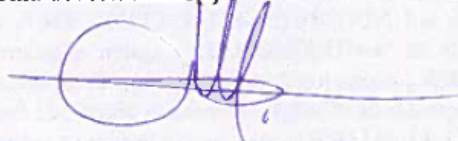
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Abstract

Learning English is a requirement in today's world. Many people dream with being able to master that language because the opportunities it offers can be countless. In order for people to learn a language, they should have certain proficiency level in all four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing).

Although all four skills are important when it comes to learning English, this paper intends to highlight the super important role that listening plays in the teaching and teaching process. It will also explain why listening is considered the most difficult skill to learn as well as the most neglected one by teachers and discuss about the advantages that using music in the classroom can have. It will specifically recommend the use of lyricstraining.com, which is a website that offers the best music and lyrics to date featuring thousands of music videos accompanied by cloze versions of lyrics.

Resumen

Aprender inglés es un requerimiento en el mundo de hoy. Mucha gente sueña con ser capaces de manejar ese idioma porque las oportunidades que ofrece son incontables. Para que alguien aprenda este idioma, se debe tener cierto nivel de competencia en las cuatro habilidades (escuchar, hablar, leer y escribir).

Aunque las cuatro habilidades son importantes cuando se trata de aprender inglés, este trabajo escrito intenta enfatizar el rol tan importante que juega el escuchar en el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje. El mismo también explica el por qué escuchar es considerado la habilidad más difícil para aprender y a la vez la más descuidada por los profesores y discute acerca de las ventajas que tiene el usar música en la clase. Este trabajo específicamente recomienda el uso de lyricstraning.com, el cual es un sitio web que ofrece la mejor música y letras a la fecha presentando miles de videos musicales acompañados por letras para ser completadas por los estudiantes.

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Dedicatory

I want to dedicate this thesis to the one and only God Almighty, who has been and forever will be the reason why I can do everything that I can do. HE witnessed my worries and concerns since this project's very beginning and provided me with more than I could have ever asked for or expected. HE gave me a clear mind through the whole process, sent wisdom my way when I needed it the most, and took away all fears and thoughts of insecurity.

I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me. Philippians 4:13.

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Chapter I

Introduction

1.1.Introduction

Being able to speak English has become a life goal for a lot of people. English is the most spoken language in the world, and that is why achieving a good proficiency level in it went from a nice-to-have thing to a must-have one very quickly. Speaking English is no longer perceived as a luxury to people, but it is now more of a true necessity. People have become more and more aware of its importance and how it can open countless doors for them in every field of their lives. By knowing English, people can have access to better educational resources, better jobs, and therefore better life conditions. Speaking English even offers people opportunities to travel and communicate with anyone anywhere.

Costa Rica's Ministry of Public Education (MEP) understands the importance of English and knows the advantages that people would have if they knew the language; however, their good intentions may not be enough if the approaches and the methods that teachers use sometimes are considered. If the teachers' goal is really to help students master the English language, teachers must make sure that students get an equal chance to understand, learn and practice every skill of the language, meaning listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

It is no secret that most teachers are more concerned with teaching students how to speak, read, and write, but seem to just forget or simply expect that listening to some recorded conversations is good enough for them to develop their listening skills. According to Nation & Newton (2009), "listening comprehension is one of the most neglected skills in English language teaching" (as cited in García, 2015, p. 1).

All four skills are equally important; however, listening might just be one of the most difficult skills for teachers to teach and for students to accomplish, and what is even more concerning is that this is not only a reality for students in Costa Rica, but also for many others

around the world. Robles (2017) confirms that when she says: “it is essential to recognize the complexity of the listening skill since teaching it is not as simple as playing the recorded texts and then asking students to pay attention to master the skill” (p. 61). And even before she mentioned that, she also said that “some EFL learners have experienced that the listening skill has been the least practiced skill in their classrooms and that understanding spoken speech in real life interactions is quite hard” (p. 60).

Knowing that listening is not an easy skill and that it does not get the attention it deserves, is a very important first step to fixing the issue and helping students get closer to mastering the target language. What does this mean? Well, it means that listening is a skill that can cause trouble for teachers, but also for students. Therefore, it is a topic that teachers should pay attention to and make sure that they take the time to think of something they can do to attack this problem.

Listening to music might be one of the best solutions to this issue, considering that it is an activity that most people do and enjoy. Teachers should be smart and use this kind of authentic material, music, for their own and their students’ advantage as it helps motivate them, transforms the learning environment, can be engaging, and can provide a pleasant relationship between the worlds of enjoyment and learning in the classroom. Not to mention that listening to it frequently, may help people learn new words and their correct pronunciation without even knowing that they are learning or thinking too much about it.

This research explains what listening is, its importance, and it also attempts to determine if students' listening skills can be improved by using songs' lyrics and music. To be more specific, it helps teachers realize whether using the following website: <https://lyricstraining.com/>, can provide students the practice they need to educate and train their ears, feel less stressed out or anxious when in front of native speakers, and more confident so that they can achieve their goals.

1.2.Problem Statement

As previously mentioned in the introduction section, the focus of this research is to understand how important it is to listen when it comes to learning a new language, English in this case. It is everyone's dream to be able to understand everything others say. Mastering the skill of listening is vital if a pleasant and fluent conversation with someone from a different culture is desired. The better students are at listening, the easier it will be for them to get to know others and learn new things.

However, the main issue here is that teachers do not understand the importance of the listening skill and forget or simply do not know that "listening is one of the most difficult types of speech activity" (Zhdanov & Baklanov, 2020), and so the way it is currently taught, pushes students every time further and further away from achieving their goal and living their dream.

Teachers should always keep in mind that "listening is the key element in the communication process which confirms understanding and correct interpretation of the content of the message given, without listening there is no communication" (Coll Torres & Miranda Alvarado, 2017).

Why is it important to understand the value that listening adds to students' learning process? Besides what was just mentioned, that without listening there is no communication, comparing the four skills might answer that question: if people need to express an idea, but they do not find the words they want, they can always try to say it differently; if they are asked to write something, they can investigate or ask someone else for help; if they do not understand a written message, they can go back to it as many times as they want and read it again until they understand it; HOWEVER, listening is something that people might just have one chance at since they are expected to respond almost at the same time or shortly after the spoken message is delivered.

1.3.Justification

The motivation of this research lies in the imperative need second language (English) learners have in Costa Rica, more specifically tenth graders in Liceo San José de Alajuela, which is being able to develop their listening proficiency to successfully learn a second language.

Listening is the first skill that people get to put into practice at the beginning of their lives and the proficiency level they get in it, will most likely define the success that they will have when learning the other three skills (speaking, reading, and writing); however, teachers usually forget the important role that listening plays in learning a second language.

Listening is an important medium of information gathering in our life. In addition, listening is the language activity that is used most frequently. That is fact that, a new-born baby will first listen to the voices and sounds in his or her environment in order to internalize linguistic input, before he or she speaks and learns to read and write.

(Jumadullayeva, 2020, p. 184).

If listening is the skill that gets used the most on a daily basis and it is the one that also gets practiced for so long before even getting close to using the other three when learning a native language, should it not be somehow emphasized as well when learning a foreign language? Many would say it should; but sadly, the way teachers approach this skill remains the same.

This research intends to cause a change in teachers' minds and hopefully in their activities moving forward for strengthening the students' listening abilities by using music videos and song lyrics (<https://lyricstraining.com>). Taking advantage of such an interactive website can be just exactly what is needed to give listening a boost while providing a much more interesting, musical, and stress-free class environment.

1.4.Objectives

1.4.1. General Objective

- To analyze the use of music videos and song lyrics (<https://lyricstraining.com/>) to improve tenth grade students' listening proficiency from Liceo San José de Alajuela.

1.4.2. Specific Objectives

- To describe the significance of helping students improve their listening skills.
- To identify whether using music videos and song lyrics (<https://lyricstraining.com/>) increases students' ability to listen.
- To propose innovative activities to strengthen students' listening proficiency by using music videos and song lyrics (<https://lyricstraining.com/>).

1.5.Scopes and Limitations

1.5.1. Limitations

As far as limitations, the only one that will be mentioned is timing. Why? Because by the time the questionnaires were ready to be applied, students were on their end-of-year vacation, so things had to be taken care of in a more rapidly way once they went back to school.

Questionnaires were actually applied by the group's teacher since due to the timing issue that was just mentioned, it could not have been applied by the researcher.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

2.1. Definition of listening

According to Rost (2002), “listening, in most general terms, is simply described as the act of hearing. While such definition merely alludes to listening as a neurological event, listening involves many invisible mental processes of understanding speech in a second or foreign language” (as cited in Rintaningrum, 2018, p. 9). Just as Rost, many people may think that listening is simply the act of hearing, but the truth is that hearing and listening are two different terms, which will be defined later.

This may very well be one of the many reasons why teachers have not been giving listening the attention it demands in their classrooms for a long time now. They probably think that it is something that students will just master eventually; however, listening requires a lot more work and effort than people think. As mentioned by Rost (2005), “listening is also an extremely complex process which involves not only receptive, but also constructive and interpretative aspects of cognition” (as cited in Cakır, 2018, p. 154). Velasco & Acuña (2021) even refer to it as “an active intellectual process of interpreting, decoding, evaluating and understanding messages” (p. 45).

So, it is safe to say that listening is the most difficult skill for people when they are learning a second language, and the main reason for that is the number of things that happen simultaneously in their brain when they do it. It might look like people are not doing much when they are listening, but that is only because the brain activity is not something that can be seen.

For that reason, some people might erroneously think that listening is just a passive skill, because all the processes happening when listening are invisible, but just because they cannot be seen, it does not mean that they are not happening, they all may even be happening at the same time, which makes everything much more complicated. Therefore, listening should be perceived

as a very active skill instead, if not the most active one of all four and the very one the other three skills (speaking, reading, and writing) depend on. That is why “labeling listening as a passive skill is deceptive” (Movva et al., 2022, p. 1501).

Listening is a vital primary stage of language acquisition. If students do not listen or learn to listen well, then the latter stages of the complex pattern of language acquisition within a productive framework (in other words, speaking and writing) in the communicative classroom will be difficult. (Rintaningrum, 2018, p. 9)

Listening is the first ability humans start to work on and it actually takes them a while before they can even start to produce sounds, let alone form entire sentences. As Mailawati & Anita (2022) say “listening is how spoken language becomes the first stage of learning a new language” (p. 64). This fact alone, should help teachers realize the importance of listening and therefore the focus and priority that should be given to it during all their English classes. This idea is also confirmed by Velasco & Acuña (2021) who state the following: “for years, however, the skill of listening has been taken for granted in the L2 literature, although it is often considered as the first language skill one develops and contributes primarily for language expertise” (p. 44).

Listening is a skill that requires time, effort, focused attention, and a lot of practice, and as it was previously mentioned, it plays a super important role in how successful learners can become when it comes to learning the other three skills (speaking, reading, and writing).

2.2.Differences between hearing and listening

According to Linse and Nunan (2005), “hearing involves only the perception and processing of sounds, not comprehension” (as cited in García, 2015, p. 2), but just because someone perceives a sound, does not necessarily mean that there has been certain effort put into it by the person performing this action (hearing). In other words, it is something that happens to people without them realizing it. Some examples of things people hear, are the following: a telephone ringing, people talking in the distance, birds chirping, the horns of a vehicle, etc.

On the other hand, and as previously mentioned, listening is considered an active process, and that is because in order for people to listen, a conscious effort on their part is required. For example, in a conversation between two people, one of them will speak while the other one will listen. If the person listening wants to be able to understand the message being transmitted, there should be some level of attention invested in the action of listening; however, as García (2015) mentions: “listening is not only hearing attentively” (p. 2), it goes way beyond that. “Listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying” (Mailawati & Anita, 2022, p. 64). That definition right there includes a very important word “understand”, and if understanding is a requirement for listening, then it definitely involves several other cognitive processes like “interpreting, decoding, evaluating” (Velasco & Acuña, 2021, p. 45), which make listening a deeper and much more complicated skill than hearing.

2.3.The importance of listening

Holden (2004) states that “it is estimated that adults spend 40-50% of their communication time on listening, 25-30% on speaking, 10-15% on reading, and about 10% on writing” (as cited in Velasco & Acuña, 2021, p. 44). This alone should be proof enough of the great importance that the listening skill has. It really is what people do the most during their

entire life, so why is listening not perceived or approached the right way? That is certainly a question every teacher should be asking themselves.

According to Bulletin (1952), listening “is the medium through which people gain a large portion of their education, their information, their understanding of the world and of human affairs, their ideals, sense of values, and their appreciation” (as cited in Shariyevna & Atxamovna, 2020, p. 644). So, people are able to improve their existing knowledge as well as gain some new one about everything that is around them, all through the act of listening.

Sheth & Chauhan (2015) believe that, “although listening is an imperative key to language success, unfortunately, it has been thrown on the back seat for teaching reading and writing in the classroom” (as cited in Ngwoke et al., 2022, p. 1241). Many people would have to agree with them on this. It is very sad and worrying that despite how important listening is for human beings, teachers have willingly, or not, disappointed students and even contributed to them feeling frustrated when an ability so significant does not get the consideration it deserves.

Why has listening been neglected? Is it something that teachers do on purpose? Unfortunately, those questions cannot be easily answered. All teachers are different, that means that the reasons for listening not being adequately taught, can be countless. However, Mannion & Mercer (2020) think that “perhaps the main reason for this is that listening is invisible – it leaves no paper trail and cannot be detected or recorded in the way that speaking can” (p. 28), and maybe they are right. Maybe it is hard for teachers to know whether or not their students’ listening skill is developing, needs improvement or is nonexistent.

