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**Improving Sixth Graders Pronunciation from New Hope School
Through Teaching Connected Speech Techniques during the Third
Quarter of 2023**

Thesis Submitted to Obtain the Bachelor in English with Concentration in Teaching

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Abstract

What are the most effective strategies to enhance pronunciation and fluency in students, enabling them to effectively meet the current language-related demands of businesses in Costa Rica?

In pursuit of the overarching objectives aimed at enhancing the pronunciation skills of sixth graders within the unique educational context of New Hope School through the implementation of connected speech techniques, the chosen research approach will be qualitative in nature.

According to the findings of the study, there is a need for a more well-rounded approach to the teaching of languages; one that places equal emphasis not only on the teaching of grammar and vocabulary, but also on the development of the oral competency and the application of language in real-world situations. Students may benefit from becoming more fluent and self-assured in the use of the English language by participating in more interactive activities, conversations, and conversational exercises as part of the educational experience.

In essence, the research advocates for a comprehensive language education strategy that integrates focused pronunciation drills and activities, ultimately equipping students with the necessary tools for fluent and accurate oral communication in English. The positive outcomes observed underscore the effectiveness of planned and focused language activities in addressing pronunciation challenges and fostering linguistic growth.

Resumen

¿Cuáles son las estrategias más efectivas para mejorar la pronunciación y fluidez en los estudiantes, permitiéndoles cumplir eficazmente con las demandas actuales relacionadas con el idioma en los negocios en Costa Rica?

En búsqueda de los objetivos generales destinados a mejorar las habilidades de pronunciación de los estudiantes de sexto grado dentro del contexto educativo único de la Escuela New Hope mediante la implementación de técnicas de habla conectada, el enfoque de investigación elegido será de naturaleza cualitativa.

Según los hallazgos del estudio, existe la necesidad de un enfoque más integral para la enseñanza de idiomas; uno que ponga igual énfasis no solo en la enseñanza de la gramática y el vocabulario, sino también en el desarrollo de la competencia oral y la aplicación del idioma en situaciones del mundo real. Los estudiantes pueden beneficiarse al volverse más fluidos y seguros en el uso del idioma inglés al participar en actividades interactivas, conversaciones y ejercicios de conversación como parte de la experiencia educativa.

En esencia, la investigación aboga por una estrategia integral de educación en idiomas que integre ejercicios y actividades de pronunciación enfocados, equipando finalmente a los estudiantes con las herramientas necesarias para una comunicación oral fluida y precisa en inglés. Los resultados positivos observados subrayan la efectividad de actividades lingüísticas planificadas y enfocadas para abordar los desafíos de pronunciación y fomentar el crecimiento lingüístico.

Contents

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements 2

Dedication 3

Abstract..... 9

Resumen..... 10

Tables 13

Figures..... 14

Chapter I 16

 Introductory Framework..... 16

 1.2 Objectives of the Investigation 17

 1.3 Justification of the Study..... 18

 1.4 Antecedents 19

 1.5 Scope..... 25

Chapter II 27

 Theoretical Framework..... 27

Chapter III 51

 Methodological Framework..... 51

 3.1 Research Approach 52

 3.2 Research Design 53

 3.3 Information sources 54

 3.4 Analysis Categories 55

 3.5 Data Collection Instruments 56

Chapter IV 64

 Data Analysis..... 64

 4.1 Analysis and Interpretation of Results 64

 4.2 Didactics Guide 81

Chapter V 83

 Conclusions and Recommendations 83

 5.1 Purpose of the Conclusion 83

 5.2 Conclusions 84

 5.4 Unexpected Results 88

5.5 Recommendations 90

References..... 92

Annexes 96

Tables

Table 1. Observation Report
6C..... 64

Table 2. Word Game groups
.....78

Figures

Figure 1. Word Pronunciation.....	68
Figure 2. Sentence Pronunciation.....	69
Figure 3. Bonus Challenge	71
Figure 4. Elision	73
Figure 5. Assimilation	74
Figure 6. Linking and Intrusion.....	76
Figure 7. Word Game.....	77
Figure 8. Personal Reflection Survey.....	80

Chapter 1

Introductory Framework

Learning a foreign language involves more than just speaking, writing, and understanding it. It implies a process in which it is necessary to understand the differences between the maternal and foreign languages, as well as to know, internalize, and use the rules of the metalanguage system. As for example, Spanish and English differ in their morphology, phonetics, and syntax. These are the parts of grammar that examine the structure of words and their constituents, the way sounds are organized, the way words are combined, and the groups these words form to express meanings. Improving students' pronunciation in English is crucial for effective communication and language fluency. Pronunciation encompasses various elements, including individual sounds, stress patterns, and intonation. One effective approach to enhancing pronunciation skills is through the implementation of connected speech techniques. Connected speech refers to the natural flow of spoken language, where sounds and words interact, and change based on their context. Therefore, this thesis will explore four key connected speech techniques: elision, assimilation, linking, and intrusion, and also it will highlight their importance in improving students' pronunciation skills in English.

1.1 Problem Statement

Progressively, English has become more essential to survival in all spheres of life, including academic and professional areas. More companies today require bilingual employees at the very least. Therefore, the challenges and variations that the students have when mastering and employing English-language sounds are evident. As a consequence, it is important to consider how, beyond the most obvious reasons, the distinctive sounds of the student's native

tongue can interfere with their learning of a foreign language. In particular, it is vital to be aware of how the distinctive sounds of Costa Rican Spanish may affect their ability to produce English orally.

The country is quite open to international trade, so many domestic and foreign businesses need citizens who are fluent in a second language. As the "second language of the world," English is currently given priority on a global scale. Even though, a large portion of the population in Costa Rica is proficient in English, it is obvious that the country's educational system does not always teach the language in an effective and especially beneficial way for the population. Schools focus more on teaching grammar and vocabulary instead of reinforcing speaking and oral skills during class. The best and most efficient way to learn a language is by constantly talking and formulating sentences orally. This leads to the following question: What are the most effective strategies to enhance pronunciation and fluency in students, enabling them to effectively meet the current language-related demands of businesses in Costa Rica?

1.2 Objectives of the Investigation

1.2.1 General Objective

To improve students' pronunciation skills by using elision, assimilation, linking, and intrusion from connected speech techniques

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

- To determine deficiencies students have regarding pronunciation when using elision, assimilation, and linking and intrusion from connected speech techniques.

- To apply connected speech techniques by using realia for improving students' pronunciation.
- To evaluate the implementation of connected speech techniques as a tool for improving students' pronunciation.

1.3 Justification of the Study

Thanks to both, verbal and nonverbal language, human beings have been able to communicate with one another for thousands of years. From there, Osoblivaia, T. (n.d.) (para. 2) mentioned that other writing systems started to appear in places like Mesopotamia and India, and over time, these writing systems started to develop into more advanced forms of communication that could be used for trade and diplomatic relations between countries. As communication increased between cultures, new languages were also developed. The earliest known written language is thought to be Egyptian hieroglyphs, which date back to around 3200 BC.

With the previously mentioned information, it is clear that communication skills are more essential than the ability to speak a language. To achieve this, an assortment of factors must come together, such as correct word pronunciation and fluidity, leading to barrier-free communication as a result. Individuals know that in a setting where learning a foreign language is taking place, the affective filter plays an important role in creating accurate pronunciation. Learners are discouraged from improving because they are afraid to make mistakes in front of other individuals. To communicate with others in English, pronunciation is vital. Some English-language speakers capture others with their fluency in their native tongue. The way they pronounce words influences people as listeners. The ability to wordsmith words properly is an indispensable component of every speaker. The use of English is commonplace.

Although, for people who speak English as a second language, there is no perfect pronunciation due to the variation of English that is spoken around the globe. As a result, people frequently hear different pronunciations and mispronunciations. However, despite how widespread the wrong pronunciation may be, individuals should constantly work toward perfecting it. According to Akr and Baytar, B. (2014), when the new sounds differ from those in their native tongue, learners of foreign languages typically find it difficult to pronounce the target language. Some allege that it needs to be discussed because it is an obstacle for students and educators alike to address. Consequently, this research seeks to improve the pronunciation skills of sixth-grade students at New Hope School through connected speech techniques such as assimilation, elision, linking, and intrusion.

1.4 Antecedents

Languages are always evolving. The evolution of language is essential for human beings to enhance interpersonal communication. The same thing occurs with English. This is not the same as it was hundreds of years ago, compared to now. Therefore, proper pronunciation is essential for effectively communicating. The next section will show several studies conducted by various authors that support the need to improve English pronunciation to attain more fluency.

Learning a new language is not a process that just happens all of a sudden; this process involves rules and steps as stated by Guerra and Rivera (2004), in their thesis entitled "Teaching Pronunciation to Teenagers through Activities Built on Multiple Intelligences at the PUCESA, Catholic University of Ecuador, as an Experimental Study." They considered that speaking requires the development of many norms as well as oral abilities, which students should learn from fundamental levels and refine as they learn more about the language. They investigated the

history of pronunciation. Many linguists concur that pronunciation has not been the primary focus of grammar and vocabulary instruction since the beginning of language teaching. Beginning in the 20th century, pronunciation was recognized as a crucial skill in learning a second language. The two authors mentioned that several factors influence students' pronunciation, such as personal factors, the interaction scholars have in the classroom, learning styles, etc. They also explained, with several theories, how the concept of intelligence has changed through time and how this has influenced the way in which learners capture information.

In a more recent thesis named "Improving Students' Listening Comprehension by Teaching Connected Speech", Mufraih, S. (2018) conducted a research to find out students' improvements in listening comprehension and their increased interest in listening after being taught the aspects of connected speech. It used a quantitative method with a pre-experimental design, namely a one-group pretest-posttest model design. The population of the research was all eleventh-grade students at MAS Darul Ihsan Islamic Boarding School. 30 students of the class were chosen purposefully. The research found that teaching connected speech in the listening classroom can improve students' listening comprehension and that students who have a positive perception of teaching connected speech can increase their interest in learning to listen.

This chapter introduces the background of the research and the research problem. It focuses on listening skills, which are considered one of the most difficult for foreign language learners due to their complexity and the different types of knowledge required for successful listening. It is also one of the receptive skills in language and is considered unimportant for many courses. Therefore, many students have a variety of problems with listening comprehension. According to Flowerdew and Miler (1996) and Renukadevi (2014), Research has shown that

English Foreign Language (EFL) or English Second Language (ESL) students have issues listening due to difficulty perceiving and recognizing the words, understanding rapid speech, and understanding the flow of the speech when they are assigned to listen to lectures or conversations. Moreover, Flowerdew and Miler (1996) and Renukadevi (2014) stated that one of the problems students encounter in listening is understanding quick speech.

Furthermore, techniques such as assimilation and elision showed to be effective when teaching and absorbing English during class. Carnero, J. (2015), in "The Assimilation of Features of Connected Speech in ESL Students," University of Valladolid, Valladolid, broke down her research into four sections: a description of the fieldwork itself, the goals for which the study has been established, the kinds of participants needed for the study, and the analytical techniques used to complete the task. Results were examined and evaluated in light of the fieldwork's original goal. The basic assumption is that while reading a book, English language learners will use various elements of connected speech. The fieldwork study's major hypothesis is that ESL learners will not use as many related speech elements as the native model. The four processes of coalescence, assimilation, elision, and linkage have been chosen for examination.

Carnero conducted a research in which the participants' outcomes were used to generate the results of an arithmetical average. The most noticeable characteristic, with an average production of 12.5%, was coalescence. The most noticeable characteristic, with an average production of 49%, was assimilation. With an average production of 83.3%, Elision was the least prominent feature. The least noticeable element, linking, got an average of 0%. The findings in the areas of elision, linkage, and global results were the most crucial information in this text. The participants supplied an average of three examples of elision; however, ~~but~~ the American model pronounced all, but one of the cases. Only two of the five instances were pronounced by the

American model during linking, while none of the examples were created by the participants. He always used the most obvious example, and one participant created and bought an in the test. Participants produced 168 features out of a total of 600, realizing an average of 8.4 characteristics per participant (28% of the total). This was higher than predicted.

With percentages of 48.3% and 27.9%, respectively, elision and assimilation were the most prevalent traits, leaving coalescence with 19.4% and linkage with only 15% of output. Except for a few, participants with greater reading comprehension scores did not perform any better than the other participants after the analysis. The limits that were experienced while developing this fieldwork, as well as the broad concepts that were supplied by the development and the outcomes of the final analysis, were the most crucial information in this book. The main issues that came up during the fieldwork's development had to do with the outcomes, namely how challenging it was to get reliable data. Additionally, it was not stated-the amount of time participants spent each week reading or watching English-language television, and if that had any bearing on their ability to produce related speech elements.

The pronunciation element is key in the language acquisition process. As explained by Visentin, A. (2020), in the investigation "English Pronunciation Teaching and Learning: A Focus on Connected Speech" The University of Padua, Padua, it is considered that poor pronunciation is the biggest obstacle to effective communication, so it is important to emphasize these qualities when teaching and studying pronunciation. Teachers complain that they lack the skills necessary to teach suprasegmental pronunciation lessons, which often solely focus on segments. According to Busà (2008), connected speech processes (CSPs) should be taught independently from segmental and suprasegmental elements in pronunciation classes. In spoken language, connected speech refers to continuous sound sequences that make up utterances or dialogues. To help close

the gap in CSP (Connected Speech Process) research and practice, this dissertation investigated connected speech in English pronunciation teaching and learning.

Moreover, it tried to respond to the study topic of what effect CSP training has on intermediate English learners' pronunciation. The segmental and suprasegmental characteristics of English pronunciation were covered in the first chapter, whereas connected speech was covered in the second chapter. The categorization of CSPs by Alameen and Levis was presented, along with the six types they considered to be the most significant being displayed. The text tackled two chapters on language instruction: connected speech instruction through an online classroom study and basic English pronunciation instruction. The third chapter explored the current state of English education globally, and the fourth chapter examined connected speech instruction in online classroom research.

Additionally, the article covered the significance of comprehension and intelligibility in learning pronunciation, as well as the significance of phonological control descriptors in teaching connected speech. Moreover, it talked about the significance of phonological control descriptors in teaching connecting speech, as well as the significance of phonological control descriptors in teaching connecting speech. In this work, 19 B1-level EFL students' pronunciation was evaluated regarding connected speech training (CSPs). It sought to advance current linguistic research on connected speech, teaching, and learning. The way sounds are produced when we speak incorporates several different factors, including articulation, stress, linking, and intonation.

Different techniques when teaching English language shown to be effective according to Torres et al. (2020) in the thesis entitled "The Implementation of Minimal Pair Techniques to Improve Pronunciation in Ninth-Grade Students in Cindea Nosara," Universidad Latina Costa

Rica, San José. The research project was designed to meet the demands and needs of learners on English pronunciation. The usage of the R.A.P. framework (Recognition, Articulation, and Production) and the minimal pairs technique, which employs various English phonetic sounds in words with comparable meanings, were shown to be useful in helping students improve their pronunciation in the classroom. Pronunciation instruction needs to be included in all English classes across all teaching modalities in the public school system. To improve intonation and word syllabification accuracy and fluency, minimal pair approaches are used.

Seven chapters made up the paper. The first one provided an overview of the introduction, justification, purpose, general and specific objectives, research questions, and hypothesis. The design and methodology were examined in Chapter 3; and the findings, data analysis, reflections, conclusions, and recommendations were presented in Chapter 4. For English teachers and students, pronunciation is crucial to communication. This study identified the shortcomings and inadequacies that students have been experiencing in the classroom because of the teacher's lack of enthusiasm, self-assurance, expertise, training, and knowledge. For progress, it is advised that minimal pairings be implemented using the R.A.P. framework, the articulation region, productive practice, and the four Ps. The purpose of this study was to demonstrate how the minimal pair strategy can help ESL learners pronounce voiced and voiceless sounds more accurately.

