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Investigate the influence of pronunciation techniques and the phonetic alphabet on 7th grade students of class 7-6 and 7-7 of Colegio Técnico Profesional Los Chiles to enhance their language acquisition.

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Investigate the influence of pronunciation techniques and the phonetic alphabet on 7th grade students of class 7-6 and 7-7 of Colegio Técnico Profesional los Chiles to enhance their language acquisition.

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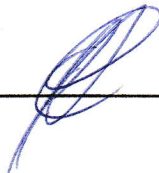
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Abstract

Many students have a false perception of what it means to speak English, believing that they must pronounce every word accurately, be entirely fluent all the time, or even have a perfect accent in order to communicate in the language. This is obviously not the case, but teachers may address it by giving their students access to effective tools that will help them feel more at ease and confident when speaking English. The results indicated that pronunciation techniques can vary from class to class and from student to student, but in general, techniques should include movement, interaction, and lots of participation, where the students are continuously interacting with the language. There is no established and perfect technique that can be used, but rather, situations that are addressed accordingly. The amount of time it takes a teacher to master new approaches is therefore important. It is the teacher's responsibility to keep improving the learning experience through adaptability.

Keywords: Education, pronunciation, curriculum, teacher, lesson improving, techniques.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Introduction:

Speaking is an important communication tool; it deserves to be taught in such a way that the corresponding students feel motivated and educated to practice the skill. Effective pronunciation is a target that can be achieved via speaking techniques. Costa Rica has seen a development in its education throughout the years, adapting to what the country needs and providing resources to achieve this goal. Because of this, for many years, various teaching methods have been implemented to change the process of making a curriculum for the English subject, by incorporating all skills (listening, reading, writing, speaking) and giving a broader exposition to a better targeted language acquisition. As the country expands its knowledge, there are also more communication needs that pushes forward on how English and other languages are been taught. In the current curriculum, there is an observable use of the four English skills inside the classroom. The main focus of this investigation relies on how speaking is the main concern of many students and how, because of pronunciation, this skill can result in an uncomfortable learning experience.

Many students create this misconception of speaking English, where they think that speaking the language is a matter of pronouncing perfectly every word, or being completely fluent all the time, or even thinking that they must have a perfect accent to accomplish English communication. This, of course is far from the truth, but teachers can assess these stigmas about English with really useful tools that can make students feel more comfortable and confident towards English speaking. One of these tools being the International Phonetic Alphabet. An alphabet composed by sound symbols, compatible with any Latin rooted language. This of course, serves as a perfect tool that assures the students on proper pronunciation, giving back as a result, a more relaxed environment where the student will feel confident on their pronunciation.

This tool not only serves its purpose on words and complete sentences, but also on isolated pronunciation sounds, permitting the teacher to focus on troubled pronunciation areas during the classroom.

General Objective:

Identify which of the actual learning methods related to speaking, focuses on pronunciation and the phonetic alphabet, can be applied on 7^o grade curriculum of MEP to improve the language acquisition.

Specific Objectives:

- Investigate the different pronunciation methods applied in a public high school based on the goals of MEP's curriculum.
- Evaluate the efficiency of the techniques used in the speaking language process on 7^o grade curriculum of MEP.
- Predict which of the actual learning methods related to speaking, focusing on pronunciation and the phonetic alphabet, can have more effectiveness on 7^o grade curriculum of MEP.

Research questions.

- What pronunciation techniques can be used to enhance the learning speaking process?
- How much will a new technique impact the development of students in class
- How will students react to new techniques implemented?
- Why should these techniques be implemented in class?
- How will pronunciation techniques make students feel more comfortable?
- Why should teachers care and invest time on learning and using new techniques?

Statement of the problem.

Pronunciation and the phonetic alphabet play an important part in the speaking process, even though some students do not know how to recognize symbols of the phonetic alphabet in order to pronounce a word correctly and just imitate the sound. In the article, Jones, R. H. explain: “The teaching techniques and task types presented continue to be based on behaviorist notions of second language acquisition, largely relying on imitation and discrimination drills, reading aloud and contrastive analysis of L1 and L2 sound systems” (p.1). For educational purposes, reading and repeating a word is enough to teach the pronunciation of a word, in regardless of this idea.

The investigation proposes an improvement of the actual curriculum of 7^o grade used by Ministerio de Educación Pública (MEP), in which, Alvarado & Barrantes, criticize:

“In foreign language teaching in Costa Rica, the explicit instruction of pronunciation at an early age remains a controversial issue. As long as there is not an official guideline for primary school English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching that establishes the approach to be used, educators will continue making personal choices regarding this issue”(p. 1).

As the authors said, MEP's curriculum did not have an official guideline of what must be used to improve pronunciation and the phonetic alphabet, as a result, we could recognize inconstancy during lessons. This problem affects more than the learning process; communication, understanding and fluency are involved as well. For this reason, pronunciation is the base for effective language communication and is vital to comprehend which is the best option to encourage students to enhance their language acquisition.

Conclusion.

A great idea is to focus our attention on making the student feel more comfortable towards their development on the language acquisition, and we can accomplish this by making use of tools that are available to every teacher but that they may or may not have been implemented on class before. Even though it is really difficult to change a curriculum used nowadays, as teachers we can still aim to improve these small details for a chance to make the learning process a better experience overall.

There are still a lot of research to do, it is crucial to question why students feel the way they do toward speaking, how are teachers addressing the issue, when is the perfect time to implement these tools and what are the pros and cons on the implementation of new tools on the learning process.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Literature Review.