It looks, though, like researchers and teachers have been becoming more and more aware of how important listening is in the last decades, which is something very good and at the same time provides a little more of hope to all those students in their classrooms.

2.4.Reasons why listening is a difficult skill

The importance of the listening skill has already been established. Listening is a skill that demands a lot of effort and practice, but is there anything else that teachers should be aware of? “Even though listening comprehension is an important language skill in second language learning, it is considered to be the most difficult skill to learn” (Yaacob et al., 2021, p. 4). Those are two things that teachers should always keep in mind during the whole teaching process. Listening is both, the most important skill and the most difficult one at the same time.

There are probably many reasons why listening is considered the most difficult skill of all four when people are learning a second language. Connelly (2019) mentions “in the case of the L2 classroom, lack of interest, increased anxiety, low confidence, and reduced intrinsic motivation can greatly affect a student’s listening ability” (p. 19). Although his affirmation sounds correct and makes a lot of sense, he may be a little more focused on the reasons from a student’s perspective. All four reasons above, have to do with situations the students go through during their learning process at some point, but they could also be seen more like conditions that are developed within the students. Something important to mention here is that even though these are strictly related to how students might feel, it does not mean that there is not something that teachers can do to help them overcome those conditions. Teachers are still responsible to guide, support, and look for ways to make sure their students are able to reach their goal despite any of the conditions previously mentioned.

Are there any other reasons why listening is considered the hardest skill to learn? Of course. According to Field (2003), “the following can cause comprehension problems: speech is fast, speech is variable, word boundaries are blurry, and speech has to be processed in real time” (as cited in Renandya & Farrell, 2011, p. 53). Unlike the previous four mentioned by Connelly, these ones do not have much to do with students or their feelings, they are really more like factors that are out of the students’ reach, meaning that there is nothing that they can do to control them. In other words, these are things that the students will have to learn to deal with.

The last reason mentioned above, “speech has to be processed in real time” is probably the biggest one. Although it is understood that both, listening and reading, “belong to receptive types of speech activity” (Bahodirovna, 2021, p. 39), reading has a little bit of an advantage over listening. Why is that? Reading does not necessarily need to be processed in real time. As a matter of fact, when people are reading, they always have the chance to go back and read again, if necessary, as opposed to what happens with listening when processing should be immediate and most of the times a response is even expected almost at the same time the spoken message is received.

One more reason why students might find this skill especially difficult, could be related to the fact that they do not really practice as much as they should. This particular reason is something that they can actually do something about. As Trunov (2011) says: “to learn to understand what native speakers are saying, you need to listen to foreign speech as often as possible” (as cited in Zhdanov & Baklanov, 2020, p. 2900). Unfortunately, that does not reflect many students’ reality. If students really invested time to listening, they would realize that most of the stress and anxiety they feel when in class or during a test will start decreasing tremendously. Daily practice can really help students get those psychological factors that have

negative effects on English achievement to a point where those do not represent such an issue for them anymore.

Besides all the reasons previously mentioned, there are probably many more things that contribute to the difficulty that students have to get a higher proficiency level in the listening skill, but here are eleven of them:

“The first is they are trying to understand every word, second is they get left behind trying to work out what a previous word meant, third is they just don't know the most important words, fourth is they don't recognize the words that they know, fifth is they have problems with different accents, sixth is they lack listening stamina/they get tired, seventh is they have a mental block, eighth is they are distracted by background noise, ninth is they can't cope with not having images, tenth is they have hearing problems, and eleventh is they can't tell the difference between the different voices” (Ulfa, 2019, p. 130).

2.5. Categories for listening activities

2.5.1. Pre-listening

“The purpose of the pre-listening stage is activating the students' background knowledge as well as generating their interest in the song. This stage can begin with warm-up questions, presentation of useful vocabulary and grammar structures or prediction activities. An example of prediction activities is when the teacher shows a picture or plays the introduction to the song and asks students to predict the title, content or theme of the song” (Bokiev et al., 2018, p. 326).

It is easier for people to listen more effectively when they have a purpose in mind. For instance, if their goal when listening to the weather report is to determine whether to wear a coat,

they will want to focus on the temperature. In other words, if teachers explain to their students the goal of the listening exercises, not only will they know why they listen, but they will also learn how to listen more effectively. As Jumadullayeva (2020) says, “the idea of knowing the purpose of listening is a very effective first strategy to teach because it helps students organize and reflect on their learning” (p. 186).

It would be unreasonable for teachers to throw their students right into the listening without first explaining the topic or the sort of task they would be working on. That is why it is imperative to provide students with everything they need before the activity, so they know what to listen for and have a better understanding of their task.

“Pre-listening exercises emphasize on providing a proper general framework for the activity, as well as examples of well-structured texts, breaking the activity into simple, well-sequenced learning steps, briefing, activating previous knowledge, relating to previous task experience, relating to previous levels of achievement, sharing learning goals, explaining listening behavior” (Movva et al., 2022, p. 1501).

2.5.2. While-listening

“In the second stage, the students are required to listen to the song and to complete a certain task. For instance, the teacher could ask the students to underline specific words, to rearrange words or lines, to fill in gaps, to spot and correct mistakes or to match phrases with definitions. It is important to bear in mind that the song should be played at least two or three times to enable students to complete the task” (Bokiev et al., 2018, p. 326).

“While – listening activities primarily focus on - contextualizing - explaining - teacher modeling strategies to monitor understanding - teacher modeling of appropriate listening behaviors - questioning of/by pupils while on task - seeking clarification” (Movva et al., 2022, p. 1502).

2.5.3. Post-listening

“In the post-listening stage, students can engage in speaking, writing, or reading activities. By way of example, they can practice pronunciation and vocabulary by singing or chanting the song lyrics as a class or in groups. Besides, the students might sum up the action of the song or its main theme, discuss the message of the song or read a text related to the topic of the song” (Bokiev et al., 2018, p. 326).

Post-listening activities give students the chance to move beyond literal understanding and develop their interpretive and critical thinking skills as well as give teachers the chance to test and review students' knowledge and comprehension. Movva et al. (2022) say that “post-listening activities primarily focus on reflecting, evaluating, encouraging transfer of skills, valuing different levels of achievement” (p. 1502).

2.6. The two models of the listening process

2.6.1. Top-down model

“Top-down processing relies on prior knowledge and experience to build the meaning of a listening text using the information provided by sounds and words. To arrive at a meaning of a text, the listener draws on her knowledge of the context topic, speakers, situation, and matching it to the aural input. Top-down listening skills include: listening for gist, main ideas, topic, and setting of the

text, listening for specific information, sequencing the information, prediction, guessing, inferencing.” (Wah, 2019, p. 884)

The listener moves from the whole (their prior knowledge), to the components through top-down procedures. In other words, the listener makes predictions about the content of the message based on their knowledge of the communication context and uses portions of the message to either confirm, correct, or add to these predictions.

2.6.2. Bottom-up model

“Bottom-up processing helps students recognize lexical and pronunciation features to understand the text. Because of their direct focus on language forms at the word and sentence levels, bottom-up exercises are particularly beneficial for students who need to expand their language repertoire. As they become more aware of linguistic features of the input, the speed and accuracy of perceiving and processing aural input will increase. To develop bottom-up processing, students could be asked to: distinguish individual sounds, word boundaries, and stressed syllables, identify grammatical forms and functions, recognize contractions and connected speech, recognize linking words” (Wah, 2019, p. 884).

In other words, bottom-up processes are those that the listener employs to put together the message from the speech stream, going from the parts to the whole, so to sum up – when the listeners use existing knowledge and experiences, it is known as top-down process. On the other hand, when the listeners use their knowledge of sounds, word meanings, etc., it is referred to as bottom-up process.

Is one of them better than the other one? According to Abdimajitovna & Sobitaliyevna (2021) “it is important for the learners to operate from both directions since both can offer keys to determine the meaning of spoken language” (p. 89).

2.7.What is music?

Levinson (1990), defines music as "sounds temporally organized by a person for the purpose of enriching or intensifying experience through active engagement (e.g., listening, dancing, performing) with the sounds regarded primarily, or in significant measure, as sounds” (as cited in Davies, 2012, p. 536). Music is something that everyone or almost everyone loves. People listen to music every day, voluntarily and involuntarily. Music is all around, so no one can really escape from it. Some people might even say that they could not live without music, so in some cases it has become one with people, which is basically why teachers should take advantage of it. It was already established that sometimes people even listen to music without even noticing, so why would teachers not use something that students are exposed to many times during their day? As Mobbs & Cuyul (2018) say “music is universally loved, and it provides pleasure and inspiration to listeners” (p. 24).

According to Hampton (2017) when someone “listens to a piece of music, the brain’s right and left hemispheres work together to process the melody and analyze the other musical elements (e.g., rhythm, pitch, and timbre) while the limbic system activates an emotional response” (Mendes et al., 2021, p. 192); however, is this the only advantage music has? Below are some other advantages of using music in the classroom.

2.8.Advantages of music in the classroom

According to Jumadullayeva (2020), “songs in general use simple conversational language with a lot of repetition. They can strongly activate the repetition mechanism of the

language acquisition, which is just what many teachers look for in sample texts” (p. 184). He definitely makes a very good point about the repetition mechanism. Repetition is very much needed when learning English; however, students do not always commit enough or use the amount of repetition they should. That is why teachers should wake up to this fact and take advantage of the incredible feature that songs offer. Teachers can have their students repeating grammatical structures to the point where they can be internalized and memorized without them putting too much effort into it. And what is even better, is that their students would be doing all of that while they think they are just having fun.

To reinforce on the importance of repetition, here is another author’s opinion:

“Songs provide a wonderful opportunity for monotonous repetitive practice. This repetition becomes as enjoyable as chanting the chorus or a song where each verse takes words from the previous verse. This repetition helps to learn and makes music sound more familiar and comfortable to those who listen to them. Using songs as an aid to improve listening skills is a good impact, because songs, especially ones we like, can make us more enthusiastic and relaxed when listening to them” (Mailawati & Anita, 2022, p. 64).

Suwartono (2019) backs them up when he says that “learners are encouraged by songs to listen to them repeatedly and emulate the pronunciation of their favorite singers” (as cited in Mailawati & Anita, 2022, p. 63). Besides touching on repetition, he also mentions “encouragement”, which is another very important factor that can determine the success of students when trying to learn English. Not all students are super encouraged all the time and that is perfectly normal, that is even expected, and that is why having them listen to music sometimes can be really beneficial for them as well as for the teachers.

According to Millington (2011), “songs can often be a welcome change from the routine of learning a foreign language” (p. 134). That is another super important thing for teachers to think about. Students get tired, and nothing can get in the way of them reaching their goal of learning English like doing the same thing over and over again. The routine kills it all and bringing a song to class does not really sound like something very complicated. It is very easy to do and the benefits of doing it really are countless.

Murphey (1992) thinks that songs can help young learners improve their listening skills and pronunciation, therefore potentially helping them to improve their speaking skills (as cited in Millington, 2011, p. 134). So, not only will students be improving their listening skills, but they will also work on their pronunciation and speaking skills – this is really great news. Another point to using music in the classroom! What he says really is a true statement. Humans learn to speak by listening. They listen, listen, and listen for years before they start to speak, and that is a fact that teachers somehow end up forgetting. If teachers brought music to the classroom more often, they would be helping students big time to improve their listening proficiency, but that does not mean that the other skills (speaking, writing, and reading) do not have a chance to expand because of it.

“Music has been shown to reduce anxiety and make people feel safer and more connected” (Landesman Scheckel, 2020, p. 2). Anxiety is something that everyone that has ever learned a second language has suffered.

“Listening in a language which is not your mother tongue can be extremely stressful, as I know from my own experience, particularly if you are required to make a response. Often learners have no control over the input (the words the speaker uses and how they say

them). This causes anxiety, which in turn has a negative impact on their ability to listen effectively” (Thorn, 2021, p. 21).

Starting to learn a language is not an easy task, especially if the language in question is English, let alone when the first language of the people trying to learn it is Spanish. English and Spanish are very different. English uses sounds that Spanish speaking people do not use and that is just one of the many important differences they have, therefore one of the many reasons people get anxious and even fearful for. Connection is another thing that he mentions as something that music can help accomplish and it is true, people indeed feel connected by music.

Connelly (2019) not only talks about anxiety, but he also says that “one of the most effective ways of reducing anxiety, building confidence, and boosting motivation whilst simultaneously improving listening comprehension is through the introduction of music into the classroom” (p. 20).

Mailawati & Anita (2022) believe that “songs are thought to be able to stimulate interest in learning and to be one of the less boring lessons for young people” (p. 63). Interest is something that teachers would always like to see in their students. It is easier for learners when they are really interested in learning English, but it will also be a hundred times better for the teachers. Teachers should consider this every time they think that bringing music to the classroom is complicated or not worth it. Music creates the perfect environment and makes students forget that they are in a class to the point where will be really looking forward to coming to class again. But what else does music do?

“Music appeals to practically everyone. Although keeping L2 learners engaged can be challenging, using music as a teaching tool is a way to bring the class together and inspire interest in the lesson. Using songs in the English classroom benefits learners in many

areas, including linguistic development, exposure to culture and diversity, and experience with multiple ways of human expression and communication” (Mobbs & Cuyul, 2018, pp. 28–29).