Torres et al. (2020) considered that the numerous uses of English in Costa Rica's tourism, hospitality, aviation, retail, industry, services, communication, financial transactions, etc. make it a crucial language. Although, speaking is a crucial ability in the study and teaching of languages, it is not a simple production activity. Grammar exercises and grammatical correctness are emphasized as learning objectives in teaching methods and instructional materials. In the

classroom, oral language is infrequently used, and teachers might not want to devote class time to speech output. Fluency is the capacity for accurately describing events or situations; pronunciation is the capacity for producing understandable utterances; grammar is the set of rules governing the typical arrangement and relationship of words in a sentence; and vocabulary is the use of words and expressions to convey attitude.

1.5 Scope

The scope of this thesis project is tailored to address the specific needs of 6th-grade students, with a primary focus on enhancing their pronunciation and fluency skills. This improvement will be achieved through the utilization of connected speech techniques, including elision, assimilation, linking, and intrusion, which are integral aspects of achieving natural and fluent speech patterns in the English language. Moreover, the central aim of this thesis is to develop and implement a comprehensive set of activities that will enable 6th-grade students to master these connected speech techniques. These activities will encompass a range of instructional strategies and assessment methods to provide a well-rounded approach to improving students' pronunciation and fluency.

This thesis will provide an in-depth exploration of the connected speech techniques mentioned, namely elision (omitting sounds), assimilation (blending sounds together), linking (connecting words smoothly), and intrusion (introducing additional sounds). Through comprehensive analysis and examples, students will gain a clear understanding of these techniques. In addition, the core of this project will involve creating a range of engaging activities and exercises that specifically target the application of these techniques. These activities will be tailored to the cognitive and linguistic development stage of 6th-grade students.

6th-grade students will actively participate in pronunciation practice sessions using the developed activities. They will be encouraged to apply these techniques in various speaking exercises, conversations, and presentations. Therefore, the implementation of connected speech techniques in the context of elision, assimilation, linking, and intrusion is expected to yield several positive outcomes: Students will develop a greater ability to pronounce words and phrases more naturally, resulting in clearer and more fluent speech. Moreover, as students become more proficient in pronunciation, their confidence in speaking English will increase, leading to more effective communication.

The skills acquired through this thesis project will be applicable in real-life communication situations, benefiting students not only in the classroom but also in future endeavors. Improved pronunciation can positively impact students' performance in language-related subjects and assessments. The techniques explored in this thesis will equip students with valuable tools for continuous language improvement throughout their lives. Furthermore, this thesis will contribute to the field of language education by focusing on the practical application of connected speech techniques to improve the pronunciation skills of 6th-grade students. The expected impact includes enhanced pronunciation, increased confidence, and improved communication skills, which are vital for success both academically and in everyday life. By providing a comprehensive scope and tangible outcomes, this project aims to empower 6th-grade students with the tools they need to become more proficient and confident English speakers.

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

The following chapter will develop several different topics essential for this investigation, which will focus on pronunciation techniques and language acquisition. This chapter delves into various aspects that enhance the understanding of pronunciation and its significance in language learning. It will explore pronunciation techniques, covering their purpose, the impact of connected speech, elision, assimilation, and the role of linking and intrusion. Moving on to the next aspect that will be mentioned, the fascinating process of language acquisition is unraveled, highlighting how sounds are produced and the roles of both teachers and students, in this journey. Furthermore, it provides clear definitions of key terms, including pronunciation, fluency, techniques, and language, establishing a solid foundation for subsequent chapters. Embark on this enriching journey to refine your pronunciation skills and enhance your language acquisition abilities.

To start with, why does good pronunciation matter? Good pronunciation in English serves multiple important purposes. Firstly, it ensures clear communication by accurately conveying ideas and messages, minimizing confusion and misunderstandings. Additionally, it improves comprehensibility by allowing both native and non-native English speakers to understand non-native speakers, allowing listeners to concentrate on the message rather than struggling to understand incorrectly pronounced words. Furthermore, good pronunciation helps to reduce the influence of native accents or regional dialects, facilitating integration into English-speaking communities and promoting smoother interactions.

In professional contexts, clear pronunciation is highly valued, as it can positively impact job interviews, presentations, client interactions, and teamwork, reflecting competence and effective

communication skills. Moreover, mastering pronunciation boosts the confidence of English learners, enabling them to actively participate in conversations and social interactions. Lastly, good pronunciation improves listening comprehension by familiarizing learners with the nuances of spoken English, such as sounds, stress patterns, intonation, and rhythm, enhancing their ability to understand native speakers and unfamiliar words or phrases. Overall, good pronunciation plays a vital role in effective language learning and successful communication in personal and professional settings.

The importance and extent of pronunciation in communication are often underestimated. It serves as the essential foundation for spoken language, as thoughts need to be articulated through sound to be heard and effectively conveyed to others. Pronunciation is not only necessary for speaking, but also for establishing meaningful and understandable communication with another person. Furthermore, it ensures the clarity required for listeners to distinguish words within a continuous stream of speech, allowing them to comprehend and construct coherent patterns of meaning. In addition, pronunciation conveys information about the speaker and the communicative context, leaving a specific impression and establishing a shared understanding between the speaker and listener, which is essential for successful communication. In the bargain, when the term pronunciation is used," as stated by Lewis, J. (2018), this is referring to a complex system of sounds and prosody that conveys information through categorical contrasts (such as phonemes), systematic variations (such as allophones), and individual variations that may indicate gradient differences like gender, age, origin, etc.

According to Jarosz, A. (2019), regarding the conceptualization of pronunciation.

Today's pronunciation instruction appears to have a more nuanced perspective, acknowledging that both suprasegmentals and some segmental features, such as the distinction between /ɪ/ in pill and /i/ in peel, can negatively affect communication and how native interlocutors perceive non-native speech. These language learners' needs have led to a significant renewal in pronunciation instruction in recent years. The desire of individuals to communicate drives them to recognize the value of being comprehended in cross-cultural contexts. Thus, speaking intelligently becomes of most significance.

Another important element is phonology when it comes to learning good and effective pronunciation. The term "phonology" refers to the sound system of a language; that is, the distinctions in sounds that are significant for that language. It can also refer to the sound stratum or level of language as opposed to the "higher" strata of language, such as lexis and syntax. Phonology is distinguished from these "higher" strata of language by its distinction from the other "lower" strata of language (Pennington, M., and Rogerson, P., 2019, p. 3). Readers need to differentiate phonetics from phonology, since there might be confusion between both terms. To support this explanation, Davenport, M., and Hannahs, S.J. (2010) imply that phonetics examines the physical properties of speech sounds, including how they are created (articulatory phonetics), heard (auditory phonetics), and perceived (acoustic phonetics). On the other hand, phonology is concerned with how the sound system underpinning speech sounds, in a given language, is organized, including how sounds may be blended, how they relate to one another, and how they influence one another. Despite having a lot in common, phonetics and phonology are separate schools of study that take a different approach to speech sounds.

Phonology does not work alone, on the contrary, it is influenced by several components. as Bybee, J. (2003) explains that the depiction of phonology is influenced by a speaker's or

listener's experience with language in a variety of ways. For instance, high-frequency words and phrases have more robust memory representations, which makes them easier to retrieve and less prone to analogy alteration. Low-frequency words, on the other hand, are more challenging to recall and may even deteriorate to the point where they are lost. Additionally, when words are used in certain situations, their lexical power may alter. Stronger patterns are those that apply to more things.

Moreover, language just did not happen out of nowhere. To explain better the process, the book *How Languages Are Learned* written by Lightbrown, P., and Spada, N. (2021), highlight that numerous theories for learning English have been proposed throughout the years. There are certain very traditional objectives for students, such as learning a lot of vocabulary and grammatical rules, as well as translating multiple texts and encountering challenging vocabulary in the process. On the other hand, other proposals emphasize the need for language learners to memorize phrases and dialogs to progress. According to the authors, there are also other, more modern methods for learning it, such as using the language frequently in conversation with other students to increase vocabulary and fluidity.

It is a fact that becoming multilingual might be easier for some people. However, this does not mean that not everybody can learn more languages. In fact, there are limitations that speakers can face during this learning process. Brown, J. D., and Crowther, D. (2022) considered that there are certain limitations when it comes to learning English. They mentioned that people think that language is composed of grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary. Words linger, suggesting that learners should expand their traditional sets of linguistic tools if they want to become proficient in the language. Tutees should know about both traditional and non-traditional linguistic tools that the authors mentioned in their book, such as the suprasegmental

ones, which can include word stress, the quality of voice, and connected speech. Then, aside from paralinguistic aspects such as facial expressions, eye movement and body language in general, for example, hand movements; there is another important aspect, that is proxemics, which have to do with the distance among speakers and involve aspects like physical distance and touching. Lastly, the authors talked about kinesics, which is related to the body's usage while speaking and can include the position, stance, and posture that speakers have while they talk.

It is extremely important to link both pronunciation and connected speech as key concepts. According to Small, L. H. (2019), when a word is pronounced carefully as a single item, it is said to be spoken in its citation form and can be defined as connected speech. The identity of a word spoken in citation form may differ markedly from its identity in connected speech. Connected speech results from joining two or more words together in the creation of an utterance.

In connected speech, words are uttered continuously, as they would in everyday conversation. In English, words can be joined in a wide variety of ways. Small, L. H. (2019) classifies the connected speech processes as assimilatory and non-assimilatory. As an assimilatory process, he includes regressive and progressive assimilation. In order to understand these processes, Trask, L. (2017), explains that assimilation is: "Any phonetic or phonological process in which a particular sound becomes more similar to some other nearby sound. For example, when ten pence is pronounced as [m] pence, the /n/ has been assimilated to the following bilabial /p/."

Before diving deep into these two terms, Small, L. H. (2019) stressed the word coarticulation. He explains that when speakers talk, they need to overlap words to speak fluently

and to maintain rapidity in connected speech. He also stated that coarticulation is an efficient process that saves time, since there is not sufficient time for the articulators to produce each phoneme in its isolated form. Moreover, coarticulation aids the speaker in producing connected speech more easily. If every phoneme had to be produced in its complete isolated form for every syllable and word, speech would be laborious and slow.

Regressive assimilation, also known as right-to-left assimilation or anticipatory assimilation, is a type of assimilation where the characteristics of a phoneme are altered by a subsequent phoneme. Progressive assimilation, on the other hand, happens when a phoneme's identity evolves because of a phoneme that came before it in time. Left-to-right assimilation and perseverative assimilation are other names for this process. In other words, the articulators continue to produce a certain phoneme while maintaining a specific posture for a subsequent phoneme.

Subsequently, Small, L. H. (2019) ~~he~~ includes elision in the non-assimilatory processes of connected speech. He also mentions other techniques such as epenthesis, metathesis, and vowel reduction, but for investigation purposes, only elision will be explained and emphasized. He explains that due to specific phonetic situations, it is frequent in English for phonemes to be completely erased during production. One way to pronounce the word "exactly" is /zktli/. In this particular pronunciation, the "t" has been dropped. Elision is the process of leaving out a phoneme while speaking. Small concludes that elision frequently happens due to historical development as a language matures. Additionally, elision causes coarticulation in related speech. It has been discovered that certain phonetic settings can cause elision to happen across word borders. Elision is a common feature of spoken language and can vary across different accents,

dialects, and speech contexts. Language learners need to be aware of elision and its impact on pronunciation to better understand and produce connected speech in authentic conversations.

Furthermore, Gerald K. (2001) explains that linking and intrusion happen when the letter comes in the written word after a vowel (as in car or carve) and the // [JA1] phoneme is employed in the pronunciation of the word (as in /kair/ and /karv/). [JA2] This is referred to as a rhotic or rautik accent in some English dialects. Examples include the majority of American English dialects, Irish English, and a few regional British accents. Other accents, which do not pronounce the /r/, produce the sounds /ka:/ and /ka:v/ [JA3] instead. The pronunciation we hear is not rhymed.

Fluency issues are almost always the result of learners' discomfort speaking aloud because doing so can reveal the well-known "accent." It is emphasized by Jones, R., and Themistocleous, C. (2022) that every speaker has an accent. This occurs because of the unique phonological characteristics that every speaker possesses. Additionally, they pointed out that speakers of General American in the US or Received Pronunciation in the UK lack accents; rather, they speak with regional accents. The fact that only 3% of English speakers use Received Pronunciation (RP) is significant and leads to a calm place when it comes to learning pronunciation and fluency.

Although, connected speech is a crucial component of English pronunciation, it can be challenging for beginners to grasp. However, there are a variety of tools accessible to teach students about connected speech and with enough practice, it is possible to speak English with fluency in this area. Second language acquisition is a phrase that is extremely important to this investigation. However, how can one define this term? To begin with,

according to Lessard-Clouston (2018), learning a language in one's mother tongue is what is meant by language acquisition. Second language learning occurs when a person succeeds in learning a second language in addition to their first one. According to Lessard-Clouston, -the boundary between the two languages tends to get a little confusing for kids who grow up hearing them both from an early age.

It is commonly believed that children are more likely to become fully proficient in a language than adults. Pennington, M., and Rogerson, P. (2019) explain that this was previously thought to be because children have an inborn language-specific cognitive capacity. However, the authors mentioned that recent research suggests that other factors contribute to this difference, such as the amount of exposure to the language and the motivation to learn. Children are more likely to be exposed to a language from a young age, and they have more opportunities to use the language in everyday life. This gives them a head start on learning the language and helps them develop a strong foundation. The book infers those adults, on the other hand, often have less exposure to the language. They may only learn the language in school or in a classroom setting, and they may not have as many opportunities to use the language outside of the classroom. Additionally, children are often more motivated to learn a language than adults. They are eager to communicate with others, and they are not as self-conscious about making mistakes. Young adults, on the other hand, may be more hesitant to speak a language if they are not confident in their abilities.

Nevertheless, this does not mean that only children learn English correctly and adults do not; instead, Brown, S., and Larson-Hall (2022) mention that many people have the misconception that children are sponges who absorb everything and are always "ready" to learn whatever the adults wish to teach them. Moreover, while seeing children learn is sometimes

fascinating and impressive, the author points out in her book that adults too underestimate their learning capacity. The author [JA4] also states that several linguists think that individuals possess a natural ability or aptitude to acquire languages. Advocates of this perspective instruct that this process will take place whether or not parents fix their children's grammar and regardless of the quantity or nature of outside influences that the kids are exposed to. Young children do appear to learn their native language in a manner that is quite natural and mimics human development processes that occur naturally, such as learning to walk or perceive the visual environment.

Next, several processes occur when people speak. According to Crystal, D. (2018), when a person talks, all of these aspects of their vocal production, including vowels, consonants, and tone of voice, are happening at the same time. Any given word or sentence can be broken down into the vowel and consonant sounds that comprise it. Nevertheless, when spoken, these sounds cannot exist in isolation from the speaker's tone of voice. Crystal, D. also mentions that when people think of pronunciation, they frequently think just in terms of the vowels and consonants in a word, as well as the way that these components mix to form syllables. It is a hangover from the days when language was written down.

Because the letters of the alphabet represent vowels, consonants, and other sounds, we can identify them. To support this thought, Davenport, M., and Hannahs, S.J. (2010) tell the reader to think about how a sound like [t] is produced. They said that for the sound to be generated, an array of independent events must take place simultaneously. These include the flow of air from the lungs, separation of the vocal cords for voicelessness, elevation of the velum for an oral sound, and contact between the tongue's blade (the active articulator) and the alveolar ridge (the passive articulator). The voiced [d] would be produced if the vocal cords were closer

together, causing vibration; the fricative [s] would be produced if the tongue's blade were lowered to close approximation with the alveolar ridge; the nasal sounds might be produced if the velum were lowered; and further on. Sounds can be broken down into different numbers or articulatory properties, and these new combinations generate new sentences and therefore, new sounds when spoken.

