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**Evaluation of the Use of Some Ludic Activities as a Pedagogical
Strategy to Improve the English Front Vowels Learning in
Intermediate English Students at Centro Internacional de Idiomas
CIDI during I Quarter of 2020**

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my parents Eladio and Rocío for their unconditional support and for all those friends who helped me. I hold all of you in my heart.

“All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them”.

Walt Disney

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Abstract

In a globalized and demanding world, mastering the English language is the main requirement to access to better life opportunities, so it is essential students have a high degree of competence in all English skills, but mainly in the oral one. The oral expression training is sometimes neglected in educational centers due to the lack of phonetic practice and the application of traditional teaching methods focused on repetition and grammar drills.

Such is the case of Intermediate English students at Centro Internacional de Idiomas which present difficulties when pronounce and discriminate the English front vowels /æ/, /ɪ/, /i/ and /E/. Therefore, it was necessary to implement some interactive activities in class for students not only to learn phonetic sounds, but also to develop oral proficiency.

How does the implementation of ludic activities increase the English front vowels learning in intermediate English students at Centro Internacional de Idiomas during the I quarter of 2020?

After the application of ludic activities such as board game, tongue twister, song and flashcards, the researcher found that the target population improved their academic outcomes, motivation, participation and fluency. Regarding to the pronunciation sub skill, it was also determined that the most difficult sound to discriminate for the participants of this study was /æ/, followed by the /ɪ/, they were very confused since in Spanish there is no lengthening of the vowels and they do not exist in Spanish.

It could be concluded that the most effective ludic activity to train fluency was the tongue twisters while the boardgame and was the most joyful activity.

Resumen

En un mundo globalizado y exigente, el dominio del idioma inglés es el principal requisito para acceder a mejores oportunidades de vida, por lo que es fundamental que los estudiantes tengan un alto grado de competencia en todas las habilidades del inglés, pero principalmente en el oral. La formación de la expresión oral en ocasiones se descuida en los centros educativos debido a la falta de práctica fonética y la aplicación de métodos de enseñanza tradicionales centrados en la repetición y los ejercicios gramaticales.

Tal es el caso de los estudiantes de inglés intermedio del Centro Internacional de Idiomas que presentan dificultades para pronunciar y discriminar las vocales frontales del inglés / æ /, / ɪ /, / i / y / ɛ /. Por lo tanto, fue necesario implementar algunas actividades interactivas en clase para que los estudiantes no solo aprendan sonidos fonéticos, sino que también desarrollen la competencia oral. ¿Cómo la implementación de actividades lúdicas aumenta el aprendizaje de vocales frontales en inglés en estudiantes de inglés intermedio en el Centro Internacional de idiomas durante el I cuatrimestre de 2020?

Luego de la aplicación de actividades lúdicas como el juego de mesa, el trabalenguas, canto y flashcards, la investigadora encontró que la población meta mejoró sus resultados académicos, motivación, participación y fluidez. En cuanto a la sub habilidad de pronunciación, también se determinó que el sonido más difícil de discriminar para los participantes de este estudio fue / æ /, seguido de la / ɪ /, los estudiantes estaban muy confundidos ya que en español no existe alargamiento de vocales y dichos sonidos tampoco existen en este idioma. Se pudo concluir que la actividad lúdica más efectiva para entrenar la fluidez fue los trabalenguas, mientras el juego de mesa y fue la actividad más placentera.

Cédula de Identidad

Chapter I

Introductory Framework

1.1 Problem Statement

In current times, English is the new “Lingua Franca” just as Latin was years ago. In the business world, people who are fluent in this language are sought for economic and political purposes. Over the years, Costa Rica has made great efforts to improve several systems at the macro level, one of them is the Educational System whereby in August ,2018, the President Carlos Alvarado marked the launch of the bilingualism program.

That initiative was created as an option to extend the English Learning at the national level to achieve a historical change for students and teachers. That language represents an essential tool for all generations since students get several opportunities when mastering a second language such as employability, marketing, and educational purposes. In order to provide a more concrete curriculum which facilitate the acquisition of the English skills in class, the Ministerio de Educación Pública (MEP), published the most recent study program “Educating for a new citizenship” which is focused on the development of skills based on communication and competitiveness. To reach the intended objective of the MEP, it is necessary for English teachers to make efforts for creating innovative lesson plans for students to train the four English skills, according to Garita, González & Solis (2019). “Having accurate pronunciation when communicating in a foreign language is fundamental in order to transmit the intended message with clarity and avoid misunderstandings”. (p.7). The oral expression is in general one of the most feared skill by students, so training them in the area of phonetics will allow them to understand the language and communicate clearly.

The development of the oral skills has been through the year's one of the focus of attention in the educational field due to its difficulty and importance. As Spanish speakers, we pronounce words in the same way as we write them, unlike that, in the English there is a whole phonological system completely different from our native language.

According to Díaz (2002). Teachers are the programmers of educational software, they plan and design teaching strategies and materials in the classroom to promote meaningful learning. (p.2). In accordance with such line, it is essential that teachers ensure that their students feel confident in their English skills and to teach pronunciation using fun, creative, and engaging material and activities.

The idea is to break patterns of repetitive drills and written practices focused on grammar, on the contrary, creating spaces of scattering and decision-making let students renew their spirit of participation. Piedra (2018), states that “the word **playful** comes from the word *ludus* which means game, it is related to the part of leisure, entertainment and fun”. (pag.96)

Games represent an essential tool when teaching L2 due to the effects they provoke on students. During the learning process they become the active actors and enjoy acquiring a significant learning.

Within the modelling process, fluency is one of the main tasks when practicing the oral skills, however, communicating the intended message is the most important aim while learning a language. Students run the risk of being misunderstood if they exchange a sound while expressing an idea. This research aims to be a guide for those English teachers who want teaching pronunciation in an interactive and effective way.

In a globalized world where everything changes so fast, it is essential to train competent students in aspects such as technology, business, soft skills, but mainly in languages. Around the world, it is taken for granted that most people, at least, speak English, since it is the most common language in every public or private school. The best jobs and academic opportunities are taken by those who master the above aspects and speak mainly English. According to the previous situation, some experts in psychology, education and didactics have carried out studies in order to expand proposals which may improve the quality in the education field.

Since Spanish is our official language, the oral practice of English is mostly limited to few hours a week; therefore, teachers should innovate during classes and offer students alternative strategies to enjoy, participate and learn.

During the class observation at CIDI, it was evidenced that the students respond in class in their native language and not in the target one. This interrupts the objective of the course, which is to develop the intelligibility and fluency of the English language. Therewith, the role of the student is passive, omitting or restricting the exchange of ideas and oral production. The fact of communicating in the native language becomes a routine that should be disregarded in a foreign language class.

In connection with the mediation strategies at the institute, it was evidenced that the students work with a textbook which focuses on grammar and vocabulary, regarding to the listening and speaking part, the teacher must to implement his own strategies and materials for the students develop the skills ; however, it was observed that pronunciation or phonetics is almost avoided by teacher , students only make short sentences and have difficulty while

pronouncing the English front vowels [i], [ɪ], [æ], [ɛ] which appear in written sentences and simple expressions.

Some teachers avoid teaching phonetics due to the lack of training in the area or because they consider the fact that the exercises in the book is enough. This is a wrong idea due to students do not learn to pronounce words correctly affecting their performance in oral expression. Therefore, it was necessary to implement some interactive activities in class for students not only to learn phonetic sounds, but also to develop oral proficiency.

Is here where the research question arises.

How does the implementation of ludic activities increase the English front vowels learning in intermediate English students at CIDI during the I Quarter of 2020?

1.2 Objectives of the Investigation

1.2.1 General Objective

To analyze the effectiveness of using ludic activities as a pedagogical strategy to improve the learning of the English front vowels in intermediate English students at Centro Internacional de Idiomas during I quarter 2020

1.2.2 Specific Objectives:

- To identify the students difficulties in the acquisition of the pronunciation of the English front vowels
- To apply ludic activities as a pedagogical strategy to improve the pronunciation of the English front vowels in intermediate English students at Centro Internacional de Idiomas during I quarter of 2020
- To evaluate the results of using ludic activities as a pedagogical strategy to improve the pronunciation of the English Front Vowels in Intermediate English students at Centro Internacional de Idiomas during I quarter of 2020

1.3 Justification

During the process of teaching a foreign language, it is essential to implement useful pedagogical strategies to help students learn and acquire knowledge in an interactive way. Since the beginning of academic training, students need to have a solid academic

background in order to communicate effectively with others, nevertheless sometimes this does not happen.

A specific case is about the one of the intermediate students at Centro Internacional de Idiomas which present difficulties in recognizing, identifying and pronouncing the English front vowels, that is / i /, / ɪ /, / ε /, / æ /. Despite being adults and having received classes at school and a basic English course, they have not been able to overcome that barrier that allows them to communicate intelligibly.

To understand the previous case at the pedagogical level, it is important to know how human beings acquire knowledge. According to Mascolol & Fischer (2005). “Knowledge arises through a process of active construction”. This affirmation is related to Piaget’s theory about learning process, it suggests that human beings learn through meaningful experiences which involves two steps; assimilation (to save info in our cognitive system) and accommodation (relate the previous info with the new one). Teaching a topic is, not only to provide the info to students, but also to make sure they understand and apply it in a right way. When playful activities are carried out in the classroom, students are engaged, attentive and more receptive, so their interest and participation increase.

Halliwell, (1992), states that students acquire the language while playing games, and through engaging activities, as they do not feel pressure, they are more open to learn and come to school also to built-in set of interests. “Through their sense of fun and play, the learners are living the language for real”. (pag.7). Teachers should take advantage of this by designing creative ways to teach the target language. As Spanish speakers we used to pronounce words as they are written; it is difficult for us to learn a foreign language not only because some of us are not exposed to it every day, but also because the grammar and pronunciation are

different. The main aim in the education field is to generate significant learning on students. In order to reach that objective, teachers should consider the use of games as an empowerment tool in the development of skills, mainly the oral one.

Ludic activities well planned are essential tools in the development of foreign language, since they encourage students to express opinions, likes and preferences freely reducing fears and enjoying the subject from a dynamic and entertaining perspective. Significant learning refers to the all information stored in a long-term in student's memory, it is acquired when they are able to produce by themselves what they have learned in class.

Let's say for instance, developing in class drills such as bringing out conclusions from a text and expressing them orally, performing a dramatization, discussing an assigned topic, learning through a board game, improvising a prayer or completing it, participating in role plays, singing songs, reading out loud tongue twisters, memorizing a rhyme and so forth. All those kinds of activities contribute students retain the information, summarize and relate it to the previous one under an enjoyable and fearless atmosphere.

During the language classroom, teachers may use supporting materials as visual aids or games to practice a specific topic. (Simpson, n.d), affirms that games are a welcome break from the usual routine of the language class as they encourage students to interact, communicate and reinforce learning. Subsequently, studying ceases to be perceived by learners as a duty, on the contrary, it becomes an opportunity to exchange points of views and get feedback about the correct pronunciation of the English vowel sounds. It is necessary teachers keep in mind to adapt games to the objectives for the course. The English sound system is notably different from Spanish, that is why non-native learners get confused when

pronouncing phonemes in both languages, for instance words such as bee /'bi / a Spanish speaker would pronounce it as “bee” or the word bite / 'baIt / as “bite” just exactly as they are written.

Fear of making mistakes, receiving mockery, shyness, fear of expressing oneself or the lack of information about the English phonemes are factors that affect students when learning any foreign language. Those negative factors increase when they must communicate with native English speakers or people who are from different countries and speak English as a second language. In the last case, it is much more complicated to understand due to the accent, intonation and probably, fluency.

Many students drop out of classes because they do not agree with the methodology developed by teachers, the lack of non-functional practices, innovation, entertainment, or effectiveness, generate a feeling of loss and failure on them. Alternatively, to avoid that situation teachers should provide the students practices and opportunities to bring out their potential. In an increasingly demanding labor market, it is the duty of teachers to facilitate a pedagogical training to students, not only to make them capable of developing soft skills and active listening, but also assertive and effective communication. The intermediate English students from Centro Internacional de Idiomas are young adults who work mostly during the day and attend classes at night.

Most of them come to classes stressed and tired due to their daily routine so that it is necessary to promote an interactive methodology which involves drills for students be able to make choices, exchange ideas, improvise sentences, associate a word with its respective sound, as well as dynamic activities such as, mime, dialogues, listening to songs, boardgames among others. The use of visual material can help learners to gain concentration and increase

their motivation. Through the class observation period, it was evidenced the lack of dynamic activities for students practice phonetics and pronunciation, due to that situation, the researcher decided to implement some ludic activities as a pedagogical strategy to help the participants to recognize, and discriminate and pronounce the English front vowels.

1.4 Antecedents

In this part of the project, it is important to consider previous researches that have served as a guide to know that the subject under study has been investigated. According to Arias (2012) “The antecedents are previous investigations, which reflect the advances and the state of knowledge in a determined area”. (p.106).

They represent a guide with similar objectives to make comparisons and have an idea of how to address a problem. Below are some previous works that have been developed which are similar in terms of objectives, instruments, and methodologies.

First, the paper “Teaching Pronunciation through Experiential Learning and Pronunciation Techniques” was presented at Bogotá, Colombia, Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios, 2016 by the student Sebastian Concha Vargas. The purpose of the study was to propose an alternative teaching strategy (drilling, minimal pairs, listening activities and reading activities) to promote the improvements of the pronunciation of the phonemes /ʌ/ VS /æ/, /ɪ/ VS /i:/ and /θ/ VS /ð/ contained in simple sentences and short conversations. The method used by the investigator was the Experiential Learning Approach which consists in creating real life experience during the learning process by the application of dynamic activities such as role-plays, debates-conversations, activities of mimics, songs as well as written practices.

During the development of the drills, the students were able to identify, analyze and correct mistakes, as well as make assumptions and receiving feedback from the teacher. The sounds were practiced in conjunction with the sentences and not alone, the author found that repetition is essential for the student to improve their performance.

Throughout the investigation, instruments such as the pre-test and the post-test were used. The first one was applied to evaluate the students' previous knowledge, they had to read sentences which contained words with the sounds studied, the researcher evidenced the fact that students replaced the phoneme /ʌ/ by Spanish /a/ or even by Spanish /u/ as in the sentence 'Sarah's uncle broke his ankle when he was drunk' / sərəs 'ʌŋkəl broʊk hɪz 'æŋkəl wen hi: wɒz drʌŋk /. Some students pronounced / saras 'uŋkəl broʊk hɪs 'aŋkəl wen hi wɒz drʌŋk, Students also confused the sound /i/ with the /I/. To facilitate teaching of three minimal pairs (/ʌ / VS / æ /, / ɪ / VS / i: / and / /θ/ VS / ð/, the researcher developed 6 classes that include ludic activities such as listening to songs, tongue twisters, reading and conducting dialogues in pairs, read aloud sentences contained in flashcards and perform written practices. After participants completed the sessions, the post-test was subsequently applied and the researcher found that students were able to remember the proper pronunciation of phonemes after having lived a meaningful experience, the 86.67% of the participants had a perfect score and there was no participant with a 0% which affirms students had meaningful improvements in relation with the pre-test results.

This research is relevant for the current study since the idea of conducting a pre-test and post-test was taken in order to compare results, the ludic activities will be taken into account because according to the author's conclusion, population under study got to achieve positive results after applying the interactive teaching techniques.

The following part refers to the paper entitled “Teaching Pronunciation to Young Learners” submitted in 2012 to the Faculty of the University in Prague in partial fulfilment of bachelor’s degree in English Teaching by Petra Skočdoplová.

The researcher carried out the field research for five weeks in a small school in the Czech Republic with four 11 years old students, the project involved a qualitative research focused on the teaching of the English phonemes / θ /, / ð /, / æ /, / ʌ /, / w /, / v /. The main objective of the research was to demonstrate that students can improve the learning of the English sounds through the implementation of playful activities.

The study emphasized that English pronunciation teaching is not necessarily linked to imitation and practical written exercises. The English sounds were taught through entertaining activities, such as the use of puppets, dialogues, poems and playing songs. Some techniques as dictation and flashcards were applied; the first one to sharp listening skills and the second one to help them to relate the sound on the flashcard with a word previously shown. The author points out that the English class must be conducted in the target language; students can decipher meanings through facial expression, mime, tone of voice, puppets, and so forth.

In order to clarify a complex topic, the mother tongue may be used, but student learning should not be exaggerated or underestimated, they are able to understand and retain information and during the developing of oral drills they should work through activities that motivate and prepare them to participate in class.

The previous investigation is relevant for the present work, since the author used playful activities through which she considered students had gained fluency and confidence. Sometimes students made mistakes, but undoubtedly, they increased they level of recognition by associating the sound with the words in the activities.

Continuing the development of this chapter about the analysis of previous studies, the next investigation was presented in 2016 at Universidad Santiago de Cali by Jesús Castillo Lozano, the study was about “Mejoramiento de la pronunciación de la lengua inglesa de los estudiantes de primer semestre del programa de Lenguas Extranjeras de la Universidad Santiago de Cali a través de la Enseñanza de la Fonética”.

The study was carried out with seventeen Bachelor's degree students, among the objectives of the research were first, to identify the most difficult English phonemes to pronounce and learn, and to determine some didactic strategies for teaching the English phonetics.

The investigation was focused on the phonemes / ə /, / ɜ /, / æ /, / ɪ /, however, they were contrasted with other phonemes / ɔ: /, / u /, / ʊ /, / i /, / ε / in exercises of minimum pairs and pronunciation. For data collection, the researcher applied instruments such as the survey, tape recordings, flashcards and pre-test and a post-test, all them helped to check the student's progress during the development of the lessons.

During the first phase, the pre-test consisted on a dictation of 20 words using the four phonemes under the study and others to contrast them , the results determined that the phonemes / æ /, / ɪ /, / ə /, / ɜ /, produced the most confusion for participants, according to students' opinion the phoneme that generates the most confusion is / æ / followed by [ə].As a didactic strategy during the training, the researcher used a program in the laboratory which contained phonetic exercises and voice recording, after that activity, the researcher used flashcards with a certain color to represent the phonemes under study, for instance; color red for representing the phoneme /ə/, brown for the phoneme / ɜ /, green for the phoneme / æ / and the last phoneme / ɪ / was represented by color orange.

The students had to select a flashcard randomly and match it with a word pronounced with the selected phoneme, then if the answer was correct the participant read it aloud for their classmates to learn it as well.