They mentioned the interest, which was just discussed; however, they also touched on things like: linguistic development, exposure to culture, and experience with multiple ways of human communication. All of them super important aspects to take into consideration when it comes to learning a second language. When people learn a language, they are not really only learning a language. Besides learning about parts of speech, verb tenses or grammatical rules, they are learning culture, which has to do with how people who speak the target language act, think, talk, behave, and communicate with others. Teachers really are even lucky that they have such an amazing tool in their hands, Music is an authentic material that contains pieces of language, grammatical structures, idioms, etc., that are used by people to communicate in a daily basis. Songs can even help transmit ideas and ways of thinking from the singer to anyone listening to it. “Using music in the classroom connects to global listening because the songs themselves are authentic sources that contain varied speech patterns” (Mobbs & Cuyul, 2018, p. 25).

They go on to say that music also “(1) reinforces the prosody (e.g., rhythm, stress, and intonation) of the target language, (2) authentically educates learners about the target culture and other cultures, and (3) encourages learners to express themselves” (Mobbs & Cuyul, 2018, p. 22). Culture has already been discussed; however, in this particular section, they refer to things like rhythm, stress and intonation, as well as encouragement for learners to express themselves. All of those are things that might even result difficult for some teachers to teach. What does that mean? It means that English teachers in Costa Rica are not English native speakers, therefore

they might not be as prepared as they should be to teach on such specific parts of the English language, and that is where songs and music can really have a huge impact. The teacher and the music could kind of complement each other and instead of teachers looking at music as an optional material, it can start to be considered by them as their helpful ally in the whole teaching-learning process.

“Songs provide many things that can strengthen students' memories such as sounds, poems, and melodies. That is, songs can increase functionality in learning, especially in English. Songs contain language patterns, along with skills in listening, pronunciation, and rhythm, as well as a pleasant atmosphere” (Mailawati & Anita, 2022, p. 64).

2.9. What is a song?

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, the following is the definition of a song: “a usually short piece of music with words that are sung”. Ulfa (2019) defines it as follows: “a song, most broadly, is a single work of music that is typically intended to be sung by the human voice with distinct and fixed pitches and patterns using sound and silence and a variety of forms” (p. 134). Everyone in the world knows what a song is. Humans listen to songs since they are very little, and some of them have actually listened to songs before they were even born. They probably will not remember, though.

Songs are part of everyone’s life. People listen to songs when they are happy, when they are sad, when they are anxious, when they are stressed out, when they are worried – the truth is, there is always a song for everyone and for everything.

2.10. How to select a song?

“Songs have become an essential part of our language experience, and if used in coordination with language they can be of great value” (Ulfa, 2019, p. 135). The importance of

songs/music in the classroom has already been recognized. Now, are there specific things that teachers should do or be careful about when selecting a song? The answer to that question would be yes, there are.

There are millions and millions of songs; however, not all of them can or should be used for teaching English. Why is that? Listening to songs in English can help students not only to improve their listening skills, but it can help them learn English in general and develop the necessary knowledge to expand their expertise on the other skills, only there are some genres or music styles that might even get students frustrated instead, and that is because some of them might talk about things the students are not very familiar with, some others might even mention issues or situations that are not appropriate for young learners such as drugs and violence, some songs' lyrics might be too difficult for students to comprehend, there are also singers who speak or sing at a really fast speed. All these are aspects that teachers have to think about when selecting a song to have their students listen to in class.

Something else teachers should be careful about when selecting a song, is the quality of the recording. The recording must be as clear as possible, so the students do not get distracted with or confused by unnecessary noise in the background and really get to focus on the message of the song. Also, it is always good if the students somehow have a say in choosing the song or at least if they are asked to give opinions or recommendation for it, although what they would like sometimes might not be as suitable for teaching as what the teachers would prefer.

According to Bokiev et al. (2018), there are a number of factors that teachers should take into account when choosing a song for ESL classroom activities, such as: “the purpose of the song, the age and proficiency level of the students, language content and quality of the song,

musical preferences of the students and the teacher, format of the song, and classroom opportunities” (p. 323).

Is there anything that should be avoided? Yes, there is. Teachers should definitely avoid having students listening to songs with a negative theme of any kind. As Sudarmiati (2014) says “there is enough bad news, negativity, and violence in the world already” (p. 31).

2.11. Description of the website (LyricsTraining.com)

LyricsTraining mentions that their site “is an easy and fun way to learn and improve people’s foreign languages skills, through the music videos and the lyrics of their favorite songs”. According to Lems (2018), “LyricsTraining.com is probably the best music and lyrics site to date, featuring thousands of music videos accompanied by cloze versions of lyrics” (p. 21).

What does this website offer? This website offers students the chance to train listening comprehension and memorization while they are at a relaxed state listening to their favorite singers and reading their lyrics. Listening and reading at the same time might not be considered beneficial for some people, but the truth is that they both complement each other. By doing those two things at the same time, not only will students be able to check out the way things are written, but they will also have the opportunity to make sure how everything they are looking at really sounds. Asrimawati & Margana (2020) say that “some studies found that simultaneous reading while listening promotes positive impacts on students” (p. 155). This idea is also supported by Woodall (2010) who says that “simultaneous listening and reading gives a beneficial effect on comprehension of language learners” (as cited in Wijaya & Indrasari, 2022, p. 60). Using a website like this could offer a lot of advantages; however, teachers should really start putting in some more effort and give technology a try. It is understandable that some of

them might be scared of it, but them being closed to using technology will not help anybody and certainly not their students. As Mannion & Mercer (2020) say, “research does suggest that digital technology can play a powerful role in facilitating dialogue and collaboration, including the development of listening skills” (p. 30), so that is definitely something all teachers should always keep in mind.

2.11.1. Objective

LyricsTraining describes themselves as “the new way to learn English and other languages through music and the lyrics of people’s favorite songs.” Its objective is to provide students with an opportunity to listen to a song while they will also have access to its lyrics. The challenging and entertaining thing here is that those lyrics will be incomplete. That means that there will be missing words and it will be the students’ task to pay attention and see if they can identify what those words are just by listening to the singer.

2.11.2. Price

How much should students pay for using it? Nothing. Students do not even need to have an account. According to Lems (2018), “users do not need an account, as the site is supported by advertisers” (p. 21). Everything students need, is a stable internet connection and choose their favorite browser to access it. The website has already been mentioned a couple of times; however, people can get into it by clicking on the following link: <https://lyricstraining.com/>.

2.11.3. Cool Feature

Not only does the website provide pre-built exercises, meaning songs with specific missing words, but it also gives teachers the chance to personalize their own

exercises. That is an amazing feature because teachers do not have to stick to whatever is already on there, but they can choose any song they like and also take out the words they want their students to listen for.

The ability for teachers to personalize their exercises is extremely important because that way they can have the website fit whatever topic they are teaching at any given time. As Millington (2011) says, “the song and the lyrics need to be selected carefully to complement the target vocabulary”(p. 136), so for example, if teachers are studying regular verbs, they can specifically take all of those words out, that way students can give focused attention to the topic they are currently learning about or any other topic that the teacher might think they need some more training on. Teachers can make their exercises as topic specific as they want or need.

2.11.4. Levels

There are four levels students or teachers can select from: beginner, intermediate, advanced, and expert. Beginners would have to fill 36 words or 10%, intermediate should fill 90 words or 25%, advanced need to fill 179 words or 50%, and expert will need to fill ALL the words. Something interesting to mention here is that filling is not the only option. That is right! It depends on how the exercise has been set up, but if teachers create their own, they can also have them set for students to either fill or choose a word from a list with four options. That is something very convenient if the students do not have a lot of vocabulary yet. If that happens, then they might not be able to identify a whole word to fill; however, they could recognize some sounds and choose the word they feel it sounded more like.

2.11.5. Learner Experience

Using the website (LyricsTraining.com) is pretty straight forward. Once people get there, all they really have to do is look for the song they want to listen to and practice their listening skills with. It has been mentioned before but English is not the only language the website provides music in, which is obviously something worth mentioning twice. Once the song's video has been selected, it will start playing and it works very similar to karaoke. People will be able to watch the video, listen to the song, and read its lyrics verse by verse. Whatever verse there is a missing word, the video will be automatically paused, and some time will be given for the students to complete the task (type the missing word or words). Time is a very important factor here, the faster people can guess the correct word, the more points they will get. If they are too slow, they won't get a good score and therefore might end up having less chances to complete the whole song. Students will also be able to compete with others, friends or just people from all over the world, which might be just the spark of motivation people need sometimes.

2.11.6. Additional Details

Is this website popular among students? According to high school teachers I am in contact with, this site is a huge hit with adolescent learners" (Lems, 2018, p. 21), so it is safe to say it is popular and liked by adolescents, which is a population teachers have some trouble with sometimes so this is definitely a website to take advantage of.

Is it a specific music genre recommended? According to Engh (2013), "the lyrics used in pop music are largely conversation-like, repetitive and are spoken at approximately half the speed of regular conversation, which can aid in increasing the students' understanding of the material" (as cited in Connelly, 2019, p. 20).

This is definitely something to take into account. There is a lot that students can learn from pop music, and this theory or idea is also supported by other authors, as stated below:

“Some forms of music, such as pop songs, work especially well for teaching English language learners (ELLs). Tim Murphey, in his classic book, explored why pop songs seem so effective in teaching English to ELLs (Murphey 1990). He found that pop songs have the magic combination of high-frequency words, repeated often, and the use of first and second person. As a result, listeners feel personally and emotionally involved with the songs (Murphey 1990)” (Lems, 2018, p. 15).

Chapter III

Methodological Framework

3.1. Research Method

Before getting into the research method that is used here, here is the definition for research:

The term research is related to seek out the information and knowledge on a particular topic or subject. The major aim of any type of research is to find out the reality and facts which is unknown, and which has not been exposed (Mishra & Alok, 2022, pp. 1–2).

The research method used here is the deductive one. As mentioned by Trochim et al., (2015), “deductive reasoning works from the more general to the more specific. Sometimes this is informally called a top-down approach” (pp. 22–23).

They further explain it the following way:

You might begin with a theory about your topic of interest. you then narrow that down into more specific hypotheses that you can test. You narrow down even further when you collect observations to address the hypotheses. this ultimate leads you to be able to test the hypotheses with specific data - a confirmation (or not) of your original theories.

(Trochim et al., 2015, pp. 22–23)

3.2. Type of Investigation

There are several research designs, such as, Descriptive (e.g., case-study, naturalistic observation, survey), Correlational (e.g., case-control study, observational study), Semi-experimental (e.g., field experiment, quasi-experiment), Experimental (experiment with random assignment), Review (literature review, systematic review) and Meta-analytic (meta-analysis) out of which the researcher should select one for his task (Mishra & Alok, 2022, p. 8).

The focus of this investigation is description. As Rinjit (2020) mentions, a descriptive study “attempts systematically to describe a situation, problem, phenomenon, service or programme, or provides information about, say, the living conditions of a community, or describes attitudes towards an issue” (p. 283). In this particular situation, an issue is being described. Actually, it can be stated that there are two issues in one. The issue #1 is how the listening skill is the most difficult one for students to master, and the issue #2 is how teachers do not always recognize its importance and, in one way or the other, end up neglecting it, which in turn contributes to making the issue #1 even bigger. Besides describing an existing issue, this research also intends to provide people’s opinions not only on the issue itself, but also on a tool (lyricstraining.com) that might really help teachers and students attack the issue mentioned and close the existing gap.

3.3. Research Approach

The approach this research focuses on is qualitative. According to Mishra & Alok (2022), “Qualitative research is concerned with qualitative phenomenon, i.e., relating to quality or variety. Such type of research is typically descriptive” (p. 3), why is the type of investigation that is being used as it was mentioned in the previous section. Here is a more in-depth definition for qualitative research:

Qualitative research is concerned with qualitative phenomenon, i.e., phenomena relating to or involving quality or kind. Attitude or opinion research i.e., research designed to find out how people feel or what they think about a particular subject or institution is also qualitative research. Qualitative research is especially important in the behavioral sciences where the aim is to discover the underlying motives of human behavior.

Through such research we can analyze the various factors which motivate people to

behave in a particular manner or which make people like or dislike a particular thing (Cr, 2020, pp. 3–4).

3.4. Subjects of Information

The subjects of information in this research are basically the students and teachers of Liceo San José de Alajuela, which will be asked to answer a questionnaire.

3.5. Sources of Information

This research will use two types of sources: primary and secondary.

3.5.1. Primary Sources

According to Cr (2020), “the primary data are those which are collected afresh and for the first time, and thus happen to be original in character” (p. 96).

The author goes on to say that:

There are several methods of collecting primary data, particularly in surveys and descriptive research. Important ones are: (i) observation method, (ii) interview method, (iii) through questionnaires, (iv) through schedules, and (v) other methods which include (a) warranty cards; (b) distributor audits; (c) pantry audits; (d) consumer panels; (e) using mechanical devices; (f) through projective techniques; (g) depth interviews, and (h) content analysis (Cr, 2020, p. 96).

The primary source in this research will be questionnaires. Students’ as well as teachers’ opinions and perceptions are vital for it.

3.5.2. Secondary Sources

As mentioned by Cr (2020), “the secondary data are those which have already been collected by someone else and which have already been passed through the statistical process” (p. 96). Some of the secondary sources, according to this author, are the following:

(a) various publications of the central, state and local governments; (b) various publications of foreign governments or of international bodies and their subsidiary organizations; (c) technical and trade journals; (d) books, magazines and newspapers; (e) reports and publications of various associations connected with business and industry, banks, stock exchanges, etc.; (f) reports prepared by research scholars, universities, economists, etc. in different fields; and (g) public records and statistics, historical documents, and other sources of published information (Cr, 2020, p. 111).

