

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT**



GRADUATION WORK

“Factors Influencing on the English Pronunciation Proficiency Level of Students after Finishing the Third year of Bachelor of Arts in English, Specialty: Teaching Major of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador”

PRESENTED IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF

LICENCIATURA EN IDIOMA INGLÉS

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INTRODUCTION

This research intends to present the problematic situation in a descriptive manner about the English pronunciation proficiency of third year students of the Bachelor of Arts in English, Specialty: Teaching Major of the Foreign Language Department (FLD) at the University of El Salvador. This report presents the circumstantial origins of the problem, its evolution, its current conditions (external and internal), its weaknesses and strengths as well as its most common techniques to evaluate oral skills, with the goal of providing a diagnosis which can establish effectively a remedial answer to this problem.

Pronunciation, as a process of the production of sounds to make meaning, is one of the most important aspects of a person's speech. Nevertheless, in some cases Pronunciation and its aspects involved, such as sounds, intonation, stress, rhythm and some others, are hardly taught in a classroom. This situation carries the students to communication problems in so many areas and aspects of their personal and professional daily life.

The results of the research show some common pronunciation deficiencies in vowel sounds and also the students' problem in the confusion and differentiation of sounds. It is also shown the students' need to have a study plan with subjects that might help them out to improve their pronunciation. Moreover, it reflects the need for students to have more access to specialized resources to help their English pronunciation along with some other interesting findings.

According to what it has been said before, it exists the necessity to highlight the importance to find a way out to solve this deficiency in students so that they will be able to have better job opportunities, scholarships, and better chances to be understood on an environment where English language is spoken.

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

After completing the third year of studies, students of Bachelor of Arts in English, Specialty: Teaching, face several problems at the time to communicate using English (their target language). Some of the problems are faced when applying for a job or a scholarship; when interviewing (or being interviewed) with another English speaker, or at any opportunity of oral performance they experience.

Most of the problems are concerning pronunciation, which is one of the least attended aspects into the programs and applied during the courses. Revising the current curricular plan, it is noticed that there is only one subject, which is English Pronunciation, and it is focused on oral performance. Although one of the main goals of the Foreign Language Department is “*to achieve proficiency in speaking and writing to make students able to hold a clear communication in English with an accurate oral competence*”, it is necessary that pronunciation counts on a special form of evaluation and more hours attending classes in which students can have the opportunity to take advantage of it.

Theoretically, all the programs are elaborated by professors of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador to teach their classes looking forward to creating English speakers, who are able to communicate in English orally with enough proficiency to satisfy routine social conversation while conveying ideas accurately.

Finding about a full proficiency, it is necessary to establish standards for the students to fulfil and this would allow professors to measure the students' level when completing their third year of the major. Robert J. Dixon (1987) says that: *“pronunciation is both, a simple and complicated procedure. It is simple in that such teaching involves merely the drilling of students on the various sounds of English; and it is complicated in that it takes much longer time than most teachers realize for a student to distinguish clearly the various sounds in a foreign language.”*

These are some pieces of advice:

- a) *“The teacher should keep in mind at all times of course, that ear training is extremely important in teaching any foreign language.*
- b) *A student must first hear a sound clearly before he can reproduce it.*
- c) *The teacher should never jump from one exercise to another, but should continue working on each individual sound until the sound is heard clearly by the students and proper ear and hearing habits have been established.”*

This project will look forward to answering the following questions:

1. Is it necessary to emphasize something about pronunciation in all of the subjects of the first three years of the Bachelor of Arts in English, Specialty: Teaching study plan?

2. Are all the subjects' objectives concrete and reachable to form high-leveled English speakers?

3. Are the students aware that they have to pronounce well to facilitate their conversational skills?

II. JUSTIFICATION

This research project is presented to the Foreign Language Department because it involves a great significance for this division specialized on teaching foreign languages, since it represents an opportunity to analyze closely important factors, conditions, elements, strengths and weaknesses of English pronunciation proficiency of the FLD's students.

The Study Program that is currently applied to students of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador need to be analyzed and met in order to detect some errors on their pronunciation; this is a valuable and urgent goal that may be favourably achieved. This assumption is based on the fact that today is the appropriate time for tackling this problem. It must be added in regards to oral testing with students of the third year the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador.

Students who have finished the Advanced Intensive English II course level are supposed to have acquired the appropriate skills to communicate in this language. However, there are several deficiencies that they show when they perform and interchange, ideas, thoughts, needs and others.

III. OBJECTIVES

3.1. GENERAL

To discover the main factors influencing on the English pronunciation proficiency level of students after finishing the third year of Bachelor of Arts in English, Specialty: Teaching major of the Foreign Language Department (FLD) at the University of El Salvador.

3.2. SPECIFIC

3.2.1 To identify the internal and external factors interfering in the English pronunciation proficiency of English students of the FLD.

3.2.2 To develop some alternatives to be applied in order to improve the English pronunciation proficiency of English students of the FLD.

3.3.3 To propose alternatives of changes into the current 1999 study plan to improve students' English pronunciation proficiency.

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

When a common person studies a second language a complex process of learning begins, since this new language has its own characteristics which differ from his/her mother tongue, so a language learner is involved in a special environment where he/she has to develop four different skills to acquire the target language such as reading, speaking, writing and listening.

This learning of the four skills is presented in the Academic Curricula through the different graduate and postgraduate programs which the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador offers. This study is focused on the pronunciation proficiency and the factors that are involved in this approach.

One of these significant problems in their communicative competence is their pronunciation proficiency. Therefore, to have an approach to the object studied it is necessary to explore basic questions that could support this research problem like: What are the learning conditions for developing a correct pronunciation? Is the teaching method adequate to get the pronunciation competence? Is the communicative competence like the ability to function in the accurate learning communicative setting?

These questions and some others direct this research since the acquisition of the correct English language pronunciation implies different factors that influence this approach.

4.1. Pronunciation

Pronunciation is one of the most conspicuous features of a person's speech, yet so often it is not explicitly taught. Pronunciation is seldom taught in the foreign language classroom beyond the initial introduction to the language's sound system in the early stages of instruction. Moreover, it is one of the most difficult challenges that second language learners face. The more educators understand the characteristics affecting their learners' pronunciation, the more they can develop and enhance their instruction to augment the accuracy of their learners' pronunciation.

Pronunciation refers to the production of sounds that are used to make meaning. It involves some important aspects such as segmental (particular sounds of a language), suprasegmental (aspects of speech beyond the level of individual sound, such as intonation, phrasing, stress, timing and rhythm), voice quality (the projection of the voice) and the attention to gestures and expressions which are related to the way the target language is spoken.

4.2. Elements of Pronunciation

Pronunciation includes both suprasegmental and segmental features (see Table 1), and it is important to remember they all work as an integral part when speaking, and thus they are usually best learnt as one part of spoken language. Traditional approaches have focused on segmental aspects, mostly because they are related in some way to letters in writing, and thus are the easiest to be noticed and worked on. More recent pronunciation

approaches have suggested that suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation may have the most influential effect on intelligibility for some speakers.

Table 1. Pronunciation Features

Segmental aspects	Collection of consonants and vowels
Suprasegmental aspects	Linguistic trends such as word stress, sentence stress, rhythm, intonation, phrasing, and timing.

Singer, 2006; AMEP Research Centre, 2002.

4.3. Segmental Aspects

Learning to pronounce the sounds of English in natural speech is a crucial part of learning pronunciation in English. Many learners may have difficulty with particular sounds, sound combinations or with putting sounds in particular positions.

The sound system of English is made up of phonemes, or individual sounds which carry the potential to make meaning, and these may be vowels, diphthongs (combinations of two vowel sounds), triphthongs (combinations of three vowel sounds) or consonants. These sounds are made using the tongue in different parts of the mouth.

A brief description of the sounds of English has been provided by Underhill (1994) (see Table 2). This phonemic chart has been arranged according to how the sounds are made in the mouth, and they are also represented using a phonemic script.

Table 2. Phonemic Chart (International Phonetic Alphabet)

i:	ɪ	u:	ʊ:	--	ɪə	eɪ	: X
e	ə	ɜ:		--	ʊə	aɪ	əʊ
æ	ʌ	ɑ:		--	eə	aɪ	au
p	b	t	d	tʃ	dʒ	k	ɡ
f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ
m	n	ŋ	h	l	r	w	j

AMEP Research Centre, 1, 2002; Underhill, A. Sound Foundations. 2005.

The vowels in the phonemic chart (see Table 2) are ordered according to where they are made in the mouth (see Figure 1). Therefore the top row of vowels is made high in the mouth, the middle row is made in the centre, and the bottom row is made low in the mouth. Similarly, the vowels on the left side of the chart are made in the front of the mouth, the right-hand rows of the vowel section are made in the back of the mouth, and those in between are made in between.

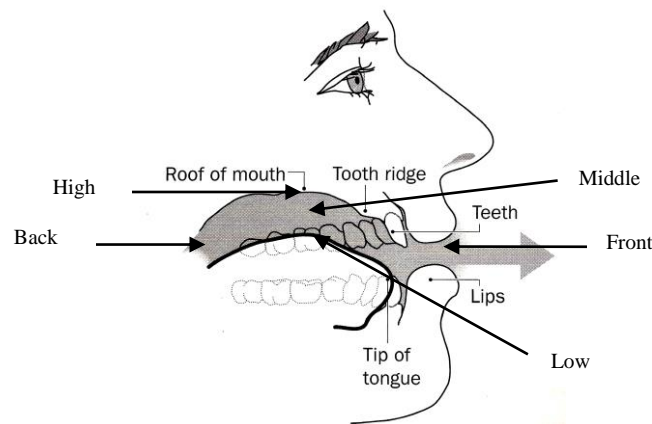


Figure 1. Positions where vowels are produced

(Gilbert, 2004)

Vowels are usually described in terms of *length* (although remember that length depends on stress, and that even short vowels in English may seem rather long when stressed), *the position in the mouth in which they are made* (in terms of their position from high to low and front to back), and *the degree* to which the lips are rounded, spread or neutral.