After several sessions of practice, the researcher applied a post-test; the same applied at the beginning of the study and the students expressed they felt motivated and engaged during the activities of flashcards and the program since the first one let them learn the phonemes easier and the voice recording provide them feedback. As conclusions, the researcher found that the participants made more mistakes when discriminating the phonemes /ɪ/ Vs /i:/ due to the prolongation of the sound, next, the participants affirmed that the vowel phonemes were the most complex for them and not the consonants. According to the data obtained, this investigation is considered relevant since, it evidenced the effectiveness of the use of flashcards and dictation as a methodological strategies to teach the English phonemes /æ/, /ɪ/, /ə/, /ɜ/. According to the result of the post-test, 90% of the students obtained positive results.

In addition, an article by Rohman Miftahur in 2016 from State Islamic University, Indonesia, talks about “The use of Tongue Twister Technique to improve EFL Student’s Pronunciation”. The purpose of the research was to improve students’ pronunciation focusing only on tongue twister’s technique.

It was carried out through sessions or cycles in which another teaching techniques such as: dictogloss, dialogues and whisper tongue twisters were used to facilitate learning, after 2 semesters it was evidenced that those didactic technique were effective for improving the participant’s English pronunciation. The group obtained an assertiveness average of 62.35% in the pre-cycle (pre-test) and subsequently went from 71.25% (1 cycle) to 84.47% (2 cycle).

According to the previous results Miftahur's contribution is considered important because it shows that playful activities such as tongue twisters had been effective for students the English pronunciation learning.

He emphasizes that teachers should motivate students in class to improve their performance, in regard to the class development, the researcher recommended educators to be creative in class and design materials as well as give instructions in class in the target language.

1.5 Scope

This research requires the collaboration of the English intermediate students at the Instituto Centro Internacional de Idiomas during the first quarter of 2020. Therefore, students can identify and discriminate some English front vowels presented in isolated sentences or words, all this through the use of playful activities as a pedagogical strategy.

The study will be carried out in the main branch in San José due to the most of the students come from places like Paso Ancho, Moravia, La Uruca, and Hatillos. The capital is an easily accessible place, however, during the night, it may become a dangerous location for students because they can be assaulted, threatened, or scared and those risks may influence on learner's motivation to attend classes.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

To start a research project, previous studies, theories, and different points of view must be taken into account to facilitate the understanding of the problem concerned. In accordance with the previous idea, Hernández (1990, p. 52 as cited in Martínez, 2019 p.16) reported that “the next step to introduce an investigation after the objectives and an investigation query is to develop and support all the information through theories”.

The theoretical framework is defined as the structure guide to support the study, according to Hernández, Fernández & Baptista (2014) “The theoretical perspective provides a vision of the field where we will move, provides new ideas and allows us to better understand the perspectives of other researchers” (p. 60). The purpose of this chapter is to examine previous studies or researches about the use of playful activities as a strategy for teaching pronunciation focused on the English front vowels.

2.1 Antecedents of the Teaching of English in Costa Rica

In the 20th century, the English investors controlled 50% or more of the coffee crops that Costa Rica exported, due to that situation, the teaching of English was linked to the economy. (Comunicación Magazine. Volume 21, year 33, No. 1, January-June, 2012 (pp. 4-15 as cited in Marín, 2012 p.4).

In 1901, the presence in the country of North American companies provoked that the teaching of English became an official subject in public schools. The students were instructed through the traditional method, which was focused on learning grammatical structures and the translation of texts. The oral skills were not essential and teachers communicate most of the

time in Spanish. In 1936, the “Escuela Normal de Costa Rica” was founded and the curriculum for the training of English teachers was created.

The most relevant event started in 1957 with the creation of the “Ley Fundamental de Educación” to transform the entire Costa Rican educational system, one year later, in 1958 the “Universidad de Costa Rica” was created and it is known as the birthplace of the first English teachers. During the same year, the Ministerio de Educación Pública established the English advisory office to facilitate the creation of English programs in a more systematic way. The contents of the programs involved the teaching of pronunciation and grammar, moreover; teachers had to apply the direct and the grammar and translation methods for their students.

In 1972, the Ministerio de Educación Pública presented again new educational programs with the aims of offering the students the opportunity to develop expression and communication skills and to reduce their low academic performance. Later in 1990 resurfaced the new English programs for Third Cycle and Diversified Education which seek to motivate students to communicate in English for their own improvement at a professional level. A major change was generated in 1997, when the National English Advisory office published a document entitled “Orientaciones para el director de institución educativa sobre el proceso enseñanza aprendizaje del inglés en el aula III Ciclo y Educación Diversificada”. That paper sets new guidelines for the English teaching process. According to the document, English classes must be active and taught in the same language. During the development of the lessons, the communicative method must be used and the evaluation of the four skills should be taken into account.

The program “Educating for a New Citizenship”, emerged in 2016 with the aim of creating a new curriculum, so that learners reached a minimum level of English proficiency of

A2 when completing primary education and B1 or B2 (depending on the study plans) when completing secondary, according to the the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR). In the current year, President Carlos Alvarado and the Ministerio de Educación Pública approved the national strategy called “Hacia la ruta bilingüe”. The proposal aims the students understand, converse, and write in a foreign language by 2040.

In order to get that purpose, nowadays with the new changes in the curriculum, the students from preschool to secondary are trained in phonemic awareness development and on didactic strategies such as prewriting work to provide a lot of modeling, drilling, writing exercises and then guided writing activities. It is a fact, that with those changes, Costa Rica have made a great effort to improve the English teaching in public and private schools.

2.2 Literature Review

In accordance with the above, the following section provides the reader with different concepts and theories related to the field of phonetics and phonology, the learning acquisition, and the importance of the ludic activities in the field of education.

2.2.1 Definitions of Phonetics and Phonology

The dictionary of the Royal Academy in its digital version defines phonetics as: “The set of sounds of a language; a transcription system that tries to establish a one-to-one relationship between the sounds of speech and their written representation”. Ashby (2016), stated that “The word phonetic and its derivatives began to be used in English in the 1840, and it is the science of speech which is concerned with all aspects of the production, transmission, and perception of the sounds of language”. (p.1).

For Martínez Celdrán (2002, as cited in Castillo, 2016 p.31), phonetics is a linguistic discipline that studies how speech sounds are produced and perceived from speaker to hearer. Phonetics is the branch of linguistics in charge of the study of sounds (phones) in a language, it focuses on allophones which are the various pronunciations that the same phoneme may have. Llisterra Boix (1991) describes the three most important branches of phonetics, which are detailed below:

2.2.1.1 Articulatory Phonetics: It focuses on the study of the production and classification of sounds according to the various parts of the voice apparatus involved in its production. (p.18).

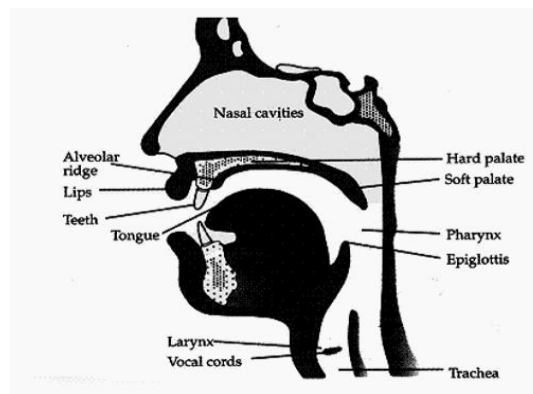
2.2.1.2 Acoustic Phonetics: Focuses on the physical properties of speech sounds considered as sound waves, specialists in the area seek to describe the movements that are generated in the vocal tract. (p.18).

2.2.1.3 Perceptual Phonetics: It is responsible for the study of speech hearing and examines the sound waves that reach the ear in nerve impulses that are transmitted to the brain. In turn, the phoneticians interpret the impulses and assimilate them to the sounds of the language. (p.20).

The present study focuses on articulatory or physiological phonetics since we are interested in knowing the different phonatory and articulatory organs that intervene in the production of different sounds. La Fuente (nd, p.7), affirms that the sound that comes out of our voice apparatus is produced thanks to the air that we push from our lungs through the larynx on its way to the mouth and the kinetic energy of the air is converted into acoustic

energy that is produced. The different sounds are produced when the air passes through the larynx and a series of muscles produce modifications in the shape of the mouth and nasal cavity. Fig.N°1 represents a diagram that is used frequently in the study of phonetics. It represents the human head, seen from the side.

Fig 1. The Articulatory Organs



Source: La fonética de la lengua inglesa p.7.Enrique LaFuente Millán

The main organs within the voice system are the larynx, which is a triangular tube that joins the trachea with the pharynx. In the middle area is the larynx that contains the glottis which is the empty space between the folds or vocal cords. In the glottic area, sound is created due to the vibration produced by the vocal cords when air is expelled by our lungs.

The veil or soft palate is responsible for circulating air through the nose or through the mouth, it rises to obstruct the nasal cavity and it descends to obstruct the oral cavity, thus producing nasal consonant sounds. The hard palate represents the “roof of the mouth”,

between it and the teeth is the alveolar ridge and then the teeth which are used in the articulation of many consonants for instance as in the case of the dental sounds.

The lips are involved in the production of vowels and consonants, retaining the air (bilabial) or by having contact with the lower teeth (lip-teeth). (La Fuente, n.d, p.8).The tongue is the most important articulator, it is a very mobile and muscular organ, which allows it to adopt various configurations to compose the passage or opening together with the palate (Campos, 2012, as cited in Castillo, 2016 p.43).

On the other hand, while phonetics deals with the production of speech sounds by humans, phonology is about patterns of sounds. According to RAE, phonology is defined as the “part of the grammar that studies how the sounds and suprasegmental elements of a language are structured to transmit meanings”. The British Council affirms that “Phonology aims to describe the sounds (phonemes) that are distinctive in a language. (p.1). It is important to know that a “phone” is a speech sound represented with the letters of the Roman alphabet, those symbols are the phonemes which distinguish one word from another in a particular language.

Cantero (2003), explains that phonetics and phonology are complementary sciences, the first is in charge of studying the sounds present in communication (production and perception) and the second is in charge of classifying those sounds from a linguistic point of view that its putting them into into categories of sounds (phonemes) so that speakers can recognize and use them. (p. 549). Phonology allows the student to learn, discriminate, and compare the sounds of a language according to the phonological system to relate them to the new language.

2.2.2 The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

The IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) was created in 1886 by the International Phonetic Association in order to develop a notation system to represent the variety of sounds found in the world's languages. It is also described as the set of symbols used to describe the sounds of spoken languages.

Its main uses are:

- It is used in dictionaries to show the pronunciation of words.
- It has been used as the basis of a writing system of a language.
- It is commonly used by non-native English speakers when they are learning to speak the language.

Fig.Nº2 represents the IPA chart which contains a set of symbols to represent the English consonants.

Fig.2. The International Phonetic Alphabet (Consonants)

CONSONANTS (PULMONIC) © 2015 IPA

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k ɡ	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill	ʙ			r					ʀ		
Tap or Flap		ɸ		ɾ		ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ							
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

Retrieved from: <file:///F:/REFERENCIAS%201/THE%20IPA%20.pdf>

2.2.2.1 Definition of Vowel

The online Oxford Dictionary defines vowel as “The speech sound in which the mouth is open and the tongue is not touching the top of the mouth, the teeth, and so forth, so that the flow of air is not limited”. It should be mentioned that each language has its own vowel system. According to Dale & Poms (2005), “A vowel is a speech sound produced by vibrating vocal cords and a continuous unrestricted flow of air coming from the mouth”. (p.4) Phones are divided into two main classes: consonants and vowels, both are formed by the movement of the air through the mouth or nose.

Cantero (2003) states that either vowels or consonants those sounds in which the air comes out freely through the mouth. In contrast, consonants consist of putting an obstacle in the air outlet, if the obstacle opposes the voice output, they are defined as “voiced” and if the obstacle opposes the air outlet without a voice, they are classified as “deaf consonants”.

2.2.2.2 Definition of Consonant

Consonants are defined phonetically as sounds made by a closure or narrowing in the vocal tract so that the airflow is either completely blocked, or restricted with an audible friction. (University of Biskra p.14). Consonants are made by restricting the air flow in some way, (Daniel Jurafsky & James H. Martin 2019 p.4).

When teachers are teaching pronunciation, it is mandatory for them to know how the phonological systems are built in order to identify what are the challenges that the students may face in that area, and how the mother tongue interferes with the acquisition of a second language. First, the English vowel system will be introduced, and then the Spanish vowel system.

2.2.3 The English Vowel Sound System

The English vowel system is formed by 46 sounds, 24 of them are consonants, twelve are vowels (monophthongs), and ten are diphthongs. In this thesis, the researcher is working with the sound system of American English, specifically with general American which is considered the standard variant in the USA. Below will be found the English sound system with its corresponding classification.

Table N°1. Represents the English Vowels

Monophthongs	Diphthongs
[i]	[ei]
[ɪ]	[aɪ]
[ɛ]	[ɔɪ]
[æ]	[aʊ]
[ə]	[oʊ]
[ɑ]	[ɪə]
[u]	[ɛə]
[ʊ]	[ɔə]
[ʌ]	[ʊə]
[ɚ]	[ju]
[ɜː]	
[ɔ]	-

Source: (Daniel Jurafsky & James H. Martin 2019 (p.3)
Retrieved from file:///C:/Users/HP/Downloads/27.pdf

2.2.3.1 Criteria for Classifying Vowel Sounds (monophthongs)

The factors for classifying the vowel sounds in this case, specifically the monophthongs are:

2.2.3.1.1 Height of the Tongue in the Mouth

It refers to the degree of raising of the tongue in the mouth that is high, mid or low. A high vowel is pronounced with the tongue arched toward the roof of the mouth, mid vowels have a tongue position between the extremes of high and low, and a low vowel is produced with the tongue is flat and low in the mouth and with the mouth open. (Enciclopedia Británica p.1).

2.2.3.1.2 The Point of Articulation

The vowels can be classified into front, central and back, depending on whether the front, the middle or the back of the tongue rises towards the upper part of the mouth to articulate the sound. Reboredo (n.d, p.1).

When pronouncing a front vowel the front of the tongue is raised in the direction of the hard palate, a central vowel is produced when the tongue is intermediate between a front and back vowels and the back vowel is produced when the back of the tongue is raised in the direction of the soft palate. (Reyes, 2015). Retrieved from <https://es.slideshare.net/IsraelReyes24/english-vowel-sounds-classification>).

2.2.3.1.3 Opening of the Jaw

According to the lowering of the jaw, vowels are classified as, close, near-close, close-mid, mid, open-mid, near-opens or open.

2.2.3.1.4 Tenseness

In a phonetic sense, vowels can be **tense or lax**. The term *tenseness* refers to the muscular effort in the muscles of the tongue, lips and mouth, the vowels are tense if the muscles are tense, on the contrary, if the vowels are lax, the muscles are relaxed. (The phonology of English vowels: an introduction, p, 33).

2.2.3.1.5 The Length of the Vowels

It refers to the prolongation of the sound when articulating them, so vowels may be classified as *long* or *short*.

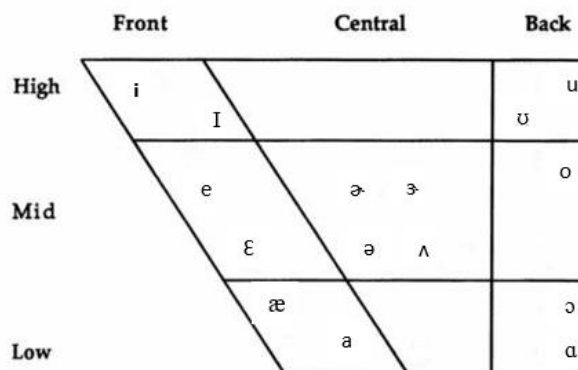
2.2.3.1.6 Lip Position

It refers to the shape of the lips when pronouncing such as, rounded, unrounded, or neutral.

2.2.3.1.7 Position of the Soft Palate

According to the position of the soft palate, sounds are oral, if the soft palate is raised and if the soft palate is lowered sound are classified as nasals. For practical purposes in this research the author will work only with the first five factors.

**Fig.Nº3. The Vowel Charts to Visualize the Tongue Positions of the English Vowels
(monophthongs)**



Source: UCL Division of Psychology and Language Sciences

Retrieved from: <https://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/courses/spsci/iss/week5.php>

2.2.3.2 Articulatory Description of the English Front Vowels

Front vowels are those which are produced by the front part of the tongue is raised towards the hard palate and the front of the mouth. (Rojas &Rodriguez, 2018, p.157). They are largely the same for speakers of both American and British English. The vowels selected for the investigation will be represented with a picture to facilitate comprehension.

2.2.3.2.1 Vowel /i/

In the production of the sound /i/ the lips are unrounded tense in a “smile position” producing a long sound, the jaw is almost completely raised, it is high because the tongue arched toward the roof of the mouth, it is front because the the tongue is raised in the direction of the hard palate. Its classification is: front, high, almost closed, oral, long, tense, lips fully spread.

Fig. N°4. The Facial Diagram of the Sound /i/



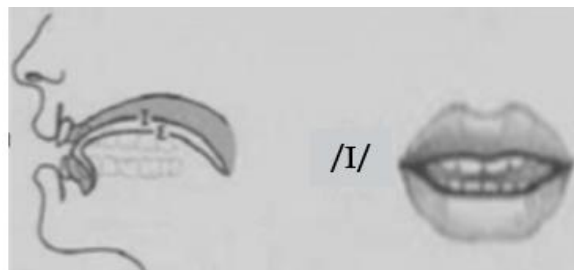
Source. (Reyes, 2015)

Retrieved from <https://es.slideshare.net/IsraelReyes24/english-vowel-sounds-classification>

2.2.3.2.2 Vowel /ɪ/

In the production of the sound /ɪ/ the lips are unrounded, lax and slightly parted producing a short sound, the jaw is slightly lower than for /i/, it is high because the tongue arched toward the roof of the mouth and it is front because the the tongue is raised in the direction of the hard palate. Its classification is: front, high, half-closed, oral, lax, short, unrounded.

