

Universidad Internacional de las Américas
School of Education and Foreign Languages
Graduation Seminar



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

*Strategies to Teach and Improve Pronunciation in Students of Seventh Grade at
Centro Educativo Cristiano Reformado during the Second Quarter of 2017*

Thesis Mentor: Licda. Margarita Pérez Roig

Thesis Reader: M.Sc. Greivin Umaña Sánchez

Student: Luis Daniel Madrigal Elizondo

San José, Costa Rica
Agosto, 2017

Contenido

Chapter I	1
Introductory Framework.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Research Question	4
1.3 Purpose and Significance of the Study	4
1.4. Objectives of the Investigation	7
1.4.1 General Objective.....	7
1.4.2 Specific Objectives.....	7
1.5 Limitations of the Study	8
Chapter 2	12
Theoretical Framework.....	12
2.1 Antecedents.....	12
2.1.1 The Syllable Structure: Understanding Spanish Speakers Pronunciation of English as an L2	12
2.1.2 Teaching Pronunciation to Adult English Language Learners	14
2.1.3 Why is Pronunciation So Difficult to Learn?.....	15
2.2 Review of the Literature	18
2.2.1 Phonetics and Phonics: What is the difference?.....	18
2.2.2 The Organs of Speech	22
2.2.3 The International Phonetic Alphabet (I.P.A.)	23
2.2.4 Factors that may Influence Students' Pronunciation Learning	31
2.2.5 Strategies to Teach Phonics.....	35
Chapter 3	38
Methodology.....	38
3.1 Research Method and Scope.....	38
3.2 Selection and Description of the Participants	42
3.2.1. Description of the Institution.....	42
3.2.2 Description of the Population.....	44
3.2.3 Description of the Participants	44
3.3 Implemented Strategies.....	45
3.3.1 Comparison and Contrast.....	45

3.3.2 Discrimination of Sounds.....	46
3.3.3 Minimal Pairs	46
3.3.4 Reading Out-Loud.....	46
3.3.5 Tongue Twisters.....	46
3.3.6 Recitation of Poems	47
3.3.7 Jazz Chants.....	47
3.4 Data Collection Instruments	47
3.5 Validation of Instruments	48
Chapter 4	50
Data Analysis.....	50
4.1 Analysis and Interpretation of the Results	50
4.1.1 Questionnaire	51
4.1.2 Observation	56
Chapter 5	78
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	78
5.1 Purpose of the Conclusion	78
5.2 Conclusions.....	79
5.2.1 To determine the mistakes seventh graders make in the pronunciation of the English consonants /θ, ð, ʃ, ʒ, ʒ, dʒ/.....	79
5.2.2 To establish a comparison and contrast among the English consonants mentioned above and some Spanish consonants.....	80
5.2.3 To apply different techniques and activities to improve the pronunciation of some consonants that offer difficulties in their production to Spanish-speaking students.....	81
5.2.4 To identify the phonetic symbols that represent the sounds to be corrected.....	82
5.2.5 To evaluate the students' progress during and after the application of the strategies to improve pronunciation	82
5.3 Restatement of the Research Question	84
5.4 Recommendations.....	84
Appendixes	89
Appendix 1. Lesson Plans.....	90
Appendix 2.....	98
Appendix 3.....	100
Appendix 4.....	101
Appendix 5.....	102

Appendix 6.....	103
Appendix 7.....	103
Appendix 8.....	105
Appendix 9.....	106
Appendix 10.....	107
Appendix 11.....	108
Appendix 12.....	110
Appendix 13.....	111
References	112

Chapter I

Introductory Framework

Chapter one of this investigation will explain the introductory framework of the research. Wilkinson (as cited in Creswell, 2014) describes the introduction as “the part of the paper that provides readers with the background information for the research reported in the paper.” (p. 107). This definition may interpret the introduction as an essential part of an investigation since it guides the readership by placing them into the context of the current and other investigations.

The introductory framework of this investigation provides a description of the current situation of the topic studied in this research, the historical background of it, the problems faced by a sample of students when pronouncing some sounds of the English language, and the reasons why it is necessary to teach phonics and correct any kind of mistakes during the English classes.

1.1 Background of the Study

It is a well-known fact that learning a foreign language and every element of it has become a necessity in the last years in order to excel in different aspects such as personal growth, job growth, and intellectual growth. The main reasons why this happens might be that according to Mollin (2006) “English is acquired because it gives access to a dominant culture and economic success” (p. 21). Since 1945, after World War II, the United States of America increased and maintained its economic power. The influence of American businesses has placed English as one of the most important

languages of international trade in the 21st century. As it is demonstrated, there are strong reasons why English opens up a great number of opportunities in the labor sphere.

When studying a second language, people need to take into account that in order to achieve a good level, it is necessary to develop a certain amount of skills inside the language, such as speaking, listening, writing and reading. According to the British Council, “the language skills of speaking, listening, writing, and reading are often divided into sub-skills, which are specific behaviours that language users do in order to be effective in each of the skills.”

In the case of the speaking skill, pronunciation is one of the most outstanding aspects to be taught when learning a second or foreign language due to some reasons. Nevertheless, this language element is not an emphasized area in English teaching at Costa Rican schools. Because of this, students may have a certain level in some other language skills, but not in pronunciation. This may affect when a speaker tries to state an idea. If he/she does not use the correct intonation and pronunciation, he/she may not express the idea in a clear and concise form.

Based on this fact, this investigation attempts to apply a series of strategies and methods that can be used to facilitate the English learning process in a classroom. These methods include constant contrast and comparison to the Spanish language (differences and similarities) and the written representation (graphemes) of the studied consonant sounds (phonemes). The investigator suggests that since the target population is formed by students that have probably not been in much contact with English, the strategies mentioned above must be applied in a simple and clear way, so that they are able to improve English pronunciation as well as other languages pronunciation.

It is necessary to establish why pronunciation in English teaching is important inasmuch as, the meaning a word or phrase may have at the moment of speaking can change depending on the intonation the speaker uses. Then, there is a large amount of words that could be mispronounced due to how a letter is produced in the student's mother language. A third reason is that depending on the accent, a word may be pronounced in different ways. All these details lead to a misunderstanding and a confusing reception of ideas that may affect the efficiency in communication of industrial, commercial, social, educational, and political areas.

Owing to the fact that teachers have never emphasized the pronunciation sub-skill while teaching English to Spanish speakers in Costa Rica, it is easy to imagine that a student's accent while making a statement or asking a question will be evident among native speakers or even nonnative speakers whose pronunciation rules were successfully taught. Using the correct techniques to improve pronunciation skills will probably avoid that many students follow the Spanish rules for pronunciation and intonation instead of the English ones.

The population that will operate as participants of this study is the seventh grade of Centro Educativo Cristiano Reformado, in Mata de Plátano, Guadalupe. This group consists of nineteen students around twelve to fourteen years old. It is characterized by possessing a large variety of personalities, strengths, and weaknesses. However, something in common is the fact that they all are used to their native language pronunciation. The author proposes that the correct implementation of pronunciation teaching techniques will result in improving not only the pronunciation of the English language, but also other important language skills.

1.2 Research Question

The intention of a research question in every investigation is to pose a problem that needs to be solved. According to Foss and Condon (2007), “The research question is what you are trying to find out by doing your study. It guides your research process, tells you what to look at and what to ignore”. This means that a research question is intended not to solve the problem, but to establish it. Besides, it helps the investigator to set a step forward during the process and to look for possible solutions to the problem.

Considering that education is one of the most important parts in the development of human beings, this research attempts to find a solution for the issue that most of the English learners who are beginners, present in the pronunciation aspect by stating the following question: Which is the effect of comparing and contrasting the pronunciation of some English and Spanish consonants applying some strategies and techniques to improve the pronunciation of seventh graders at Centro Educativo Cristiano Reformado during the second quarter of 2017?

1.3 Purpose and Significance of the Study

Every investigation project must have two important features. One of them is a clearly defined purpose; it must have a concise idea of what the author intentions are. The Oxford Dictionaries (2016) define *purpose* as “the reason for which something is done or created or for which something exists”. In this case, the current research is created to analyze the impact in English language students’ pronunciation of some consonants that do not exist in their native language by applying different techniques to improve their pronunciation skills.

The other feature that a respectable investigation must have is its significance. In the words of the Merriam Webster Dictionary (2016), this concept refers to “The quality of having notable worth or influence”. This means that when a research is significant, it is due to the influence it has in a field to help improve one or more aspects. This part aims to determine why it is necessary to put this investigation into practice.

As it has been indicated above on this document, the goal of this investigation is to detect exercises that work better to teach phonics in a classroom. The application of these techniques have as a goal to improve the students’ pronunciation subskills in English, specifically in the case of some consonants that Spanish language does not include in its sound system.

The fundamental beneficiaries of this plan are the students. They will be exposed to activities and exercises that will give them a mechanism to prepare their English pronunciation abilities which are considered influential skill in one of the most significant languages in the world of business and general development. Additionally, when a student understands the relationship between a letter and its different sounds, he/she will improve areas like the oral and communicative skills. Besides, he/she will expand his/her capacity to pronounce different words and new sounds in other languages; different from their native one.

Professors may also be part of the beneficiaries of the appliance of this practice. Educators have the possibility to use this investigation as a base to apply the techniques it offers and adapt them into their classrooms and, if necessary, to stop using other techniques that may not be so productive. Teachers may feel free to use this approach,

not only with kids, but also with adolescents and adults. This form of flexibility occurs due to the simplicity in which the activities should be applied.

Another that is included into the list of beneficiaries is the school. It is a fact that the better a school teaches English, the greater prestigious it will be, and, there will probably be more enrollment every year. The techniques and strategies offered in this investigation are optimal to deal with language issues, such as the wrong habit of pronunciation in advanced and non-advanced English language students. The right usage of these techniques will increase an individual's possibility to be hired among a group of people whose pronunciation or accent skills are not suitable enough for the job due to the poor pronunciation coaching he/she has received.

Another way in which this investigation pretends to help the effectiveness of English learning in a classroom is inviting students to perceive the language for pleasure and not as an obligation. The idea is to display language apprenticeship in a way that they get interested in learning, so they do not feel that learning is a must, but a delight. By applying the activities exhibited in this study, the students in the sample will feel that learning a language and its skills is not necessarily frustrating.

Finally, this analysis pretends to reconsider strategies that have been applied by other experienced people before to decide if they accomplish the purpose effectively, so they can be used with many English language learners. Similarly, the investigator also pretends to demonstrate that no matter the learner's age, the use of simple strategies is an excellent way to explain and illustrate complex topics such as the one studied in this investigation.

1.4. Objectives of the Investigation

In order to achieve the purpose stated before, it is necessary to set the objectives of the investigation. According to Ferraro (2012), “The investigation’s objectives define the fact-finder’s purpose, benchmark his or her progress, and provide the framework by which the project manager coordinates and builds his case. The objectives become the foundation on which the investigation rests” (p 77). This means that the objectives point a line that delimitates the study. Without the objectives correctly determined, the investigation might not have an established path to follow and it would be extremely difficult or impossible to achieve the settled purpose. The research question will be answered only when the investigator accomplishes the objectives.

1.4.1 General Objective

To analyze the effect of comparing and contrasting the pronunciation of some English and Spanish consonants applying some strategies and techniques to improve the pronunciation of seventh graders at Centro Educativo Cristiano Reformado during the second quarter of 2017

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

To determine the mistakes seventh graders make in the pronunciation of the English consonants: /θ, ð, ʒ, dʒ, ʃ, tʃ/

To establish a comparison and contrast among the English consonants mentioned above and some Spanish consonants

To apply different techniques and activities to improve the pronunciation of some consonants that offer difficulties in their production to Spanish-speaking students

To identify the phonetic symbols that represent the sounds to be corrected

To evaluate the students' progress during and after the application of the strategies to improve pronunciation at Centro Educativo Cristiano Reformado during the second quarter of 2017

1.5 Limitations of the Study

There is always a possibility that during the development of an investigation different types of difficulties may occur. These problems are known as the limitations of the study, and it is necessary for the researcher to take them into account before starting to explore in order to ensure, or at least, obtain a fluid and uninterrupted progress of the analysis. Among the group of limitations, problems as such of money, time, and communication may occur.

In terms of money, it is well known that a professor needs lots of material to come up with an interesting design of a lesson. These materials may be essential to keep the students interested in the current subject and cannot be excluded under any circumstance. Sometimes the materials are not very expensive, but they almost always seem to be very expensive due to the fact that the groups of students are generally large and the professor needs to get enough material for all of them.

There may be some possible solutions for this limitation. First, the teacher needs to make sure if there is a chance of making the schools responsible for purchasing the materials. It would be better if the institution and the educator come to an agreement, and, at least, divide the costs. Another way to overcome this circumstance is to ask the students to bring the materials to the classroom as a part of their homework. If the

teacher cannot find a place where products are sold at a lower cost, he/she must cut them down by himself by recycling materials that he or the students have already used before. Ultimately, the teacher should put into practice his ingenious capacity to create their own material; for instance, instead of printing big pictures, the teacher would draw them on a large piece of paper or on the board. If the teacher has certain ability to draw, this should not be difficult to achieve.

The most common limitation in a huge number of investigations, and one of the most important ones to bear in mind is the one that has to do with time. In this case, the school's shift starts at 7:00 AM and ends at 2:00 PM from Monday to Friday. Since it is a private school, there is a great number of special subjects that will take a space in the students' schedule, such as Portuguese or Bible. Besides these special subjects, there is a long variety of clubs such as choir and Soccer that are also included within the same schedule. The time that these subjects take may affect the possibility of extending the time for this investigation in case that it is needed.

On the other hand, the professor will only be given a specific period to apply these methods, from May, 2017 to August of the same year. It is here where he needs to apply the simplicity of the techniques mentioned above. By keeping these exercises simple, students will be able to learn and practice pronunciation rules without the need of spending a great amount of time on it. Besides, it is important for the investigator to create a schedule to establish the dates to apply the methods in an appropriate way.

Important dates may also represent time limitation. This happens because of two main reasons. First, some of these important dates are holidays in which students don't go to school. A second reason is that every school has the duty to organize activities or civic acts to celebrate important dates like the one is celebrated on July, 25. Similarly,

this happens during exam periods, so the professor should take into account that there are not only English assessments, but also Spanish, Math, and Social Studies, among others. In both cases, the professor should be prepared and take into account the days that he will not be able to teach.

An important problem included in time limitation is the fact that any of the students, or even the teacher, could miss a class during the span in which the investigation is applied. This will also delay the process. If the professor finds himself in the obligation to miss lessons, he will need to teach the methods on another date to every children in the group, but if the one who misses school is a student, the researcher has to make sure that the kid will recover the studied material in order to assure a reliable and respectable conclusion at the end of the investigation.

Finally, there is the problem related to communication. With these limitations, the research refers to the moments in which because of one reason or another, the professor may not be able to communicate the corresponding knowledge to the students and vice versa.

It may happen a special situation in which a student loses his glasses and does not distinguish what is written on the whiteboard. In this position, the professor needs to have a plan B, which may consist of sitting the student in front of the board or giving him a paper with the information printed on it in big, bold font.

The professor should also consider the possibility of the presence of students who have never had any contact with the English language. For instance, if the group being analyzed is seventh grade, there will be a certain amount of students that come from a public school in which English is not taught at the same level that it is usually taught on private schools. These new students' English level is very low if they are

compared to the students that have received English lessons in a private school. It is important to remember; however, that the methods that will be applied during this investigation include learning pronunciation by taking vocabulary as an instrument to apply pronunciation rules. It means that both, experienced and new English students will learn a great amount of vocabulary, which is the key to start learning a language. As it is expressed on the book *Linguistics in Language Teaching*: “without grammar, very little can be conveyed; without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed”. (Wilkins, 1972).

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

The purpose of the current chapter in this investigation is to develop the theoretical framework, which represents the ground and foundations on which the entire research project is based. According to Uma Sekaran and Roger Bougie (2010) in “*Research Methods for Business: A Skill Building Approach*”, a theoretical framework is “a logically developed, described and elaborated network of associations among the variables deemed relevant to the problem situation and identified through such processes as interviews, observations, and literature review.”

2.1 Antecedents

Before beginning the explanation of the methods and strategies that will be used in this investigation, it is necessary to include the antecedents of this topic. According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary (2016), the word “*Antecedent*” means “Something that came before something else and might have influenced or caused it.” This definition suggests that, in this case, the antecedents are studies, theories, and other investigations that have influenced in one way or another the application of the techniques applied in the current research.

2.1.1 The Syllable Structure: Understanding Spanish Speakers Pronunciation of English as an L2

The study was developed by Susana Gómez Martínez in 2010, at the University of Valladolid, Spain. In the introduction to the work, Gómez explains that the accent and pronunciation of the native tongue of an English language learner will always infer in

the pronunciation of the second language. This happens because the sound system of people are used to its mother tongue and not to the sounds of a new language. In order to eliminate these pronunciation issues, there should exist a constant practice to avoid the negative transfer of some sounds from the mother tongue to the target language.

According to the author, these transferences can be positive (facilitative) or negative (inhibitive): “facilitative, i.e. that helps the learning of the language as it uses elements which are similar in both languages, or inhibitive, i.e. that leads to errors in the target language due to differences in both systems”. (p. 1).

The goal that Gómez wanted to achieve was to analyze differences and similarities between the structure of the Spanish and English syllables. Likely, her intention was to inquire if the similarities and differences found out could demonstrate and describe the reason of the mispronunciation of a group of participants. The analysis was applied to a group of English students as a second language in the Faculty of Translation and Interpretation at the University of Valladolid.

Taking into account that the research compared the syllable structure of both English and Spanish, Gómez stated that the most basic and common syllable structure in both languages is the one that is formed by a consonant and a vowel because these are the first sounds or utterances that are produced by babies when they try to speak. Later, the author included a group of similarities and differences between both languages. Among the similarities, she found out that in both languages the nucleus is essential and both of them contain similar syllable types. For example, the Spanish word **cien**, which means a hundred, is composed like this: consonant + vowel (diphthong) + consonant. In the case

of the English word **pain**, it is composed using the same structure: consonant + vowel (diphthong) + consonant.