Vowels are also often described as either *lax* or *tense*.

Consonants are made by causing a blockage or partial blockage in the mouth, and these are usually described in terms of:

- a) where the sound is made in the mouth, or place of articulation
- b) how the sound is made, or the manner of articulation
- c) whether or not the vocal cords vibrate, or voicing.

Therefore, consonants differ from each other in at least one of these ways (see Table 3).

Table 3. English Consonants (International Phonetic Alphabet)

	Lips bilabial	Lips + teeth labiodental	Teeth dental	Alveolar ridge alveolar	Alveolar/ palate palato- alveolar	Hard palate palatal	Velum velar	Glottis glottal
Plosive	p b			t d			k g	
Fricative		f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ			h
Affricative					tʃ dʒ			
Nasal	m			n			ŋ	
Lateral				l				
Approximant	w				r	j		

AMEP Research Centre, 1, 2002; Underhill, A. Sound Foundations. 2005.

It is important for teachers to know where and how a sound is made, and many learners find this knowledge helpful as well, although they will only come to say sounds intelligibly through careful listening and practice. The distinction between voiced and

unvoiced sounds is often more clearly heard in the amount of aspiration or forced heard (greater for unvoiced sounds) and the length of the vowel before the sound (longer before voiced sounds) rather than in the presence or absence of voicing. Consonant sounds may occur together in English to form clusters, which can pose particular difficulties for learners.

4.4. Suprasegmental Aspects

Stress or word stress refers to the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables with a word. It is signalled by volume, force, pitch change and syllable length, and it is often the place where we notice hand movements and other gestures when someone is talking.

Sentence stress refers to the various stressed elements of each sentence. Thus, word stress and sentence stress combine to create the rhythm of the English syllables and pauses.

According to Australian Adult Migrant English Program Research Centre (AMEP, 2002), those words which are more important for communicating the speaker's meaning, usually the content words, tend to be stressed, while those which are less important, usually the grammatical words, are unstressed. In addition, one of these stressed syllables or words is usually more important than the others, and this is called the "*tonic*". This is very significant because it carries not only the major stress, but also the major pitch change, and it changes according to the speaker's intended meaning. This syllable is sometimes called *contrastive stress*.

Another suprasegmental aspect is the *intonation* or change of pitch, which is crucial in signaling speaker meaning, particularly interpersonal attitudes. Since intonation patterns are language-specific, learners will need to acquire new ones for English in order to avoid inappropriate transfer for their first language, and thus perhaps inadvertently causing offence. The way in which intonation works is highly complex, and teachers will not have the time to explore the theory in depth with learners. Even though, there are some simple patterns that can be identified and practised even for beginner learners, these are: falling pattern, raising intonation, fall-rise, rise-fall and level tone.

Based on what it has been said by Singer (2006), “to understand intonation, *pitch* must be understood first”. Pitch is a very important feature of teaching and learning English pronunciation because it does not change the meaning of the words. It is defined as the relative highness or lowness of voice. With pitch being the individual tones of speech, intonation then is the combination of the individual tones in an entire string of utterances. Intonation involves the rising and falling of the voice to various pitch levels throughout the duration of an utterance. This feature of pronunciation is essential to convey specific meaning.

Another facet of pronunciation research is the importance of voice quality, according to AMEP. It is defined as certain audible characteristics that are present most of the time when native speakers talk. Also it has been described as the aspect of prosody that spans the longest stretches of speech and underlies all other aspects, and argues that all other aspects of pronunciation (suprasegmental and segmental) are produced within the limits

of the voice quality set by the articulators and the breath stream coming up from the lungs.

Three main types of settings have been described by Singer (2006): supralaryngeal (setting above the larynx-tongue position, lip-rounding or spreading, presence or absence of nasality, others), laryngeal settings (whether the voice can be characterized as whispery, creaky, neutral, or falsetto), and muscular tension. It is known that voice quality does contribute to a foreign accent and they stem from both linguistic and socio-cultural factors.

Within the suprasegmental aspects there are some adjustments in connected speech such as linking, assimilation, dissimilation, deletion, and epenthesis. **Linking** can be described as connecting the final sound of one word to the initial sound of the following. In non-native English, the *choppiness* generally derives from the speaker's inability to *connect* or link speech *smoothly*. **Assimilation** is when a given sound takes on the characteristics of a neighboring sound. This feature occurs in English very frequently, both within words and between words. The opposite of assimilation is **Dissimilation**, which is a differentiation of like sounds. Another very prominent feature in English pronunciation, in terms of connected speech, is **Deletion**. This is a fairly radical form of adjustments whereby sounds disappear or are not clearly articulated in certain context. One final term worth mentioning is **Epenthesis**. This phenomenon is characterized by the insertion of a vowel or consonant segment within an existing string of segment. Though less common in English than deletion, the most important type of epenthesis

occurs in certain morphophonological sequences such as the regular plural and the past tense endings.

4.5. Importance of Pronunciation and Teaching Pronunciation

According to Adult Migrant English Program Research Centre (AMEP, 2002), learners having good English pronunciation are more likely to be understood even if they make mistakes in other areas. On the other hand, learners whose pronunciation is hard to understand will not be understood even if their grammar is perfect. Such learners may avoid speaking English, and thus experience social isolation, employment difficulties and limited opportunities for further study. Learners are also often judged by their speaking way, and so people with poor pronunciation may be judged as uneducated, incompetent or lacking in knowledge, although listeners are only reacting to their pronunciation.

It has been noted until recently that pronunciation teaching has been labeled as the “Cinderella” (Seidlhofer, 2000), or “something of an orphan in English programs around the world” (Gilbert, 1994). According to Jackie Greenwood, unlike reading, writing, listening, and general oral fluency, pronunciation had been treated as a luxury “add-on”, and where it has been taught, it has consisted of repetitive drill work, often perceived by both teachers and students as boring and unproductive.

Jackie Greenwood of the University of Auckland, says: *There are seven groups of English language learners whose needs mandate special assistance with pronunciation:*

1. *Foreign teaching assistants in colleges and universities in English-speaking countries.*
2. *Foreign – born technical, business, and professional employees in business and industry in English – speaking countries.*
3. *International business people and diplomats who need to use English as their workplace lingua franca.*
4. *Refugees in resettlement and vocational training programmes wishing to relocate in English-speaking countries.*
5. *Teachers of English as a foreign language who are not native speakers of English and who expect to serve as the major model and source of input in English for their students.*
6. *People in non-English speaking countries working as tour guides, waiters, hotel personnel, custom agents, and those who use English for dealing with visitors who do not speak their language.*
7. *Foreign – born people in living, working and studying in English speaking countries and having to communicate with other non-native English speakers and native English speakers.*

It has been accepted that English is the major lingua franca globally, and that there are probably more speakers of English as a second or foreign language than there are people who speak it as their first language/mother tongue. More people need to use the target language for social, educational, and professional reasons in all kind of contexts, locally and internationally. Therefore, it is essential that people who use English to communicate have a high level of intelligibility.

4.6. Intelligibility

According to AMEP Research Centre 2, 2002, there is a lack of agreement about what is meant by intelligibility. Three related but separate notions are mentioned:

- a) accentedness, or the strength of accent
- b) the degree to which the hearer can understand what is being said
- c) interlocutor load, or the difficulty the hearer has in understanding what is said

Learners with strong accent may be unintelligible, in the sense that it cannot be understood what they are saying, or they may be intelligible, but understanding them requires a lot of effort (the interlocutor load is high). It is also possible that learners with strong accent may be perfectly intelligible and may not place any burden on the hearer, particularly if the accent is a familiar one.

Intelligibility is therefore a two-way process, involving at least the speaker and the hearer. A speaker may thus be unintelligible to a hearer because of what they are doing as they speak, or because of something about the hearer that makes the task of understanding difficult. Intelligibility also depends on factors other than pronunciation that do not relate specifically to language learning, but to communication in general, such as whether the topic is familiar or whether it is expected in the context.

Listeners bring with them their own values, abilities, experience and prejudices which may influence their judgements about intelligibility. Different listeners may judge the intelligibility of the same speaker differently depending on how sympathetic they are to

the speaker, how familiar they are with the speaker or with other speaker from the same first language background and other non-native speakers in general, as well as how much they know about the topic.

Jackie Greenwood says that: *With regard to non-native English speakers (NNES), there is a summary on the kinds of judgements about NNES typically made as follows.*

Listener judgements:

- a) Incomprehensible speech – micro level*
- b) Ineffectual performance – micro and macro level*
- c) Negative judgement about personal qualities*
- d) Negative stereotyping*

Learner judgements:

- a) Lack of confidence: they feel embarrassed about their accents, and this leads to avoiding communication with native English speakers (NES) or in public situations, and so deny themselves opportunities to practise or hear good models of spoken English.*
- b) Misplaced expectations about goals: they think they are expected to achieve native – like pronunciation, or that just by attending English pronunciation classes, improvement will happen “overnight”.*
- c) Difficulty with perception and production at micro – and macro levels: they frequently report and demonstrate that they have genuine difficulty with both hearing and producing certain sounds and prosodic features (words stress and*

intonation). Accurate listening is a serious problem, especially for students who have to attend lectures.

d) Lack of explicit knowledge about the pronunciation system of the target language: Many students report that they have difficulty because they do not know enough about English pronunciation. This is interesting, as it suggests that their approach to learning pronunciation is similar to that of learning other aspects of English, such as grammar and vocabulary. They want a form-focused analytical approach in order to understand how English pronunciation works.

In addition to general proficiency in English and general speaking skills, there are some important issues for intelligibility, which are:

- overall prosody (including stress, rhythm, and intonation)*
- phrasing and sense of groups*
- intonation*
- word stress*
- rhythm (use of stressed and unstressed syllables)*
- syllable structure*
- segments (sounds)*
- voice quality.*

4.7. General Aspects of Teaching Pronunciation

One of the most important tasks in the teaching process is pronunciation. Many adult learners find pronunciation one of the most difficult aspects of English to acquire, and

need explicit help from the teacher. Teaching implies that English teachers show their students the correct pronunciation when they communicate in the target language. The students repeat what they heard but the role of the teacher is to correct the mistakes that the students make.