FigN°5. The Facial Diagram of the Sound /ɪ/



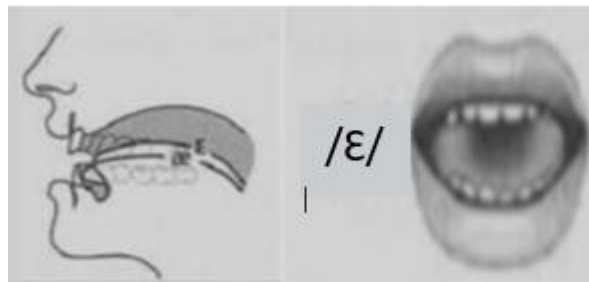
Source. (Reyes, 2015)

Retrieved from <https://es.slideshare.net/IsraelReyes24/english-vowel-sounds-classification>

2.2.3.2.3 Vowel /ɛ/

In the production of the sound /ɛ/ the lips are unrounded and lax producing a short sound, the jaw is half-open, the tongue position between the extremes of high and low, so it is in a mid position, and it is front because the front of the tongue is raised in the direction of the hard palate. Its classification: front, mid, half-open, oral, lax, short, unrounded.

Fig N°6 .The Facial Diagram of the Sound /ɛ/



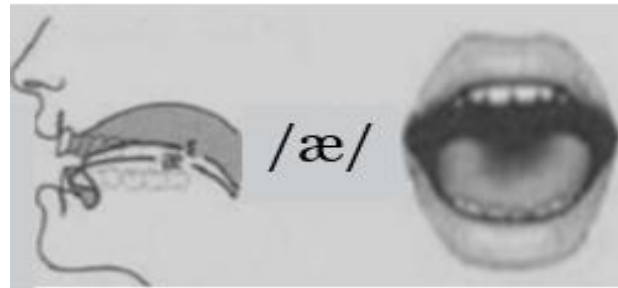
Source. (Reyes, 2015)

Retrieved from <https://es.slideshare.net/IsraelReyes24/english-vowel-sounds-classification>

2.2.3.2.4 Vowel /æ/

In the production of the sound /æ/ the lips are fully spread, producing a long sound, the jaw is open, it is front because the front of the tongue is raised in the direction of the hard palate and it is in a low position since the tongue is relatively flat and low in the mouth. Its classification: front, low, half-open, oral, tense, long, the lips are held apart.

Fig.N°7. The Facial Diagram Representing Sound /æ/



Source. (Reyes, 2015)

Retrieved from <https://es.slideshare.net/IsraelReyes24/english-vowel-sounds-classification>

2.2.3.3 Criteria for Classifying Vowel Sounds (diphthongs)

The criteria for classifying Diphthongs are:

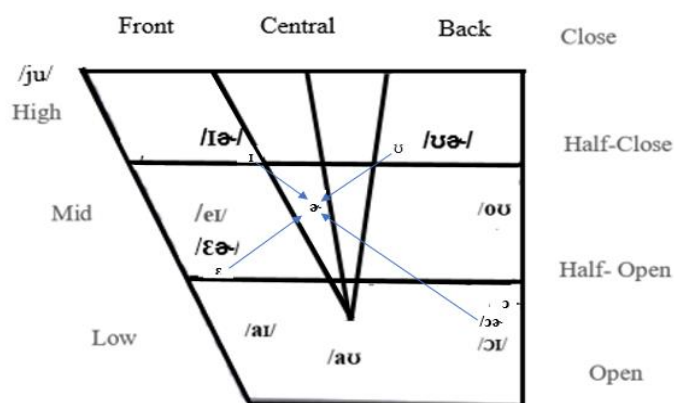
2.2.3.3.1 Change of stress: According to the change of stress diphthongs are classified as falling or rising, they are falling if the first stress falls on the first vocalic element, they are rising if the stress falls on the second vocalic sound.

2.2.3.3.2 Length of the glide: According to the length of the glide diphthongs are classified as wide and narrow, they are wide if the movement between the two vocalic elements is long, they are narrow if the movement between the two vocalic elements is short.

According to the length of the glide diphthongs are classified as wide and narrow, they are wide if the movement between the two vocalic elements is long, they are narrow if the movement between the two vocalic elements is short.

2.2.3.3.3 According to the movement of the jaw: Diphthongs are classified as opening if they move from a closer to a more open position, if they move from a more open to a closer position they are classified as closing and they are considered as centering if they move from a front or back to a central position.

**Fig.N°8. The Vowel Charts to Visualize the Tongue Positions of the English Vowels
(diphthongs)**



Source: UCL Division of Psychology and Language Sciences
Retrieved from: <https://www.phon.ucl.ac.uk/courses/spsci/iss/week5.php>

2.2.3.4 The English Consonants

In English there are 24 consonant sounds. They are classified according to the 5 factors that appear below.

- Place of articulation
- Manner of articulation
- Presence or absence of voice (voice or voiceless)

- Position of the soft palate
- Force of Articulation

The following table N°2 represents the classification of the English consonants according to their factors.

TableN°2. The English Consonants

Phoneme	Place of Articulation	Manner of Articulation	Presence or Absence of voice	Position of the soft palate	Force of Articulation
/p/	bilabial	plosive	voiceless	oral	fortis
/b/	bilabial	plosive	voiced	oral	lenis
/t/	alveolar	plosive	voiceless	oral	fortis
/d/	alveolar	plosive	voiced	oral	lenis
/k/	velar	plosive	voiceless	oral	fortis
/g/	velar	plosive	voiced	oral	lenis
/f/	labiodental	fricative	voiceless	oral	fortis
/v/	labiodental	fricative	voiced	oral	lenis
/θ/	dental	fricative	voiceless	oral	fortis
[ð]	dental	fricative	voiced	oral	lenis
/s/	alveolar	fricative	voiceless	oral	fortis
/z/	alveolar	fricative	voiced	oral	lenis
[ʃ]	palato-alveolar	fricative	voiceless	oral	fortis
[ʒ]	palato-alveolar	fricative	voiced	oral	lenis
/h/	glottal	fricative	voiceless	oral	fortis
[tʃ]	palato-alveolar	affricate	voiceless	oral	fortis
[dʒ]	palato-alveolar	affricate	voiced	oral	lenis
/m/	bilabial	nasal	voiced	nasal	lenis
/n/	alveolar	nasal	voiced	nasal	lenis
/ŋ/	velar	nasal	voiced	nasal	lenis
/l/	alveolar	lateral	voiced	oral	lenis
/r/	palatal	medial	voiced	oral	lenis
/j/	palatal	medial	voiced	oral	lenis
/w/	labio-velar	Medial	voiced	oral	lenis

Source: Pérez (n.d., p.11).Book: Phonetics

2.2.4 The Spanish Sound System

The Spanish sound system is formed by 36 sounds. Seventeen of them are consonants, five are vowels (monophthongs), and fourteen are vowels (diphthongs). In this research, the

investigator is working with the sound system of Costa Rica.

Below will be found the Spanish sound system with its corresponding classification.

TableN° 3. The Spanish Vowel Sound System

Monophthongs	Diphthongs
/a/	/ei/
/e/	/ai/
/i/	/oi/
/o/	/au/
/u/	/eu/
-	/ou/
-	/ja/
-	/je/
-	/jo/
-	/ju/
-	/wa/
-	/we/
-	/wi/
-	/wo/

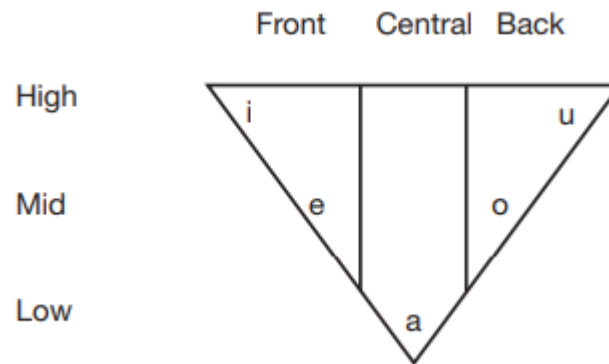
Source: Pérez (n.d., p.11).Book: Phonetics

2.2.4.1 Criteria for Classifying Vowel Sounds (monophthongs)

Spanish has five vowels, they are represented in the Spanish alphabet by the letters *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, and *u*, the criteria to classify vowels (monophthongs) are the same once that have been used for English. Fig.N°9 below, represents the vowel charts to visualize the tongue

positions of the Spanish vowels.

Fig.N°9 The Vowel Triangle of Hellwag to Represent Monophthongs



Source: (Salcedo p.199) *The phonological system of Spanish*.
 Retrieved from: [file:///C:/Users/jcmena/Downloads/Dialnet-ThePhonologicalSystemOfSpanish-3269828%20\(3\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/jcmena/Downloads/Dialnet-ThePhonologicalSystemOfSpanish-3269828%20(3).pdf)

2.2.4.1.1 Articulatory Description of the Spanish Front Vowels

2.2.4.1.2 Vowel /i/

In the production of the sound /i/, the air is exhaled freely through the mouth; the front of the tongue is raised towards the hard palate and the tongue is in a high position. The muscles of the tongue, lips, and mouth are tense. The jaw in an almost closed position and the lips are unrounded. It is a long sound. Its classification is front, high, almost closed, tense, long, unrounded, and oral.

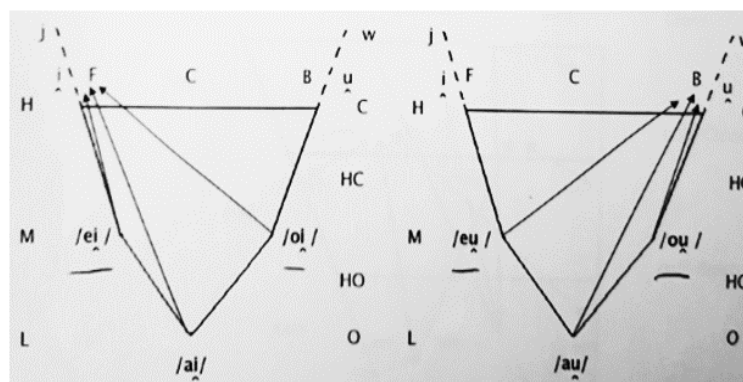
2.2.4.1.3 Vowel /e/

In the production of the sound /e/, the air goes out freely through the mouth. It is front because the front part of the tongue is raised towards the hard palate; the tongue is in a mid position and the muscles of the tongue, lips and mouth are tense. The jaw is between a half-closed and half-open position; the lips are unrounded. It is a long sound. Its classification is front, mid, between half close and half open, tense, long, unrounded, and oral.

2.2.4.2 The Spanish Diphthongs

The criteria to classify vowels (diphthongs) are the same ones that have been used for English, that is, change of stress, length of the glide, and movement of the jaw.

Fig.10 represents the Spanish diphthongs inserted in the vowel pentagons



Source: Pérez (n.d., p.11).Book: Phonetics

2.2.4.3 The Spanish Consonants

In the Spanish, there are 17 consonants. The factor for the classification are the same ones that have been used for the English ones.

Table.N°4 The Spanish consonants

Phoneme	Place of Articulation	Manner of Articulation	Presence or Absence of voice	Position of the soft palate	Force of articulation
/p/	bilabial	plosive	voiceless	oral	fortis
/b/	bilabial	plosive	voiced	oral	lenis
/t/	dental	plosive	voiceless	oral	fortis
/d/	dental	plosive	voiced	oral	lenis
/k/	velar	plosive	voiceless	oral	fortis
/g/	velar	plosive	voiced	oral	lenis
/f/	labiodental	fricative	voiceless	oral	fortis
/s/	alveolar	fricative	voiceless	oral	fortis
/h/	glottal	fricative	voiceless	oral	fortis
/ç/	palato-alveolar	affricate	voiceless	oral	fortis
/y/	palato-alveolar	affricate	voiced	oral	lenis
/m/	bilabial	nasal	voiced	oral	lenis
/n/	alveolar	nasal	voiced	oral	lenis
/ɲ/	palatal	nasal	voiced	oral	lenis
/l/	alveolar	lateral	voiced	oral	lenis
/r/	alveolar(tap)	medial	voiced	oral	lenis
/r̄/	alveolar(roll)	medial	voiced	oral	lenis

Source: Researcher's create.

2.2.3 The English Pronunciation in Class

One of the main challenges in English class is teaching pronunciation, it tends to be neglected or limited to “listening and repeating” activities. Among the reasons are the lack of teacher’s training in the field of phonetics, many of them seem to have difficulty to learn the phonemic alphabet. For Cook (2008, as cited in Solís, Garita & González, and 2019 p.17) the main skills that students must develop are: imitation, discrimination of sounds, awareness and communication. In English class, it is essential the students work on pronunciation activities in order to compare the sounds of their mother tongue with the new one, facilitate intelligible communication to avoid misunderstandings with native speakers, and discriminate sounds to learn new words such as homophones, homographs, among others. The use of phonetic symbols during the class development is considered useful, but it can be a bit difficult for students, however, the application of playful activities in class can facilitate the process of improving students' pronunciation little by little.

Sagarna and Navarro (1981), declare that, apart from the book, it is important to develop the teaching of pronunciation in class through activities, such as; pictures on the wall, audios, blackboards, vocabulary cards, and so forth, to enrich the learning experience and vocabulary of students. (p.62).

In the same line, the authors Rogerson-Revell (2011) and Kelly (2000), suggest that teachers should teach sounds to students through sequencing activities which involve listening, imitation and phoneme production, also they stated that, the introduction of vowels is more effective through listening activities, while the introduction of consonants are more convenient if they are taught through communicative activities. (cited in Solís, Garita & González, 2019 p.18).

2.2.4 Ludic Activities to Enhance the Oral Expression

In the teaching of foreign languages, it is essential that teachers create pedagogical strategies focused on motivating and predisposing students to facilitate the learning of a second language. Cuq, (2003 quoted in Arias, 2011, p.233) defines it as “Learning activity guided by rules and practiced for the pleasure it provides. It allows communication between students (information gathering, problem solving, competence, creativity, decision making, etc.). Oriented towards a learning objective, it allows students to use all their verbal and communicative resources in a collaborative and creative way".Cuq's contribution is considered fundamental since it reaffirms that games enrich student's environment both in motivational and in the communication part. A stress-free environment allows the student to develop his/her full potential.

UNESCO (1980) states that games can facilitate cognitive processes on students as well as improving social relations among them. During playful activities, students train their capacity for understanding, memory retention, intervention and innovation, all due to the rules of games and their complexity. During the development of group activities, students train roles of command, active listening, assumption of responsibilities, all these processes are essential for the student to exchange communication, make decisions, express wishes and oppositions, practice abstract thinking, debate ideas, etc. (page 14-15).In the same year, UNESCO reaffirms that before introducing game as a teaching tool, it is firstly essential to define a pedagogical objective in order the activities and students meet the previous target objective. In the same line, Cuq (2003) agrees that play is linked to learning objectives and can be applied to all populations from children to adults, on the other hand, many people

might think games are more emphasized at a child's age than adults, nevertheless, each activity learners are involved allows the development of oral skills as well as affective ones.

While learning a second language, it is essential to acquire linguistic competence in order to communicate effectively and fluently. The Common Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment defines language competence as "the process that involves knowledge, lexical, phonological and syntactical skills, and cognitive organization, and comprises several components: linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic".

It can be deduced that it results from the set of knowledge linked to practice, theory, and experience approached to successful communication.

UNESCO (1980) proposes some exercises that can be developed in the classroom and help facilitate learning.

- Verbal expressions: stories, tales, riddles, logical and reasoning games.
- Use of symbolic objects: dolls and dolls, masks, and other significant objects.
- Reading: diaries, novels, comics, etc.
- Aesthetic activities such as plays or choreographies.

In contrast to the previous activities Common European Framework of Reference (2002) proposes some mediation activities for the students may develop their ability to pronounce the language.

- Exposure to authentic statements, speaking activities such as making public announcements and reading aloud a written text
- Native speaker recordings
- Significant phonetic material, accompanied by repetition exercises
- Use visual support material such as images, graphics, or diagrams

- Performing monologues
- Rehearse songs.

There are also some games of a social nature such as bingo, board and card games, picture dictionary, mime, crossword puzzles, word and puzzle games, and word games, which can be implemented in the foreign language class in order to facilitate group cohesion, practice and entertainment (CEFR, 2002 p.58-60).

It is important to mention that all the previous activities will be a successful tool as long as they are adapted to the cognitive and physical needs of each student, to facilitate information retaining, students should provide opinions and express ideas both orally and in writing form. Teachers must reduce L1 to a minimum and carry out constant written or oral evaluations in order to clarify doubts on a certain topic.

2.2.5 Ludic Activities Selected in the Research.

2.2.5.1 Tongue Twister

According to the Royal Spanish Academy, it is defined as a “word or phrase difficult to pronounce, especially when it is used as a game to make someone make a mistake”. Such activity is considered essential when learning the English Language because it allows learners to identify differences between vowels and consonants sounds as well as pronunciation patterns. Many tongue twisters use a sequence of sounds and rhymes which makes the text or dialogue more entertaining for the student at the same time they improve their fluency, concentration and accent due to the difficulty level. According to Rohman (2016, p. 26-27) there are 3 types of tongue twister which are; sentence, repetitive and story.

Sentence

Can you a can as a canner can a can?

Six sleek swans swam swiftly southwards.

A big black bug bit a big black dog on his big black nose!

Repetitive

I wish to wish, I dream to dream, I try to try, and I live to live, and I'd die to die, and I cry to cry, but I don't know why.

Story

A flea and a fly flew up in a flue.

Said the flea, "Let us fly!"

Said the fly, "Let us flee!"

So, they flew through a flaw in the flue.

Songs

Music represents a means of recreation and relaxation for most of the students, Melody favors motivation towards learning and relationships between peer group and teachers.

Teachers should take advantage of this situation to implement it as a teaching strategy in a second language.

"Research has shown that during an electroencephalogram (EEG), music can change obtain waves and make the brain more receptive to leaning. Music connects the functions of the right and left hemispheres of the brain so that they can work together and make learning

quick and easy. There are many different advantages of using songs: establishing a positive learning state, energizing learning activities, increasing attention, improving memory, releasing tension, enhancing imagination, developing inspiration and motivation, and adding an element of fun. Songs tend to have simplified, colloquial language, use natural rhythm, stress, intonation, contractions, slang, expressions, idioms, authentic material and communicative repetition, all of which help to build vocabulary and other language structures in way that is stress-free.” Villalobos N. (2008) pages 95-97).

Students can work on listening activities alone or in a group so they may recognize their weaknesses in pronunciation, compare mistakes while pronouncing a word and overcome them.

The right hemisphere of the brain is in charge of creativity, imagination, art and music, while the left hemisphere is in charge of logic and analysis of information, when someone is singing or playing an instrument the brain uses both hemispheres, which implies to a greater retention of information and use of greater capacity of that organ creating new neural connections.