One difference she mentions in the study is that a consonant in the English language can function as the nucleus of a syllable (this is the case of the syllabic consonants), while in Spanish, it is not possible. Then, in Spanish, how a word sounds or how it is pronounced is almost directly associated to its spelling, while in English, a simple symbol or grapheme can be pronounced in two, three, or even four ways.

Gómez concluded the investigation by stating that it is really important that learners and teachers should be aware of the syllable structure in both languages in order to have a better comprehension. She also states that if these structures are studied and analyzed correctly, the mistakes commonly produced by a learner of English as a second language will be easily detected and corrected.

2.1.2 Teaching Pronunciation to Adult English Language Learners

In 2009, Kirsten Schaetzel and Ee Ling Low applied this investigation using adult English language learners as participants. The study refers to some characteristics of the English pronunciation that must be taken into consideration when teaching adults. In this research, the author referred to accent, motivation, exposure, and variety of English. In the case of accent, they state that a good English accent is not vital for communicating; however, other characteristics like stress, intonation and rhythm are. Motivation is another important feature that must be considered. No matter what the motivation is, it should be strong enough when learning a new language. Then, when the authors mention exposure as another element considered in language teaching, they state that every learner must be exposed to the language as much as possible with the purpose of

creating or improving listening and comprehension skills. Finally, Schaetzel and Low affirm that English has a great amount of varieties due to the amount of native and nonnative speakers outside the classroom. It is extremely important for a learner to be able to understand different accents that may vary due to the area of the United States where English is spoken or to the nationality of people. Above, in the research, there are enumerated a list of strategies to teach pronunciation to a population characterized by adulthood: (1) cultivate positive attitudes toward accuracy, (2) identify specific pronunciation features that pose problems for learners, (3) make learners aware of the prosodic features of language (stress, intonation, rhythm), and (4) focus on developing learners' communicative competence. At the end of the report, it is concluded that if students are aware of all these features mentioned before, professors will execute pronunciation teaching in a better and more effective way and, as a result, people will create and improve skills to communicate adequately.

2.1.3 Why is Pronunciation So Difficult to Learn?

In 2011, Abbas Pourhossein Gilakjani and Mohammad Reza Ahmadi conducted a study whose title expresses a question that is probably asked by a great amount of ESL students. *Why is Pronunciation So Difficult to Learn?* was written for the School of Educational Studies at Universiti Sains Malaysia (University of Science, Malaysia) located in Penang, Malaysia. The purpose of this study was to explain some of the factors that may cause difficulty when pronouncing English to understand the needs of a pronunciation learner and to give some suggestions for teaching pronunciation. The study begins with an introduction that states that there is no simple answer to the question embodied in the title of the study; in fact, there are many perspectives and

theories that try to answer that question. However, there is an idea that is generally accepted among some specialists in the area of pronunciation which is that the difficulty of learning to pronounce a foreign language is not physical, but cognitive, and that it has something to do with how the 'raw sound' is categorized or conceptualized in speech.

On this study, Gilakjani and Ahmadi base on Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D. & Goodwin, J. (1996) to mention and add some factors that affect the learning of pronunciation, such as accent, stress, intonation, rhythm, motivation, exposure, attitude, instruction, age, personality, and mother tongue influence.

An important part of this study is the one in which the authors explain the needs of a pronunciation student by mixing what learners believe they need and what teachers consider they need. As a whole, the authors assure that a pronunciation learner needs conversation, drilling, expert guidance, and critical listening.

In the area of conversation, they state that teachers can help with strategies such as how to initiate and maintain a conversation with native speakers outside the classroom; however, this is something that learners have to do by themselves. In the aspect of drilling, they affirm that this practice must directly exercise the speech and vocabulary that they will actually use in real life because old fashion drilling of sounds is not always effective.

When the authors talk about expert guidance, they refer to teachers who are good in pronunciation; teachers who are able to make the student detect, discriminate, understand, and improve every single mistake that they may make.

According to the authors, the last but not the least thing that a pronunciation student needs is critical listening. This means student need to critically listen to their own speech and to the speech of fellow learners in order to compare them with the speech of native speakers in order to distinguish different aspects and characteristics of the English utterances.

Another part of the study is the one that worries about suggestions for teaching pronunciation. One of these suggestions is the curriculum design. Morley (1998), states that ESL programs should start by “establishing long range oral communication goals and objectives” that help identify pronunciation needs as well as speech functions and the contexts in which they may occur. The goals and objectives in the program should be realistic, aiming for “functional intelligibility, functional communicability, and enhanced confidence in use”, and they should be the result of a careful analysis and description of the learners’ needs. The second suggestion that the authors give is the one that tell teachers to focus on the supra-segmental features of pronunciation. This concept refers to a feature of speech that affects a segment longer than the phoneme, such as stress, intonation, rhythm, duration, and others. Then, Gilakjani and Ahmadi added some advice that suggests that teachers should receive professional instruction in pronunciation teaching and that the program of trainee teachers should also include such tuition.

Finally, the authors conclude by stating that pronunciation should be taken into account with the same strength as other language skills although it can be one of the most difficult parts for a language learner to master and one of the least favorite topics for teachers to address in the classroom. However, teachers can apply a great amount of

techniques and strategies to help students understand the topic better and encourage their listening and production.

2.2 Review of the Literature

The Literature Review's purpose is to explain some theories presented by other authors that influence the current investigation project in which this research is based on. The following review will briefly explain the five parts that the author used in this investigation. Among some of the authors mentioned in this project there can be found Eugenia Mora, Laurel Brinton, Dennis Butler Fry, and Katrina Hayward. The author has taken the following information from them: Phonetics, its definition and symbols used for vowels and consonants; Phonics, its definition and differentiation with Phonetics; definition and purpose of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA); differentiation between the Spanish and English symbols and the production of them; and finally, usage of some strategies to teach Phonics.

2.2.1 Phonetics and Phonics: What is the difference?

When a study of this nature is done, it is a common mistake to mix up two or more different concepts, especially when these terms are similar to each other, such as the words Phonics and Phonetics. To understand the difference between these two, it is important to define each concept with the corresponding characteristics.

2.2.1.1 Phonetics

Like almost any area of study, Linguistics has several branches, and Phonetics is one of them. According to Ogden (2009), "Phonetics is the systematic study of the sounds of speech which is physical and directly observable." However, these definitions stays too simple taking into account everything that Phonetics actually involves. In fact, Thorum

(2013) mentions a really similar definition and states that it is too simplified because phonetic science includes an examination of other items. The better way to define Phonetics, will be to see it as the relation among the sounds of speech and the way they are produced by the speech mechanism.

To justify the complexity in which Phonetics works, both authors aforementioned agreed with the idea that some of the disciplines can be studied in three branches of phonetics: Articulatory Phonetics, Acoustic Phonetics, and Perception (Auditory Phonetics).

2.2.1.1.1 Articulatory Phonetics

This categorization of Phonetics study is described by Gick, Wilson, and Derrick (2013) as a science that specializes in “the basic anatomy and physiology of speech, how different kinds of speech are produced, and how to measure the vocal tract to learn about these speech sounds.” The definition stated declares that Articulatory Phonetics is concerned with the way a sound is produced by the speech mechanism.

2.2.1.1.2 Acoustic Phonetics

In the words of Fry (2009), Acoustic Phonetics is in charge of the measurement of sound waves and the examination of the links between the features of the speech sound waves and the working of linguistic systems (p. 11). The meaning of this concept states that Acoustic Phonetics studies the physical shape and characteristics of a sound.

2.2.1.1.3 Perception (Auditory Phonetics)

As Hayward (2000) explains, the study of perception “has focused on the ability of the monolingual native listener with normal hearing to identify and distinguish between the individual sounds of his native language.” This is how a person perceives and

understands the native language and also how he or she perceives the sounds of a foreign language.

2.2.1.2 Phonics

Wiley Blevins (1998) states in his book *Phonics from A to Z: A Practical Guide*, that Phonics is “the relationship between sounds and their spellings.” Unlike Phonetics, Phonics is not something that needs to be observed necessarily inside the speech mechanism; this branch studies the sounds that are produced depending on the phonemes used to write a word.

When studying English phonics, it is needed to consider that learners may come from different countries that speak languages in which sounds are probably different to the English ones. Some of the sounds may not belong to the same phonemes that they do in English, and some of them do not even exist in the learners’ country. In the case of Spanish vowels, for example, there is a phoneme-grapheme correspondance. While, in English, there is not because a single phoneme may be pronounced in more than one way.

Because of the complexity of any language, English sounds may change or stand against its own characteristics and rules based on the location in which it is spoken. This means that when an American speaks, the sounds produced may be different from when a British person pronounces the same word or phrase. And the same will probably happen when the pronunciation is compared to other English variants, such as Canadian or Australian English just to mention some of them. Even within American English, a variation in the pronunciation can be found depending on the area or the state of the speaker.

Based on the previous facts, it is crucial to specify that this investigation will be based on the General American English (GA), which is the standard variant in the USA.

On Blevins's book, he lists some important discoveries that have been found on different studies focused on usefulness of phonics instruction and the best way to teach children about the relation between sound and spelling. The following are some of the findings that Blevins mention.

2.2.1.2.1 Phonics Instruction can Help All Children to read

The first point that Blevins states is that Phonics instruction is helpful for every learner, but especially for those who are at risk for learning difficulties. He also cites Chall (1967), who defends the idea stating that students will make a faster progress in acquiring literary skills (reading and writing) by learning phonics. This happens because most children have learned about 6000 words by the age of six years which will make them able to read, write, and acquire new words at a faster rate than without learning phonics.

2.2.1.2.2 Explicit Phonics Instruction is More Beneficial than Implicit

Instruction

On this point, Blevins cites Chall (1996) by affirming that “the most effective type of instruction, especially for children at risk for reading difficulties, is explicit (direct) instruction.” However, this does not mean that implicit instruction is not useful. He actually affirms that it is really helpful when the students are good readers because they will be able to discover clues about sound-spelling relationships; but poor readers may not have that ability yet. Based on this, poor readers will not have the practice and/or

experience to discover the clues by themselves; they will need to rely on explicit instruction.

2.2.1.2.3 A Teacher's Knowledge of Phonics Affects his or her Ability to Teach Phonics

Another important point in which Blevins shows interest is the one that assures that the ability to teach phonics will strongly depend on the teacher's knowledge. The reason why this is true lies on the fact that the "knowledge of the English language enables the teacher to choose the best examples for instruction, to provide focused instruction, and to better understand students' reading and writing errors in relation to their developing language skills." This also supports the idea that if there is a student or a group of students who do not understand a topic with the first example that the teacher provides, the teacher's ability will make him/her able to provide new examples or new ways to explain what the student has not been able to understand.

2.2.2 The Organs of Speech

Something important when studying Phonetics in any way is to identify and differentiate every speech organ in the speech apparatus. According to Sethi and Dhamija (1999) "The organs of the human body which produce speech sounds are together called Organs of Speech." (p. 1). However, Dr. Jaime Gutiérrez (2009) assures that in reality, there is no such thing as speech organs; these organs have primary functions, which are breathing, chewing, smelling, tasting, or eating, but speaking is just their secondary function.

Every organ of the speech mechanism is important in its own way. The lungs; for example, contain the air which is the source of the vocal activity, they expel the air and force it out when forming a sound, the vocal cords, may vibrate or not to produce voiced or voiceless sounds, and the tongue does its part by moving and positioning according to the sounds will be produced, so as it can be seen each speech organ plays an important function in the development of oral language. Other organs in the speech apparatus are the hard palate, soft palate (or uvula), lower jaw, lips, teeth, and alveolar ridge, among others.

2.2.3 The International Phonetic Alphabet (I.P.A.)

The IPA (International Phonetic Association) is the major and oldest representative organization for phoneticians. This association provides the academic community with a standard for the phonetic representation of all languages. This standard is called the International Phonetic Alphabet (whose acronym is IPA). The IPA's last version was published in 2005.

In 1999, the Association replaced a booklet entitled "*The Principles of the International Phonetic Association*" by editing "*The Handbook of the International Phonetic Association: A Guide to the Use of the International Phonetic Alphabet*." This handbook states that the IPA can be used "as a way to show pronunciation in a dictionary, to record a language in linguistic fieldwork to form the basis of a writing system for a language, or to annotate acoustic and other displays in the analysis of speech." This suggests that the alphabet may be used for more than one purpose and in many fields. The handbook also assures that "it is necessary to have a generally agreed set of symbols for designating sounds unambiguously". This is, exactly, the main

purpose of the alphabet and its handbook; to provide a guide to the IPA and to the conventions associated with it.

In order for this alphabet to be as easy as possible, it was based on the Roman alphabet. This decision was taken because the Roman alphabet has many familiar letters and symbols. According to the International Phonetic Association, speech transcription can be illustrated by using segments. They are divided into two categories: Consonants and Vowels. (IPA, 1999, p. 3).

An important piece of information to take into account when going into the topic of phoneme representation through symbols is the English variation being used. There are many variations of the English language around the world, and these may affect several components on it. For example, Kovecses (2000) decides to characterize American English (which is the English variant in whichn this investigation is based on) by taking British English as a point of reference. On his analysis, he mentions that American English shows some changes in details like the irregular form of some verbs (burned-burnt), the use of shorter words (math-maths, cookbook-cookery book), shorter spellings (color-colour), shorter sentences (I'll see you Monday vs. on Monday), and the dynamism with which it is used; American English is more active than passive. However, the most important characteristic of English in this investigation is the way words are pronounced, and this is probably the most remarkable difference when someone listens to a person speaking. For instance, the word “*either*” can be pronounced /'aɪðə/ in the British variant, while in the American variant, it would be /'iðər/. Another example would be the word *tomato*, which in British English sounds /tə'mɑ:təʊ/ and in American English it is pronounced /tə'meɪ,təʊ/.

2.2.3.1 The English Consonants

In English, there are 24 consonant sounds that are classified according to five factors: Place of Articulation, Manner of Articulation, Position of the Soft Palate, Presence or Absence of Voice, and Force of Articulation.

According to Olive, Greenwood and Coleman (1993, p. 26-27), based on the manner of articulation, consonants are classified into Stops or Plosives, /p, b, t, d, k, g/; Fricatives, /f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h/; Affricates, /tʃ/ and /dʒ/; Nasals, /m/, /n/ and /ŋ /; Lateral, /l/; Retroflex like /r/; and lastly, two glides or semivowels, /j/ and /w/.

This investigation will not focus on every English consonant, but on a few of them. Because of this, it is necessary to understand how each sound is produced.

2.2.3.2 English Consonants Sounds Produced by Spanish Speakers

When teaching English as a foreign language, many students face difficulties with the articulation of some English sounds. On this paper, the author will try to prove on his thesis that some of the most frequent difficulties in the case of the English consonant sounds occur with /tʃ, dʒ, ʃ, ʒ, j, θ/, and /ð/. As most of these sounds do not occur in Spanish, students generally have difficulties in the articulation of them.

For example, Spanish speaking students tend to mispronounce sounds /tʃ/ and /ʃ/ producing instead, the Spanish sound /c/. In the case of sound /dʒ, ʒ/, and /j/, the students tend to pronounce the Spanish sound /y/. Finally, in the case of sound /θ/, the students tend to produce the Spanish sound /s/ while in the case of sound /ð/, they tend to produce the Spanish sound /d/, this is why, it is very important for teachers to practice these sounds in different positions and, if possible, teach the main differences from the articulatory point of view. Does that mean that 7th graders are supposed to study the

phonetics of the English language? Not exactly, but teachers should be aware that it is important to show the students the different articulations and try to find similarities and differences with Spanish sounds similar to them. For this reason, the author of this paper will refer to the main factors that should be taken into account in the articulation of these sounds, that is, the place of articulation, or the region or area in which the sounds are produced and the presence or absence of voice, that is, the vibration or the non-vibration of the vocal cords. The following chart illustrates the place of articulation and the presence or absence of voice of them.

Chart 1

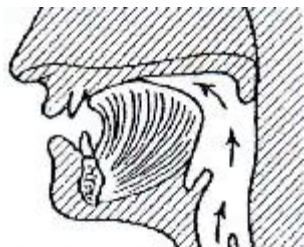
Classification of Consonants According to the Place of Articulation and Presence or Absence of Voice

Sound	Place of Articulation	Presence or Absence of Voice
tʃ	Palato-Alveolar	Voiceless
ʃ	Palato-Alveolar	Voiceless
dʒ	Palato-Alveolar	Voiced
ʒ	Palato-Alveolar	Voiced
θ	Dental	Voiceless
ð	Dental	Voiced

Due to these differences, teachers should understand what happens with the organs of speech in the articulation of these sounds in English and Spanish, and when preparing exercises, practice the sounds in all the positions in which they may appear within the

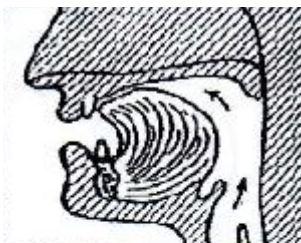
English syllables and determine the most difficult occurrences for the students. Below, the facial diagrams of all these sounds are shown and explained.

Diagram #1



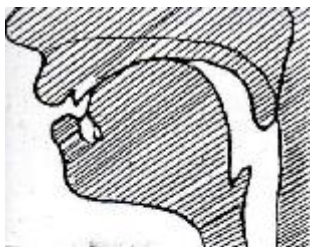
In diagram #1, English /t/ is represented. As it can be seen, the tip of the tongue touches the alveolar ridge, and the front of the tongue touches the hard palate. In diagram number 2, sound /ʃ/ is represented.

Diagram #2



One can see that in the articulation of sound /ʃ/, the tip of the tongue approaches the alveolar ridge, and the front of the tongue approaches the hard palate. Although these sounds are very similar in Spanish; they are somewhat different.

Diagram #3



If the two first diagrams are compared to diagram 3, that represents Spanish /c/, one may notice that the tip of the tongue touches the back part of the lower incisors, and the front of the tongue touches the hard palate, so it can be concluded that the sound shares some aspects in common but differ in some others which are essentials to achieve a good pronunciation of them. This is why some teachers use examples, such as the Spanish word *chayote* and say that /tʃ/ and /j/ are similar to the ch (Spanish /c/).