In the elaboration of this research, the following secondary resources are being used: books, e-books, articles, journals, and magazines.

3.6. Population

The population this research will be carried out on is a group of students from tenth grade from Liceo San José de Alajuela. It is a 15-student group, 10 boys and 5 girls. They are all between the ages of 16 and 28.

3.7. Instruments

The instrument selected for the elaboration of this research is the questionnaire. There will actually be a couple of them, one for the students (10 closed questions) and one for a few teachers (9 closed questions).

A questionnaire is a written list of questions, the answers to which are recorded by respondents. In a questionnaire respondents read the questions, interpret what is expected and then write down the answer. Also, the layout of a questionnaire should be such that it is easy to read and pleasant to the eye, and the sequence of questions should be easy to follow. A questionnaire should be developed in an interactive style. This means respondents should feel as if someone is talking to them (Rinjit, 2020, pp. 145–146).

Chapter VI

Results and Analysis

4.1. Analysis

Not only has it been established the meaning of listening so far, but there has also been important discussion on a gap that seems to exist and affect many students in Costa Rica and the world when it comes to learning listening effectively.

Holden (2004) states that “it is estimated that adults spend 40-50% of their communication time on listening” (as cited in Velasco & Acuña, 2021, p. 44), and that is a huge number. Listening is what people spend most of their time doing during their whole life, so it just fair that a good percentage of the teachers’ time gets also spent on giving their students the necessary tools to master such a skill.

Besides listening being something that human beings spend most of their time doing, “it is considered to be the most difficult skill to learn” (Yaacob et al., 2021, p. 4), so, that is right there a whole new reason why teaching listening should be addressed with more responsibility and commitment.

Why is listening the most difficult skill to learn? There are actually several reasons why it is considered the hardest skill to learn. When a person listens, not much seems to be happening; however, Velasco & Acuña (2021), refer to listening as “an active intellectual process of interpreting, decoding, evaluating and understanding messages” (p. 45), and all of those things may even happen at the same time. Rost (2005) supports them when he says that, “listening is also an extremely complex process which involves not only receptive, but also constructive and interpretative aspects of cognition” (as cited in Cakır, 2018, p. 154).

Another reason why listening is the hardest skill to learn is explained by Mannion & Mercer (2020), who said that “listening is invisible – it leaves no paper trail and cannot be detected or recorded in the way that speaking can” (p. 28), which obviously makes it turn into an

even more complex skill for students to learn and certainly also for teachers to teach, because this affects the teachers' ability to know what their students' level really is.

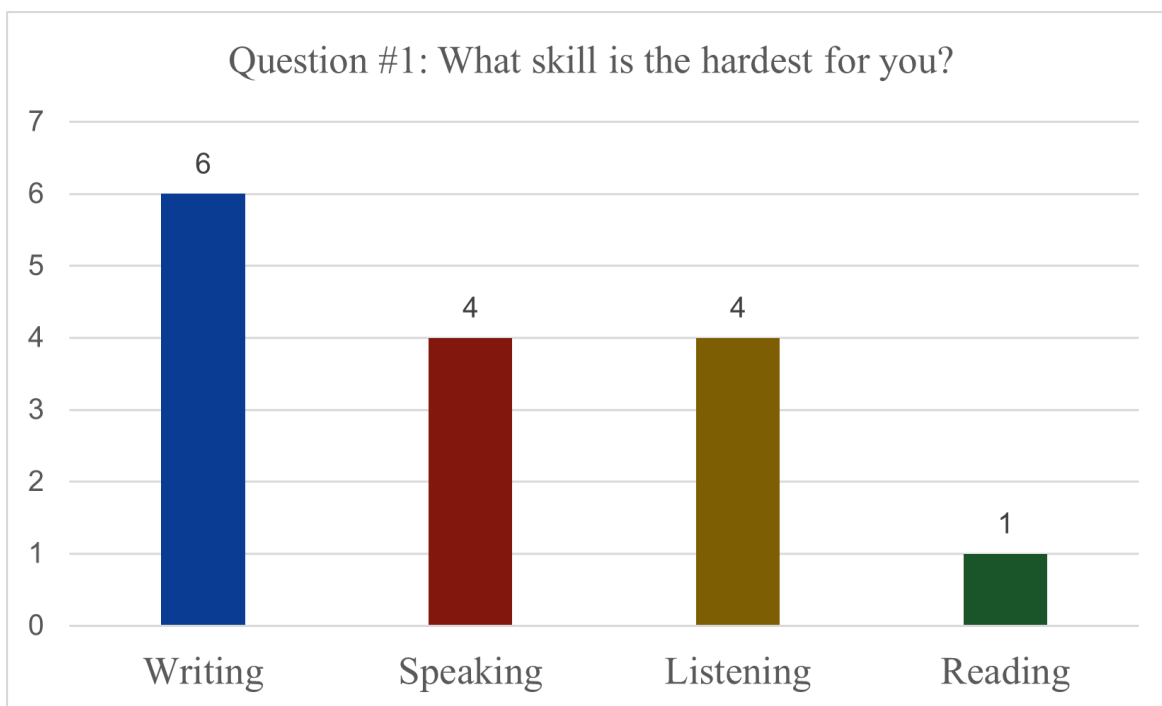
Besides the reasons previously mentioned, Sheth & Chauhan (2015) think that "listening has been thrown on the back seat for teaching reading and writing in the classroom" (as cited in Ngwoke et al., 2022, p. 1241), which may send a not so accurate message to students and might make them believe that listening is not as important as the other skills (speaking, reading and writing).

Getting to know that listening can be both, the hardest skill to learn and also the skill most teachers seem to be neglecting in their classroom, is not good news; however, it should work as a more than a valid reason for teachers to start considering new and better ways to teach their students, for example: through the use of music videos and song lyrics. It has been argued among several researchers how useful it can be to have students practice their listening by using music, and the reason for that is that music is pretty much liked by every person in the world, it motivates students, helps them process new information, trains their ears, teaches them pronunciation, and all of that while in a relaxing, and at the same time, fun environment.

4.2. Results

Graphs from the Teachers' Questionnaire

Graph #1: Skill students have most trouble with, according to teachers.



Source: Questionnaire applied to teachers by Jairo Marín Jiménez.

Graph #1 shows that 66.7% of the teachers think that speaking is the skill their students have the most trouble with, 22.2% of them think the hardest skill is writing and only 11.1% of them think the hardest skill for students is listening.

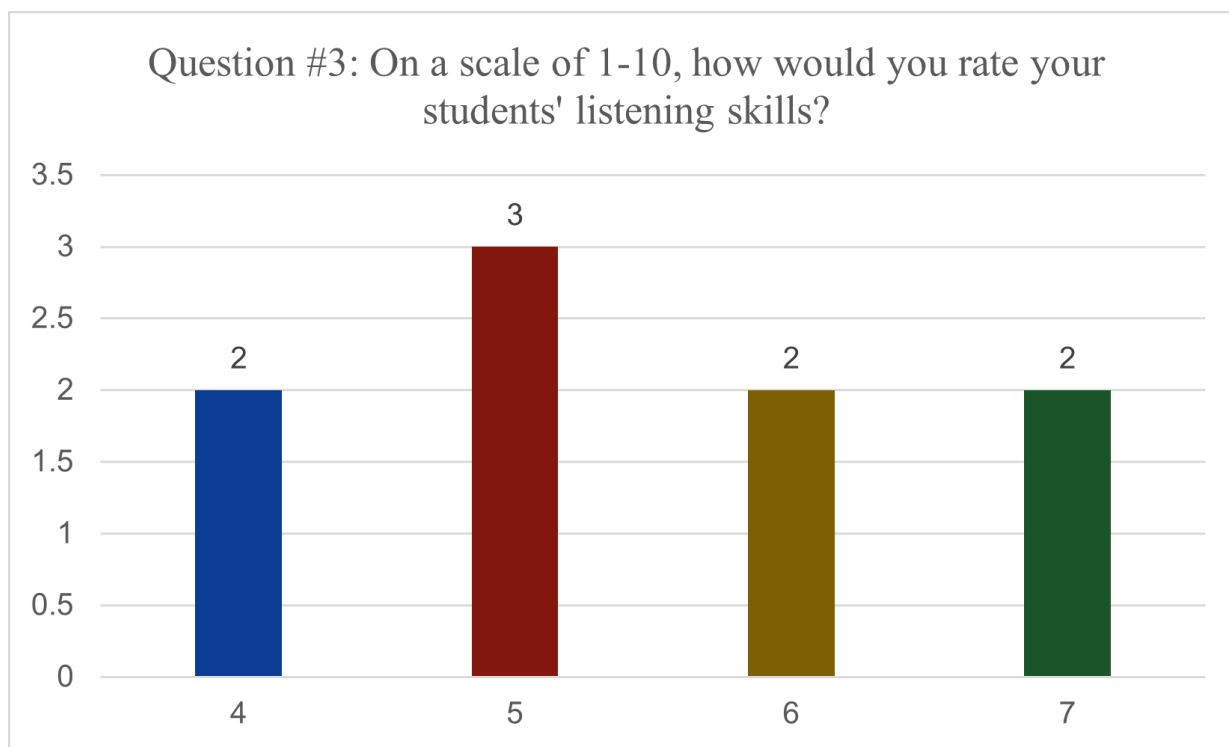
Graph #2: Skill students practice the least, according to teachers.



Source: Questionnaire applied to teachers by Jairo Marín Jiménez.

According to Graph #2, 66.7% of the teachers think the skill students practice the least is speaking, 22.2% of them think it's listening and only 11.1% think it's reading.

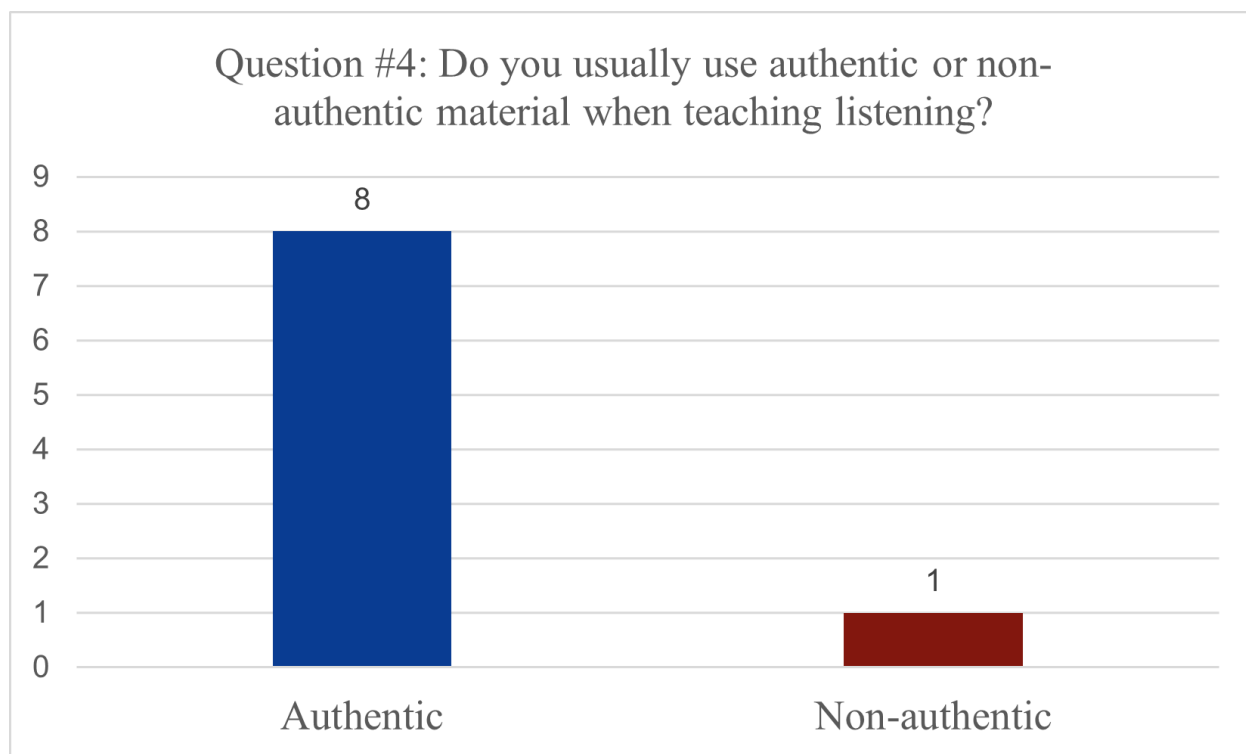
Graph #3: Students' listening skills rated by teachers.



Source: Questionnaire applied to teachers by Jairo Marín Jiménez.

Graph #3 shows that 22.2% of the teachers rated their students' listening skills 4, while 33.3% rated them 5, 22.2% rated them 6 and 22.2% rated them 7.