English teaching is in constant change, where there are social needs, teaching will adapt to suffice it. There are certain important aspects to consider when evaluating how pronunciation is taught in a classroom. These aspects are: The understanding of the bases on how English teaching was introduced, the introspection of how English is taught, the variables of performance in the class, the pronunciation and prior experience of students and how the phonetic alphabet can be used as a tool to improve the learning experience.

English: Then and now.

Teachers have changed the way they give their lessons since English was introduced in our country. The language was taught in a more structured and technical way, this was to accomplish communication outside the country “English is evidently perceived as the “business language” which demands Costa Rican English speakers to be part of a job market highly determined by the foreign capital investment.” (Araya & Córdoba 2008). Even though it started this way, language teaching has evolved to accomplish more social needs in ways of new methodologies and goals in the form of skills. By doing so, the teachers also were accompanied with various approaches and methodologies “In the case of English language teachers, the main expectation is to master the grammatical, phonetic, syntactical, phonological and morphological aspects as well as to use appropriate methodologies – e.g. audio-lingual approach, non-restrictive, content-based and task-based approaches among others” (Araya & Córdoba, 2008). But teaching is more than just following rules and techniques related to subjects, teachers should also consider the social context when a subject is being reviewed and what circumstances are found in the learning environment for them to enhance the class and favor students on a more accurate learning process where variables and real-life situations are considered, thus giving a

more complete learning experience for the student. Taking real life scenarios into account not only gives language and grammatical opportunities to students, but also provides a safer place where practice and speaking is applied.

Curricular Introspection.

According to Álvarez & Valenzuela (2007), they express that the essence of progress in every area is when you take a step back and realize how you can improve your environment, looking for all the areas in which you recognize weakness and the different options to redirect into a better option. In this research, there is a comprehension of how a team of investigators worked with some groups in order to do an introspection of the way in which language was taught. They found two main problems: First, students had a bad non-verbal language, they were unwilling to talk and participate in the class; in addition, some teachers did not know how to manage the group and just gave up. Second, some teachers and students were not well prepared to speak advanced English, they were more comfortable using Spanish as the main language in the classroom. In both situations, they give recommendations and work effectively to give them a viable solution. This document showed us a point of view of how this type of suggestions should be managed, it is not enough to recognize the errors, the main point of every introspection is to find solutions and improve them in the most realistic scenario.

Performance in classroom.

Performance is a main priority when talking about speaking and pronunciation in the English classroom, without it, the learning experience, the student's confidence and the knowledge acquisition can be damaged. According to Alvarado & Barrantes (2015) on the Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 2 "Poor performance means poor fluency. In fact, learners actually avoid words or grammatical structures that they find difficult to pronounce, and teachers

are sometimes guilty of misinterpreting these ‘gaps’ in production as gaps in a learner’s knowledge or understanding” therefore, it is a concern that teachers should have when applying their classes. Students usually see certain pronunciation sounds as uncomfortable and therefore the avoidance of said sounds contained in words is frequent. This phenomenon does not occur because of the difficulty level on said words, but actually the confidence that students have at the moment of using them, in occasions, this can lead to embarrassment and a socio-psychological situation where the student is ashamed of the mistakes made.

“It is not common to find that quite a few students resist coordination with teachers in phonetics classes. Sometimes some other students pronounced separate phoneme uncorrected, these students laughed at them. That needs a correct attitude to learn English pronunciation” (Dahrmika, 2021)

Pronunciation.

In the document, the author Jones (1997) express that one of the most common techniques to teach pronunciation is using listen and repeat, the students must pay attention to the word and try to replicate the sound. In this paper, we can understand the idea and their advantages and disadvantages, also, we can realise new theories of which method could be better. The author put in the table how the age, the nationality and the educational system influence the way in which students learn how to pronounce. Also, express the importance of recognizing specific sounds in order to be replicated when they are speaking or learning how to pronounce. In addition to this, explain new ideas of how pronunciation should be taught in the future, proposing monitoring and self-assistant as his prior proposes. In addition to this idea, (Snow & Hoefangel 1997) proposes that is well known to teachers of English that early ages are better for having a pronunciation without accent, even though that could not reflect how much

language acquisition the person could have. In this paper, we explore some evaluations of the level of pronunciation in young and adult people. We understand that a person between 5 to 15 years old can have a better development on their pronunciation in two areas, imitation and improvisation. In spite of that idea, a person older than 15 years old, could have struggles when he or she is talking in a spontaneous way. Following this idea, an older person is much better in other aspects, such as vocabulary, grammar, morphology, than a younger one. In the document we can observe other aspects which influence language acquisition, for example; motivation or pressure in their studies. In comparison, both learners have the same goal, but they are dealing with different problems. This paper must help us to understand the similarities and differences between learning a new language, focusing on pronunciation and how to apply the knowledge in order to use the correct strategies in a suitable time.

Prior experience and the phonetic alphabet.

Other factors that damage the pronunciation learning process is the prior experience acquired by the student, which can be incorrect and therefore influence the pronunciation on certain words, this is more common in higher levels of English classes, where students have developed habits towards certain phonetic sounds “Some students failed to pronounce some words correctly from the beginning. As they become accustomed to their own version of pronunciation, they would be more likely to miscomprehend when these words are not correctly pronounced.” (Dahrmika, 2021). One possible solution to the issue is on using the International Phonetic Alphabet as a benchmark for students in order to help them comprehend pronunciation and intonation, resulting in more confidence and reassurance when practicing speaking. Teachers should also ensure a safe environment where students can speak freely, knowing that they will not be misjudged.

Chapter 3

Research Method

Why and action research?