Jackie Greenwood (2002) says that: *as most researchers in the field of pronunciation teaching and learning would say, pronunciation is not merely a linguistic matter.*

It cannot isolate the mere sounds of English or the sounds of their native language as sole reasons for their interlanguage obstacles.

Especially with adult learners, it is needed to evaluate such factors as the amount of exposure to the target language, their attitude toward it, and the amount of instruction of pronunciation received by the learner.

According to the language learning theories of Postovsky (1974), Asher (1977), and Krashen (1982), among others, learners acquire language primarily from the input they receive, and they must receive large amounts of comprehensible input before they are required to speak.

Adult learners may have little opportunity to surround themselves with the native target language input. Whereas children who are possibly in English – speaking schools for hours during the day, their adult counterparts are likely to live and work in what these theorists call “linguistic ghettos” where they again have little meaningful exposure to the target language thus inhibiting their acquisition.

Learning a new language and speaking it is especially difficult for foreign language learners because effective oral communication requires the ability to use the language appropriately in a variety of interactions. Verbal communication also affects the suprasegmental features of speech such as pitch, stress and intonation. Such features are often not learnt from reading a textbook or dictionary. Beyond the suprasegmental features, are the non-linguistic elements involved in language such as gestures, body language, and facial expressions which carry so much meaning yet are not learnt through explicit instruction, but rather through sheer experience in a language and culture. Consequently, due to minimal exposure to the target language and contact with native speakers, adult English language learners often do not acquire a native-level of pronunciation, especially regarding fluency, control of idiomatic expressions and cultural pragmatics.

Foreign language instruction or teaching mostly focuses on four main areas of development: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Foreign language curricula emphasize pronunciation in the first year of study as it introduces the target language's alphabet and sound system, but rarely continues this focus past the introductory level.

Tarone (1978) states that the lack of emphasis on pronunciation development may be due to a general lack of fervor on the second language acquisition researchers, second language teachers and students, that pronunciation of a second language is not very important. Also, teachers tend to view pronunciation as the least useful of the basic language skills and thus they generally sacrifice teaching pronunciation in order to spend

valuable class time on other areas of language. Or perhaps, teachers feel justified neglecting pronunciation believing that for adult foreign language learners, it is more difficult to attain target language pronunciation skills than other facets of second language acquisition. Probably, teachers just do not have the background or tools to properly teach pronunciation and therefore it is disregarded.

According to Singer (2006), most teachers have taught what they thought pronunciation was via repetition drills on either a discrete word or phrase level, or give the students the rules of pronunciation like the vowel in a CVC pattern, when given an *e* at the end, say its name. For example, when *e* is added to the word bit (CVC) the pronunciation of the “short i” becomes long and therefore “says its name”. This type of instruction is meant to help students with decoding words for the purpose of reading, rather than pronunciation. For example, students are rarely given information about the differences between fricatives and non-fricatives continuants, or the subtleties between the trilled or flapped /r/ between Spanish and English. This particular information is often left up to the students to attain on their own.

According to different researchers like Dickerson (1975), Carlister (1994), Edge (1991) and Yavas (1994) the most common environments where the English speakers face problems to produce English as a Second Language is more often kept before vowel, word-final epenthesis more likely to happen before pause or consonant, rarely before vowel; word-initial epenthesis more likely after consonants; context also determines word-final obstruent devoicing.

Eckman (1987) says that: *Markedness and sonority: Deletion cannot result in increased markedness of the sequence; perceptually salient segments are not deleted in complex onsets and codas.*

Riney, suggests that: *Age: the older the learner, the more epenthesis is likely to happen.*

Chen and Wang (1998) suggest that: *Prosodic word size: Brownlow, the choice between deletion and epenthesis may be the result of metrical structure optimization: Monosyllabic words undergo epenthesis; bisyllabic words undergo deletion.*

Morphology: Inflectional morphemes are usually dropped by learners and even by native speakers.

Hancin-Bhatt & Bhatt says: *Onset versus Coda: Epenthesis is preferred in word-initial onset position, whereas deletion is the main strategy in word-final codas*

According to all these researchers, teaching a language with a correct pronunciation is a challenge for a teacher which implies to find in their language learners what environments make them fail in the language production and direct them to the English pronunciation.

Most of the time, in the teaching-learning practice from the basic level to the advanced level, it is so rare that the teacher emphasises on the pronunciation approaches, the students have acquired the correct English pronunciation through hearing, speaking to their own teacher and classmates in a general teaching learning approach, the students find a real environment to acquire the language through syntaxes, grammar, morphology, semantics, etcetera.

The Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador has a specific course of phonetics after students get the advanced level, so they begin to know the English Language sounds so late. They are supposed to have learned the English language with pronunciation errors. Therefore the job for the Phonetics teacher turns more difficult.

In this case according to Ronald Carter (1975), there are four priorities for phonology in a pronunciation class:

1. *“Comprehensible: Are learners able to identify the sounds and are their articulations understood by native speakers?”*
2. *“Social Acceptability: Are learners producing sounds that are aesthetically acceptable to the ears of native speakers?”*
3. *“Ease of Production: Do learners have a good chance of successfully learning to produce the sounds?”*
4. *“Number of familiar words (functional load): Do the sounds occur frequently in essential and/ or very useful words?”*
5. *“Likely to be a bad habit affecting other sounds: Are errors getting in the way of other important targets?”*

Confusing /θ/ and /ð/ will rarely lead to misunderstanding, but confusing / s / and /θ/, /ð/ or /z / can. This is likely to affect learners of English from French, German, Italian, Chinese, Japanese or Russian Language background. Speaker of these languages do not have separate phonemes for these English consonant sound contrasts.

The consonant contrasts affect many common English words, so poor production of these sounds will be noticeable. Teaching should focus on both recognition and production.

Teachers will not necessarily teach the differences of sound to students, but this knowledge will provide a basis for teachers to identify the physical reasons for inaccurate approximations of foreign language sounds, enabling them to give precise instructions which will help students to correct faulty pronunciation. Unless teachers understand how students are using their speech organs in producing a native language sound and what they should be doing to produce the foreign language sound acceptably, teachers, will not be able to help students beyond a certain stage of earnest but inaccurate imitation. Incorrectly articulated consonants will affect the production of vowel, as vowels will affect consonants.

Students therefore require steady practice and muscle training. Pronunciation is a motor skill that needs practice. Carter also says phonology lessons will centre on:

- “Hearing: physical demonstration. Discrimination exercises e.g. ship or sheep? / I / or / i: /?”
- “Which vowel sounds occur in: “it”, “bit”, “eat”, “fit”, “fleet”, “seat”, “sit”?”
- “Production: Physically making sounds”.
- “Expanded context: Phrases and sentences as well as phonemes between closed consonants”.

V. METHODOLOGY

It is necessary to mention that studying this field of pronunciation proficiency is an ambitious goal that counts not only on general theoretical support, but also on the practical contribution that helped solving the different questions around this topic. Much of the supporting information for this work was taken from students' opinions, teachers' personal working experience, observations, oral test activities and interviews to people who have been involved in the process of taking oral tests. All these resources will help to find concrete solutions about the proficiency on pronunciation.

5.1 Description of the methodological procedure

Due to the fact that this research is based on qualitative mixed approached in which the object of the study goes from the general knowledge to specific approach. Therefore, it is focused on discovering the problem presented, finding out the general aspects that influence on the students' pronunciation and then get the specific internal and external factors that influence on the students' oral performance. It, thus, means that this research discovered the object of the study through the direct approach with the problem. It helped to come within reach of the result of this study with different techniques based on a qualitative methodology as shown below:

- Diagnosis test
- Questionnaires

The first instrument was the diagnostic test which was administered to measure students' proficiency degree and was applied to ten English students who had finished the third year of Bachelor in Arts of English, Specialty: Teaching, during the term I/2008. The test took ten minutes per student and it contained nineteen items.

The second instrument consisted of a questionnaire, and it was applied to eighty five students. It contained sixteen items referred to students' pronunciation necessities during the learning English language process.

The third instrument was directed to five English professors of the FLD. It contained ten questions referring to find out the emphasis of the teachers on the correct pronunciation of their English students. It took fifteen minutes per professor.

5.2. Research Population

The research population consisted of English language students who were taking their major in English and had already finished their third year of studies at the FLD at the University of El Salvador in the term I/2008. In this case the population consisted of one hundred and ten English students of the advanced courses of Readings and

Conversations in English II, Syntax, Literature II, and Teaching Practice I, during the term I/2008.

5.3. Research Sample

The sample had to be representative to generalize the requested information for the whole population. It consisted in a sample of eighty five English students. (See Appendix 3).

This kind of methodology, which the scientists call *qualitative method*, is not based on measuring through a sample derived from a universe of a specific population. The main purpose of this study is to find out some answers to the researched subjects related to problem under study.

VI. RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

6.1. Diagnostic Test Analysis

An oral test was applied to a little sample of students who have finished three years of studies at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador. A sample of students was asked to read some words using some of the phonetic sounds that do not exist in Spanish. This test was administered to ten students only because the rest of them rejected such an exam. It is important to say that most male students did not accept to participate into this type of interview. However, it could be possible to get nine female students' participation and, at least, one male student.

The consonant sounds applied were the following:

{θ} {tʃ} {t} {s} {z} {ð} {ʃ}

These sounds were compared by using words with the same combination of vowels; for instance, when pronouncing the vowel {i:} into words like “Breathe” and “Breeze” students had troubles and got confused with the vowels {eɪ} and {ɪ}. Something similar happened when pronouncing the words “share” and “chair”. They did not differentiate the sound {ʃ} from the sound {tʃ}. Moreover, they did not realize that the vowel sounds used into these words are pronounced the same way although they are not spelled the same way.