However, as with everything in life, every major event has a starting point. In this case, how did language originate? The origin of language is a subject that has fascinated humans for centuries. While the exact origins remain uncertain, it is widely believed that language emerged as a fundamental tool for communication and social interaction. As early humans evolved and developed complex cognitive abilities, they felt the need to convey thoughts, emotions, and information to one another. This led to the gradual development of a system of sounds, gestures, and symbols that eventually evolved into what we now recognize as language.

In the book, *Language: Its Nature, Development, and Origin* written by Jespersen, O. (2021), for instance, it is posed some crucial concerns that prompt readers to consider the origins of languages. Questions such as, "How did the first words begin?" What relationship is there between a name and the thing it refers to? Why is such-and-such a person or object known by this name rather than that? In reaction, the author explains that the questions were largely theological: either God, or a particular god, created language, or God brought all of the animals to the first man so that he might give them names. Because of this, the Old Testament describes the diversity of languages as a punishment from God for the sins and haughtiness of man. However, early Jews were also worried about minor, more specialized linguistic problems, such as when etymological explanations of personal names were offered when they did not immediately make sense. These were major, pervasive problems.

According to StudySmarter (n.d.), there are four theories of language: behavioral theory, cognitive theory, nativist theory, and Interactionist Theory. To start, a component of behavioral philosophy is the behavioral theory of language learning, sometimes known as the imitation hypothesis. According to behaviorism, we are a result of our surroundings. Children lack the internal processes or capacity to independently acquire language. According to BF Skinner (1957), children first pick up a language by mimicking their caregivers, who are typically their parents, before changing their language, resulting in operant conditioning.

Furthermore, the Cognitive theory of language acquisition, human ideas, and internal workings are what primarily motivate their behavior. According to Jean Piaget (1923), infants have very limited cognitive capacity at birth, but as they get older and interact with the outside world, their minds expand and form new schemas. The ability to assimilate new knowledge into what was previously established to accommodate new information allows them to eventually apply language to their schemas. Piaget thought that language development should proceed with cognitive development since children cannot communicate concepts they do not yet grasp. No matter how much they are taught a language, a younger child who lacks a concept of time, for instance, cannot talk hypothetically or in the future tense. Likewise, according to Chomsky's (1957) Nativist theory, infants are born with the language acquisition device (LAD) to learn, use, or desire to learn languages. He said that even if a kid is not schooled in the language of their home nation, as long as they are raised in a growing cultural setting, they will still develop a verbal communication system. As a result, learning a language must have an intrinsic, biological component.

The last theory explained in the website is the Interactionist theory, proposed by Jerome Bruner in 1961. He stated that children can acquire and use language, but they need consistent

interaction with their parents, caretakers, or teachers to do so fluently. The Language Acquisition Support System (LASS) is the name given to this concept. Children's verbal errors are frequently corrected by caregivers, and they are also routinely taught what various items are and what they are used for. According to Bruner, doing so aids in creating the support structures that kids will later rely on as they continue to improve their language skills.

As humans began to live in larger communities, the ability to communicate effectively became increasingly crucial for survival and collective advancement. Over time, this necessity drove the development and refinement of language as a complex and adaptable system. Language likely started with simple sounds, gestures, and facial expressions that conveyed basic meanings. As human societies grew more sophisticated, these early forms of communication evolved and became more structured and nuanced. The development of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary allowed for the expression of abstract concepts and the transmission of complex ideas across generations.

In the realm of teaching pronunciation in English, the role of the teacher becomes even more crucial. As educators delve into the intricacies of language origins and their significance, they bring that knowledge into the classroom to guide students in their linguistic journey. Recognizing the historical, cultural, and cognitive aspects of language, teachers understand the impact of accurate pronunciation on effective communication. They facilitate a deeper understanding of the complexities of language by encouraging students to explore and refine their pronunciation skills. By connecting the study of language origins with the practical application of pronunciation, teachers help students to grasp the interconnectedness of language development and its role in shaping human nature and communication. Through their expertise

and guidance, teachers empower students to not only master pronunciation, but also to appreciate the profound impact language has had on our evolution as a species.

The role of the teacher in teaching pronunciation in English is paramount. A skilled teacher understands the significance of accurate pronunciation in effective communication and takes on the responsibility of guiding students toward clear and intelligible speech. They guide articulatory techniques, stress patterns, intonation, and phonetic features specific to English pronunciation. The teacher serves as a model, demonstrating proper pronunciation and facilitating practice opportunities for students to imitate and refine their pronunciation skills. They also provide constructive feedback, pinpointing areas for improvement and offering strategies to overcome challenges.

Moreover, a knowledgeable teacher recognizes the individual needs of students and tailors instruction accordingly, by employing various teaching methods and resources to engage and support diverse learners. They create a supportive and inclusive classroom environment where students feel comfortable taking risks, experimenting with new sounds, and building confidence in their pronunciation abilities. Ultimately, the teacher's role is to empower students to develop accurate pronunciation, enabling them to effectively communicate and engage with others in the English-speaking world.

Even though, the significance of English pronunciation has already been discussed, many institutions still do not give it the significance that it deserves. This may be due to a variety of factors, such as a lack of visibility or a lack of resources to explain the topics, either because the institution lacks such resources or because the instructor is not properly prepared to cover the topics. Additionally, other skills, like grammar and writing, are always given priority.

Additionally, many teachers are hesitant to teach the language orally, since their foundations may not be the strongest in this field, which causes uncertainty in the students' learning. The geographical component is quite influential. This emphasizes the fact that different educational institutions prioritize other languages above English depending on the country in which they are located. In Costa Rica, for example, the second-most important language after Spanish is French. Therefore, public institutions focus more on that language than English. Therefore, students in public institutions do not develop proper skills, and they are not able to speak English fluently.

Teachers might indeed "miss" some aspects when teaching pronunciation or not teach it at all. However, another question pops up: why do individuals not learn it? To support this idea, Lane, L., and Brown, H. D. (2010) mentioned in their book that many factors affect pronunciation, including age, social-psychological factors, amount of exposure to the second language, amount of use of the second language, the native language, and personality. 9 Additionally, speaking rate, errors in grammar, word choice, discourse markers, the age at which English is learned, the amount of exposure the learner has had to natively speak English, the extent to which learners use English, and the listener's familiarity with the topic of conversation, have all been shown to affect comprehensibility. Yoshida, M. T. (2016) supports this theory and explains that age might influence it, since young learners can absorb information faster than adults.

There is a famous proverb that says, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink." This is translated as You can give all the tools or lead the way, but you cannot force people to take that chance. The same situation happens with motivation. The lack of motivation to learn pronunciation might lead learners to experience minimal interest in the learning process. It needs to be something that facilitators should implement in their classes,

so students keep their motivation and participate in the knowledge process of pronunciation.

Yoshida suggests to the instructors that when they become fully aware of each student's goals, motivation will persist in class.

Furthermore, Yoshida mentioned that personality traits influence pronunciation significantly. She says that everyone is different, and even though outgoing personalities tend to speak more confidently and freely, it does not mean that only outgoing people can learn pronunciation correctly. They can feel more confident to express themselves and talk, but they can also jump ahead in the learning agenda, cause confusion for other learners, and mispronounce words. On the other hand, introverted learners may be more cautious in their learning path. They tend to analyze and practice more before deciding to speak.

An instructor should have well-developed leadership skills to help students to learn. The importance of leadership in teaching lies on its ability to inspire, guide, and empower both educators and students. Effective leadership in the teaching profession fosters a positive and supportive learning environment where teachers can excel in their roles and students can thrive academically and personally. Strong leadership encourages collaboration, continuous professional development, and the implementation of innovative teaching practices.

A competent and visionary leader in education can shape the school's culture, set high standards, and ensure a focus on student success. Ultimately, leadership in teaching plays a pivotal role in creating a conducive atmosphere for learning, fostering growth, and nurturing future generations of capable and confident individuals. According to Sullivan, D. K. (2022), leadership can be defined by as many different things as possible for different individuals.

Some people think that to lead, there must be two individuals involved for one of them to lead the other. In addition, it has an intentional influence; the person who leads the other being or group of individuals wants them to do something. The author considers that being a good teacher has a lot to do with also being a good leader. She mentions that when confronted with a situation requiring leadership, a good teacher frequently demonstrates the qualities and abilities of a good leader. The teacher, like any other leader, is aware that obstacles will always exist, and that change is unavoidable. Both the instructor and the leader see opportunities and advantages in taking chances and learning from past mistakes. Each frequently ponders the effects and ramifications of their deeds and ideas. Both the instructor and the leader are aware of the value of teaching, learning, and success within a community. These fundamental character traits contribute to the development of a climate that fosters natural learning and leadership.

Nevertheless, it is not only that teachers have to be great leaders for students to teach a topic with the impact that they want to transmit, but they also have to teach with a purpose. Teaching with a purpose is essential, as it gives direction and meaning to the educational process. When educators have a clear purpose for their teaching, they can design effective learning experiences that align with specific goals and objectives. This purpose-driven approach helps to keep both teachers and students focused and motivated, creating a more engaging and meaningful learning environment. Having a purpose in teaching allows educators to tailor their instructional methods and content to better meet the needs of their students. It enables them to choose relevant and meaningful learning activities that foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and skill development. Moreover, a well-defined purpose helps teachers to assess and measure students' progress more effectively, ensuring that learning outcomes are achieved.

Teaching with purpose also helps to instill a sense of meaning and relevance in students' learning experiences. When they understand the purpose behind what they are learning, students are more likely to be motivated and engaged, as they can see how the knowledge and skills they acquire will be valuable in real-life situations. Malin, H. (2018), reinforces this perspective. She mentions that some educators could see value in introducing students to the realm of ideas through literature. Others could find fulfillment in helping to build a society with greater equality. Many people who work in the field of education are driven by many goals. Many others, however, may find it difficult to answer these questions because they have been disconnected from the motivation that led them to work in education due to external pressures. The fact that purpose is not always the starting point for a professional decision, complicates things even further. Instead, it is feasible and even typical to begin a job or profession with no specific goal in mind and discover one along the way, or to begin a career with a certain purpose in mind and change it over time.

There must be teamwork to get successful results during the learning process. The role of the student in learning English as a Second Language (ESL) is vital and encompasses active participation, responsibility, and commitment. As language learners, students must take an active role in their learning process. They should engage in various language activities, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing, to develop their language skills comprehensively. They also have the responsibility to set goals and objectives for their language learning journey. By identifying their specific needs and areas for improvement, they can focus their efforts on acquiring the necessary language skills and knowledge. They should actively seek opportunities to practice English both inside and outside the classroom, such as engaging in conversations with

native speakers, watching English-language media, or participating in language exchange programs.

Additionally, learners need to be proactive in seeking clarification and asking questions when they encounter challenges or uncertainties. They should actively participate in class discussions, engage in group activities, and take advantage of feedback provided by teachers and peers to enhance their language proficiency. By taking ownership of their learning process, they should maintain a positive attitude, perseverance, and a growth mindset. Learning a new language can be challenging at times, but with dedication and a willingness to embrace mistakes as part of the learning process, students can progress and achieve their language goals. Ultimately, the student's role in learning ESL involves active engagement, responsibility for their learning journey, and a commitment to continuous improvement, leading to greater success in acquiring English language skills.

The learning experience of learners is significantly influenced by how facilitators deliver their lessons. The integration of creativity in instruction is paramount, as it not only enhances learning outcomes, but it also creates a lively and engaging classroom atmosphere. When teachers incorporate creative approaches into their lessons, they can capture and maintain students' attention, stimulate their curiosity, and facilitate a deeper understanding of the subject matter. Creative teaching methods offer a more individualized and varied learning experience, catering to the diverse learning styles and preferences of students. Recognizing that not all students learn in the same manner, innovative educators can tailor their teaching approaches to accommodate different learning needs. This fosters a more inclusive and effective learning environment, where all students have the opportunity to thrive and excel.

Moreover, creative instruction promotes the development of critical thinking skills in learners. By presenting information in unique and imaginative ways, teachers encourage students to think beyond conventional boundaries, analyze concepts from various perspectives, and engage in problem-solving. This cultivates their ability to think critically, tackle challenges, and enhance their overall cognitive development. Additionally, creativity in teaching contributes to the establishment of a positive classroom culture. When students are actively engaged and derive enjoyment from the learning process, they become more motivated to learn and take ownership of their education. By employing creative and innovative presentation methods, teachers can reach a wider spectrum of students, tapping into their diverse interests and learning styles, thus fostering an environment that encourages active participation and enjoyment of learning.

Furthermore, creative instruction nurtures a sense of autonomy and curiosity among students. By presenting unique challenges or projects that require creative solutions, students are encouraged to think outside the box, explore alternative perspectives, and enhance their analytical and innovative skills. This approach empowers students to take an active role in their learning journey, fostering a mindset of lifelong learning and self-motivation. In summary, incorporating creativity into teaching is essential for optimizing the learning experience of students. It enables teachers to capture students' attention, cater to diverse learning styles, promote critical thinking skills, foster a positive classroom culture, and inspire students to become self-motivated learners. By embracing creativity in instruction, educators create an environment that encourages active participation, promotes deeper understanding, and cultivates a love for learning among students.

Apart from that, encouraging creativity in kids is another benefit of creative instruction. Students are more inclined to embrace their creativity and apply it to other parts of their lives

when they observe innovative teaching techniques that encourage innovation and adaptation. Teaching with creativity enhances the learning process, encourages active participation, and equips students to develop their own creative and autonomous thought processes. It gives them the skills they need to prosper in a world that is changing quickly and gets them ready to face difficulties in the real world with courage and resourcefulness. As per Cremin, T. (2022), the existence of a trusting and supportive atmosphere in the classroom is essential for fostering individual agency and self-determination, as well as valuing, exploring, and celebrating the children's ideas and interests. Moreover, she mentions that facilitators who are secure in their subject-matter expertise, as well as their understanding of creative educational practice, may foster creativity by modeling the characteristics of creativity and creating an environment where creative chances are encouraged.

A creative approach to teaching English includes many fundamental components that empower instructors to make well-informed judgments during both the preparation stage and actual classroom interactions. By incorporating creative teaching strategies, educators can make pronunciation lessons engaging, interactive, and enjoyable for learners. Games, role-playing, storytelling, and multimedia resources can be utilized to introduce and reinforce pronunciation concepts. Creativity, in teaching pronunciation, not only increases learner motivation and engagement, but also it promotes retention and overall learning outcomes. Employing creative approaches allows learners to explore and practice pronunciation in diverse and meaningful ways, enhancing their proficiency in this vital aspect of language learning.

To help the reader understand the research, it is ~~it's~~ essential to define the basics, which is the term "fluency." According to Multilingual Matters (2019), fluency refers to an individual who is proficient in speaking skills in the target language. Teachers should make it their main

goal to teach fluency to ESL students. In addition, to be able to master a language and communicate effectively, fluency is crucial. In addition, in many facets of personal, intellectual, and professional life, it is very important. Fluency, first and foremost, facilitates successful communication. It enables people to convey their thoughts, ideas, and feelings clearly and easily. Consequently, a person who speaks a language fluently can have interactions that flow naturally, improving understanding and minimizing misunderstandings.