Data collection is crucial if the goal is to improve the learning process and experience of the students. The main objective of this research is to analyze the techniques and methods related to pronunciation, and to understand how pronunciation can affect the learning process of students. The goal is not to find a solution but to understand the issue and to hypothesize some possible tools that can help improve the situation such as the phonetic alphabet. The action research is a work in progress and as such, it is always developing, (Miller, Greenwood & Maguire. 2003) giving teachers the opportunity of a change where the objective is to always improve upon feedback and knowledge acquired on the investigation. The action research gives the opportunity to investigate, answer questions and build more interrogatories that serve as bridges to a deeper understanding of the investigated issue.

Type of approach.

This research has taken a mixed approach where there is a believe that data is important to quantify the issue but also there is a human factor involved in it, as such, qualitative data is important to create a deeper understanding of the situation abroad. By using both, qualitative and quantitative data the results will be comparable, giving an opportunity to create more questions than previously asked, and to build upon what is being discovered.

The context.

This section provides information about the institution and the group selected by the researchers. For this investigation, Colegio Técnico Profesional Los Chiles was chosen, which is located in Los Chiles, in the north frontier of Alajuela province. This is a public high school; it was founded by Misael Murillo on October 21th 1971 in decree 4874, the Legislative Assembly of the Republic of Costa Rica, created Colegio Técnico Profesional Los Chiles, as a result of the

efforts made by a committee composed of members of the community and with the support of officials of the Ministry of Public Education. With its creation, the possibility was opened so that a great number of local young people could attend high school, since until then few could do so, due to the great distance to the nearest schools and most of them did not have the required economic resources.

The vision of this institution is to be a Professional Technical School that promotes and facilitates the integral formation of individuals, capable of joining society, and the acquisition of knowledge, skills, abilities in different areas: technical, scientific, technological, academic, personal, artistic, moral, sustainable development, with a spirit of competitiveness in accordance with contemporary demands and involving the family and the community, and the mission to educate the student population in such a way that there is an integral development according to the needs of society based on respect, responsibility, peace and justice that promotes intellectual development, labor, environmental sustainability, and family and community welfare.

(Fernandez, 2017. p.4)

It began to operate in an old house located in the center of town where it worked for four years in quite deficient conditions of installation, equipment and resources in general, teaching the specialties of Agricultural and Social Family Education, which began in the seventh year. In 1976, the school moved to its current physical plant, where working conditions improved greatly. Until 1978 the education provided went up to the Third Cycle, therefore, young people who wanted to opt for the title of Medium Technician, had to move to the schools of Santa Clara, Aguas Zarcas, Fortuna.

The C.T.P. Los Chiles has the resources provided by the Department of Technical Education, coming from Law 7372 and with which the equipment is executed to the Specialties

that are currently offered, which are Accounting, Ecological Tourism, Agroecology, Agriculture in Livestock Production, Agriculture in Agricultural Production, Administration and Customs Operation, Executive for Service Centers and Executive Secretariat.

The educational center also has a during Night Section that offers specialties for those people who have a Baccalaureate and opt for a technical specialty, for this year 2017 the offer is: Accounting, Administration and Customs Operation and Executive for Service Centers in tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades. The institution has also had the National Plan since 2015, which is a modality for people with special learning conditions and it covers all levels from seventh to twelfth grade and has the codes of Mental Retardation and Hearing and Language and also teaches the subjects of Computer Education, English, Music, Physical Education, Religion and the specialties of Secretarial Techniques, Agriculture and Livestock, Industrial Arts and Technical Drawing.

The setting.

Colegio Técnico Profesional Los Chiles is a public high school located in Los Chiles, at the north frontier of Alajuela, Costa Rica. For our research, the group chosen for this investigation is seventh grade, for the reason that, they may know basic English in order to express their ideas when they are talking. They came from a difficult situation in which their classroom was their house. Virtual lessons probably may not provide enough knowledge to encourage them to learn a new language.

Participants.

For this investigation, our target group are seven graders. They are 12 to 13 years old. The group is the 7-7 and 7-6 classroom. This group takes three English lessons and six professional

English lessons per week.

Data collection.

Data collection will be achieved by visiting the educational environment and analyzing via observation (considering our objectives as a priority for the evaluation) questioning students via forms and interviewing the corresponding teachers, so that the data collected has both the students' and teachers' perspectives.

The following is the form created to gather starting information.

- Marque si o no y brinde una breve explicación acerca de la opción elegida

1. ¿El idioma inglés es de su agrado? Si () No ()

Justifique. _____

2. ¿El aprender inglés se le dificulta? Si () No ()

Justifique. _____

3. ¿Sus clases de inglés le hacen querer continuar aprendiendo el idioma? Si () No ()

Justifique. _____

4. ¿Considera usted que la pronunciación es importante en el idioma inglés? Si () No ()

Justifique. _____

5. ¿Considera que la pronunciación en el idioma inglés puede ser una traba para el aprendizaje de la lengua? Si () No ()

Justifique. _____

6. Durante sus clases, ¿existen actividades que se enfoquen en mejorar la pronunciación del idioma? Si () No ()

Justifique. _____

7. ¿A usado o conoce usted que es el abecedario fonético?

Si () No ()

8. ¿Cree usted que las lecciones de inglés le ayudan a mejorar su pronunciación? Si () No ()

Justifique. _____

9. ¿Usted opina que las lecciones de inglés proporcionan las herramientas adecuadas para mejorar su producción oral (Lograr expresar ideas en el idioma) Si () No ()

Justifique. _____

- Elija según su opinión

1. Del 1 al 5, ¿qué tan bueno se considera usted en la pronunciación del idioma?

1. Deficiente ()

2. Malo ()

3. Regular ()

4. Bueno ()

5. Muy Bueno ()

2. ¿Cuánto tiempo personal a la semana le dedica usted a la práctica del idioma inglés?