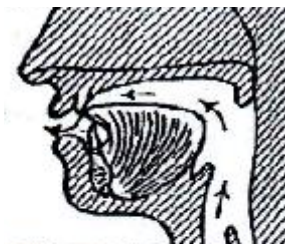
Something similar happens with the articulation of the English sounds /dʒ, ʒ/, and the Spanish /y/. In diagram #1, as it can be seen, sound /dʒ/ is produced similar to /tʃ/, that is, the tip of the tongue touches the alveolar ridge and the front of the tongue touches the hard palate. In diagram #2, sound /ʒ/ is also represented, and as in the case of /j/, the tip of the tongue approaches the alveolar ridge, and the front of the tongue approaches the hard palate.

Diagram # 4



Diagram # 4 shows the articulation of sound /j/, in which the tip of the tongue faces the lower incisors, and the front of the tongue is raised towards the hard palate. As it has been said, students have a tendency to mispronounce these three sounds and instead, produce Spanish /y/, which is represented in diagram 3, similar to Spanish /c/, that is to say, when the tip of the tongue touches the back part of the lower incisors and the front of the tongue touches the hard palate. This is the reason why some teachers say that these three sounds are similar to Spanish /y/, which is the one that is produced in words such as *lluvia*, *yo*, and so forth. After analyzing the diagrams, it can be seen that the three English sounds and the Spanish one are different and the teachers should help students to acquire their correct pronunciation.

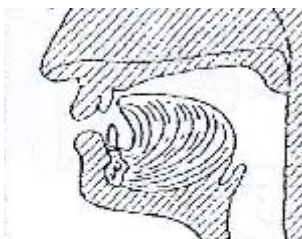
Diagram # 5



In diagram #5, sounds /θ/ and /ð/ are represented. As it can be seen, in order to articulate these two sounds, the tip of the tongue is placed between the teeth. English /θ/ is frequently confused with Spanish /s/, which is represented in diagram #6. This sound is produced when the tip of the tongue faces the alveolar ridge. This is why when

producing English words such as “*Think*”, Spanish speakers tend to produce “*Sink*”, similar to the initial sound of the Spanish word “*Cinco*.”

Diagram #6



The second aspect that should be taken into account is the presence or absence of voice. Some of the sounds mentioned above are voiceless, and some others are voiced. When the vocal cords vibrate, the sounds produced are classified as voiced; when they do not vibrate, the sounds produced are classified as voiceless. This second classification can be seen in the above chart: “Classification of Consonants According to the Place of Articulation and Presence or Absence of Voice.” To determine if the sounds are voiced or voiceless, students should place their fingers in the outer part of the throat. If one feels, when producing the sound, that the vocal cords vibrate, the sounds are classified as voiced. If one does not feel any vibration of the vocal cords, it means that the sounds are voiceless.

Teachers should prepare different exercises to practice the articulation of these sounds. When preparing them, one should place the sounds in all the possible positions in which they occur within the syllable because the different positions, that is to say initial, medial, and final, may help more or less to achieve the correct pronunciation of the sound depending on it. This factor is known as sound distribution.

2.2.3.3 Insertion of /e/

Spanish-speaking students have a tendency to insert sound /e/ before words that begin with sound /s/. A couple of examples are *United States* and *great spirits*. These two phrases are generally pronounced /juˈnaɪtɪd eˈsteɪts/ and /ˈɡreɪt eˈspɪrɪts/, respectively. The correct pronunciation of the phrases should be /juˈnaɪtɪd steɪts/ and /ˈɡreɪts pɪrɪts/. So, as it can be seen, adding the initial /s/ to the end of the previous word is a good technique to correct this mistake to the students.

2.2.3.4 Aspiration of /p, t/, and /k/

Aspiration is a slightly puff of breath which is heard after the explosion of /p, t/, and /k/ in stressed position. The aspiration of /p, t/, and /k/ is an important characteristic of these English consonants. In English, the voiceless plosives /p, t/, and /k/ are produced differently depending on the syllable in which they appear, that is to say, if these sounds appear in stressed syllables, they are said to be aspirated; if they appear in unstressed position they are unaspirated. Some examples of words with aspirated /p, t/, and /k/ are: “Pin”, “Tin”, “Kin”, “Pill”, “Top”, “Cat”. Some examples of words with unaspirated /p, t/, and /k/ are: “Lip”, “Hope”, “Late”, “Rate”, “Suck”, “Rock”. Aspiration is represented in phonetic transcription by an [h], while unaspiration is represented by a [̰].

2.2.4 Factors that may Influence Students’ Pronunciation Learning

In order to achieve the objective of teaching English pronunciation to a group of students or an individual, the investigator needs to go through a path where some linguistic factors may change the result and the processes to obtain it. However, Marianne Celce-Murcia, Donna M. Brinton, and Janet M. Goodwin (2010) explain that

pronunciation is not only a linguistic matter; but it is also necessary to take into consideration other factors. Below, the most important characteristics will be mentioned.

2.2.4.1 Student's Age

The first component they mention is student's age. Apparently, the individuals will probably be unable to attain nativelike proficiency if they are adults. The authors mentioned above states that "prepubescent children with adequate exposure to a second language can achieve perfect or near perfect pronunciation with relative ease." (p. 15) This may happen because when a person whose age is around 20 years or more, their learning skills related to language do not function in the same way as a child learning skills. The difference is found in the fact that adults need to link every new piece of information to their native language. In the case of a babies, since they do not know any language yet; they start learning a second language without linking it to any previous knowledge.

2.2.4.2 Exposure to the Language

Another factor that may influence pronunciation learning is the exposure to the target language. This means that learners must be exposed to a great amount of comprehensible input before they are obliged to speak. For example, if a Spanish-speaker, who does not speak English, takes an English course in the United States, the professor does not need to worry a lot about the learner's second language input due to the exposition this student has to the language during the rest of the day. When the student is not attending English classes, he will probably be practicing activities such as going to the supermarket, watching T.V., or even going out for a walk. During all these activities, the individual will listen to people speaking in the country's native language,

and even, in the case of the supermarket, he will need to communicate to someone in order to buy something. Now, if this same person takes an English course in his or her native country, the professor must make him receive lots of English input during the classes in order to compensate the fact that when he executes activities like the ones mentioned before, he will listen only to Spanish words.

2.2.4.3 Amount and Type of Prior Pronunciation Instruction

Presuming that a professor is teaching learners who have had prior exposure to English, another important aspect that must be taken into consideration is the amount and type of prior pronunciation instruction. However, according to the authors, it is even more important that a professor is conscious of the problems students may have in the pronunciation area. By knowing and understanding the pronunciation issues that they have to face in a classroom, professors must implement techniques and strategies conducted to fix and improve the pronunciation skills of students.

2.2.4.4 Aptitude, Attitude, and Motivation

One more aspect that should be taken into account in order to determine students' pronunciation learning is divided into three parts: Aptitude, Attitude, and Motivation.

Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin state that there are four traits that constitute language aptitude. First, the phonemic coding ability, which is the capacity to differentiate and code foreign sounds, so that they can be recalled. Then, the grammatical sensitivity, that means being able to analyze language and figure out rules. Third, the inductive language learning ability. This one is the capacity to pick up language through exposure. Finally, memory, which is the amount of rote learning activity needed to internalize something related to the language, such as a new sound, a

grammatical rule, or the pronunciation or spelling of a word. All these characteristics that describe the meaning of aptitude conclude that the person needs to be good at executing all the tasks mentioned. If the student is not able to develop them, he may not be able to learn English at all.

The second part of this factor is attitude, whose concept, according to Dr. Erin N. Goodykoontz in her dissertation *Factors that Affect College Students' Attitude Toward Mathematics*, refers to the positive, negative, or neutral feelings that a student has toward the studied matter. This means that in order to achieve a good level of learning the professor needs to find a way to teach in which the student has positive feelings.

Finally, the level of motivation may have influenced English pronunciation learning. According to Maehr & Meyer (1997), as cited on *Motivating Students to Learn* by Jere E. Brophy (2004), "Motivation is a theoretical construct used to explain initiation, direction, intensity, persistence, and quality of behavior, especially goal-directed behavior." In fact, Brophy explains that there are three important terms that need to be differentiated: motive, strategy, and goal. For better understanding, these concepts can be used in an example: A man needs to be hired at a company where the knowledge of English language is fundamental, but he believes that his English skills need to be improved, so he decides to take an English course to improve. When the man finally finishes the course, he attends an interview for the position he wants, and the company takes the decision to hire him. The objective of this man is to improve his English knowledge; this is known as the goal. The fact that he needs to be hired at the company is the motive why he wants to achieve that "Goal". Because of this, he decides to apply the strategy, which is to take an English course.

2.2.5 Strategies to Teach Phonics

Before introducing different theories and methods to apply strategies to teach phonetics, it is important to define the word *strategy*. According to “The United Nations Human Settlements Programme” (2004), a strategy refers basically to two things; the first one states where a person wants to go, and the second one is how the person gets there. In the Merriam Webster Dictionary, the word strategy is defined as “a careful plan or method for achieving a particular goal” (p. 707). In other words, a strategy is the implementation of an activity, technique, or method to reach an objective that has been previously set.

Throughout several years, some frequent strategies to teach phonetics to kindergarten, elementary school, high school and, even, university students have been implemented. In her book *Connecting Content and Language for English Language Learners*, Mora (2011) mentions some of these techniques: word building, word families, and the phonics carousel. The word building strategy refers to an activity where the teacher pronounces isolated phonemes that form a word. Doing it one at a time, students must concentrate in the individual sounds to form the word. The word families strategy is a technique in which some words are provided and students have to find similar patterns to relate them. The phonics carousel is a strategy in which the teacher selects around six sounds that students already know. The teacher writes them on top of large pieces of paper (one sound per paper). Students are arranged in small groups, a paper is assigned to each group, and they have to write as many words as possible that contain the corresponding sound. Then, they turn to another paper and repeat the exercise. These

activities proposed by Mora will help students, not only to practice the identification of different sounds, but also to acquire a lot of new vocabulary throughout the process.

Some other techniques such as word hunt, jumping for sounds, picture pairs, and realia wall are proposed by Graham and Vinson (*Jump into Phonics, Grade 1*, 2009; *Jump into Phonics, Grade K*, 2009). In a word hunt activity, the teacher organizes small groups and gives them a set of pictures and a sound. Students must find the pictures that contain words pronounced with that sound and group them. Jumping for sounds is an activity to be performed in an outdoor area. Students will have to jump the rope, and every time they jump, they will have to say a word with a sound the teachers asks.

Another strategy is picture pairs, in this activity, students choose two pictures from a pocket chart. The images they choose have to begin with the same sound. Once the student has chosen the pair of pictures, he or she has to say the words and emphasize the common sound. Finally, the realia wall refers to a strategy in which there is a sort of bulletin board in the class. Every week or so, a sound is chosen. The board must be filled with real objects that contain the phoneme. For example, the sound / p / is the one chosen, students and the teacher should bring real objects like paper, pens, pictures, plants, plates, and the like, which contain the sound / p /, and place it in the realia wall. Graham and Vinson's activities are designed to teach children; however, with some adaptation, these activities can be implemented with adolescents and even adults. The realia wall can benefit students from all ages by providing them something tangible to remember and making the learning process more interactive than just writing and memorizing words.

As a conclusion, it can be guaranteed that the knowledge of phonetics is highly important when speaking and understanding any language (English, in this case) and that there are a great amount of techniques that have been successfully applied through the years to people of different ages and language levels. It is also important to highlight that these techniques may be specially applied to students of specific ages, and that they may not be suitable if they are not adapted to the characteristics of the students.

Chapter III

Methodology

Before starting the investigation project, the researcher needs to select the techniques and approaches that he will use during the process. Since these methods will guide the entire research, and gather information on how students show improvement before and after the investigation, it is essential to select them carefully. Chapter three attempts to describe the methods that the investigator will use during the research, as well as a detailed description of the institution and the population involved.

3.1 Research Method and Scope

Kothari (2004) defines research methods or techniques as “all those methods which are used by the researcher during the course of studying his research.” Kothari also mentions that these techniques can be put into three different groups. First, the methods that will collect data; second, the statistical techniques used to establish relationships between the data and the unknowns; and third, the methods that evaluate the results of the investigation.

When the researcher chooses a research technique, it should be strictly related to the purpose of the investigation; for example, when a teacher wants to know the method that students prefer to use to improve their pronunciation during their free time, the professor should create a checklist including different activities such as reading, watching movies or TV series, and listening to music, among others. Then, they will gather the information and will be able to express which method they prefer the most, as well as the least preferred one. However, if the situation defines that most people within the

population prefer to listen to music, for instance, the researcher should make some interviews to find out the reason of that preference. In the first scenario, the researcher is trying to figure out what the preferred activity is in order to improve pronunciation. In the second case, he is trying to figure out the reason why they prefer that activity. These examples suggest that the intention in which the investigation is being conducted will influence on what methods to choose and how they will be used.

Taking into consideration that the word data is a very broad term, according to Punch and Oancea (2009), researchers have decided to accommodate the information in two different groups; qualitative data and quantitative data. Depending on the method that the researcher uses, the investigation may be considered Qualitative or Quantitative; however, there is also a third type of datum that mixes both approaches. Goodwin and Goodwin (1996) barely mention that Quantitative researches involve numbers, tables, and graphs. However, Barragán et al. (2003) bring a more detailed definition on “*Guía para la Formulación y Ejecución de Proyectos de Investigación*”, which is translated as “*Guide to the Formulation and Execution of Investigation Projects.*” They state that Quantitative investigation works essentially with quantities and that its final purpose is to establish similarities and differences in ranges and proportions. Based on these definitions, it can be stated that a Quantitative approach will not try to understand the population’s point of view but only some numerical characteristics. On the other hand, a Qualitative investigation is briefly defined by Alan Bryman (2015) as an approach concerned to words instead of numbers. He also mentions that a Qualitative Research is sometimes taken to imply an approach to social research in which Quantitative data are not collected or generated. On the other hand, Maxwell (2013) mentions that a

Qualitative research can be defined as a research that is intended to help the investigator to understand better the meanings and perspectives of the population studied – seeing the world from their point of view and not necessarily from the investigator’s; how these perspectives are shaped, and the specific processes that are involved in maintaining or altering these phenomena and relationships. This suggests that a Qualitative research, not only cares about the results on the investigation, but also digs deep to know more about why and how the results are obtained. In some cases, even the researcher may influence in the results of the investigation. As stated before, there is a third type of method that leads to the creation of a new type of approach for an investigation; the mixed methods approach. This has been defined as “a type of research design in which qualitative and quantitative approaches are used in types of questions, research methods, data collection and analysis procedures and/or inferences” (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003a, p. 711). This method comes with different strengths and weaknesses. Among the benefits, the mixed method could help generalize to a degree, qualitative data, and also be helpful in designing and validating an instrument. On the other hand, one of the weaknesses when using this approach is that it may take a lot of time to use both the quantitative and qualitative approaches.

The research method that was decided to be used in this investigation is the qualitative because the main purpose of the investigator is to analyze how the applied strategies to teach phonics impact the students’ production of the different sounds taught during the lessons, thus improving their pronunciation in General American English. The study and its conclusions will appear in a narrative form instead of in a numerical

one; each participant's progress will be contemplated before the application of the techniques and in the explanation of the results.

The Qualitative and Quantitative methods use different types of instruments to collect the data and analyze the conclusions to validate the purpose of the investigation. Due to the type of investigation this is, it is necessary that the researcher chooses instruments that will work specifically on a Qualitative Approach. Goodwin and Goodwin (1996) express that there is a general category that makes a difference between interactive methods, which include observation and interviewing, and noninteractive methods, such as document collection.

In the first category, observation, the authors explain that an important difference between the observation techniques used in the two types of research is that Quantitative analysis usually bases on observation instruments with predetermined ways of behavior. Unlike the Quantitative Approach, Qualitative observation concentrates directly on more natural techniques, like the one known as participant observation. This technique puts the investigator to take part of the activities that the studied population is involved with, thus he is able to live the other participants' reality; their thoughts, beliefs, and feelings. This is the reason why, as it was mentioned before, even the researcher could have some influence in the results of the investigation; he is part of the studied population.

The interview method consists of an amount of questions directed to the participants of the study, and whose answers will help gather the information that the investigator requires. These questions can be direct, indirect, open, or close, depending on how the investigator decides to conduct the interview, and they can be applied as face-to-face, over the telephone, or through ink and paper.

Not only a method should be included in the investigation, but it is also necessary to include a scope. This scope needs to be as complex as the investigation is. Goodwin and Goodwin (1996) acknowledge that writers and professional researchers frequently express that there are three types of research: descriptive, correlational, or experimental. For this investigation, the researcher decided to choose the descriptive scope. Palerm-Calmorin and Calmorin (2008) state that when using this design, “the study focuses at the present condition. The purpose is to find the truth. The truth may have different forms such as increased quantity of knowledge, a new generalization or a new law, an increased insight into factors which are operating, the discovery of a new causal relationship, a more accurate for the problem to be solved, and many others.” Since the current investigation will analyze the characteristics, behavior, and reaction of the population being studied before, during and after the application of the techniques mentioned below, the descriptive scope fits the objective of the investigator.

3.2 Selection and Description of the Participants

To start the investigation, the researcher needs to describe the population that he selected to work with. To locate the reader in the reality of the participants, it may also be necessary to describe the institution.

3.2.1. Description of the Institution

The researcher decided to apply his investigation at an institution called Centro Educativo Cristiano Reformado (CECRE), located in Mata de Plátano, Goicoechea. This institution is a private school, recognized and approved by the Ministry of Public Education in Costa Rica (MEP) since 1993. It started only as Kindergarten called *Arca de Noé*, (in English, it means **Noah’s Ark**.) It was until a few years later that the

institution changed its name and grew to include elementary and high school education levels to its studies program.