Moreover, it boosts individuals' confidence when ~~in~~ using a language. When someone can speak fluently without struggling to find words or structure sentences, they feel more confident in their language abilities. This increased confidence encourages them to actively participate in discussions, express themselves more freely, and build stronger interpersonal connections. In real-world situations, fluency becomes even more crucial. In professional settings, fluency enables individuals to present their ideas, negotiate, persuade, and collaborate effectively. It is particularly important for job interviews, public speaking, customer service, and leadership roles. Fluency empowers individuals to express themselves professionally and provides credibly; thus, opening opportunities for career advancement.

Furthermore, fluency also facilitates cultural integration. When someone can communicate fluently, they can engage with native speakers, understand cultural nuances, and participate in social interactions more easily. Fluency helps to bridge gaps among different cultures, fostering mutual understanding, respect, and appreciation. It allows individuals to immerse themselves in a new culture and fully participate in its social, professional, and educational aspects.

Moreover, in both academic and professional contexts, fluency in a language is essential for success. It not only enables students to understand lectures, actively participate in discussions, and articulate their thoughts effectively, but it also enhances their reading comprehension, writing proficiency, and critical thinking abilities. Fluent language skills grant students access to a broader range of educational resources, allowing them to engage with academic materials and excel in their studies. Fluency extends beyond academic and professional spheres, bringing personal growth and opportunities. It enables individuals to connect with people from diverse backgrounds, fostering meaningful relationships and cultural exchange. Fluency facilitates travel, empowering individuals to navigate new environments and experience different cultures more authentically. Additionally, being fluent in a language opens up opportunities for personal enrichment, such as reading literature, watching movies, and appreciating various forms of art in their original language.

Although achieving fluency in a language requires considerable time and effort from both the instructor and the student, it is indeed possible to teach and develop fluency skills. As noted by Jones (2022, April 5), instructors can support their students' journey toward fluency by creating a classroom environment that encourages free expression. This can be achieved by incorporating spoken exercises that grant students the autonomy to choose their topics of discussion and how they articulate their thoughts. By allowing students the freedom to express themselves, they are more likely to engage actively in the learning process and take ownership of their language development.

Furthermore, projects and activities that foster a desire to engage in conversations and active listening, can greatly contribute to the development of fluency. Assignments that require students to participate in discussions, debates, or collaborative projects provide opportunities for

meaningful interactions. Both the speaker and the listener must have something valuable to contribute to the conversation, encouraging active participation and fostering a genuine exchange of ideas. By creating a purposeful and engaging learning environment, instructors can motivate students to strive for fluency and actively work towards improving their communication skills. While teaching fluency requires time and dedication, it is rewarding for both instructors and students. By providing ample opportunities for self-expression, encouraging meaningful interactions, and fostering a classroom culture that values active communication, instructors can support their students in developing the fluency skills necessary for effective language use. With persistence and a supportive learning environment, learners can gradually enhance their fluency and confidently navigate real-life communication situations.

Prioritize time for planning and linguistic scaffolding before the activity, as this allows students to approach the task with greater confidence. Fluency in speaking is directly influenced by one's confidence level. Therefore, adequate preparation plays a crucial role in boosting that confidence. When learners are well prepared, they feel more comfortable and are better able to express themselves fluidly. By dedicating time to planning and linguistic scaffolding, educators can help to alleviate reluctance and promote a smoother flow of speech. Additionally, it is essential to allocate time for providing feedback on the perceived level of work complexity and communication ease. Engaging in discussions with students about any challenges or hurdles they encountered during the activity, helps to identify areas that may require further attention or support. By addressing these issues, teachers can assist students in overcoming difficulties and fostering their development. Moreover, during the activity, it is valuable to explore with the students what fluency means to them individually. Fluency can have different interpretations and expectations for each learner. Thus, understanding their perspectives can provide valuable

insights into the instructional process. By actively engaging students in discussions about fluency, teachers gain a deeper understanding of their unique goals and aspirations, allowing for a more personalized and effective approach to instruction.

In conclusion, teaching pronunciation involves employing a range of techniques, addressing inhibiting factors, recognizing the roles of teachers and students, and utilizing phonological knowledge creatively. By utilizing effective teaching strategies, recognizing, and addressing inhibiting factors, and fostering a supportive learning environment, educators can empower learners to improve their pronunciation skills and achieve accurate and fluent communication in the target language.

Chapter III

Methodological Framework

The purpose of this paper is to investigate whether teaching connected speech strategies is useful in improving the pronunciation abilities of sixth-grade children who attend New Hope School. It is impossible to overstate the importance of proper pronunciation in terms of achieving successful communication, as it was discussed in Chapter 2. One of the most important aspects of learning a language and becoming fluent in it, is developing the articulation skills necessary to say words and sentences correctly while maintaining a natural tone. Because of this broader context, the complexities of connected speech methods, which include phenomena such as elision, assimilation, linking, and intrusion, become particularly relevant in the pursuit of attaining a native-like pronunciation.

This section is to shed light on the impact that teaching such speech strategies has on the pronunciation competency of sixth-grade students by delving into the methodological framework that underpins the design and procedures of this research endeavor. The methodological approach that this study takes aims to be all-encompassing by fusing together theoretical foundations, teaching methodologies, and assessment procedures. The researcher hopes to make a significant contribution to the field of language education, particularly within the one-of-a-kind setting that is New Hope School, by adopting this comprehensive method as strategy for doing so.

By carefully traversing the complex intersection of theory and practice, the goal is to offer teachers with a deeper grasp of how to improve the pronunciation training that is given to their students. Moreover, the goal of this research is to serve as a guiding light on how to improve pronunciation instruction in our educational system, so it can be more effective and

interesting to students. The end goal is to provide the students with the knowledge and abilities they need to communicate effectively and with self-assurance in the English language, not only during their academic careers but also in the broader context of their lives.

3.1 Research Approach

In pursuit of the overarching objectives aimed at enhancing the pronunciation skills of sixth graders within the unique educational context of New Hope School through the implementation of connected speech techniques, the chosen research approach will be qualitative in nature. A qualitative research methodology, as eloquently described by Thomas, K. (2014), delves into attributes, qualities, or characteristics associated with a unit of observation. These attributes could encompass a broad spectrum, including factors like gender, hair color, place of birth, learning requirements, and more. The application of a qualitative research approach is driven by the aspiration to attain a comprehensive and multifaceted understanding of the effects of teaching connected speech techniques. This approach allows for a more in-depth exploration of the experiences, perspectives, and nuances that shape the students' journey toward improved pronunciation. By venturing beyond mere quantitative data and delving into the qualitative aspects, the researcher seeks to uncover the intricacies and subtleties that quantitative measures might overlook.

As this study unfolds, it aspires to generate rich, qualitative insights that will not only benefit the immediate educational environment of New Hope School, but also to extend their influence to the broader realms of language teaching and pronunciation instruction. The qualitative findings are poised to provide valuable input, shedding light on the dynamic interplay between pedagogical strategies and students' learning experiences. These insights hold the

potential to inform future research endeavors, guide educators in refining their instructional practices, and contribute to the ongoing evolution of effective language teaching methodologies. In essence, this research embodies the spirit of exploration and discovery, guided by the belief that a qualitative approach will illuminate the path toward more effective pronunciation instruction, while nurturing a deeper understanding of the intricacies of language acquisition. It is a journey of empowerment, both for the sixth graders at New Hope School and for the broader educational community, as we continue to navigate the ever-evolving landscape of language education.

3.2 Research Design

The investigation aims to use an action-oriented and descriptive research design. Moreover, the study aims to explore the effectiveness of teaching connected speech techniques to improve the pronunciation skills of sixth-grade students. It recognizes that pronunciation is a complex and nuanced aspect of language learning, involving various phenomena like elision, assimilation, linking, and intrusion. Therefore, a descriptive approach allows researchers to delve deeply into these phenomena, providing a comprehensive and accurate portrayal.

According to the Business Research Methodology (n.d.), the action research approach can be defined as "An approach in which the action researcher and a client collaborate in the diagnosis of the problem and the development of a solution based on the diagnosis." In other words, one of the main characteristic traits of action research is collaboration between the researcher and members of an organization to solve organizational problems. Action research assumes the social world is constantly changing, with both researchers and research being part of that change. Generally, action research can be divided into three categories: positivist,

interpretive, and critical. Furthermore, this study aims for the action research approach because it is iterative, involving cycles of planning, action, observation, and reflection. In this paper, the research design encompasses an ongoing process of implementing connected speech techniques, assessing their impact, and refining instructional methods based on observed outcomes. The iterative nature of the action research allows for continuous improvement and adjustment to achieve better results.

On the other hand, the descriptive approach, according to Hassan, M. (2023, June 28), is a kind of research that tries to describe or record the traits, actions, attitudes, viewpoints, or views of a population or group under study. A descriptive research design avoids aiming to anticipate future results or establish cause-and-effect correlations among variables. Instead, it focuses on presenting a complete and accurate picture of the information gathered, which may help to come up with theories, examine trends, and see patterns in the information.

3.3 Information sources

For this study's purposes, several informational sources will be used, such as books and articles, theses from colleagues, and journal articles. As primary sources, the investigator will implement pre-tests, assessments, and questionnaires to the sixth graders from New Hope School. *How to Teach Pronunciation* by Kelly Gerald and *Fundamentals of Phonetics* by Larry H. Small, will be the main two secondary sources that will help to support the research. In addition, two older theses created by other students will also support the research study.

3.4 Analysis Categories

Hassan, M. (2023, April 3) makes reference to the fact that in statistics, an attribute or feature of a data point is characterized by a qualitative variable, which is also sometimes referred to as a categorical variable. A numerical value is not used to define the attribute or feature. In polls and surveys, qualitative variables, which are typically represented by labels or categories such as "male" or "female," are regularly used to collect data on the characteristics of a community. This is the case because qualitative variables are easier to classify. As qualitative variables, strategies of connected speech including elision, assimilation, connecting, and intrusion will be used in this inquiry. The phrase "words that are spoken one after another, which may be heard as a continuous sound rather than as separate words" is how connected speech is described in the Cambridge Dictionary. According to the website Tools for Clear Speech, the assimilation technique refers to the process by which two sounds can become more similar to each other through the use of successive speech. This procedure makes it possible for sound combinations to be spoken more easily, which ultimately results in improved fluency (Tools for Clear Speech, n.d.).

According to the Collins English Dictionary, elision can be described as the omission, assimilation, or slurring over of a vowel, syllable, etc. in pronunciation. This is sometimes utilized in poetry to retain meter, such as when a word finishes with a vowel before another word starts with a vowel. Another qualitative variable that is brought up is linking and intrusion. Linking, in its most fundamental form, refers to the natural inclination of native English speakers to blend many words together until they seem like a single word (Lillet, A., n.d.). Intrusion, on the other hand, refers to the process of inserting words into a sentence that does not belong there. In addition, the phenomenon known as "linking vowel to vowel," which occurs when one word

finishes with a vowel sound and the following word begins with a vowel sound, contributes to the phenomenon of intrusion. There are now three more sounds available to learn: /w/, /r/, or /j/.

The sound /j/ is like the letter "y" in yellow (RMIT Training, n.d.)

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

In the context of data collection for this research, a diverse array of instruments will be thoughtfully employed. Initially, the research methodology encompasses an observational approach. This entails observing and engaging with the interviewed group in order to glean comprehensive insights into their English language learning journey. The primary focus is to delve into their learning strategies, the specific topics they engage with during their language acquisition process, and, notably, their proficiency in spoken English. This observational phase aims to provide a holistic understanding of the participants' learning dynamics.

Additionally, a set of pronunciation tests will be conducted as a pivotal component of data collection. These tests have been meticulously designed to assess the students' pronunciation and fluency in the English language. The testing procedure necessitates students repeating sentences and individual words; thereby, allowing for a precise evaluation of their linguistic dexterity. Furthermore, these assessments encompass targeted exercises in elision, assimilation, as well as linking and intrusion techniques, offering a comprehensive assessment of their language competency in both formal and informal conversational contexts.

Furthermore, upon the completion of the initial assessment of the participants' English language fluency, the researcher will proactively engage the students in a series of connected speech exercises. These exercises have been thoughtfully curated with the express intention of honing the students' fluency and pronunciation skills. As an integral part of the research design, a

follow-up assessment will subsequently be administered. This follow-up evaluation aims to discern the extent of progress achieved by the students because of their participation in the connected speech exercises. It will also serve to gauge their heightened comprehension of the English language, thus facilitating a nuanced assessment of the learning outcomes.

Subsequent to these assessments and exercises, the interviewees will be requested to complete a survey. This survey will encompass a series of carefully formulated questions that are directly related to their language learning experiences. The survey seeks to solicit their insights, perspectives, and perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the language learning methods and exercises they have engaged in. Through this multi-pronged approach to data collection, the research aspires to garner a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the language acquisition process as experienced by the participants.

3.6 Collection Data Process and Data Analysis

The observation conducted in the segment was carried out meticulously and in great detail to analyze the execution of the instruments used for data collection. On this occasion, it focused on a specific group of students: the 6-C class, consisting of a total of 23 students, with 13 boys and 10 girls. The observation took place during the third and fourth lessons of the day, specifically in the Language Arts classes. It is important to note that the educational institution in question offers various subjects in English. However, for the purposes of this paper, the observation instruments were applied during the Language Arts lessons, as this subject focuses on teaching topics related to grammar, pronunciation, and fluency in the English language.

During the observed lessons, the topic addressed was prepositions of place and time. The students actively participated in the learning process, completing a total of 3 exercises related to

this topic. A high level of commitment and participation by the students was observed, indicating a genuine interest in the subject matter. What sets this classroom apart is the teacher's patience and dedication, especially when it comes to students with learning disabilities. She took the time to explain the material several times to ensure that all students, including those with specific needs, had a clear understanding. Her teaching techniques were effective, and her pronunciation was excellent, providing students with a solid foundation in English language skills.

It is worth noting that the classroom's infrastructure and available resources are sufficient to facilitate a dynamic educational experience. The students have access to technology, such as tablets and laptops, which they use regularly as part of their learning process. The whiteboard used in the classroom is interactive and acrylic, allowing for dynamic content presentation. Furthermore, all exercises, presentations, and other activities are hosted on the Microsoft Teams platform, from which the teacher projects them onto the whiteboard, fostering a technologically advanced learning environment.

In the context of this detailed observation, it is relevant to highlight that certain peculiarities were identified in the group of observed students. It was noted that three students exhibited symptoms and characteristics suggesting the possibility of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). However, as of now, they have not received a formal diagnosis for this condition. Furthermore, another student in the group has a visual impairment that affects their ability to see the educational materials clearly. As a supportive measure, this student is seated in the front row of the class to enhance their view of the whiteboard and presentations. Additionally, all printed materials are adapted with a more legible and larger font format to ensure the student can access information effectively and participate actively in the lessons.

These specific circumstances within the group add an important dimension to the classroom dynamics and emphasize the need to adapt and personalize teaching to address the individual needs of each student, which is an essential aspect of an inclusive and quality educational process. These additional considerations provide valuable context for the subsequent analysis of the observation results within the paper's framework. In summary, the observation in the 6-C Language Arts classes revealed an environment of active learning and technological readiness, with students fully engaged in the learning process and a teacher who demonstrated patience and excellent teaching techniques, especially with students who have specific learning needs. This information will serve as a solid foundation for further analysis within the context of this paper.

Moreover, two assessments were administered on Monday, October 30, during the 8th and 9th lessons, while the 6C students were attending the Oral Communication Skills subject. These assessments aimed to evaluate and provide insights into the students' pronunciation and communication abilities. The first assessment constituted a comprehensive evaluation of pronunciation and articulation, featuring four distinct parts. In the initial part, students were given a specific set of words to pronounce. These carefully chosen words, including "elephant," "important," "comfortable," "chocolate," and "library," aimed to assess various aspects of pronunciation and articulation. This component of the assessment aimed to determine the students' ability to accurately enunciate common words, serving as a reflection of their competence in oral communication.

