

**UNIVERSIDAD INTERNACIONAL DE LAS AMÉRICAS
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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES

**AUDIOS AS A TASK-BASED APPROACH TECHNIQUE TO
IMPROVE THE PRONUNCIATION OF SHORT AND LONG
VOWEL SOUNDS IN NINTH-GRADERS AT MONT BERKELEY
SCHOOL IN SAN JOSÉ DURING THE FIRST QUARTER OF
2022**

Thesis Submitted to Obtain the Bachelor's Degree in English with Concentration on Teaching

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Chapter I

Introductory Framework

Every teacher of English as a second language knows from direct experience, either from the time when he/she learned ESL or from teaching it to learners, that one of the main causes of misunderstanding spoken English is the mispronunciation of sounds, leading to communication breakdowns. Pronunciation is always linked to listening skills, which applies to learning the mother tongue. Therefore, pronunciation is an important component of communicative competence, and pronunciation instruction is key in teaching ESL. According to Celce-Murcia et al. (2006), when teaching pronunciation, the main goal is not to make the learners sound like native speakers but to help them establish an intelligible pronunciation (p.8).

The researcher has been brought up as a bilingual child in Romanian and Hungarian language, and without citing any author, she can testify that the better the language is pronounced around the listener, the better he/she will speak it, and the better listener a person is, the better his/her pronunciation will be. Consequently, when living in a non-English spoken country, audios become important tools in exposing learners to English pronunciation. This research is trying to narrow the field. It focuses on using audios as a task-based approach technique to improve the pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds of the English language in ninth-graders at Mont Berkeley School in San José during the first quarter of 2022.

1.1 Problem Statement

In 2019, the Government of the Republic of Costa Rica created a public-private Alliance for Bilingualism and declared it a public interest (Declaratoria de interés público de la alianza para el bilingüismo (ABI) N° 41858-MTSS-MEP-MICITT-MCSP, 2019). The President of the Republic of Costa Rica, Carlos Alvarado Quesada, cited by the Costa Rican Public Education Ministry (2019), said that "English language teaching will be a national priority"

(para.1). Many programs have been developed since then to help learners of all ages improve their English language level. Mont Berkeley School has kept up with this extraordinary endeavor and introduced updated resources for all its students; therefore, it introduced the most recently published books by Oxford University Press, the series of books Oxford Discovery Futures, for all high school grades. Despite having the best teaching and learning resources and numerous lessons a week, the ninth-grade students and their teachers have faced a huge challenge: teaching and learning both in-person and online due to the Covid-19 pandemic that burst in 2020.

The ninth-grade learners have been experiencing several difficulties in their process of learning, such as not being able to practice oral skills due to the obligation of following the Covid-19 protocols, such as wearing a facial mask during classes, keeping a two-meter distance from each other to avoid infection, and spreading it, not being allowed to work in pairs or as a group for the same reason. When teaching and learning a second language, wearing a facial mask prevents the teacher from articulating the language correctly. The facial mask they are wearing does not allow the teacher to understand what they are saying fully or hear whether their pronunciation is correct. Therefore, the students misunderstand the sounds and the words and the general instruction. If we look at this situation vice-versa, we can identify the same obstacle in communication. When students try to communicate in English, their message is affected by the mispronunciation they have previously learned.

The researcher directly experienced this incredible and frustrating scenario with the ninth-graders during her teaching practicum in the first quarter of 2021. Teaching and learning EFL in these conditions is extremely difficult since pronunciation is the basis of oral communication. Oral skills result from listening skills; therefore, students need to be exposed to correct English language pronunciation. Even if they have modern professional books to study,

the amount of information they must look into at each level is enormous. The teacher must plan her classes to cover all topics to the detriment of pronunciation, hoping that students will pick up the right pronunciation on the go. Keeping in mind that the type of classes can change anytime from in-person to online due to the behavior of the Covid-19 pandemic, the focus on pronunciation during the EFL lessons is neglected in favor of covering as many topics as possible from the books. As a result, the researcher proposes a set of task-based activities focused on audios to help the students improve their listening and, as a direct consequence, their pronunciation. In conclusion, the research question is the following. How much can audios improve the pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds of English as a foreign language in ninth-graders at Mont Berkeley School in San José during the first quarter of 2022?

1.2 Objectives of the Investigation

1.2.1 General Objective

To evaluate the use of audios to improve the pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds of English as a foreign language in ninth-graders at Mont Berkeley School in San José during the first quarter of 2022

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

To identify whether the short or long vowel sounds of English as a foreign language are mispronounced by the ninth-graders at Mont Berkeley School in San José during the first quarter of 2022

To apply audios as a task-based technique to improve the pronunciation of the short and long vowel sounds of English as a foreign language in ninth-graders at Mont Berkeley School in San José during the first quarter of 2022

To analyze the progress in the pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds of English as a foreign language in ninth-graders at Mont Berkeley School in San José during the first quarter of 2022

1.3 Justification of the Study

2020 is the year when the Covid-19 pandemic burst and forced a global shutdown of most activities, including educational activities, which had to migrate to online teaching and learning. The ninth-grade students from Mont Berkeley School in San José are some of the so many students affected by the change in the teaching methodology provoked by the Covid-19 pandemic. This specific group of students has been even more affected because, in the year 2020, when they started the seventh grade, they were almost immediately sent home because the Covid-19 pandemic had just burst, and by orders of the Costa Rican Ministry of Education, all students had to continue their education from home through synchronic and asynchronous classes. Because the new teaching modality was new for both teachers and students, they all had to adapt to the new reality. As a consequence, because it was a never-experienced situation, the quality of the English teaching and learning process dropped drastically. The following year, 2021, when they started the eighth grade, they received with great joy their new resources, the Oxford books in order to dramatically improve their English level, overcome the previous years' experience, and become fluent speakers. Even if they had the most updated resources to study English from and the newest methodology, at that time, they still had online classes, which were alternated with in-person classes every other week, which made students improve their English at a slow and steady pace.

It is important to mention that this educational institution's English program is designed to help students graduate as bilinguals; however, the pandemic conditions that

continued over the year 2021, as well, affected today's ninth graders in their English language acquisition and pronunciation. First, the students did not know each other very well, did not know their teacher, were not familiar with the high school's rules because most of their classes were taught online; some of them did not speak English at all, while other students in the class were somehow able to speak a little bit more. Consequently, all these situations were causing them a great amount of stress. Second, when they studied the seventh grade, their English lessons were online, and when they studied their eighth grade, their English lessons were both online and in the classroom. When online, they did not have opportunities to interact among them to practice English and they had to speak one at a time, which also happened during classroom lessons because they had to follow the Covid-19 protocols, which did not allow them to work in groups or pairs. As a consequence, their English language acquisition was affected at that point that even if they had eleven lessons of thirty-five minutes each per week and had access to professional books created by Oxford University Press, today, in 2022, they still have not developed their fluency and still have difficulties in pronouncing sounds correctly. As a result, when speaking, their message is affected and misunderstood.

The researcher had the opportunity to be the teacher of this group of students during the first quarter of the year 2021, and she could observe their struggles with English Language acquisition, fluency, and pronunciation. This investigation is convenient to be carried out because it focuses on very specific aspects of pronunciation, such as short and long vowels of the English language, which ninth-grade students find very difficult to pronounce. This investigation is relevant and practical because first, it will help ninth-graders discriminate between the two types of vowels, which will immediately affect their pronunciation. The more students are exposed to the English language through different types of audio, the better their pronunciation

will be. Good pronunciation is important to avoid confusion when trying to convey a message because misunderstandings are often caused by mispronunciation. Second, it will help the teachers of English in Mont Berkeley School apply the techniques used in this investigation to other grades to help them improve pronunciation. Third, the entire school will benefit from it because even if the teachers change over the years, they will always have access to the techniques to help new generations of students improve their pronunciation. Finally, the information that this investigation provides may stimulate professors of English at different universities and teacher trainers to encourage future teachers and school teachers to use the activities to enhance students' performance in English pronunciation.

1.4 Antecedents

1.4.1 Historical antecedents

Celce-Murcia et al. (2006), in their book *Teaching Pronunciation, a Reference for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages*, present a succinct and chronological overview of modern language teaching. They state that only the intuitive-imitative approach was used before the nineteenth century, complemented by textbooks. Later the analytic-linguistic approach was introduced to complement the first one using important tools such as the phonetic alphabet descriptions of the speech mechanism, sounds, and rhythm to supplement listening, imitation and production. Teaching methods have also evolved from the Grammar Translation Method and Reading Based Approach to Direct Method and more naturalistic approaches; from the Audio-Lingual method that uses minimal pair drills to Communicative Approaches and beyond. Material developers and teachers decided that "directing most of their energy to teach suprasegmental features of the language (i.e., rhythm, stress, and intonation) in a discourse context was the optimal way to organize a short-term pronunciation course for non-native

speakers" (p.10). Teaching pronunciation has evolved over de decades for the benefit of the students. The importance of citing these authors is to emphasize the evolution of teaching English as a second or foreign language, specifically teaching pronunciation.

1.4.2 International investigations

The development of the phonological factor in the pronunciation of EFL learners is very important; therefore, González Guerra (2019), author of the thesis report at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Ecuador, denominated The Phonological Factor in the Pronunciation of Vowel Sounds in the First Level Senior High School Students from "María Auxiliadora" School, 2018, through explorative qualitative research intended to describe the development of the phonological factor in the pronunciation of vowel sounds in EFL learners. After identifying the level of fluency of English language learners and evaluating their difficulties in pronouncing the English vowel sounds, the investigator interviewed the learners' teachers and finalized the research with challenging ten learners of EFL, randomly selected, to establish how learners use them English during lessons. For the observations, she used a guide containing criteria such as the students' use of the language, teachers' performance, feedback and correction, and students' difficulties with pronunciation.

When interviewing the teachers, she used a question bank formed by seven questions related to phonology, teaching strategies, and activities for improving pronunciation. In the same way, the difficulties in the speech production of the learners of EFL were observed using a guide. The outcomes of the investigation point out that the students' English vowel sounds pronunciation was inaccurate because they pronounce them as the written Spanish vowels a, e, i, o, u. In addition, stress, assimilation, and intonation were a major part of their difficulties in English language production; therefore, communication was affected. Teachers mentioned using

cooperative learning to overcome the learners' difficulties. This research concluded that EFL students need to improve their English vowel sounds pronunciation, while "teachers should emphasize more on pronunciation exercises which are frequently regarded as unimportant."

In order to improve the students' pronunciation of EFL, teachers need tools to help their students learn and practice the correct pronunciation. UgarrizaOrnes (2020), in her thesis denominated "Techniques and tools for the improvement of English pronunciation for secondary students" defended at Universidad de Cantabria in Spain, makes a didactic proposal of techniques and methods to improve the pronunciation of English in secondary level students to be taken into consideration by educators when teaching ESL or EFL. The proposal focused on using information and communication technologies, minimal pairs and contextualized minimal pairs, tongue twisters, reading aloud and storytelling, songs, podcasts, and dictogloss through cooperative learning. The author proposes five sessions of fifty minutes each. The first session is recommended to focus on the pronunciation of the silent hand on initial groups that start with /s/ such as sp, st, sc, sm, sn (shr, sf). During the second session, voiced and voiceless consonants are to be practiced; as for the third session, the differences among the sounds /æ/ /ʌ/ /ɑ:/ /ɒ/ /ɔ:/ are highlighted; the fourth session emphasizes the short and weak vowels vs. long vowels; and finally, during the last session, the intonation of questions and tongue twisters are the main suggestion. UgarrizaOrnes (2020) concludes her research with the recommendation for teachers to use ICT in their classrooms during their lessons since it is an essential tool that complements the techniques reviewed and contributes to enhancing learners' motivation.

1.4.3 National investigations

In Costa Rica, some research on teaching to improve pronunciation has been done in several contexts so far. One of them was conducted at Centro Educativo Cristiano Reformado

during the second quarter of 2017 to implement strategies to teach and improve pronunciation of seventh-grade students. For that purpose, Madrigal Elizondo (2017) used different teaching techniques such as comparison and contrast between Spanish and English sounds, discrimination of sounds, minimal pairs, reading out loud, tongue twisters, recitation of poems and jazz chants, and applied them on the group of nineteen students whose level of understanding and pronunciation of English language was mixed due to students coming from different public schools with different levels of English. The instruments used to measure students' progress were checklists, observations, oral and written practices during and after the lessons. The investigation outcomes were positive since most of the students showed an improvement in their pronunciation of EFL, specifically in the articulation of the sounds, the intonation, and the rhythm. They also developed self-confidence in speaking English due to the activities and techniques applied.

Another research was conducted at Canaán High School in Rivas on twelve tenth-grade students. Acuña Aguilar & Quirós Cordero (2017) used a quantitative approach and numerical methodology to determine to which extent the Multistage Frame Technique enhances the students' pronunciation of Standard American English vowel sounds. Instruments such as questionnaires and interviews were used to obtain measurable data, and pre-tests and post-tests were applied to learners following a quasi-experimental design. A booklet created by the researchers denominated "Keep Calm and Learn Pronunciation" was implemented during the stage of treatment. Plenty of conclusions and recommendations were drawn, among which we selected the most important ones. The implementation of the Multistage Frame Technique, divided into five different stages, significantly improved the students' performance in pronunciation. According to the researchers, Acuña Aguilar & Quirós Cordero (2017), one

remarkable conclusion is that some participants showed great improvement by shifting from beginner to advanced level fact that confirms the efficiency of the methodology proposed by them. However, the students still showed difficulties with some specific Standard American English vowels sounds such as /æ/ and /u/ after administering the treatment. Some of the recommendations were related to the need to have clear programs which include all the linguistic aspects. In addition, Acuña Aguilar & Quirós Cordero (2017) recommended that "the teachers' attitudes towards teaching pronunciation should be reinforced using training sessions to help them implement teaching techniques that intertwine all skills when developing an EFL lesson. The lack of inclusion of specific elements leads teachers to overlook or even ignore pronunciation's role in the final linguistic results. It is also necessary to include the instruction of pronunciation during EFL lessons as a way to improve students' communicative skills." The researchers also emphasized that "high school students' aptitude and attitude towards pronunciation instruction must not be overlooked by the teachers due to false misconceptions."

Ludic activities are also important in the teaching and learning process. Rodríguez Madriz (2017) analyzed the "effect of ludic activities to enhance the pronunciation of front vowels of the 7-6 students at Liceo León Cortés Castro." Twenty-four students were part of the research. The instruments used were initial questionnaires, observations, a pre-test, and a post-test, and he made use of three ludic activities. Plenty of conclusions was reached, and a good deal of recommendations was made. Rodríguez Madriz (2017) One of the most important conclusions was that most of the students could identify and pronounce one of the sounds correctly. Even if the usage of ludic activities helped students enhance the pronunciation of the front vowel sounds, some students still needed to improve and practice these vowel sounds more. Two students exceeded the expectations of the post-test. Some recommendations suggest that

games are adapted to the student's English level and age. Teachers use more technology through modern applications on their cell phones or tablets. Rodriguez Madriz (2017) thinks “it would be a great idea for future studies to carry out ludic activities not only to improve other vowel sounds, but also apply other games and strategies to help students to enhance and learn the correct stress, rhythm, intonation patterns and, linking of words in connected speech.”

1.5 Scope

Due to the pandemic that burst in 2020 and continued over the years of 2021 and 2022, the teaching-learning methodology of EFL has been severely affected. Consequently, students have been studying English both online and in the classroom. When online, many technical issues have been reported by both the teacher and the students, making teaching and learning difficult and slow. When in the classroom, they observed the covid-19 protocols to avoid getting infected and spreading the disease by wearing facial masks. That also means they are not allowed to work in groups or pairs. Therefore, the researcher will carry out several activities involving different kinds of audios, hoping to find out if they help students improve pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds of English as a foreign language. Should this investigation be successful, not only ninth-grade students will be benefited, but also their teacher who will receive the activities to adapt and apply them to other grades in the high school; future generations affected by the sudden change in the teaching and learning methodology provoked by the pandemic will benefit from it as well. Hence, this research seeks the following goals for the ninth-graders at Mont Berkeley School in San José during the first quarter of 2022:

- Identify which of the short and long vowel sounds are mispronounced.
- Create efficient activities that imply using audios to improve the pronunciation of the short and long vowel sounds.

- Apply audios as a task-based technique to improve the pronunciation of the short and long vowel sounds.
- Analyze the progress in the pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds.
- Gather the activities that give the best results in a booklet to be handed over to the teacher for further use when teaching EFL.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, a literature review of the theories and concepts related to the object of the present research for a better understanding of it can be found.

2.1 Literature Review

This section of the chapter will develop relevant concepts and theories affiliated with the investigation. Therefore, the reader will find topics such as the audio-lingual method, task-based approach, audios, task-based approach, pronunciation, vowel sounds, phonetics, audios in teaching pronunciation, and their related teaching techniques and activities briefly explained.

2.1.1 The Audio-Lingual Method

2.1.1.1 What is the Audio-Lingual method? According to Kakunta and Kamanga (2020), the audio-lingual method is known as the Army method because American Universities developed it for the US Army personnel who needed to learn European languages fast due to the US participation in World War II. The audio-Lingual method was an innovation in teaching foreign languages. It was also a reaction to the Grammar-Translation method, which made learners speak the targeted foreign language. As Mei (2018) believed, the Audio-Lingual Method is an oral-based approach emphasizing language teaching through listening and imitating the use of grammatical and sentence patterns, emphasizing the acquisition of structures and patterns in common everyday dialogue.

2.1.1.2 What is the Audio-Lingual technique? Kakunta and Kamanga (2020) clarify that this method is usually applied in the form of a drill pattern where patterns are elicited, repeated, and tested to make students use the patterns automatically.

Per Kakunta and Kamanga (2020), drilling is a technique that consists of the repetition of oral patterns and structures. Repetition drills and substitution drills are the most used when applying this method. In a repetition drill, learners repeat what the teacher says or the recorded audio produces. In a substitution drill, language learners replace one word with another. They could replace a word of the model sentence with a pronoun, number, or gender and make the necessary change.

2.1.2 Task-Based Approach

2.1.2.1 What is a task-based approach? It is also known as task-based instruction (TBI) or task-based language teaching (TBLT). According to East (2017), TBLT is a subcategory of communicative language teaching, learner-centered, and experiential pedagogical approach. It focuses on the use of tasks since the learners engage more in language learning when having to perform a task using the language that is being learned. The final purpose is to integrate language learning processes such as focusing on pragmatic meaning, giving due attention to grammatical form, cognitive processing, and scaffolding opportunities.