Currently, the institution works with the MEP's curriculum; furthermore, the English curriculum is being expanded. This is because although the school is not 100% bilingual, they are starting to work with a Cambridge program to improve pronunciation and conversational skills. This program started functioning last year, and its purpose is to enable students, at the end of their secondary studies, to defend themselves against the need to have a minimum level of conversational English for a future job or scholarship. However, it must be noticed that the program is being applied to all the levels from first grade to eleventh, except for the seventh grade. The reason for this lies on the fact that the group of seventh graders is formed by some students that come from public elementary schools. This may become a problem due to the fact that these students do not have the same English level that others who come from private schools do, and because of this, it is very difficult to teach the same pronunciation and conversational material to every student in the group. The institution also enabled different clubs for the students to participate in them. Among the variety of clubs, they have the ones of Soccer, Taekwondo, Chorus, Literature, and Dancing.

In terms of infrastructure, they have two floors. In the one below, they have one bathroom for each gender and seven rooms, one for each primary school level and a larger room for arts. In the floor above, there is one more bathroom for each gender and seven more rooms, one for each high school subject. Each one of these rooms has an interactive board in which teachers can share videos, pictures, and PowerPoint presentations. Professors have a teachers' room right next to the dining area. They have,

as well, a small green area and a small gym, where the students receive physical education lessons and play during breaks. Finally, there is also a couple of classrooms for pre-school levels that are not part of the building, but they are rented from a building next door.

The institution works during mornings and afternoons; in its regular schedule, the shift starts at 7:00 AM, and it ends at 2:00 PM, from Monday to Friday.

3.2.2 Description of the Population

Since seventh grade is the only group that has not been introduced to pronunciation lessons using the Cambridge method aforementioned, it is ideal to submit the investigation to this group. There is only one group of seventh grade at CECRE. This group is formed mostly by people who belong to the upper middle class, and their English knowledge is average.

3.2.3 Description of the Participants

The seventh grade group consists of nineteen students; six girls and thirteen boys, whose ages range from twelve to thirteen years old. It is somehow difficult to work with them in English, due to the fact that, as it was mentioned before, some students come from public schools, and they do not understand a lot when the professor speaks only in English. This creates the need that sometimes the professor explains the material more than once and, in some cases, in Spanish. However, some of the students have received English since they started elementary school, and some others, since they were coursing the kindergarten.

Although some of these students come from public institutions where English is not as strong as it is in CECRE, according to their current English teacher, these students

tend to be the ones that most put effort on their part and strive to learn more every day. On the other hand, some other students who have been in private schools since the beginning of their academic life are not what their teacher describes as ‘good students’ because they do not really show the respect and interest during the moment in which the teacher is trying to teach the lesson.

There are different personalities among all the students, but most of them have common interests like soccer, videogames, music, and technology.

3.3 Implemented Strategies

In this section, the strategies that the investigator selected to enforce in the research will be described below.

3.3.1 Comparison and Contrast

This strategy puts into practice the comparison and contrast between the students’ native language and the target language sounds with the purpose to point out the slight differences that exist between them. It is especially useful when the student’s mistake is to produce an incorrect sound because the correct one does not exist in his or her native language. For example, when studying the English sound /t/ with Spanish speakers, it is common that, since this sound does not exist in their native language, they try to produce a similar sound, such as Spanish /c/. In this case it is necessary to compare both sounds, so the students understand why they tend to mispronounce it. Also, and more important, it is necessary that both sounds are contrasted, so the students understand the differences between them.

3.3.2 Discrimination of Sounds

There is a great variation of activities to practice the discrimination of sounds.

Basically, the strategy consists of the professor saying words similar among them, so the students recognize the different sounds on them.

3.3.3 Minimal Pairs

When speaking about phonetics, **minimal pairs** refer to pairs of words in a language that are identical except for one sound. Some examples are the following: bin/pin, had/head, those/doze and mouse/mouth. Teachers need to put the words together, so the students recognize the differences in spelling and pronunciation. Some teachers usually put pictures that represent each word, so the students can also practice the meaning of the word.

3.3.4 Reading Out-Loud

This strategy is pretty simple. It consists on having the students to read out-loud a group of texts that include the sounds that are being studied or practiced. When reading out loud, students will hear their own mistakes and the professor or other classmates may be able to correct them. This is something that would not be reached if one reads silently.

3.3.5 Tongue Twisters

The use of tongue twisters is a funny technique in which students will have fun and learn at the same time. It consists on reading phrases that include similar sounds that students may mispronounce if they speak fast and do not articulate correctly, such as the sounds /ð/ and /d/.

3.3.6 Recitation of Poems

Similar to reading out loud, this technique involves reading a text but, since the text is a poem; it also helps the student practice stress and intonation.

3.3.7 Jazz Chants

The Jazz Chants technique is really helpful, not only for improving pronunciation, but also for practicing vocabulary and grammar. It consists on saying and repeating phrases with rhythm, in a way that it sounds like a chant, similar to rap, but more poetic.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

With the purpose of collecting relevant information and analyze the improvement and evolution of the students, it is important that the investigator chooses some instruments.

The first instrument that the professor decided to use is a checklist. This instrument will help the investigator identify the mistakes that the students in seventh grade make in the production of consonant sounds /θ, ð, ʒ, dʒ, ʃ/, and /tʃ/. The investigator will tell each student, one by one, to slowly read out loud sentences containing words with these sounds. The professor will listen and note down the sounds that the student produces on each word. With a similar purpose, to diagnose and analyze the students' English level, the researcher decided to apply a questionnaire including questions about their English education on previous years.

Observation be another instrument. By observing the groups during the whole investigation process, the researcher will take notes of everything that happens during every lesson. These observations will be described and analyzed on the next chapter.

To determine if the implemented strategies are effective or not, the investigator will use the different oral and written practices during and after the lessons. Also, he will use the same checklist he mentioned previously; this time to evaluate the progress on the sounds the students may have mispronounced before the teaching techniques were applied.

3.5 Validation of Instruments

The chosen instruments were validated with the eighth graders of the same institution, due to the fact that the students coursing this year are supposed to have a similar English level and maturity to seventh graders. The students read the same sentences that were going to be applied to the seventh grade students.

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

	Instrument 1 Questionnaire	Instrument 2 Observation	Instrument 3 Checklist	Review of the literature page number
Specific Objective 1 To determine the mistakes seventh graders make in the pronunciation of the English consonants /θ, ð, ʒ, dʒ, ʃ, ʒ/	The students answer a questionnaire about their English knowledge and previous education.	The researcher listens to determine the English pronunciation knowledge the students have.	The researcher fills in a checklist with different consonant sounds based on how the students produce them.	
Specific Objective 2 To establish a comparison and contrast among the English consonants mentioned above and some Spanish consonants		The researcher observes to determine the progress the participants present during the application of the strategies.		
Specific Objective 3 To apply different techniques and activities to improve the pronunciation of some consonants that offer difficulties in their production to Spanish-speaking students		The researcher observes to determine the progress the students present after the application of the strategies.		
Specific Objective 4 To identify the phonetic symbols that represent the sounds to be corrected	The students answer a questionnaire about their English knowledge and previous education.	The researcher observes to determine the progress the participants present during the application of the strategies.		
Specific Objective 5 To evaluate the students' progress during and after the application of the strategies to improve pronunciation		The researcher observes to determine the progress the participants present during the application of the strategies.	The researcher fills in a checklist with different consonant sounds based on how the students produce them.	
General Objective To analyze the effect of comparing and contrasting the pronunciation of some English and Spanish consonants applying some strategies and techniques to improve the pronunciation of seventh graders at Centro Educativo Cristiano Reformado during the second quarter of 2017		The researcher observes to determine the English level the students have before and the progress they present during and after the application of the strategies.		

Chapter IV

Data Analysis

In this chapter, will be analyzed the information that has been gathered during the whole investigation process. According to Aneshenselhe (2013), the word **datum** does not have an intrinsic meaning; it is just some of information whose nature needs to be comprehended. This author points out that in order to understand the data's nature, an analysis should be done, which, as defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary (2017), is defined as “a detailed examination of anything complex in order to understand its nature or to determine its essential features.” It is important to take into account that during the process of some investigations, when the data is being analyzed, it may be necessary to pause the research in order to gather more data and, then, continue the analysis. Also, in some cases, when the datum is being analyzed, some information may result as a step for new discoveries or theories that will not only enrich the current investigation, but ut also generates new ones.

4.1 Analysis and Interpretation of the Results

The first and unique section of this chapter contains the description and explanation of the data collected through the instruments selected by the investigator. This information includes the analysis of the checklist and questionnaire applied to the students before the investigation, the written and oral practices applied to assess the

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

students' progress, and the notes taken during the observation during and after the application of the strategies.

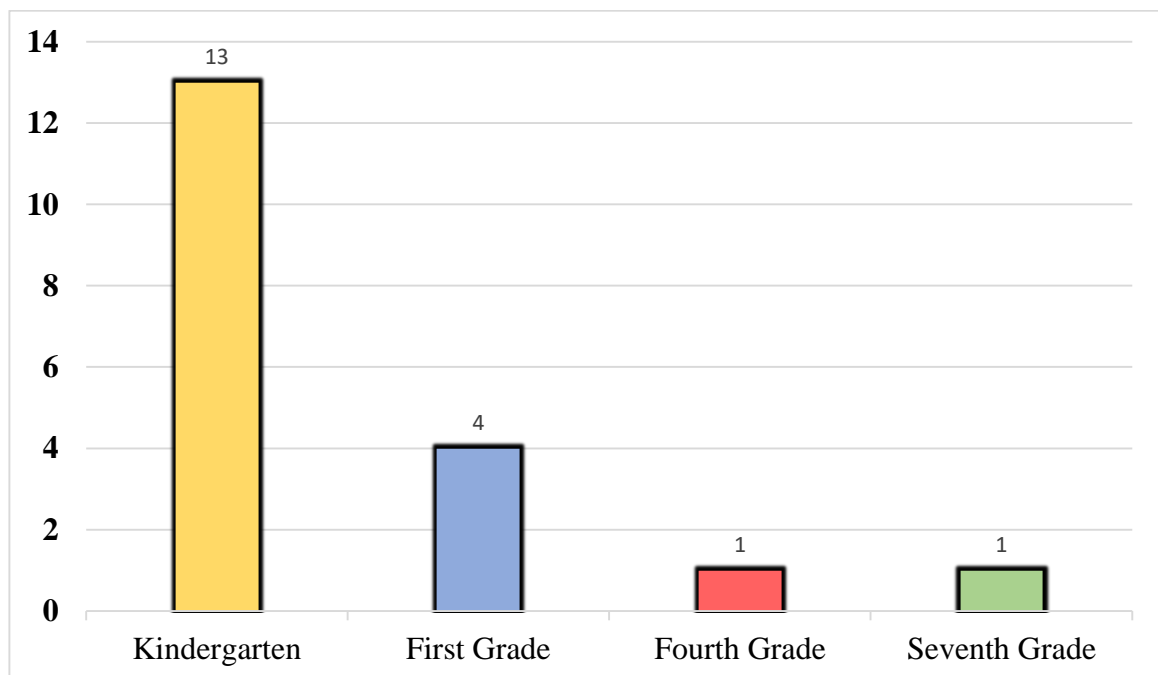
4.1.1 Questionnaire

The first instrument that the researcher used is a questionnaire. The Business Dictionary (2017) defines a questionnaire as a “list of a research or survey questions asked to respondents, and designed to extract specific information.” At the beginning of the current study, before any strategy was applied, a questionnaire was delivered to the participants. This questionnaire consisted of ten questions, including both multiple choice and open questions.

The first question asked the grade when they started receiving English lessons. The participants answered as graph #1 shows:

Graph #1. Question 1

I have received English classes since _____



Source: Questionnaire applied to the students

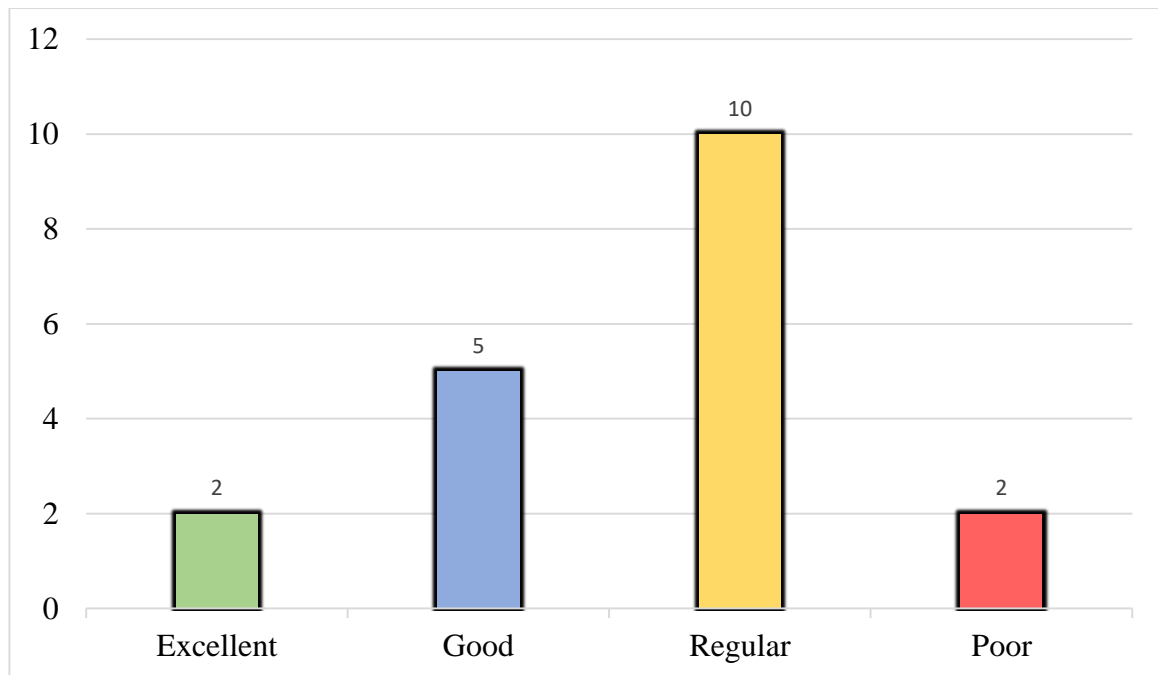
STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

Among the nineteen students in seventh grade, thirteen of them (the majority) started receiving English since Kindergarten and other four, when they were in first grade. Meanwhile, the other two started their English education later, on fourth and seventh grade, respectively.

In question number two, they were asked to rate their own pronunciation based completely on their opinion. As it can be seen on Graph #2, only two students believe their pronunciation is excellent, five, state that they have a good pronunciation, most students; ten, perceive that they have a fair level of pronunciation, and two believe their pronunciation is poor.

Graph #2. Question 2

Rate your pronunciation



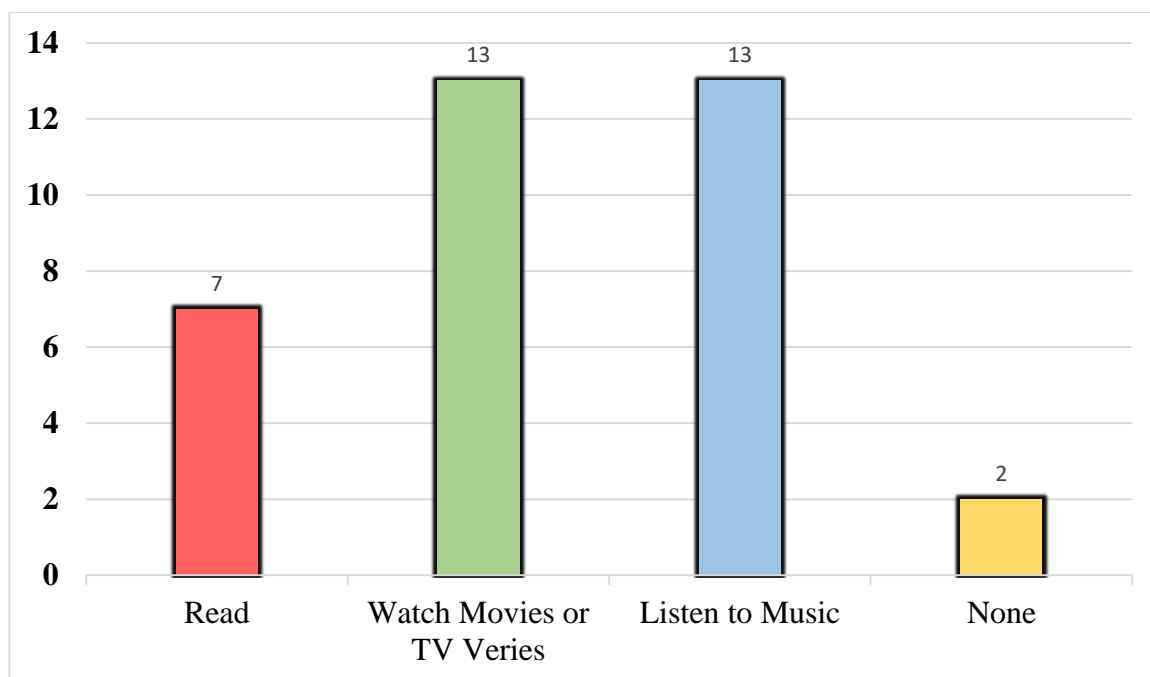
Source: Questionnaire applied to the students

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

The third question's purpose was to know if, during the English lessons that the students had received, they were taught any kind of pronunciation lessons. For this question, seven students coincided with a positive answer; at some point of their English lessons, pronunciation material was given to them. However, the other twelve students gave a negative answer.

Question number four was supposed to be answered only by people who gave a positive answer on the previous question. It asked the students if they remembered what they had learned regarding pronunciation. The answers on this questions showed an interesting variety; most of them (five out of seven) belonged to the group who believed their pronunciation was good or excellent. One of them answered that they studied the rules on how to pronounce words depending on their spelling, another one answered that they studied the sounds of each letter separately, and the others answered that they did not remember exactly what they had learned, because when they were taught about it, they were too young.

Graph #3 shows the answers based on question five. Students were asked to answer among four options, what activity they performed to learn and practice their English pronunciation. In this question, they were given the possibility to select more than one answer.