In 1978, the Bulgarian psychiatrist Georgi Lozanov created the didactic teaching method called “Suggestopedia”, which affirms that human beings learn more effectively by doing dynamic activities as singing songs, chants etc, playing games, reading or talking during classes etc, those variety of experiences get better results on our learning and memory, his theory is based on one of his researches which affirms that foreign languages can be learned with 85-100% efficiency in only thirty days "by using baroque music and a relaxed environment due to the effect that baroque music has on brain waves.

According to the previous research, it is evident that listening to music may affect students emotionally, it creates on them a musical experience. Songs potentiate their abilities so it is essential teachers select the appropriate material for students based on English level, content, rhythm, meaning and fluency of the song, taking into account all those factors will help teachers keep students motivate to participate in oral and written drills.

2.2.5.2 Board Game

Learning through Board games gives students the opportunity to learn in a skillful way, in most of these games the competence of communication, negotiation and decision making is developed. One of its advantages is learning new vocabulary. In each interaction, the student learns in an environment of joy, works as a team, learns from his/her classmates, and reinforces previous knowledge.

Treher (2011) states that Board games are an opportunity to develop hands -on and heads-on skill and knowledge for people of all ages on all subjects, at the same time team-base board games contributes to build communication because players work face to face in order to answer questions and solve problems.

In this same criterion, these types of games favor the part of the students oral expressions since they interact in a natural and spontaneous way, by means of this activity the fears are left aside and the participants learn from their opponents, here it is where there is imitation of sounds and the formulation of sentences involving new patterns and words, the role of the teacher becomes facilitator and intermediary making the students exercise the role of responsibility. Rubin and Thomson (1994).

Bruner (1983) claimed that using hands-on activities let learners acquire knowledge more effectively, similarly, as Rubin and Thomson (1994) agrees that learning a large number of words in a foreign language provides the student with a better understanding of reading and writing skills, but much more in the oral part since he speaks fluently and accurately.

Campbell University (s.f) highlights the advantages of boardgames as a teaching method. Why board games?

- Play is an important part of our mental and social development.
- Games provide stories and information, presented in a new format.
- Many board games challenge students to think critically.
- Playing a board game is an “inquiry-based research process.”
- Board games are an effective way to employ cooperative learning in the classroom.

It can be concluded that this instrument is enriching in the field of education since it allows not only the development of the 4 skills of the English language but also promotes soft skills in the student as focus, common sense, confidence and time management, etc.

2.2.5.3 Flash Cards

The learning cards (flashcards) are a tool that favors the acquisition of English as a second language. This activity promotes concentration, memorabilia, active learning and visual learning. At every opportunity, the student must retain and interpret the information in turn. Associating the vocal sounds with the images which allows creating new words that contain the same sound.

(Gonzales, 2003 as cited in Vargas, 2018) “audiovisual materials are technical resources that are used in the teaching-learning process and that combine image with sound in a harmony such that their language is more stimulating, complex, aggressive and provocative than verbal language” (p.6).

In order to develop communicative competence, it is necessary teachers to use support materials that allow the student to acquire the information through different means (photographs, posters, crafts or sounds) everything that is perceived by the senses is best established in our memory. In the activity carried out in the classroom, each flashcard was upside down, the students had to find the pairs, each one contained a phonetic sound and a word, as the students found pairs they should make a sentence up with the word found, this game allowed them associating the sound with the word, the researcher made them relate that same sound with other words, for example the words Bat and Nap which share the sound / æ /.

During the development of playful activities in the classroom, teachers should consider some aspects such as:

- All leisure activities must be planned with a prior objective.
- Teachers should exercise the role of facilitators and supervise all activities.
- Provide feedback to students and communicate the advantages or objectives of the activities, for example, listen to a certain song because it will allow them to identify some words with the / i / sound, will allow them to identify some expressions of native English as well as to sharp their ears to recognize other vowels for a better comprehension of L2.
- The activities must be carried out under an environment of trust, respect, and teamwork.

Chapter III

Methodological Framework

In this chapter, all the actions and procedures that were used by the researcher to answer the stated objectives are described. This section defines the type of research, the approach, the study population, the context, the techniques and the data collection methods, all of the above will support the results obtained.

According to (Arias, 2012 as cited in Azuero, 2018), the Methodological Framework is defined as “a set of steps, techniques and procedures that are used to formulate and solve problems” (p.112). In relation to the authors, it can be inferred that the methodological framework is essential in the research because it represents the guide that will allow the researcher to obtain relevant information to explain, verify or respond to the problem posed.

3.1 Research Method

During the investigation, one of the most important steps is the selection of the investigation method, this set the path that will allow the investigator to obtain the results according to the stated objectives. Rajasekar et al. (2013, as cited in Almalki. 2016, p.290) describe research methodology as “The procedures by which researchers go about their work of describing, explaining and predicting phenomena”. In the present investigation, an overview about the characteristics of the population, the limitations found, the description of the environment and the results obtained will be made. All the information collected is considered relevant to the subject of the study and follow in a logical progression. In relation to this research work, it was developed under a mixed approach, which combines the qualitative and

quantitative approach. Creswell, J. (2003), defines the qualitative approach as the one used to develop knowledge, cause and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables and hypotheses, questions, use of measurement and observation, and the testing of theories, also employs strategies such as experiments and surveys, and collects data on predetermined instruments that produce statistical data.(p.18).

In a similar vein, the authors Blasco and Pérez (2007, cited in Ruiz, Borboa & Rodríguez. 2013 p.8) point out that qualitative research studies the reality of people in their natural context as it happens, taking out and interpreting phenomena according to the people involved. In this sense, the researcher witnesses the experiences of the participants such as: life stories, routines, problematic situations, etc., in which subjective conclusions can be generated. On the other hand, the quantitative method aims to explain or solve a real-life problem from an external and objective perspective. Its intention is to seek the accuracy of measurements or social indicators in order to generalize its results to large populations or situations. They basically work with the number, the quantifiable data (Galeano, 2004 as cited in in Ruiz, Borboa & Rodríguez. 2013 p.6).

Quantitative research collects open emerging data with the main intention of developing theories or patterns, those are carried out by using research strategies such as narratives, phenomenologies, ethnographies, grounded theory studies or case studies. Creswell, J. (2003, p.18). Finally, as the result of the combination of both approaches, emerges the mixed research which presents the following characteristics, according to Grinnell (1997, as cited in Ruiz, Borboa & Rodríguez. 2013 p.10).

- a) They carry out observation and evaluation of phenomena.
- b) They establish assumptions or ideas as a consequence of observation and evaluation carried

out.

- c) Test and demonstrate the degree to which assumptions or ideas have basis.
- d) Review such assumptions or ideas on the basis of evidence or the analysis.
- e) They propose new observations and evaluations to clarify, modify, cement and / or support assumptions or ideas; or even to generate others.

Crewell (2003) states that within this method, numerical and text information (as interviews) are combined to get the expected results and the final database represents both quantitative and qualitative information. (pp. 18-21). After a description of the three concepts to be used during the investigation, it was determined to work for this research in the mixed approach. Thus, it accomplish with the requirements that we need to develop, investigate and give conclusions and recommendations of this material.

3.2 Research Design

The Analysis in a specific topic allows the researcher to know in depth its characteristics and variables that influence directly or indirectly in certain population, it is necessary to follow a set of methodological processes of logical and chronological order to provide a solution to a problem. In relation to the previous idea, Hernández et al. (2014) define the research design as "the plan or strategy conceived to obtain the information desired in order to respond to the approach of the problem". (p.128). referring to the present investigation, the selected strategy is the application of some ludic activities as a pedagogical strategy to English Intermediate students at Centro Internacional de Idiomas improve the English Front Vowels learning during I quarter 2020 consequently, Once the results are obtained, the effectiveness of the selected strategy and instruments will be evaluated.

3.3 Information Sources

In this part of the research, it is detailed characteristics of institution where the research was carried out, the social context which directly or indirectly affects learning in students, as well as participants involved.

3.3.1 Primary Sources

The main resource for this investigation is the books in physical or digital version, they are considered essential to rely on theory to support the results, and all of them are related to learning and teaching relevant theories so comprehend the participants' learning process.

3.3.2 Secondary Sources

As a secondary source for the present investigation is the Thesis. All these are university investigations done by students to find solutions to solve a problem in a determined population. The researcher selected all them related to English, Teaching, Phonetics and Pronunciation fields. As a third resource, digital libraries, some school magazines and reliable Internet pages were used.

3.3.3 Tertiary Sources

The use of the dictionary was an important didactic tool taken into account for the research and the teaching process. When participants or the researcher have doubts about a concept they accessed to this tool in order to get the right meaning of a term also, by using dictionaries students learn homophones, homographs, synonyms etc. all those concepts enriched their vocabulary, help them to improve grammar knowledge and let the students be more independent and autodidactic.

3.4 Description of the Institution

El Centro Internacional de Idiomas was established in 2009 as a private Institute located in San José down town, here people can learn Foreign Languages such as English, French, Portuguese, German, Italian, Spanish, Japanese etc., The Institution has different Branches at Liberia, Heredia, Alajuela y San José, all of them works in three schedules from 8:00 am to 9:00 pm.

In San José, the building is comfortable and it has three floors. The classrooms are arranged, clean, some are equipped with desks and video beam projector, the staff and teachers are polite and helpful. Among the

Among the disadvantages found are the lack of a computer laboratory for students to practice the listening skill, there are no desks for left-handed students and few classrooms have a television and projector.

In spite of what has been observed, the institute is concerned to offer an efficient service for students.

Mission of the institution

“Being an educational center specialized in teaching foreign languages, integrating linguistic and cultural aspects”

Vision of the Institution

“To become a leading company in the teaching of languages by training students to take international exams, attend academic events and handle highly specialized bibliography”

Institution Goal

“To develop professionals of excellence to ensure a future full of success”.

Some of the advantages of the educational center are accessible location and competitive cost for lessons.

3.5 Context of the Population of Centro Internacional de Idiomas.

San José as a capital is always full of people that place represents the main source of employability in the country. Almost every student in the institute works during the day and attend classes at night. Many of them come from places such as Pavas, Uruca, Paso Ancho, Moravia, Hatillos and Escazú.

At night San José becomes an insecurity place due to social problems as crime, drugs sales, assaults, and prostitution, consequently it provokes many students do not concentrate during the lessons and ask the teacher to leave earlier.

3.6 Description of the Participants

Students are adults between 19 and 40 years of age, most of them work during the day and attend classes at night that provokes they come late to classes. Three students are

Nicaraguan, and the rest are Costa Rican, some of them have not finished high school none of them have any physical disability.

During the class observation, students sometimes feel unmotivated, shy or bored because classes focus on written grammar drills and little time is for oral participation, when they express an idea, comment or ask for a permission they do in Spanish.

As long as the class was developing, it was evidenced students have a basic knowledge of English even though when they took a Basic English Level.

As adults, participants are aware they should make an extra effort at home to learn more vocabulary, but they indicate it is complicated due to tiredness and obligations at home. During the development of the ludic activities applied by the researcher, the students were motivated, curious, and dynamic.

3.7 Description of the Course

Centro Internacional de Idiomas offered courses from basic level to advanced one. Before the students enroll a language course, teachers should apply a diagnostic test in order to place the person in the right level, moreover, during all classes the four English skills Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, should be emphasize, and the syllabus is completed in 2 years, each level last 3 months.

As it was observed, the students work on exercises in the book “interchange” published by Cambridge and its content is emphasized on grammar drills and readings. Regarding to the oral activities teachers must adapt them according to the studied unit, the institute do not provide extra materials for students, so teacher should bring it to class.

3.8 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection is a fundamental tool in all qualitative, quantitative or mixed research, at the beginning of the research the evaluator applies instruments such as questionnaires, surveys, interviews, audio recordings or observations to access data and obtain accurate and reliable evidence to guarantee truthful results.

According to Hernández et al. (2014), data collection from the qualitative approach is generated in everyday environments in which the participants carry out actions simultaneously. (p.398-399). In the present research participants were evaluated in their educational center to obtain all the information in detail. Below is a detailed description of the types of instruments used in this research.

3.8.1 Class Observation

Hernández et al. (2014), investigative observation involves maintaining an active role and permanent reflection to analyze, events, interactions as well as physical and human environments (p.399). In accordance with the author, this instrument was selected to analyze the group dynamics, student's performance when Speaking English and the methodology used by the teacher, all those characteristics by applying an observation rubric composed of 9 items, during the research two observation were done and in both the results changed. The following tableN° 5, represents the criteria applied when the researcher observed the class.

Table N° 5. Represents the first class observation rubric

Criteria	Always	Sometimes	Never
Teacher speaks in English.		x	
Students speak in English during the class development.		x	
Students pronounce most of the English front vowels accurately.		x	
Students are actively involved during the oral activities.		x	
Students show effort to speak English naturally.		x	
There is group cohesion (teamwork among participants).		x	
Teacher encourages students to express comments, questions, or suggestions in English.		x	
Teacher implements ludic activities for students to practice the oral skills.		x	
Teacher implements effective didactic strategies so that students acquire and relate background vocabulary.		x	

Source: Researcher's create.

3.8.2 Questionnaire

Garcia (2003) defines the questionnaire as "the set of carefully formulated questions about facts and aspects of interest in an investigation or evaluation" (p.2).

Its purpose is to obtain in an orderly manner all the necessary information about the population which the researcher works, during the application of this instrument, the

researcher applies questions at the same time in the same place in order to facilitate data collection.

3.8.3 Pre - Test and Post - Test

Kuehn (2020), defines pre and post-tests as “assessment tools for measuring the preparedness and performance of students”. They are fundamental to measure how much they have improved during a period of time. The instruments were selected because they provide information about the amount of learning a student has acquired in a specific subject as well as long-term impacts and evidence of the effectiveness of a program or course. During the research, the same pre and post-test was applied in order to evaluate the impact of play activities as a pedagogical resource to improve the learning of English Front Vowels.

3.8.4 Pre-test

A quiz was applied individually, it contains 19 words, the student should pronounce them and the researcher selects the vowel sound that the student emits, the objective is to measure the level of knowledge regarding the pronunciation patterns of the English front vowels.

3.8.5 Post-test

In the same way, the same previous quiz was applied but, on this occasion, it is expected that the students have improved their knowledge after the application of the ludic activities. Below is the table six which represents the quiz applied to the students.

Table N°6. The Pre-test applied to the Students at CIDI.**Centro Internacional de Idiomas****PRE-TEST**

Intermediate English Level

Student: _____ Researcher: Jendri Mena Arias

Word	[i]	[ɪ]	[ɛ]	[æ]	other	IPA Phonetic Transcription
Eagle						/'iɡəl/
Hats						/'hæt/
Seat						/'sit/
Sand						/'sænd/
Kiss						/'kɪs/
Keys						'kiz
Bear						/'ber/
Meat						/'mit
Bee						/'bi/
Reap						/'ri:p/
Seagull						/'siːgʌl/
Feel						/'fi:l/
Keep						/'ki:p/
Jeans						/'dʒi:nz/
Mend						/'mend/
Swear						/'swer/
Rip						/'ri:p/ /'rɪp/
Fit						/'fi:t/
Deep						/'di:p/

Source: Researcher's create.

3.9 Collection Data Process and Data Analysis

The approximate time for this research is around eight weeks in which the instruments will be applied and the ludic activities will be developed, the researcher will answer questions

regarding the topics studied in class and will provide feedback about the English pronunciation.

During the following weeks the results will be analyzed and ordered to verify their effectiveness. The schedule of activities in the institution is presented.

Table N° 7. The Chronogram of Activites at CIDI.

<i>Centro Internacional de Idiomas CIDI</i>		
<i>Chronogram of Activites-I quarter 2020</i>		
Week	Day	Activity
#1	1	First class observation
	2	Application of students' first questionnaire
#2	3	Application of pre-test on the discrimination of the phonemes / æ /, / e /, / ɪ/, /i/
	4	Lesson about the English front vowels
#3		Lesson about the English and Spanish front vowels
	5	Students solve a written practice (dialogue) in pairs
#4	6	Ludic Activity: Flashcards
#5	7	Ludic activity: "Tongue twisters "The man on the sand" and Pal's cat
#6	8	Ludic activities: Song "Photograph" and Boardgame
#7	9	Final class observation and clarification of doubts
#8	10	Application post-test (same pre-test) and application of teacher's questionnaire

Source: Researcher's create.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis

This chapter describes the process of analysis and interpretation of all the data collected, which are essential to draw conclusions and provide recommendations. Ibrahim, M. (2015), defines data analysis as "The process of performing certain calculations and evaluations to extract relevant information". (Par.1). In the same vein, to obtain successful results, the researcher applied different playful activities as a strategy for the participants to improve the pronunciation of the English front vowels. There are 15 intermediate English students at Centro Internacional de Idiomas. In the next stage of the chapter, all the qualitative and quantitative results will be represented in a logical order through comments.

4.1 Analysis and Interpretation of the Results

Next, the researcher will transform all the data collected into relevant information to understand the results obtained in a meaningful way. The instruments that facilitated the research are observation, questionnaire, pre-test, and post-test. All of them give way to subjective and objective data related to participants, such as attitudes, academic performance in the classroom, behavior, opinions, and motivation, among others.

4.1.1 Observation Rubric

The first instrument applied during the study was the observation rubric, it is also called observation checklist. BBC Council (2019) define this tool as, "a list of things that an observer is going to look at when observing a class" (par. 1). The instrument applied to observe students is a coherent set of 9 criteria that includes items related to the evaluation of

teacher and student's performance, class dynamic and mediation strategies. In the present investigation, two observation rubrics were carried out, the first was carried out in week one and the last in week seven. It is important to mention that both have the same criteria.

The Professor

Regarding the teacher, it was evident that he is a respectful and an attentive professional with the students, he clarifies their doubts when they required it, that made easy the control of the group, related to the class development; Teacher communicates with the students most of the time in Spanish, according to him in that way students understand better the instructions.

Mediation Strategies Developed in Class.