The subsequent part of the assessment, termed "Sentence Pronunciation," required students to articulate a series of sentences. This component was designed to evaluate their capacity to pronounce more extensive phrases and sentences with precision. It delved into

aspects of fluency, clarity, and pronunciation within the context of sentences. The sentences presented for this portion of the assessment included examples like: "The brown fox jumped over the lazy dog", "She sells seashells by the seashore" and "A big, red balloon floated in the sky." These sentences were thoughtfully chosen due to their incorporation of diverse sounds, words, and sentence structures; thereby, posing challenges to the students' pronunciation skills. The assessment aimed to provide valuable insights into the students' ability to communicate effectively, especially within the framework of more intricate spoken language contexts, thus offering a comprehensive view of their overall oral communication proficiency.

The third part of the assessment, known as the "Bonus Challenge," introduced a tongue twister for students to pronounce: "How can a clam cram in a clean cream can?" This tongue twister was chosen for several reasons. First, it presents a level of phonetic complexity that can be challenging for students to articulate clearly. It incorporates a series of sounds and consonant clusters, particularly the "cl" and "cr" consonant blends, which are known to be difficult to pronounce, especially in rapid succession. Second, the tongue twister emphasizes the importance of articulation and diction. Each word in the sentence is crucial, and even a slight mispronunciation can render the sentence incomprehensible. This makes it a valuable tool to evaluate how effectively students can articulate sounds and words. Furthermore, the tongue twister encourages students to work on their fluency and their ability to enunciate sounds clearly, even when speaking at a rapid pace. This aspect of the assessment tests not only their pronunciation skills, but also their overall communication abilities in challenging conditions.

Ultimately, the choice of this tongue twister in the "Bonus Challenge" was intended to push the boundaries of students' pronunciation and articulation skills. It offered a more advanced level of assessment beyond the initial word and sentence pronunciations. Tongue twisters like

this one are frequently used to improve speech clarity and enunciation and using it in the assessment added a fun and engaging element to evaluating the students' oral communication skills.

The second assessment, like the first, took place during the 8th and 9th lessons. However, this test had a different focus, centering on the application of Connected Speech techniques. It comprised five distinct parts, with students tasked with reading phrases aloud while the instructor assessed their pronunciation and fluency. Part one of the assessment delved into the "Elision" technique. Students were prompted to pronounce specific sentences with a focus on blending words together smoothly in a conversational manner. For instance, they were instructed to say the phrase "I am going to" as if they were engaged in a quick conversation, emphasizing the fluid connection between words. Another example involved saying the phrase "Could you" naturally, with an emphasis on omitting the 'd' sound in 'could.'

Part two shifted the students' attention to the concept of "Assimilation." The sentences provided for practice were designed to help students observe and understand how certain sounds blend when spoken together. For instance, students were asked to say the phrase "handbag" while emphasizing the 'n' sound in the middle, taking note of how the 'd' sound in "hand" combines with the 'b' sound in "bag." Similarly, they were directed to say the word "impossible" with an emphasis on the 'm' sound in the middle and to observe how the 'm' blends with the 'p' sound.

Part three of the assessment, entitled "Linking and Intrusion," included four phrases that the students had to repeat aloud. The goal was to practice and recognize how sounds connect in speech. For example, students read aloud the sentence "I saw a movie," paying attention to how

the 's' sound in "saw" connected with the 'a' sound in "a." Similarly, they practiced the sentence "She has an apple," focusing on how the 's' sound in "has" linked with the 'a' sound in "an." In addition, students said the word "chimney" and observed how a slight 'y' sound intruded between the 'm' and 'n.' Lastly, they practiced the phrase "next Saturday" and noted how a slight 'y' sound intruded between 'next' and 'Saturday.'" These exercises provided students with the opportunity to understand and apply various connected speech techniques, improving their fluency, articulation, and overall pronunciation skills in real-life conversational contexts.

First and foremost, the students did respond to a "Personal Reflection" survey that encouraged self-assessment, promoting students to critically evaluate their own performance. It allowed students to reflect on their language skills, and the act of rating their abilities provided them with a clear sense of their strengths and areas in need of improvement. This small survey also introduced a student-centered dimension to the assessment. By giving students the opportunity to voice their feelings and self-perceptions regarding their performance, made the assessment more inclusive and reflective of their experiences. This not only acknowledges their role in their learning, but also it strengthens their sense of ownership over their educational journey.

Furthermore, the "Personal Reflection" survey aligned with the concept of metacognition, which involves thinking about one's thinking. It encouraged students to engage in metacognitive processes, fostering a deeper understanding of their own learning and the strategies that work best for them. By combining the objective evaluation of pronunciation and fluency with this subjective self-assessment, the assessment became more holistic. This multifaceted approach offered a more comprehensive view of the students' language abilities, enriched by their personal perceptions and experiences. In summary, the "Personal Reflection" section was selected to add

depth and student-centeredness to the assessment process. It enabled students to express their self-perceived strengths and areas of growth, fostering self-awareness, engagement, and a more well-rounded evaluation of their pronunciation and fluency skills.

Afterwards on October 31st, the instructor proceeded to divide the students into seven groups, each consisting of 3 individuals, with an additional group of 2 students, making a total of eight groups. Each group was assigned a letter from the phonetic alphabet, and their task was to pronounce words corresponding to that assigned letter. The group that managed to correctly pronounce the highest number of words would be eligible for a prize in recognition of their performance. The phonetic alphabet symbols used for this activity included: [i], [ɪ], [ɛ], [æ], [u], [ʊ], [ɔ], [ʌ], and [dʒ]. Each group received a set of four words related to their assigned letter, all within the context of American English. These words were thoughtfully chosen to provide an appropriate challenge to the students and enable them to practice the pronunciation of specific phonetic sounds. The groups engaged in friendly competition to showcase their proficiency in articulating and recognizing these phonetic sounds, adding an element of fun and rivalry to the learning process.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis

In this chapter, the results obtained from the instruments applied to the sixth-grade section C of students at New Hope School will be explored in-depth. The primary goal of this study was to assess the students' fluency and pronunciation skills, utilizing the Connected Speech techniques previously mentioned. It is essential to emphasize the significance of measuring these outcomes, as one cannot improve what is not measured. The data gathered plays a pivotal role in identifying solutions and implementing appropriate actions during the English lessons of these students.

4.1 Analysis and Interpretation of Results

The purpose of this section is to present the outcomes of the instruments that were utilized in the New Hope school's 6-C group. As previously stated in Chapter III, a range of instruments were utilized in conjunction with the target population to assess their English language proficiency. It is noteworthy to mention that this establishment is distinguished by its bilingual nature and the fact that it offers numerous English classes per week to students to provide them with a holistic understanding of the language.

4.1.1. Observation Report

Observation Report 6-C

Statement	Yes	No
Most of the students were paying attention to the teacher.	x	
The class actively participated during the lessons.		x
The teacher explained the instructions clearly.	x	
Most of the audience pronounced words and answered questions fluently.	x	
When the teacher asked specifically to someone, the learner seemed confident.		x
Students were clear about the topics explained during the lesson.	x	
The teacher continuously stopped explaining to check on the learners.	x	

Table 1. Observation Report 6-C. Source: Researcher's creation.

It is important to highlight that the educational institution in question offers various subjects in English. However, for the purposes of this paper, the observation instruments were applied during the Language Arts lessons, as this subject focuses on teaching topics related to grammar, pronunciation, and fluency in the English language. During the observed lessons, the topic addressed was prepositions of place and time. The students actively participated in the learning process and completed a total of 3 exercises related to this topic. Although, the learners did not interrupt the teacher and the majority paid close attention to the topics shared by the

instructor, they struggled when the teacher asked them individually specific questions or asked them to do something individually. They did want to learn, but it looked like they were shy or uncomfortable by the fact that they did not have enough vocabulary, fluency, and better pronunciation to be understood.

What sets this classroom apart is the teacher's patience and dedication, especially when it comes to students with learning disabilities. She took the time to explain the material several times to ensure that all students, including those with specific needs, had a clear understanding. Her teaching techniques were effective, and her pronunciation was excellent. Therefore, this provided students with a solid foundation in English language skills.

The classroom's infrastructure and available resources are sufficient to facilitate a dynamic educational experience. The students have access to technology, such as tablets and laptops, which they use regularly as part of their learning process. The whiteboard used in the classroom is interactive and acrylic, allowing dynamic content presentation. Furthermore, all exercises, presentations, and other activities are hosted on the Microsoft Teams platform, from which the teacher projects them onto the whiteboard, fostering a technologically advanced learning environment.

In the context of this detailed observation, it is relevant to highlight that certain peculiarities were identified in the group of observed students. It was noted that three students exhibited symptoms and characteristics suggesting the possibility of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). However, as of now, they have not received a formal diagnosis for this condition. Furthermore, another student in the group has a visual impairment that affects their ability to see the educational materials clearly. As a supportive measure, this student is

seated in the front row of the class to enhance their view of the whiteboard and presentations. Additionally, all printed materials are adapted with a more legible and larger font format to ensure the student can access information effectively and participate actively in the lessons. These specific circumstances, within the student group, add an important dimension to the classroom dynamics and emphasize the need to adapt and personalize teaching to address the individual needs of each student, which is an essential aspect of an inclusive and quality educational process. These additional considerations provide valuable context for the subsequent analysis of the observation results within the framework of the present investigation.

4.1.2. Knowledge Assessment

As previously stated in Chapter III, two knowledge assessments were implemented with the learners. The first assessment as explained, consisted of four parts: part one “Word Pronunciation,” part two “Sentence Pronunciation,” part three “Bonus Challenge,” and part four “Personal Reflection. The data gathered will be explained below.

4.1.2.1 Word Pronunciation

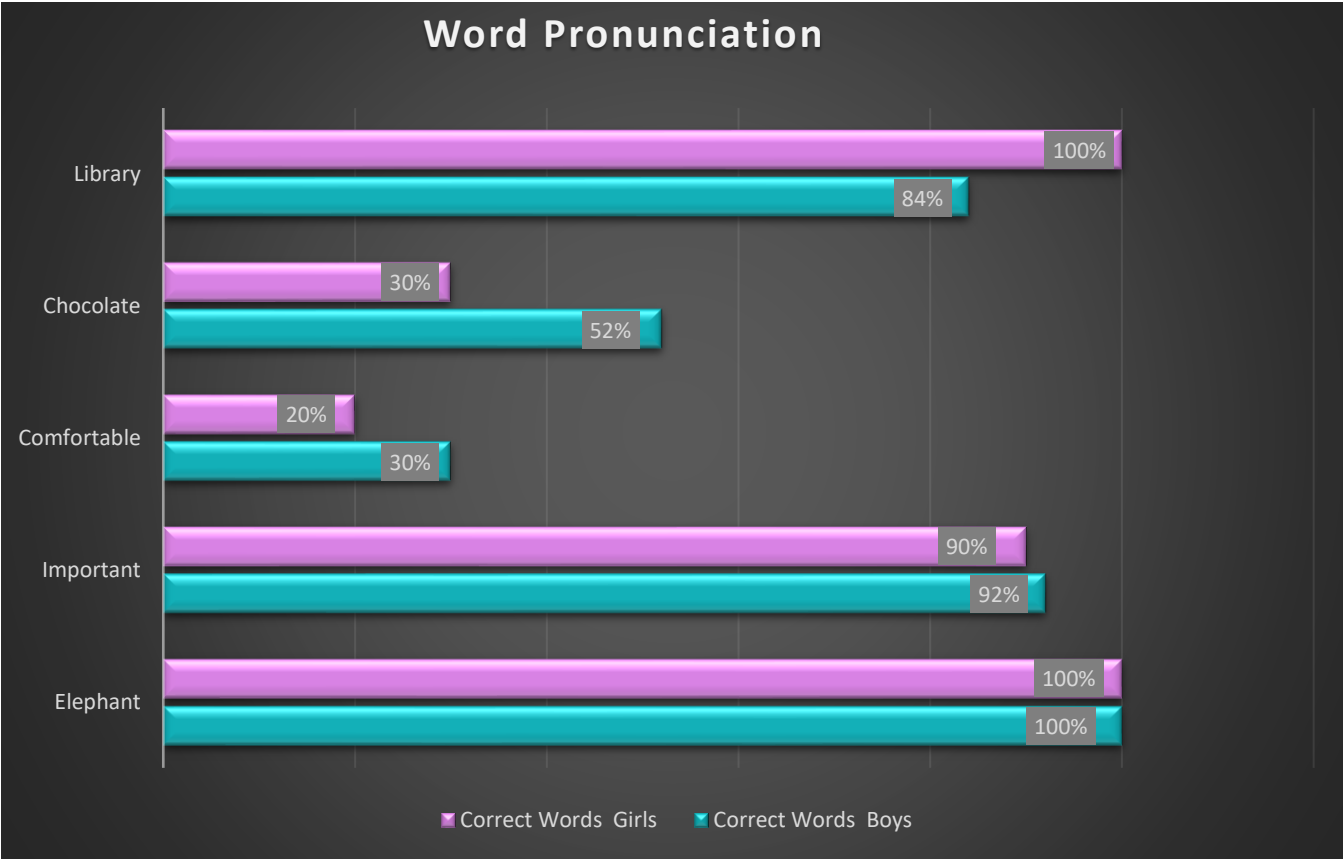


Figure 1. Word Pronunciation. Source: Researcher’s creation.

For research effects, the answers will be divided in the figures by correct criteria; even though, the mistakes made were not major ones. According to the word pronunciation evaluation, the students pronounced the given words in the following way. All 23 students pronounced "elephant" with clear and accurate articulation. Among the 10 girls, 9 pronounced "important" clearly, while 1 had a minor mispronunciation; however, it was still understandable. Among the 13 boys, 12 pronounced "important" clearly, while 1 had a minor mispronunciation, but it was still understandable.

From 10 girls, 8 pronounced "comfortable" with a slight difficulty in enunciation, but it was comprehensible, and 2 pronounced it clearly. Out of all the 13 boys, 9 pronounced "comfortable" with a slight difficulty in enunciation, but it was comprehensible. Nevertheless, 4

pronounced it clearly. Moreover, among the 10 girls, 7 pronounced "chocolate" with a noticeable error, but the word was recognizable. However, 3 pronounced it clearly. Among the 13 boys, 6 pronounced "chocolate" with a noticeable error, but the word was recognizable; and 7, pronounced it clearly. In addition, among the 10 girls, 10 pronounced "library" with clear and accurate articulation. Among the 13 boys, 11 pronounced "library" with clear and accurate articulation, while 2 had minor mispronunciations, but it was still understandable. Furthermore, it is important to mention that the student with visual impairment received the word in an adapted mode. This means that the instructor provided the word in a bigger letter format and with a font that was easier for the student to read.