According to Chong and Reinders (2020), TBLT is opposed to the majority of the traditional language teaching methods of the twentieth century, such as grammar-translation and audio-lingual methods. According to Ellis (as cited in Chong and Reinders, 2020), the novelty of this method lies in the belief that "language learning will progress more successfully if teaching aims simply to create contexts in which the learners' natural language learning capacity can be nurtured" (p. 222).

According to Chua and Lin (2020), TBLT was first applied by Prabhu (1987) in Bangalore in India. According to Murad, as cited in Chua and Lin (2020), TBLT engages learners to perform a series of tasks by using the target language for communication. The tasks'

activities are related to daily work and focus on real-life situations. In addition, Chua and Lin (2020) express that communicative competence is the main objective of TBLT. It refers to enabling learners to acquire new linguistic knowledge and enhance their existing knowledge.

2.1.2.2 The TBLT technique. Ellis (2003) explains that the tasks of the TBLT have a clear outcome which refers to what the learners arrive at after completing the task, such as a story or a list of differences, for example. In order to understand how to apply the TBLT, it is important to understand the meaning of "task." Ellis (2003) defines the task as "an activity which requires learners to use language, with the emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective, and which is chosen so that it is most likely to provide information for learners and teachers which will help them in their own learning" (p.9). It is important to clarify for the learners that what matters is the outcome, so they do not focus on the manner language is used but on achieving the outcome by using the language.

According to Ellis (2003), a task could be characterized by the following features: it is a work plan, involves a primary focus on meaning, involves a real-world process of language use, can involve any of the four language skills, involves cognitive processes such as selecting, classifying, ordering, reasoning, and evaluation information; it has a clearly defined outcome. Moreover, according to Prabhu (as cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2003), there are three main tasks called information-gap activity, opinion-gap activity, and reasoning-gap activity. The information – gap activity involves the exchange of information among participants in order to complete a task such as drawing each other's family trees after sharing information. The information-gap activity only requires a single-step transfer of information rather than negotiation. The opinion-gap activity is rather open-ended and requires that students give their personal preferences, feelings, attitudes, or opinions to complete a task such as writing a letter to

a friend who has sought their counsel about a dilemma. The reasoning-gap activity encourages a more sustained engagement with meaning and requires students to infer some new information from their given information. For example, students are given a railroad timetable and asked to find the best route to get from one city to another.

Elis (2006) identifies three stages of a task-based lesson named pre-task phase, "during task" phase, and post-task. The pre-task refers to diverse activities that can be performed before they start the task, such as giving the students time to plan the performance of the task. The "during task" phase is centered on the task itself, and it could have some instructions such as students being required to meet a deadline which means students perform the task under pressure. The post-task is the final phase that covers follow-up procedures on the task performance. However, the pre-task and the post-task are not mandatory, but if performed, they will maximize language development.

Phase	Examples of options
1. Pre-task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish the outcome of the task • Plan time • Do a similar task
2. During task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time pressure • Number of participants
3. Post-task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learner report • Consciousness-raising • Repeat task

A framework for designing task-based lessons. Adapted from Elis (2006)

According to Ellis (2003), TBLT results in a clear outcome rather than just simply using the language, and the outcome of the task can be assessed in terms of contents. A few examples mentioned by (Ellis 2003) are a) a narrative task-based on pictures can be evaluated according to

whether or not the learner has told the story successfully, including all main events; b) a spot-the-difference task involving pictures can be judged according to whether or not the students have successfully identified the differences.

2.1.2.3 Pros. When analyzing the pros, Larsen-Freeman, (2003) points out that when using TBLT, first, learners have numerous opportunities to interact using the target language while completing a task. In addition, they are exposed to a natural context for language use. Second, their interaction while trying to understand each other and express their meanings facilitates the language acquisition of the targeted language (p.145, p.146). In other words, East (2017) explains that learners learn the target language through experiencing it in the classroom through actively using it as a means of communication in real life. In addition, Willis (as cited in Duong and Nguyen, 2021) assures that learners become highly motivated as they get exposure to the language they are learning (p. 2). Furthermore, according to East (2017), another important aspect is that TBLT is a learner-centered approach in which not only students work in pairs or groups, but also as a whole class while the teacher, during task performance, does not interfere; however, the teacher's role is to provide feedback during task execution. (p.8)

2.1.2.4 Cons. When analyzing the cons, Larsen-Freeman, (2003) highlights that TBLT does not focus on a particular function or form of the language because the teacher should use a wide variety of linguistic forms, which are made clear by the context. Another point explained by Larsen-Freeman, (2003) is that the focus of TBLT is not on the task itself but on completing the task, which means that the language used in the process is not as relevant as the task completion. According to East (2017), TBLT fails to sufficiently explain grammatical concepts and rules. He insists that TBLT in practice may look very different from TBLT in theory or empirical study, which could lead to a disagreement between researchers and teachers. (p.2)

Rafie et al. (2015) present a set of challenges when employing TBLT. Those challenges refer to the ones mentioned above and also include the following: a) if the teacher was used to having a traditional role in the classroom when applying TBLT, it becomes difficult for the teacher to change the approach since the TBLT requires a high level of creativity and dynamism on behalf of the teacher. b) When learners feel difficulty, they are likely to use their mother tongue. c) The resources which are necessities of task-based learning are beyond the textbooks.

2.1.2.5 Activities. According to East (2017), when applying TBLT, students perform the activities of the tasks either individually, in pairs, or as a class, while the teacher's role is to provide feedback during task execution. Ellis (2003) provides a series of example activities that can be used in TBLT briefly presented below. In the first activity called "A dangerous moment," students work in pairs; student A must describe to his/her partner a situation where he/she have felt that his/her life was in danger. Student A will describe what happened and will add how he/she felt when in danger and afterward. Student B will listen carefully to student A and draw a picture to show what happened to his/her partner and show it to him/her.

In the second activity called "The same or different?" described by Ellis (2003), students work in pairs and describe pictures to each other in order to find out whether the pictures are different or not. A third activity called "New students" is described by Ellis (2003). The activity consists of first, listening to a dialog to complete the missing information on four personal information cards; second, students complete a paragraph with the missing information according to one of the cards; third, students interview each other to find out similar information about themselves and create similar cards.

In the fourth activity called "Asking for help," described by Ellis (2003), students work in pairs, and each pair receives two cards, card A for student A and card B for student B. They

must practice the conversation written on the cards. However, on the cards, the lines on the dialogue only indicate what the student should say, not what to say. A clear example of this type of dialogue is A: Check if B is busy. B: Tell him/her that you are not doing anything. A: Ask him/her to help you. B: Refuse and give a reason. A: Thank him/her. B: Agree reluctantly. In the fifth and last activity called "going shopping" presented by Ellis (2003), students work in pairs. Student A is given a shopping list, and student B lists things that can be found in a store. Student A plays the role of a customer, and student B the role of the store clerk. Students engage in a dialogue related to shopping the things on the list and practice simple present tense verbs in affirmative, negative, and question form. (p.11-13)

According to Oxford (2006), three possible task goals can be applied when applying TBLT. These goals can focus on meaning, form, or forms. First, when the goal is focused on meaning, as Oxford (2006) mentioned, learners do not receive any presentation of structures or rules or encouragement to discover them by themselves. Learners are exposed to the target language without discussing any structure, hoping that they will develop grammar naturally when they are ready for it. Second, when the goal is focused on form, as Oxford (2006) expressed, learners, are confronted with communicative language problems within a meaningful and communicative context. The learner's attention is shifted from meaning to form occasionally when a communicative breakdown occurs. In order to meet this goal, a technique called "recast" is used in which the teacher reformulates the learner's incorrect production to help the learner discern the difference between the two forms and figure out the rule. Salaberry (2001), as cited in Oxford, (2006) defines three major components of a task goal focused on forms: "a) can be generated by the teacher or the learner(s), b) it is generally incidental (occasional shift of attention), c) it is contingent on learners' needs (triggered by perceived problems)" (p.105).

Third, when the goal is focused on forms, as expressed by Oxford (2006), learners are presented with specific forms, one at a time, hoping that they will synthesize the information themselves to be able to negotiate to mean. However, lessons are not oriented toward communication in this case, and learning is reduced to memorizing.

According to Oxford (2006), numerous key types of tasks can be used when applying TBLT. These tasks can relate to problem-solving, decision-making, opinion-gap or opinion exchange, information-gap, comprehension-based, or sharing personal experiences, attitudes, and feelings; Other task types can be basic cognitive processes, such as comparing or matching, listing, and ordering or sorting; language analysis, narrative, reasoning-gap, question-and-answer, structured and semi-structured dialogues, and role-plays and simulations. In addition, Oxford (2006) refers to task types that include picture stories, puzzles and games, interviews, discussions, debates, and everyday functions, such as telephone conversations and service encounters. Finally, task types also encompass communication/conversation strategies, learning strategies, and text-handling strategies, including video making. In conclusion, multiple skills and sub-skills are involved in tasks. To synthesize, a short example is using a text for reading comprehension and then processing the information found in the text by answering questions, discussing the information, making a decision, solving a problem, and expressing how learners feel about the information given in the text and how it could apply in their lives.

2.1.3 The use of audios and the task-based approach

2.1.3.1 Importance. According to Bradlow, Akahane-Yamada, Pisoni, &Tohkura (1999), Lee &Lyster (2017), Wang, Jongman, & Sereno(as cited in Darcy, 2018), listening and speaking are interconnected; therefore, when improving perception, learners improve their production of segments and suprasegmentals. Similarly, pronunciation practice can help develop

listening comprehension and word segmentation skills, which are the ability to recognize separate words in connected speech. In addition, according to Ranbom&Connine, (2011), Ziegler, Ferrand, & Montant (2004), as cited in Darcy (2018), just as listening to speech activates orthography, pronunciation practice is intertwined with both reading and writing. For example, practicing spelling-sound correspondences guides learners to recognize written words and improve spelling. Moreover, according to Prator (1971), as cited in Darcy (2018), practicing listening and pronunciation helps learners reduce spelling mistakes caused by incorrect pronunciation, and vice versa, to reduce pronunciation errors based on incorrect spelling. Moreover, according to Brown (2011), Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin (2010), as cited in Darcy (2018), the more accurate listening and segmentation skills a learner has, the more their writing improves because the omission of function words or reduced forms are limited thanks to a better perception.

2.1.3.2 Activities. Limited research on the field of pronunciation in TBLT has been made; however, authors like Gurzynski-Weiss, Long, and Solon (2017) have studied the importance of pronunciation in a TBLT context. The authors emphasize that to achieve pronunciation improvement or progress, different tasks with a common goal should be applied over time. Guerrero (2015) insists on using specifically chosen and modified tasks to allow learners to focus on phonetic aspects of the language while moving toward the main goal, which is communication. According to Zareinajad, Rezaei, and Shokrpour (2015), as cited in Fahmy Hashem (2020), generally, listening task-type activities are both receptive and productive. The receptive tasks assess understanding when one listens, including matching, labeling, form-filling, and multiple choices. The productive tasks assess both students' understanding and interpretation, including sentence completion, summary completion, and short answer questions

(p. 98). Badri, Nazari & Badri (2014), as cited by Fahmy Hashem (2020), clarify that, in general, activities for listening comprehension that are centered on a certain task are more successful. That means, in order to indicate comprehension, learners should be required to do something in response to what they hear. (P.97)

2.1.4 Pronunciation

2.1.4.1 What is pronunciation? The editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica define pronunciation as the form in which the elementary symbols of language, the speech sounds, appear and are arranged in pitch, loudness, and duration patterns. The organs of speech described in section 2.1.4.2 of this chapter change the quality of the sound produced, making it different from the noise or musical instrument. Therefore, according to Koch (2019), air from the lungs is pushed up through the throat and vocal cords, through the mouth, past the tongue, and out between the teeth and lips or through the nose to pronounce words. In order to change the sound, muscles of the mouth, tongue, and lips control the shape of the mouth and the flow of air. By controlling the shape of the mouth and the airflow correctly, pronunciation is clearer for other people to understand it more easily.

When people speak a foreign language, Ray, (n.d) their muscles may not be well developed for that language, so pronunciation becomes more difficult. By practicing the foreign language pronunciation, muscles develop, and pronunciation improves, producing correct vowel and consonant sounds and correct word and sentence stress, linking words, and intonation, which is explained in sections 2.1.6.2, 2.1.6.3, and 2.1.6.4. Consequently, according to Burns (2003), as cited in Purba et al. (2018), there are three main reasons why pronunciation is important. The first reason is that the learner achieves intelligibility which means that the speaker produces sound patterns recognizable as English. The second reason is

comprehensibility, which means that the listener can understand the meaning of what is said. Finally, the third reason is interpretability. That is, the listener can understand the purpose of what is uttered.

Additionally, Moyer (as cited in Gurzynski-Weiss, Long, and Solon, 2017) emphasizes that pronunciation and accent are "fundamental to communication, for, without a reasonable degree of phonological fluency, spoken interaction will falter" (p. 218). Moyer also insists that "the degree of intelligibility of an L2 speaker influences that speaker's capacity to participate within the target language community" (p. 218). Finally, Gurzynski-Weiss, Long, and Solon (2017) state that "L2 pronunciation is central to the entire act of communication in the L2, particularly as it relates to accent." (p. 218).

To summarize, pronunciation refers to how we make the sound of words. It is what the speaker does and what the hearer perceives, and judges since many words in English are not pronounced the way they are spelled.

2.1.4.2 Speech mechanism. The editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica (Ray, n.d.) agree that speech is the faculty of producing articulated sounds, which, when blended, form language. We use speech to communicate verbally and express our thoughts and ideas. According to Koch (2019), speech requires complex linguistics and motor aspects to combine sounds into words, phrases, and sentences. The speech mechanisms that we use to produce speech are respiration at the lungs, phonation at the larynx, and articulation in the mouth. Baker (2018) and Koch (2019) describe and explain the function of each part of the speech mechanism. Therefore, the respiratory system, including the lungs, expels the air when forming a sound. The phonatory system consists of the larynx, glottis, vocal cords, and trachea. The vocal cords may vibrate or not produce voiced or voiceless sounds. The articulatory system is represented by the nose, upper

and lower teeth, alveolar ridge, tongue (tip, blade, dorsum, and root), mouth (hard palate, soft palate, and uvula), and upper and lower lips. The tongue has a very important role as it is an extremely flexible muscle. It can move back and forth, up and down, to modify the flow of air in order to produce sounds. The uvula is also flexible as it can move and block or not the airflow towards the nose, creating nasal sounds or oral sounds. In conclusion, each part of the speech mechanism, called organs of speech, articulates sounds.

This is very important to know when teaching EFL as it has several other sounds than Spanish, and they have different places and manners of articulation that make the difference between the sounds. For example, the sound /æ/ as in cat [k æ t] does not exist in Spanish; therefore, students usually pronounce it as /a/, and the word cat sounds like [k a t]. Consequently, teachers must explain to students how to produce the sound /æ/ by making use of the speech mechanism, which must be well known and distinguished.

2.1.5 Vowel sounds

Flemming (2019) defines vowel sounds as the sound created when air flows smoothly, without interruption, through the throat and mouth. By changing the tongue and jaw position, the speaker produces different vowel sounds. In addition, the position of the vowel in a syllable and the letters that follow it determine the pronunciation of the vowel. Vowel sounds can be short, long, or silent.

2.1.5.1 Short vowel sounds. According to Flemming (2019), the term *short vowel* is used to refer to the sounds that most often correspond to the letters "a," "e," "i," "o," and "u" when the vowel occurs individually between consonants. Hancock (2017) points out that they are also known as lax vowels because the mouth muscles are more relaxed than when pronouncing long vowels (p.36). It is important to note that the term *short* does not refer to the length of time

the vowel sound is pronounced—it is merely a label. Hancock (2017) also mentions that "short vowels are usually spelled with a single vowel letter with no silent "e" after the following consonant" (p.36). According to the author, a consonant sound, often spelled with a double consonant letter, always follows a short vowel as in the word "ridden."

According to Flemming (2019), some basic rules for short vowel sounds are described to avoid confusion. The first basic rule is when a word has only one vowel and ends with a consonant, the vowel makes a short sound like "a" in "jam" /dʒæm/, "e" in "west" /wɛst/, "o" in "hot" /hɒt/, "i" in "fish" /fɪʃ/, and "u" in "cup" /kʌp/. A second rule is when there are two vowels in a word, but a double consonant follows the first vowel, the vowel makes a short sound as in "apple" /æpəl/, "matter" /mætər/, "ribbon" /rɪbən/, and "bunny" /bʌni/. A third rule is when a word has two vowels separated by two or more letters the first vowel makes a short sound as in "octopus" /ɒktəpʊs/, as in "basket" /bæskɪt/, as in "elephant" /ɛləfənt/, and as in "umbrella" /ʌmbrɛlə/.

2.1.5.2 Long vowel sounds. Hancock (2017) points out that long vowel sounds are tenser compared to short vowel sounds. (p. 36) According to the author, the five vowels of the English spelling system, "a," "e," "i," "o," and "u", each have a corresponding long vowel sound /eɪ/, /i:/, /aɪ/, /oʊ/, /ju:. Flemming (2019) describes the long vowel sound as the same as the vowel's name, and she describes some basic rules to avoid confusion. The first rule is when a word ends with the letter "e", which is silent, the first vowel makes a long sound such as "cake" /keɪk/, "like" /laɪk/, "bone" /boʊn/, "rode" /roʊd/, and "tube" /tju:b/. The second basic rule is when vowels work as a team to make a long vowel sound, the first vowel makes a long sound while the second vowel remains silent as in "rain" /reɪn/, "seize" /seɪz/, "boat" /boʊt/, "toad" /toʊd/, and "heap" /hi:p/. According to the author, the third basic rule is the vowel "i" often makes a long

sound in a one-syllable word if the vowel is followed by two consonants as in “blight” /blaɪt/, “high” /haɪ/, “mind” /maɪnd/, “wild”/waɪld/, except when the “i” is followed by the consonants “th”, “ch”, or “sh”, as in “fish” /fɪʃ/, “wish” /wɪʃ/, “rich” /rɪtʃ/, and “with” /wɪθ/.

2.1.6 Phonetics

2.1.6.1 Phonetic alphabet. According to the International Phonetic Association (1999), there is a standard for the phonetic representation of all languages. The International Phonetic Alphabet standard, whose acronym is IPA, shows the pronunciation of written words. It uses a set of symbols representing the phonetic alphabet, mainly based on the Roman and Greek alphabet. Another important point to understand is that due to many variations and dialects of the English language, the spelling of some words may vary and their pronunciation and, consequently, their phonetic transcription.