For the development of the classes, the institute provides teachers the book *Interchange* published by the Cambridge House, although it is a book with useful material for the classes, it is focused on reading and grammar exercises but does not bring incorporated exercises on listening by means of CD as others bring it. The teacher must rely on the exercises presented in the book; therefore, he should create strategies for students to practice the four skills; listening, speaking; reading and writing. Supposedly that teacher develops drills to involve students to participate on interactive activities, however, it does not happen in the class. In few opportunities the teacher applied a hand-made boardgame for students to learn verbs or vocabulary, so they were supposed to take turns to make sentences with those words. During the activities, the students expressed few short ideas in the target language, but asked questions in Spanish continuously. The teacher allowed them to do so sometimes, but the feedback was not constant. As an important fact, it was not observed that the teacher carried out any type of additional activity related to pronunciation, neither visual elements were

shown to promote student learning, in some cases the participants had doubts about the pronunciation of a word, and the facilitator wrote only the word on the board and pronounced it. Regarding the previous idea, there was no technical explanation of the pronunciation of specific words. To sum-up, classes are based on activities focused on the reading and writing skills in which students repeat and translate meanings to the teacher, something not far from traditional classes.

The Students

Participants enrolled in the intermediate English group are adults who work during the day and attend classes in the evening. They are respectful and pay attention during the lessons. Regarding to their academic performance in the classroom, this is not the best due to factors, such as fatigue, lack of motivation and knowledge.

The first weakness was found on evaluating people due to the fact that there is a low production of the English language during the exercises, most of the answers are done in L1, sometimes they prefer to remain silent because of the lack of vocabulary, they are afraid of being criticized, and they lack motivation on pronunciation. The learning of pronunciation is poor, since they lack association patterns to distinguish or associate one word from another, stress and intonation patterns are not practiced in class.

Despite their good attitude in class, sometimes working in pairs is extremely difficult for them because they are not used to speak English. Motivation in students is relatively low, and as their body language shows, they are easily bored and sometimes distracted due to tiredness and to the monotony of the class.

4.1.2 Second Class Observation

The following table shows the results of the second class observation, despite students keep talking sometimes in Spanish, the teacher and students did their best to participate in ludic activities.

*TableN*8. The Result of the Second Class Observation Rubric*

Criteria	Always	Sometimes	Never
Teacher speaks in English.		x	
Students speak in English during the class development.		x	
Students pronounce most of the English front vowels accurately.	x		
Students are actively involved during the oral activities.	x		
Students show effort to speak English naturally.	x		
There is group cohesion (teamwork among participants).	x		
Teacher encourages students to express comments, questions, or suggestions in English.	x		
Teacher implements ludic activities for students to practice the oral skills.	x		
Teacher implements effective didactic strategies so that students acquire and relate background vocabulary.	x		

Source: Researcher's create.

According to the information above, the results of the rubric changed substantially, although the teacher sometimes kept on speaking in Spanish, translation decreased.

After the application of playful activities, the teacher began to incorporate more similar activities in class, for instance some exercises presented in the book were carried out in the form of interactive dialogues, as well as other oral activities such, as songs, tongue twisters, bingo, among others.

The researcher reinforced the participants and teacher the idea about that when a person is learning a foreign language, it is essential to develop intelligibility and precision for a better understanding and competence of the target language, from this premise, students have become more aware of their own learning process.

Once they participated in ludic activities, the students were much more motivated in class and paid a lot of attention, they looked joyful and active while participating and exchanging ideas with their classmates during some activities on pronunciation.

When asking a question or making a comment, the researcher let them to know the importance of training the brain to think and relate information in the target language, since that they had make an effort to answer questions or make comments alone or with a partner in English.

According to the second observation rubric, the implementation of the five activities generated a great improvement on student's performance.

4.1.3 Pre-test Results

According to the definition.org Dictionary (n.d) Pre-test is defined as "A preliminary test administered to determine a student's baseline knowledge or preparedness for an educational experience or course of study".At every level and field, this important tool let

teachers identify student's weakness or strength in a determined area before beginning a new unit of study.

As the research focused on learning on the English front vowels, it was essential for the researcher know whether or not the participants had any basic idea about the topic on pronunciation. A short quiz was applied as a pre-test. It included 19 written words (pronounced with the front vowels /i/, /ɪ/, /ɛ/, /æ/).

Participants individually had to read each word aloud, so the researcher selected the vowel sound associated to each by marking an "x". There was also a blank space to write any other sound produced by them. The following table presents the answers and grades obtained by students on the pre-test.

Table N° 9. The grades obtained by the English Intermediate level Students in the pre-test

Student	Phonological transcription with IPA	Grade
	<p>Eagle- Hats- Seat- Sand- Kiss- Keys- Bear- Meat- Bee- Reap- Seagull- Feel-Keep- Jeans- Mend- Swear- Rip- Fit- Deep</p> <p><i>/ˈɪgəl/-/ˈhæt/- /ˈsɪt/- /ˈsænd/-/ˈkɪs/- /ˈkɪz/- /ˈbɛr/-/ˈmɪt/-/ˈbi/- /ˈrɪp/- /ˈsiˌɡəl/- ˈfɪl/-/ˈkɪp/-/ˈdʒɪnz/-/ˈmɛnd/-/ˈswɛr/-/ˈrɪp/- /ˈfɪt/-/ˈdɪp/</i></p>	
One	<p>ˈɪgəl-ˈhat-ˈsɪt-ˈsænd-ˈkɪs-ˈkeɪz-ˈbɛr-ˈmɛt-ˈbi-ˈrɪp-ˈseˌɡəl-ˈfɛl-ˈkɛp-ˈdʒɪnz-ˈmɛnd- ˈswɛr-ˈrɪp-ˈfɪtˈdɛp</p>	47
Two	<p>ˈɛgəl-ˈhat-ˈsɪt-ˈsænd-ˈkɪs-ˈkeɪz-ˈbɛr-ˈmɪt-ˈbi-rɛp-ˈseˌɡəl-ˈfɛl-ˈkɛp-ˈdʒɪnz-ˈmɛnd- ˈswɛr-ˈrɪp-ˈfɪtˈdɛp</p>	42
Three	<p>ɛgəl-ˈhat-ˈsɪt-ˈsænd-ˈkɪs-ˈkeɪz-ˈbɛr-ˈmɪt-ˈbɪ-rɛp-ˈsiˌɡəl-ˈfɪl-ˈkɪp-ˈdʒɪnz-ˈmɛnd- ˈswɛr-ˈrɪp-ˈfɪt-ˈdɪp</p>	52
Four	<p>ɪgəl-ˈhat-ˈsɪt-ˈsænd-ˈkɪs-ˈkeɪz-ˈbɛr-ˈmɛt-ˈbi-rɛp-ˈseˌɡəl-ˈfɛl-ˈkɛp-ˈdʒɪnz-ˈmɛnd- ˈswɛr-ˈrɪp-ˈfɪt-ˈdɪp</p>	47

Five	ɛgəl- 'hat- 'set- 'sand- 'kis- 'kɪz- 'bɛr- 'mɪt- 'bɪ- 'rɛp- 'sɛ, gəl- 'fɛl- 'kɛp- 'dʒɪnz- 'mɛnd- 'swɛr- 'rip- 'fit- 'dɛp	31
Six	ɪgəl- 'hat- 'sɪt- 'sand- 'kis- 'kɛɪz- 'bɛr- 'mɛt- 'bi- 'rɛp- 'sɛ, gəl- 'fɪl- 'kɪp- 'dʒɪnz- 'mɛnd- 'swɛr- 'rip- 'fit- 'dɪp	36
Seven	ɛgəl- 'hat- 'sit- 'sand- 'kis- 'kɛɪz- 'bɛr- 'mɛt- 'bi- 'rɛp- 'sɛ, gəl- 'fil- 'ki:p- 'dʒɪnz- 'mɛnd- 'swɛr- 'rip- 'fit- 'dɛp	52
Eight	ɛgəl- 'hat- 'sit- 'sand- 'kis- 'kɛɪz- 'bɛr- 'mɪt- 'bɛ- 'rɛp- 'sɪ, gəl- 'fɛl- 'kɪp- 'dʒɪnz- 'mɛnd- 'swɛr- 'rip- 'fit- 'dɛp	26
Nine	ɛgəl- 'hat- 'sɪt- 'sand- 'kis- 'kɛɪz- 'bɛr- 'mit- 'bɛ- 'rɛp- 'sɛ, gəl- 'fɛl- 'kɛp- 'dʒɪnz- 'mɛnd- 'swɛr- 'rip- 'fit- 'dɪp	36
Ten	'ɛgəl- 'hat- 'set- 'sand- 'kis- 'kɛɪz- 'bɛr- 'mɪt- 'bi- 'rɛp- 'sɛ, gəl- 'fɛl- 'kɛp- 'dʒɪnz- 'mɛnd- 'swɛr- 'rip- 'fɪt- 'dɪp	42
Eleven	ɛgəl- 'hat- 'sit- 'sand- 'kis- 'kɪz- 'bɛr- 'mit- 'bi- 'rɛp- 'si, gəl- 'fɛl- 'kɛp- 'dʒɪnz- 'mɛnd- 'swɛr- 'rip- 'fit- 'dɪp	57
Twelve	ɛgəl- 'hat- 'sit- 'sand- 'kis- 'kɛɪz- 'bɛr- 'mɛt- 'bi- 'rɛp- 'sɪ, gəl- 'fɛl- 'kɛp- 'dʒɪnz- 'mɛnd- 'swɛr- 'rip- 'fit- 'dɛp	31

Thirteen	'ɛgəl- 'hat- 'set- 'sand- 'kɪs- 'kɛɪz- 'bɛr- 'mɛt- 'bi- 'rɛp- 'si, gəl- 'fɛl- 'kɛp- 'dʒɛnz- 'mɛnd- 'swɛr- 'rip- 'fɪt- 'dɛp	36
Fourteen	ɛgəl- 'hat- 'sɪt- 'sand- 'kɪs- 'kɛɪz- 'bɛr- 'mɛt- 'bi- 'rɛp- 'sɛ, gəl- 'fɛl- 'kɛp- 'dʒɪnz- 'mɛnd- 'swɛr- 'rip- 'fɪt- 'dɪp	42
Fifteen	ɪgəl- 'hat- 'sɪt- 'sand- 'kɪs- 'kɛɪz- 'bɛr- 'mɛt- 'bi- 'rɛp- 'sɛ, gəl- 'fɪl- 'kɛp- 'dʒɪnz- 'mɛnd- 'swɛr- 'rip- 'fɪt- 'dɛp	47

Source: Researcher's create.

As it is evident in the results of Table N°9, all the students failed the test, grades were less than 60% of 100%, and participants lack of knowledge on pronunciation and the teacher must reinforce the teaching of the English front vowels by applying interactive strategies to facilitate learning.

Among the most common errors found are:

- The substitution of the sound /æ/ for the /a/ as in the words **hat** /'hæt/, **sand** /'sænd/, it was very common because in Spanish the vowel sound /æ/ does not exist.
- Words containing the letters "ea" as in the word "reap" / 'ri:p / were mostly pronounced with the sound / e/.

- The words in which the students failed the least were the most common for example, ones such as "jeans", "rip", and "bear", this because they have heard them in school.
- The word "keys" / 'kiz / was repeatedly pronounced as the word "case" / 'keis /, so after the application of the test the researchers made examples of sentences in order the students figure it out in context.
- Many of the results could be influenced by the student's mood, the pre-test was applied individually in another classroom, and the students were a little nervous and felt insecure about the answers. Several times they hesitated and changed the answers.

4.1.4 Questionnaire

According to García, T. (2018), "questionnaire consists of a set of questions, usually of various types, prepared systematically and carefully, all them about the facts and aspects that interest an investigation or evaluation." (pag. 2). This instrument allows the collection of qualitative and quantitative data in a large population such as facts, opinions, attitudes and knowledge indices, number of inhabitants, and so forth, and of course all this before conducting a questionnaire, the researcher should take into account as a first step, selecting the question type, that is closed, open or mixed, and second, designing the most important ones to obtain the desired information. For this study, three questionnaires were conducted to analyze the group dynamic, methodology and student's knowledge on the pronunciation skill. The questionnaire had four multiple-choice questions, six closed type and one open question.

The first question was a closed one type, its objective was to find out if students were motivated by the teacher to speak English in class. They marked with an "x" the best option for them. The fig #11 demonstrates the range of their responses.

Fig #11

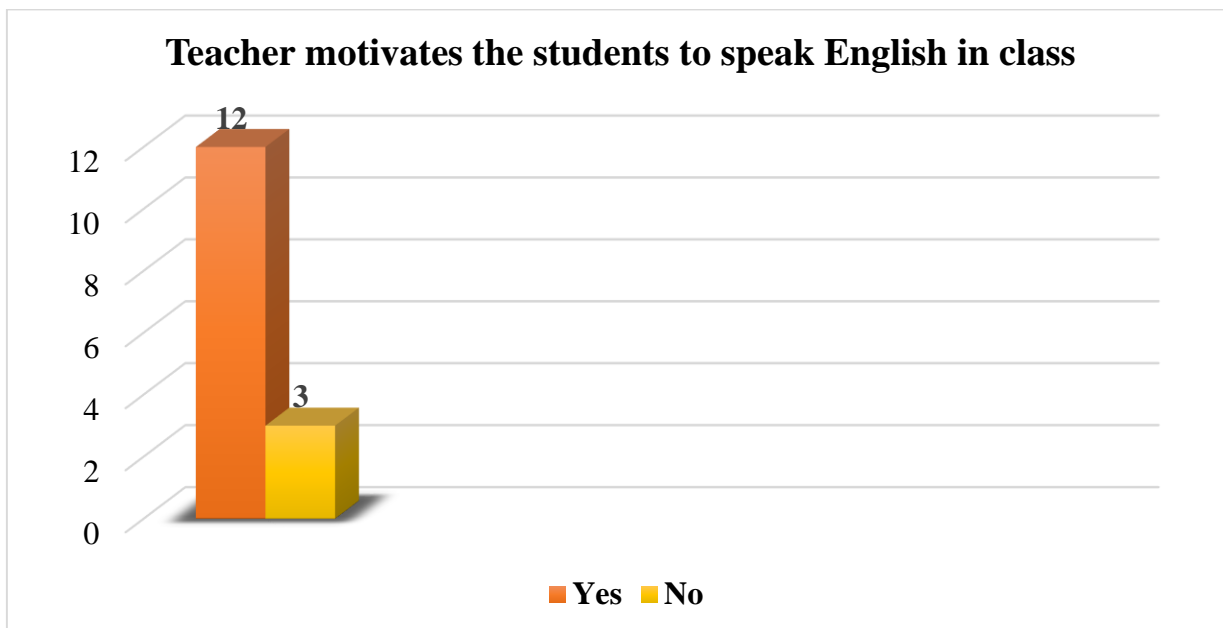


Fig11 shows if the students felt motivated by teacher to speak English in class

In this question, 12 students considered that they had received sufficient motivation to communicate in English in the classroom, in contrast, three validated that they did not receive enough simulation from the teacher to converse in the target language.

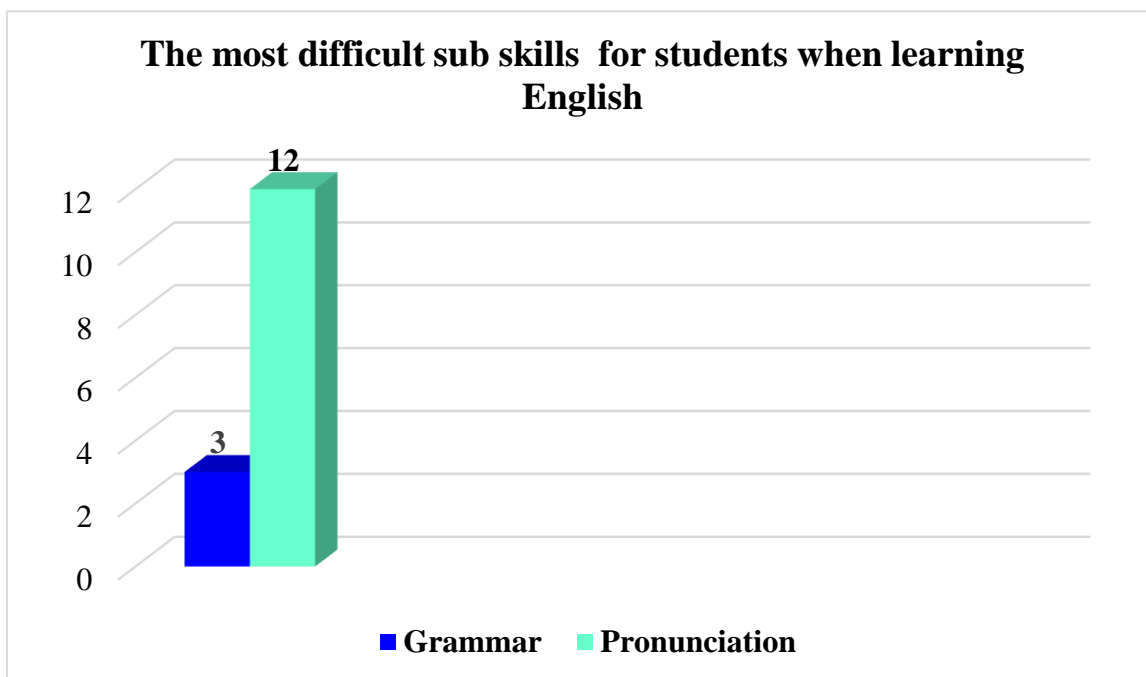
The researcher consulted the participants what prevented them from expressing ideas during the development of the lessons; some reasons provided from them were: nerves, insecurity, and difficulty when pronouncing and making sentences.

The statistical result highlights the motivational work of the teacher towards the students, but there is a pending work related to the development of integration and oral expression activities that allow the students to communicate naturally, fluently, and understandably.

The second question was a closed type, participants had to select the most difficult sub

skill for them when learning English, by putting an “x” the answers fluctuated. Below the figure # 12 shows the answers.

Fig #12



Fig# 12 students chose the most difficult sub skill for them when learning English.

According to figure # 12, 12 intermediate English students perceive that the pronunciation sub skill was the most difficult one to acquire, on the other hand, three participants chose the grammar option.

Most students affirmed that as English Pronunciation is so different from Spanish, as well as grammar structure, they did not have so much time for practicing the speaking skill. It is essential for teachers to reinforce this sub skill through group activities such as, oral presentations or short dialogues. The next graph evidenced if students know the term of phonetics or not. It was a closed-ended question, in which students chose by marking with an “x” the best option for them. The next graph provide the answers.