So when listening to the audio aid, included in the appendices, it can be noticed that the pronunciation and the use of these sounds is not commonly important for all English learners. The purpose of this test was to determine if the students' effort or the teachers' influence improved students' pronunciation. It could be noticed that the use of these sounds is not important for all English students; however, they can produce most of other sounds presented since they have to repeat them when interacting with anybody else, this depends on the student's own effort.

Phonemic Chart (International Phonetic Alphabet)

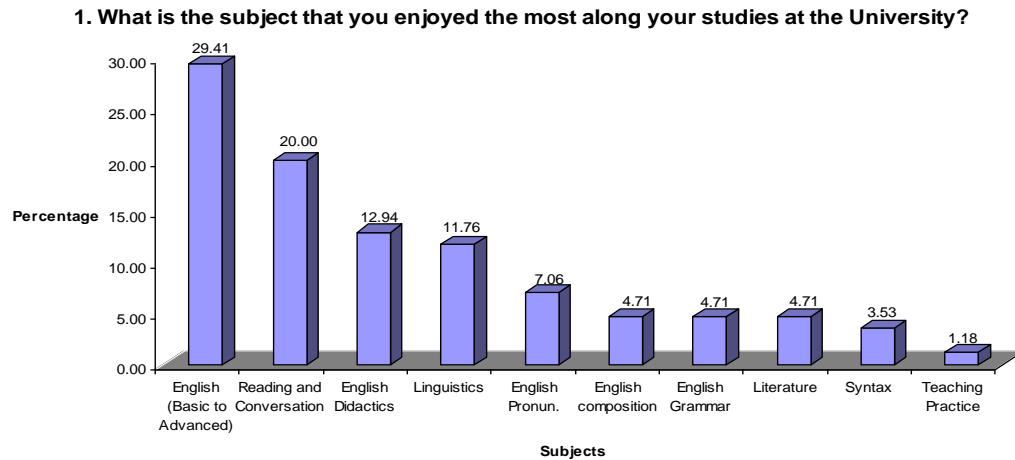
i:	I	u:	u:	--	ɪə	eɪ	: X
E	ə	ɜ:		--	ʊə	aɪ	əʊ
Æ	ʌ	ɑ:		--	eə	aɪ	aʊ
P	b	t	d	tʃ	dʒ	k	G
F	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ
m	n	ŋ	h	l	r	w	J

AMEP Research Centre, 1, 2002; Underhill, A. Sound Foundations. 2005.

After listening to the audio aid it can be noticed that the most difficult sounds from the Phonemic Chart presented before to be pronounced are { θ }, { tʃ }, { z }, { ð }, and { ʃ }. Moreover, there are some vowel sounds that are mispronounced or changed.

6.2. Graphics and Analysis from the Students Questionnaires.

6.2.1. Graphic 1. First question.

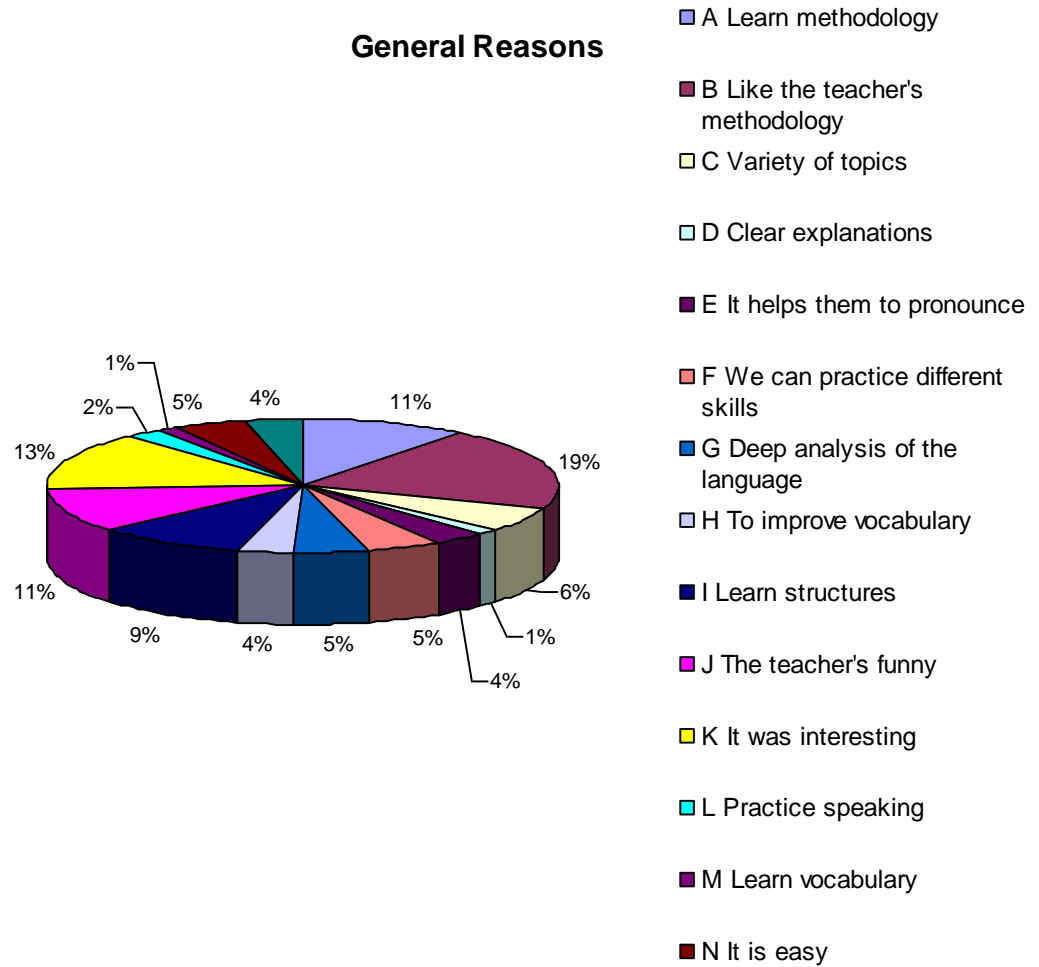


Almost the third part of the students considers the intensive courses of English as their favourite subject.

An important group of them express their preference for Readings and Conversations in English I, which reveals an enthusiastic desire on their part to have classes which promote the use of the four basic skills.

Almost one fourth of them enjoy English Didactics and Introduction to Linguistics, which reveals their interest in teaching and doing scientific research around their target language.

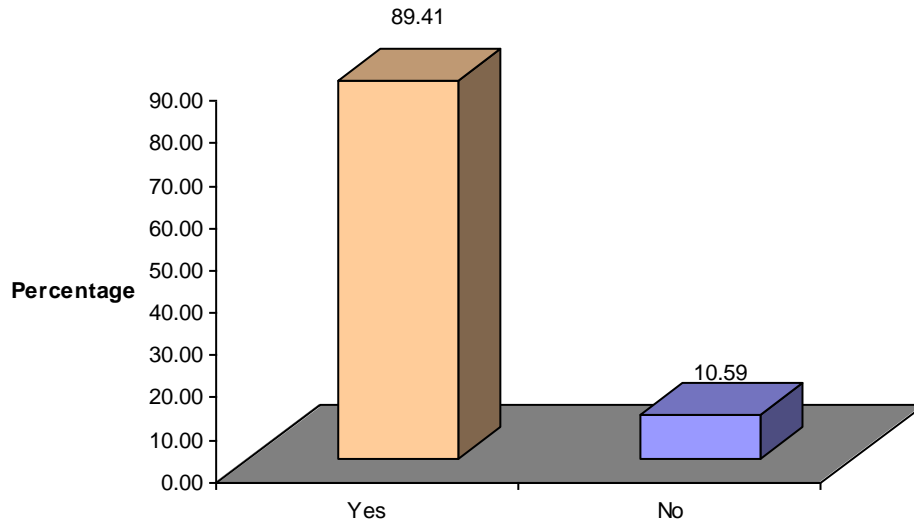
6.2.2. Graphic 2. Second question.



This graph shows a variety of preferences by the students, being the most common the methodology used by the teachers during the learning process of English as a second language. This reinforces the fact that the intensive courses in English from Basic to Advanced level allow teachers to create a dynamic, participative and comfortable environment for the students.

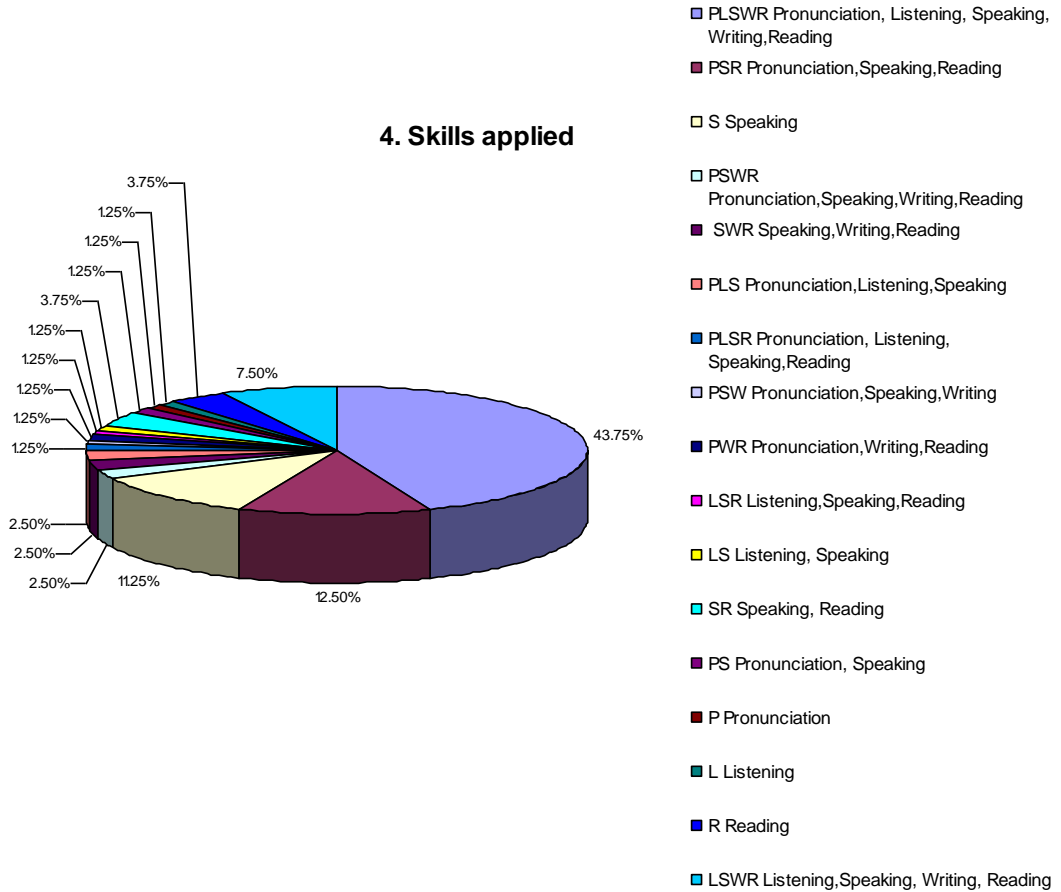
6.2.3. Graphic 3. Third question.