According to the International Phonetic Association (IPA)(1999), speech transcription can be illustrated by using segments. They are divided into two categories: consonants and vowels. English consonant sounds are categorized according to their place of articulation as bilabial, labiodental, dental, alveolar, palatal, palate-alveolar, velar and glottal, and according to their manner of articulation as plosives or stops such as / b /, / d /, / g /, / p /, / t /, and / k /; fricatives such as / v /, / ð /, / z /, / ʒ /, / f /, / θ /, / s /, and / ʃ /, affricates like / tʃ / and / dʒ /; nasals such as / m /, / n / and / ŋ /; lateral / l /; glides or semivowels, / w / and / j /, and retroflex / r /. Association, (1999) According to IPA, English vowel sounds are described as front vowel sounds such as / i /, / ɪ /, / e /, / ε /, / æ /, and / a /; central vowel sounds consist of / ə /, / ɚ /, / ɜ /, and / ʌ /, and back vowel sounds such as / u /, / ʊ /, / o /, / ɔ / according to the position of the tongue when producing the vowel sounds.

It is easy to distinguish American English from British English due to their particular characteristics. To illustrate the difference between American English and British English, Kovecses (2000) mentions that in American English, there are some changes in details such as the irregular form of some verbs as burned versus burnt; the use of shorter words as math instead of the British maths; cookbook contrasted with the British cookery book; shorter spellings such as color and colour. Skandera and Burleigh (2011) explained that AE is a rhotic variant while BE is a non-rhotic variety, which means that the British speakers no longer pronounce /r/ sound immediately after a and not followed by another vowel. For example, the words bird, father, butter, and hard in AE are pronounced as ['fɑðə], [bɜ:d], ['bʌtə], and [hɑ:d] while in BE are pronounced as ['fɑ:ðə], [bɜ:d], ['bʌtə], and [hɑ:d].

This investigation focuses on American English pronunciation. It is very important to understand the variation in pronunciation between the two English variants. Using the website <https://topphonetics.com/> and contrasting the information obtained with speakers of AE and BE, we discover that the word "tomato," is pronounced as [tə'meɪ,təʊ] in American English and [tə'mɑ:təʊ] in British English. Another example of how the pronunciation of one word differs is the word "aluminum." In AE it is pronounced as [ə'lʌmɪnəm], while in BE it is pronounced as [al(j)ʊ'mɪnɪəm]. Understanding the phonetic alphabet, it is easier for both teachers and students to teach and pronounce English words correctly.

2.1.6.2 Intonation. According to Sabbadini (n.d.), intonation is crucial for communication and a largely unconscious mechanism. It is related to how we say things rather than what we say. We use intonation to help get our message across. Without intonation, it is impossible to understand the expressions and thoughts with words. There are rising, level, and falling intonations. In other words, it is the melody that we hear when someone is speaking.

Changing the intonation by rising it, leveling it, or dropping it can completely change the meaning of a sentence. Readers can go ahead and say the sentence "It's raining" by using the three types of intonation to understand that intonation also conveys the speaker's emotions.

2.1.6.3 Rhythm. Bowler et al. (2000), Kelly G, (2000), Kenworthy, (1987), as cited by Steve Darn on the British Council webpage, explain that English is a very rhythmical language and if a learner can maintain the rhythm of the language is more likely to sound both natural and fluent. The authors state that both sentence stress and connected speech influence that rhythm. On the one hand, usually, the words that carry the stress of a sentence are lexical such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs, while the remaining words are weak, that is, they are not stressed; they are functional and are represented by conjunctions, pronouns, prepositions, auxiliaries, articles. Sentence stress is an important factor in fluency as English spoken with only strong forms has the wrong rhythm, sounds unnatural, and does not help the listener distinguish emphasis or meaning.

On the other hand, connected speech also influences the rhythm. When the language is spoken, groups of words are formed by linking the sounds and avoiding pauses. In this case, weak or unstressed words sound different when used in a sentence instead of being said in isolation. Some examples are the words "and," "to," and "of." Accepted written contractions such as "*can't*," "*won't*," "*didn't*," "*I'll*," "*he'd*," "*they've*," "*should've*" also influence the rhythm and make the language sound natural. Therefore, rhythm produces sentence stress, connected speech, and what happens to the words and sounds between the stresses. Rhythm is one of the reasons why learners believe that native English speakers produce the language too fast. The native speakers only use the correct speed and rhythm. It is of great importance for the students to understand, learn, and produce the rhythm of a sentence correctly.

2.1.6.4 Word Stress. According to Pathare (n.d.), word stress combines different features when syllables in words are stressed. The stress is always longer and louder, and its pitch is usually higher. It is said more clearly than the first, and the last vowel sounds with the stressed sound are compared; finally, it uses larger facial movements. A clear example of stress is the stressed syllable "put" in the word "computer." Pathare (n.d.) explains that there are patterns in word stress, but exceptions can also be found. A general tendency for the word stress in English is the following: a) stress on the first syllable on two-syllable nouns and adjectives, such as in the words "apple" and "happy"; b) in words which can be used as both nouns and verbs such as "suspect," "import" and "insult," the noun has a stress on the first syllable, and the verb has a stress on the second syllable; c) compound nouns such as "hairbrush" and "football" have fairly equally balanced stress but with stronger stress on the first part.

There are also patterns such as the following word family "equal" (the stress is on the first syllable), "equality" (the stress is on the second syllable), "equalize" (the stress is on the first syllable), and "equalization" (the stress is on the fourth syllable). Therefore, students should be exposed to and taught word stress patterns to pronounce the words correctly and avoid their message being affected by mispronunciation.

2.1.7 Audios in teaching pronunciation

Gurzynski-Weiss, Long, and Solon (2017) agree that pronunciation is a central component of the acquisition of a second or foreign language and highlight that the study of pronunciation has been marginalized within the field of applied linguistics. Teaching pronunciation is important, and Gower, Philips, and Walter (1995), as cited in Maharani (2017), give two reasons for it: it helps the students to know and understand the spoken English heard, and it helps the students to make their speech comprehensible.

2.1.7.1 What are audios? According to Rost (as cited in Cakir, 2011), listening is vital when teaching a second or foreign language because learning simply cannot begin without it. Listening provides input for the learner; therefore, listening is fundamental to speaking (p.1802). When the learner is practicing the listening skill, he/she is provided with phonological, lexical, grammatical, and ideological complexities and performance factors like rate of speech, clarity of intonation and pronunciation, hesitations, pauses. In conclusion, listening is the most common communicative activity in daily life.

According to Maharani (2017), several techniques can teach pronunciation to the students, such as minimal-pair drill, repetition technique, audio aids, visual aids, and audio-visual aids. Audio aids refer to radio, CD/DVD/MP3 player, language laboratory, whereas audio-visual aids refer to modern technology such as projector, television, video players, etc. The audio and audio-video aids help students be more interested in learning pronunciation and understand easier how to produce the sounds. Moreover, according to Anzaku (2011), as cited in Anderson (2019), the phrase audio-visual materials is commonly used to refer to those instructional materials that may convey meaning without complete dependence upon verbal symbols or language. Audio means "hearing" and visually relates to sight. In conclusion, audio can be defined as sound recordings that are shared with students in some way because the more they hear the language, the more quickly they acquire it.

2.1.7.2 What are the techniques to improve pronunciation through audios? Darcy (2018) presents a few suggestions. Contextualized and repeated links to vocabulary items are recommended rather than practicing the perception of a difficult contrast using nonsense syllables only or two unknown words. Another recommendation is to present a variety of voices, contexts, speech rates, and utterance lengths. Finally, she suggests a multimodal input using

audio and written, or audio and video input modalities (p.25). The practice of perception does not require spending much time having students do discrimination tasks; however, it should be contextualized. Therefore, learners can repeatedly recognize the spoken form of targeted words when spoken in isolation, then in very short sequences, and finally in longer passages. Examples of how to adapt listening practice in the three ways mentioned above are detailed by Darcy (2018) and summarized below.

For listening in isolation, controlled and self-paced activities such as picture matching or word matching are recommended by Darcy (2018). In a word-matching task, learners are asked to choose the picture corresponding to the form they heard, and it could be used with minimal pairs for a difficult contrast such as /r/ and /l/. Similarly, the learner is asked to pronounce the name of an object pictured on a screen. It is useful with beginners and can include minimal pairs. In addition, in the picture matching, learners are asked to listen to two items where one is a real word, for example [stɪt] street, and the other is a pseudo word, for example [stɪt̩]. The learner's task is to pick which item is the expected pronunciation of the picture (of a street) they see.

Listening in longer sentence contexts is well suited for more advanced learners because of the speech speed. Darcy (2018) recommends activities such as shadowing, where the learner repeats everything they hear while the speech is ongoing or right after it if the sentence is short. Integrating variability such as speakers of various dialects, genders, and ages is another important recommendation for Darcy (2018). There are plenty of online tools for this purpose; one is the site YouGlish.

Moreover, multimodal input combines written and audio input as a subtitled video. According to Darcy (2018), this input helps learners develop their word-recognition skills while

listening to speech and stabilize the form of words in their memory. (p.27) Levi, Winters, &Pisoni, (2007), Mitterer& McQueen, (2009), as cited in Darcy (2018), think that providing written input while listening to spoken language makes the input more intelligible to the listener because words do not vary in written form as much as they vary in spoken form. Therefore, captions reduce the ambiguity, and the learner progressively learns to associate the perceived input to the correct word. Besides the techniques suggested for effective pronunciation, Darcy (2018) insists on giving corrective feedback and explicit pronunciation instruction to raise learners' awareness. According to Lyster (2004), as cited in Darcy (2018), explicit feedback is preferred over non-explicit feedback. Non-explicit feedback such as repeating the learner's message can be ambiguous because the learner might understand that the correction focused on meaning rather than form.

According to Darcy (2018), explicit feedback has to draw attention to the phonological error by stating the difficulty or error, precisely describing the difficulty or the error, and providing the means of correction. An example for such explicit feedback is the following: first, the instructor states the difficulty during instruction by saying, "Look, this is difficult, this is where people make mistakes"; second, notes an error when providing feedback saying, "You've made a mistake"; third, draws attention to the area of difficulty during instruction by saying "Look at this specific word and its pronunciation"; finally, provides specific feedback delineating the error by saying "You pronounced ___ like ___."; or provides explicit means of correction as feedback by saying "This is what you should do."

To conclude, effective pronunciation instruction includes contextualized vocabulary items to practice listening in isolation, the use of various voices, contexts, speech rates, and utterance lengths with shadowing exercises, and multimodal input, which is practicing viewing

captioned media. In addition, explicit feedback is necessary because it encourages learners to notice how their productions are different from what they should produce, and by recognizing those differences, they can self-correct or self-monitor

2.1.7.3 What are audios used for? According to Anderson (2019), audio-visual aids are tools used to improve the teaching and learning process. They appeal to the learners' senses to improve comprehension and retention through sensory experience since audio means "hearing" and visually relates to sight. Another important usage of audio-visual materials, as stated by Gopal V.P. (2010) as cited in Anderson (2019), is that they bring the culture and climatic conditions of other countries into the classroom. As a consequence, the distance between the two cultures is broken. The author insists that audio-visual materials facilitate the acquisition, retention, and recall of lessons learned.

As stated by Anderson (2019), audios not only help learners to focus their attention on learning, but it also exposes the learner to the target language substituting the teacher's pronunciation, which not always is the right one, with a native pronunciation, and this also helps to increase students' motivation. In addition, Anderson (2019) explains that audios are also used as a source of information to stimulate interest and encourage participation in the classroom. Digital tools make the class more interesting, dynamic, and effective, and they help learners remember the concepts for a longer period. Sarani et al. (2014) explain that when students are exposed to a video, they can hear not only the speaker but also the paralinguistic features and the non-verbal communication; however, when students are exposed to audio-based materials, they do not receive the visual elements, but the script contains more explicit language than it is used in real life. In conclusion, audio can be used separately from videos; however, because of the

access to technological tools and professional materials that can be easily found or bought from professional websites, audio videos are preferred.

2.1.7.4 How are audios used? According to Anderson (2019), there are some principles to be followed for the effective use of audios and audio-visual aids such as they should function as integral part of the educational program, should be centralized under leadership in educational programs, should be available anytime to be utilized as a part of the curriculum, among others. Glover (2013) explains that there are many ways to use audio in learning, teaching, and assessment. Some examples are general or individual assignment feedback, teaching materials such as performances, case study materials, lecture recordings, recording such as telephone or in-person interviews with experts, student reflections such as audio diaries, and producing a record of meetings and tutorials and discussions.

When audio is played in the language classroom, it provides a sound that stimulates learners' hearing, and it becomes a model sound, especially if a native speaker produces it. By imitating the speaker's sounds, the learners improve their pronunciation. The imitation of sounds can be done, for example, either by just repeating it or by having the written support of the transcription of the sounds or texts. Students can also practice shadow reading with the transcript texts to improve pronunciation and improve stress, intonation, and rhythm.

2.1.7.5 Types of audios. Ampa (2015) uses the term "learning media" when listening to the audio, watching the video, or viewing the text, animation, and graphics simultaneously, followed by exercises. Ur (as cited in Ampa, 2015) insists that learners should be exposed to different input types such as video, audio, text, animation, among others, stating that the elements that may be involved are the message, speaker, listener, and the setting. Moreover, Holden (as cited in Ampa, 2015) states that the type of activity that can be used when using

media in the classroom should include dialogue, including unscripted dialogue and scripted dialogue, authentic dialogue, and monologue. Willis (as cited in Ampa, 2015) explains that the purpose of such activities can be predicting the speech, interpreting the words, phrases, and sentences, identifying the relevant matters, and knowing the speaker's intention.

Dike (as cited in Ashaver and Igyuve, 2013) defines audio resources as records, tapes and cassettes, and radio broadcasts. Ashaver and Igyuve (2013) explain that the audio-visual resources are divided into audio, visual, and a combination of audio and visual resources such as television programs, videotapes, and dramatization; educational programs or games, programmed instructions, demonstration, and field trips. Finally, nowadays, there are plenty of types of audios that can be used in a language classroom, from prerecorded dialogues specially designed to accompany the learners' textbooks to real speeches that can be found online such as podcasts or Ted Talks videos; from specially composed songs to teach a certain topic to real songs whose lyrics happen to use a certain vocabulary, special phrases, grammar structure, or pronunciation style.

2.1.7.6 Activities. There are plenty of activities to help learners to improve their pronunciation. These activities can be found online. There are plenty of creative teachers who share activities and explanations that improve their students' pronunciation. One of these websites is <https://englishpronunciationguide.weebly.com>, where information is organized according to what needs to be taught. Szpyra-Koztowska, (2015) explains that when learners were asked to rate their favorite type of phonetic activity, the choices rated from one, the most favorite, to ten, the least favorite, were songs, dialogues, tongue twisters, phonemic transcriptions, phonetic games, repeating after the recording, imitating the teacher, minimal pairs, phonetic drills, and working on pronunciation at home.

A very motivating activity is audio recording. According to King (2016), this activity can be used to meet a variety of objectives, refining learners' voices because it gives students a chance to hear their voices add drama through pauses, repetition, or startling comparisons. Audio recordings keep students accountable for their work and help them self-assess or reflect on their strengths and challenges. They record their thoughts instead of writing; therefore, students can back up, self-correct, and restate as they think. They can even complete assignments in a medium with which many are already quite practiced and comfortable. Listening to songs, as mentioned above, is an activity that most learners love. It can be used in several ways. Speck (n.d.) describes several ways to use songs in a language classroom. One example is to have students complete gap-fills while listening to songs or create their gap-fill worksheets for their favorite song. Some more detailed activities using songs to improve pronunciation focus on sounds, words, or connected speech.

Taking into consideration that the rhymes in a song provide listeners with the repetition of similar sounds and that students listen to songs several times exposing themselves to those sounds, Ebong&Sabbadini (n.d) propose a very beautiful activity that can be done with students such as replacing the rhymes in a song with a gap. Students listen and fill the gaps, using the song to guide them. As a follow-up activity, they can categorize the words according to sounds. Ebong&Sabbadini (n.d) explain applying a song activity focused on sounds; the activity consists of choosing six words from a song from which minimal pairs can be created and writing the pairs separately on cards. Students divided into groups of four receive one set per group to match the pairs while they listen to the song and grab the correct one. Choices are then checked with projecting the lyrics on the screen.

Ebong&Sabbadini (n.d) explain that when using songs to focus on words, students learn to associate the number of syllables/stress with memorable rhythms. Specific words, especially those where the music makes the stress patterns clearer, are targeted in the following activity. Ebong&Sabbadini, (n.d) propose that the lyrics, with certain words for students to guess the number of syllables, leaving a space by each word to write the number in be given out. Students then listen, checking their predictions. Higher-level students can underline the stressed syllable while listening, then those words can be drilled and sung or chanted, or they can sing the whole song.

When using songs to focus on connected speech, Ebong&Sabbadini (n.d) state that students become aware of contractions, linked words, and phrases and practice them to integrate them into their normal daily speech. Ebong&Sabbadini (n.d) propose the first activity towards this objective: to rewrite the lyrics with the contractions in full form. Then students listen and identify the contracted words. For the second listening, they rewrite the words with the contractions. A second activity proposed by Ebong&Sabbadini (n.d) can be focused on helping learners hear how words flow in phrases. Choose a catchy tune for students to fit words to; play each chorus line until they get the rhythm. After that, in groups, students order the lines of the song on strips of paper by remembering the tune. Ebong&Sabbadini (n.d) propose other activities that highlight the strong words in phrases and sing only these, replacing the rest with "mmm." Finally, more creative students can practice and create a song contest or write their own words to fit the tune.

Another interactive variant of using songs is to use the website <https://es.lyricstraining.com> or its application on their phones to practice gap-filling while listening to songs. At the same time, they are required to think fast based not only on what they

hear but also on the given clues, such as how many letters the missing word is. It is an adjective, a pronoun, noun, or verb missing. It is a contraction because there is an apostrophe, etc. They can even choose the level of difficulty. It can be played alone or in pairs or groups of three or four as a team.

Listening to podcasts or radio is another engaging activity described by Speck (n.d.) where learners connect with a topic they are interested in. Then they can make notes about it and tell the class the gist of what they have heard or focus on more specific details as they listen. There are plenty of activities using minimal pairs to improve the learners' pronunciation in a language classroom. Wickham (2021) detailed a set of activities such as bingo with minimal pairs where learners practice the targeted sounds. Odd one out where three to five words contain the same sound, but only one word has a different sound such as meet, seat, sit is also proposed by Wickham (2021). This activity can be done individually, in pairs, or small groups. Another activity called by Wickham (2021) is run and grab where learners play in teams, and one representative of each team races towards the board to indicate the correct word or the odd or grab the appropriate flashcard.