Fig #13

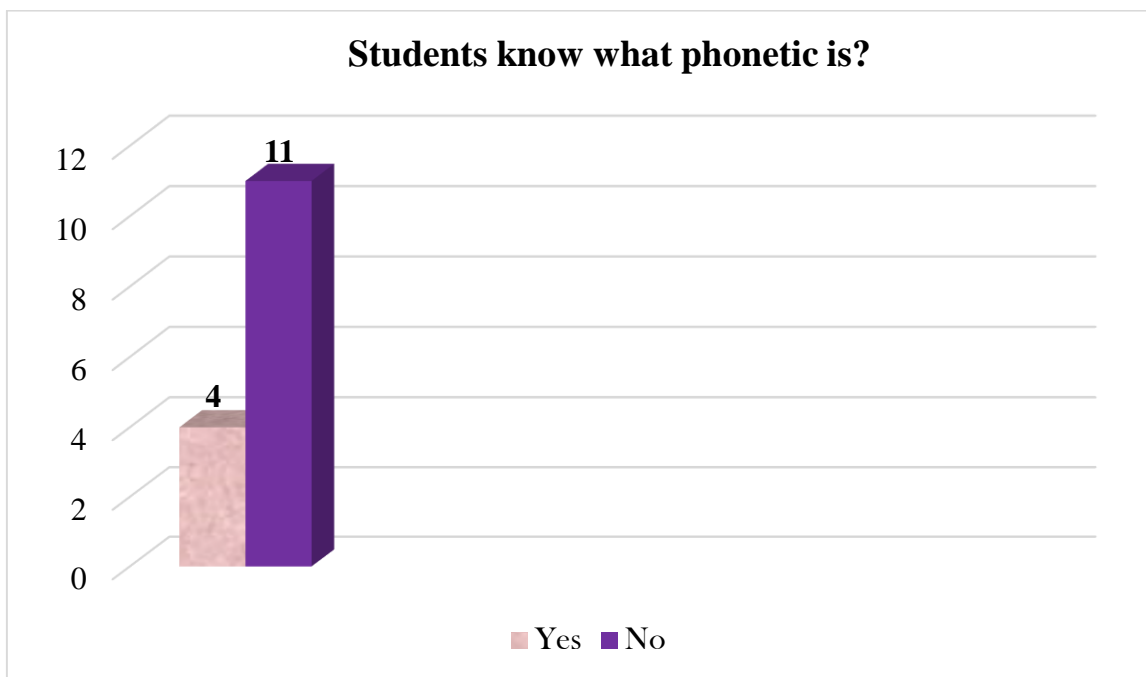


Fig #13 shows if the intermediate level students knew what phonetics is.

In relation to figure # 13, four students know the term phonetics, on the contrary, 11 did not know it.

It is considered essential that the teacher mention this term in a foreign language class since the first day with the objective of facilitating student's understanding and clarity of the phonetic system of the English Language. One strategy would be to look for similar sounds in the mother tongue and compare them with the ones in L2.

The next graph shows the frequency with which the professor teaches pronunciation in class. This was a multiple-choice question, in which students chose the answers by making an "x", the best option for them.

Fig #14

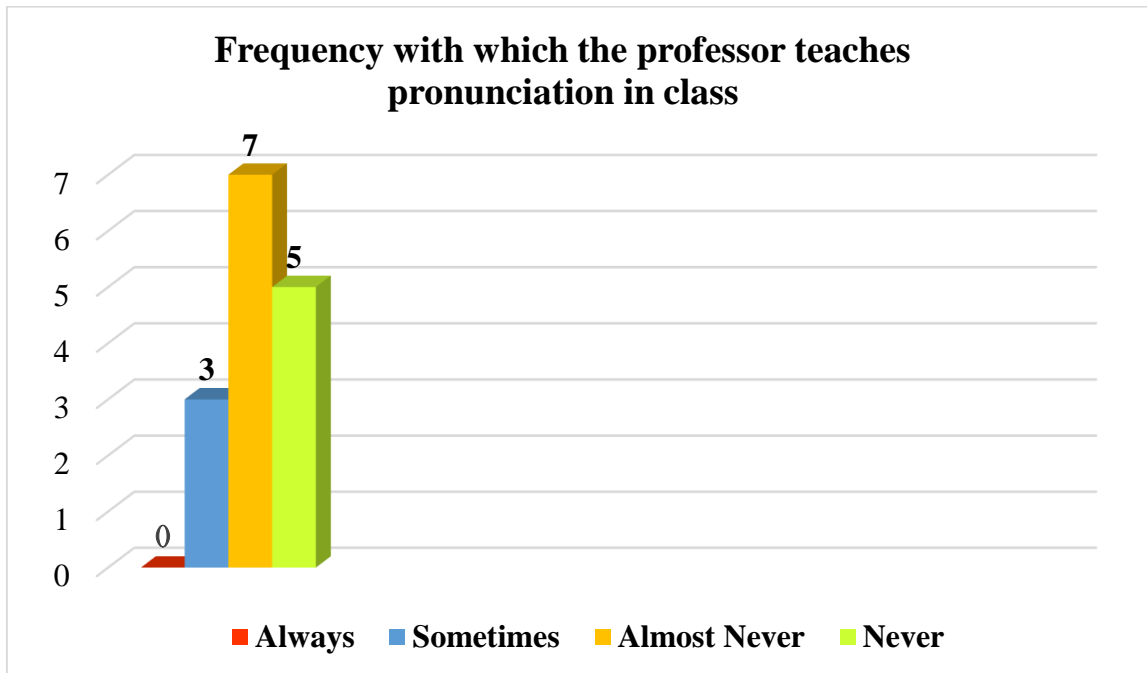


Figure # 14 shows what the students considered about the teaching of pronunciation in class

Figure #14 represents the opinion perceived by students regarding the frequency with which the teacher teaches English pronunciation in the classroom. The results shows that three students said that **sometimes**, seven **almost never** and the last five pointed that **never**.

It is a fact that the teacher should develop more activities in class related to pronunciation, the students expressed that the teacher had mentioned some English vowels in class; however, students did not learn patterns to identify the words.

The next figure give the results of a closed question. It focused on student's opinions on the use of games specifically if they helped them to learn English easier. Students were asked to mark with and "x" the best response for them.

Fig #15

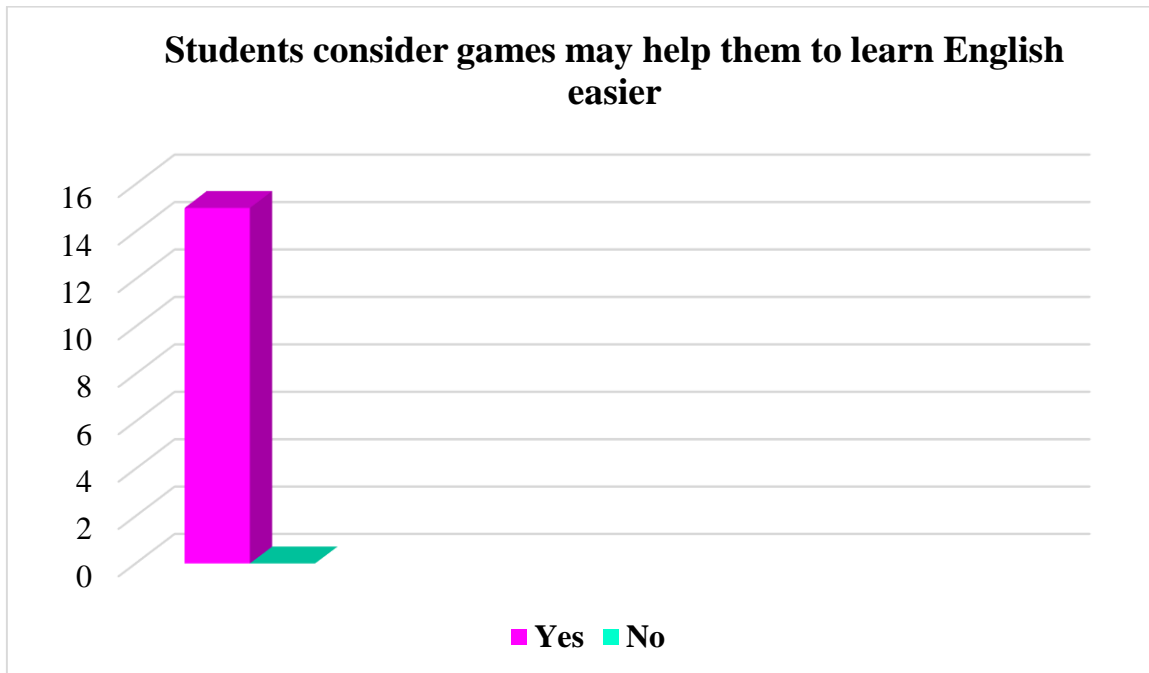


Fig # 15 shows the student's opinion about the use of games, specifically if they helped them to learn English easier.

In this question all the students agreed that games allowed them to learn English easier, successively, they claimed that interactive activities helped them to get out of the routine, exchange opinions, and reduce stress.

This is considered an important fact that the teacher must take into account to motivate the student's preferences when planning a class, as well as dynamic activities that motivate and make them focus on the task.

In figure # 16 a multiple-choice question was given to analyze how frequent teacher develops class activities to train the student's oral skills.

Fig # 16

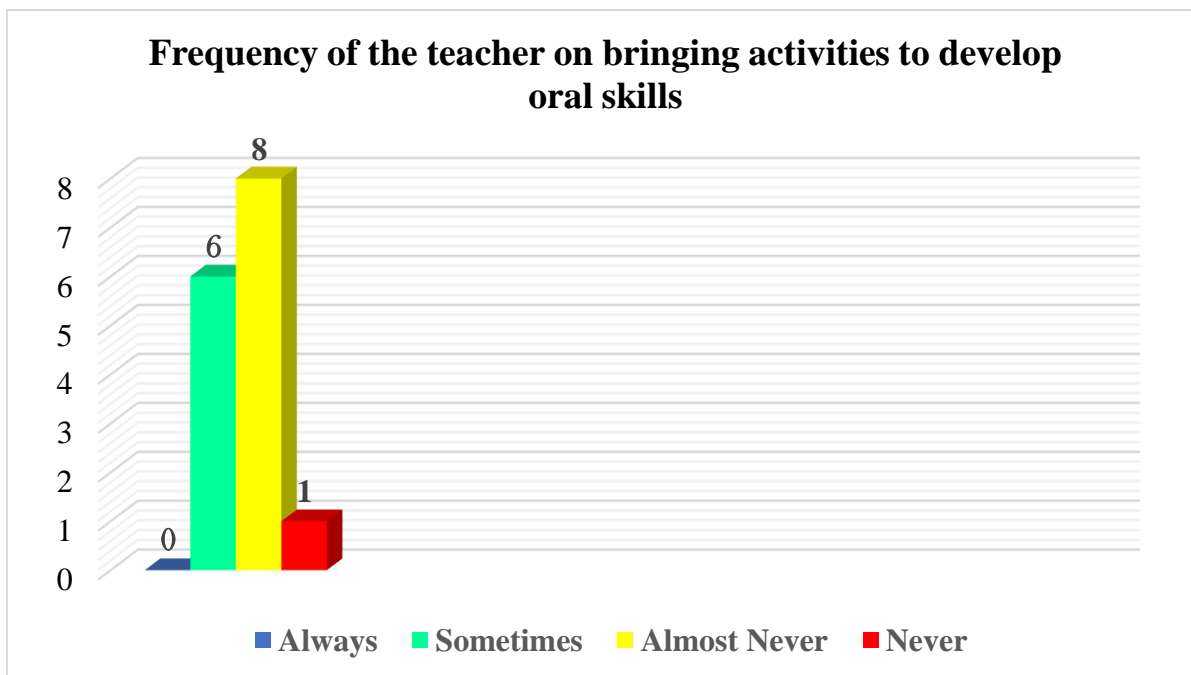


Fig # 16 shows the English intermediate students' opinion about the frequency with which the teacher brings activities to training the oral skills.

The figure #16 represents how frequent the oral activities are executed by the teacher during the English lessons, as a way to motivate them to speak in class. The results show that six students mentioned **sometimes**. Furthermore, eight said **almost never**, and the last one stated that **never**.

According to the results, more than half of the participants agree that the teacher carries out few activities in the classroom to practice the oral skills. It is a fact that the teacher must develop a lesson plan with more speaking activities to help students to be competent at market.

The next graph shows the results of a closed question that evaluate if the ludic activities

developed in class are enough for students to learn a foreign language.

Fig # 17

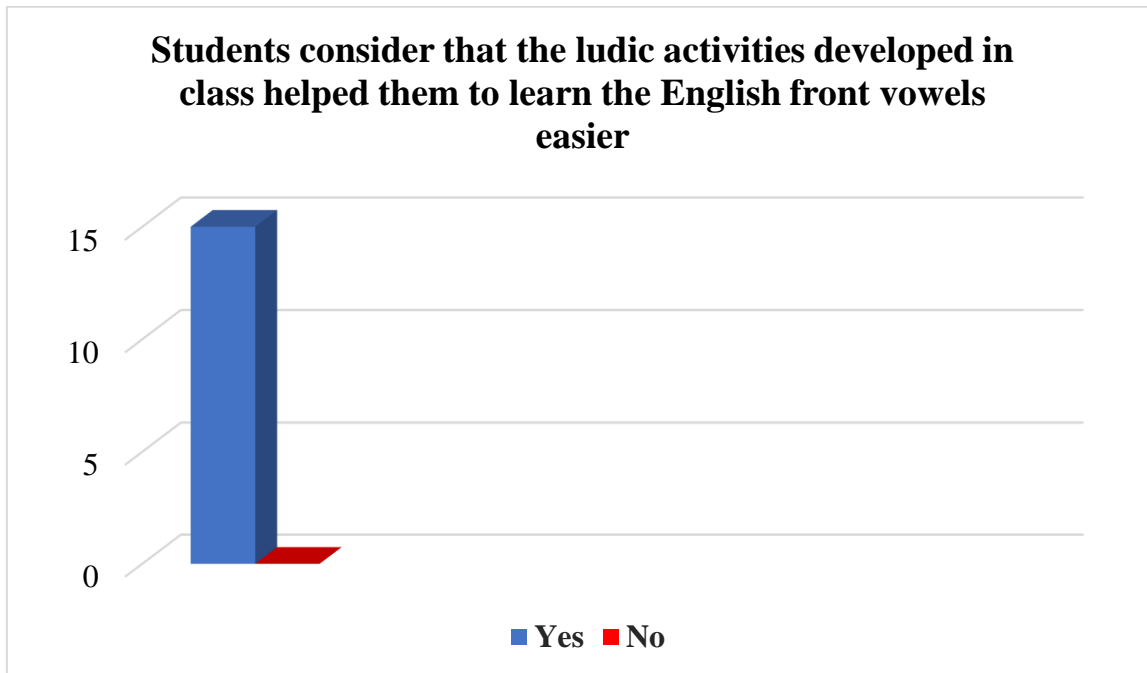


Figure # 17 shows the student's opinions regarding to the ludic activities developed in class.

A hundred percentage of the population considered that the ludic activities developed in class by the researcher helped them to learn the English front vowels easier. Some students stated that their learning and interest greatly increased when the activities were developed in class, also those activities helped them to practice much more the oral skill.

According to that opinion, the teacher must implement ludic activities in class frequently.

The figure # 18 intends to identify the preferences of the English intermediate students regarding to the ludic activities. A multiple-choice question was selected to gather these results.

Fig # 18

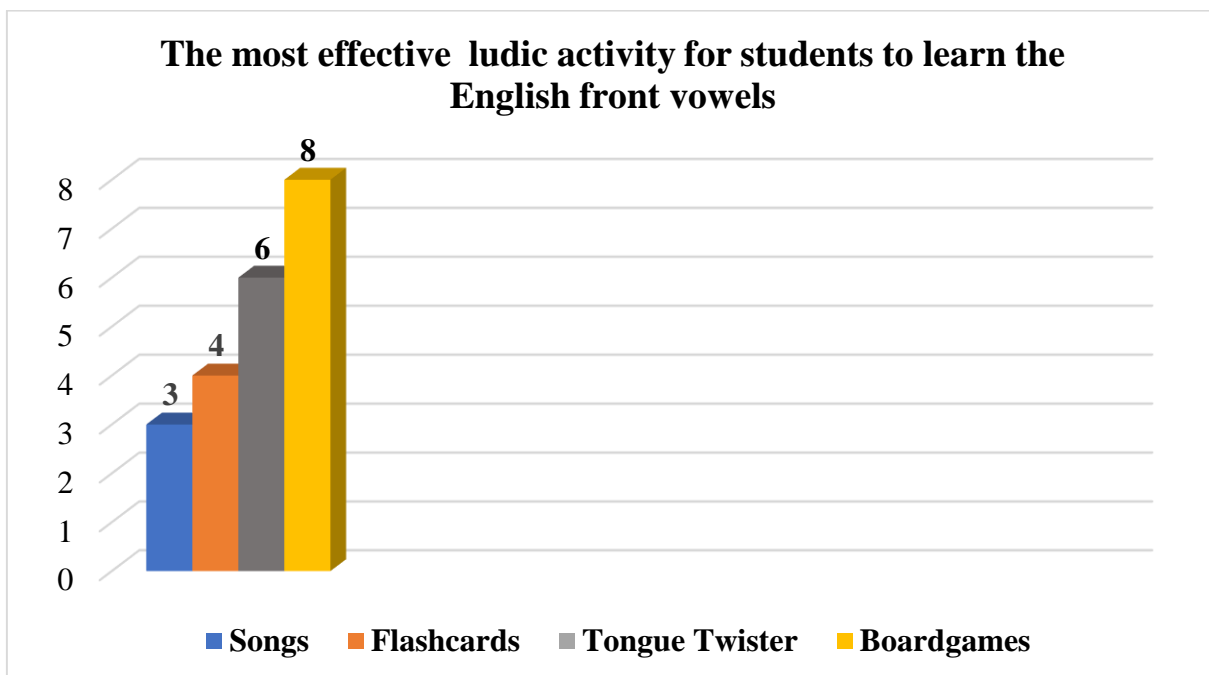


Figure # 18 shows the student's opinion about the most effective ludic activity to learn the English front vowels.

This figure # 18 shows that three students prefer listening to songs to learn English front vowels, four prefer the use of flashcards, six consider that repeating tongue twisters are good for them and the last eight said that playing with boardgames is the best activity for them.