1. Nada ()

2. Una a dos horas ()

3. Tres a cuatro horas ()

4. Cuatro a cinco horas ()

5. Cinco horas o más ()

3. Del 1 al 5, ¿Se siente preparado para entablar una conversación en inglés fuera de las aulas?

1. Sin preparación ()

2. Poco preparado ()

3. Ligeramente preparado ()

4. Muy preparado ()
5. Absolutamente preparado ()

4. Del 1 al 5, ¿Qué tan difícil se le hace la pronunciación del inglés?

1. Muy difícil ()
2. Difícil ()
3. Regular ()
4. Fácil ()
5. Muy Fácil ()

5. Del 1 al 5, ¿Puede usted reconocer símbolos fonéticos?

1. Ninguno ()
2. Algunos pocos ()
3. Algunos ()
4. La mayoría ()
5. Todos ()

- Pregunta de respuesta libre. Siéntase libre de opinar y responder de la forma mas abierta y honesta posible a las siguientes preguntas.

1. Según su opinión, ¿Cuál es el concepto de hablar inglés?

2. ¿Qué opina usted de la importancia de la pronunciación para el idioma inglés?

3. Según su opinión, ¿cree usted que existe algún acento que sea visto como el correcto?

4. ¿Cree usted que se le da importancia a la pronunciación del idioma durante la clase?, de ser así, ¿por qué cree que sea el caso?

5. ¿Cree usted que mejoraría a su adquisición del lenguaje el utilizar el abecedario fonético como una herramienta más exacta para la pronunciación? (previo a la pregunta se le daría una breve explicación de cómo funciona el abecedario fonético)

Evaluation table.

Fecha: _____ Observación aplicada en: _____
 Seminario de Investigación. Profesor encargado: _____



Grado: ____ Sección: ____ Tema: _____ Unidad _____ Semana: ____

Técnica de aprendizaje de utilizada en la clase:	Características de la practica:	Complejidad:	Que material se utilizó en la actividad:	Sigue el programa de estudios propuesto:	Material de apoyo:	Cambios realizados:	Se utilizó el alfabeto fonético: ¿Como se utilizó?	¿Hubo trabajo en grupos/parejas? ¿Que realizaron?

Estudiantes:

Interés:	Manera de expresarse en inglés:	Comportamiento:	Trabajo en equipo:	Tolerancia a las correcciones:	Confianza utilizando el idioma:

NOTAS.

Variables.

This research study's variables include the learner's level, age, personal traits, context of their previous lessons, and the professor's methodology. The conceptual definition is centered on tangible elements that influence the study's potential outcomes. Previous research and studies on the topic being studied can be contrasted to this study to determine the variables' influence on pronunciation and phonetic alphabet techniques used in classroom. The operational definition will then evaluate the findings by using instruments such as observations and questionnaires to comprehend the significance of each variable on the research results.

Chapter 4

Findings

Introduction.

During this chapter, data gathered from different questionnaires, interviews and observations alongside analyzed references will be presented with the hopes of an answer regarding each research question mentioned on chapter. All data gathered will be presented in the same chronological order as it was obtained to ensure any new observation of change on the studied subject.

Analysis and interpretation of the results.**Instrument 1. Primary Observation.**

During the first week of data gathering, a primary observation was done inside the classroom with the goal of stablishing a general idea of how each English class is presented. During this time, the primary focus was set on how the speaking skill was implemented, used and corrected. The general findings are as followed.

First observation, class 7-7.

The primary observation was done during two different days, where the goal was to understand how the class was managed, the student behaviour and how speaking and pronunciation was thought.

The initial observation gave an interesting perspective, where students lack of interest on their lessons. From an academical standpoint, there is an observable simplicity on the activities done during class. Despite this, it is also useful to consider that simplicity does not mean inaccurate or unhelpful, as demonstrated with the activity done, where students had to write “comparatives” sentences to later practice speaking with them. According to Posner, Gagner said that “complex learning, even development of such capabilities as problem solving, is

accomplished by successively linking together previously learned, simpler behaviors.” (p. 193)

Although it seems that this activity is basic at its core, it can serve as a good entry way to techniques such as the phonetic alphabet. During day one students expressed themselves with little to no vocabulary in English, they also showed low confidence when speaking and no initiative to learn when reviewing previously learned subjects. Despite the circumstances, the interest of understanding what students think and how they feel is a priority, alongside with the objective of answering the research questions stated before.

On day two students presented more interest on the activity done. Here, the activity involved movement and competition, where students had to write adjective on the white board divided in two teams. Even though students were more inclined to participate during the activity, they still presented the same situation where no interest on the subject reviewed was found.

But this gives a new perspective on possible interests of students regarding English classes. Because of the better response on the activity, there is a clearer perspective on teaching techniques where, if there is a possibility to implement them, they should be via activities that create an active environment.

First observation, class 7-6.

Class 7-6 had a lot of practical differences from class 7-7. Primarily, they were more cooperative and enthusiastic, giving the deserved attention towards the subjects explained during class. At the moment the observation was done, there was a noticeable lack of speaking practice. Nonetheless, this could be attributed to the fact that, because of unexpected and unmanageable

reasons, they were behind schedule on the subjects they had to review. Despite the circumstances, they demonstrated interest on the English language.

It is important to evaluate the differences between both classes (7-7 and 7-6) their behaviour and their reception regarding language acquisition. There are clear differences in how the practices were done, how well received were the activities and how the class responded in relation to learning new vocabulary. Knowing this will come in handy when reviewing the instrument 2 (Questionnaire) where despite the differences, there will be similarities regarding opinions on the language.

Instrument 2. Questionnaire.

The objective of the questionnaire is to give the students an opportunity to speak freely regarding their opinion on the English class. Here, data gathered helped the understanding of our subject matter's situation. The following Figures will show the total findings.