Wickham (2021) also proposed dictation to practice minimal pairs. It can be focused on simply dictating words in a particular order to write them down, color them, or mark them. It can also focus on students dictating single words or sentences, including target words or sounds. Hancock (2017) created a four-book set for teachers of English to help them teach pronunciation. It is a collection of lesson plans focusing on awareness of sounds, vowels, consonants, semi-vowels, consonant clusters, word stress, rhythm, connected speech, and -ed -s endings. The set contains pronunciation worksheets, puzzles, pair work, and poems.

Based on the briefly reviewed literature, and according to Burns (2003) as cited in Purba et al. (2018), it is clear that listening activities have a key role in foreign language teaching in order to improve learners' pronunciation. It is directly linked to intelligibility, comprehensibility, and interpretability. Even if the learners are well equipped with vocabulary and grammar, they cannot communicate efficiently and effectively if their pronunciation falls below a certain threshold level.

Chapter III

Methodological Framework

In this chapter, the reader will encounter information related to the strategies selected to achieve the objectives of the research and the means of collecting the information related to the participants' progress. The chapter follows subdivisions such as the description of the research approach, research design, information sources, analysis categories, description of the institution where the research is conducted, and a detailed description of the population and participants. Finally, instruments used to collect relevant information, collection data process, and data analyses are developed.

3.1 Research Approach

The three main research approaches or methods that an investigation can focus on depending on the objectives and goals the investigator wants to reach are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed approaches. In this section of the methodological framework, the reader will find clear and brief descriptions. According to Kumar (2011), "Research is one of the ways to find answers to your professional questions." (p.25). He also states that "research is a process for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information to answer questions. Nevertheless, to qualify as research, the process must have certain characteristics: it must, as far as possible, be controlled, rigorous, systematic, valid, and verifiable, empirical, and critical" (p. 28). In order to gather the information to meet the research objectives stated in chapter one, this investigation follows the qualitative method because of its interpretative nature and because it is the most common method used when conducting an investigation related to education. Additionally, the researcher will use instruments that will help her analyze her research objectives using merely qualitative techniques.

3.1.1. The qualitative approach

Niclas (ascited by Hernández and Mendoza, 2018) agrees that the term qualitative comes from the Latin "quality," which refers to phenomena' nature, character, and properties. Moreover, Niglas states that the concept of qualitative research has its origins in another classic author of the social sciences: Max Weber (1864-1920). This author proposed a hybrid method, where studies are of social variables at the macro level and individual instances. He introduced the term "Verstehen" or "understanding," emphasizing that besides the description and measurement of social variables, researchers must also consider the subjective meanings and the understanding of the context in which the phenomenon occurs.

Lindlof and Taylor, (2018); Punch, 2014, Lichtman (2013), Morse (2012), Encyclopedia of Educational Psychology (ascited by Hernández and Mendoza, 2018) state that the qualitative approach focuses on understanding and exploring phenomena from the perspective of the participants in their natural environment and relation to the context. The qualitative approach is preferred when the investigation aims to examine how individuals perceive and experience phenomena around them, delving into their views, interpretations, and meanings. In other words, according to Hernández y Mendoza (2018), the qualitative approach utilizes data obtained throughout the interpretation process. Exploring phenomena deeply, being conducted in natural environments, taking meanings from data, and not being based on statistics are some of the characteristics of this method.

There are two other research approaches, the quantitative and mixed approach, which will not be used for this investigation; however, they are briefly explained to understand the three types of approaches better.

3.1.2 The quantitative approach

Niglas (2010), cited by Hernández y Mendoza (2018), discusses that the quantitative methods are: "numerical counts and mathematical methods." (p.5), to which Hernández y Mendoza (2018) added that they are a set of processes organized sequentially to test certain assumptions, where each phase precedes the next one, and steps cannot be avoided, the order is rigorous; however some stages can be redefined. (p.6) At the same time, the authors Hernández y Mendoza (2018) emphasize the necessity of counting with: "a precise place to arrive at (specified and delimited approach) and a precise map or GPS (delimited design). Our luggage includes statistical analysis as we will be dealing with numbers."¹(p.7). According to Hernández y Mendoza (2018), the quantitative method uses data collection to prove hypotheses. Data collection is based on numerical measurements and statistical analysis to establish behavior patterns and test theories. This method is characterized by the measurement of phenomena, the use of statistics, the validity of the hypothesis, and the result of the cause-effect analysis.

3.1.3 The mixed approach

Johnson y Onwuegbuzie, (2004); Hunter and Brewer, (2003); Morse, (2003); M. L. Smith, (2006) cited by Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner, (2006); Sandelowski, (2003), Tashakkori and Teddlie, (2010); Plano-Clark and Creswell, 2008; Bergman, 2008, and Hernández-Sampieri y Mendoza, (2018) state that other names have also been given to the mixed methods, names such as integrative research, multi-method research, multiple-method research, triangulation studies, and mixed research. According to Hernández and Mendoza (2018), the mixed approach intertwines the two previous approaches and mixes them, implying their interaction and empowerment.

¹ Translated from Spanish with www.DeepL.com/Translator (free version)

Hernández-Sampieri and Mendoza (2018) state that the mixed approach represents a set of systematic, empirical, and critical research processes that involve quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis together with their integration and joint integration discussion. In addition, Hernández and Mendoza (2018) state that the purpose of the mixed approach is to make inferences from all the information gathered and achieve a better understanding of the phenomenon under study. As Hernández y Mendoza (2018) mention in their work, the usage of evidence from numerical, verbal, textual, visual, symbolic, and other types of data to understand problems in science is the main characteristic of the mixed approach.

3.2 Research Design

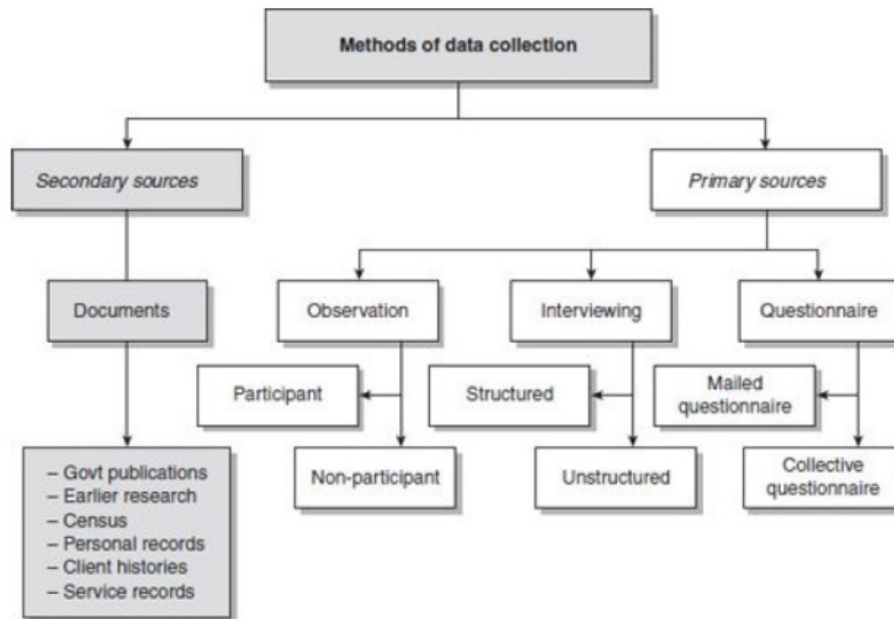
Kumar (2011) stated that a research design is a plan, structure, and strategy of investigation purposed to obtain answers to research questions or problems. Several research designs can be used within the qualitative approach. The researcher chooses to follow the descriptive design and the action research. Hernández and Mendoza (2018) stated that the descriptive design aims to describe the peculiarity and characteristics of peoples' profiles, groups, communities, processes, objects, or any other phenomenon under analysis. Sacred Heart University from Fairfield, Connecticut, defines the action research design as educational research that involves understanding a problem by collecting and analyzing information developing and applying a plan to improve it, collecting data after implementing the plan to develop conclusions related to the improvement.

The analysis and results of the study will be presented in a narrative or descriptive form instead of a numerical one. Since the design refers to the observation of the general behavior of a group of students to discern whether the implementation of the strategies helps them improve or not, the investigator will describe some weaknesses students have when pronouncing the short

and long vowel sounds and how the applied strategies of listening to different kinds of audios may help them to enhance the discrimination and pronunciation of these sounds in the English language. Also, each participant's progress will be considered during the analysis and the interpretation of the results.

3.3 Information Sources

In order to gather the necessary information, the researcher needs access to several sources of information. These information sources refer to the background history and the theory needed to meet the investigation's main objectives. A succinct explanation of what these sources are can be easily found on the website of Library and Information Science called LIS BD Network. In addition, Muthumari (2013) describes three main sources of information: primary, secondary, and tertiary. In contrast, Kumar (2011) explains that there are two types of sources of information known as primary and secondary sources. He describes and synthesizes them, as shown in the flowchart below.



Methods of data collection

Taken from Kumar, R. (2011). *Research Methodology*. (p.132)

According to Muthumari (2013), primary sources are original materials from the period involved and have not been filtered through interpretation or evaluation. Primary sources are those original materials on which other research is based, and "they present original thinking, report a discovery, or share new information." (para.1). Some examples are Journal articles published in peer-reviewed publications, letters, newspaper articles written at the time, original documents, patents, proceedings of meetings, conferences and symposia, records of organizations, government agencies such as an annual report, treaty, constitution, and government document.

Muthumari (2013) stated that secondary sources are less easily defined than primary sources. Generally, the process first-hand information, and consequently, they are interpretations and evaluations of primary sources; therefore, they are not evidence but rather a commentary on

and discussion of evidence. Examples are bibliographies, commentaries from critics, magazines, encyclopedias, sources of information cited in the text, and journal articles.

Muthumari (2013) explains that Tertiary sources consist of information which is a distillation and collection of primary and secondary sources. For this investigation, the researcher consulted primary, secondary, and tertiary sources such as books, journal articles, commentaries, educational magazines and journals, transcribed conferences gathered in the form of pdf books, all written by educational researchers in the twenty-first century, dictionaries, and specialized websites. Examples of tertiary sources are dictionaries, encyclopedias, fact books, textbooks, manuals, conferences and symposia, websites, companies, industry associations, and various services.

3.4 Analysis Categories

In this section of the chapter, the reader will find the conceptual definition of the variables, known in the qualitative research as analysis categories. As stated by Hernández and Mendoza (2018), the conceptual definition indicates how we are going to understand a variable in the context of our investigation. Generally speaking, it refers to a definition agreed and validated by the scientific or professional community and emanates from the literature review such as specialized dictionaries, books, academic articles, etc. The following analysis categories are related to the present research: short vowel sounds, long vowel sounds, mispronunciation, pronunciation, audios, and task-based techniques.

3.4.1 Short Vowels.

Short vowel sounds are lax vowel sounds that usually correspond to letters "a," "e," "i," "o," and "u" when they occur individually between consonants and when there is no silent "e"

after the following consonant. It is important to recognize them in both writing and listening to pronounce them correctly.

3.4.2 Long Vowels

Long vowel sounds are tense vowel sounds that correspond to the letters "a," "e," "i," "o," and "u" when they occur individually in a word containing any of them, and the word ends in silent "e." They usually sound as the name of the written letter such as /eɪ/, /i/, /aɪ/, /oʊ/, /ju/. Being aware of this rule helps learners read and speak with the correct pronunciation.

3.4.3 Mispronunciation

The learners' native language influences mispronunciation as they transfer sounds from their mother tongue to the target language. When it occurs, the intelligibility of the message is affected. Therefore, interaction and communication might be interrupted.

3.4.4 Pronunciation

Pronunciation is articulating the sounds of words and includes intonation and stress. Its two major parts refer to what the speaker articulates and what the listener hears and judges since many words in English are not pronounced the way they are spelled.

3.4.5 Audios

Audios can be defined as sound recordings that are shared with students in some way in order to acquire the target language. The more they hear any target language form such as speeches, dialogues, songs, tongue twisters, etc., the more quickly they acquire it.

3.4.6 Task-based techniques

Task-based techniques are meaningful activities that involve a real-world process of language use and have a clear outcome using the target language without focusing on form but the meaning of the target language; it can involve any of the four language skills.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

To collect data regarding the students' pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds before and after applying audios as a task based approach to improve the pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds, several instruments such as checklists, pre-test, and post-test, are created and applied on the ninth-grade students at Mont Berkeley School.

3.5.1 Checklist

The first instrument to be used according to the first specific objective of this research is a class observation checklist which will help the researcher understand better the cause of the students' mispronunciation of the English language in general and of the mispronunciation of the short and long vowel sounds specifically. The checklist contains 8 different statements to be checked whether yes or no according to what the researcher observes during the class. For each statement, there is another cell that can be filled in with comments. The checklist statements are the following: the teacher speaks English in class, the teacher has a good level of English pronunciation, the students actively participate in conversations with the teacher and among themselves in English, the teacher uses audios in class, the teacher corrects students' pronunciation mistakes, the facial mask interferes with the students' pronunciation impeding the communication, the facial mask interferes with the teacher's pronunciation impeding the communication, and the students' speaking level is at the same level as their textbook. Another checklist refers to the pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds of selected words from a reading text. Two keywords correspond to each short and long vowel sound. The data the researcher collects with the help of the checklist is transferred to an evaluation rubric and into figures.

3.5.2 Pre-test

To identify which of the short and long vowel sounds of English as a foreign language are mispronounced by the ninth-graders at Mont Berkeley School in San José during the first quarter of 2022, a pre-test is designed and applied. The pre-test consists in reading out loud a short article, less than a page long, taken from the students' previous textbook; therefore, the vocabulary from the text is already known to the student. Students receive a sheet of paper with the article to be read on it and are asked to read the article individually and silently once and turn the page upside down when they finish reading. Students come to the teacher's desk in the order they chose and read out loud the entire article while the researcher checks or crosses the target words' pronunciation in a checklist. For each short and long vowel sound, words containing short or long vowels sounds are extracted from the text and introduced in the checklist. There are two target words for each long or short vowel sounds; therefore there are a total of ten target words. The researcher checks whether the short and long vowel sounds are pronounced clearly and accurately. The reading out loud is also recorded so that the researcher can verify later the accuracy of the filled-in checklist. The data the researcher collects with the help of the checklist is transferred to an evaluation rubric and into figures.

3.5.3 Activities in between

In order to help students improve their pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds, several audio activities are to be developed during three consecutive days. During the first meeting, the researcher gives a brief explanation of the short and long vowel sounds, helping the students discover the basic rules of these vowel sounds. All examples are projected on the board and students listen to their pre-recorded pronunciation produced by an American native English speaker. The students are given the opportunity to repeat the specific words after the audio of the

native speaker. After that, a series of activities are to be performed such as minimal pairs under the form of listen and repeat after the audio, listen and circle the word you hear, matching - chose the picture that corresponds to the word they hear-, say the name of the object in the picture projected on the board and make a sentence using that specific word, and finally think of any word that rhymes with that specific word.

On the second day, students are introduced to shadow reading, where they listen to longer sentences and read them after the audio sentence by sentence from the given worksheet, After that, they will try to read them at the same time with the audio. In order to perform this activity in a better way, students will be in the computer laboratory using their personal headset and individually and at their own pace will listen to the audio, watch the video with subtitles and practice the sentences saying them out loud. Later, students think of what words rhyme with the bold words and categorize them according to their long or short vowel sounds.

The third day's activity is practicing with the lyrics of a song. While students listen to the song they must organize its lyrics that are given to each of them on papers slips, after which they receive a sheet of paper with the lyrics on it but with gaps that they must fill in with the missing words. After that the missing words are to be categorized in words containing long/short vowels and read out loud to practice their correct pronunciation. Once students do that, they must create a sentence that contains at least three of the words in bold and a quick tong twister with the most difficult words to pronounce which will be said out loud by them.

These activities will be monitored by the researcher in order to help students improve their pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds. The researcher, during these activities, will help the students improve their pronunciation by giving them constant feedback on their

performance. To measure the improvement of the short and long vowel sounds pronunciation, a post-test is also designed.

3.5.4 Post – test

A post-test is designed and applied to analyze the progress in the pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds of English as a foreign language in ninth-graders at Mont Berkeley School after they are exposed to the short and long vowel sounds through different types of audios including native-speaker voice. The post-test consists in reading out loud a text, less than a page long that is taken from the first unit of the students' new textbook; therefore, the text is completely new for the students and is also part of their previously designed lesson plan objectives. Just as during the pre-test, the researcher fills in a checklist that is related to their pronunciation. Students receive a sheet of paper with a text to be read on it and are asked to read it individually and silently once and turn the page upside down when they finish reading. Students come to the teacher's desk in the order they chose and read out loud the entire article while the researcher checks or crosses the target words' pronunciation in a checklist. For each short and long vowel sound, words containing short or long vowels sounds are extracted from the text and are introduced in the checklist. There are two target words for each long or short vowel sounds; therefore there are a total of ten target words. The researcher checks whether the short and long vowel sounds are pronounced clearly and accurately. The reading out loud is also recorded so that the researcher can verify later the accuracy of the filled-in checklist. The data the researcher collects with the help of the checklist is transferred to an evaluation rubric and into figures.

3.6 Collection Data Process and Data Analysis

The Collection Data Process is approved by the Mont Berkeley School Academic Director to be performed during 5 different days between February 14th and February 18th. The Academic Director has also approved and validated the instruments that are to be applied to collect the data showing great interest in this research and its outcomes. The ninth graders are the most numerous group of high-school students at Mont Berkeley School during the first quarter of 2022; therefore, this group was assigned to the researcher to conduct her investigation on. As mentioned in the section called Justification of the problem, the students have different levels of English because of several reasons related to their social background and change in teaching and learning methodology due to the Covid-19 pandemic. When the researcher conducted her teaching practicum during the first quarter of 2021, this specific group of students made a lot of noise during the lessons and showed lack of discipline.

In order to have a better understanding of what the cause of the students' mispronunciation of the short and long vowel sounds might be, the collection data process begins with a class observation on February 14th. The researcher observes a thirty-five minute ninth-grade English lesson conducted by the high-school's English teacher. The investigator marks on the checklist her observations according to the criteria presented in the section above (3.5.1) and adds any necessary comments next to each checked or crossed criteria of observation. The observation will be described and analyzed in the following chapter.