3. Do your teachers apply skills that allow you to practice the pronunciation into the classroom?



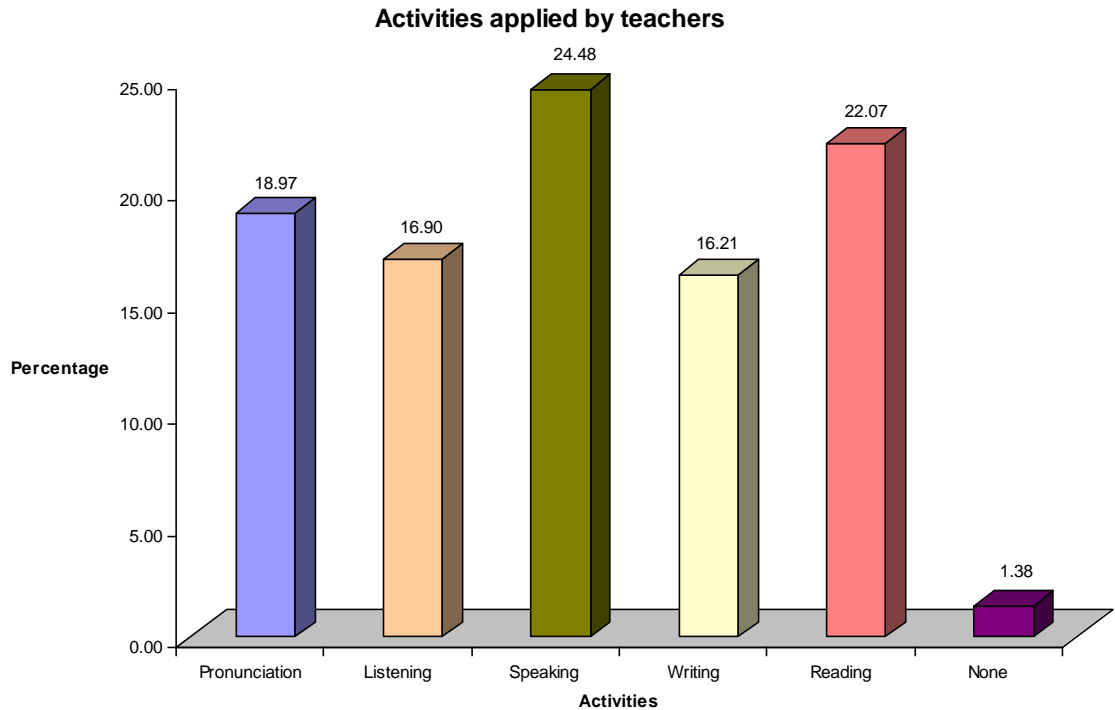
This graph shows a positive opinion on the students' part about the activities developed by teachers during their classes. A significant majority (89.41%) of students expressed that pronunciation is a priority for the teachers because they include it in their subject syllabus in order to improve this subskill.

6.2.4. Graphic 4. Fourth question



Almost half (43.75%) of the interviewed students expressed their acceptability of macro skills and pronunciation as a subskill applied by teachers in their classes.

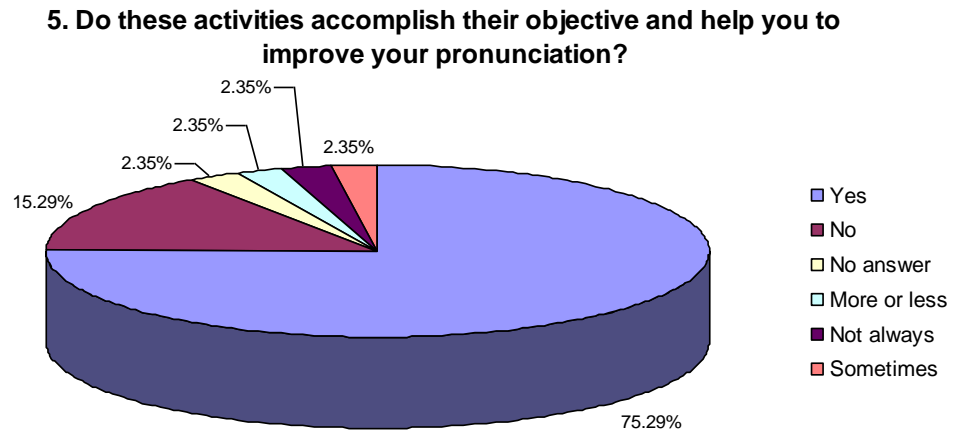
6.2.5. Graphic 5. Individual skills applied by teachers.



Almost one fourth of students expressed that speaking skill is the most applied activity performed by teachers into the classroom. The second applied skill is reading with almost a quarter (22.07%) of the interviewed students.

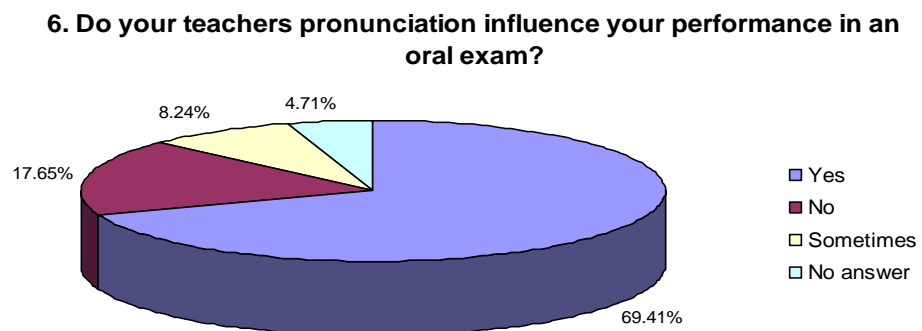
It is important to notice that pronunciation as a subskill gets almost one fifth (18.97%) of the population under study, being significant data for the purpose of the present research.

6.2.6. Graphic 6. Fifth question.



There is a strong tendency on the students' part to accept that the four macro skills accomplish their objectives and help them to improve their pronunciation.

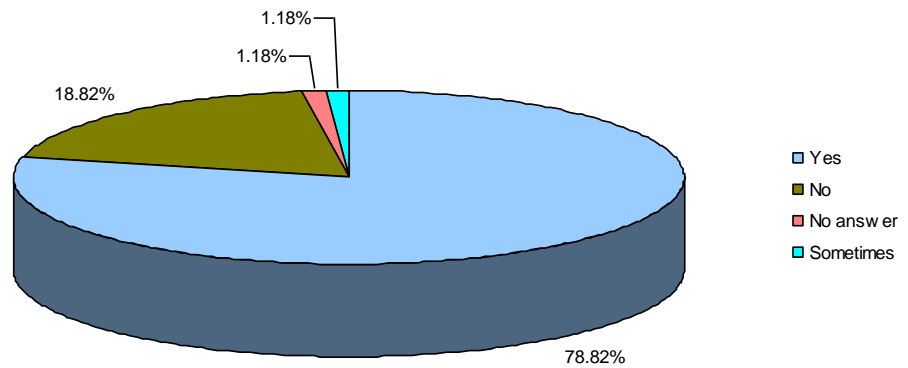
6.2.7. Graphic 7. Sixth question.



The students' acceptability as to their teacher's important role to influence in their pronunciation is revealed in their answers as shown in the previous graph.

6.2.8. Graphic 8. Seventh question.

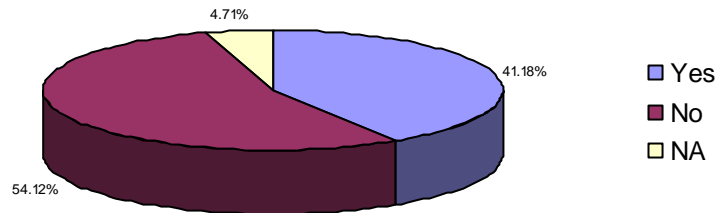
7. Do you ask your teacher to pronounce a difficult word for you?



The students under study strongly admit that their teachers are an important support to them when they have pronunciation-related problems.

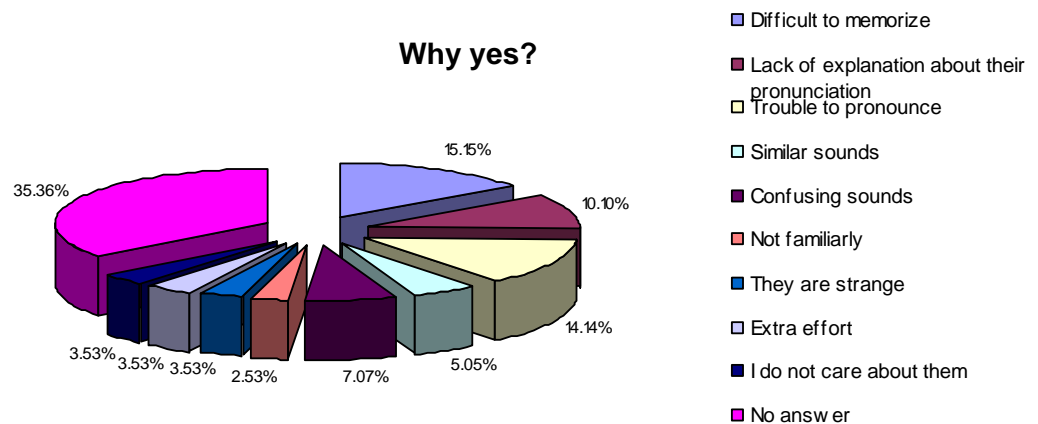
6.2.9. Graphic 9. Eighth question.