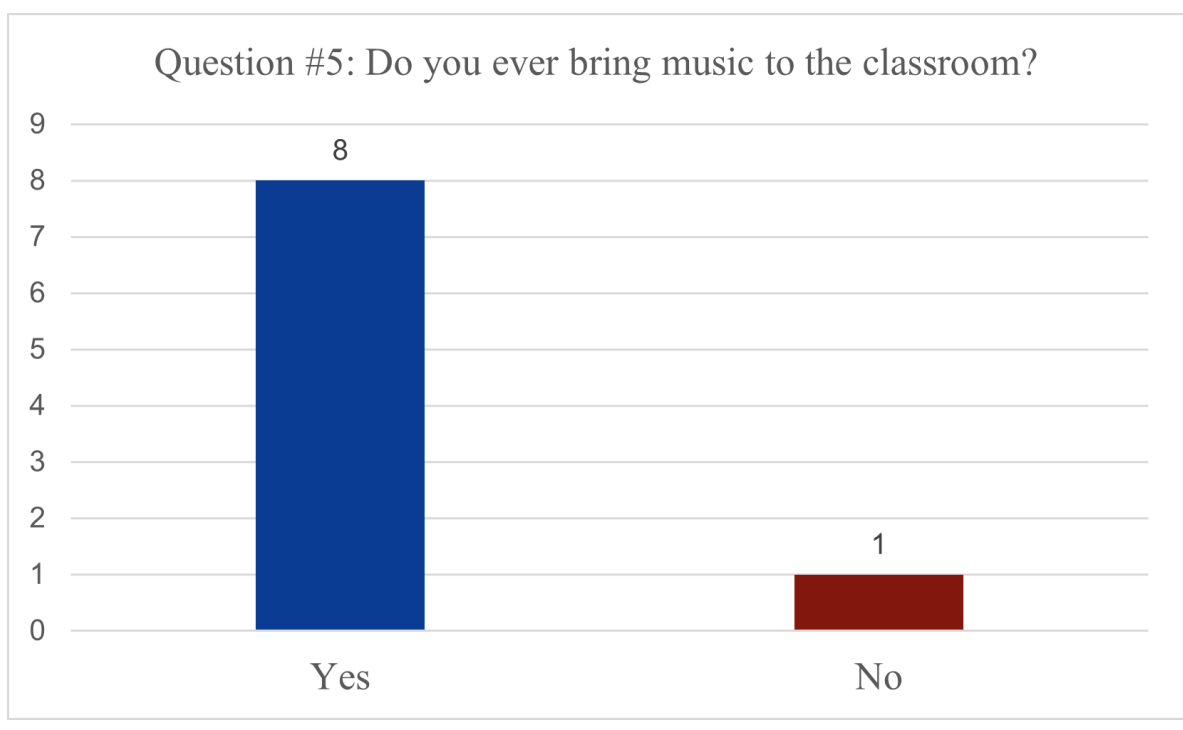
Graph #4: Teachers using authentic or non-authentic materials.



Source: Questionnaire applied to teachers by Jairo Marín Jiménez.

According to Graph #4, 88.9% of the teachers answered that they usually use authentic material, while only the 11.1% of them chose non-authentic material as their answer.

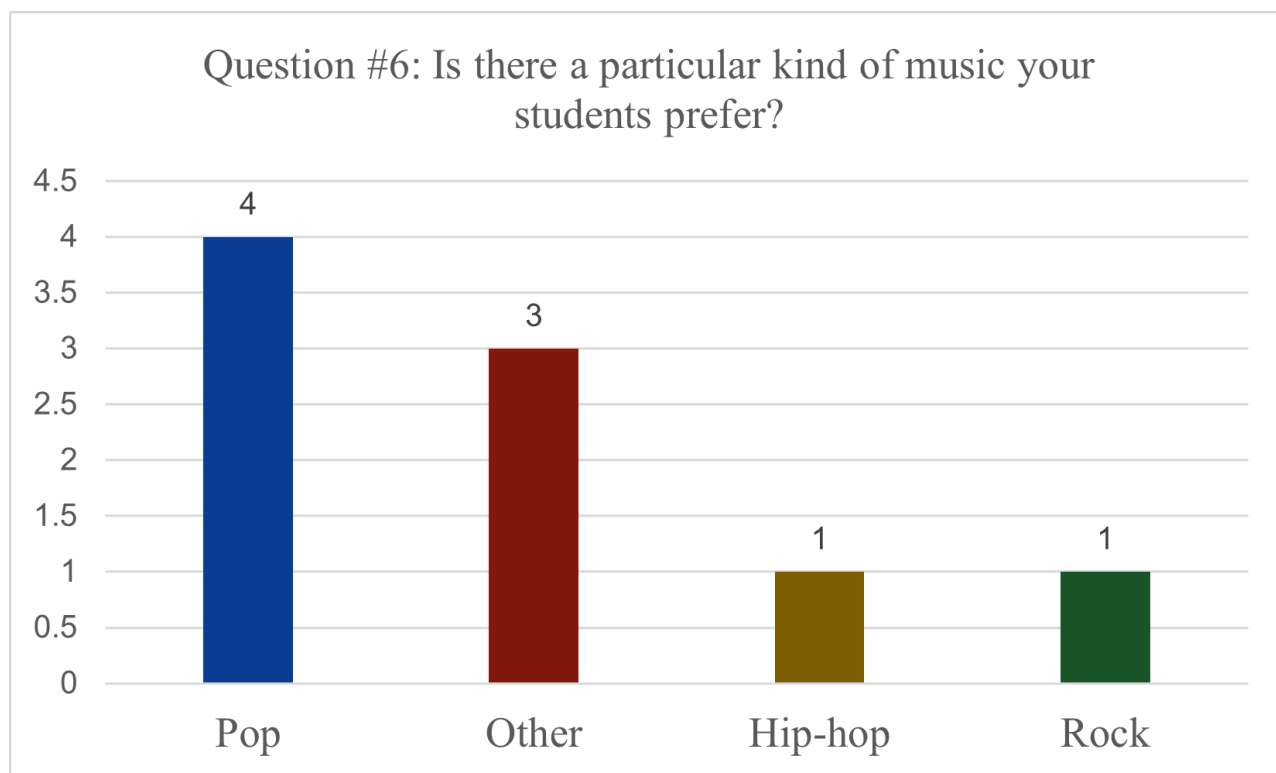
Graph #5: Teachers bringing music to the classroom.



Source: Questionnaire applied to teachers by Jairo Marín Jiménez.

Graph #6 shows that 88.9% of the teachers bring music to the classroom while only 11.1% of them said they do not.

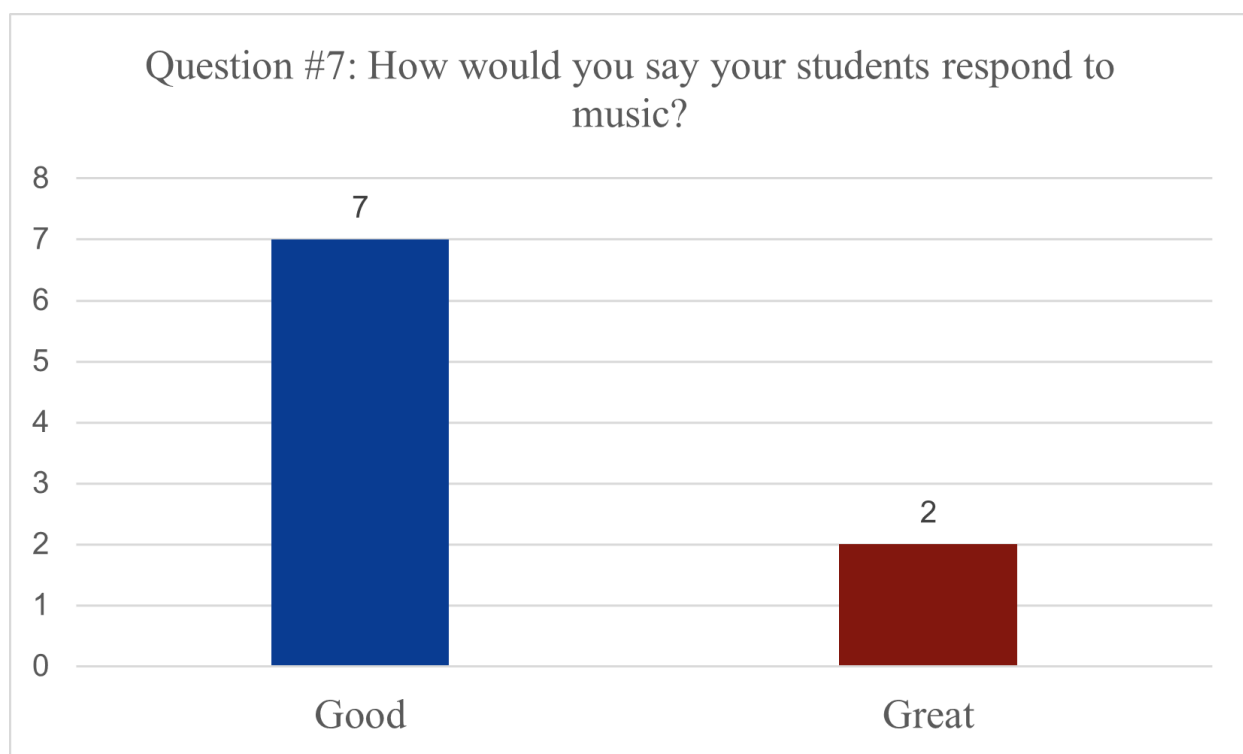
Graph #6: Kind of music students prefer, according to teachers.



Source: Questionnaire applied to teachers by Jairo Marín Jiménez.

According to Graph #6, 44.4% of the teachers think the music their students prefer is “Pop”, 33.3% of them answered “Other”, 11.1% chose “Rock” and 11.1% went with “Hip-hop”.

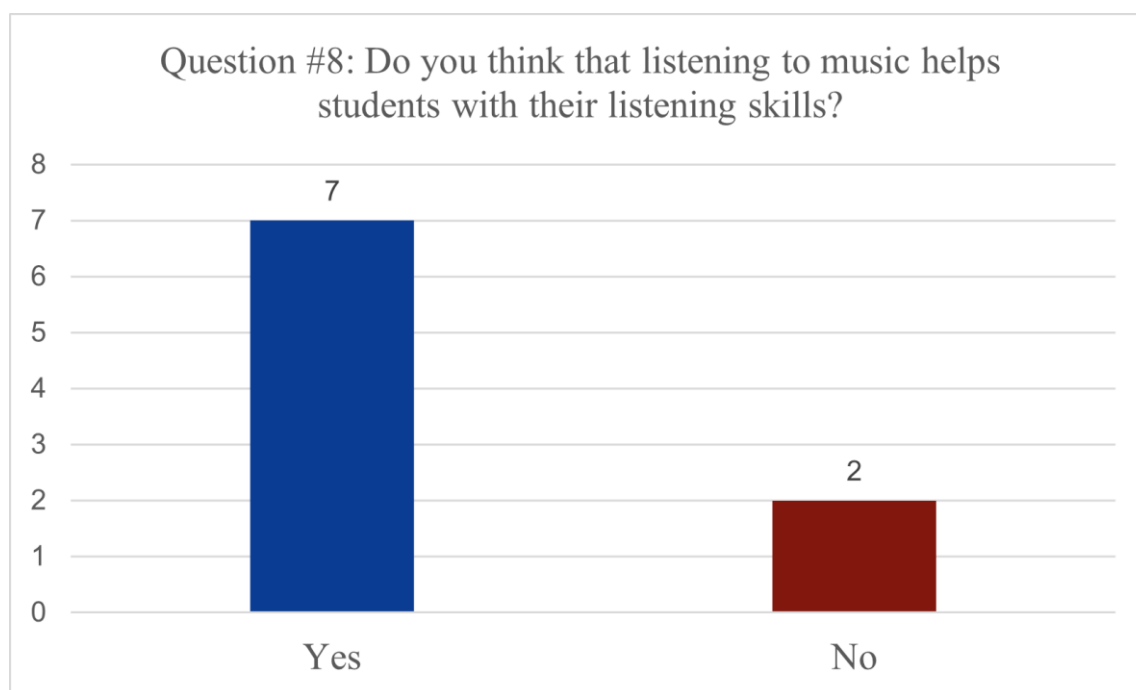
Graph #7: Students' response to music, according to teachers.



Source: Questionnaire applied to teachers by Jairo Marín Jiménez.

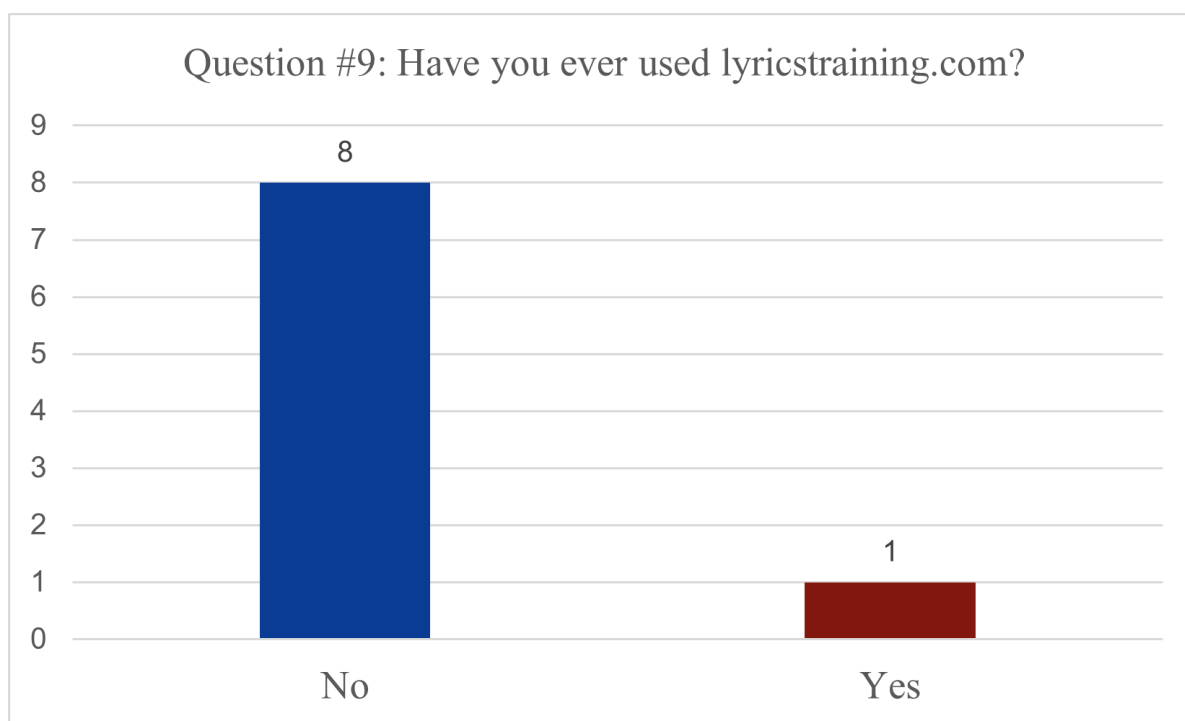
Graph #7 shows that 77.8% of the teachers think that their students' response to music is "Good", while the remaining 22.2% say their response is rather "Great".