In addition, after the class observation, and after the break, the researcher applies the pre-test in order to identify which of the short and long vowel sounds are mispronounced by the ninth-graders. The pre-test consists in reading out loud a short article, less than a page long, taken from the students' previous textbook; therefore, the vocabulary from the text is already

known to the student. While the students read out loud the text one by one the researcher fills in a checklist related to their pronunciation. For each short and long vowel sound, two specific words containing short or long vowel sounds are extracted from the text and introduced in the checklist. The researcher checks whether the short and long vowel sounds are pronounced clearly and accurately. If a sound is mispronounced, the researcher will write the produced sound. The data the researcher collects with the help of the checklist is transferred to an evaluation rubric which is used for both pre-test and post-test. The rubrics evaluate whether the students' pronunciation of the sounds meets the expectations or it doesn't meet the expectations, needs improvement or exceeds expectations. In addition, the rubrics are divided in two parts which refer to the short vowel sounds, the first part, and to the long vowel sounds, the second part. The data analysis will be performed after the information is processed and transformed into figures.

The following three days, the researcher is assigned two thirty-minute lessons each day to implement strategies based on audios as a task-based technique to improve the pronunciation of the short and long vowel sounds of English. On the first day, the researcher explains the students the basic differences between the short and long vowel sounds with the help of a PowerPoint presentation which includes the voice of a native English speaker with an American accent who reads out loud the target words. Tasks such as practicing minimal pairs with the help of the audio, discrimination of sounds, and rhyme are used during the first sessions which are to be evaluated through identifying short and long vowel sounds through listening to minimal pairs, through producing words that contain short and long vowel sounds, and through finding the correct rhyming words. The researcher, during these activities, will give the students constant feedback on their performance.

On the second day, to practice longer sentences, students perform a shadow reading task in the computer laboratory. They bring their own headsets and watch a three-minute video taken from unit one of the textbook they use this year. The content is new; therefore, they will be more motivated to watch it. After watching the video once with the subtitles on, they are asked to shadow read the subtitles, that is stop the video after every sentence and read the subtitles immediately after the audio sentence by sentence trying to imitate the pronunciation of words, intonations, and rhythm. Students can either read from the subtitles or from the given transcription of the audio with target words in bold. After practicing the shadow reading, students are asked to categorize the words in bold according to their vowel sound: long or short. After that, they think of what words rhyme with the bold words and write 1 rhyming word for each word in bold. The researcher, during these activities, will give the students constant feedback on their performance.

On the third day, students perform a lyrics puzzle task. While listening to a song, they order strips of paper with the song's lyrics on them. They listen again to check if the strips are in the correct order. After that, they receive a sheet of paper with the lyrics on it but with gaps to be filled in with the missing words while playing the audio again. After listening again to check whether they filled in the gaps correctly, students categorize the words they wrote in the gaps according to their vowel sounds, short or long. After that, to wrap up, students create at least a sentence that contains at least three of the categorized words. They write the sentence and say it out loud. After that, each of them, creates a quick tongue twister with 5 of the target words (nouns, verbs, adjectives) and says it one by one. The researcher, during these activities, will give the students constant feedback on their performance.

Finally, on the last day, on February 18th, in order to be able to analyze the progress in the pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds of English in eighth-graders at Mont Berkeley School, the researcher will apply a post—test which will be similar to the pre-test in terms of structure. The content will differ, though. During this last process, the students are going to read out loud a short text, less than a page long, taken from the students' actual textbook to ensure that it is a completely new text for them. A similar procedure to the pre-test will be followed during the post-test and a checklist and an evaluation rubric will be filled out. The data analysis will be performed after the information is processed and transformed into figures. The results of the pre-test and post-tests will be compared in order to analyze the students' progress in the pronunciation of the short and long vowel sounds, and will be analyzed in the following chapter.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis

Since this investigation is based on observation, in this chapter, the reader will find a description of the tests and activities that were applied to the ninth-graders in Mont Berkeley School during the first quarter of 2022 and their results..

4.1 Analysis and Interpretation of the Test Results

In this section, the initial observation, pre-test, activities in between, the post-test, and a final observation will be described one by one.

4.1.1 Initial Observation.

The researcher observed a 35-minute lesson held by the school's English teacher on February 14. While observing the class, the researcher filled in a Class Observation Checklist with eight points to identify the cause of the students' mispronunciation of short and long vowel sounds. The first statement of the checklist refers to whether the teacher speaks English in class or not. The researcher observed that the teacher spoke most of the time in English; however, the most important instructions were translated into Spanish to ensure the students understood them. The second statement of the checklist was related to the teacher's level of English pronunciation. During the class observation, it was obvious that the teacher's pronunciation was not the desired one. Plenty of mispronounced words could be heard during the class. The mispronunciation was not only related to the short and long vowel sounds but also other vowel sounds and consonants.

A third statement concerns the students' participation in conversations with the teacher and among themselves in English. As far as the 35-minute observed lesson, the investigator could notice that the teacher required the students to always speak with her in English, making them find a way to communicate with her in the studied language. The students struggled to

communicate with the teacher, asking their questions in English and trying to create coherent questions or statements. Their sentences were not correct, however. When the students had to communicate among themselves for any reason, they were communicating in Spanish because the communication among them was a lot faster. A fourth statement considers whether the teacher uses audio in class or not. This activity was not observed in class due to the nature of the lesson's topic, which opened unit one in their textbooks and had a class discussion. The fifth statement refers to whether the teacher corrects students' pronunciation mistakes. During the observation performed during the lesson, the researcher did not observe any correction of the students' mispronunciation. The teacher let the students express themselves as they could, emphasizing the opportunity to speak up and practice their English language.

Since the pandemic started, people must wear facial masks to prevent the spread of the Sars-Cov-2 virus. Therefore, students and teachers must wear it the entire day while at school. Therefore, the sixth statement focuses on whether the facial mask interferes with the students' pronunciation impeding communication. It was observed that the facial mask is a major impediment in communication, making their message misunderstood. The teacher asked the students to remove their masks when speaking or to read aloud so that she could hear how they read or spoke. She also kindly asked the students to repeat some ideas that their teacher did not properly capture.

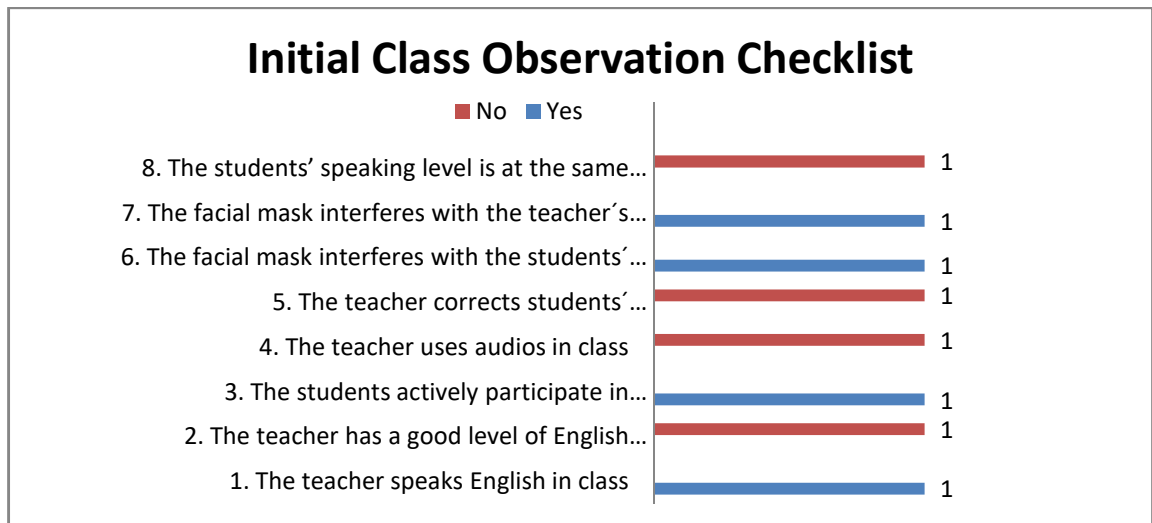
Moreover, the seventh statement focuses on whether the facial mask interferes with the teacher's pronunciation impeding the communication. It was the moment when the teacher renounced speaking in English and chose to speak in Spanish. The researcher could observe that the facial mask was a major impediment in communication, making her message misunderstood.

In addition, students were shy to ask the teacher to repeat what she had already said; therefore, the communication was broken, and the students looked confused.

The last statement of the checklist refers to whether the students' speaking level is at the same level as their textbook. After the researcher skimmed through their actual textbooks and their previous ones and observed the students' level of speaking and pronunciation, she concluded that the textbooks are a lot more advanced. The students' English speaking and pronunciation level is even way behind their previous textbook. In conclusion, after observing a thirty-five-minute lesson, the researcher can say that the major factors that impede the correct pronunciation of the short and long vowel sounds are first of all the use of the facial mask, which is mandatory, second the teacher's level of pronunciation and the teacher failing to give proper feedback on the students' pronunciation to help them improve faster.

Figure 1

Initial Class Observation Checklist



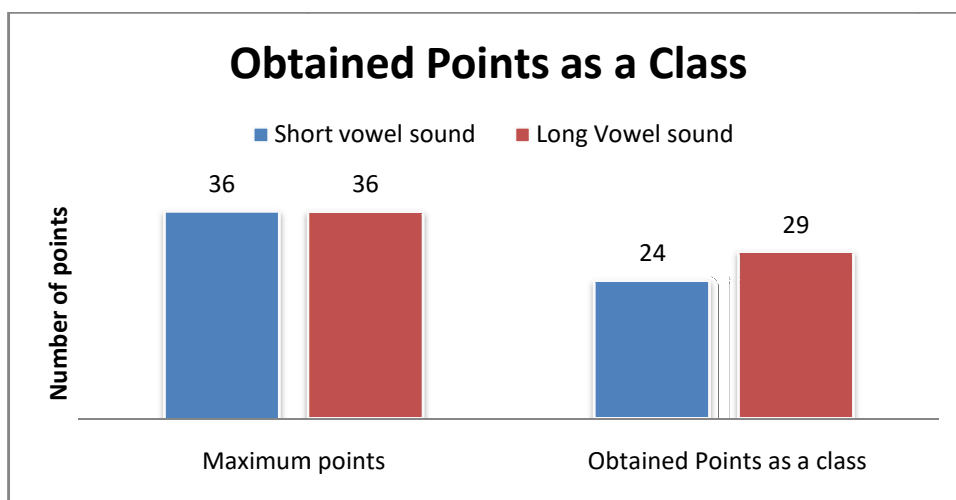
Source: Initial Class Observation Checklist

4.1.2 Pre-test

To apply the pre-test, the investigator first explained to the class that they were going to participate in the research to help them to improve their pronunciation of long and short vowel sounds. The researcher briefly explained the dynamics of the five meetings, telling them that there would be a pre-test, a post-test, and three activities. She also told them that the tests and tasks would not be graded and would not be part of their final grade. Therefore, they should not worry whether they did well or wrong in their task because the most important thing is the practice of sounds and their progress step by step. After that, the researcher explained the dynamics of the pre-test as described in the previous chapter and proceeded to it. Students came to the researcher's desk one by one to read the article, and their pronunciation was recorded and checked in the checklist and transferred to the evaluation rubric. The data collected during the pre-test was transformed into graphs to facilitate its analysis.

Figure 2

Pre-Test: Obtained Points as a class

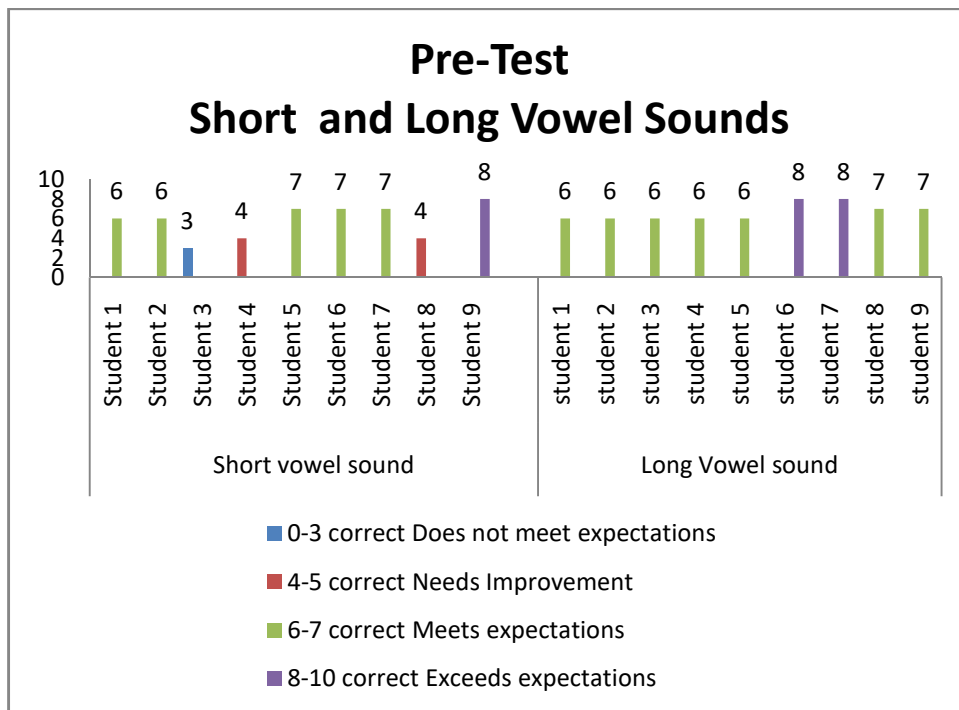


Source: Pre-Test Evaluation Rubrics

The first thing that stands out in the figure is that the ninth-grade students pronounced the long vowel sounds better than the short vowel sounds. As observed in figure number two, the class obtained twenty-nine points, representing 81%, out of thirty-six points that refer to the accuracy of the pronunciation of the long vowel sounds. In contrast, twenty-four points, which represent 67% percent, out of thirty-six points were obtained when students pronounced the short vowel sounds.

Figure 3

Pre-Test. Short and Long Vowel Sounds



Source: Pre-test. Evaluation Rubrics

According to figure number three, when having a closer look at the figures related to the pronunciation of short vowel sounds, what easily stands out is that during the pre-test, five students met the expectations when pronouncing short vowel sounds having between six and seven correct target word pronunciation out of ten target words. In addition, there were two

students whose pronunciation needed improvement because they only pronounced correctly four words out of ten. Only one student whose pronunciation of short vowel sounds did not meet the expectations because he only pronounced three target words out of ten; however, one student's pronunciation exceeded the expectations since eight target words out of ten were pronounced correctly. In terms of the pronunciation of long vowel sounds, according to figure number 3, what stands out is that, during the pre-test, the majority of the students met the expectations when pronouncing long vowel sounds, seven of them having between six and seven correct target word pronunciation out of ten target words. In addition, there were two students whose pronunciation exceeded the expectations since eight target words out of ten were pronounced correctly. Another result revealed by the pre-test was that the students tended to read the short vowels as their written letters in Spanish. For instance, the short vowel sound / α / was pronounced as a Spanish /o/, and the short vowel sound / æ /, was most of the time pronounced as a Spanish /a/; the long vowel sound /oo/ was usually pronounced like the Spanish /o/.

4.1.3 Activities in between

The following three days, during three seventy-minute lessons, the investigator carried out three sessions of activities using audios to improve the ninth-grade students' pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds. The first lesson was focused on listening to target words in isolation, the second lesson was focused on listening to target words in a context, and the third meeting was focused on listening to target words in a song.

4.1.3.1 First lesson. The first session started with the investigator doing a PowerPoint presentation and explaining the basic rules of short and long vowel sounds. First, the difference between short and long vowel sounds was explained using examples of words pronounced by an American native English speaker on a prerecorded audio file. Students repeated the words after

the audio. Then three basic rules for short vowel sounds were explained with example words containing the short vowel sounds. An American native English speaker pronounced the example words on prerecorded audio, and students repeated after him, observing the spelling of each word and acknowledging the three previously explained rules. After that, three basic rules for long vowel sounds were explained with example words containing the long vowel sounds. An American native English speaker pronounced the example words on prerecorded audio. Students repeated after him, observing the spelling of each word and acknowledging the three previously explained rules.

Once the basic rules of short and long vowel sounds were explained, the investigator proceeded with the exercises. The first exercise consisted of listening to and repeating out loud minimal pairs while they were projected on the board for the students to observe their spelling. The audio was prerecorded with the voice of an American native English speaker. The students found this exercise a bit boring. For the second exercise, the ninth-grade students were given a worksheet with a list of minimal pairs. They had to listen to the prerecorded voice of an American native English speaker and circle the word they heard. Then the investigator showed them the correct answers to assess themselves, and they listed the selected words again. This exercise activated the students' interest because they realized the importance of the practice in discriminating the short and long vowel sounds after the first two words.

When a third exercise was presented, and the students were given the worksheets, they became intrigued and engaged since they had to select the picture that corresponded to the phrase they heard, which was more challenging. The phrases contained two minimal pairs each, such as "sit on the ship" "sit on a sheep," and an American native English speaker pronounced them. The investigator was asked to play the audios several times, and the students struggled with selecting

the picture that corresponded to the phrase they heard. Then the investigator showed them the correct picture so they could assess themselves, and they listened again to the phrase that represented the picture. For the fourth and the last exercise, the students had to select one of the nine pictures projected on the board, say the name of the object in it, and find a rhyming word. This activity exceeded the expectations because students were engaged. They started to help each other find rhyming words. Instead of finding one rhyming word, they found and said out loud several rhyming words. Another reason why this last activity of the first lesson exceeded the investigator's expectations was that the students, without being told, started to create sentences with the words representing the objects in the pictures and one of the rhyming words. The sentences were funny, and the students had a great time creating them.

4.1.3.2 Second lesson. The following day, the investigator invited the students to the computer lab to watch a short video with subtitles so that they listen to the short and long vowel sounds in context with longer sentences. The video was taken from their textbook e-book, Unit one, exactly the unit they were studying. After watching the three-minute video while using their headset due to Covid-19 protocols, students were explained what a shadow reading was and its purpose. The investigator asked the students to play the video again. The students were instructed to listen and read the subtitles after the audio sentence by sentence by pausing the video after each sentence and copying the pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm. They repeated the activity three times individually and at their own pace. In the beginning, the students were skeptical about the activity. However, when they realized that the audio was helping them improve their pronunciation and intonation, they engaged in the activity, ignored the background noise, and focused on their pronunciation. After that, the investigator explained that they could practice this exercise with any video they like or dialogues from the movies or their favorite

series. After that, the students received a transcription of the video with target words in bold. They were asked to categorize the words in bold according to their short or long vowel sound. After that, they were instructed to find words that rhymed with the bold words and write them in another column for each word in bold. At this point, they were struggling more with finding a rhyming word than with differentiating the sounds.