4.1.2.2 Sentence Pronunciation

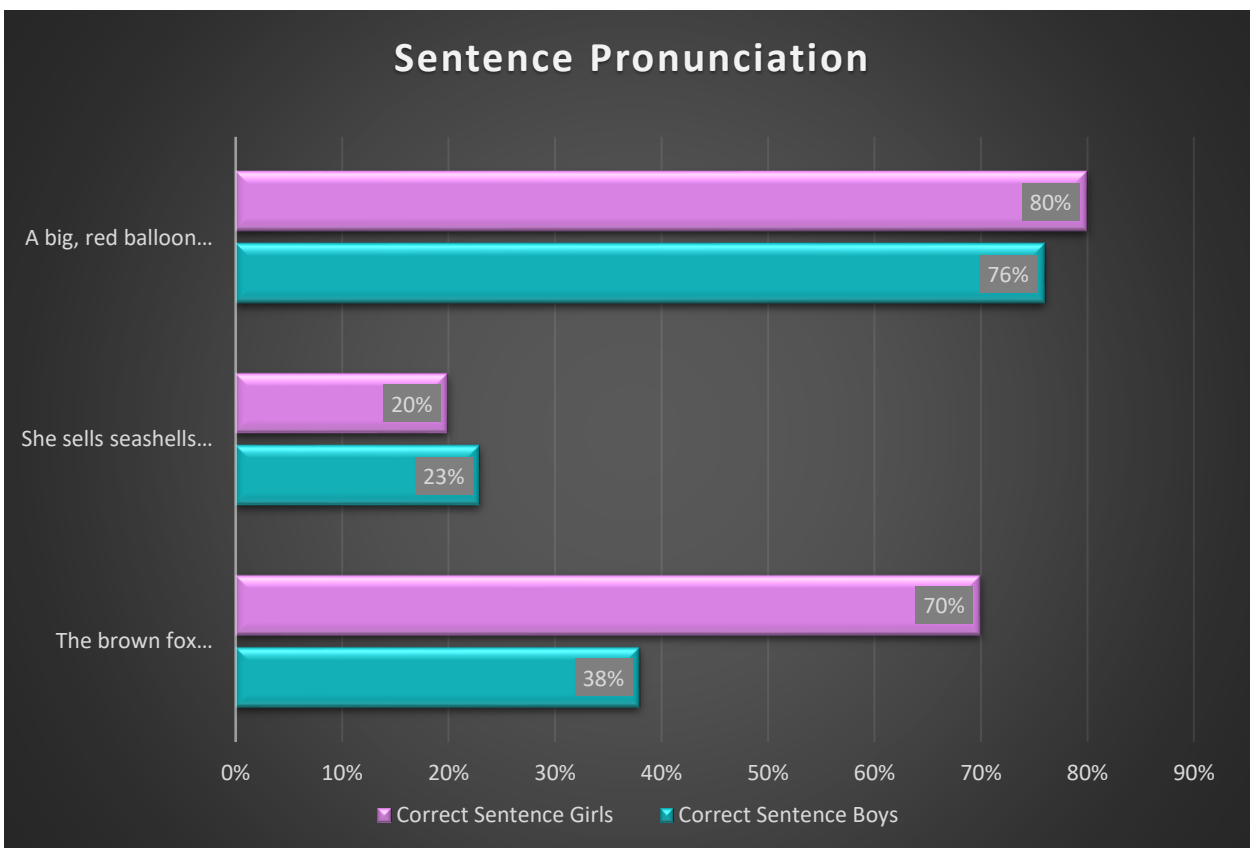


Figure 2. Sentence Pronunciation. Source: Researcher's creation.

As previously outlined in this chapter, Part Two, titled "Sentence Pronunciation," tasked the same groups of boys and girls with the articulation of three distinct sentences. The primary objective was to assess their proficiency in correctly pronouncing these sentences. Let us delve into the results for each sentence individually. To begin with, the sentence: "The brown fox jumped over the lazy dog." Among the 13 boys, a total of 5 successfully articulated the sentence, constituting 38% of the group. Conversely, the female students exhibited a notably higher level of proficiency, with 70% of them enunciating the sentence flawlessly. This equates to 7 out of the 10 female students accomplishing this feat. It is noteworthy that all students who encountered difficulties in uttering the sentence consistently erred the pronunciation of the verb "jumped." Specifically, they enunciated the "-ed" ending quite distinctly; in other words, they did not blend it with the /t/ sound. This divergence resulted in a less coherent and less intelligible pronunciation of the sentence.

Moving on to the well-known tongue-twister, "She sells seashells by the seashore," it can be stated that this sentence posed a considerable challenge for the participants. Among the 13 boys, a mere 3 managed to articulate it without errors, representing a success rate of 23% within the male cohort. Similarly, the girls faced difficulties, as only 2 of them pronounced the sentence correctly, yielding a 20% success rate. It is important to note that those who did succeed in articulating the sentence without errors chose to speak it slowly, underscoring the sentence's intended function as a tongue-twister, designed to enhance language fluency.

Lastly, regarding the sentence: "A big, red balloon floated in the sky", the results were notably favorable. Among the 13 boys, a substantial 10 individuals correctly vocalized the sentence, accounting for a commendable 76% success rate. Among the 10 girls, 8 successfully articulated the sentence, resulting in an even higher success rate of 80% among this group.

4.1.2.3 Bonus Challenge

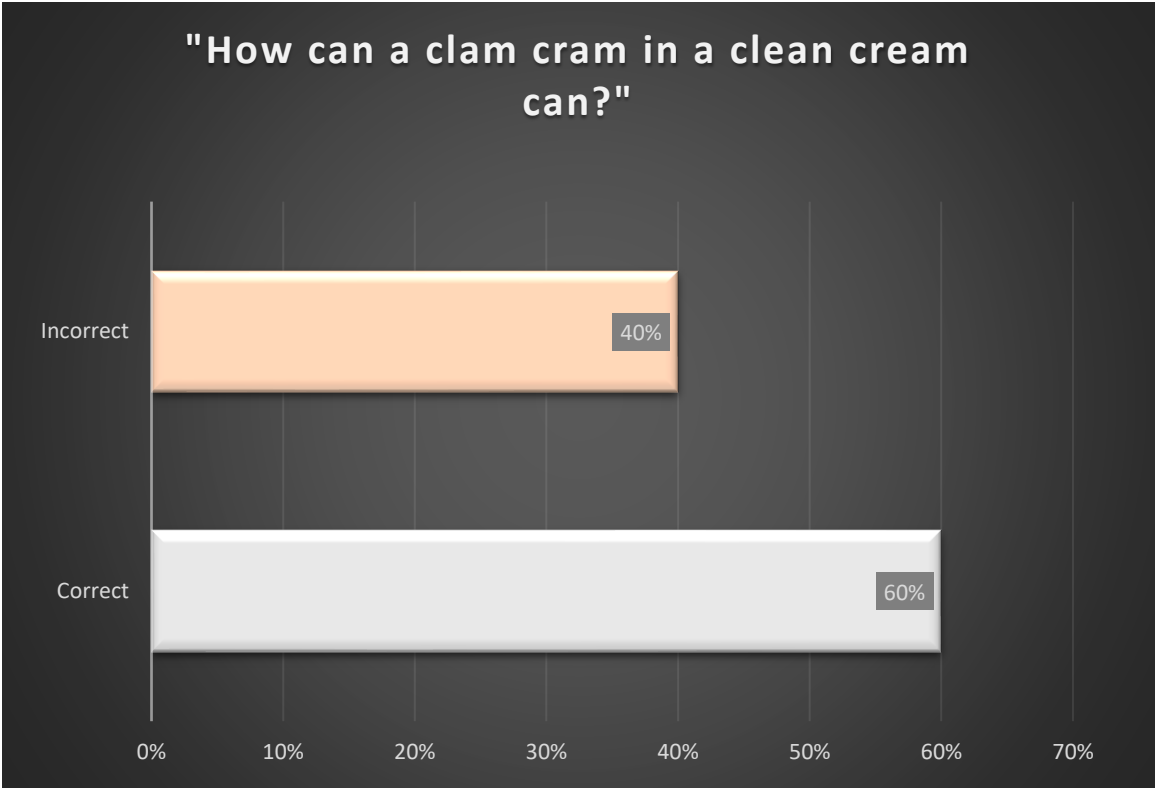


Figure 3. Bonus Challenge. Source: Researcher’s creation.

When concluding the examination, an engaging bonus challenge was introduced—a tongue twister. This tongue twister was presented to the entire class, without any gender-based distinctions. The tongue twister in question was as follows: "How can a clam cram in a clean cream can?" The objective was to determine how many of the 23 pupils in the class could accurately pronounce this challenging tongue twister. Out of the total number of students, 14 managed to effectively enunciate the intricate terms when called upon to do so in front of their peers. Their skillful handling of the tongue twister was certainly commendable. However, it is essential to note that not all students found this task a breeze. In fact, the remaining nine participants encountered confusion, as they attempted to articulate the words correctly. Despite their best efforts, they grappled with the tongue twister, underscoring the complexity of this

linguistic challenge. In summary, this bonus challenge added an entertaining and inclusive element to our examination, revealing the diversity in linguistic abilities among our fellow classmates. While 14 students excelled in these verbal acrobatics exercise, the remaining nine students faced a formidable linguistic hurdle, demonstrating that tongue twisters can truly put one's pronunciation skills to the test.

4.1.3 Connected Speech Techniques Assessment

The sixth-grade students at New Hope School underwent a unique oral assessment, which closely resembled the initial exam they encountered earlier. However, this time, the examination was entirely centered on exercises related to connected speech. Unlike traditional written assessments, this test aimed at evaluating the students' ability to apply the principles of connected speech in spoken language. The examination was thoughtfully structured, comprising three distinct sections, each designed to assess different aspects of connected speech. The first section, aptly named "Elision," challenged the students to demonstrate their proficiency in smoothly blending words together, replicating the fluidity of spoken language. In the second section, "Assimilation," the students were tasked to showcase their ability to seamlessly combine sounds and syllables within words, simulating how native speakers naturally articulate words. The final segment, "Linking and Intrusion," delved into the students' capacity to create coherent and fluid speech through proper linking of sounds and the subtle intrusion of specific sounds between words. This section emphasized the practical application of connected speech principles in real-life communication scenarios.

The upcoming sections will delve into the specific results of each of these components, shedding light on how the students fared in these critical aspects of spoken English. This

examination not only assessed their linguistic abilities, but also provided valuable insights into their readiness to communicate effectively in English, making it a noteworthy evaluation in their language learning journey.

4.1.3.1 Elision

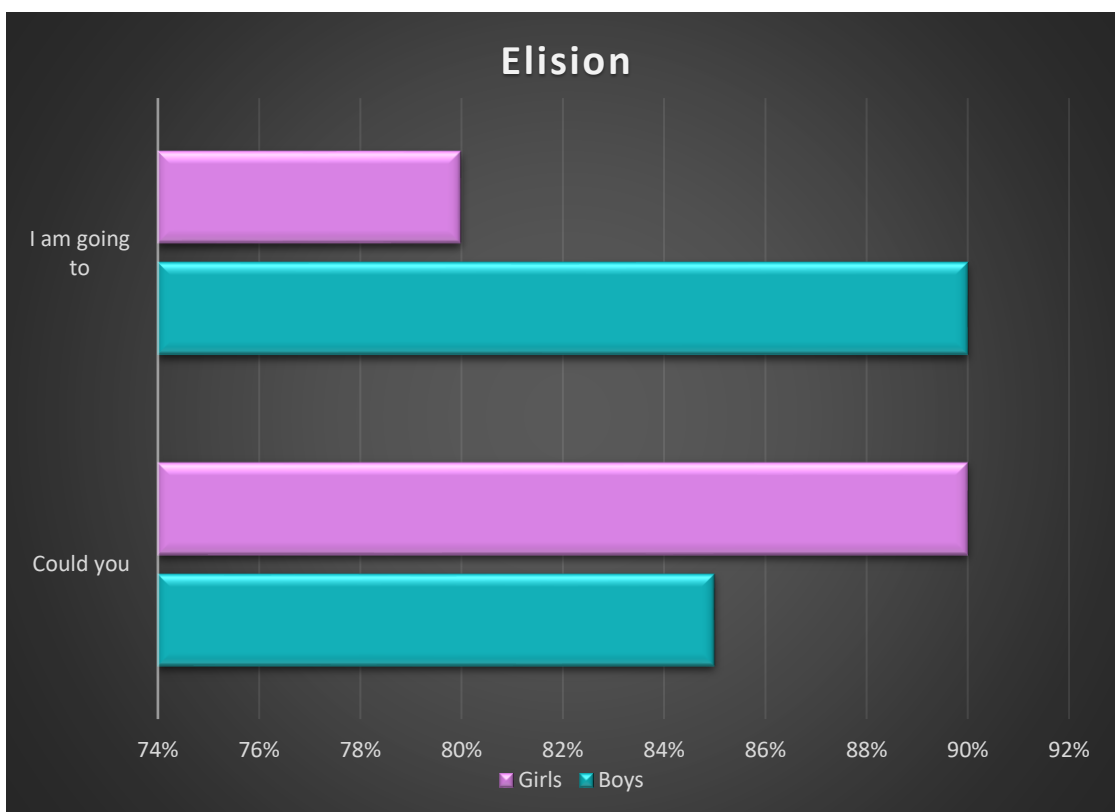


Figure 4. Elision. Source: Researcher's creation.

The students were categorized into two distinct groups: boys and girls. Each group was tasked with pronouncing specific sentences under different speech conditions. The first sentence, "I am going to," required them to articulate it as if they were engaged in a brisk conversation. Additionally, they were instructed to say, "Could you" as if they were conversing naturally, with the added challenge of omitting the "d" sound in "could." Now, let us delve into the results. When it came to the sentence "I am going to," the girls' performance was notable, as 80% of them pronounced it correctly. This translates to 8 out of 10 girls, who successfully delivered the

sentence with the right pronunciation. In contrast, the boys achieved a slightly higher accuracy rate, as 90% of them pronounced the sentence correctly. In numerical terms, this signifies that 12 out of 13 boys mastered the correct pronunciation.

Shifting the focus to the sentence "Could you," it was found that 85% of the boys executed it with precision. This equates to a total of 11 out of 13 boys getting it right. On the girls' side, an impressive 90% successfully pronounced the phrase without any errors. These results showcase the notable performance of both boys and girls in these pronunciation exercises. The data indicates that both groups displayed proficiency in these aspects of connected speech. It is evident that they made significant strides in mastering these linguistic challenges, with only minor differences between the genders.

4.1.3.2 Assimilation

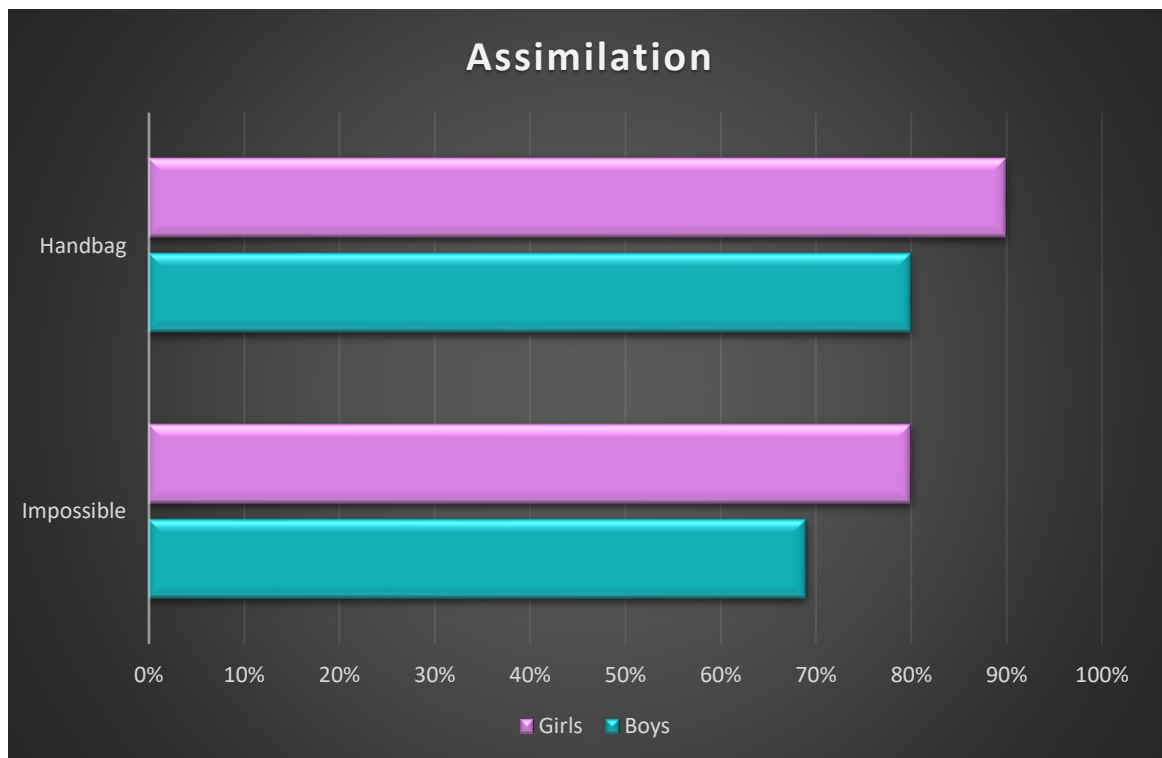


Figure 5. Assimilation. Source: Researcher's creation.