Graph #8: Music helping students' listening skills, according to teachers.



Source: Questionnaire applied to teachers by Jairo Marín Jiménez.

According to Graph #8, 77.8% of the teachers believe that music really helps students with their listening skills, while only 22.2% of them think that it does not.

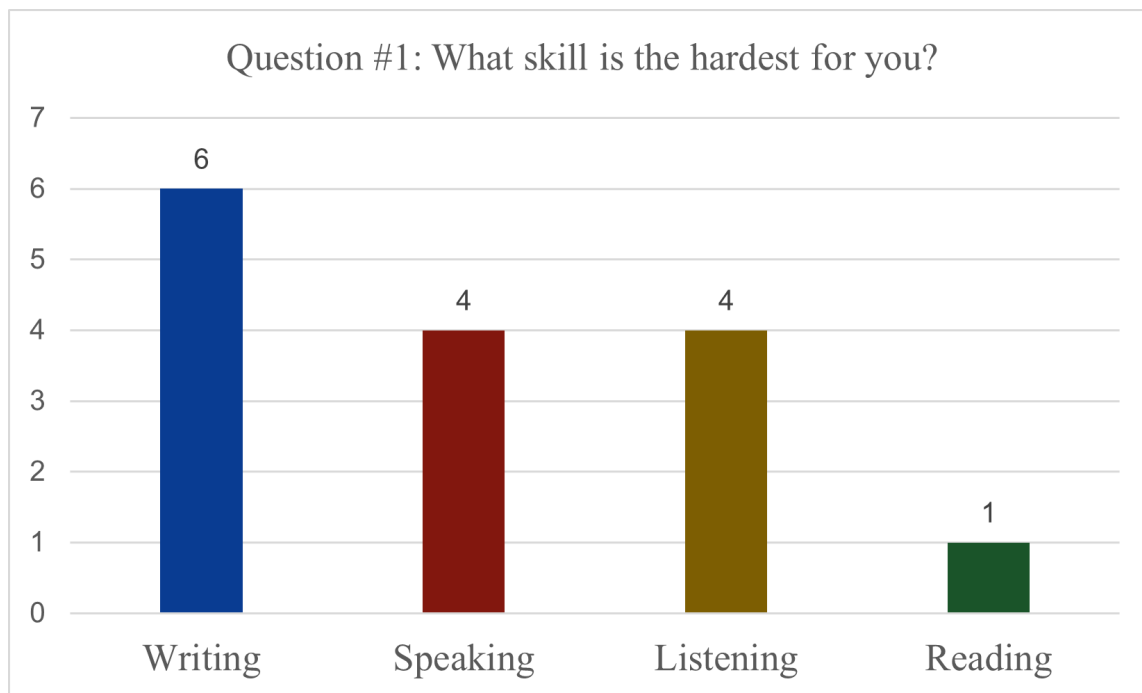
Graph #9: Teachers using lyricstraining.com.

Source: Questionnaire applied to teachers by Jairo Marín Jiménez.

Graph #9 says that 88.9% of the teachers have not used the website lyricstraning.com, and only 11.1% of them said they have already used it.

Graphs from the Students' Questionnaire

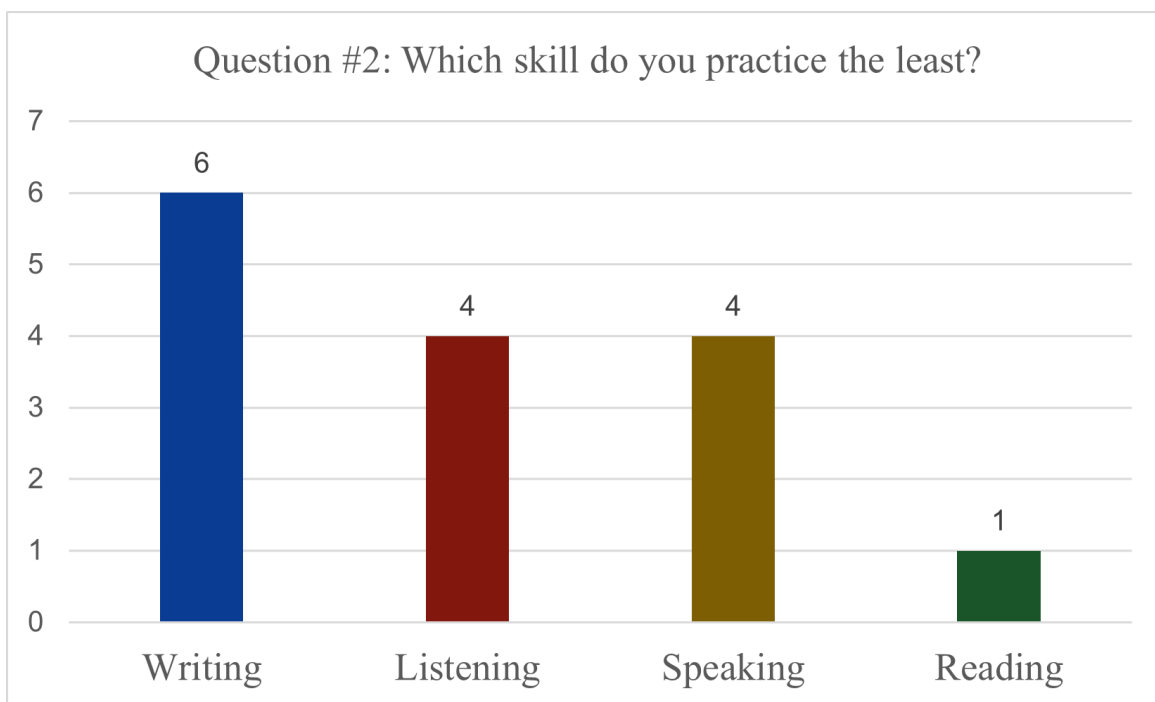
Graph #10: Students' opinion on the hardest skill for them.



Source: Questionnaire applied to students by Jairo Marín Jiménez.

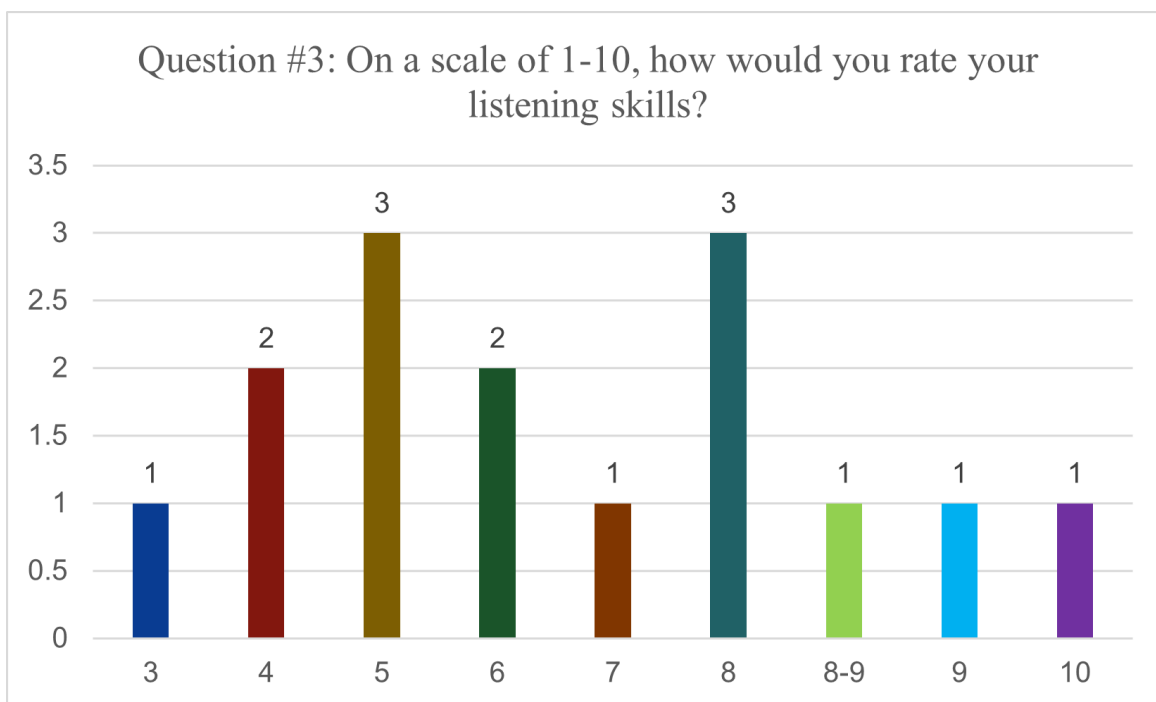
Graph #10 shows that 20% of the students said that writing is the hardest skill for them, 26.7% of them equally said that it was speaking and listening, while only 6.7% thought it was reading.

Graph #11: Students' response on what skill they practice the least.



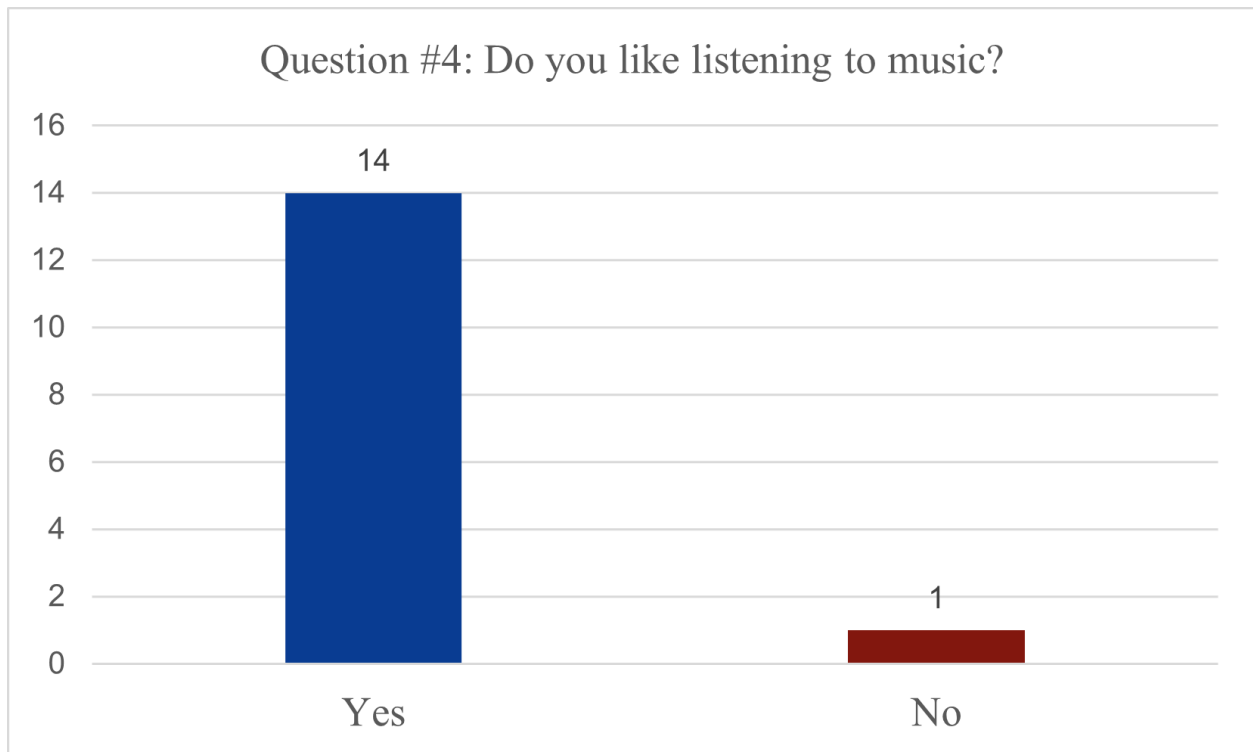
Source: Questionnaire applied to students by Jairo Marín Jiménez.

According to Graph #10, 40% of the students said that writing is the skill they practice the least, 26.7% of them equally said that it was speaking and listening, while only 6.7% answered it was reading.

Graph #12: Student's rating their listening skills.

Source: Questionnaire applied to students by Jairo Marín Jiménez.