Graph #3. Question 5**What do you usually do to improve your pronunciation?**

Source: Questionnaire applied to the students

Question number six asked students if they knew something about the International Phonetic Alphabet. All of them gave the same answer; they did not know what the IPA was or what it was used for.

In question seven, the students were asked if any of them knew anything about the following IPA symbols: /θ, ð, ʒ, dʒ, ʃ, tʃ/. No one recognized a single symbol, with the exception of one student who recognized / ð /. Also, this student was the only one who answered question number eight, which asked the students to draw other symbols if they knew more. This student drew the symbol / æ /.

In question number nine, the students were asked if they were able to differentiate between the pronunciation of consonants in English and consonants in Spanish. Only

five of them gave a positive answer, thirteen answered *no* and one of the students did not mark any of the options. However, this student left an annotation saying that he knew that some consonants are pronounced the same way, as well as there are others that are pronounced differently. The annotation also pointed out that he did not remember very well about his pronunciation lessons because he had taken them a long time ago.

Finally, question ten asked the students if they knew what the correct position of lips, tongue, and other organs of speech was when producing consonant sounds. Most students, ten to be exact, were sure that they did not know the correct position of these organs and four of them believed that they did. On the other hand, two students marked both options, and other two did not mark an option at all, but the four of them left a note making clear that, depending on the sound, sometimes they knew how to do it; other times not.

The purpose of this questionnaire was, not only to know if they had any kind of theoretical knowledge before applying the strategies, but also if they were able to apply this theoretical information into practice when speaking English. As well, the questionnaire worked as an instrument to know how good they consider themselves when speaking in English.

The questionnaire helped the investigator to conclude that none of the students had a lot of knowledge about pronunciation theory, except one of them who identified a few of the IPA symbols, and another one who admitted to know that some English sounds were produced similarly to Spanish, but not exactly in the same way. If the students had had more education about phonetics, the researcher would have saved time by not explaining what the IPA was, nor what it was used for. In this case, the researcher will

need to start the explanation from zero, so the students are able to understand as much as possible. Also, the questionnaire concluded that, although they did not know a lot about pronunciation theory, most of them had a high concept about their own knowledge.

4.1.2 Observation

As defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (2017), observation is “an act of recognizing and noting a fact or occurrence often involving measurement with instruments.” This is why observations are necessary in this investigation due to the fact that the researcher needs to recognize and note different events that happen during the application of the strategies. These events include the reactions, behaviors, and progress that students may show before, during, and after the application of the strategies, as well as other important details necessary to be mentioned.

The following descriptions were taken from the annotations that the investigator took while observing the participants. These lessons were conducted during the period from May 8th, 2017, on Mondays and Wednesdays. Each day, the researcher was given a forty-minute lesson to apply the strategies mentioned before.

First, it is necessary to include a brief description of how the first day was. On day one, the researcher met the participants for the first time. He greeted the students and introduced himself in a friendly way, so the students had a comfortable reaction. The professor started talking a little about himself, and the things he liked to do, and later he asked the students to say their names and talk a little about themselves, what their hobbies and their favorite school subjects were, and how their experience with English had been since they started studying it. Some of them mentioned hobbies, such as music, and sports, while others commented on videogames. A few of them classified English as

their favorite subject, and all of them agreed that this was because it was probably the only subject in which funny and interesting activities were carried out, something that was not usually done in other subjects. However, most students confirmed that based on their previous experience with the language, they did not feel really secure when speaking English and that, for some reason, during the application of a test, they sometimes felt nervous. After this, the professor started explaining what he was there for. It was noticed that the students were really quiet, keeping respect, and paying attention to what was said at that moment. When the professor was done with this, he gave the students a questionnaire to diagnose their knowledge and level about English and its pronunciation. This questionnaire included questions regarding their basic pronunciation knowledge and their experience with the English classes in the past.

Observation number one started on the second day before any of the strategies were applied. The researcher called students one by one and asked them to read out loud a few sentences containing words with the following sounds: /θ, ð, ʒ, dʒ, ʃ, tʃ/. Since the investigator needed to listen carefully to the sounds in these words, he highlighted the words containing the sounds and told the students to read them slowly and emphasizing every sound on them. While the students were reading the sentences, the professor used a checklist to determine if the sound they produced was correct or not. The main idea of this dynamic was to discover what the common mistakes were when the students tried to produce any of these sounds, and to determine the students' pronunciation level.

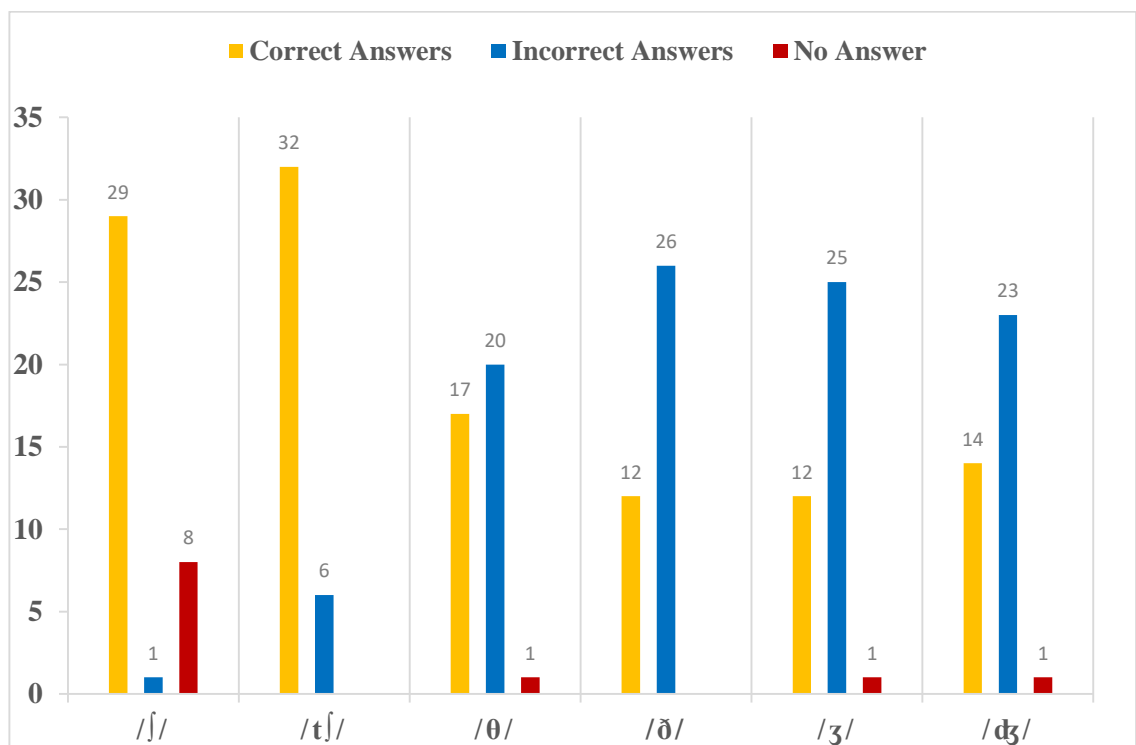
Taking into account that the professor selected six different consonant sounds, and provided two words per sound to collect the data on how the students produced the utterances, it is important to point out that since there was a total of nineteen students,

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

the total amount of answers provided as a group should be 228. However, there were some words that the students decided not to say. This probably happened because they were a bit anxious or they had no idea of how the sound was produced. Graph #4 shows the answers provided by the students:

Graph 4.

Evaluation Task



Source: Evaluation Task

In general terms, the participants made several mistakes when producing most of the sounds. Although a few of them were able to produce the sounds in a correct way, there were others that took one of two different paths. In the first path, a group of the participants produced the sounds exactly in the way that they would have been produced

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

if the words were being read in Spanish. This means that they related the spelling directly to the sound that is produced in the Spanish language, as if there were no differences at all. For example, when producing the word *decision*, instead of producing the sound /ʒ/, they produced the sound /s/ because in Spanish, this is the only sound that is produced when the letter “s” appears in a word. The group that took the second path did know that there was a difference between the spelling pronunciation in English and in Spanish, and they did not relate the spelling of the words directly to the Spanish sounds; however, when they tried to produce the sound within the words, they produced the sound incorrectly; some of them imitated the English sound using a similar Spanish sound, while others produced the closest English sound they knew. For instance, instead of producing the sound /ʒ/ in the word “*Television*”, they produced the voiceless version of the sound; /tʃ/.

The following chart shows the information that the checklist collected, which includes the amount of students who produced the sound correctly, the number of students who produced a Spanish sound relating it to the spelling, and finally the number of students who tried to produce the English sound, but they did it incorrectly. The sound analyzed is represented by the underlined letters in the words. The students who decided not to say the words are not included in the chart.

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

Chart 2

Word containing the sound	Number of students who produced sound correctly	Number of students who produced sound with no difference to Spanish	Number of students who produced sound incorrectly, but not in Spanish
Sketch	15 Students	2 Students	2 Students
Cash	18 Students	0 Students	1 Students
South	10 Students	4 Students	4 Students
Usually	7 Students	9 Students	3 Students
Vision	5 Students	7 Students	6 Students
Education	11 Students	0 Students	0 Students
Bridge	8 Students	2 Students	9 Students
Justin	6 Students	10 Students	2 Students
Catch	17 Students	0 Students	2 Students
Thousand	7 Students	11 Students	1 Students
Then	9 Students	4 Students	6 Students
Southern	3 Students	11 Students	5 Students

Source: Evaluation Task

As it can be seen, English sounds /tʃ/ and /ʃ/ are the sounds that students were more able to produce correctly. This is probably because sound /ʃ/ is really simple to produce for Spanish speakers, and although the sound /tʃ/ may be easily confused with Spanish sound /c/, the fact that the students had no problem recognizing and producing sound /ʃ/, may be helpful for them to understand and produce the /tʃ/ sound in a right way.

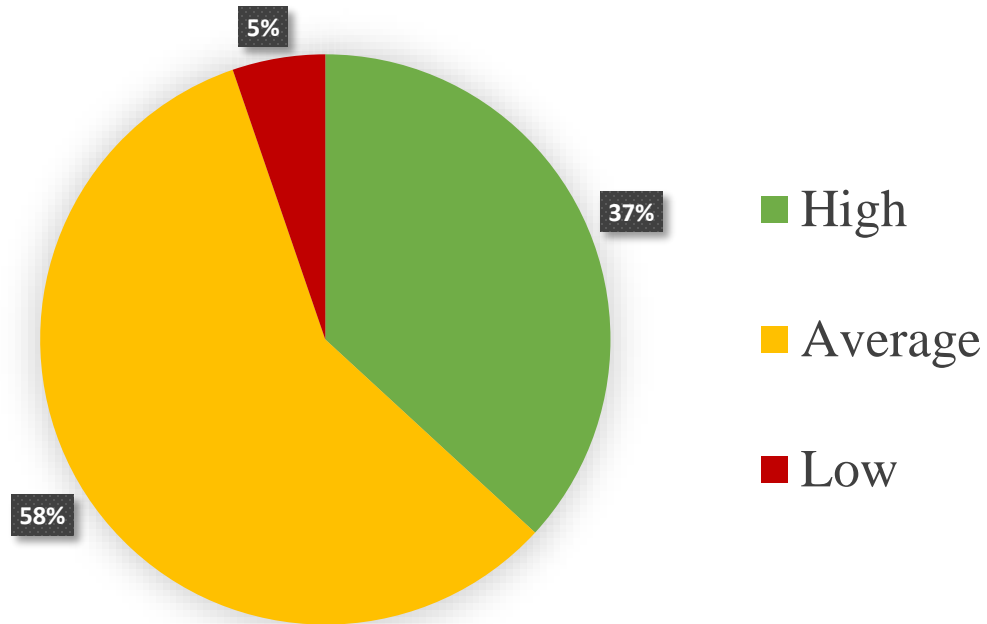
STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

The two *th* sounds were the most confusing for students due to the fact that most students produced the Spanish /t/ sound because they related the spelling directly to the Spanish pronunciation. On the other hand, in some cases with sound /ð/ the students did know that using the /t/ sound was not right. Instead, they tried to produce the Spanish sound /d/. This one, although it was incorrect as well, was the most similar sound they were able to find similar to /ð/.

In the case of sound /ʒ/, it was produced with a lot of variation. Some students related the spelling in words like *vision* and *usually* with the Spanish sound /s/; while others, produced the closest sound they could find in English: /ʃ/.

When producing sound /dʒ/ in the word *bridge*, most students confused it with sound /tʃ/, while others produced the Spanish sound /d/ followed by /g/, producing the word as /bridg/. A different situation happened with the word *Justin*. In this case, some students used the sound /j/ as in the words *yes* and *year*. The other students who failed, produced the Spanish sound /y/.

Since the investigator noticed that there was a great variety of levels regarding the students' pronunciation, he determined that it was necessary to divide the students into four different groups or levels. This is how he decided to divide the group: (1) high, students who presented three mistakes or less; (2) average, students who made from four to eight mistakes; and (3) low, students who made from nine to twelve mistakes. The different levels discovered during the observation are shown in the graph below.

Graph #5.**Seventh Grade Students' Level in English Pronunciation**

Source: Evaluation Task

As it can be seen, the group that predominates is the one with the average level, which includes eleven students. The high level group, consisting of seven students is the one that follows. Finally, the smallest group is the low level one. This group consists only of one student.

Next day, the professor started introducing the International Phonetic Alphabet. Since the students did not know anything about it, it was necessary to start explaining the topic carefully; from the very beginning. Because of this, the lesson included a basic introduction to what the IPA is, plus a quick presentation of vowel sounds and their variation. As an example, the case of the letter “a” was an important topic. The professor demonstrated through some examples that the letter “a” represented one

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

single sound in Spanish, because in this language, there is a one to one correspondence between letters and sounds, while in English, a single letter may be pronounced in more than one way. For this last statement, the professor wrote examples such as *table*, *cat*, *father*, *about*, and *fall* on the board, to demonstrate the sounds /eɪ/, /æ/, /ɑ/, /ə/, and /ɔ/, respectively. Most participants were amazed because even though they were already aware that the letter “a” was pronounced differently among these words, it was the first time that they had seen the phonetic representation of the different sounds, and they had not imagined that there were such a considerable amount of ways to pronounce them.

The professor also explained that although this is the way to represent these sounds according to the IPA, there are other phonetic notation systems that use different representations.

It was until the next week (week number two) that the professor started teaching the target consonant sounds. He started by telling the students that there were some differences between the English and Spanish consonant sounds. He mentioned that some English sounds do not exist in Spanish, and that other sounds exist with a slight variation or difference. The first activity that the professor carried out in order to demonstrate these differences was to write some words on the board that had been used to diagnose them the previous week. The words written on the board were: “*Thousand*”, “*Vision*”, and “*Justin*”. He pointed out the mistakes that most Spanish speakers make when saying these words and told them that these were the mistakes that most of them had made while they were evaluated. After that, he repeated the words with the correct sound, followed by the incorrect pronunciation, so the students were able to notice the difference on the sounds.

Once the students were able to hear the difference between the correct and the incorrect pronunciation, the investigator started teaching sounds /θ/ and /ð/ due to the fact that they were the ones in which the students had more problems when producing the sound (Graph 4). Followed by this, the researcher explained that the most important reason why most ESL students make this kind of mistake lies on the fact that people are used to articulate the sounds they produce only in their native language. Finally, in order to clarify the difference between the production of the two TH sounds, the professor applied the use of strategies tongue twisters, discrimination of sounds, and recitation of poems making a comparison between the two studied sounds.

In addition to this, it was decided to use the following two weeks (weeks number three and four) to compare and practice the sound /θ/ and /s/, and the sounds /ð/ and /d/. The first group of sounds was chosen because although the students did not make any mistake confusing one sound with another, it is pretty common that some Spanish speakers do. On the other hand, a lot of students found difficult to produce sound /ð/; instead, most of them produced Spanish /d/. Because of this, it was also necessary to explain the difference between Spanish /d/ and the English /d/. The professor took advantage of this explanation to point out the difference in the articulation of English /t/ and Spanish /t/, which are different as well.

The following week (week number five), English sounds /tʃ/ and /ʃ/ were explained. It was easy for the students to understand the sound /ʃ/ because although there is not a word in Spanish that uses this sound, the interjection *shh* is used in Spanish to ask for silence. On the other hand, sound /tʃ/ was a little bit more difficult. This occurred due to the existence of a similar sound in Spanish: /c/. Although both phonemes sound almost

identical, it was necessary that the students understood that both are produced differently. The professor quickly explained the difference in the position of the tip of the tongue when producing each sound and used different Spanish and English words as examples. It was until that moment that the students understood the difference. To practice the sounds, the professor brought different texts such as poems and tongue twisters in Spanish and English so they could read them out loud.

Week number six was used to explain sounds /ʒ/ and /dʒ/. For the first sound, it was necessary to review sound /j/. By doing this, the professor was able to explain that both sounds are produced in a very similar way, with the exception that, when producing /ʒ/, the vocal cords vibrate, producing sound, while in the production of sound /j/ vocal cords do not produce vibration, meaning that voice is not produced. Also, since a few students generated the English sound /j/ when saying the word *Justin*, the phonological oppositions method worked as a technique to compare and contrast the three new sounds: /ʒ/, /dʒ/, and /j/. Despite this, what most students did when saying the same word, was to produce the Spanish sound /y/, which is the most similar sound in Spanish. Due to this confusion, the professor decided to bring some texts, so the students were able to practice, compare, and practice them.

By this time, after noticing the problem that some students had when producing sound /j/, the professor realized that most participants showed other different pronunciation problems that were not necessarily related to the sounds that had been analyzed in his current study. For example, the constant mistake of producing sound /g/ instead of sound /w/ in words, such as “*would*”, “*with*”, “*within*”, “*water*”, or “*Wilson*”. A similar thing happened when some students substituted the final /d/ sound in some

words by the sound /t/. This occurred with words like *good, liquid, squad, sad, had*, and a great number of regular verbs in the past tense. Also, there was a number of students that had some trouble when saying some words starting with letter “s” and followed by a consonant sound, such as *snake, start, sky, spoon, scout, slash, Spanish*, or *skill*. The problem they had when pronouncing these words consisted in inserting the vowel sound /e/ at the beginning of the words. Because of this, the investigator thought that it would probably be necessary to include some brief lessons that helped students to eliminate this problem. However, this could only be achieved once all the target sounds in the investigation were studied, practiced, and evaluated.