4.1.3.3 Third lesson. The investigator brought the class a song called The Joker and the Queen by Ed Sheeran on the third day. She asked the students whether they were familiar with the song or not. The song was unknown to them. Furthermore, they received the lyrics on pieces of paper to organize them while listening to the song. After that, the song was played again so that they could listen again to make sure the lyrics were in the correct order. All of them organized the lyrics correctly except one student. Then, the students received a sheet of paper with the lyrics but gaps to be filled in with the missing words while playing the audio again. They filled the gaps and listened to the song again to make sure they wrote the correct words. Later, they categorized the words they wrote in the gaps according to their short or long vowel sounds. Then, they read the words aloud one by one and were helped to pronounce them correctly. To wrap up the activity, they were asked to create at least a sentence containing three of the categorized words. They wrote the sentence, read it aloud one by one, and received feedback on their pronunciation.

Finally, the investigator wrote the most difficult words to pronounce on the board that the students had just categorized and reviewed with them whether they were nouns, verbs, or adjectives so that they could individually create a tongue twister with those target words. Each of them read his/her tongue twister aloud and received feedback on pronunciation. During the third lesson, the students were completely engaged in the activities. When creating the sentences and

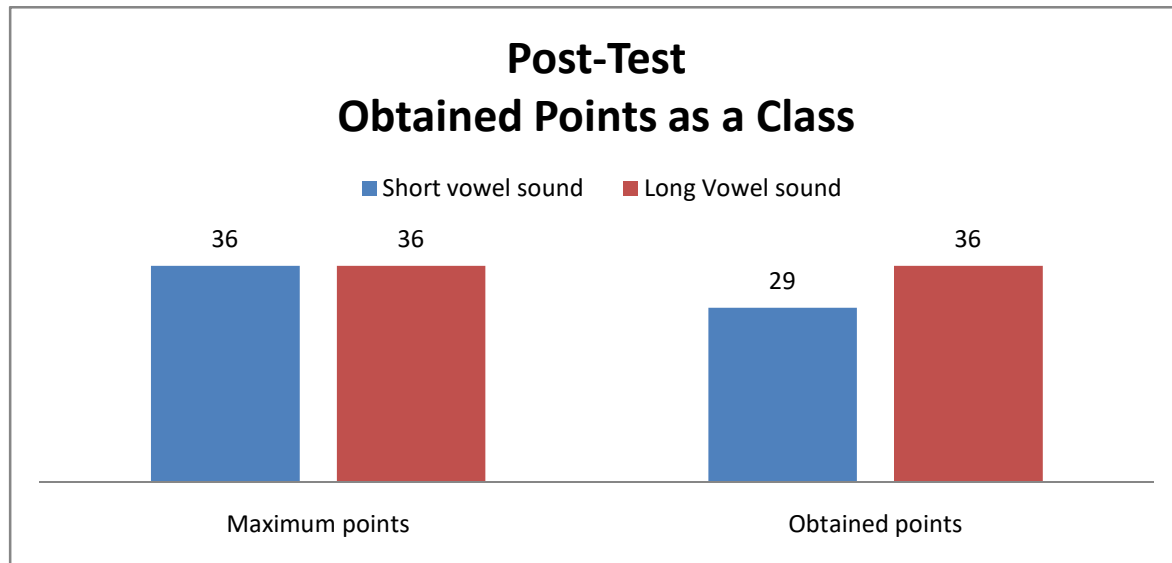
the tong twister, they naturally interacted with each other in English to complete the task. They commented that they had enjoyed the activities and would like to have them at least once a week in a pronunciation class. To finish the lesson, the teacher announced the end of the activities; she reviewed with the class the short and long vowel sounds through the most difficult words they had to categorize during the activities and announced that the following day the post-test would take place in order to be able to measure their progress.

4.1.4 Post-Test

To apply the post-test, the investigator first explained to the class that that was the last meeting with them and thanked them for their collaboration during the process of applying the research instruments, and reminded them that they could use some of the activities on their own to improve even more their pronunciation of long and short vowel sounds. After that, she also reminded them that the tests and tasks would not be graded and would not be part of their final grade. Therefore, they should not worry whether they did well or wrong in their tasks because the most important thing is the practice of the long and short vowel sounds and their progress step by step. After that, the researcher explained the dynamics of the post-test as described in the previous chapter and proceeded to it. Students came to the researcher's desk one by one to read the text, and their pronunciation was recorded and checked in the checklist and transferred to the evaluation rubric. The data collected during the pre-test was transformed into graphs to facilitate its analysis.

Figure 4

Post-test. Obtained Points as a Class

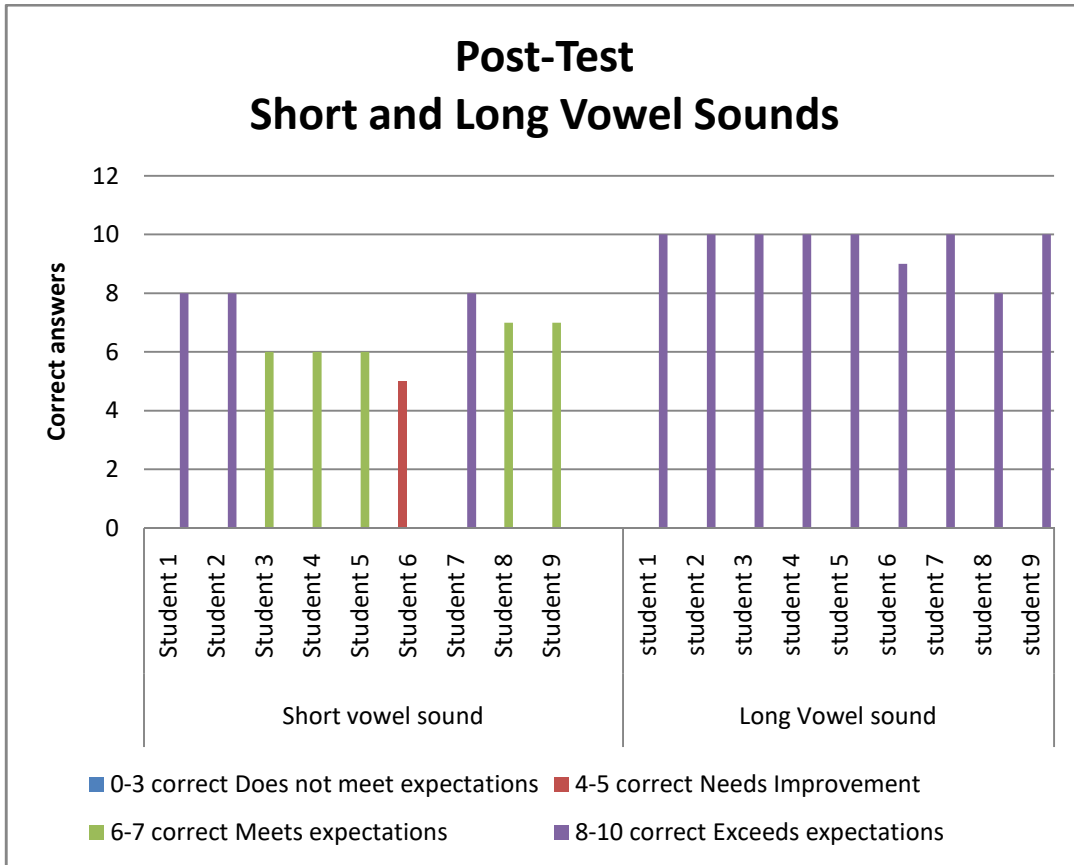


Source: Post-test

In figure number four, which represents the total points obtained as a class after applying the post-test, the reader can observe that the first thing that stands out in the graph is that the ninth-grade students pronounced the long vowel sounds a lot better than the short vowel sounds. As observed in figure number four, the class obtained twenty-nine points out of thirty-six points that refer to the accuracy of the pronunciation of the short vowel sounds. The twenty-nine obtained points represent 80.55% of the total number of points. Furthermore, thirty-six points, representing 100% percent of the total number of points, were obtained when students pronounced the long vowel sounds.

Figure 5

Post-Test. Short and Long Vowel Sounds



Source: Post-test

According to figure number five, when having a closer look at the graphs related to the pronunciation of short vowel sounds, what easily stands out is that during the post-test, three students exceeded the expectations when pronouncing short vowel sounds having between eight and ten correct target words pronounced correctly out of ten target words. Also, five students whose pronunciation met the expectations had between six and seven correct target words pronounced correctly out of the ten target words. There was only one student whose pronunciation of short vowel sounds still needs improvement because he only pronounced five target words out of ten.

In terms of the pronunciation of long vowel sounds, according to figure number five, what stands out is that, during the post-test, all students met the expectations when pronouncing long vowel sounds, seven of them having pronounced correctly ten target words out of ten, while one of the nine and another student eight. Overall they all exceeded the expectations related to the pronunciation of long vowel sounds.

4.1.5 Final observation

Table 1

Comparison Between Pre-Test and Post-Test Obtained Points

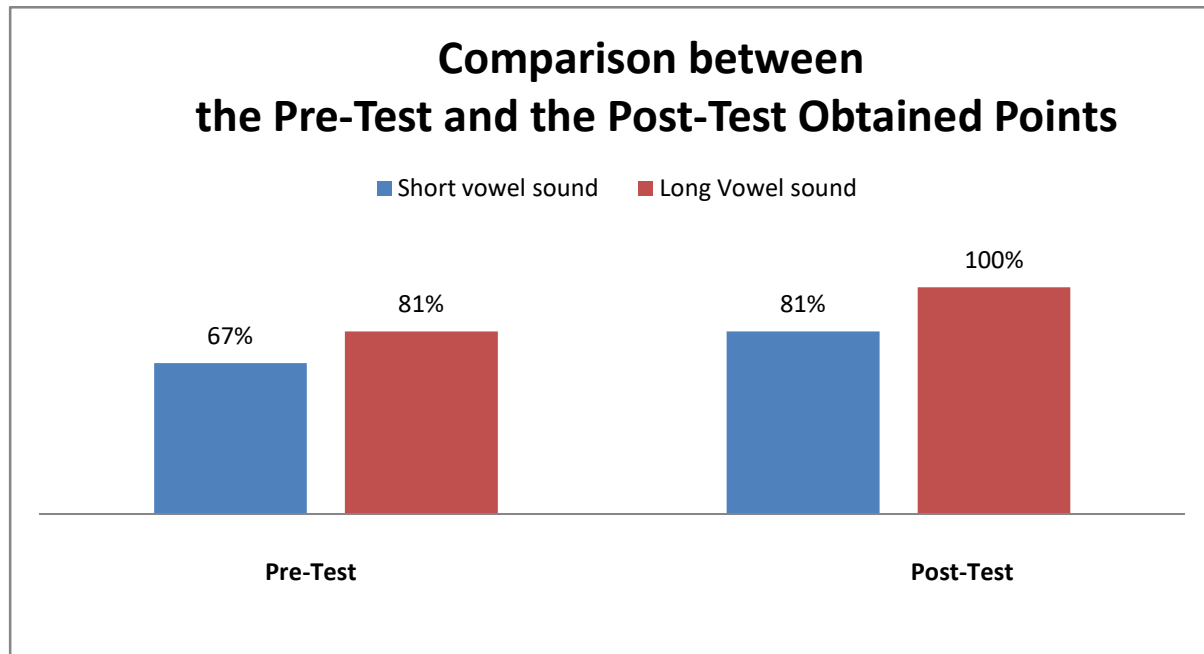
	Maximum points	Pre-Test		Post-test		Improvement
		Number of Points	Percentage	Number of Points	Percentage	
Short vowel sound	36	24	67%	29	81%	14%
Long Vowel sound	36	29	81%	36	100%	19%

Source: Pre-test and Post-test

In table number one, a comparison between the Pre-Test and the Post-Test results is presented. The reader can observe that the activities in between helped improve the pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds in ninth-graders at Mont Berkeley School during the first quarter of 2022. The students registered a significant increase of 14% in short vowel sounds and 19% in the pronunciation of long vowel sounds. For easier analysis and more visual, the numbers were transformed into a graph analyzed below.

Figure 6

Comparison between the Pre-Test and the Post-Test Obtained Points

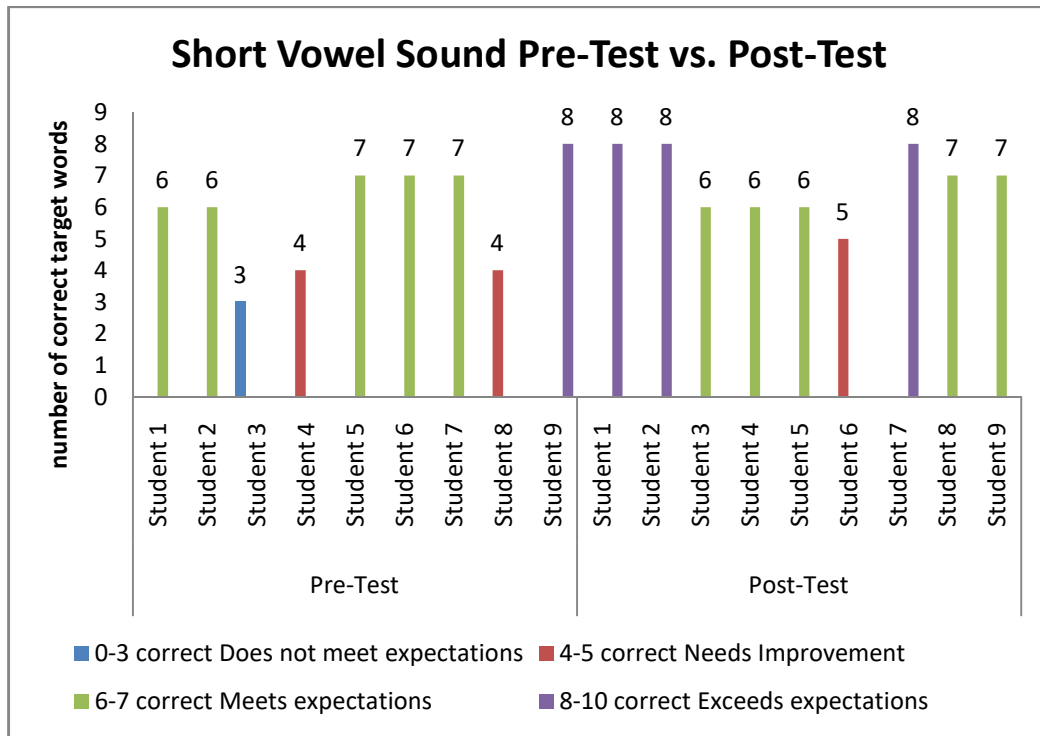


Source: Pre-Test and Post-Test

As observed in figure number six, when analyzing the Pre-Test results compared to the results of the Post-Test, there is a significant improvement in the pronunciation of short, long vowel sounds. Students increased their pronunciation of short vowel sounds from 67% to 81%, representing a 14% improvement. In addition, the students enhanced their pronunciation of long vowel sounds from 81% to 100%, representing a 19% improvement.

Figure 7

A comparison between the pre-test and the post-test concerning the pronunciation of short vowel sounds.

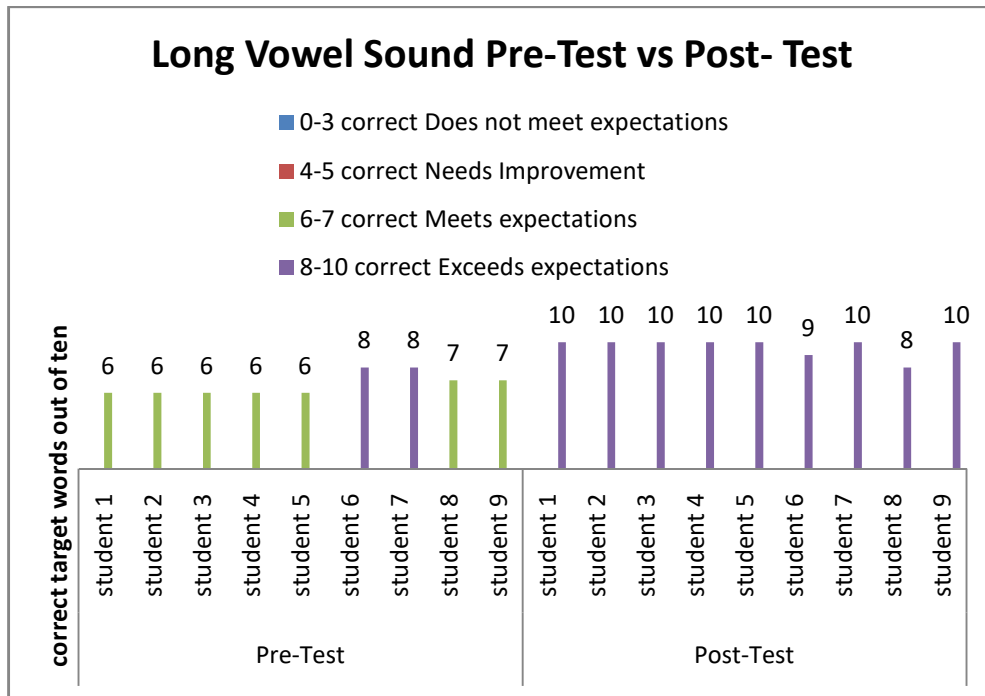


Source: Pre-Test and Post -Test

When comparing the results concerning the pronunciations of short vowel sounds during the pre-test and the post-test, it is notable that if during the pre-test, there was only one student to exceed expectations in the pronunciation of short vowel sounds during the post-test, there were three students who exceeded expectations. In addition, five students met the expectations during both pre-test and post-test. Furthermore, if two students needed improvement in the pronunciation of short vowel sounds during the pre-test, there was only one student who needed improvement during the post-test. Finally, while there was one student who did not meet the expectations during the pre-test, there were none with this level during the post-test.

Figure 8

A comparison between the pre-test and the post-test concerning the pronunciation of long vowel sounds.



Source: Pre-Test and Post -Test

When comparing the results concerning the pronunciations of long vowel sounds during the pre-test and the post-test, it is remarkable that seven students met the expectations, having pronounced between six and seven correct target words out of ten during the pre-test. Only two students exceeded the expectations, having pronounced correctly eight target words out of ten. During the post-test, all students exceeded expectations. Seven students pronounced all target words correctly, and only one student pronounced nine words correctly, and another one pronounced eight target words correctly.