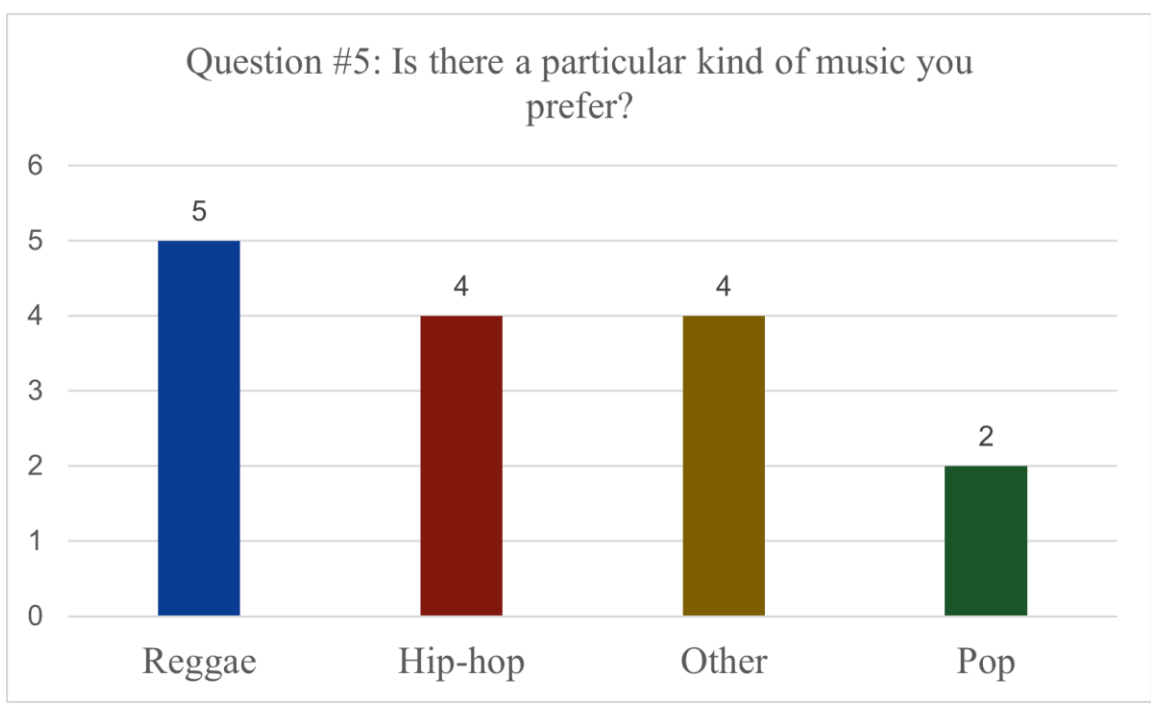
According to Graph #12, 6.7% of the students gave themselves a 3, 13.3% said 4, 20% said 5, 13.3% said 6, 6.7% said 7, 20% said 8, 6.7% said 8-9, 6.7% said 9 and 6.7% said 10.

Graph #13: Students liking music.

Source: Questionnaire applied to students by Jairo Marín Jiménez.

Graph #13 shows that 93.3% of the students like listening to music, while only the remaining 6.7% said that they do not.

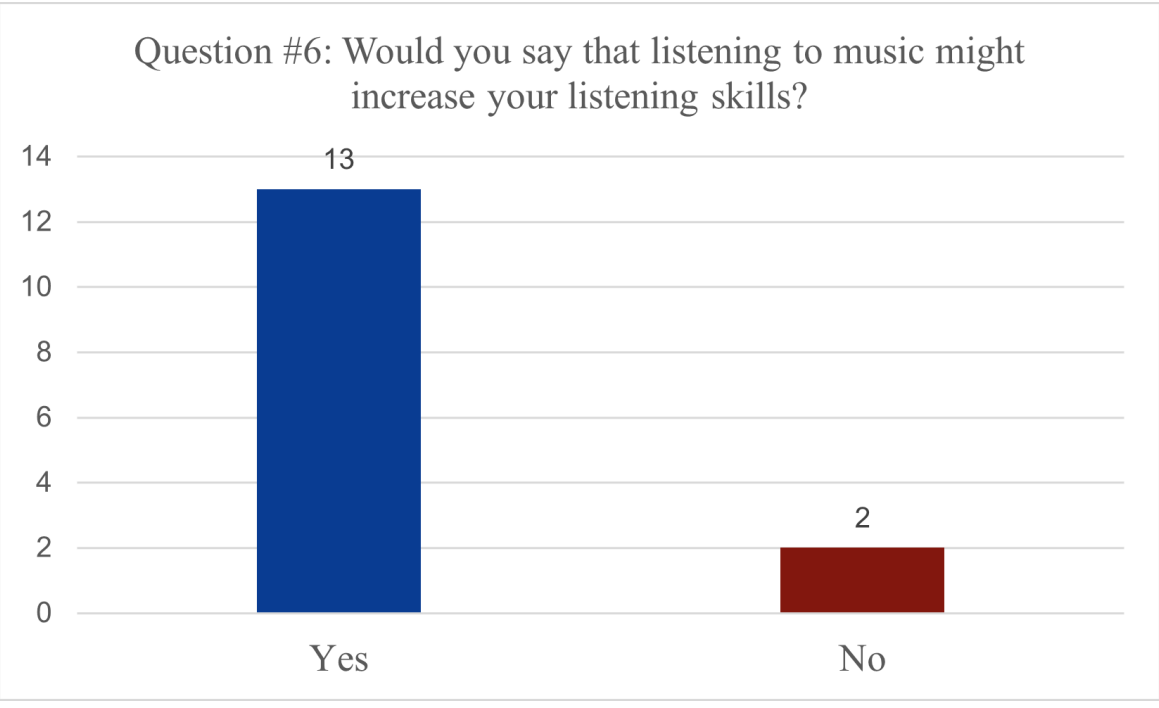
Graph #14: Students' preferred kind of music.



Source: Questionnaire applied to students by Jairo Marín Jiménez.

According to Graph #14, 33.3% of the students said their favorite music was “Reggae”, 26.7% of them equally said that it was “Hip-hop” and “Other”, while only the remaining 13.3% of them said it was “Pop”.

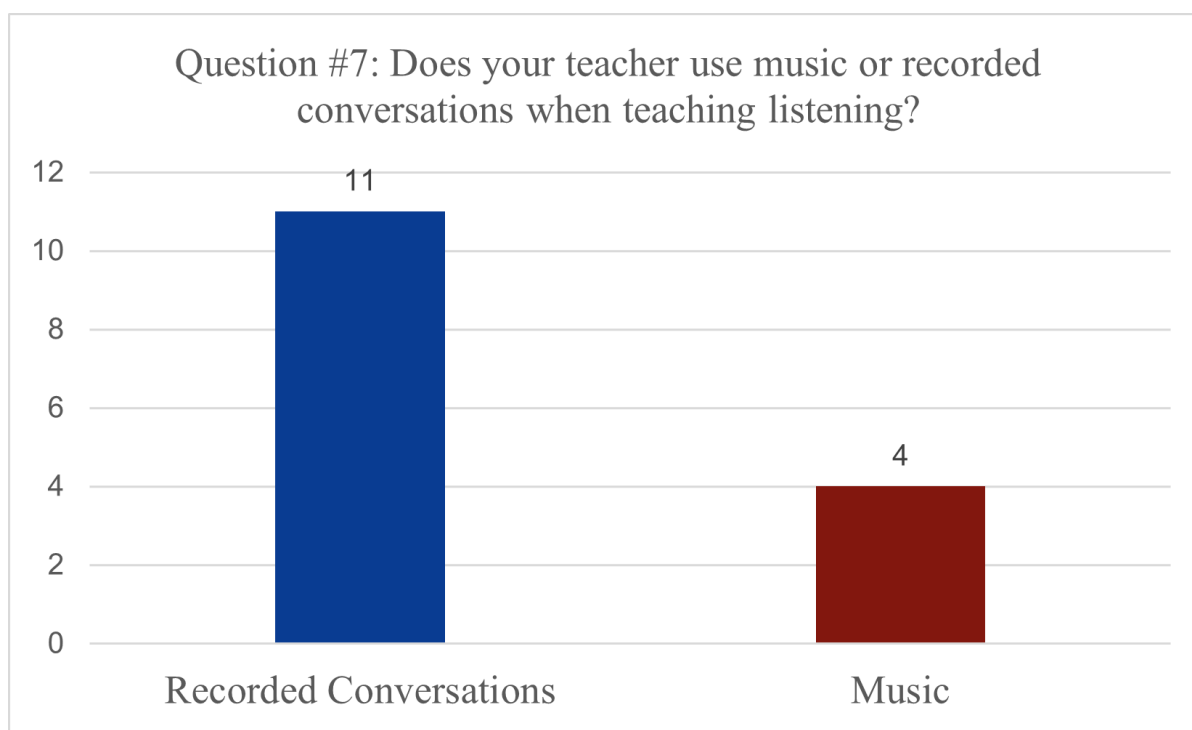
Graph #15: Music helping students' listening skills.



Source: Questionnaire applied to students by Jairo Marín Jiménez.

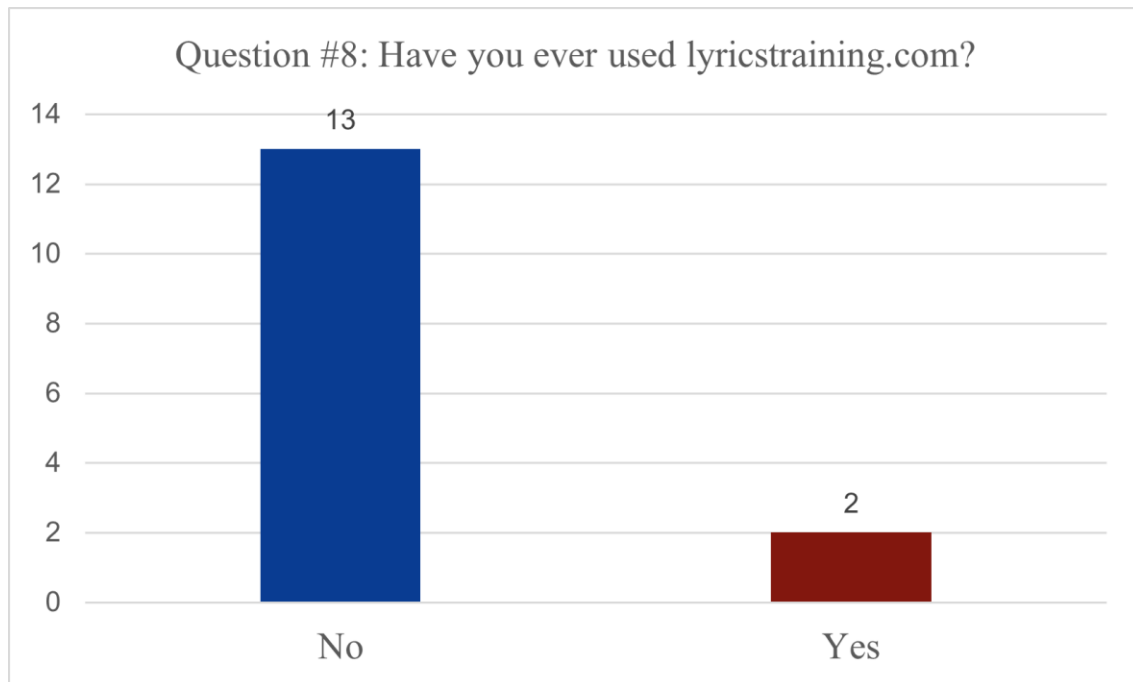
Graph #15 shows that 86.7% of the students said they thought that listening to music might increase their listening skills, while only the remaining 13.3% of them answered “no”.

Graph #16: Teachers' using music or recorded conversations.



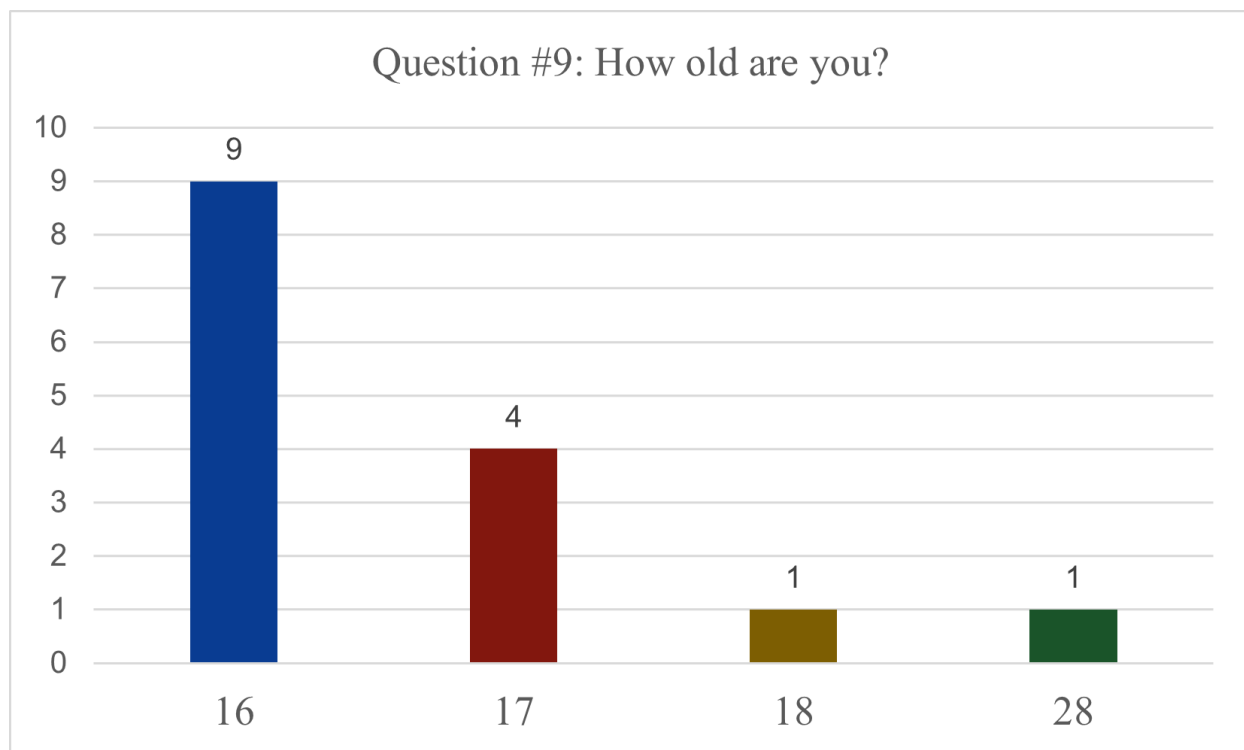
Source: Questionnaire applied to students by Jairo Marín Jiménez.