The questionnaire consisted of 18 questions designed to elaborate on students' opinions related to English and how pronunciation can affect their learning. The results were interesting and creates a clear panorama towards their thinking and believes on their language. Only 2 out of the 17 students interviewed do not like English as a whole, with only one other student claiming that he or she does not like or dislike the subject. This first question brings up some interesting comparisons to the behavior discovered on the primary observations, where on class developed better their behavior and participation than the other, so, though more than half do like the English subject it does not necessarily impact the way their learning develops.

Furthermore, into this question, by analyzing the positive responses towards English we can also understand the motive behind their interest ranging from better jobs opportunities to

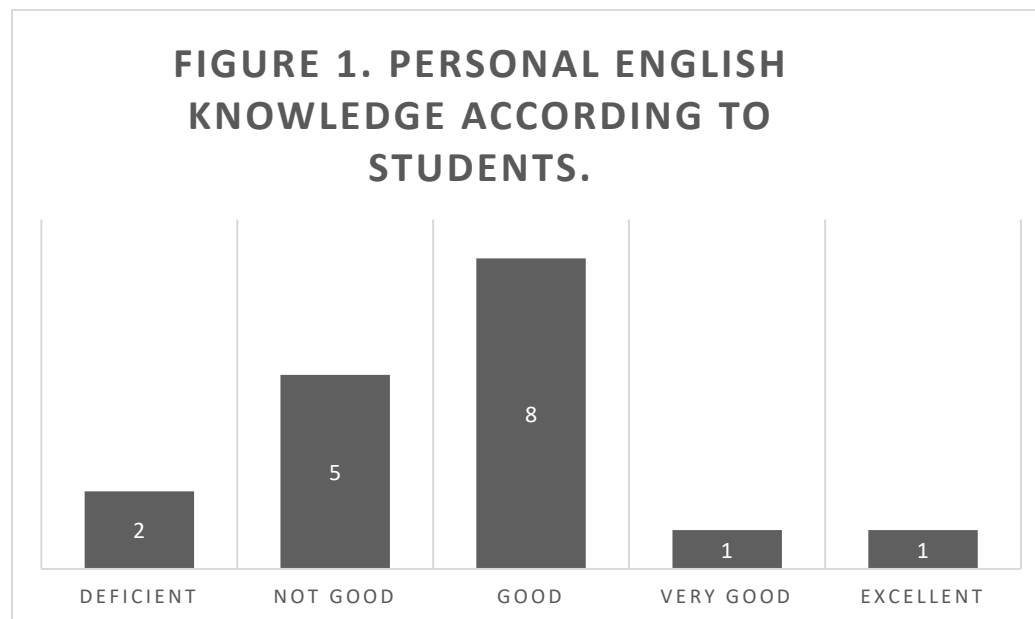
better worldwide connectivity (understanding information outside the country). Supporting question 1, on question 2, students were asked if the English subject tends to be difficult to understand. Here most of the responses were similar, they mostly agree that it can be confusing, with some of them explaining that the issue relies on how hard it can be to interpret and pronounce. Giving a new picture on what can be the cause. Most of the students like the subject but can find it confusing from time to time.

By shifting the focus of the questionnaire towards pronunciation there are some interesting results. All of the students agree that pronunciation is key when learning English, by also explaining that without pronunciation there will be a lack of effective communication with other people, they claim that good pronunciation is needed if you want good job opportunities, have a clear speech and also to have improved understanding. With this last point, there is an interesting link of pronunciation and listening, where, by improving pronunciation, there will also be improved listening skills. When asked if they consider that pronunciation can be an inconvenience to learn the language, only 4 answered no, with one of them reasoning behind the different ways that words can be pronounced (American English and British English), the majority agreed with the statement reasoning that there are many words that are pronounced differently than how they are written.

In general, there is a clear interest and importance on pronunciation from the student's perspective, this interest is also reinforced when the students were asked if they practiced pronunciation during class, where all the answers were positive they also agreed that their classes helped them improve their pronunciation with some of them explaining the different ways they practiced, including presentations, homework and dialogues. Students also believe that the class provided good learning tools to improve their pronunciation skills. The following figure explains

what the students believe are regarding how good at pronunciation they consider themselves.

Here, most of the students believe themselves to be good at pronunciation with 5 of them being not good and 2 of them being bad at pronunciation.



Note: Obtained from instrument 2.

There was an interest to understand how well students develop their learning at home due to the response where they claimed that homework helped them improve their language acquisition. The following chart explains how much time students spent practicing at their homes.