8. Are all the phonetic symbols difficult for you?



The issue regarding the difficulty when using phonetic symbols is a controversial situation. Whereas a little more than half of them express not to have any problems with regard to phonetic symbols, a considerable percentage of them (41.18%) admit having problems on the matter.

6.2.10. Graphic 10. Eighth question. Why yes?

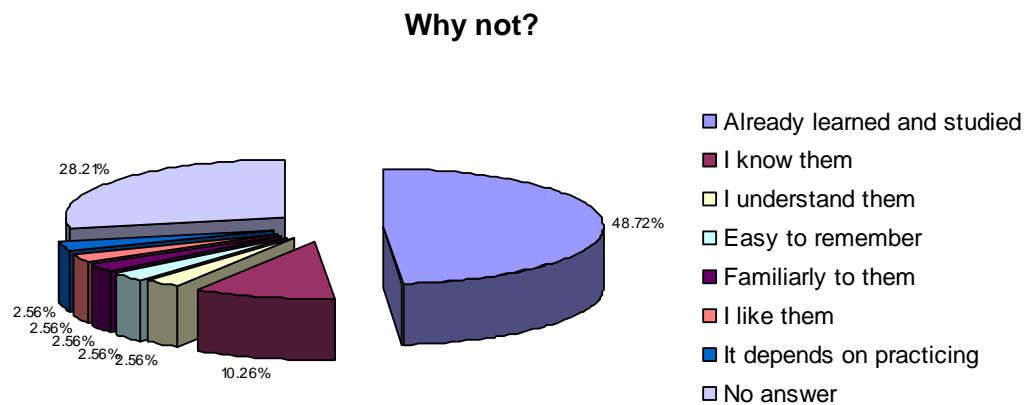


An important fact is that students expressed that phonetic symbols are “difficult to memorize” (15.15%). According to Dr. Jorge Lemus, the phonetic symbols are not recommended to memorize. They must to be learnt by practicing them. (Linguistics

and Morphology and Phonology subjects, Term I and II, year 2002, University of El Salvador). Almost 25% of the students under research admit having problems with pronunciation because of the deficient explanation of the phonetic symbols in class.

A considerable percentage (35.36%) did not answer when being asked about this matter.

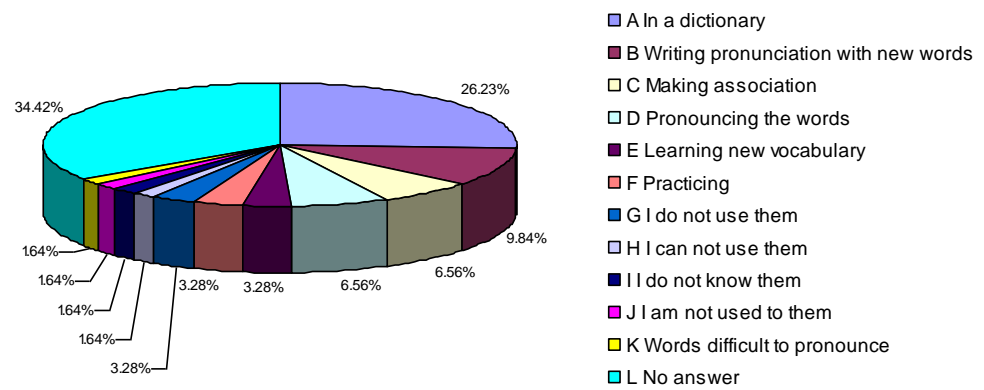
6.2.11. Graphic 11. Eighth question. Why not?



Almost 50% of the students expressed that they already learned and studied the phonetic symbols. A significant part of the population (28.21%) did not answer when being interviewed.

6.2.12. Graphic 12. Ninth question.

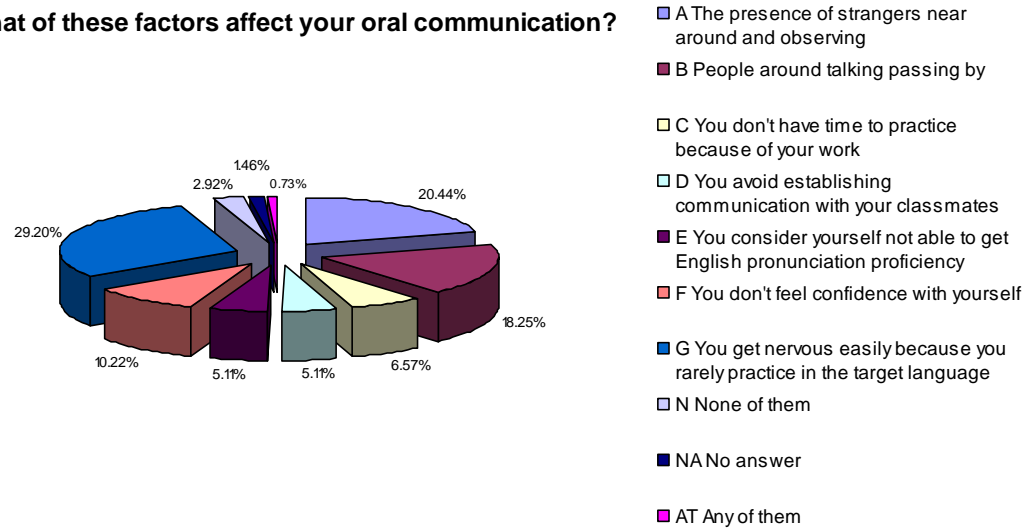
9. How do you use these symbols in order to improve your speaking?



A little more than 25% of students under research resort to dictionaries when they need to use the phonetic symbols whereas another fourth of them write the pronunciation of new words, make associations, and practice pronunciation of words. It is important to notice that more than 34% of them did not provide any answer.

6.2.13. Graphic 13. Tenth question.

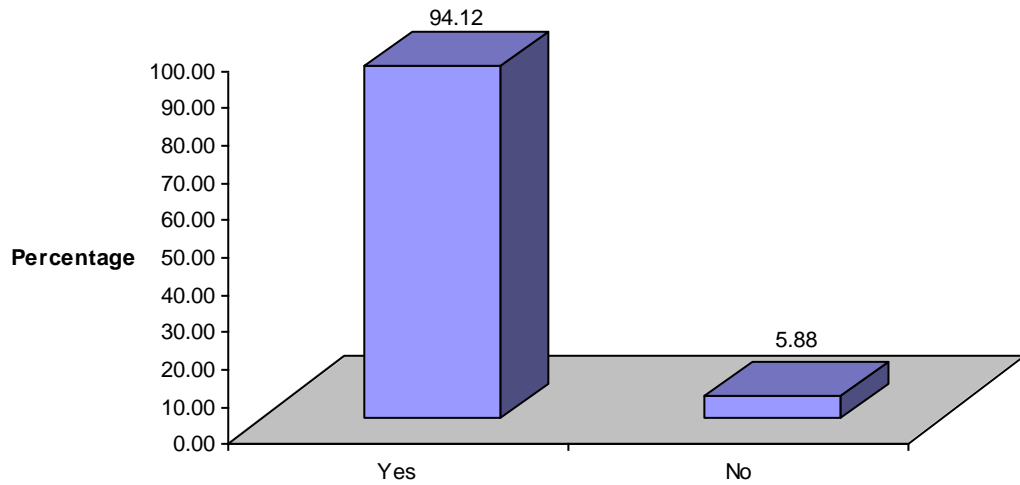
10. What of these factors affect your oral communication?



Around 40% of interviewed students coincided on the main factors that affect their oral communication such as getting nervous easily because they rarely practice in the target language (29.20%) and the fact that they do not rely on themselves (10.22%). Another 40% expressed that people around talking passing by (18.25%) and the presence of strangers nearing around and observing (20.44%) makes them feel nervous.

6.2.14. Graphic 14. Eleventh question.

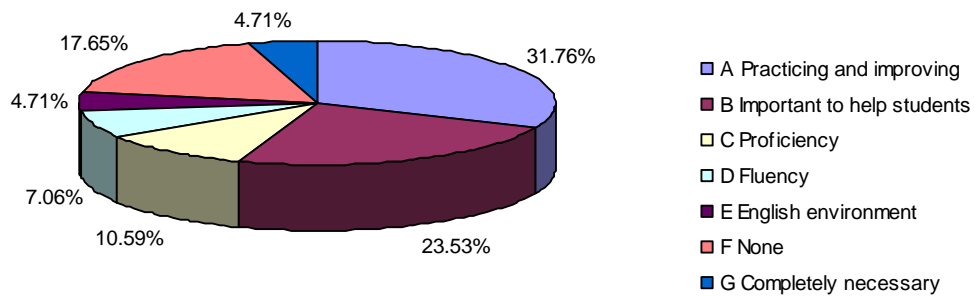
11. Do you think your teachers must include activities that make you improve your pronunciation?



A strong number of the interviewed students (94.12%) claimed for successful activities developed by the teachers in order to improve the farmer's pronunciation.