When the assimilation exercises were administered to the students, it resulted in a remarkable performance. Among the girls, a significant 90% accurately pronounced the word, which translates to 9 out of the 10 students. On the boys' side, they achieved an 80% success rate, encompassing 10 out of the total 13 boys. Both sets of results were quite positive, demonstrating the students' commitment to doing well and their eagerness to improve their pronunciation skills.

Moreover, the students were tasked with orally articulating the word "Impossible." The outcome showed that 80% of the female students pronounced this word correctly and fluently. On the boys' side, they obtained a 69% success rate, signifying that 9 out of the 13 boys pronounced it correctly. The slight discrepancy in their pronunciation lay in the fact that the word was often enunciated as if it only contained a single "s," with less emphasis on the double "s" when speaking it. These results emphasize the students' continued dedication to improve their connected speech skills. The fact that most of both girls and boys successfully managed assimilation and fluently pronounced a challenging word like "Impossible," it is indicative of their commitment to enhancing their pronunciation and fluency in English.

4.1.3.3 Linking and Intrusion

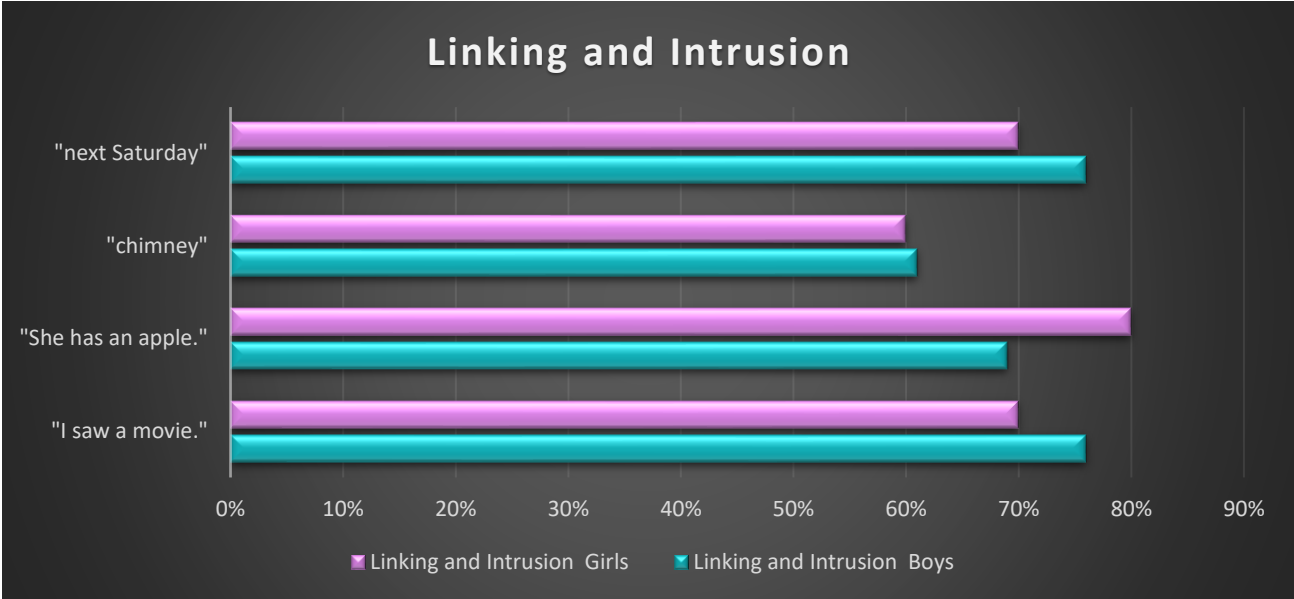


Figure 6. Linking and Intrusion. Source: Researcher’s creation.

In this section, the results proved to be quite intriguing, shedding light on a prevalent issue in English language education, which is fluency. It became evident that both men and women faced challenges in avoiding pauses between words to construct coherent sentences. By taking the phrase "Next Saturday" as an example, 7 out of 10 girls responded with fluidity; this is equivalent to 70% of the interviewees. Among the boys, 77% articulated the phrase fluently, with a subtle accent. This figure signifies that 10 out of the total 13 interviewees got it right. The word "Chimney" was undoubtedly the most challenging for both groups, as both the female and male students tended to insert a sound resembling an "e" between the "m" and the "n." Among the women, 60% responded correctly. This percentage represents only 6 out of the 10 students. On the other hand, the men achieved a 61% accuracy rate in their pronunciation. Furthermore, in the sentence "She has an apple," 80% of the female students and 69% of the male students in the

class pronounced it correctly with the appropriate level of fluency. Those who did not pronounce it correctly often encountered a common issue, namely, the inability to smoothly connect each word, resulting in prolonged pauses between words before proceeding.

Lastly, in the sentence "I saw a movie," the findings revealed that 70% of the girls and 76% of the boys pronounced it as expected, displaying a commendable level of fluency. These findings highlight the critical importance of addressing fluency issues in English language instruction. Both male and female students encountered similar challenges in this regard, emphasizing the need for focused practice in connecting words and forming sentences seamlessly. The students' earnest efforts to improve their fluency deserve acknowledgment, and they are determined to refine their language skills.

4.1.4 Word Game

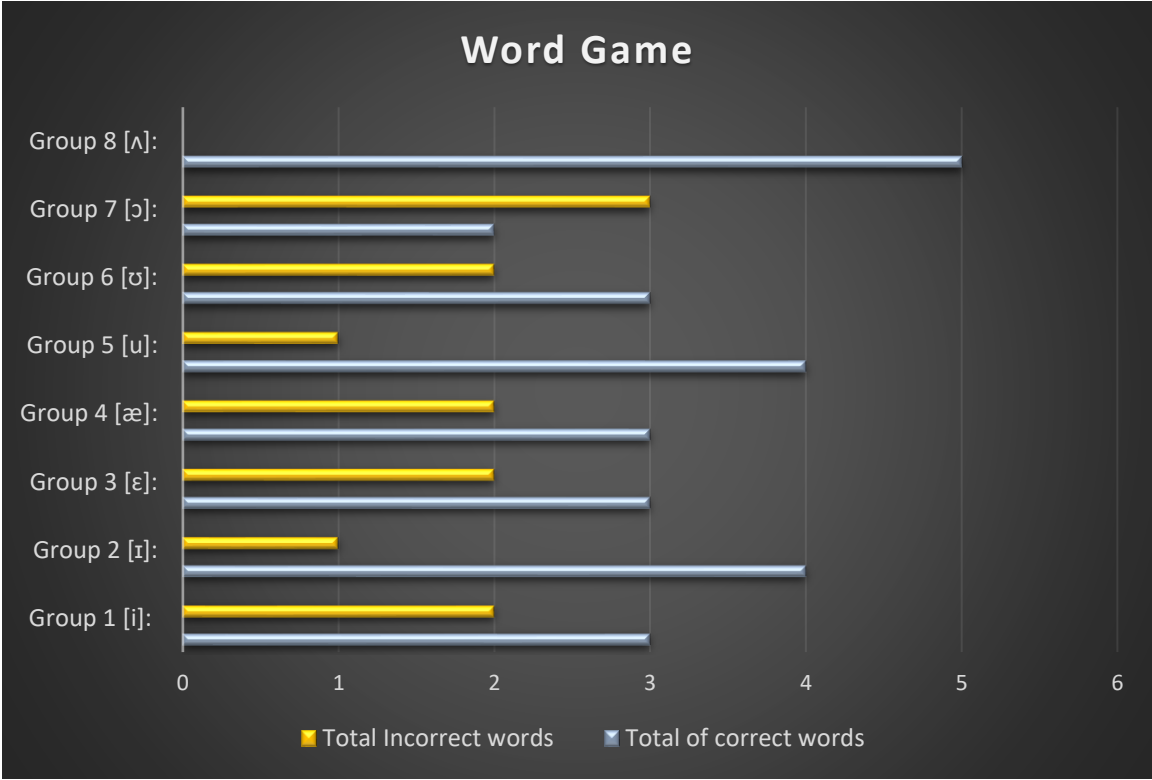


Figure 7. Word Game. Source: Researcher's creation

As stated in Chapter III, students were divided into 7 groups of 3 students and 1 group of 2. Each group was assigned a letter from the phonetic alphabet and with it, a set of words that the students had to pronounce aloud. Please see table below to check the groups and the words assigned.

Group	Group 1 [i]:	Group 2 [ɪ]:	Group 3 [ɛ]:	Group 4 [æ]:	Group 5 [u]:	Group 6 [ʊ]:	Group 7 [ɔ]:	Group 8 [ʌ]:
Word	"beet"	"sit"	"bet"	"cat"	"boot"	"book"	"law"	"cup"
	"feet"	"chip"	"red"	"hat"	"food"	"good"	"jaw"	"luck"
	"machine"	"pig"	"pen"	"man"	"blue"	"put"	"store"	"sun"
	"treat"	"fit"	"bell"	"bat"	"cute"	"look"	"bore"	"fun"
	"sheep"	"whip"	"head"	"sad"	"mood"	"could"	"four"	"hut"

Table 2. Word Game groups. Source: Researcher’s creation.

Group 1 managed to correctly pronounce three out of the five words presented to them: "beet," "treat," and "sleep." However, they encountered some challenges with the words "machine" and "feet." The word "machine" exhibited a pronounced "ch" sound, which was not as smooth as recommended for connected speech techniques. Furthermore, "feet" was pronounced too quickly, resembling the word "fit." In this case, the student responsible of pronouncing it, did not achieve the desired continuity in speech. In contrast, Group 2 performed relatively well, as they accurately pronounced four out of the five words. They encountered a minor issue with the word "pig," which was mistakenly pronounced as "pick." Despite this small slip, the group demonstrated a strong grasp of the pronunciation techniques introduced.

Moreover, group 3 achieved the correct pronunciation of three words: "bet," "pen," and "bell." However, they faced difficulties with "red" and "head." In "red," the final "d" sound was substituted with a "t" sound, while in "head," the "ea" was pronounced as a single "e" sound, deviating from the desired connected speech pattern. Moving on to Group 4, they accurately pronounced three out of the five words. The words "man" and "sad" presented challenges. "Man" was articulated as "men," and "sad" was pronounced as "sat," omitting the final "d" sound. In addition, group 5, as the previous groups, showcased competence in pronunciation by mispronouncing only one word, "food," which was pronounced as "foot." The student's swift pronunciation resulted in a slight deviation from the intended connected speech technique.

Furthermore, in Group 6, minor issues arose with "good" and "could." In the case of "good," the double "o" was not emphasized as a longer sound and was pronounced too quickly. For "could," an extra "l" sound was inserted instead of the intended omission. Group 7, on the other hand, struggled more with pronunciation, managing to correctly pronounce only two out of the five words. They succeeded with "law" and "store," but stumbled with "jaw," where "jau" was articulated instead of the correct pronunciation, and with "bore," where the final "e" sound was erroneously included. Finally, Group 8 stood out as the only group that did not make any pronunciation errors. It is noteworthy that this group consisted of only two students, each accurately pronouncing their assigned words.

These findings provide valuable insights into the students' application of connected speech techniques in their pronunciation. It is evident that while some groups excelled, others faced challenges in maintaining the desired connected speech patterns. This analysis serves as a foundation for further investigating the effectiveness of teaching connected speech techniques to improve the pronunciation skills of sixth-grade students at New Hope School. Based on a survey

implemented with the classmates, all the 23 students were evaluated orally and provided the following answers:

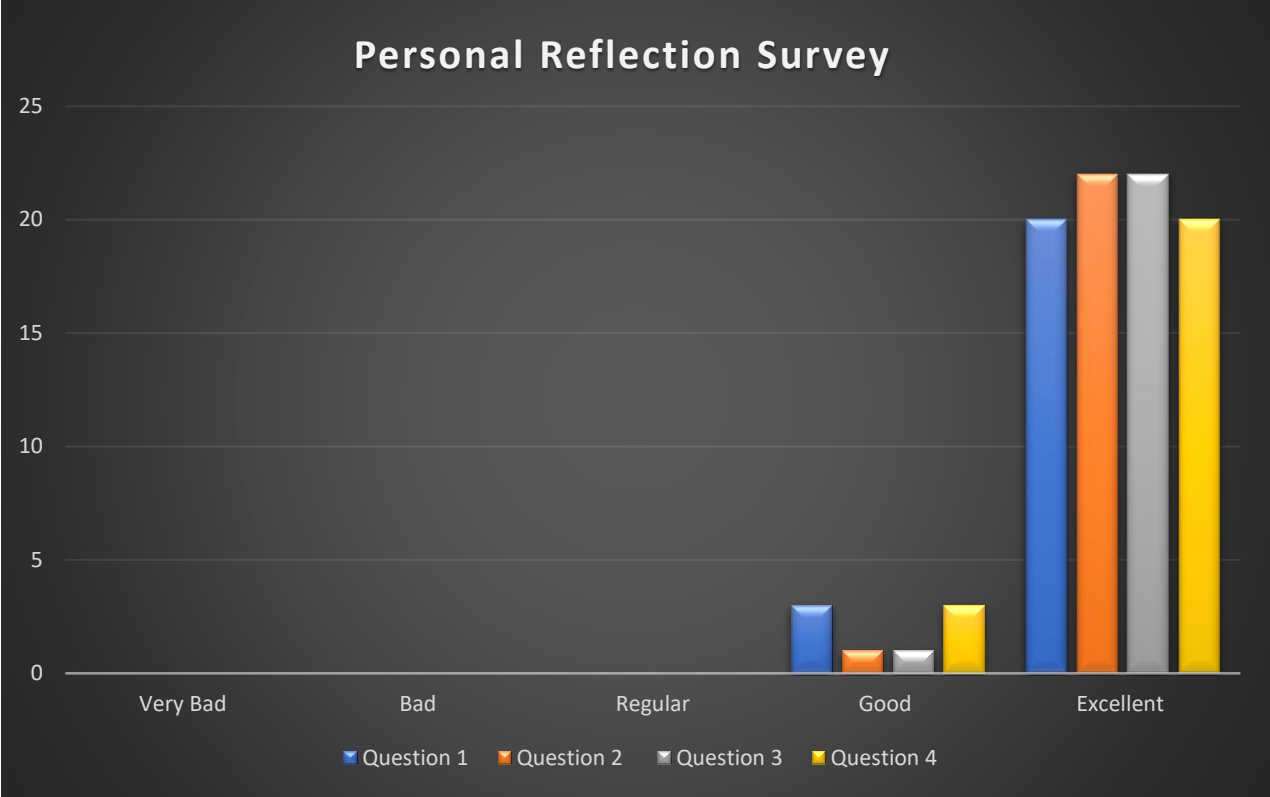


Figure 8. Personal Reflection Survey. Source: Researcher's creation.