On week seven, since all the target sounds had been taught and explained, it was time to review them and do some practice. Because the students had several problems with sounds /ʒ/, /dʒ/, /θ/, and /ð/ the professor thought it was important to give special emphasis on these sounds. This is why he started explaining them as if they were sounds studied for the first time. This led to emphasize the Spanish counterparts of each English sound, and apply the different techniques mentioned before.

An activity that the students enjoyed during this week was the Jazz Chants. In order to apply this technique including all the possible sounds and in an even more entertaining way, the professor selected a song by Kenny Rogers, which is a version of an old Gospel song entitled *Children, Go Where I Send Thee*. This song includes all the sounds studied by the group. The professor played the song’s video on a big screen in the classroom and then provided paper sheets with the lyrics to the students. The song was played two more times, so the students were able to practice and sing along while reading the lyrics. Before the song was played a fourth time, the professor introduced the

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

directions for an activity. This activity consisted on each student dividing a white sheet of paper in different boxes with one of the studied sounds each. The idea was that while the song was being played, every time they heard a word containing one of the studied sounds, they needed to write it in the corresponding box. At the end, the three people with the largest amount of words in the correct box, were supposed to get a prize.

The last minutes of the final class were used by the teacher to tell the students that there was not going to be more practice for the sounds because the following week an evaluation. The professor also mentioned that if they had questions or doubts regarding the studied material, that moment was the right time to clear them out. No more than seven students raised their hands to ask questions about sound-symbol relationship and the differences among some sounds.

It is important to point out that during some weeks, the lessons did not follow the plan that was established before applying the techniques. This happened due to different factors. During a couple of weeks, there was a soccer championship in which about half of the students in the group needed to assist during the English lessons. Also, in another week, there was the celebration of the FEA (Festival Estudiantil de las Artes) (which in English translates as *Students Art Festival*), which took a couple of lessons away. Finally, one of the last days of the investigator's stay, the Father's day, was celebrated with an activity that did not let the professor carry out his lesson. Because of all these specific situations, the researcher decided to ask for some extra lessons apart from the ones scheduled before. However, although the Social Studies professor was able to grant a few extra lessons to the researcher, they were not enough to cover all the information

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

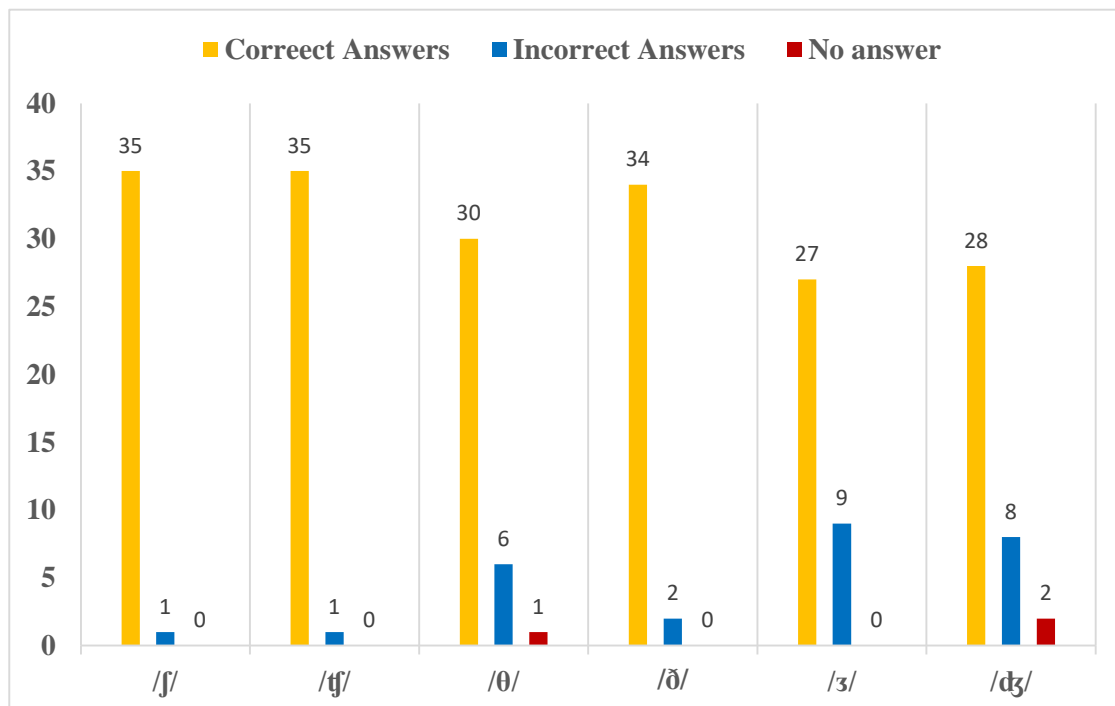
that had been planned. It was because of this reason that the professor needed to teach some of the lessons a little bit quicker than it was planned.

The final day, the investigator used the checklist again in the same way he had used it before the techniques were applied. He gave the students a list of sentences (different to the first sentences they had read before, but including the same words with the studied sounds), so they read them and the teacher was able to determine the progress they had had after all the lessons carried out.

Before describing the results of the evaluation, it is necessary to mention some specific details that the researcher considers important due to the influence they may have in the results. Some of these pieces of information have already been mentioned above, but it is important to give them a review. First, since there were some students who studied at public schools previously, their progress may vary among the ones who studied at private schools or took phonics lessons. Then, the school is constantly being visited by native speakers from Canada and the United States. This is a major fact that exposes the students to American and/ or Canadian English in a way that influences their progress if they work simultaneously with the lessons developed by the investigator. Besides this, there is one student who lived in the United States for a few years. Her pronunciation is almost perfect. On the other hand, there are two students that have been diagnosed with ADD (Attentional Deficit Disorder), and other two with Dysgraphia. This affected not only their own progress, but also the time for the development of the lessons, due to the fact that it was necessary to explain things slowly and more than once for these students to understand.

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

Now that these details have been acknowledged, the results of the evaluation will be described. As stated before, there were six consonant sounds being studied and each student was given different sentences containing two words with each sound. This gives a total of 228 answers provided by the group, which after the evaluation was divided as Graph number 6 shows.

Graph #6.

Source: Evaluation Task

As it can be seen, the amount of correct answers increased considerably. On the other hand, the incorrect answers decreased in a significant way, as well. Besides this, it can also be noticed that there are still some people who decided to not pronounce the word; however, this number disappeared completely in the evaluation of every sound, except for /θ/ and /dʒ/, which are difficult for students to understand and to pronounce due to the difference between them and the similarity to some Spanish sounds.

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

During the first application of the checklist, the researcher noticed that the production of a sound could end in three possible ways: the first, in which the sound would be produced in a correct form, the second, where the student would produce a wrong sound similar to Spanish because they relate the letters to their native language sound system, and the third, in which they understood the sound was produced differently than it would be in Spanish, but were not able to produce the correct English sound either. In Chart number 3, it is shown the amount of students that produced each word in each of the three forms mentioned.

Chart #3

Word containing the sound	Number of students who produced sound correctly	Number of students who produced sound with no difference to Spanish	Number of students who produced sound incorrectly, but not in Spanish
<u>Sketch</u>	18 Students	0 Students	1 Students
<u>Cash</u>	18 Students	0 Students	1 Students
<u>South</u>	18 Students	0 Students	1 Students
<u>Usually</u>	13 Students	1 Students	5 Students
<u>Vision</u>	16 Students	0 Students	3 Students
<u>Education</u>	19 Students	0 Students	0 Students
<u>Bridge</u>	11 Students	0 Students	8 Students
<u>Justin</u>	19 Students	0 Students	0 Students
<u>Catch</u>	19 Students	0 Students	0 Students
<u>Thousand</u>	15 Students	4 Students	0 Students
<u>Then</u>	17 Students	2 Students	0 Students
<u>Southern</u>	19 Students	0 Students	0 Students

Source: Evaluation Task

As it can be noticed, almost all the sounds produced during the final evaluation were corrected in a way that the students did not produce the same amount of Spanish sounds that they had produced during the first application of the checklist. It was only in the production of the word “*Usually*” that instead of sound /ʒ/, a student produced the letter *s* as if it would have been read in Spanish: with sound /s/. Another word that presented this problem was “*Thousand*”. In this case, four students produced the sound /t/ instead of /θ/ when seeing the “*th*” sound. Finally, in the production of sound /ð/ in the word *then*, the same thing happened; two students produced the sound /t/ because they read the *th* sound as if they were reading in Spanish.

From a different point of view, although they did not produce the correct sound, there were some students who were able to make a difference between the Spanish and the English sounds. For example, in the word *catch*, one of the students produced the sound /j/ as in the word “*Cash*”. The same thing happened the other way around, when he tried to say the word *cash*, but instead, he produced the sound /tʃ/. A more important problem occurred when a few of the participants tried to produce sounds /ʒ/ and /dʒ/. In the case of /ʒ/, since even in English it is not a common sound, some students produced its voiceless counterpart /j/, which was probably the closest sound they were able to remember. This happened with both words “*Vision*” and “*Usually*”. In the case of sound /dʒ/, eight students made a similar error when producing the sound /tʃ/.

Although there are still a few mistakes in the production of these sounds, it is important to consider that they are different from the ones that were presented on the diagnostic application of the checklist. The reason why this is important is that they are

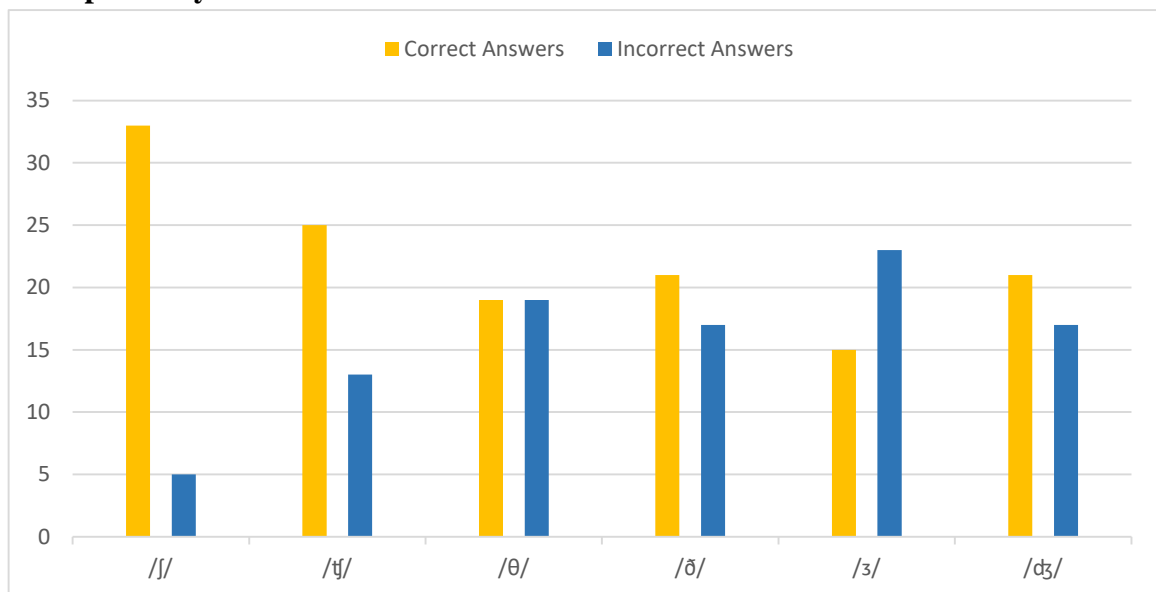
STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

starting to notice the difference between some sounds in English and Spanish. Some of them have realized that there are sounds that only exist in English and viceversa.

From a different point of view, the researcher wanted to determine if the students had learned the symbols that represent the new sounds they studied from the moment that the investigation started. Taking into account that this was not the main purpose of the study and that from the very beginning, the researcher realized that almost none of the students knew any of the symbols, any kind of improvement would have been considered as a success.

To evaluate this, just after the professor evaluated the pronunciation of words containing the studied sounds, he gave the students a paper with the same words and asked them to put the symbol that best corresponds next to each word. In this case, the professor noticed that the students did have a good improvement in their knowledge about these English consonant sounds' symbols. Graph #7 shows the correct and incorrect answers that each student had. Each student was given two words per sound.

Graph #7. Symbol Evaluation



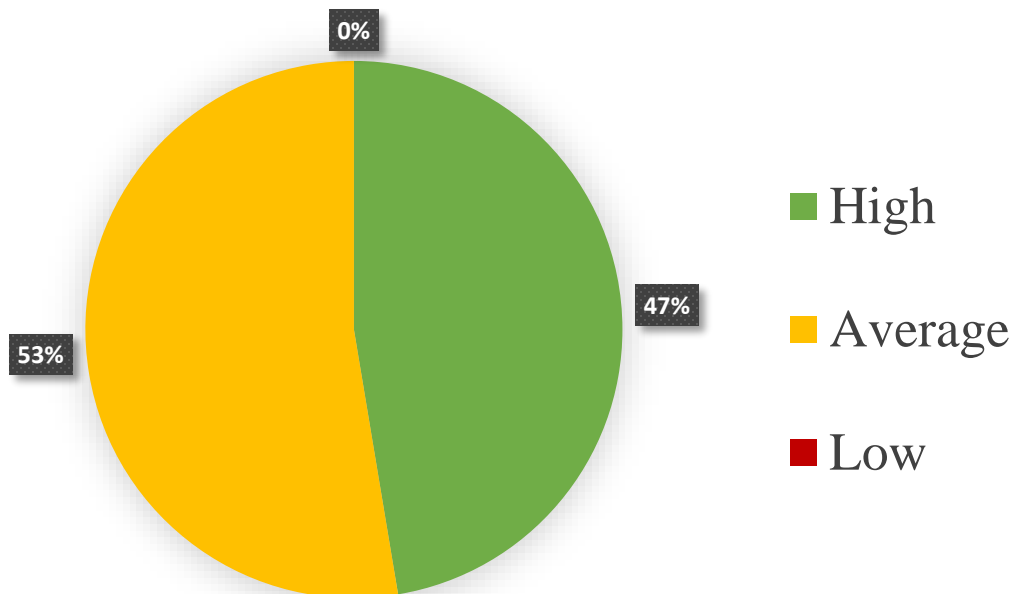
Source: Evaluation Task

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

As it can be seen, the students were able to improve their knowledge symbol. Even in the case of sound /3/ which is the sound that shows less improvement, it is important to recognize that there is a great progress, due to the fact that this sound usually gives a hard time to Spanish speakers.

This means that, using the same criteria that was used before the techniques were applied to evaluate the participants' level, the group could be divided again into three groups: (1) high level, students who presented three mistakes or less; (2) average level, students who made from four to eight mistakes; and (3) low level, students who made from nine to twelve mistakes. This is how the graph looks with the updated information included after the **Source: Evaluation Task** second evaluation:

Graph #8



STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

It can be noticed that, although the average level group decreased in quantity, the low level group disappeared completely. Also, and most important, the high level group had a remarkable growth.

The following week after this, the professor showed the students how well they had improved until that day. He also pointed out that besides the mistakes that he had already talked them about, he observed that there were other mistakes during the application and practice of the techniques to improve their pronunciation. He mentioned that these mistakes were actually pretty common in Spanish speakers, so they did not have to feel bad about making them. However, it was important for them to correct the errors. Saying this led him to introduce the first of these topics.

Without telling the students the first mistake that he noticed, he wrote a few words on the board: “*Spoon*”, “*School*”, “*Sleep*”, and “*Scan*”. Then, he asked each student to choose two of the words and say them out loud. He noticed that twelve out of nineteen students made exactly the same mistake he had noticed a few days before, which consisted in producing the /e/ sound at the beginning of most words starting with letter “s” and a consonant sound.

The investigator told three of the students that were not producing the words correctly to go outside for a few seconds. While they were out, the professor explained to the students left in the classroom what the problem was and clarified that the way to produce the words correctly was to start saying the words with sound /s/ and omitting any possible production of /e/ or any other vowel sound at the beginning, so they were able to discriminate the correct and the incorrect pronunciation of the words. He explained

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

that when their classmates got back inside the classroom, he needed them to listen carefully to their pronunciation to notice if they were saying the words correctly or not.

After that, the professor called the students that were standing outside. He told them to repeat the words they had chosen before. After they did it, he asked the other students (the ones who stayed inside the classroom) if they thought that the words had been produced correctly. Everyone who stayed inside the classroom noticed the mistake in their classmates' pronunciation right away and tried to correct them.

After the professor cleared everything out to the students who waited outside the classroom, he proceeded to do some practice. This practice consisted on saying and repeating words with the same pattern on a list. After that, each student needed to choose three different words in the list and create a sentence using each of them. When they had the sentences written down, they needed to make groups of three people. Once in the group, each participant had to read the three sentences, while the other two played the role of judges by determining if the student had said the sound correctly.

Once the practice was done, the professor evaluated the students individually by telling each one of them to read two of the sentences they had written. This time, it was pretty easy for all the students to produce the sound correctly; except for two students that apparently did not pay attention.

Another mistake that the investigator noticed while listening to the participants was the lack of aspiration in some English words that are supposed to show aspiration. This happened because aspirated sounds are not produced in Spanish and again, the students are extremely used to the characteristics of their native language.

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

To evaluate this, the researcher wrote a few words on the board that are pronounced with aspiration: “*Pay*”, “*Top*”, “*Cat*”, and “*Kite*”. Later, he told each student to choose two of them and read them out loud.

It was noticed that only three out of the nineteen students were able to produce the aspiration on these words; the other sixteen students produced all the words without aspiration, just as they would pronounce them according to the Spanish sound system.