6.2.15. Graphic 15. Eleventh question. Why?

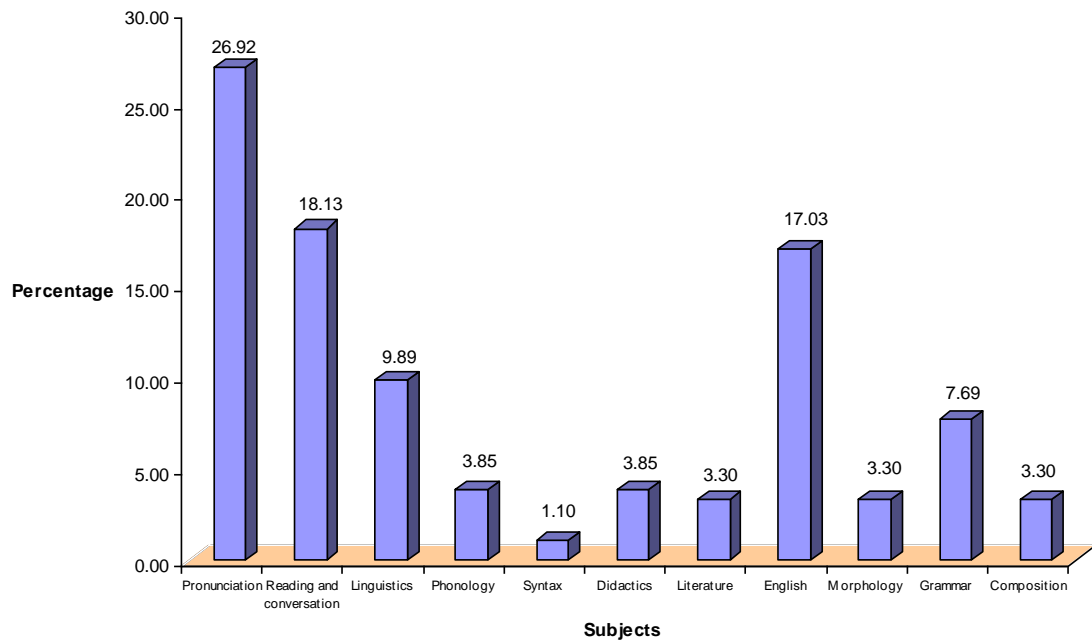
11.2. Why teachers must include activities in order to improve your pronunciation?



This graph shows that on the one hand 31.76% of students are in agreement that teachers must emphasize and develop activities such as practicing and teaching the use of difficult symbols in which students learn how to pronounce a word that is a huge barrier at the time to communicate with each other. On the other hand, 23.53% of them demand the teachers' interest in the students' needs. This means that the teacher must select activities that help to increase the vocabulary and how to pronounce in an acceptable manner. With this in mind the teacher will work following a route that helps the future professional to take advantages in this area that is a main subskill.

6.2.16. Graphic 16. Twelveth question.

12. In which subject do you consider that you learnt more about pronunciation?

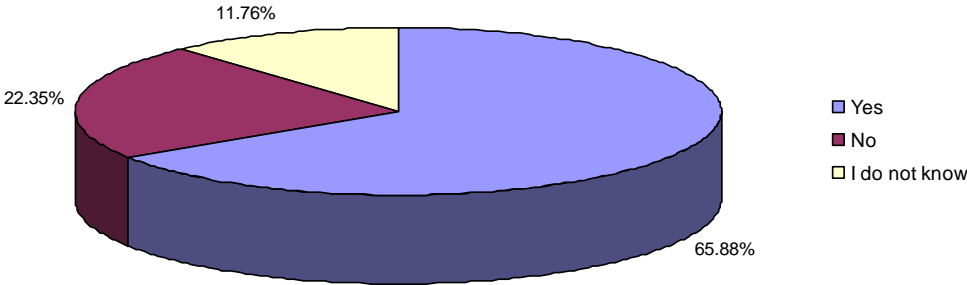


With regard to the subjects that mostly provided them with support to their pronunciation, students ranked the subjects in this way:

- A) English Pronunciation 26.92%
- B) Readings and Conversations in English 18.13%
- C) Intensive English Courses (from Basic to Advanced) 17.03%

6.2.17. Graphic 17. Thirteenth question.

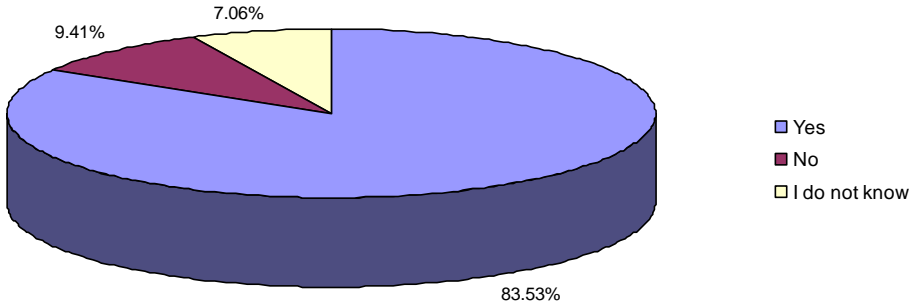
13. Do you agree with teacher's methodology applying when he/she correct you into a classroom?



A significant percentage (65.88%) of students approves the teachers' methodology when correcting error pronunciation into the classroom.

6.2.18. Graphic 18. Fourteenth question.

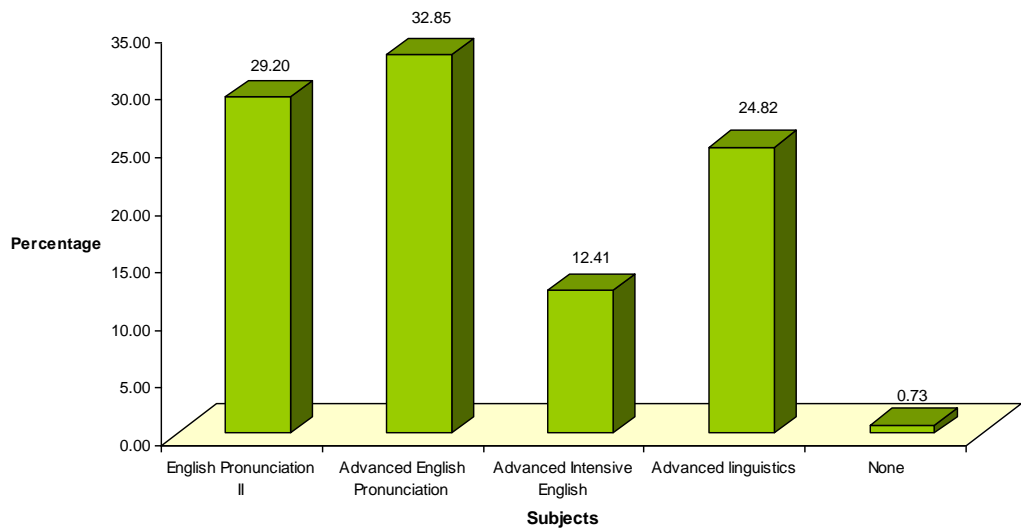
14. Do you consider that the study plan of Bachelor Degree has to include any other subjects that help the way you pronounce?



The previous graph represents a high number (83.53%) of students demanding that the 1999 study plan must be modified in order to include more specialized subjects related to pronunciation.

6.2.19. Graphic 19. Fifteenth question.

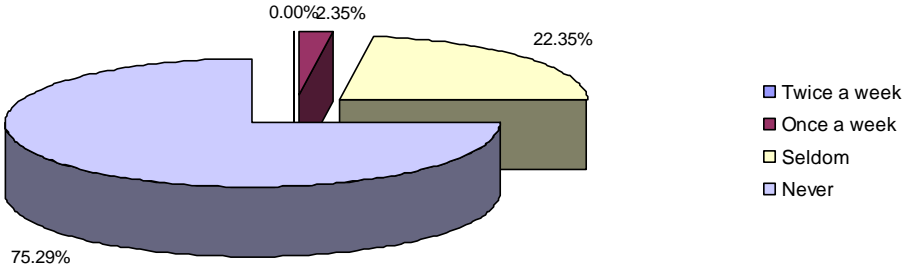
15. In your opinion, which of the following subjects could help you to get a better pronunciation?



When being asked about the possible inclusion of four subjects in the 1999 study plan, the students highlighted pronunciation, as shown in the graph above. This means that pronunciation is a very important area in their opinion.

6.1.20. Graphic 20. Sixteenth question.

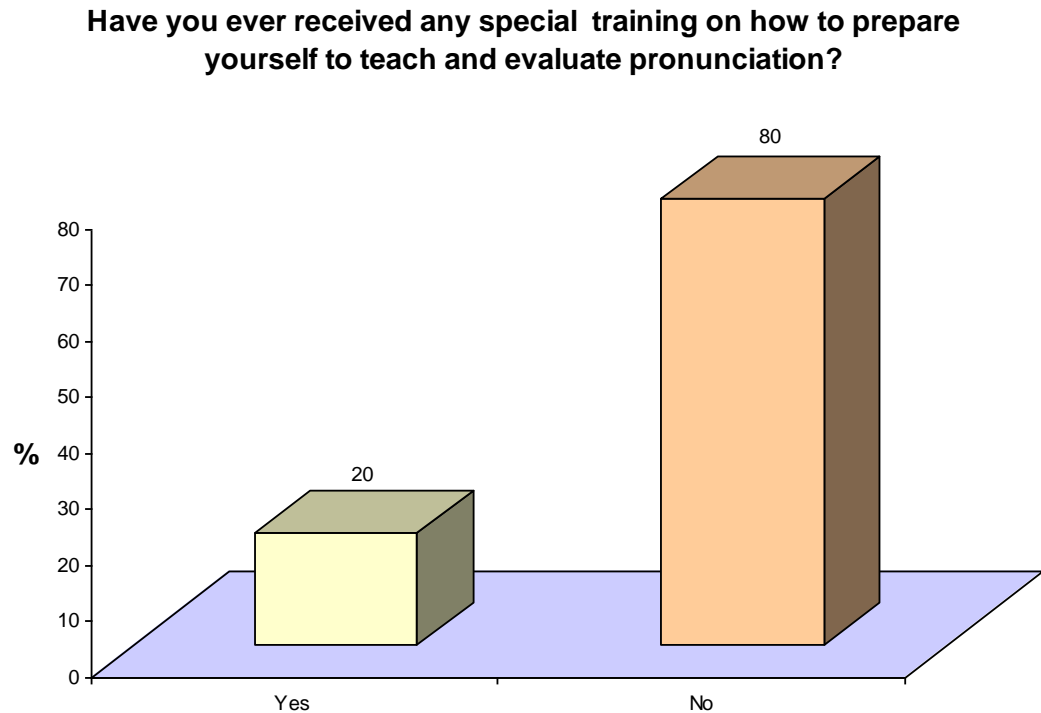
16. How often do you go to the laboratory to reinforce your speaking comprehension?