Table 1. Number of hours spent on practicing the language

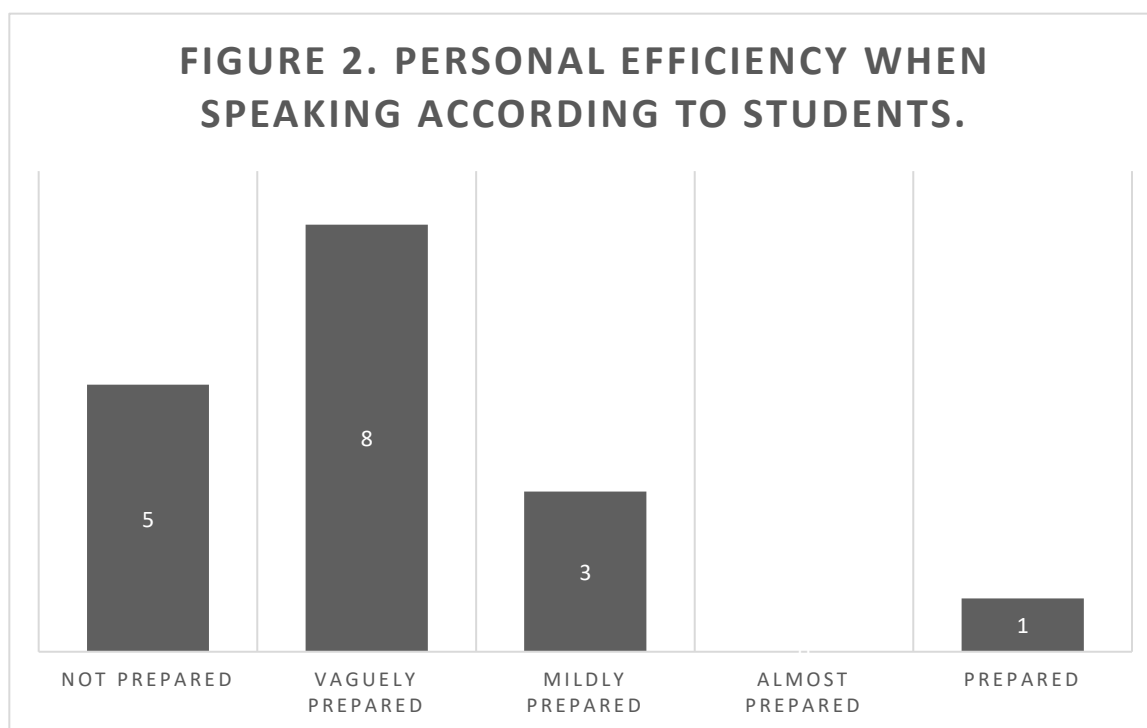
Hours Spent	Number of students
No hours at all	6
1 to 2 Hours	5
2-3 Hours	4

Note. Obtained from instrument 2

The results of Table 1 gave an interesting perspective where a little more than half of the students show some sort of practice that help them improve their learning, and the rest do not

practice at all, this can be one of the causes on why there are some difficulties on learning. Regarding to Jones (1997) the implication for materials is not that pronunciation should be ignored, but that pronunciation teaching methods should more fully address the issues of motivation and exposure by creating an awareness of the importance of pronunciation and providing more exposure to input from native speakers (p. 105).

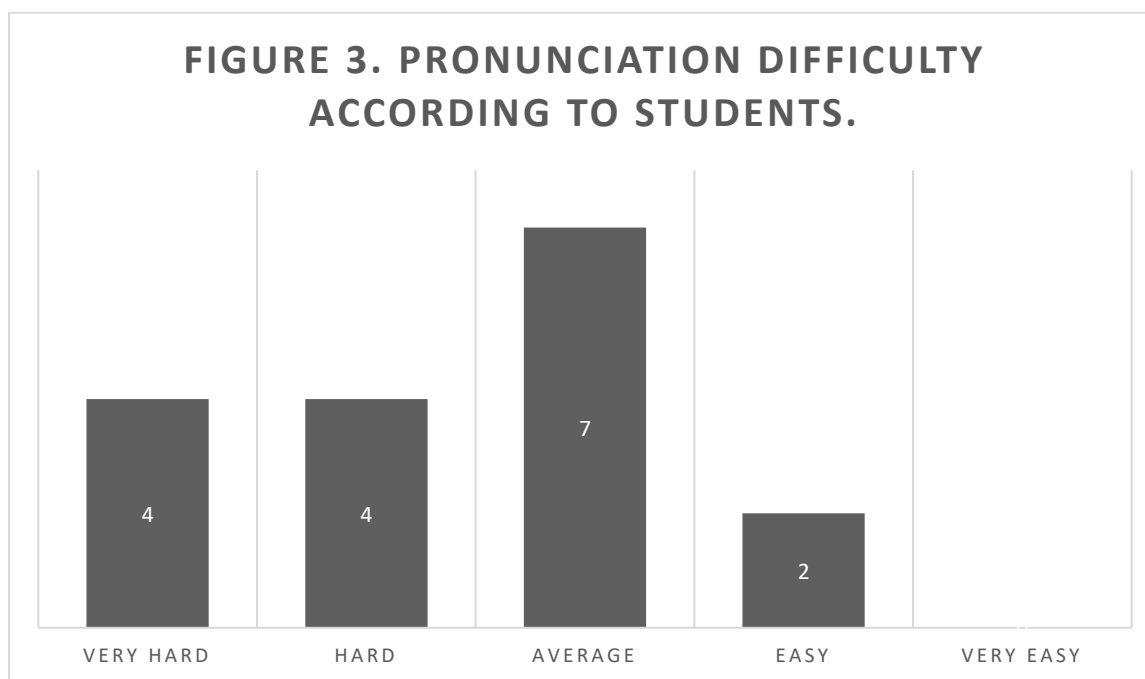
Students were also asked if they felt prepared to have a full conversation in English. On Figure 2 students show an honest opinion on how prepared they feel to develop a conversation on the English language, and, although they have had positive responses towards their learning and their development, most of them do not feel prepared enough to endorse a conversation. This can be attributed to how well pronunciation is practiced by the students.



Note. Obtained from instrument 2.