Graph #16 shows that 73.3% of the students said that their teachers use recorded conversations when teaching, while only the remaining 26.7% of them said their teachers use music.

Graph #17: Students using lyricstraning.com.

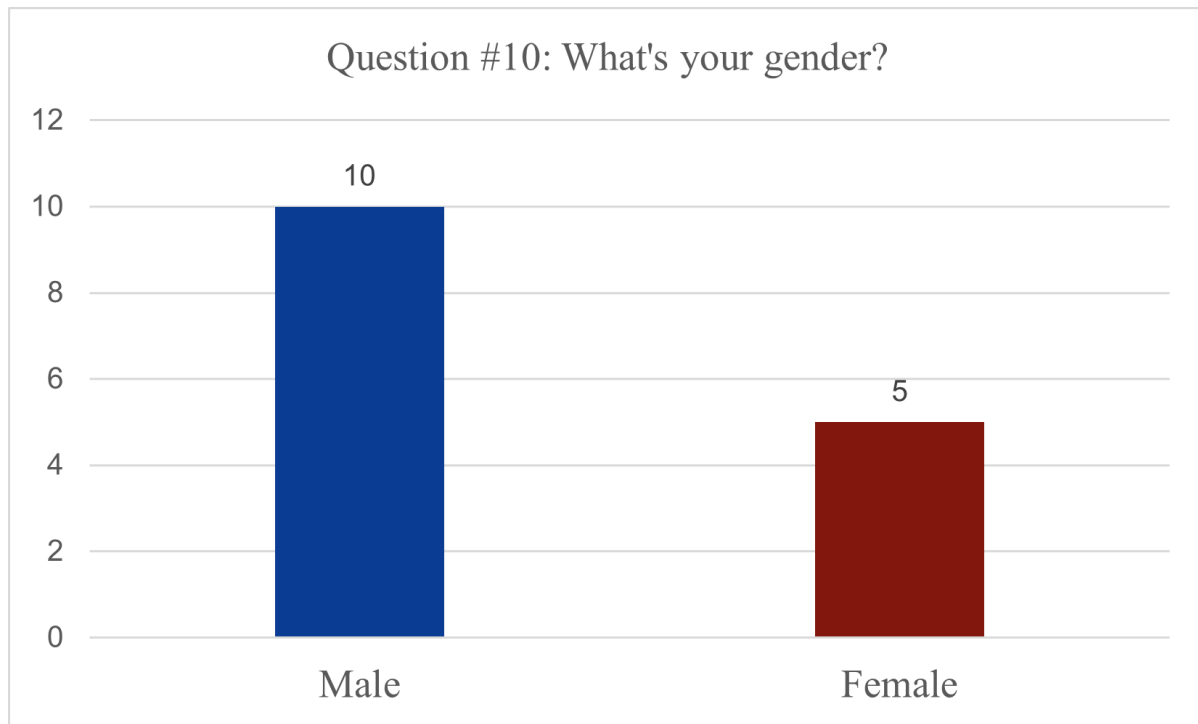
Source: Questionnaire applied to students by Jairo Marín Jiménez.

According to Graph #17, 86.7% of the students said that they have not used lyricstraning.com, while only the remaining 13.3% of them said they have it.

Graph #18: Students' age.

Source: Questionnaire applied to students by Jairo Marín Jiménez.

According to Graph #18, 60% of the students are 16 years old, 26.7% of them are 17, while 6.7% of them are equally 18 and 28.

Graph #19: Students' gender.

Source: Questionnaire applied to students by Jairo Marín Jiménez.

Graph #19 shows that 66.7% of the students are men, while the remaining 33.3% of them are women.

Chapter V
Reflections
(Strategies)

Thanks to this research and all of the information displayed, students but mostly teachers, will be able to get a better understanding of listening, as one of the skills one must master in order for communication to happen.

Perceiving listening as the hardest skill to learn is not something that happens to just a few people; on the contrary, many of the authors cited on this document agree on that fact, and not just that, they also provide several valid reasons as to why listening is perceived that way. Listening being hard is an issue that many students in Costa Rica and the whole world encounter. They might not perceive that as an issue at the beginning, but they most likely will the first time they get in front of a native speaker and a message gets sent their way.

Knowing that listening is also the most neglected skill by teachers in their classrooms is not something to be happy about; however, it should encourage every teacher that reads this investigation and hopefully have them change the way that this skill is taught, practiced and evaluated.

This study also recommends that using lyricstraining.com can be a game-changer and as its name suggests, it can help train people all around the world by using lyrics accompanied by something that can be considered the universal language of the humankind, music. Music can help students relax, make them forget for a while that they are in a classroom, provide a pleasant and stress-free environment for learning to take place, change their mood, promote motivation, and many other things.

Something that could be considered for a future investigation is applying a diagnostic test to students, having them try the website (lyricstraining.com) for a few months, and then testing them to see how much of a progress they are really able to make.

Strategies

Strategy #1

<i>Level</i>	10 th
<i>Unit</i>	2
<i>Scenario</i>	Stories Come in All Shapes and Sizes
<i>Topic</i>	Simple Past
<i>Song</i>	Because You Loved me by Céline Dion
<i>Material</i>	https://lyricstraining.com/en/play/because-you-loved-e/H7I4VxsU27#NN8/w!jairo.marin
<i>Instructions</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher tells the students the song's name and has them try to predict what it is about by asking questions like: Is it a sad song or a happy one? Do you think it is a romantic song? What makes you think that? 2. The teacher writes a list of past tense verbs on the board and pronounces one by one and waits for the students to repeat. These are actually the words they will have to listen for later. 3. The teacher has the students access the link and complete the exercise. 4. Once the exercise is complete, the students are asked to choose five of the verbs and make one sentence with each one. 5. Finally, students go in front of the class one by one and say one of the sentences out loud. Their classmates need to recognize the verb that was used.

Strategy #2

<i>Level</i>	10 th
<i>Unit</i>	6
<i>Scenario</i>	What Comes Next?
<i>Topic</i>	Present Continuous
<i>Song</i>	Tom's Diner by Suzanne Vega
<i>Material</i>	https://lyricstraining.com/play/toms-diner-official-music-video/gEvrcQmHIE#NNM/w!jairo.marin
<i>Instructions</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The teacher plays the song and has the students write all the words they recognize from it. 2. The students access the exercise by clicking in the link provided by the teacher, pay attention to the song and fill in the gaps. 3. The teacher chooses some students and has them go in front of the class and list out all the missing words. 4. Students are told to choose one of the verbs, make one sentence, read it out loud and have their classmates guess what it means. 5. The song lyrics are given to the students so they can study vocabulary at home.

Chapter VI

Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1. Conclusions

This research is relevant because it provides valuable information not only to students, but also to teachers. It describes several subjects; like the importance of listening, how listening is perceived as the hardest skill to learn by some researchers, why teaching listening has been neglected by so many teachers during so many years, and also offers significant data on how using music videos and song lyrics can help teachers get better results from students when practicing their listening skills.

All topics mentioned above, are truths that many people, students as well as teachers, are not aware of and this research does a good job at pointing them out, explaining, and recommending the use of music videos and song lyrics. As discussed by Bokiev et al. (2018), “music and songs provide teachers with a rich and authentic resource that they can utilize to promote student engagement in ESL classrooms and to make a satisfactory connection between entertainment and learning” (p. 327). They believe it and so do a lot of people: it is much easier to get students engaged while in a more relaxed environment and music provides just that.

This study specifically informs about a website and/or application, that can be accessed by anyone who has a computer and internet access, lyricstraining.com. This website provides everyone not only with their favorite music videos, but it also offers song lyrics with missing words for the students or learners to listen for and complete the lyrics with. In addition to that, teachers can create and customize their exercises by removing specific words from the lyrics depending on what the study topic is, making it even more flexible and complete for the benefit of everyone who wants to improve their listening abilities.

6.2. Recommendations

6.2.1. To Students

It is important that students understand the importance of learning English and all the benefits that knowing this language can bring to their lives. Once they understand and know this, their journey can become a totally different experience and motivation will start to grow on them. Motivation is essential and provides engagement, and it is much more effective if it is something that comes from within.

Students should not give too much thought to what others might say or think. They have to understand that everybody's path to mastering the language is different and not knowing something is certainly allowed. Giving into fear or worry is not an option, and it most definitely will not do them any favor.

While practicing listening, students should avoid feeling anxious, nervous, or stressed out. They should be aware it is just a practice and knowing all the answers is definitely not the point of it. Making mistakes is part of the learning process.

Students should also focus on what is happening at the moment of the practice and try to prevent distractions. They should live in the moment and give their 100% of attention to the teacher's instructions and activities. The more engaged they become, the easier it will be for them to complete their activities successfully and bring themselves to a whole new proficiency level.

6.2.2. To the Institution

The institution should make sure teachers have everything they need to be able to do their job. Teachers need technological equipment and materials so they can offer their students a real immersion into the English language every time they go to class. Teachers should have access to

computers, tape recorders, multimedia projectors, etc. Besides all those materials just mentioned, the institution should do its best to train and retrain their teachers as many times as necessary. Teachers should never get stuck with old methodologies and the institution is the authority that can make sure that does not happen.

6.2.3. To Teachers

Teachers should always do everything they can to provide a safe and fun environment to learn. They should make sure students understand that it is allowed to make mistakes, and only by making those mistakes, is that they will be able to accomplish whatever goal they have put their effort into. Teachers should also find a way to learn more about their students, their interests, their likes, their dislikes, their wants and their goals. Knowing the students is a powerful tool.

Taking advantage of something like music can help with their students' mood and perception of the English language. Music gives teachers the chance to have students know that learning is important, but it is also something that can be fun and exciting.

Motivating students and having them appreciate the opportunity they have to be better and reach their goals is definitely the teachers' responsibility, but teachers should always keep in mind that it can become something less stressful and fun for them if they let music into their classrooms.

Teachers should never get used to the same things or methods. They need to be innovative and should educate themselves before trying to educate others.

6.2.4. To the Educational System

The main recommendation for Costa Rica's Ministry of Education would be to make sure that all English teachers have certain proficiency level. Not only should teachers have vast knowledge on the subject, in this case the English language, but they must also be able to transfer their knowledge to their students, and that is something that the Ministry of Education should be able to guarantee.

Something else they should do is investigate and see if their current syllabus really meets the students' needs in Costa Rica. Looking at English programs from other countries which may have proved to be successful might sound like another good option. Changing the way that English is taught in Costa Rica is crucial and it must be started by someone with the authority, just like the people in the Ministry of Education.

Training teachers is something else the Ministry of Education should be investing in. There are teachers that have been working for years and yet they have not received any kind of training. No training on new methodology, no training on technological advances or available materials, nothing. In order for students to learn, teachers must be excellent and knowledgeable people; but in order for teachers to become that, constant training should be given to them, and sadly, that is not the case.

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Annexes

Annex #1

Teachers' Questionnaire

1. What skill would you say your students have the most trouble with?

Listening

Speaking

Reading

Writing

2. What skill would you say your students practice the least?

Listening

Speaking

Reading

Writing

3. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your students' listening skills?

4. Do you usually use authentic or non-authentic material when teaching listening?

Authentic

Non-authentic

5. Do you ever bring music to the classroom?

Yes

No

6. Is there a particular kind of music your students prefer?

Pop

Rock

Hip-hop

Reggae

Electronic

Other

7. How would you say your students respond to music?

Great

Good

Bad

8. Do you think that listening to music helps students with their listening skills?

Yes

No

9. Have you ever used lyricstraining.com?

Yes

No

Annex #2**Students' Questionnaire**

1. What skill is the hardest for you?

Listening

Speaking

Reading

Writing

2. Which skill do you practice the least?

Listening

Speaking

Reading

Writing

3. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your listening skills?

4. Do you like listening to music?

Yes

No

5. Is there a particular kind of music you prefer?

Pop

Rock

Hip-hop

Reggae

Electronic

Other

6. Would you say that listening to music might increase your listening skills?

Yes

No

7. Does your teacher use music or recorded conversations when teaching listening?

Music

Recorded Conversations

8. Have you ever used lyricstraining.com?

Yes

No

9. How old are you?

10. What's your gender?

Female

Male

Did you find attractive the activities implemented in class? *

Yes

No

Do you like having activities/games where e-tools are used in the class to improve the listening skill? *

Yes

No

Do you feel your listening skill has improved after the use of e-tools? *

Yes

No

Would you recommend the use of e-tools to enhance the listening skill? *

Yes