The investigator explained that aspiration may be a difficult topic to understand because the amount of languages that do not have aspiration is larger than the ones that do, and Spanish lies within the group of the ones that do not. He also explained what aspiration is and demonstrated through examples how and when to produce it. He also included some Spanish words within the examples for the students to notice that aspiration is completely non-existent in this language. Although the explanation was completed and most students understood almost perfectly, there were some of them who raised their hands for the professor to explain again due to the fact that they did not understand or were not able to hear the difference at first. Because of this, the professor called them to their desk to repeat the explanation in a more individual way to eliminate doubts and misunderstandings.

Once the professor was done with the individual explanation, he tried to demonstrate the aspiration and lack of aspiration in different words by putting a little piece of paper in front of his mouth and saying different words with and without aspiration. Not only he did it in front of the classroom, but also told each student to take a piece of paper and do it on their own for a few minutes.

To continue practicing, the professor told the students to take out a sheet of paper and write a short story of no more than one paragraph including at least five words starting with /p, t, k/ or words including stressed syllables starting with those sounds. This activity needed to be completed in groups of two people (except for one group, which needed to have one extra participant). When the students finished writing their stories, the professor gave the instruction to exchange the papers among the other groups, so every group had a different story from the one they had originally written. Once each group had a paper, the researcher gave the instruction that one of the participants in each group had to read the story trying to identify the words that involved aspiration and, of course, trying to produce the aspiration when necessary. The other participant in the group was supposed to listen carefully and discern if his or her partner was doing it correctly or not. After this, they needed to exchange roles.

A few minutes later, when all the participants were done practicing the exercises, the professor proceeded to evaluate individually their improvement in producing aspiration in English words. He called students one by one to listen to them reading a fragment of the text that their group had written. During the evaluation, he noticed that a couple of students were not able to produce the aspiration; however, they were able to realize that they were not doing it. Because of this, the professor gathered them together to practice the aspiration on a few more words and gave them some time to keep practicing while he evaluated the other participants.

At the end of the evaluation, it was determined that even with a couple of students having problems understanding and producing the aspiration in English words, a 100% of them were able to produce the sound correctly.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations

Chapter number five, which is the last one in this investigation, will show the conclusions that the investigator has achieved after the analysis of the gathered information about the progress that the participants manifested. As well, it will review the objectives and analyze if they have been attained or not. Finally, this chapter will suggest some recommendations that the investigator considers important to take into account if the same investigation is continued or extended or if a similar research is conducted in the future.

5.1 Purpose of the Conclusion

Markman, Markman, and Waddell (2001) explain that the “conclusion of the research paper is the most valuable part of it”. This is because all the information gathered across the investigation does not have a meaning to the audience until the conclusions show the results that have been accomplished.

Besides summarizing the main points that have been mentioned and analyzed during the study, the conclusion will reiterate the importance and significance of the purpose of this study, as well as the the results. Also, it links the results obtained to the objectives determined before the whole investigation process started.

According to Markman, Markman and Waddell, a good conclusion should be “a strong recapitulation” of the major ideas in the research. This means that it should lead

the reader through a summary of the details that may have been left behind during the whole process.

5.2 Conclusions

The researcher wrapped up a series of conclusions after performing the analysis of the information presented in the previous chapters. In this case, the investigator decided to reiterate the specific objectives mentioned in Chapter number one, in order to explain whether they were achieved, and how they were obtained.

5.2.1 To determine the mistakes seventh graders make in the pronunciation of the English consonants /θ, ð, ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ/

In order to determine the mistakes that the participants in the research presented in the pronunciation of the above consonants, the investigator used more than one instrument. The first instrument (as explained in Chapter number four) was a questionnaire, which helped the investigator determine the English level of each student and what they knew about the production of the English sounds. This list of questions helped the researcher realize that the participants did not have any knowledge about pronunciation or phonics, except for one student which only had the idea of the existence of a couple of IPA symbols. In addition to this, there were two students who did not receive English lessons until they were in fourth and seventh grade.

The second instrument used by the researcher to identify the mistakes the students made in pronunciation was a checklist. As explained in Chapter number four, the usage of this instrument stated that most of the participants in the group had an average level before the instruction and the strategies were applied. Because of this, only a few students were able to communicate effectively with an English speaker.

Regarding to this, the researcher concludes that most of the mistakes that the participants made were due to the incorrect place of articulation when producing the sounds, causing words to be mispronounced, and; therefore, misunderstood. Instead of producing the correct sounds, most of them produced sounds in their mother language. Also, when the mistake was not related to the incorrect production of the sound in their mother tongue, the participants failed to distinguish which English sound to use because in Spanish, there is phoneme-grapheme correspondence, that is, each letter has only one way to be pronounced.

5.2.2 To establish a comparison and contrast among the English consonants mentioned above and some Spanish consonants

The strategy mentioned in this objective was selected by the researcher in order to correct the mistake that most of the students made when instead of producing the correct English sound; they produced a Spanish one.

This strategy was constantly used while teaching and practicing the target sounds. Every time that a new English sound was introduced, the researcher looked for a sound in Spanish that may have been confused with the correct English one. This way the students may understand the difference between the two sound systems because they start being instructed about the articulation of the sounds from the very beginning. When the sound was practiced, every time a student did not produce the sound correctly, the researcher corrected him or her right away, and when the sound was correctly produce the student was congratulated, the word was repeated, and the sound emphasized.

The investigator considers that this strategy helped the students in different ways. First, it helped them understand that there is an extensive list of sounds that are nonexistent in their native language; same happens the other way around. Also, this technique helped the students understand the theory on how some of their mother tongue sounds are produced. Finally, it helped the students understand what sounds are produced similarly in both languages, so they avoid producing the Spanish sounds while speaking English.

Although this one is not a strategy as such, in the investigator's opinion, this was the most useful technique due to the fact that the most common mistake during the first evaluation was that students had a tendency to produce a Spanish sound instead of the correct English ones.

5.2.3 To apply different techniques and activities to improve the pronunciation of some consonants that offer difficulties in their production to Spanish-speaking students

There is a great variety of techniques and activities that the investigator selected to use in order to improve the English consonants production of the participants. These techniques are: discrimination of sounds, practice of minimal pairs, reading out loud, tongue twisters, recitation of poems, and jazz chants.

The first two techniques mentioned above were extremely useful to help the students distinguish and discriminate the target sounds especially when some words were confused with others due to the similarity in their writing and/or pronunciation.

The other techniques (reading out loud, tongue twisters, recitation of poems, and jazz chants) worked as a second part of the previous activities in a way that they put into

practice the sounds that were introduced through minimal pairs and other activities to discriminate sounds. These activities helped students practice the discrimination, pronunciation of sounds, and fluency when speaking English. Probably the most helpful activity was the jazz chants, due to the fact that it was funny and entertaining for the participants. Also, analyzing the lyrics in the song helped them notice how common the target sounds are in English. Finally, since music must follow a specific rhythm at a specific speed, singing the song helped them practice and improve fluently the production of phrases using words with the target sounds.

5.2.4 To identify the phonetic symbols that represent the sounds to be corrected

Sometimes, in order to differentiate a pair of (or more) sounds, it is necessary to give a written representation to each sound. It was in fact easier for the participants to remember the sounds differences and similarities by associating each sound to a symbol.

As explained in Chapter number four, at the beginning of the study, the participants had no idea of what the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) was. Because of this, they did not have any knowledge of the symbols, either; however, after instruction and practice were carried out, the participants were able to recognize most symbols and associate them to the correct sound in different words. This also helped them understand and discriminate the characteristics and attributes of each sound, such as the presence or absence of voice.

5.2.5 To evaluate the students' progress during and after the application of the strategies to improve pronunciation

In Chapter number four, there are some graphs and charts that shows the results when evaluating the students' English knowledge and pronunciation before the techniques to

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

improve such aspects were implemented. The checklist used by the researcher helped him acknowledge that 58% of the group had an average level, 37% a high level and 5%, a low one. These numbers are not necessarily bad; however, they would have been better-looking if there had not been a single student in the low level.

Later, after the strategies mentioned before were applied, the participants' level of pronunciation improved in many important ways. First, according to the observations, it was noticed that most students who did not feel confident when speaking English, showed more assurance as the techniques were implemented. For instance, when reading a sentence or a poem out loud, most students demonstrated to feel ashamed because their classmates and the professor were listening to them; however, when the jazz chant technique was implemented, they sang loudly and full of confidence. Then, their fluency started getting better little by little, especially after reading out loud and working with jazz chants, they did not hesitate or get stuck when trying to produce a sound that was difficult to them at the beginning of the study.

Finally, and more important, by using the same criteria, that the investigator used during the first evaluation, he was able to demonstrate that the group of participants improved the pronunciation of the target sounds in a way, that the high level group grew to 47% of the students, making the average level go to 57% and leaving the low level group with no students at all.

On the other hand, using a checklist as well, the researcher was also able to evaluate the other pronunciation problems (insertion of /e/ and lack of aspiration). Since these targets were not as complicated as the previous one, the researcher used different

checklists. By using them to evaluate the participants, he was able to confirm that they improved considerably.

5.3 Restatement of the Research Question

Which is the effect of comparing and contrasting the pronunciation of some English and Spanish consonants applying some strategies and techniques to improve the pronunciation of seventh graders at Centro Educativo Cristiano Reformado during the second quarter of 2017?

Comparing and contrasting the pronunciation of some English and Spanish consonants while applying some strategies and techniques had, in fact, a positive effect in the group of seventh graders at Centro Educativo Cristiano Reformado.

This investigation has contributed greatly to English education as a foreign language by improving the English pronunciation of the students within the research process. A great majority of the participants showed an improvement in pronunciation, that is, in the articulation of the sounds, the intonation and the rhythm. They also got a lot of confidence as a result of the activities and techniques applied.

5.4 Recommendations

The final section of this chapter offers a series of recommendations that are considered by the investigator to be important in case that it is decided to carry out a similar investigation afterwards. These recommendations would function better if a continuation of this research is carried out.

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

The first recommendation that the researcher considers important before beginning the field work is to find out any kind of activity that may affect the time assigned to the evaluation or application of the strategies (such as a scientific fair, father's day, soccer championship or art festival), in order to avoid any kind of inconvenience. Such activities may vary depending on the institution's values, religion, nationality, or interests. Knowing out of school activities of the institution may help the researcher to organize his schedule better.

Second, it is important to take into account that many strategies or objectives are only achievable if some specific resources are available. Because of this, the researcher recommends that it is important to be sure that all the resources needed to achieve a specific objective are available or easy to get. In this kind of study, the availability of these resources usually depends on the institution; however, if the institution is not able to support the researcher, the researcher will need to find the way of getting the resources, or ultimately, to change the strategy or the objective.

Another important recommendation is to start working beforehand, in case that one has to change the investigation's course. This is important due to the fact that changing the investigation course will probably need to gather more data and this may take more time than expected. This recommendation also involves to pre-analyze the population in different ways; this means to be conscious of their likes and dislikes, so the researcher can try to plan more interesting activities. It also suggests that the researcher needs to know if there is any kind of special condition that deprives someone from participating in games, songs or any other kind of activity related to learn a specific topic.

A recommendation that should not be ignored by anyone who studies English teaching (or any other teaching career) is to take advantage of all the courses that the corresponding university offers related to the topic of the investigation. This means to do things such as clarifying doubts with professors and other experts within the institution, saving important documents related to the topic of the investigation that may be needed in the future, or taking notes about the activities performed during a class in order to use them or modify them during the lessons given to carry out the investigation. It is also possible to do things that involve a little more complexity and effort, such as interviewing a pronunciation professor and/or a student about their experiences before, during, and after a pronunciation course.

An important well-known fact to consider when teaching a foreign language is that the younger the student, the easier it will probably be for him or her to assimilate new information. Because of this, it is recommended to choose a group with young participants. Besides that, these students are more willing to participate in activities that involve games, songs, poems, or other activities usually performed during language lessons.

A recommendation to carry out a more interesting research would be to develop a second investigation in parallel with a different group. Doing this will assure some different results due to the variants that both groups may present among them, regarding the age of the participants, their English level, their culture, and the environment that encloses every single participant. Even, if by doing this, it is predicted that for some reason the results will not vary a lot, one may want to change the population to another one that presents more prominent differences in order to get different results.

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

Similar to the previous recommendation (or as a continuation), it may be recommended as well, to select two or three important techniques to improve pronunciation and implement them in different groups. This will offer different results that suggest that there are some techniques that are more effective than others.

Something recommended in order to make participants be aware of their mistakes and using them as a starting point to improve their pronunciation is to record their voice when pronouncing the words or sentences in the target language. This must be done before any kind of instruction is given. Later, after giving the instruction and completing the practice, the students should be able to listen to themselves in the recording and notice the mistake in order to self-evaluate their improvement.

It is recommended, as well, that in order to practice during the lessons, the investigator includes activities in which music and movies in English are involved. The first reason lies in the fact that it gives students real life examples of the English sounds, with real life topics and situations. Also, since music and movies come from all around the world, although the language is supposed to be English, there are many different ways to produce words depending on the region or country from where the artists are from. Another good reason to use music and movies during the lessons is that even when pronunciation is the main target, this material might include new vocabulary and grammatical patterns, as well as cultural elements that will not only make the participants extend their knowledge, but may also spark their interest in the language, in a way that they feel the need to keep on practicing the foreign language by their own. One of the most important reasons why playing music and movies should be implemented is that having fun is an excellent way to learn, and most of the times

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

students will find more interesting to watch a movie and answer a few questions in a questionnaire or to recreate a scene through a role-play based on the film, than to do the same activities based only on texts. Of course, it is not recommended to base the whole course on films. Students stop feeling interested once it becomes an everyday routine. Music, on the other hand, may be used more frequently, due to the fact that playing a different song every couple of weeks will not take the same amount of time that a movie does. Also, students may find better to practice a song at home, not because it is a homework, but because they may simply enjoy it.

Appendixes

In this section, it is included the instruments that the investigator used in order to collect the information for the analysis, as well as some practices that were completed during the lessons.

Appendix 1. Lesson Plans

Topic: Introduction

Week 1

Objectives	Activities	Procedure	Materials	Time	Evaluation
To introduce and explain the content of the course		T explains what the course is about.		5 min	Diagnostic checklist: sounds /θ, ð, ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ/
To understand the student's English level and English educational background	Questionnaire	Sts Students answer a questionnaire.		15 min	
To know the students' general knowledge and level in English	Checklist evaluation	Sts produce words containing the target consonant sounds /θ, ð, ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ/, while the T annotates the results of each student separately.	Copies	40 min	
To introduce the IPA	PPT presentation	T introduces the IPA and gives examples of vowel sounds.	Laptop and Video Bin	20 min	

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

Topic: sounds /θ/ and /ð/

Week 2

Objectives	Activities	Procedure	Materials	Time	Evaluation
To understand the correct pronunciation of sounds /θ/ and /ð/	Minimal pairs	Sts listen to T explanation on the sounds /θ/ and /ð/, T copies examples and Sts provide their own.	Pictures	40 min	Practice: Tongue twisters Discrimination of sounds Recitation of poems
To understand the difference between the two sounds	Tongue twisters		Copies		
To understand the difference between the two sounds	Discrimination of sounds	Sts look at pictures of different items that represent a word containing the sounds /θ/ and /ð/.		40 min	
To practice the articulation of the sounds	Recitation of poems	T explains the difference between sound /θ/ and /ð/.			
		T uses strategies like minimal pairs, tongue twisters, discrimination of sounds, and recitation of poems.			

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

Topic: sounds /θ/ and /s/

Week 3

Objectives	Activities	Procedure	Materials	Time	Evaluation
To understand the correct pronunciation of sounds /θ/ and /s/	Minimal pairs Tongue twisters	Sts listen to T explanation on the sounds /θ/ and /s/, T copies examples and Sts provide their own.	Pictures Copies	40 min	Practice: Minimal pairs Tongue twisters
To understand the difference between the two sounds	Discrimination of sounds Recitation of poems	Sts look at pictures of different items that represent a word containing the sounds /θ/ and /s/. T explains the difference between sound /θ/ and /s/.			Discrimination of sounds Recitation of poems
To practice the articulation of the sounds		T uses strategies like minimal pairs, tongue twisters, discrimination of sounds, and recitation of poems.		40 min	

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

Topic: sounds /ð/ and /d/

Week 4

Objectives	Activities	Procedure	Materials	Time	Evaluation
To understand the correct pronunciation of sounds /ð/ and /d/	Minimal pairs Tongue twisters	Sts listen to T explanation on the sounds /ð/ and /d/, T copies examples and Sts provide their own.	Pictures Copies	40 min	Practice: Minimal pairs Tongue twisters
To understand the difference between the two sounds	Discrimination of sounds Recitation of poems	Sts look at pictures of different items that represent a word containing the sounds /ð/ and /d/. T explains the difference between sound /ð/ and /d/, and mentions the difference between Spanish /d/ and English /d/.		40 min	Discrimination of sounds Recitation of poems
To practice the articulation of the sounds		T uses strategies like minimal pairs, tongue twisters, discrimination of sounds, and recitation of poems.		40 min	

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

Topic: English /tʃ/ and /ʃ/ vs. Spanish /c/

Week 5

Objectives	Activities	Procedure	Materials	Time	Evaluation
<p>To understand the correct pronunciation of English sounds /tʃ/ and /ʃ/</p> <p>To understand the difference between the sounds</p>	<p>Minimal pairs</p> <p>Tongue twisters</p> <p>Discrimination of sounds</p> <p>Recitation of poems</p>	<p>Sts listen to T explanation on the sounds /tʃ/ and /ʃ/, T copies examples and Sts provide their own.</p> <p>Sts look at pictures of different items that represent a word containing the sounds /tʃ/ and /ʃ/.</p> <p>T explains the difference between English sounds /tʃ/ and /ʃ/ and Spanish sound /c/.</p>	<p>Pictures</p> <p>Copies</p>	<p>40 min</p>	<p>Practice: Minimal pairs</p> <p>Tongue twisters</p> <p>Discrimination of sounds</p> <p>Recitation of poems</p>
<p>To practice the articulation of the sounds</p>		<p>T uses strategies like minimal pairs, tongue twisters, discrimination of sounds, and recitation of poems</p>		<p>40 min</p>	

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

Topic: English /dʒ/, /ʒ/ and /j/ vs. Spanish /y/

Week 6

Objectives	Activities	Procedure	Materials	Time	Evaluation
<p>To understand the correct pronunciation of English /dʒ/, /ʒ/ and /j/</p> <p>To understand the differences between the sounds</p>	<p>Minimal pairs</p> <p>Tongue twisters</p> <p>Discrimination of sounds</p> <p>Recitation of poems</p>	<p>Sts listen to T explanation on the English /dʒ/, /ʒ/ and /j/, T copies examples and Sts provide their own.</p> <p>Sts look at pictures of different items that represent a word containing the sounds /tʃ/ and /ʃ/.</p> <p>T explains the difference between English /dʒ/, /ʒ/, /j/, and Spanish /y/.</p>	<p>Pictures</p> <p>Copies</p>	<p>40 min</p>	<p>Practice: Minimal pairs</p> <p>Tongue twisters</p> <p>Discrimination of sounds</p> <p>Recitation of poems</p>
<p>To practice the articulation of the sounds</p>		<p>T uses strategies like minimal pairs, tongue twisters, discrimination of sounds, and recitation of poems.</p>		<p>40 min</p>	

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

Topic: General Review

Week 7

Objectives	Activities	Procedure	Materials	Time	Evaluation
To review the correct pronunciation of sounds /θ, ð, ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ/	Minimal pairs Tongue twisters	T briefly reviews sounds /θ, ð, ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ/.	Speakers Laptop Video Bin	40 min	Practice: Minimal pairs Tongue twisters
To understand the differences between the sounds	Discrimination of sounds Recitation of poems Jazz Chants	Sts ask questions about the specific sounds. T uses strategies like minimal pairs, tongue twisters, discrimination of sounds, and recitation of poems. T plays video of the song “Children, Go Where I Send Thee” by Kenny Rogers and Home Free and sts watch and listen.		40 min	Discrimination of sounds Recitation of poems
To practice the articulation of the sounds		Teacher provides a copy of the lyrics to each student and tells them to mark the words that contain the studied sounds. T plays the song a few times more, so the students can sing and check their own answers.			