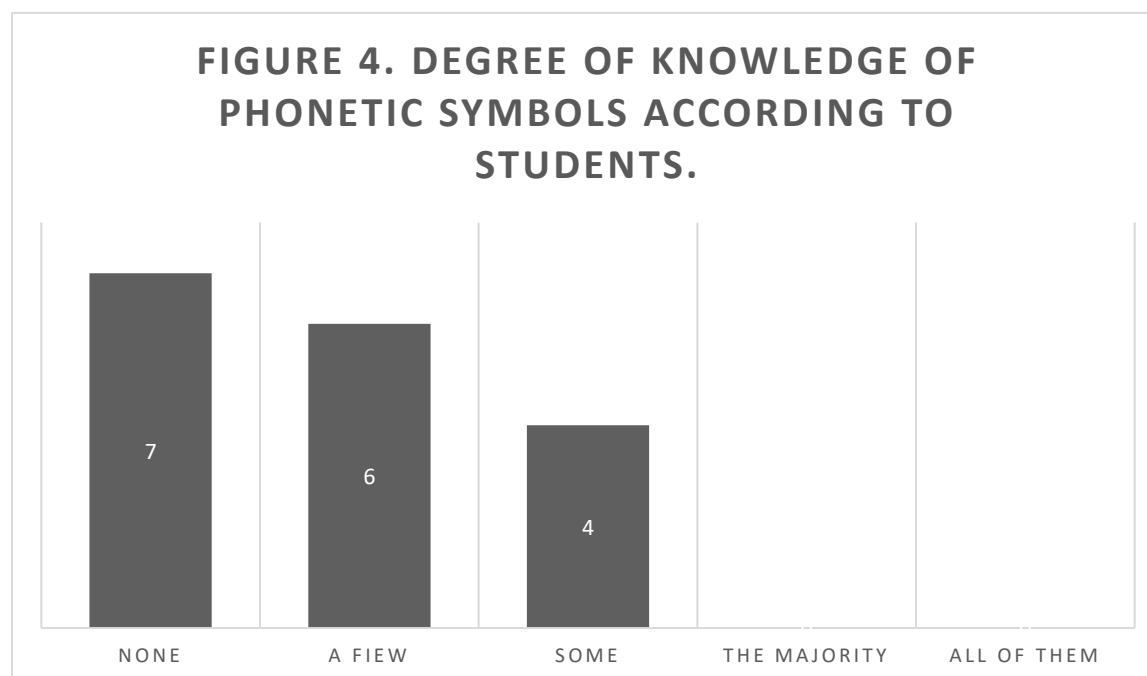
Following this data, students were asked how hard was pronunciation for them, to further understand if there is a link between preparation and pronunciation. On Figure 3, students

showed that, although the vast majority find it to be a normal difficulty, most of the rest of the students determined it to be harder than average. The data explain that pronunciation may have a meaningful impact on the students' development and that, by using tools to endorse the learning acquisition of the skill, it may result on an improved learning experience.



Note. Obtained from instrument 2.

The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) can serve as a useful tool for developing students who seek to understand in a different how to pronounce correctly. Students were asked if they know what the IPA is, where 8 out of 17 students had some sort of idea of what it was. Furthermore, they were asked in a general manner, how many symbols they could identify, which is illustrated in Figure 4.



Note. Obtained from instrument 2.

According to the results, in Figure 4 most students do not recognize phonetic symbols. This an interesting observation because of how the curriculum and the teacher's guide is designed, phonetic symbols are supposed to be reviewed, which rises the question, why is the IPA not reviewed properly if reviewed at all. This question is not an accusation but rather an intrigue derived by the interest in class development. Such a question can only be properly answered by the teacher and therefore will be reviewed later in the instrument 3.

Following the topic of phonetic symbols, students were asked if by using the phonetic symbols as a learning tool it would be useful to further improve their learning, and, although they

made a supposition, after explaining what the IPA is to the ones who have not used them, the results were positive, with all comments referring to the tool as a great opportunity to understand in a different and possibly better way.

According to the teachers, having separate pronunciation-only classes seems to be a need too. It was evinced that explicit instruction is not taught; however, they stated that their students are prepared to learn some phonetic elements despite this pronoun difficulties, Poor performance means poor fluency. In fact, learners actually avoid words or grammatical structures that they find difficult to pronounce, and teachers are sometimes guilty of misinterpreting these ‘gaps’ in production as gaps in a learner’s knowledge or understanding (Oxford University Press, 2012, p. 2).

Instrument 3. Interview.

Now that there is a general perspective of the students’ opinion regarding speaking and the proposed methods for improvement, it is essential to further understand the teacher’s perspective on the situation, where time, productivity, clarity and efficiency are key elements to time management and teaching. Therefore, an interview gave further information on the subject, the hypothesized solutions and tools available for the teacher.

According to the teacher, the speaking skill is the most complicated skill to explain and practice. He stated that students tend to dislike it to several reasons including repetition, shyness. In consonance with Alvarado & Barrantes, (2015).

“Most of them mentioned that they do not teach pronunciation explicitly. One of them stated that explicit instruction favors learning since you can guide the student and not just work informally. Another informant wrote that both explicit and implicit approaches are

equally necessary. None of them used a textbook as reference for pronunciation exercises and activities. These informants questioned did not seem to underestimate their learners' capacities. They all believed their students are prepared to receive direct explanations (p. 60)"

Pronunciation is another key factor that tends to alter how students learn. According to the teacher, now at days, speaking has gain mayor importance in language acquisition unlike some time ago, where, according to him, other skills where the primary focus. Here there is a clear notice of significance, where speaking is a mayor consideration on modern classes that, at the same time, deserve more time than what is available. Furthermore, one of the principal factors that affects students' participation on speaking, is culture due to how much it can influence participation and practice. By expanding this idea, there is an understanding that culture on different places in the country can lead to how disciplined the students where toward English classes thus, affecting their performance. When speaking about culture, some factors came into play, not only where the students lived (rural or urban areas) but also, their habits; what music they listen to, general interest in the area and even how well economically placed can the family be.