According to the figure based on the given responses, 20 students answered that they felt excellent with their English language after the provided exercises. 3 of them responded that they felt good. Regarding question 2, which aimed to understand what students thought of the content shared by the instructor, 22 students responded that it seemed excellent, and 1 thought it was good. Next, for question 3, which inquired about how easy the instructions were to understand, 22 students responded with excellent, and one of them found it to be good. Lastly, question 4, which sought to understand the students' opinions regarding the activities to assess if they were creative and dynamic, resulted in 20 students considering them to be excellent, and 3 of them found them to be good.

4.2 Didactics Guide

In response to the detailed observation in a Language Arts class for 6-C, this guide aims to equip educators with practical strategies for improving students' pronunciation and fluency in English. The observed class, 6-C, comprised 23 students (13 boys, 10 girls) and emphasized English language skills, focusing on grammar, pronunciation, and fluency.

4.2.1 Understanding Classroom Dynamics

The teacher's patience, dedication, and inclusive teaching techniques were notable. Technology, including tablets and laptops, facilitated a dynamic learning environment. The whiteboard, a key tool, was interactive, allowing dynamic content presentation.

4.2.2 Addressing Diverse Student Needs

Identifying students with learning disabilities and visual impairments was crucial. Adapting teaching methods, utilizing technology, and providing enlarged materials catered to diverse learning needs.

4.2.3 Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment

Adapting and personalizing teaching methods to ensure individual student's needs, were met. A supportive atmosphere encouraged active participation, fostering a sense of belonging.

4.2.4 Assessment Techniques

Comprehensive assessments evaluated pronunciation, articulation, and fluency. Components included word pronunciation, sentence articulation, and tongue twisters. Connected Speech techniques improved real-life conversational skills.

4.2.5 Self-Reflection and Metacognition

Incorporating personal reflection surveys encouraged students to assess their language skills. Promoting metacognitive processes enhances students' understanding of their learning journey.

4.2.6 Group Activities for Pronunciation Practice

Group activities focused on specific phonetic sounds using the phonetic alphabet. Friendly competition motivated active engagement. Prizes recognized and rewarded groups demonstrating proficiency.

This guide, encompassing inclusive teaching practices, diverse assessments, and engaging group activities, aimed to empower educators in fostering a learning environment that effectively addressed pronunciation and fluency gaps. By tailoring approaches to diverse students' needs, educators contributed significantly to enhancing linguistic proficiency in English language learning contexts.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Purpose of the Conclusion

The conclusions of the research are of utmost significance for a variety of important reasons that have been outlined below. To begin, they present a summary that is both clear and succinct of the conclusions and findings of the research. This allows readers to acquire a speedy comprehension of the topic at hand without the need to read the complete work. In addition, the findings contribute to the process of synthesizing and organizing the material presented in the work, which helped to facilitate the comprehension and incorporation of the data that was gathered and the analyses that were performed. These discoveries are also necessary for determining whether or not the research goals that were outlined at the beginning of the study have been accomplished. Researchers can establish, as a result, whether or not their study was successful in reaching their goals and whether or not the effort invested was justified.

In addition, the conclusions typically include a discussion of the implications that the findings have for the area of research that was conducted. This serves to contextualize the data and highlights their relevance, both in terms of practice and theory. In addition, recommendations for future research or actions are frequently included in conclusions. These recommendations might serve as a guide for other researchers working in related fields or as a reference point for decision-making in the real world.

The findings, which are presented at the end of the research project, offer a fitting finish to the work that was done on the research. They make it possible for readers to comprehend exactly what was accomplished and what the ultimate ramifications of the research are. In the

end, the findings play a crucial part in effective communication in research, contributing to the presentation of results in a coherent and appealing manner. This because they play a role in the interpretation of the data.

5.2 Conclusions

This investigation led to the following conclusions based on the objectives mentioned in Chapter I.

5.2.1 To determine deficiencies students have regarding pronunciation when using elision, assimilation, and linking and intrusion from connected speech techniques.

The findings of the research indicated that there is a discernible absence of an emphasis placed on the process of cultivating students' practical communication abilities. Students' abilities to communicate confidently and successfully in real-life circumstances may be hindered by the lack of emphasis placed on oral exercises, readings, and conversational activities in language classrooms, even though acquiring grammar and vocabulary are necessary components of language acquisition. In addition, it was noticed that students, typically, have difficulty carrying on impromptu conversations and expressing themselves fluently in English. This weakness in practical communication skills could potentially have an impact on the individual's capacity to utilize the language in a practical, everyday context, such as in social interactions or in future professional settings.

According to the findings of the study, there is a need for a more well-rounded approach to the teaching of languages; one that places equal emphasis not only on the

teaching of grammar and vocabulary, but also on the development of the oral competency and the application of language in real-world situations. Students may benefit from becoming more fluent and self-assured in the use of the English language by participating in more interactive activities, conversations, and conversational exercises as part of the educational experience. In general, the findings of the study show the need of addressing these concerns to provide a well-rounded education in language that equips students with the ability to understand and communicate successfully in English. This may be done by ensuring that these issues are addressed. This well-rounded strategy has the potential to help to their overall linguistic growth and to better prepare students for the application of language in real-world contexts.

5.2.2 To apply connected speech techniques by using realia for improving students' Pronunciation.

As it was covered in previous chapters, the research done with 6-C students, involved a variety of oral activities that were aimed to evaluate the students' proficiency in English in terms of their pronunciation and fluency. The findings of the analysis showed that the pupils demonstrated a level of language proficiency that was typically good. This was discovered because of the analysis. Nevertheless, there were obvious and persistent errors in their pronunciation, which might have been reduced to a tolerable level if they had been provided with a more thorough support system for pronunciation and fluency exercises.

It was noted that some pupils had difficulty with specific parts of pronunciation, which resulted in frequent blunders. For example, numerous kids forgot to leave off the "e" at the end of sentences like "jumped," pronouncing it instead as "jump-ted." In addition, a sizeable portion

of the class consistently mispronounced words like "pig" by pronouncing the letter "g" as if it were the letter "k," leading to errors in pronunciation such as "pik."

The instances of incorrect pronunciation highlight the necessity for individualized therapies and practices that are tailored to address these distinct difficulties. Students may have the potential to enhance their overall oral communication skills and rectify these faults if teachers give them more targeted support in the form of pronunciation drills and activities that increase fluency. This strategy has the potential to contribute to a language education that is both more complete and more successful; hence, boosting students' capacity to speak fluently and accurately in English.

5.2.3 To evaluate the implementation of connected speech techniques as a tool for improving students' pronunciation.

Both the students' pronunciation and their fluency showed noticeable progress after the implementation of exercises that were specifically designed to address elision, assimilation, connecting, and incursion. Students were given the opportunity to hone their language abilities through participation in the targeted activities, which demonstrated that adhering to certain pronunciation norms greatly contributed to improve oral communication. For example, during the exercise that was centered on the phrase "She has an apple," the majority of the participants had a discernible development in their speaking abilities as a direct result of diligently following the offered directions that pertained to the designated speaking skills.

This encouraging answer demonstrates how successful it is to incorporate targeted exercises that address subtle parts of pronunciation. The ability of the students to apply the approaches that they have been told to use not only demonstrates their capacity for adaptation,

but it also highlights the influence that targeted language interventions have had on their total language proficiency. The significance of these findings lies on the ability of planned and focused language activities to discuss difficulties with pronunciation. Teachers may give students the tools they need to improve their pronunciation and fluency by incorporating activities like these into the language curriculum. This will ultimately result in the development of a more solid foundation for efficient oral communication in English.

5.3 Restatement of the Research Question

In addressing the question posed in Chapter I regarding effective strategies to enhance pronunciation and fluency in students for meeting the language-related demands of businesses in Costa Rica, the research findings underscore the significance of practical exercises centered on speaking, vocalizing, and, critically, pronunciation. The study highlights a prevailing tendency in educational institutions to prioritize vocabulary, grammar, and writing skills, neglecting crucial components such as phonetics, oral expression, and spelling. Moreover, the limited encouragement for student participation during lessons results in insufficient practice opportunities. Consequently, this deficit manifests in subpar pronunciation, a deficiency in social language skills in English, and the emergence of a pervasive fear or reluctance towards engaging with the language.

Notably, individuals who have undergone education in schools, colleges, or language academies commonly express apprehension about speaking English, despite their ability to comprehend the language when spoken to. This fear is often accompanied by sentiments of embarrassment or anxiety about making mistakes. These responses can be attributed to a lack of adequate practice moments to test and refine oral communication skills. Considering these

findings, the research suggests a critical need for educational institutions to reassess their language teaching methodologies. Emphasizing interactive and participatory approaches, particularly those focusing on pronunciation and fluency, is vital. This shift could contribute significantly to equipping students with the necessary skills to meet the language-related demands of the business landscape in Costa Rica. Additionally, fostering a supportive and encouraging learning environment that values oral expression, may help to alleviate the apprehensions and fears associated with speaking English.

5.4 Unexpected Results

Unexpectedly, the analysis of word pronunciation revealed that the student with visual impairment consistently outperformed their peers in correctly articulating the given words. Despite the adapted format, the visually impaired student demonstrated flawless pronunciation, raising intriguing questions about the potential benefits of customized learning materials for all students, regardless of visual abilities.

Contrary to expectations, the evaluation of the pronunciation of the word "comfortable," showed that students, who encountered slight difficulty in enunciation, as opposed to those who pronounced it clearly, exhibited a more nuanced and expressive pronunciation style. This challenges the conventional belief that absolute clarity in pronunciation is always preferable, suggesting that variations in enunciation might contribute to a richer and more diverse language expression. Surprisingly, the word "chocolate" posed a greater challenge for girls than boys, as more girls exhibited noticeable errors. However, those who made errors still rendered the word recognizable. This unexpected gender-based difference in pronunciation challenges, stereotypes

and underscores the importance of considering individual strengths and weaknesses rather than generalizing based on gender.

Additionally, the students' ability to correctly pronounce "important" revealed an unexpected trend. While girls and boys generally performed similarly, the minor mispronunciation by one girl and one boy, which was still understandable, hinted at the subjectivity of pronunciation evaluation. This unexpected result prompts a reconsideration of the rigid criteria often applied in pronunciation assessments and emphasizes the need for a more nuanced approach to evaluating language proficiency. Although, it was first assumed that there would be a gender-based difference in the ability to correctly pronounce sentences, the findings suggested that the opposite tendency was true for the line "The brown fox jumped over the lazy dog." To everyone's surprise, a far higher percentage of female pupils than male students exhibited perfect articulation when compared to one another. This unanticipated conclusion contradicts traditional beliefs regarding gender and linguistic aptitude, highlighting the necessity for a more customized approach to language examinations.

The famed tongue-twister "She sells seashells by the seashore" proved to be less challenging for the participants than they had imagined it would be, which was a surprising turn of events. The slower pace that was used by individuals who successfully spoke the sentence, runs counter to the conventional idea that tongue-twisters ought to be difficult and quick. This unexpected outcome shows that a systematic and measured approach might improve language fluency, which challenges standard ideas about the purpose of tongue-twisters and how they should be performed.

5.5 Recommendations

Since private schools in Costa Rica possess greater levels of autonomy when it comes to the curriculum they choose to implement, students who attend those schools typically benefit from a higher level of English instruction than those who attend public schools. However, the findings of this research indicate that the style in which the instructor guides the class is one of the most important factors that determines whether or not the lesson is successful. It is highly unlikely that students will be able to feel ready to put the language into practice, gain interest in it, or feel comfortable with it, regardless of the books, materials, or technological resources that the institution provides. However, if the teacher does not implement dynamism, creativity, and, most importantly, allows students to share in lessons orally, it is highly likely that students will not be able to feel ready to put the language into practice.

It is not an easy task, but once it is accomplished, there will be promising results seen in the students. This because, as was stated earlier, people who do not speak English, regardless of the fact that they understand concepts, and people who, even if they read something with their eyes and understand it, do not typically speak it because of the pain or inconvenience of doing so, are examples of the types of people who do not speak English. To be more specific, it is recommended that teachers improve students' pronunciation whenever it is necessary throughout class time. If a teacher lets a student mispronounce a word and then pretends it does not matter, the student will come to believe that the way he or she spoke the word is the correct one.

Working languages typically contain combinations of sounds and letters that can be difficult to pronounce; nevertheless, if one practices these languages on a regular basis, one's pronunciation of words can improve, and the muscles that are used in the joint can become

stronger. This is another reason why it is encouraged to use working languages. In addition to this, when viewed from a different angle, many jobs are conceived with the intention of being fun and engaging. The practice of these language games can bring moments of joy and laughter; therefore, they add to emotional well-being and to generate in the classroom environment that convenience of speaking and pronouncing freely despite of the possible faults that may arise when trying to do so. In addition, the emotional well-being of the students can be improved because of the emotional well-being contributed by the practice of these language games. Finally, the teacher must ensure that there is a healthy balance between topics, both in terms of the content that is presented and the implementation component. Because the practical component of the classes almost always includes speaking exercise, the instructor is going to have to put in some effort. Besides, the teacher must make sure there are places for pupils to talk and express themselves verbally. Consequently, students will benefit from this by being able to better prepare themselves to have conversations in English that are more fluent.

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Annexes

Appendix 1. Pre assessment 1

Instructions: In this pre-assessment, you will be asked to pronounce a series of words and sentences. Please do your best to say them clearly and accurately. Your teacher will listen and take notes to help understand your current pronunciation skills. Don't worry if you're unsure; this is just to see where we can improve!

1. Word Pronunciation:

- a. Say the word "elephant."
- b. Say the word "important."
- c. Say the word "comfortable."
- d. Say the word "chocolate."
- e. Say the word "library."

2. Sentence Pronunciation:

- a. Read the following sentence aloud: "The brown fox jumped over the lazy dog."

b. Read the following sentence aloud: "She sells seashells by the seashore."

c. Read the following sentence aloud: "A big, red balloon floated in the sky."

3. Bonus Challenge:

a. Try to pronounce the tongue twister below. Don't worry if it's tricky! Just give it your best shot.

"How can a clam cram in a clean cream can?"

4. Personal Reflection:

Tell us how confident you feel about your pronunciation on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being very bad at all and 5 being excellent. Also, share any words or sounds you find particularly challenging to pronounce.

Appendix 2. Pre-Assessment 2: Pronunciation for 6th Graders - Using Elision, Assimilation, Linking, and Intrusion Techniques

Instructions: In this pre-assessment, we will explore your pronunciation skills using various connected speech techniques such as elision, assimilation, linking, and intrusion. Please read the sentences aloud, paying attention to these techniques as you speak. Your teacher will listen and make notes to understand your current pronunciation abilities. Don't worry if it's challenging; this is just to see where we can improve!

1. Elision:

a. Say the phrase "I am going to" as if you're speaking quickly in conversation. Try to blend the words together smoothly.

b. Say the phrase "Could you" as if you're speaking naturally. Make sure to omit the 'd' sound in 'could.'

2. Assimilation:

a. Say the phrase "handbag" and emphasize the 'n' sound in the middle. Notice how the 'd' sound in "hand" combines with the 'b' sound in "bag."

b. Say the word "impossible" and emphasize the 'm' sound in the middle. Observe how the 'm' blends with the 'p' sound.

3. Linking:

a. Read the following sentence aloud: "I saw a movie." Pay attention to how the 's' sound in "saw" connects with the 'a' sound in "a."

b. Read the following sentence aloud: "She has an apple." Notice how the 's' sound in "has" links with the 'a' sound in "an."

4. Intrusion:

a. Say the word "chimney" and notice how a slight 'y' sound intrudes between the 'm' and 'n.'

b. Say the phrase "next Saturday" and observe how a slight 'y' sound intrudes between 'next' and 'Saturday.'