As a final observation of the pre-test and post-test results, with every activity performed in class, the students were more engaged and enjoyed the challenges of discriminating the short and long vowel sounds whether they were in isolated target words or longer sentences or songs

lyrics. They also enjoyed the challenges of finding rhyming words which helped them to understand better, recognize, and pronounce the sound patterns correctly. During the final meeting, they expressed that they would like to receive pronunciation classes once a week. Throughout the post-test, the researcher observed that most of the students had already corrected the pronunciation of long vowels sounds and that they no longer pronounced the Spanish /o/ instead of the long vowel sound /oo/. Some of them had improved the pronunciation of the short vowel sound / α /, which was no longer pronounced as a Spanish /o/; however, they still have not completely improved the short vowel sound / æ /, which was still sometimes pronounced as a Spanish /a/.

Another important element that contributed to the improvement in their pronunciation was not only the variety of audios they had to listen to and the strategies used during the class but also the fact that the researcher spoke only in English, gave not only instructions in English but also feedback on their pronunciation and helped the students be aware of their pronunciation. Even if both the researcher and the students had to wear facial masks to follow the Covid-19 protocols, standing in front of the class, she temporarily removed the facial mask to model the students the correct pronunciation of sounds.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations

In this last chapter, the patient reader will find the conclusions that the investigator arrived at after analyzing the information gathered during her research. In addition, there will also be a review of the research objectives with their corresponding analysis. Finally, some recommendations that the investigator considers important to be considered in case further investigation occurs or if similar research is conducted in the future will be suggested.

5.1 Purpose of the Conclusion

This part of the investigation is important because it establishes the investigator's conclusions after applying the instruments and analyzing the outcomes. Conclusions immediately conducted to recommendations detailed at the end of the chapter.

5.2 Conclusions

This investigation carried out during the first quarter of 2022 at Mont Berkeley School, and which focused on measuring the improvement in the pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds of the English language, which ninth-grade students found very difficult to pronounce, was convenient to be carried out because it revealed the necessity of introducing pronunciation lessons into the English as a foreign language course.

The investigation was practical and relevant. First, the applied instruments were created based on the suggestions presented by Darcy (2018) when she described techniques to improve pronunciation through audio. The detailed presentation of Darcy's (2018) suggestions is presented in chapter number two, section 2.1.6.2. Therefore, a variety of audios containing different voices, contexts, speech rates, and utterance lengths, even a multimodal input using

audio and written, or audio and video input modalities were used. Listening practices were adapted to the task-based approach.

Consequently, the developed activities focused on listening words in isolation and minimal pairs and were applied to picture matching tasks. Second, a shadowing activity was carried out to help students listen to and pronounce longer sentences in context. Third, multimodal input was used in subtitled videos and song lyrics. Students were exposed to listening to various dialects, genders, and ages to perform the required task to improve the pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds in English. Finally, one of the most important parts of the investigation was giving students constant feedback on their pronunciation to help them be aware of it. Good pronunciation is important to avoid confusion when conveying a message because misunderstandings are often caused by mispronunciation.

After applying the instruments and measuring the results, the investigator could dramatically improve the pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds in ninth-graders; they improved their pronunciation of short vowel sounds by 14% and the pronunciation of long vowel sounds by 19%. Before applying the instruments, the students did not even know the difference between short and long vowel sounds; however, once the topic was explained and performed all tasks during only three meetings, their pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds improved mentioned above.

If with only three activities in between, the ninth-grade students at Mont Berkeley School improved almost 15% in the pronunciation of short vowel sounds and almost 20% in the pronunciation of long vowel sounds, the rising question is how much they could improve their pronunciation of these sounds and English sounds in general if they received one pronunciation lesson per week during the whole year? The investigator always believed that pronunciation

lessons play an important role in learning English as a foreign language. This investigation proved that students improved their pronunciation considerably with proper lessons in a very short period.

5.2.1 To identify whether the short or long vowel sounds of English as a foreign language are mispronounced by the ninth-graders at Mont Berkeley School in San José during the first quarter of 2022.

The ninth graders have been experiencing several difficulties in learning English as a foreign language and their oral skills due to the changes experienced in the teaching and learning process caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, they have not been able to practice oral skills due to the obligation of following the Covid-19 protocols, such as wearing a facial mask during classes, keeping a two-meter distance from each other, not being allowed to work in pairs or as a group. Another issue both the teacher and students have been dealing with is to wear a facial mask which prevents them from articulating and understanding the language correctly. As a consequence, their message is seriously affected.

In order to meet the first objective of the investigation, the researcher observed one lesson taught by the school's English teacher and used a Class Observation Checklist that clearly showed that one of the main obstacles incorrectly pronouncing the short and long vowel sounds and therefore affecting the communication was the facial masks that both students and teacher had to wear during classes. Another source of mispronunciation of sounds was the lack of feedback on behalf of the teacher towards the students. A third obstacle was the teacher's English level and accuracy in her pronunciation.

After applying the pre-test, the researcher could identify whether the short or the long vowels sounds are mispronounced and which one. First, the researcher identified that the short

vowel sounds were correctly pronounced in a percentage of 67 and the long vowel sound in a percentage of 81. The researcher identified that both short and long vowel sounds are mispronounced, specifically the following sounds: /oʊ/, /ɑ/, /æ /, /ɪ/, and /ʌ/. In conclusion, the first objective of the investigation was met.

5.2.2 To apply audios as a task-based technique to improve the pronunciation of the short and long vowel sounds of English as a foreign language in ninth-graders at Mont Berkeley School in San José during the first quarter of 2022.

The second specific objective was met by applying audios as a task-based approach during three meetings. The tasks in previous chapters, called activities in between, were carefully selected as suggested by Darcy (2018) and adapted to the objective of the investigation. They had a similar outcome to the ones presented by Darcy (2018), which improved the pronunciation of English's short and long vowel sounds as a foreign language. An important role in the correct pronunciation of sounds is feedback as well. Students need constant feedback from their teacher to pronounce the sounds correctly; however, if the teacher's level of English and pronunciation are not the desired ones, students do not receive proper feedback, and their pronunciation will be affected. That is why audios in teaching and learning pronunciation are so important: they reduce the teacher's mispronunciation and level of English impact on students helping the students have a better reference point for their pronunciation. Exposure to various sources of audio helps students tune their listening, recognize the sounds and produce them correctly. The advantage of this class was that there were only nine students in it, and the researcher could give proper feedback to everyone in a short time. The conclusion related to this objective of the investigation is that students improve their pronunciation easily if they are exposed to properly pronounced sounds in different contexts with different accents and by different genders.

It is important to add that the tasks mentioned above were carefully selected to expose the students to properly pronounced sounds by using target words in isolation such as minimal pairs, in longer sentences within a context to perform shadow reading, and within a song where sounds blended even more, and the way to identify the missing target words and categorize them according to their short and long vowel sounds. According to the investigator's observation, the students' best-liked activity and most effective one was the second one, even if they were skeptical about it at the beginning of the activity. They realized that while performing the task, they were in total control of their process of learning the correct pronunciation of target words by independently controlling the audio and repeating the sentences at their own pace. They felt empowered by having this control in their hands. In addition, in the beginning, it was fun to do the shadow reading because they had never done it before. Then, while performing the task, they understood its effectiveness and engaged in it. The second most effective and most-liked activity was the third one because it was more musical, and they felt that the teaching and learning process was taking into consideration their personality. Feeling empowered by the previous activity, they felt free to sing or murmur the song when they had to listen to it to check if they wrote the missing words correctly. The activity continued with categorizing target words according to their short or long vowel sounds, creating sentences and funny tongue twisters with them, and reading them aloud. Students were completely engaged, and they even helped each other with ideas to complete their tongue twisters.

The first activity, related to minimal pairs, was the activity they least liked. Listening to a pre-recorded audio of an American native speaker articulating minimal pairs was received with certain skepticism on behalf of the students due to its boring repetition of words without a context. Even if, at the end of the minimal pair activity, students realized that the task was

necessary to understand and properly differentiate the short and long vowel sounds, the investigator could observe that the students were performing the task because they had no other choice but do it. In contrast, they enjoyed and engaged in the second part of the activity exceeding the investigator's expectations. This happened because they were offered the opportunity of interacting and being creative by finding rhyming words and creating sentences with the target word. Students became more creative by making sentences with the target words and their rhyming words without being told. The sentences were funny, and the students had a great time creating them.

In conclusion, the investigator considers that minimal pairs should be used as little as possible or should be adapted to some contexts to avoid the boring activity of repeating random words. When students repeat words without context, they feel they are not learning. They lose their motivation to pay attention; they even feel that they are not taken into account as human beings but as robots that only have to repeat random words. On the contrary, students should be able to feel in a certain control of their learning process. Therefore, the students' tasks should let them involve their creativity, which will keep them motivated to continue learning.

5.2.3 To analyze the progress in the pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds of English as a foreign language in ninth-graders at Mont Berkeley School in San José during the first quarter of 2022.

In order to analyze the progress in the pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds, the investigator first observed a thirty-five-minute lesson performed by the school's English teacher to identify possible reasons for the students' mispronunciation of short and long vowels sounds. After that, as explained in previous chapters, she applied a pre-test to identify the level of mispronunciation of short and long vowel sounds. In order to help students increase the accuracy

of their pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds, the investigator created and applied three different activities, which are described in previous chapters and this chapter in section 5.2.3. They were focused on exposing the students to various sources of audio and on giving students constant feedback to help them become aware of their pronunciation and their progress in pronouncing short and long vowel sounds. To measure the progress, a post-test was applied, and its results were compared to the pre-test outcomes.

After comparing the outcomes, significant progress in the pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds was registered. According to the comparison presented in chapter four, the ninth-grade students at Mont Berkeley School improved almost 15% in short vowel sounds and almost 20% in the pronunciation of long vowel sounds. This is an enormous percentage of improvement considering the length and number of activities applied between the pre-test and the post-test. Both teacher and students were wearing facial masks, which is always an obstacle in uttering sounds properly, and therefore it breaks communication. Consequently, the rising question is how much the students could improve their pronunciation of these sounds and English sounds in general if they received one pronunciation lesson per week during the whole year without wearing a facial mask?

When looking deeper into the percentages of their improvement, according to the checklists, we can see that almost all students improved the pronunciation of one of their most difficult pronounce the sound, long o as /oʊ/; However, there still are short sounds to be improved such as /ɑ/, /æ /, /ɪ/, and /ʌ/ which are usually pronounced as their written vowel letter in Spanish as /o/, /a/, /i/, and /u/. It is important to consider that Spanish is their primary language, and when reading Spanish texts, all letters must be read as they are written. This is another reason students tend to mispronounce the short and long vowel sounds.

Finally, the investigator always believed that pronunciation lessons play an important role in learning English as a foreign language. This investigation proved that with proper lessons, students improved their pronunciation considerably in a very short period. As a result, the investigator strongly recommends that Mont Berkeley School introduce one pronunciation lesson per week to the ninth-graders and the rest of the grades. To conclude, the third specific objective was met, and the students registered an increase in the accurate pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds.

5.3 Restatement of the Research Question

How much can audios improve the pronunciation of English's short and long vowel sounds as a foreign language in ninth-graders at Mont Berkeley School in San José during the first quarter of 2022?

Exposing the ninth-grade students' to a variety of audios containing different voices, contexts, speech rates, and utterance lengths, even a multimodal input using audio and written, or audio and video input modalities had a positive effect on them helping them tune their listening, recognize the short and long vowels sounds and correctly produce them; however, students still have to practice on improving their pronunciation of short and long vowels sounds, especially the short vowel sound. Overall, as mentioned above, students presented a significant increase in the accuracy of the short and long vowel sounds pronunciation, almost 15% corresponding to the short vowel sounds and almost 20% corresponding to the long vowel sounds. Therefore, the activities applied between the pre-test and post-test were effective. In addition, students learned something priceless: how to become independent learners to continue on their own, improving the pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds and English pronunciation in general. They learned the shadow reading technique, which they enjoyed so much, and they also learned how

to practice pronunciation by using their favorite songs written in English. In conclusion, the research question will not change because the investigation went on as expected. The ninth graders improved their pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds which could also be measured.

5.4 Recommendations

In this last section of chapter five, ten major recommendations directed to investigators who would like to conduct similar projects or continue this project can be read. First, it is important to understand the research topic clearly and its importance for its population. The topic should be of high importance so that the population is also benefited and, for that reason, happily collaborate in the research project.

Second, if the population refers to high-school students, the investigator must ensure the research does not interfere too much with the school's English curriculum. On the contrary, it should be of help. In addition, if the computer laboratory will be used, it is important to discuss the possibility of its usage ahead of time, considering that other groups might use it. Therefore, it is important to make sure it is available for the required schedule. Another recommendation when using the computer laboratory is to let the students know several days before and insist the day before using the lab to bring their headsets to take full advantage of the activities since they also have to follow the Covid-19 protocols. Having their headsets makes students feel less stressed and more comfortable since they use a personal object in the English class.

Third, when using the computer lab, students must access their e-books, or their online practices announce them at least one day before so they can search for and find their passwords to access their accounts. This will ease the investigator's work and avoid any unexpected situations.

Forth, in case there are any delays for any reasons such as because of lack of electricity for a short time, or the platform is not working that day, always explain to the students transparently what is happening so that they can understand the situation and collaborate with the investigator to pass to a plan B such as changing the classrooms or use their cell phones instead of the computer lab.

Fifth, have everything prepared, and in order to avoid any delays during the class, it is better to finish the lesson earlier and do an extra activity than run out of time and not be able to finish the activities.

Sixth, it is important that the activities be attractive, engaging, and fun to reward the students for their collaboration with having a good time during the investigation. The activities should also be planned in such a way that the students can use them outside of the classroom; in other words, the activities should have a triple purpose: help students improve the pronunciation of sounds, have fun performing them, and can teach the students how to become independent learners by being able to repeat the activity by themselves during their free time.

Seventh, it would be extremely helpful to introduce more activities in between, more meetings, so that the students be exposed to a greater variety of audios, including different accents. Depending on the students' level of English, the investigator could introduce more complex tasks.


Eighth, no matter the level of English, students should always receive proper and honest feedback on their performance so that they can understand the necessity to improve their pronunciation and become aware of their progress.

Ninth, this project can be continued by focusing on the front, central, and back vowel sounds, or diphthongs, or consonants, or the –ending plural nouns and third-person singular

verb conjugation, or -ed ending for the past tense of regular verbs through the use of a variety of audio. Finally, the project could also be extended to investigate the improvement in intonation, rhythm, sentence stress through a variety of audios.

Annexes

Institution: Mont Berkeley School
 Teacher: Cristina Ioana Tulbure
 Topic: **Pre-test**
 Grade / Level: ninth grade

Objectives	Activities	Procedure	Materials	Time	Evaluation
<p>To identify which of the short and long vowel sounds of English as a foreign language are mispronounced</p>	<p>Diagnostic evaluation</p>	<p>Teacher explains the purpose and the number of sessions.</p> <p>Students are called one by one to read aloud a text containing the target sounds, while the teacher takes notes related to the accuracy of the produced sounds</p> <div data-bbox="793 954 1276 1312" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">William's windmill</p>  <p>I recently watched an online interview with an amazing young man from Malawi called William Kamkwamba. When William was only 14, he was forced to leave school because his parents could no longer pay his school fees. He continued his education in the local library, where he saw a diagram of a windmill that generated electricity. He knew the windmill would make a big difference to his village, so he went ahead and built it.</p> <p>Fifteen years after building the windmill, William told his story at a conference. After introducing him to the audience, the interviewer asked William how his life had changed since he had built the windmill. William said that he had finished school and then he had gone to an American university. William told the interviewer that he was currently designing a new water pump for farmers in his country.</p> <p>The interviewer also asked William how life in his village had changed. William said that the village had become more prosperous, so it had been able to pay for repairs to the school. He told the interviewer that his parents were running their own business and that all six of his sisters had been able to go to school.</p> <p>William wants to inspire other young people to solve problems in their communities. From the impact his story had at the conference, he will surely achieve his new goal.</p> </div>	<p>copies</p>	<p>10min 60 min</p>	<p>Diagnostic checklist for the short and long vowel sounds</p> <p>Rubrics</p>

Institution: Mont Berkeley School

Teacher: Cristina Ioana Tulbure

Topic: **Diagnostic evaluation**

Grade / Level: ninth grade

Name: _____

Instructions: Read the text out loud

William's windmill

I recently watched an online interview with an **amazing** young man from Malawi called William Kamkwamba. When William was only **fourteen**, he was forced to **leave** school because his parents could no longer pay his school fees. He continued his education in the local library, where he saw a **diagram** of a windmill that generated electricity. He knew the windmill would make a big difference to his **village**, so he went ahead and built it.

Fifteen years after building the windmill, William **told** his story at a **conference**. **After** introducing him to the audience, the interviewer asked William how his life had **changed** since he had built the windmill. William said that he had finished school and **then** he had gone to an **American university**. William told the interviewer that he was currently designing a new water **pump** for farmers in his country. The interviewer also asked William how life in his village had changed. William said that the village had **become** more **prosperous**, so it had been able to pay for repairs to the school. He told the interviewer that his parents were **running** their **own** business and that all six of his sisters had been able to go to school. William wants to **inspire** other young people to solve problems in their **communities**. From the **impact** his story had at the conference, he will surely achieve his new goal.

Checklist
Pre-test

	Target words	Correct/incorrect (✓ / ✗)	Sound produced (long/short/other)
Short vowels			
/æ/	imp <u>a</u> ct		
	<u>a</u> fter		
/ɛ/	th <u>e</u> n		
	Amer <u>e</u> rican		
/ɪ/	b <u>e</u> come		
	vill <u>a</u> ge		
/ɑ/	prosper <u>o</u> sous,		
	con <u>o</u> ference		
/ʌ /	r <u>u</u> nn <u>u</u> ng		
	p <u>u</u> mp		
Long vowels			
/eɪ/	ch <u>a</u> ng <u>e</u> d		
	am <u>a</u> zing		
/i/	l <u>e</u> ave		
	four <u>ee</u> n		
/aɪ /	d <u>i</u> agram		
	ins <u>pi</u> re		
/oʊ/	t <u>o</u> ld		
	<u>o</u> wn		
/ju/	<u>u</u> niversity		
	comm <u>u</u> nities		

Institution: Mont Berkeley School

Teacher: Cristina Ioana Tulbure

Topic: **Activity 1: minimal pairs**

Time 65 min

Grade / Level: ninth grade

Objectives	Activities	Procedure	Materials	Time	Evaluation
to identify long and short vowels sounds	PPT presentation	Teacher explains the basic rules of short and long vowel sounds	Ppt	15 min	Through identifying short and long vowel sounds
	Listening to an audio	Practice: minimal pairs: recorded native speaker voice		5 min	through listening to minimal pairs
to confirm the understanding of short and long vowels sounds	Minimal pairs	a) Students listen & read and repeat after the audio (ppt) b) Students listen and circle the word they hear (ppt+use worksheet) c) choose the picture that corresponds to the phrase they hear. (ppt+worksheet)	copies	5 min 10 min	Through producing words that contain short and long vowel sounds
to produce short and long vowel sounds	Discrimination of sounds	d) say the name of the object in the picture projected on the board and make a sentence using that specific word.		15 min	
to apply the use of short and long vowel sounds	Rhyme	e) Students brainstorm words that rhyme with that specific word		15 min	Through finding the correct rhyming words

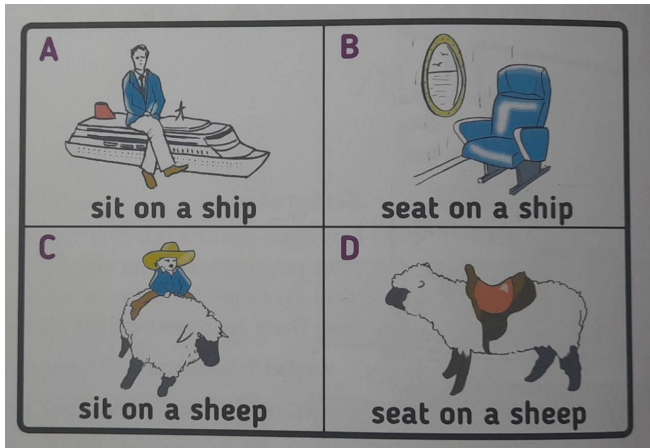
Institution: Mont Berkeley School
Teacher: Cristina Ioana Tulbure
Topic: **Activity 1, ex 2, worksheet**
Grade / Level: ninth grade
Date _____
Name _____

Listen and circle the word you hear.