According to the interpretation of the results, more than half of students selected the boardgames as the best technique to learn the English front vowels because the students can speak naturally under an entertainment atmosphere. The second option was the tongue twisters because they provide fluency and phoneme-grapheme correspondence. Finally the flashcards and songs were chosen since they allow the students to relate the image to the sound.

The students indicated that they had a lot of fun with the flashcards and that, on the contrary, the tongue twister represented a great challenge. The teacher should consider these strategies because they are useful for practicing pronunciation and they can be created at a

very low cost.

In figure # 19 a multiple-choice question was given to analyze the ludic activity students enjoyed the most.

Fig # 19

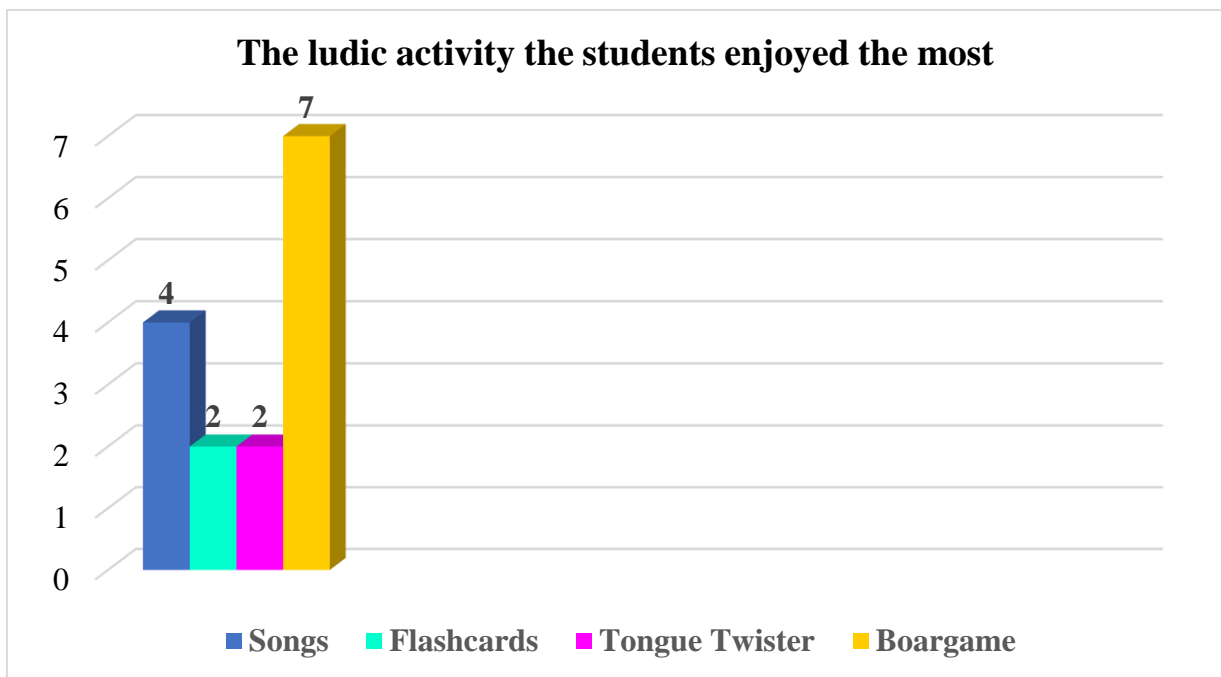


Fig # 19 illustrates the students' preferences about the ludic activity they enjoyed the most.

The previous graph illustrates that, four students chose listening to songs, two selected flashcards, another two preferred the tongue twisters, and the rest of the students answered that they preferred boardgame as the most enjoyable activity.

Intermediate English students demonstrated a high preference for songs and board games, it is clear that this type of dynamics encourage them, and make them feel more comfortable.

The figure # 20 illustrates the answers of a close-ended question, it was given to evaluate if the students would like the teacher applied ludic activities in the class frequently.

Fig # 20

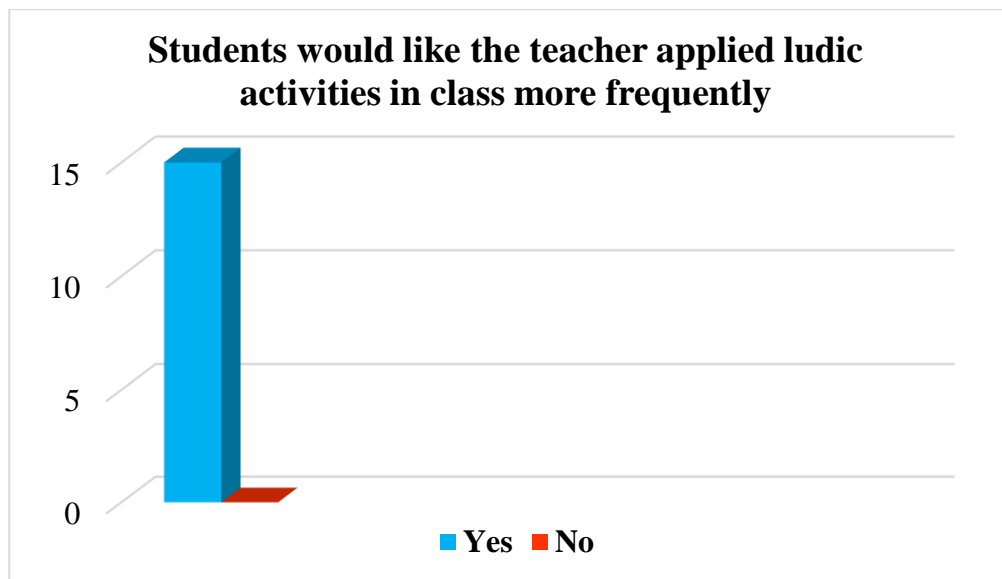


Figure # 20 illustrates the student's preferences about applying ludic activities in the class frequently

According to the results in question 10, all the fifteen participants agreed they would like the teacher applied ludic activities in class more frequently.

As an important point to mention, some students expressed “We like the dynamic activities a lot because they allow us to get out of the routine in class”, therefore, the teacher must look for the alternatives which let the students learn with some entertainment.

Question number eleven was an opened question. Students had to answer the type of changes to be implement to improve their speaking skill in the English class.

The answers given by Intermediate English students are shown in Table N°10

Student	Answer
One	To do oral activities and games
Two	To pay more attention and do not talk a lot in class
Three	To have oral presentations, and less written practice
Four	No answer
Five	To practice more English through interactive fun games
Six	To getting the info in an entertained way.
Seven	To use games
Eight	To plan fun classes with ludic activities
Nine	To have more practice, games, and conversations
Ten	To use songs in class
Eleven	To practice more pronunciation, vocabulary, activities as songs, and visual aids.
Twelve	To practice more pronunciation in class
Thirteen	To practice more conversation in class
Fourteen	To watch movies, and series in class
Fifteen	To do more speaking activities

Table N°10 shows the responses of the intermediate students about what to do in class to improve the speaking skill. Source:

Researcher's create.

In table 2, most of the intermediate students prefer doing more oral activities in class to improve the speaking skill, and dynamics such as listening to songs, watching movies or participate in oral presentations in order to practice accents, vocabulary among others.

Other students expressed they would like to learn more about English pronunciation to improve and comprehend the language much more, they also suggested that visual aids would help them to remember the English front vowels.

4.5 Questionnaire to the Teacher

In the same previous line, the last instrument applied was the teacher's questionnaire; it consists in ten open questions. All them were carried out with the intention of knowing the teacher's opinion about his teaching strategies and the results on students' performance after the application of ludic activities.

The first question was about the method he applied when teaching English to students. The teacher mentioned that the main method was the Grammar Translation Method.

The second question was about what resources the teacher used to train the English pronunciation sub skill with the group of students in charge. The teacher answered that the students worked on written practices with a book from a *Cambridge*, publisher House.

Question number three asked about his criteria of what were the best ways for motivating students to speak English during lessons. The teacher mentioned that activities, such as dramatizations, short dialogues, talking about controversial topics should be carried

out to encourage students to speak.

Question number four was about what percentage of participants who practiced oral pronunciation during each class. The teacher said that there was a range between 30% and 70% of participation.

In question number five, the researcher wanted to know if the teacher had applied ludic activities during classes. He replied that at least one hour per week, students worked with a boardgame.

In question number six, the researcher asked about what had been the most difficult part when reinforcing the pronunciation sub skill with the students, the teacher said that it had varied because of the lack of materials to work in class and the difference of the student's English that for that reason a topic was to be repeated several times or taught in a mother tongue.

In question number seven, the researcher wanted to know if the ludic activities developed by herself had been effective for students to improve the English front vowels learning. The teacher answered that the students had been motivated to participate and solve drills in class, besides, he stated that the activities helped the students to discriminate the vowel sounds easier.

Question eight was about his opinion about students' performance, after the application of ludic activities. The teacher mentioned that students' performance improved since they related the old vocabulary to the new one.

Question number nine was about teacher's opinion regarding the two most effective activities for students to learn the English front vowels. The teacher gave great importance to dialogues and songs.

In the last question, the researcher wanted to know if the teacher would be willing to apply more playful activities in the class. He replied that he would like to work with songs and flashcards because they increase the students' interest and participation in the class.

Post-test Results

After completing the training program, the researcher proceeded to apply the final evaluation in order to check the effectiveness of the selected playful activities, that is songs, which favor the phoneme-grapheme correspondence and the acquisition of new vocabulary; boardgames that caused participants interactive learning; flashcards, which are excellent didactic tool that allow students to improve concentration and memory; and finally, tongue twisters in order to develop student's fluency.

Table N°11. The grades obtained by the English Intermediate students in the post-test

Students	Phonological transcription with IPA	Grade
	<p>Eagle- Hats- Seat- Sand- Kiss- Keys- Bear- Meat- Bee- Reap- Seagull- Feel-Keep- Jeans- Mend- Swear- Rip- Fit- Deep</p> <p>'i:gəl- 'hæt- 'si:t- 'sænd- 'kɪs- 'ki:z- 'bɛr- 'mi:t- 'bi:- 'ri:p- 'si: gəl- 'fi:l- 'ki:p- 'dʒi:nz- 'mend- 'swɛr- 'ri:p- 'fit- 'di:p</p>	
1	<p>'i:gəl- 'hæt- 'si:t- 'sænd- 'kɪs- 'ki:z- 'bɛr- 'mi:t- 'bi:- 'ri:p- 'si: gəl- 'fi:l- 'ki:p- 'dʒi:nz- 'mend- 'swɛr- 'ri:p- 'fit- 'di:p</p>	100
2	<p>'i:gəl- 'hæt- 'si:t- 'sænd- 'kɪs- 'ki:z- 'bɛr- 'mɛt- 'bi:- 'ri:p- 'si: gəl- 'fi:l- 'ki:p- 'dʒi:nz- 'mend- 'swɛr- 'ri:p- 'fit- 'di:p</p>	94
3	<p>'i:gəl- 'hæt- 'si:t- 'sænd- 'kɪs- 'ki:z- 'bɛr- 'mi:t- 'bi:- 'ri:p- 'si: gəl- 'fi:l- 'ki:p- 'dʒi:nz- 'mend- 'swɛr- 'ri:p- 'fit- 'di:p</p>	100
4	<p>'i:gəl- 'hæt- 'si:t- 'sænd- 'kɪs- 'ki:z- 'bɛr- 'mi:t- 'bi:- 'ri:p- 'si: gəl- 'fi:l- 'ki:p- 'dʒi:nz- 'mend- 'swɛr- 'ri:p- 'fit- 'di:p</p>	100
5	<p>'i:gəl- 'hæt- 'si:t- 'sænd- 'ki:s- 'kɪz- 'bɛr- 'mi:t- 'bi:- 'ri:p- 'si: gəl- 'fi:l- 'ki:p- 'dʒi:nz- 'mend- 'swɛr- 'ri:p- 'fit- 'di:p</p>	89
6	<p>'i:gəl- 'hæt- 'si:t- 'sænd- 'kɪs- 'ki:z- 'bi:r- 'mi:t- 'bi:- 'ri:p- 'si: gəl- 'fi:l- 'ki:p- 'dʒi:nz- 'mend- 'swɛr- 'ri:p- 'fit- 'di:p</p>	94
7	<p>'i:gəl- 'hæt- 'si:t- 'sænd- 'kɪs- 'ki:z- 'bɛr- 'mi:t- 'bi:- 'ri:p- 'si: gəl- 'fi:l- 'ki:p- 'dʒi:nz- 'mend- 'swɛr- 'ri:p- 'fit- 'dɛp</p>	94

8	i:gəl- 'hæt- 'si:t- 'sænd- 'kɪs- 'ki:z- 'bɛr- 'mi:t- 'bi:- 'ri:p- 'si: gəl- 'fi:l- 'ki:p- 'dʒi:nz- 'mɪnd- 'swɪ:r- 'ri:p- 'fi:t- 'di:p	89
9	i:gəl- 'hæt- 'si:t- 'sænd- 'kɪs- 'ki:z- 'bɛr- 'mi:t- 'bi:- 'ri:p- 'si: gəl- 'fi:l- 'ki:p- 'dʒi:nz- 'mænd- 'swɛr- 'ri:p- 'fi:t- 'di:p	94
10	i:gəl- 'hæt- 'si:t- 'sænd- 'kɪs- 'ki:z- 'bɛr- 'mi:t- 'bi:- 'ri:p- 'si: gəl- 'fi:l- 'ki:p- 'dʒi:nz- 'mænd- 'swɛr- 'ri:p- 'fi:t- 'di:p	89
11	i:gəl- 'hæt- 'si:t- 'sænd- 'kɪs- 'ki:z- 'bɛr- 'mi:t- 'bi:- 'ri:p- 'si: gəl- 'fi:l- 'ki:p- 'dʒi:nz- 'mænd- 'swɛr- 'ri:p- 'fi:t- 'dɛp	89
12	Igəl- 'hæt- 'si:t- 'sænd- 'kɪs- 'ki:z- 'bɛr- 'mi:t- 'bi:- 'ri:p- 'si: gəl- 'fi:l- 'ki:p- 'dʒi:nz- 'mænd- 'swɛr- 'ri:p- 'fi:t- 'di:p	94
13	Igəl- 'hæt- 'si:t- 'sænd- 'kɪs- 'ki:z- 'bɛr- 'mi:t- 'bi:- 'ri:p- 'si: gəl- 'fi:l- 'ki:p- 'dʒi:nz- 'mænd- 'swɛr- 'ri:p- 'fi:t- 'di:p	100
14	i:gəl- 'hæt- 'si:t- 'sænd- 'kɪs- 'ki:z- 'bɛr- 'mi:t- 'bi:- 'ri:p- 'si: gəl- 'fi:l- 'ki:p- 'dʒi:nz- 'mænd- 'swɪ:r- 'ri:p- 'fi:t-	94
15	i:gəl- 'hæt- 'si:t- 'sænd- 'kɪs- 'ki:z- 'bɛr- 'mi:t- 'bi:- 'ri:p- 'si: gəl- 'fi:l- 'ki:p- 'dʒi:nz- 'mænd- 'swɛr- 'ri:p- 'fi:t- 'di:p	100

Source: Researcher's create.

Table N°11 shows the results of the participants and the researcher. It highlight that the topic selected by the researcher contributed substantially to improve the learning of the English front vowels .With those results, the students were pleased and much more motivated. They became more interested in the pronunciation of those sounds.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations

The current study was carried out in order to contribute to the learning process of the Intermediate English students at Centro Internacional de Idiomas Institute through the implementation of playful activities as a pedagogical strategy to learn the pronunciation of the English front vowels. In accordance with the foregoing, in this segment the researcher will summarize the findings and conclusions generated after the analysis of the data. All of them were obtained through the use of instruments, such as the observation rubric, the questionnaire, and the pre and post-test.

Fuentes (2012) states that the conclusions constitute an ordered synthesis of the findings, they are linked to the general purpose, the hypothesis and the objectives. (Page 23). Following the same line, the researcher will explain, first of all; if the intended objectives were feasible, then the relevance of the study for the institution, and some suggestions for future researches and for the educational center.

5.1 Conclusions

In the following segment, the researcher will analyze each objective and its aspects found during the research process.

5.1.1 To identify the students difficulties in the acquisition of the pronunciation of the English front vowels

The first specific objective was to identify some of the difficulties that students face during the learning of the English front vowels. The first weakness in the classroom was the lack of visual aids such as; pictures, models, charts, maps, real objects, among others to help the students to make a lesson clearer or easier to understand. The lessons are developed in small and warm classroom, inside it, there is a screen but, during the observed period it was always off. For all those reasons, the students focused their attention on the cell phone or remained in silent affecting their motivation to participate in activities.

During the observation, it was noticed that, in the building there is no internet connection nor a computer laboratory, these two elements are considered essential when learning a foreign language because they allow the student to access to relevant information to practice pronunciation through free and interactive online platforms.

Regarding to physical materials, students carry out grammar practices in the book *Interchange* of Cambridge Publisher so listening and speaking skills are little emphasized and the learning of vowel sounds is not included in the content of the oral course. As a result, the students have great deficiencies to communicate in English accurately.

The teacher developed the class under traditional teaching and rarely uses playful or interactive activities to motivate students in the classroom, the role of the student is passive. The participants expressed to the teacher that they wanted to learn English in English and not by translating the speech into Spanish, however, He said that it will happen in the next level of the course.

Regarding to the pronunciation sub skill, it was also determined that the most difficult sound

to discriminate for the participants of this study is / æ /, which does not exist in the Spanish language.

The vowel /æ / has characteristic that makes it difficult for Spanish speakers, it is pronounced between the Spanish sounds /a/ and /e/, so the lips are partially parted and not as fully spread as the /a/ Spanish sound, in the pre-test all the students pronounced it as / a / in Spanish. For this reason, it is essential that articulation exercises be carried out for the learners to practice and develop phonological awareness in both languages.

The vowels / ɪ / and / i / were very confused since in Spanish there is no lengthening of the vowels but, only the accent on the syllables, the / i / in Spanish is pronounced just like its writing. In English there are patterns such as "e", "ee", "ea", among others to pronounce the words with / i / sound such as, the word team / 'tim / and finally, the / ɛ / sound was the most assertive due to its similarity to Spanish sound /e/.

5.1.2 To apply ludic activities as a pedagogical strategy to improve the pronunciation of the English front vowels in intermediate English students at Centro Internacional de Idiomas during I quarter of 2020

Part of the joy of language is using it to communicate, so the teaching of English must be develop under an optimal and productive class climate in order to encourage the students to learn and participate in oral activities.