Didactic tools are necessary to capture the students' interest on the class, whether if its for learning purposes or for practicing ones, in this case, the tools mentioned were videos, technology such as the cell phone, virtual workbooks, competences and video or audio recording (For speaking practices). According to the teacher, the tools used should be those that are the most interesting for the students, where, if they show an interest in technology, it should be used as an advantage to catch the students' attention. When phonetic symbols where asked about, there were some interesting responses. Even though the IPA is a great tool, the teacher believes

that again, according to culture, students tend to be afraid or uncomfortable about new letters and symbols and so, there is a tendency to ignore or reject the unknown. He explains that IPA is used little by little, and there is some level of acceptance on advanced grade students, but despite that, they still show some sort of uncertainty when reviewing phonetic symbols. Still, he believes that it is a good idea to expand the usage of them and to incorporate more frequently in the language acquisition, but it has some degree of difficulty related to how new, “scary”, time consuming and challenging this tool can be.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

There is a need to further understand how and why students behave the way they do regarding English classes, what they think and what aspects should be considered to improve weaknesses that can be found on the classroom. Speaking is a factor that can encourage students to learn a new language, but it can also have a complete opposite outcome. Due to different factors and its difficulty, students who are looking forward to improve their language skills, can encounter some trouble to do so. There for it is and the teacher's responsibility to further improve the learning experience with different tools, techniques and didactic planning.

Looking back to the research questions stated at the beginning of the investigation we found that there are some questions successfully answered to certain extent. Because of the nature of the study. It is clear that every educative institution has its needs, its resources and its special situations that make the learning process unique and distinct. Therefore, every question asked has an open-ended answer that can change depending on the learning environment. For research purposes, there will be a focus on the students and teacher interviewed when answering the questions.

Research Questions

1. What pronunciation techniques can be used to enhance the learning speaking process?

Findings showed that pronunciation techniques can vary from class to class and from student to student, but to summarize and, according to the teacher, techniques should be those that incorporate movement, interaction and lots of participation, where the students are constantly engaging with the language. Role plays, presentations, competitions and conversations are some of the activities that incorporate pronunciation in their doing and, as a result, helps improve vocabulary, engagement and pronunciation in the process. There is no

established and perfect technique that can be used, but rather situations that are addressed accordingly.

2. How much will a new technique impact the development of students in class? And How will students react to new techniques implemented?

Here, two of the research questions can be answered at once by addressing the IPA and the proposition of using them during class to improve speaking and pronunciation, which are the main objective of the investigation, but the findings showed that, although it is a good learning tool and good resource that can be used during language acquisition, students can receive it in a negative way. This is because younger teens tend to reject unknown concepts such as a new alphabet. It does not mean that because of it, it will not work. In fact, in this scenario students are already learning phonetic symbols, but in a slow and methodic way so that it will not have that big of an impact when its being introduced. In conclusion, the IPA is an excellent tool, but, for students to understand it properly and to accept this new concept, it should be incorporated and taught at a slow pace.

3. Why should these techniques be implemented in class? How will pronunciation techniques make students feel more comfortable?

Although some techniques could result in an overwhelming experience for students, they should still be implemented during the learning process. This is because all students are different and learn in different ways. This idea was supported by the interviewed students when asked their thoughts on the IPA and them using it during class. Their answers suggested that it can be well received because of how it captures a new way of learning and understanding, resulting in an opportunity for learners to better comprehend wording and pronunciation.

4. Why should teachers care and invest time on learning and using new techniques?

As previously mentioned, the learning environment is constantly changing due to many outside and inside factors of the classroom. Mood, general culture regarding discipline, available technology in the classroom, classroom space and the didactic planning itself are some of the factors mentioned by the interviewed teacher. Therefore, it is not important how much time-consuming it can be to learn new techniques. Adaptability is key to enhance the learning experience and it is the teacher's responsibility to do so.

Chapter 6

Recommendations.

In these recommendations, we provide some ideas of how improve some aspects of the different groups involved in this investigation research, in addition to this, is important to remember how everything around us is in a continuous changing and the constant analysis of the data must be the key to advance as a society.

For teachers of MEP Institutions: As teachers, you bring the knowledge to the classroom and guide students to understand and use the information provided to them. For this reason, improve the way in which time and the techniques used in class are fundamental. In agreement with Alvarado & Barrantes, some suggestions for ameliorate our classroom are:

Stick to what matters: Sometimes teacher pay too much attention to very simple and meaningless aspects and do not give emphasis to what is really important.

Integrate pronunciation into normal lessons.

Do not leave the teaching of pronunciation to the end of the week or to that moment when there is nothing else to do. Pronunciation must be at first, or a point with big importance and attention in every class.

Insist on accuracy but don't demand perfection. Insisting on good pronunciation is the first way of showing that it matters.

Work on pronunciation and enjoy working on it. But most of all, make sure learners enjoy working with it. (p.56)

To MEP: The curriculum for the seventh-grade students share the idea of be more than effective, sadly, in some places as CTP Los Chiles it is not working enough. Putting more attention to the context, the idea of how guide students for learn a new language and how

teachers are doing it in the classrooms, taking in consideration the level expected and the real, could help to solve this breach between rural and city high schools.

Other simple suggestions can change the way students learn and the experience they receive:

- Be progressive when implementing new techniques. Time is key to let new techniques settle with students and their way of learning.
- Culture is different in every part of the country. Understanding the environment and adapting accordingly will give a better learning experience for students.
- Let the students understand that learning is a process in which perfection does not exist. Failing is natural and thus, it is a good practice to learn and improve from mistakes.
- As a teacher, give attention to details during class. Details such as the students' opinions and likings could be an excellent tool and resource for activities.

Learning and teacher are both a process that go one by the other, improving according to the society's needs. It is important, as a teacher, to understand, to create and to develop tools to improve learning with the goal of new experiences and opportunities for students. As teachers we serve as a bridge for learners by giving them the so much needed language skills for their future.

Chapter 7

Research Schedule.

Chapter 8

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