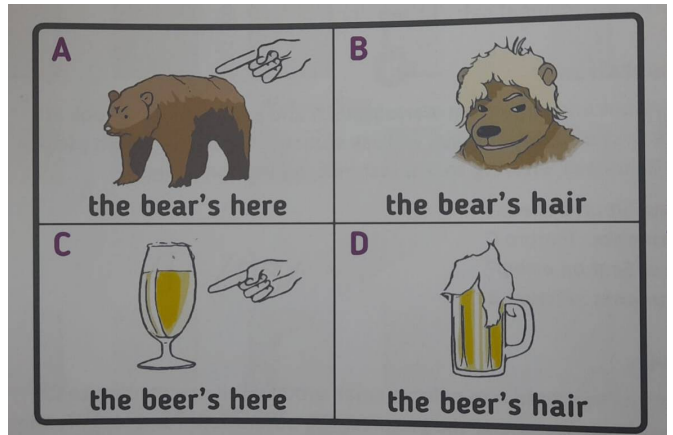
1. Honor owner
2. Seat sit
3. Cheap chip
4. Sheep ship
5. Dad dead
6. Sat said
7. Show shoe
8. Boat boot
9. Bad bed
10. Drone drawn
11. Boat bought

Institution: Mont Berkeley School
 Teacher: Cristina Ioana Tulbure
 Topic: Activity 1, ex 3, worksheet
 Grade / Level: ninth grade
 Date _____
 Name _____

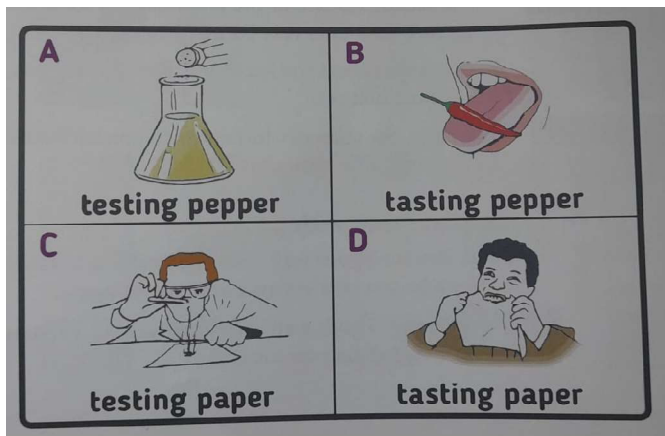
Choose the picture letter that corresponds to the phrase you hear.



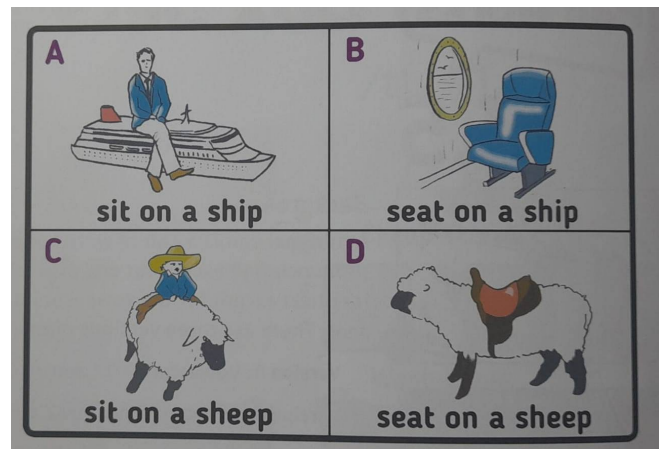
Picture 1 _____



Picture 2 _____



Picture 3 _____



Picture 4 _____

Institution: Mont Berkeley School

Teacher: Cristina Ioana Tulbure

Topic: **Activity 2: Shadow reading. Students listen to longer sentences**

Grade / Level: ninth grade

Objectives	Activities	Procedure	Materials	Time	Evaluation
To produce words with short and long vowel sounds	Watch video Shadow reading Differentiation of sounds Rhyme	Students are in the computer laboratory using their own headsets 1. Students watch a short video with subtitles to get familiarized with the content of it. (the video is taken from their textbook e-book, unit 1, the unit they are studying) 2. Shadow reading. Students listen to longer sentences (the subtitles) and read them after the audio sentence by sentence, copying the pronunciation, intonation and rhythm. Repeat 2 or 3 times. 3. Students receive a transcription of the video with target words in bold. They are asked to categorize the words in bold according to their vowel sound: long or short	Computer lab Video, Copies	3 min	Through the correct pronunciation of sentences from the audio
To categorize words that contain short and long vowel sounds		10 min		Through differentiation of sounds	
To apply the use of short and long vowel sounds		20 min		Through finding the correct rhyming words	

Institution: Mont Berkeley School
Teacher: Cristina Ioana Tulbure
Topic: **Activity 2. Shadow reading**
Grade / Level: ninth grade
Date _____
Name _____

Instruction:

Categorize the words in bold according to their long or short vowel sound. Mark with a check the corresponding column on the following page.

For each word in bold write another word that rhymes with it.

Josh: Hi, I'm Josh ...

Bella: ... and I'm Bella. Welcome to **Factflix**. Today we're **discussing** "Why do we want to fit in?"

Josh: Nice T-shirt, Bella!

Bella: **Thanks**.

Josh: We have the same **taste** in T-shirts!

Bella: And I thought this T-shirt would make me look different. But it's interesting because most **people** like to fit in ...

Josh: ... through their clothes, for example. Often because they want to be **popular** ...

Bella: ... but also because it's human nature. People feel safer and more **confident** when they're in groups. And it's easier to be in a group if you fit in.

Josh: That's true. In terms of music, I like stuff that all my friends are listening to. If **everyone** likes it, it's cool, **right**?

Bella: Er ... that sounds like **peer pressure** to me. Some people say that if everyone likes something, it's **extremely** uncool. Personally, I have pretty unusual taste in music - I think it's OK to stand out in a crowd.

Josh: Right ... You're in good company then! Did you **know** that Albert Einstein was a rebel, too? He had a great mind but he hated school! And he was always an outsider.

Bella: Many extraordinary artists, scientists, and **inventors don't** follow the crowd.

Josh: They don't have a lot in **common** with other people and they look at the world in a different way.

Bella: And that might be why they achieve amazing **things**.

Josh: So we should all dare to be different!

Bella: And that might be why they achieve **amazing** things.

Josh: So we should all dare to be different!

Bella: Yeah! It'd be pretty boring if we were all the same! See you next time!

Josh: Bye!

Checklist

Activity 2. Shadow reading

		Short vowel sound	Long Vowel sound	Rhyming word
1	<u>I</u>			
2	F<u>a</u>ct<u>fl</u>ix			
3	d<u>i</u>scussing			
4	disc<u>u</u>ssing			
5	Th<u>a</u>nks			
6	t<u>a</u>ste			
7	p<u>e</u>ople			
8	pop<u>u</u>lar			
9	c<u>o</u>n<u>f</u>ident			
10	<u>e</u>veryone			
11	ri<u>gh</u>t			
12	pr<u>e</u>ssure			
13	kn<u>o</u>w			
14	extrem<u>e</u>ly			
15	in<u>v</u>entors			
16	d<u>o</u>n't			
17	c<u>o</u>mm<u>o</u>n			
18	am<u>a</u>zing			
19	th<u>i</u>ngs			
20	p<u>e</u>er			

Institution: Mont Berkeley School

Teacher: Cristina Ioana Tulbure

Topic: Activity 3: **Lyrics- The Joker and the Queen by Ed Sheeran**

Grade / Level: ninth grade

Objectives	Activities	Procedure	Materials	Time	Evaluation
Identify sequence of paragraphs and match them with the lyrics	Lyrics puzzles	a. Play a song that students like and are familiar with. Students receive the lyrics on pieces of paper to organize them while they listen to the song. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gPniyexd_BE&ab_channel=EdSheeran	Copies	5 min	Through solving a lyrics puzzle
Reconstruct sentences	Fill in the blanks	b. Listen again to make sure the lyrics are in the correct order		5 min	Through filling in blanks the correct missing words
		c. Students receive a sheet of paper with the lyrics on it but with gaps to be filled in with the missing words while playing the audio again		5 min	
	Categorize word	d. Listen again to check e. Students categorize the words they wrote in the gaps according to their vowel sounds, short or long. Students read the categories with the words aloud		5 min 10 min	

<p>Compose original sentences Generate original tongue twisters</p> <p>Prepare for the post test by reviewing the short and long vowels</p>	<p>Create sentences</p> <p>Tongue twister</p>	<p>f. Students create at least a sentence that contains at least three of the categorized words. They write the sentence and say it out loud.</p> <p>g. As a class, create a quick tongue twister with 5 of the target words (nouns, verbs, adjectives) and say it one by one</p> <p>Teacher announces the end of the activities and quickly reviews with the class the short and long vowels</p>		<p>10 min</p> <p>15 min</p>	<p>By composing original sentences with correct word order and generating tongue twisters</p>
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The Joker and the Queen

By Ed Sheeran

How was I to know?
It's a crazy thing
I showed you my hand
And you still let me win
And who was I to say
That this was meant to be?
The road that was broken
Brought us together

And I know you could fall for a thousand kings
And hearts that would give you a diamond ring
When I fold, you see the best in me
The joker and the queen

I was upside down
From the outside in
You came to the table
And you went all in
With a single word
And a gentle touch
You turned a moment
Into forever

And I know you could fall for a thousand kings
And hearts that could give you a diamond ring
When I fold, you see the best in me
The joker and the queen

And I know you could fall for a thousand kings
And hearts that would give you a diamond ring
When I folded, you saw the best in me
The joker and the queen
The joker and the queen

Institution: Mont Berkeley School
Teacher: Cristina Ioana Tulbure
Topic: Activity 3: Lyrics- The Joker and the Queen by Ed Sheeran
Grade / Level: ninth grade

Instructions:

- 1. Fill in with the missing words while you listen to the song The Joker and the Queen by Ed Sheeran**

How was I to _____ ?

It's a _____ thing

I _____ you my _____

And you let me _____

And who was I to say

That this was meant to be?

The _____ that was _____

Brought us _____

And I know you could fall for a thousand kings

And hearts that would give you a diamond _____

When I fold, you see the _____ in me

The _____ and the queen

I was _____ down

From the outside in

You came to the _____

And you went all in

With a _____ word

And a _____ touch

You turned a _____

Into forever

And I you could fall for a thousand kings

And hearts that could give you a _____ ring

When I, you see the best in me

The joker and the queen

And I know you could fall for a thousand _____

And hearts that would give you a diamond ring

When I _____, you saw the _____ in me

The joker and the queen


The joker and the queen

2. Categorize the following words taken from the lyrics according to their long or short vowel sound. Mark with a check the corresponding column.

		Short vowel sound	Long Vowel sound
1	<u>u</u> pside		
2	kn <u>o</u> w		
3	cr <u>a</u> zy		
4	sh <u>o</u> wed		
5	h <u>a</u> nd		
6	w <u>i</u> n		
7	r <u>o</u> ad		
8	br <u>o</u> ken		
9	to <u>g</u> ether		
10	r <u>i</u> ng		
11	b <u>e</u> st		
12	j <u>o</u> ker		
13	ups <u>i</u> de		
14	t <u>a</u> ble		
15	s <u>i</u> ngle		
16	g <u>e</u> ntle		
17	m <u>o</u> ment		
18	d <u>i</u> amond		
19	k <u>i</u> ngs		
20	b <u>e</u> st		
21	f <u>o</u> lded		

3. Write at least a sentence that contains three of the categorized words. Then say it out loud.

Institution: Mont Berkeley School
 Teacher: Cristina Ioana Tulbure
 Topic: **Post-test** Time 70 min
 Grade / Level: ninth grade

Objectives	Activities	Procedure	Materials	Time	Evaluation
<p>To evaluate the progress in the pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds of English</p>	<p>Reading aloud</p>	<p>Students are called one by one to read aloud a text containing the target sounds, while the teacher takes notes related to the accuracy of the produced sounds</p> <div data-bbox="789 732 1346 992" data-label="Complex-Block"> <p>REAL LIVES: LI YU</p> <p>15-year-old Li Yu is from China. He moved to Canada with his family when his dad got a job in Toronto. He had to get used to a new culture, a new language, and make new friends. Real Lives talked to Li about how he has adapted.</p> <p>So Li, what's the biggest challenge for you? The language. I'm not used to speaking English, and sometimes it's difficult to understand. I learned English at my old school in China, but we didn't use to speak it very often.</p> <p>Is your new school very different? Yes, it is. My old school was small – I used to know all of the teachers and we would have lessons in the same classroom all day. But my new school is huge, with a lot of students. I'm used to it now, but sometimes I still get lost!</p> <p>Are you getting used to your new home? Yes and no. In China, we used to live in a house in a small town. It was close to the school so I used to walk there every day. Now I live in an apartment in a big city. I'm slowly getting used to it, but I'm not used to the snow!</p> <p>What do you miss? I miss my grandparents the most. They lived nearby, and my grandma would always make the best rice noodles for breakfast. I'll get used to my life here eventually, but I'll always miss China.</p>  </div>	<p>copies</p>	<p>70 min</p>	<p>checklist for the pronunciation of short and long vowel sounds</p> <p>Rubrics</p>

Institution: Mont Berkeley School
Teacher: Cristina Ioana Tulbure
Topic: **Post-test**
Grade / Level: ninth grade
Name: _____

Instructions: Read the text out loud

REAL LIVES: LI YU

15-year-old Li Yu is from China. He moved to Canada with his family when his dad **got** a **job** in Toronto. He had to get used to a new **culture**, a new language, and make new friends. Real Lives talked to Li about how he has **adapted**.

So Li, what's the biggest **challenge** for you? The language. I'm not used to **speaking** English, and **sometimes** it's difficult to understand. I learned English at my old school in China, but we didn't use to speak it very often.

Is your new school very different? Yes, it is. My old school was small — I **used** to know all of the teachers and we would have lessons in the same classroom all day. **But** my new school is **huge**, with a lot of students. I'm used to it now, but sometimes I still get lost!

Are you **getting** used to your new **home**? Yes and no. In China, we used to live in a house in a small town. It was close to the school so I used to walk there every **day**. Now I live in an apartment in a big city. I'm slowly getting used to it, but I'm not used to the snow!

What do you **miss**? I miss my grandparents the **most**. They lived nearby, and my grandma would always **make** the best rice noodles for breakfast. I'll **get** used to my **life here eventually**, but I'll always miss China.

Checklist
Post-test

	Target words	Correct/incorrect (✓ / ✗)	Sound produced (long/short/other)
Short vowels			
/æ/	ch <u>a</u> llenge		
	ad <u>a</u> pted		
/ɛ/	g <u>e</u> t		
	ev <u>e</u> ntually		
/ɪ/	g <u>e</u> tting		
	m <u>i</u> ss		
/ɑ/	g <u>o</u> t		
	j <u>o</u> b		
/ʌ/	c <u>u</u> lture		
	B <u>u</u> t		
Long vowels			
/eɪ/	d <u>a</u> y		
	m <u>a</u> ke		
/i/	h <u>e</u> re		
	s <u>p</u> eaking		
/aɪ/	l <u>i</u> fe		
	som <u>e</u> times		
/oʊ/	h <u>o</u> me		
	m <u>o</u> st		
/ju/	<u>u</u> sed		
	h <u>u</u> ge		

Evaluation rubric

Rubric	Does Not Meet Expectations 1 point (0-3 correct answers)	Needs Improvement 2 points (4-5 correct answers)	Meets Expectations 3 points (6-7 correct answers)	Exceeds Expectations 4 points (8-10 correct answers)	Total points
Pronunciation of short vowel sounds /æ/, /ɛ/ / ɪ /, /ɑ/, /ʌ/	The student frequently mispronounces the short vowel sounds. The words are difficult to understand and the message is affected	The student makes mistakes in the pronunciation of short vowel sounds. The words are difficult to understand	The student has a clear pronunciation of vowels sounds with a few mistakes	The student has a clear and accurate pronunciation of vowels sounds with few or no mistakes	
Pronunciation of long vowel sounds /eɪ/, /i/, /aɪ /, /oʊ/, /ju/	The student frequently mispronounces the short vowel sounds. The words are difficult to understand and the message is affected	The student makes mistakes in the pronunciation of short vowel sounds. The words are difficult to understand	The student has a clear pronunciation of vowels sounds with a few mistakes	The student has a clear and accurate pronunciation of vowels sounds with few or no mistakes	

Institution: Mont Berkeley School

Teacher: Cristina Ioana Tulbure

Grade / Level: ninth grade

Date: _____

Class observation Checklist

	Yes (✓)	No (✗)	Comments
1. The teacher speaks English in class			
2. The teacher has a good level of English pronunciation			
3. The students actively participate in conversations with the teacher and among themselves in English			
4. The teacher uses audios in class			
5. The teacher corrects students' pronunciation mistakes			
6. The facial mask interferes with the students' pronunciation impeding the communication			
7. The facial mask interferes with the teacher's pronunciation impeding the communication			
8. The students' speaking level is at the same level as their textbook			

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