The English and Spanish languages have different phonological system, and in order to facilitate the learning of the English front vowels first of all, it was necessary to explain the the articulatory description of the English and Spanish sounds. During the explanation, the students showed focused and interested on the topic. Once they finished, they expressed to the

researcher that they felt satisfied and thankful because no one had taught them any term related with front vowels or phonetics.

During the development of the ludic activities the first rule was to think and express ideas in the target language, so the students had to make an effort to learn the vocabulary provided to exchange ideas. That rule was effective because it helped the students to train their memory, have more fluent conversations, learn vocabulary and match the phonemes with their respective words.

Regarding to the environment inside the classroom, it was completely different, the students enjoyed the class, and they were more motivated to work in pairs and to provide a comment about any topic. Some times when researcher came to classes the students asked her “Hey teacher! What did you bring today for us? ” regarding to a new game or activity.

In comparison to the activities implemented by the teacher and the activities carried out by the researcher, there is great difference regarding the participation of the students in oral activities, after the application of the playful activities the students were able to identify the English front vowels easier. It is considered an enriching experience at the pedagogical level since the students and the teacher were very satisfied with the results obtained.

5.1.3 To evaluate the results of using ludic activities as a pedagogical strategy to improve the pronunciation of the English Front Vowels in Intermediate English students at Centro Internacional de Idiomas during I quarter of 2020

Learning a foreign language and becoming fluent in it is not easy, so it is essential that teachers provide the students of effective learning techniques to facilitate the language acquisition. Before the development of the playful activities in the classroom, the low

participation of students in oral activities was evident, this due to reasons expressed by the students such as; fear of failure, shame or the lack of information regarding to phonetics patterns for proper a pronunciation.

In order to help the participants to overcome their fears the selected playful activities were applied, and fortunately, they represent an effective strategy to increase not only their participation in class, but also to improve their knowledge.

According to the results of the post-test, ludic activities are an effective pedagogical tool which allows the student to develop phonological awareness of the English vowels i /, / I /, / æ /, / ε /. In conclusion, the three objectives presented for this investigation were successfully achieved. All the results showed that the selected strategy is effective for learning the frontal vowels of English.

5.2 Recommendations

In order to facilitate students the second language acquisition, teachers should select alternative didactic material to improve English speaking language according to their likes and level of knowledge. Lessons will create a welcoming environment for the English Learners.

Teaching English by applying ludic activities offers countless benefits on students' learning for instance; they let the students to exchange ideas spontaneously without having to translate into their mother tongue, also they offer the opportunity to acquire new vocabulary and phonics patterns. In addition those activities reduce the stress and anxiety the learners feel when participating in oral drills.

The Ludic activities developed for the researcher shows positive outcomes on student's performance and motivation, so the teachers should take into account student's weakness in order to promote a long-term learning.

Based on the conclusions above, a suggestion for all teachers is to opt for alternative material and complement them with useful textbooks in order to increase the student's academic progress. On internet there are countless activities that can be done with recycled material at very low cost, all them may be adapted to train the speaking skill since it is one of the most complicated for students to acquire.

Another recommendation is to increase students talking time during the oral drills. In order to increase the student's oral skill, it is necessary teachers give clear instructions and to opt for strategies to check the student's learning in a specific content. Techniques such as; to let one or two students to explain the topic taught by the teacher, to associate phonetic patterns to graphemes and to avoid yes/no questions are some examples to sharp the speaking skill in class.

All those activities help them to develop phonemic awareness, encourage a sense of criticality and be aware about their own learning process (metacognition cognitive process).

Finally, to improve the student outcomes, teachers should take into consideration the opinion of the students, their likes and preferences in order to motivate them to acquire the foreign language. Throughout the development of the lessons they are the real participants of the curriculum.

The teacher's role is expanded to promote active involvement in curriculum development and participation in school management, in the same line, Teachers should emphasize active listening during these sessions in order to foment an environment of confidence, joy and participation.

Every opinion of the students represents a feedback for teachers to improve their lesson plans and the way they manage the class. Likewise, there is a horizontal learning in both parts.

5.3 Suggestions for Future Research

The first recommendation for future researchers is to be kind and courteous to the participants throughout the research process, especially if they are adults, since at times, they may feel embarrassed or in a bad mood due to a special situations. Subsequently, having an adequate time management, since activities must be carried in the class, this will help a lot to students who attend because in this way they will not ask for permission to leave early.

As second point, it is important that teachers master the content that they are teaching, and to keep updated on the proper pronunciation, simple grammar, and phonics in order to create meaningful lessons for the students.

The third and final recommendation is to identify each student's difficulties on pronunciation in order to address the weaknesses immediately. For some students it is more difficult to master the pronunciation and for others the listening comprehension or the phonic association with their corresponding grapheme. What is essential is to clarify any difficulty in order to overcome them.

5.4 Restatement of the Research Question

The main purpose of this investigation was summarized at the beginning of the investigation, how does the implementation of ludic activities increase the English front vowels learning in intermediate English students at CIDI during the I Quarter of 2020?

This question was answered through the development of this study. The data results pointed out the success of the techniques applied with the students, it is important to mention that over the course of the investigation, the four language skills were emphasized which further enriched the students learning and fulfilled the researcher's expectations.

5.5 Unexpected Results

For the researcher's satisfaction, the teacher in charge of the group and the students were respectful and grateful at all times during the development of the ludic activities carried out in class. It could be observed that the students' mood in class, as well as their motivation for participating in the different activities increased.

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APPENDIX A

Instituto CIDI

English Intermediate Level- First Questionnaire for the students

Researcher: Jendri Carolina Mena Arias

Student: _____

1. Do you like English?

Yes () No ()

2. How often do you study English at home?

Always () sometimes () almost never () never ()

3. Does the teacher motivate you to speak English in class?

Yes () No ()

4. Do you consider English is difficult to learn?

Yes () No ()

If yes, what is the most difficult sub skill for you when learning English?

Grammar () pronunciation ()

5. Do you know what phonetics is?

Yes () No ()

6. How often the teacher teaches phonetics in class?

Always () sometimes () almost never () never ()

7. How often does the teacher correct you when mispronouncing a word in English?

Always () sometimes () almost never () never ()

8. Do you prefer working alone or in a group?

Alone () In a group ()

9. Do you consider that games in class may help you to learn English easier? Yes () No ()

10. How often does the teacher bring activities for developing Oral Skills?

Always () sometimes () almost never () never ()

APPENDIX B

Instituto CIDI

English Intermediate Level

Researcher: Jendri Carolina Mena Arias

Second Questionnaire for the students Student: _____

.....
Dear Student:

The main aim of the interview is to collect the necessary data to carry out a research related to English Teaching methodology at Instituto Centro Internacional de Idiomas, it is focused on Intermediate level group. I would like to count on your collaboration for answering the questions below. All information is for educational purposes and is confidential. }

1. Do you consider the ludic activities developed in class are useful for learning English easier?

Yes () No ()

Why? _____

2. Do you consider group work / pair work in English classes can help me learn?

Yes () No ()

Why? _____

3. Which of the following activities do you consider help you to learn English Front Vowels easier?

Songs () Memorizing games (flashcards) () Dialogues () Boardgames ()

Why: _____

4. Which of the following activities did you enjoy more and why?

Songs () Memorizing games (flashcards) () Dialogues () Boardgames ()

5. Would you like teachers apply ludic activities in the future lessons?

Yes () No ()

6. What changes do you think should be made in the English class to improve the ability to speak in this second language? _____

APPENDIX C

Instituto CIDI- Questionnaire for teacher

English Intermediate Level

Researcher: Jendri Carolina Mena Arias

Esteemed Teacher:

The main aim of the interview is to collect the necessary data to carry out a research related to English Teaching methodology at Instituto Centro Internacional de Idiomas, it is focused on intermediate level group. I would like to count on your collaboration for answering the questions below. All information is for educational purposes and is confidential.

1. What is the main English approach or method you apply when teaching English?

2. What resources do you use to teach pronunciation during classes?

3. What is the best way for motivating the students to speak in English during the class?

4. What percent do you consider your students practice pronunciation during each class?

() 0% - 30% () 30% - 70% () 80% - 100%

5. Before this research, have you ever applied any Ludic Activity in your classes?

6. What have been the most difficult part when reinforcing pronunciation skills with the students?

7. According to the ludic activities applied in class, do you think they were effective for the students improve the front vowels learning?

8. Have the students improved their learning after the ludic activities?

9. According to your criterion what are the 2 more effective ludic activities for students to learn the front vowels pronunciation? _____

10. Would you like to apply some of the ludic activities developed in class for the students to improve English Front Vowels Learning? _____

APPENDIX D

"Photograph"

Singer:

Ed Sheeran

Loving **can** hurt*/ kæn/*

Loving can hurt sometimes

But it's the only thing that I know

When it **gets** hard*/ gɛts/*

You know it can get hard sometimes

It **is** the only thing that makes us **feel** alive*'ɪz/**'fi:l/*We **keep this** love in a photograph*/ ki:p/ ðɪs/*We made **these** memories for ourselves*/ ðɪz/*

Where our eyes are never closing

Hearts are never broken

Times forever frozen still

so you can keep me

Inside the pocket

of your **ripped** jeans*/ npt/ 'ri:p't/*

Holdin' me closer

'Til our eyes **meet***/ mi:t/*You won't **ever** be alone*/ ɛvə-/*

Wait for me to come home

Loving can **heal***/ hi:l/*Loving can **mend** your soul*/ mɛnd/*

And it's the only thing that I know (know)

I **swear** it will get easier*/ swɛə-/*Remember that with every **piece** of ya*/ pi:s/*And it's the only thing we take with us when
we dieWe keep this love in a photograph
We made these memories for ourselves
Where our eyes are never closing
Hearts were never broken
Times forever frozen still

So you can keep me

Inside the pocket

Of your ripped **jeans***/ dʒi:nz/*

Holdin' me closer

'Til our eyes meet

You won't ever be alone

And if you hurt me

That's OK, baby, only words bleed

Inside these pages you just hold me

And I won't ever let you go

Wait for **me** to come home*/ mi:/*

Wait for me to come home

Wait for me to come home

Wait for me to come home

Oh you can **fit** me*/ fit/*Inside the necklace you got when you were
sixteen

Next to your heartbeat

Where I should be

Keep it **deep** within your soul

And if you hurt me

Well, that's OK, baby, only words bleed

Inside these pages you just hold me

And I won't ever let you go

When I'm away

I will remember how you kissed me

Under the lamppost

Back on 6th **street***/ fi/*

Hearing you whisper through the phone

'Wait for me to come home

APPENDIX E

Let's practice the followings tongue twisters with the teacher, then work in pairs and read it aloud!

"The man on the sand"

The man on the sand is Peter, he sells seashells by the seashore.

/æ/ /æ/ /ɪ/ /i/ /i/ /ɛ/ /i/ /ɛ/ /i/

The man on the sand set a man and get a tan

/æ/ /æ/ /ɛ/ /æ/ /ɛ/ /æ/



Pal's cat



A. My pal's cat sat on the mat and made it wet.

/æ/ /æ/ /æ/ /æ/ /ɛ/

B. Wasn't that the cat that ran off behind her owner's back?

/æ/ /æ/ /æ/

A. Yes, and the cat's owner is a cat cátcher who can't find his

/æ/ /æ/ /æ/ /æ/

own cat.

/æ/

B. Tell the cat cátcher the best way to get the cat is to rent rat.

/ɛ/ /æ/ /ɛ/ /ɛ/ /ɛ/ /æ/

Source: <http://englishspeaklikenative.com/tonque-twisters/>

APPENDIX F

Practice #1

Read the following dialogue aloud.

Write the phonetic symbol /i/ or /I/ in the brackets and take turns to read with a classmate.

Jim: Hi, Tina! Do you have a minute?

[] [] []

Tina: Yes, Jim What is it?

[] []

Jim: Do you know where Jean is?

[] []

Tina: Tim picked him for the team.

[] [] []

Jim: I would like to give him a pair of slippers! They don't fit my feet!

[] [] [] []

Tina: Of course, I will tell him as soon as I see him.

[]

Jim: By the way, Tina my sister is in the city on business. We will eat dinner out tonight.

[] [] [] [] [] [] []

Can you recommend a place to eat?

[]

Tina: There is a fine seafood restaurant on Fifth Street. The fish is fresh, and the shrimp is great.

[] [] [] [] [] []

But it isn't cheap!

[]

Jim: That's OK. It will be "feast today, famine tomorrow!"

[] [] []

I'll have to eat "frijoles" the rest of the week!

[] []

APPENDIX G

English Front Vowels

A vowel is a speech sound produced with vibration vocal cords**

They are produced with the front part of the tongue

/i/ spelled:				/I/ spelled:		
“e”	“ee”	“ea”	“ie” /ei	“y”	“ui”	“i”
He	see	east	niece	Gym	build	sin
We	eel	lean	brief	System	quick	
Me	deed	team	piece	lips		
Scene	heel	cheap	belief	Syrup	guilty	gift
These				rhythm		
/ɛ/ spelled:				/æ/ spelled:		
“e”		“ea”		“a”		
Sell		head		Had		
Seven		lead		Mat		
Never		dead		Pat		
				Past		
				And		
				hat		

Activities developed in class



ANNEXES

Tribunal Examinador

Esta Tesina fue aprobada por el Tribunal Examinador de las Carreras de Inglés de la Universidad Internacional de las Américas, como requisito para optar por el grado de Bachiller en Inglés con énfasis en Enseñanza.

Tutor: Lic. Leslie Elizondo Mora

Lectora

Msc. Yanith Delgado Chacòn

Lic. Leslie Elizondo Mora
Director de las Carreras de Inglés

Carta de la Directora de Carrera

San José, 26 de agosto de 2020

Señores
Universidad Internacional de las Américas
Estimados señores:

El suscrito Lic. Leslie Elizondo Mora, Director de las Carreras de Inglés, hace constar que ha revisado la Tesina del estudiante, Jendri Carolina Mena Arias, portadora de la cédula de identidad N° 1-1399-0037 que se ha titulado **Evaluation of the Use of Some Ludic Activities as a Pedagogical Strategy to Improve the English Front Vowels Learning in Intermediate English Students at Centro Internacional de Idiomas CIDI during I Quarter of 2020**

La mencionada Tesina, responde a los requisitos exigidos en la Guía que nuestra carrera tiene para estos casos. Por tanto, se autoriza al autor para que lo presente ante el tribunal examinador nombrado para esta ocasión.

Atentamente,

Lic. Leslie Elizondo Mora
Director de las Carreras de Inglés

Carta del Lector

San José, 26 de agosto de 2020

Licenciado
Leslie Elizondo Mora
Director de las Carreras de Inglés y Enseñanza del Inglés
Universidad Internacional de las Américas

Estimado señor:

La estudiante Jendri Carolina Mena Arias, portadora de la cédula de identidad N° 1-1399-0037 ha presentado para su lectura y corrección de estilo la tesina denominada

Evaluation of the Use of Some Ludic Activities as a Pedagogical Strategy to Improve the English Front Vowels Learning in Intermediate English Students at Centro Internacional de Idiomas CIDI during I Quarter of 2020. He revisado y corregido la coherencia de los objetivos con el marco teórico, instrumentos y resultados, la calidad del trabajo y la relevancia del trabajo. Por lo tanto, hago constar que este se encuentra listo para ser presentado a la Universidad como trabajo de graduación.

Atentamente,

Lectora
Msc. Yanith Delgado Chacòn

Carta del Revisor

Miércoles, 25 de agosto de 2020

Licenciado
Leslie Elizondo Mora
Director de las Carreras de Inglés y Enseñanza del Inglés
Universidad Internacional de las Américas

Estimado señor:

La estudiante Jendri Carolina Mena Arias, portadora de la cédula de identidad N° 1-1399-0037, ha presentado para la respectiva revisión la tesina denominada **Evaluation of the Use of Some Ludic Activities as a Pedagogical Strategy to Improve the English Front Vowels Learning in Intermediate English Students at Centro Internacional de Idiomas CIDI during I Quarter of 2020**. Por lo tanto, se hace constar que el documento fue revisado en lo relativo a la estructura gramatical, ortografía, puntuación, cohesión y terminología. Asimismo, se comprobó que las correcciones sugeridas se incorporaran al documento. Por ende, una vez incorporadas las recomendaciones efectuadas en el documento, el mismo se considera listo para su presentación la Universidad como trabajo de graduación.

Atentamente,

.....

Lic. Margarita Pèrez Roig



Universidad Internacional de las Américas Código de Ética

La suscrita Jendri Carolina Mena Arias, portadora de la cédula de identidad N° 1-1399-0037 graduada del grado de Bachiller en inglés con énfasis en la Enseñanza de la Universidad Internacional de las Américas, se compromete a cumplir, durante el ejercicio profesional, con el Código de Ética de la Institución, que se rige por los siguientes principios:

PROBIDAD: actuar siempre con rectitud y honradez.

PRUDENCIA: actuar con pleno conocimiento de la materia sometida a su consideración.

JUSTICIA: permanente disposición hacia las funciones de la profesión, bajo los lineamientos legales que debe respetar todo profesional.

RESPONSABILIDAD: cumplir con los deberes, tanto en calidad como en oportunidad.

DISCRECIÓN: guardar respeto sobre los hechos o informaciones de los que tenga conocimiento con motivo del ejercicio profesional, sin que esto perjudique las funciones y responsabilidades.

INDEPENDENCIA DE CRITERIO: no involucrarse o comprometerse con situaciones, intereses o actividades contrarias a la moral, a la sana crítica y que, por ley, sean incompatibles con las funciones profesionales correspondientes.

DIGNIDAD Y DECORO: actuar con sobriedad y moderación.

TOLERANCIA: evidenciar una actitud paciente y de comprensión ante las opiniones divergentes que puedan expresar otras personas.

EQUILIBRIO: desempeñar las funciones profesionales con sentido práctico, buen juicio y equidad.

ACTUALIZACIÓN: comprometer parte del tiempo en actualizar los conocimientos y adaptarlos en el desarrollo de la actividad profesional.

VOCACIÓN: mostrar siempre apego al trabajo y a la educación recibida, como fundamentos para el desempeño laboral.

BUENA FE: toda conducta o comportamiento, criterio emitido y labor desempeñada debe basarse en los más altos principios éticos y tendrá como fundamento la buena fe.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'J' followed by the name 'C. Mena Arias'.

113990037

Jendri Carolina Mena Arias