STRATEGIES TO TEACH AND IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION

Topic: Evaluation

Week 8

Objectives	Activity	Procedure	Materials	Time	Evaluation
To evaluate the students' pronunciation of sounds /θ, ð, ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ/	Reading sentences out loud that include words with sounds /θ, ð, ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ/	Teacher listens to students reading sentences out loud and takes down notes of their pronunciation.	Copies	1 hr	Reading sentences out loud that include words with sounds /θ, ð, ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ/
To understand the differences between the sounds	Reading words out loud beginning with a consonant cluster that starts with /s/	Teacher listens to students reading words out loud beginning with a consonant cluster that starts with /s/.		1 hr	Reading words out loud beginning with a consonant cluster that starts with /s/ Writing stories with words that contain sounds /p, t/, and /k/ in stressed position
To practice the articulation of the sounds	Writing stories with words that contain sounds /p, t/, and /k/ in stressed position	Teacher asks students to write a one-paragraph story using words that contain the sounds /p, t, k/ in stressed position. Teacher tells students to exchange papers and read the words with /p, t, k/ out loud. To evaluate the, the teacher asks each student to read the story they wrote		1 hr	

Appendix 2**Questionnaire**

Directions: Answer the following set of questions. Mark with an X the chosen answer. When required, write your answer in the assigned space.

1. I have received English classes since _____.

- A) Kindergarten
- B) First grade
- C) Fourth grade
- D) Seventh grade

2. Rate your pronunciation:

- A) Excellent
- B) Good
- C) Regular
- D) Poor

3. Since you started studying English, have you received pronunciation lessons?

- A) Yes
- B) No (skip question 4)

4. What did you learn in those classes?

5. What do you usually do to improve your English pronunciation?

- A) Read
- B) Watch movies/TV series
- C) Listen to music
- D) None

6. Do you know the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet)?

A) Yes

B) No

7. Mark the different phonemes that you can identify:

A) / θ /

B) / ð /

C) / ʒ /

D) / dʒ /

E) / ʃ /

F) / tʃ /

8. If you know more symbols, write them:

10. Are you able to differentiate between the pronunciation of consonants in English and Spanish?

A) Yes

B) No

11. Do you know the correct position of lips, tongue, and other organs of speech when pronouncing consonants?

A) Yes

B) No

Appendix 3

Directions: Slowly read the sentences out loud:

1. The comedian filmed a **sketch** for a television show.
2. I can pay by **cash** or credit card.
3. The new bridge links the north of the city to the **south**.
4. My son **usually** exercises in the gym.
5. **Vision** is my favorite character in the new Avengers movie.
6. Students take internships to complement their **education**.
7. There is a **bridge** where the river narrows.
8. At Rome, **Justin** and a group of Christian intellectuals were condemned to death.
9. The poster was designed to **catch** people's attention.
10. Five **thousand** flights touch down in my city each year.
11. I showered and **then** went to bed.
12. What things should I pack to visit the pacific **southern** area of Costa Rica?

Checklist #1

	Correct (✓ / X)	Sound produced
Sketch		
Cash		
South		
Usually		
Vision		
Education		
Bridge		
Justin		
Catch		
Thousand		
Then		
Southern		

Appendix 4**Checklist # 2**
(Insertion of /e/)

Word chosen	Correct (✓ / X)	Sound produced
Word # 1: _____		
Word # 2: _____		

Student's Name: _____

Appendix 5**Checklist # 3**
(Aspiration of /p, t/, and /k/)

Word chosen	Correct (√ / X)	Sound produced
Word # 1: _____		
Word # 2: _____		
Word # 3: _____		
Word # 4: _____		
Word # 5: _____		

Student's Name: _____

Appendix 6

"sh" Words Read the following words.

shark



ship



fish



sheep



shrimp



trash



shell



shoe



dish



shelf



shirt



leash

Appendix 7

Practice

1- Write the symbol that represents the *th* sound for each word.

- a. _____ Thorn
- b. _____ Thousand
- c. _____ That
- d. _____ Leather
- e. _____ Length
- f. _____ Father
- g. _____ Brother
- h. _____ Math

2- Say the tongue twisters. Add the right sound under each *th*.

a. I **th**ought a **th**ought, but **th**e **th**ing I **th**ought I **th**ought

wasn't the **th**ing I **th**ought I **th**ought.

b. **Th**irty **th**ousand **th**oughtless boys **th**ought **th**ey would

make a **th**undering noise.

c. **F**ather, **mo**ther, sister, **bro**ther. Hand in hand **wi**th one

another.

d. Are **th**ose **cl**othes **l**eather?

Appendix 8

Practice

A. Listen to the teacher saying the words. Circle the one that he says on each item.

- a. sing - thing
- b. face - faith
- c. force - fourth
- d. sink - think
- e. sort - thought
- f. tense - tenth

B. Read the texts out loud. Under every sound you've studied so far (/t/, /d/, /s/, /ð/, /θ/), draw the symbol that represents it.

- a. My father and mother like to bathe in the sea but first they lather on a smooth layer of suncream. Neither of them like to swim in the months of winter or when the weather is bad. The cold water bothers them too much. My brother also likes to bathe in the sea but only when there are small waves. He paddles in the shallow water, never going deeper than his thigh.
- b. King Thistle stuck a thousand thistles in the thistle of his thumb. A thousand thistles King Thistle stuck in the thistle of his thumb. If King Thistle stuck a thousand thistles in the thistle of his thumb, how many thistles did King Thistle stick in the thistle of his thumb?

Appendix 9

The “th” sound

In English, the TH consonant sounds are studied together because they share the same spelling and are made in the same part of the mouth. There are two TH consonant sounds. One is unvoiced, and the other is voiced.

To produce the voiced and unvoiced TH sounds:

1. Place the tip of your tongue between your top and bottom teeth. It should not stick out very far.
2. Blow air through the space between your tongue and your top teeth. This makes the unvoiced TH sound (IPA symbol: θ).
3. When you add your voice, you make the voiced TH sound (IPA symbol: ð).

θ voiceless TH	ð voiced TH
thin	then
think	these
third	them
Thanks	either
birth day	broth er
bath tub	cloth ing
health y	worth y
math h	smooth h
Breath h	breathe h

When to use each sound?

There is not exactly a rule for it, but there are some guides:

- At the end of words, the *th* sound is usually **unvoiced (/θ/)**.
 - Strength
 - Length
 - Plinth
 - Warmth
- After vowel sounds, the *th* sound is usually **voiced (/ð/)**
 - Brother, mother, father
 - Either
 - Feather
 - Clothes

Appendix 10

Practice

A. Listen to the teacher saying the words. Circle the one that he says on each item.

1. Die - thy
2. doze - those
3. day - they
4. dare - their
5. dough - though
6. Dan - than
7. den - then
8. they - day
9. those - dose
10. then - den
11. than - Dan
12. breathe - breed
13. soothe - sued

B. Read the poem out loud. Classify the highlighted words on the box.

I had a little **brother**
 And I **brought** him to my **mother**
 And **said** I want **another**
 Little **brother** for a change.
 But she **said** don't be a **bother**
 So I **took** him to my **father**
 And I **said** this little **bother**
 Of a **brother's** very **strange**.
 But he **said** one little **brother**
 Is **exactly** like **another**
 And every little **brother**
 Misbehaves a **bit** he **said**.
 So I **took** the **little brother**
 From my **mother** and my **father**
 And I **put** the little **bother**
 Of a **brother** back to **bed**

/d/	/ð/	/s/	/θ/

Appendix 11

Kenny Rogers & Home Free

"Children, Go Where I Send Thee" Lyrics

1

Children, go where I send thee,
How shall I send thee?
I'm gonna send you one by one
One for the little bitty - baby
Born of the virgin Mary
Born, born, born in Bethlehem

2

Children, go where I send thee,
How shall I send thee?
I'm gonna send you two by two
Two for Paul and Silas
One for the little bitty - baby
Born of the virgin Mary
Born, born, born in Bethlehem

3

Children, go where I send thee,
How shall I send thee?
I'm gonna send you three by three
Three for the hebrew children
Two for Paul and Silas
One for the little bitty - baby
Born of the virgin Mary
Born, born, born in Bethlehem

4

Children, go where I send thee,
How shall I send thee?
I'm gonna send you four by four
Four for the four that stood at the
door
Three for the hebrew children
Two for Paul and Silas
One for the little bitty - baby
Born of the virgin Mary
Born, born, born in Bethlehem

5

Children, go where I send thee,
How shall I send thee?
I'm gonna send you five by five
Five the for gospel preachers
Four for the four that stood at the
door
Three for the hebrew children
Two for Paul and Silas
One for the little bitty - baby
Born of the virgin Mary
Born, born, born in Bethlehem

6

Children, go where I send thee,
How shall I send thee?
I'm gonna send you six by six
Six for the six that couldn't get fixed
Five the for gospel preachers
Four for the four that stood at the
door
Three for the hebrew children
Two for Paul and Silas
One for the little bitty - baby
Born of the virgin Mary
Born, born, born in Bethlehem

7

Children, go where I send thee,
How shall I send thee?
I'm gonna send you seven by seven
Seven for the seven that couldn't get
to heaven
Six for the six that couldn't get fixed
Five the for gospel preachers
Four for the four that stood at the
door
Three for the hebrew children

Two for Paul and Silas
 One for the little bitty - baby
 Born of the virgin Mary
 Born, born, born in Bethlehem

8

Children, go where I send thee,
 How shall I send thee?
 I'm gonna send you eight by eight
 Eight for the eight that stood at the
 gate
 Seven for the seven that couldn't get
 to heaven
 Six for the six that couldn't get fixed
 Five the for gospel preachers
 Four for the four that stood at the
 door
 Three for the hebrew children
 Two for Paul and Silas
 One for the little bitty - baby
 Born of the virgin Mary
 Born, born, born in Bethlehem

He was born, born, born in Bethlehem

9

Children go where I send thee,
 Ohhhh
 That's how the whole thing started
 Way down in the manger
 Eight for the eight that stood at the
 gate
 Seven for the seven that couldn't get
 to heaven
 Six for the six that couldn't get fixed
 Five the for gospel preachers
 Four for the four that stood at the
 door
 Three for the hebrew children
 Two for Paul and Silas
 One for the little bitty - baby
 Born of the virgin Mary
 Born, born, born in Bethlehem
 Born, born, born in Bethlehem

Appendix 12**Sound /ɜ/ insertion**

English words starting with letter “s” + “consonant sound” may be difficult to produce for some Spanish speakers. A mistake that learners usually make consists of inserting the sound /e/ at the beginning of these words. This error transforms words like *spoon* into “*espoon*” and *school* into “*eschool*”. To stop this habit, it is necessary to start the word producing the /s/ sound.

1- Read the following words out loud to practice the correct pronunciation:

Spoon	Scan
School	Snooze
Spotify	Sky
Spanish	Smash
Sleep	Squash
Stand	Steal

2- Create three sentences using at least one of these words in each. Practice the pronunciation reading the sentences to the classmate next to you.

- a- _____
 _____.
- b- _____
 _____.
- c- _____
 _____.

Appendix 13

IPA phoneme /z/

/z/ is a voiced consonant; its unvoiced counterpart is IPA phoneme /s/.

Some examples:

equation – usually

Common words

- **ending in "sion"**: conclusion – confusion – decision – division – occasion – provision – television – vision
- **ending in "sual"**: usual – visual – casual
- **ending in "sure"**: exposure – measure – pleasure
- **ending in "ge"**: beige – collage – massage



References

- Aneshensel, C. S. (2013). *Theory-Based Data Analysis for the Social Sciences*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.
- Association, I. P. (1999). *Handbook of the International Phonetic Association: A Guide to the Use of the International Phonetic Alphabet*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Barragán, R., Salman, T., Ayllón, V., Córdova, J., Langer, E., Sanjinés, J., & Rojas, R. (2003). *Guía para la formulación y ejecución de proyectos de investigación*. La Paz.
- Blevins, W. (1998). *Phonics from A to Z: A Practical Guide*. New York: Scholastic Inc.
- Brinton, L. J. (2000). *The Structure of Modern English: A Linguistic Introduction*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing.
- Bryman, A. (2015). *Social Research Methods*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Business Dictionary*. (2017, May 26). Retrieved from Business Dictionary: <http://www.businessdictionary.com>
- Calmorin, L. P., & Calmorin, M. A. (2008). *Research Methods and Thesis Writing. Second Edition*. Manila: Rex Book Store, Inc.
- Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D., & Goodwin, J. (2010). *Teaching Pronunciation: A Reference for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Chall, J. S. (1967). *Learning to Read: The Great Debate*. Harcourt Brace College Publishers.
- Chall, J. S. (1996). *Teaching and Assessing Phonics: Why, What, When, How : A Guide for Teachers*. Educators Pub. Service.
- Creswell, J. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Dictionary, M.-W. (2016). *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. Retrieved from Merriam-Webster.com: <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/strategy>
- Ferraro, E. F. (2012). *Investigations in the Workplace, Second Edition*. New York: CRC Press.
- Fry, D. B. (2009). *Acoustic Phonetics: A Course of Basic Readings*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Gick, B., Wilson, I., & Derrick, D. (2013). *Articulatory Phonetics*. Oxford: John Wiley & Sons.
- Gilakjani, A. P., & Ahmadi, M. R. (2011). *Why is Pronunciation so Difficult to Learn?* Gelugor Pulau Pinang.

- Goodwin, W. L., & Goodwin, L. D. (1996). *Understanding Quantitative and Qualitative Research in Early Childhood Education*. New York.
- Goodykoontz, E. (2008). *Factors that Affect College Student's Attitude Towards Mathematics*. Morgantown, West Virginia: ProQuest.
- Gutiérrez, J. (2009). *Oral Communication*. Quenzon City, Philippines: Katha Publishing.
- Hayward, K. (2014). *Experimental Phonetics: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge.
- Jere E., B. (2004). *Motivating Students to Learn*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Psychology Press.
- Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*. New Delhi: New Age International (P) Ltd., Publishers.
- Kovecses, Z. (2000). *American English: An Introduction*. Toronto: Broadview Press.
- Kumar, R. (2008). *Research Methodology*. New Delhi: Balaji Offset.
- Ladefoged, P., & Johnson, K. (2014). *A Course in Phonetics (6th Edition)*. Berkley: Cengage Learning.
- Markman, R. H., Markman, P. T., & Waddell, M. L. (2001). *10 Steps in Writing the Research Paper*. El Paso, Texas: Barron's Educational Series.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Mollin, S. (2006). *Euro-English: Assessing Variety Status*. Germany: Gunter Narr Verlag.
- Mora, E. (2011). *Connecting Content and Language for English Language Learners*. California: Shell Education.
- Odgen, R. (2009). *An Introduction to English Phonetics*. Great Britain: Edinburgh University Press.
- Olive, J., Greenwood, A., & Coleman, J. (1993). *Acoustics of American English Speech: A Dynamic Approach*. Murray Hill: Springer Science & Business Media.
- Punch, K. F., & Oancea, A. (2009). *Introduction to Research Methods in Education*. SAGE.
- Rogers, K. (2015). *Children, Go Where I Send Thee*. United States.
- Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2010). *Research Methods for Business: A Skill Building Approach*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Sethi, R. J., & Dhamija, P. V. (1999). *A Course in Phonetics and Spoken English*. New Delhi: PHI Learning.
- Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2009). *Foundations of Mixed Methods Research: Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches in the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications Inc.
- Thorun, A. R. (2013). *Phonetics: A Contemporary Approach*. Massachusetts: Jones & Bartlett Learning.

UN-HABITAT. (2004). *Formulating Issue Specific Strategies and Action Plans*. Nairobi: UN-HABITAT.

Whitley, M. S. (2002). *Spanish/English Contrasts: A Course in Spanish Linguistics*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

Whitley, M. S. (2002). *Spanish/English Contrasts: A Course in Spanish Linguistics*. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press.

Wilkins, D. A. (1972). *Linguistics in Language Teaching*. London: Edward Arnold Publishers.