This graphic represents a demand of students (75.29%) for practicing in the laboratory of English more frequently during each semester.

6.3. Graphics and Analysis from English Teachers Interviews

6.3.1. Graphic 21. Third question.



More than three quarters (80%) of the English teachers interviewed said they have never attended any special training about teaching and testing pronunciation.

6.3.2. Table 4. Fourth and fifth question.

6.3.2.1. Question four: In your opinion, which are the internal factors that affect in negative and positive ways the students' pronunciation proficiency in the sixth semester of Bachelor Degree in English Teaching major?

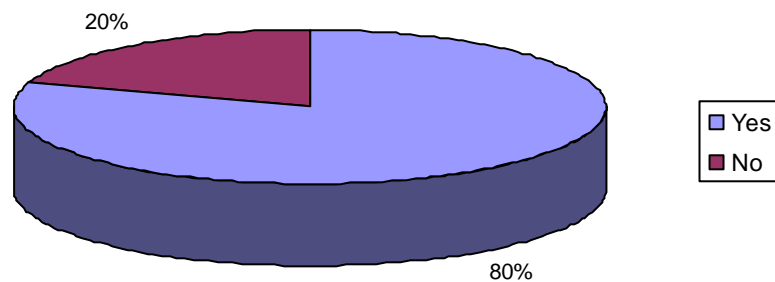
6.3.2.2. Question five: Which are the external factors that affect in negative and positive ways the students' oral performance and pronunciation proficiency in the sixth semester of Bachelor Degree in English Teaching major?

Table 4. Internal and External Factor affecting students' pronunciation proficiency.

Internal factors	External factors
Negative effects: 1- The bad pronunciation of English teachers. 2- Students almost never use the tools they have for improving pronunciation such as tv, the laboratory in the UES, books with cds, and others.	Negative effects: 1- Students do not listen to real English. 2- We do not live in the environment where English is spoken outside the classroom. 3- The fact that they are not in an English speaking environment. 4- Physical disability – lack of contact with English native speakers. 5- Large classes, which reduces the students' participation.
Positive effects: 1- Teachers' advisory and training constantly.	Positive effects: None.

6.3.3. Graphic 22. Sixth question.

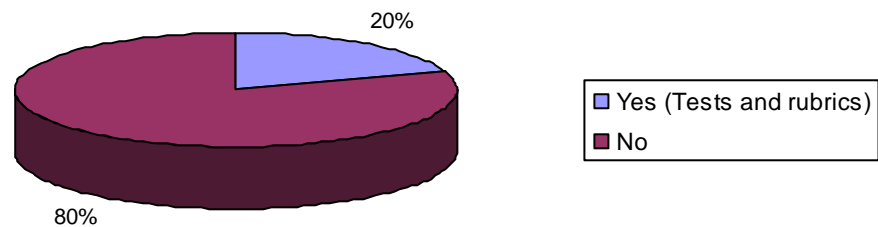
Do you emphasize on your students' oral performance when teaching any English subject in order to help them improve?



There is a strong tendency on the teachers' part to emphasize their students' oral performance.

6.3.4. Graphic 23. Seventh question.

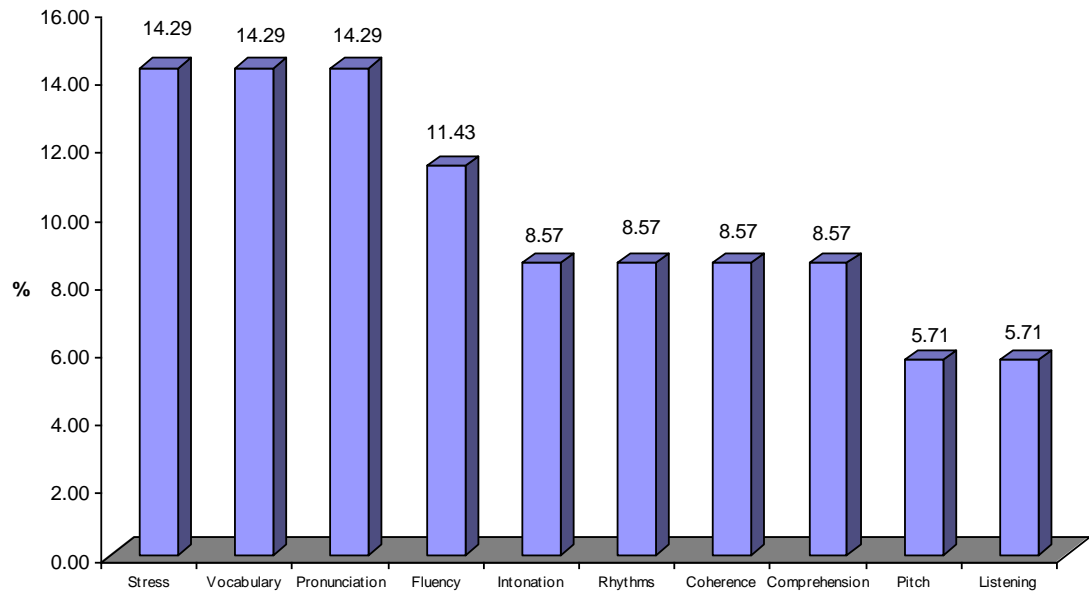
Do you use different kinds of resources to evaluate pronunciation?



FLD's teachers refuse to use different kinds of resources to evaluate their students' pronunciation. Only a fifth of them resort to diverse tools to test their students' pronunciation, which reveals their reluctance to innovate controlling instruments for this important subskill.

6.3.5. Graphic 24.Tenth question.

Which of these phonetics and linguistics aspects do you consider more important when you evaluate and test student's pronunciation?



English teachers consider that *stress*, *vocabulary* and *pronunciation* are the most important phonetic and linguistic aspects at the time to evaluate and test the students' pronunciation.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

7.1. According to the oral test applied, the most common pronunciation deficiencies found in the students tested are with the sound of the vowels { **i:** }, { **eɪ** } and { **ɪ** }, and the difficulty to differentiate the sound { **ʃ** } from the sound { **tʃ** }.

7.2. The favourite subjects by the students along their studies at the University were those related to the English language, no one in Spanish language or other humanistic subject. As it can be seen the subjects such as Intensive English Courses from Basic to Advanced, Readings and Conversation in English and English Didactics are those which fill the requirements for the students. Besides, the most common preferences are those based on teacher's methodology, the variety of topics taught by teachers, and because students considered these subjects very interesting. Although Syntax, because of its difficultness level, is one of the most disliked subjects. Also it is important to notice the fact that Teaching Practice as a subject is one of the most dislike by students of Bachelor Degree in English with a Teaching major.

7.3. Despite Pronunciation subject is the one students consider from which they have learnt more about pronunciation, they also suggest modifying the study plan by including subjects such as Advanced English Pronunciation and/or English Pronunciation II, so that they would be able to move forward the pronunciation matter.

7.4. Phonetic symbols are considered the scientific basis of a language and when these ones are not applied or mastered the result is poor pronunciation proficiency and a deficient oral performance. In this way, as it was shown before, students expressed that there is a lack of explanation about pronunciation of these symbols and also they consider them to be difficult to pronounce and they feel the sounds hard to identify. Something that calls the attention is the fact they expressed phonetic symbols are “difficult to memorize”, when it is already known that they have got to be mastered by practicing them. It is remarkable that a high percentage of students did not answer when being asked about the difficultness, the application and the correct pronunciation of the phonetic symbols.

7.5. It has been expressed that the skills applied, such as speaking and reading are important factors that allow students to practice their pronunciation. Moreover, pronunciation as a subskill has been considered as a noticeable path to improve pronunciation proficiency. The four skills applied (listening, speaking, writing and reading), taken into account pronunciation, are generally considered to be a key parts in the pronunciation improving process. Nevertheless, up to 90% of the students interviewed said that more activities must be included in order to achieve a better oral communication and pronunciation proficiency.

7.6. This research found that the main factors influencing in the pronunciation proficiency are: the difficultness and confusion when pronouncing the sounds in a correct way, the lack of or deficient explanation of the phonetic symbols in specialized subjects related to Linguistics, the deficient attendance to the English Laboratory in almost all of the English subjects, the inexistence of advanced subjects in English pronunciation into the study plan of the FLD, and also the fact that English as a foreign language is studied in a non English environment.

7.7. There is a contradiction on FLD's teachers. On the one hand, they refuse to innovate by using different kind of resources to evaluate their students' pronunciation. On the other hand, they consider that *stress*, *vocabulary* and *pronunciation* are the most important phonetic aspects that have to be taken into account when evaluating students' pronunciation proficiency.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1. To modify the study plan of the FLD in order to include specialized and advanced subjects in pronunciation such as English Pronunciation II, Advanced English Pronunciation, and/or Advanced Linguistics.

- 8.2. There are 17 languages recognized by the United Nations, people who speak English are generally considered suitable for most jobs than people who do not. The ability to speak English with a correct pronunciation can determine the living standards and occupations of the graduate students of the FLD, being this one of the main reason to emphasize the correct pronunciation of the phonetic symbols from the basic subjects related to linguistics area.

- 8.3. To allow more frequently students' access for practicing in the Laboratory of English in all the English subjects each semester.

- 8.4. To qualify Teachers' staff constantly in those deficient areas, by making a diagnostic to detect areas to be reinforced.

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APPENDIX TWO: OBSERVATION GUIDES

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

INTERVIEW FOR THE ENGLISH TEACHERS OF THE FLD

Objective: To find out the emphasis of the Teachers on the correct pronunciation of their English students.

1. Do you have a master degree?
Yes _____ No _____
Which is your major in? _____
2. What subjects do you usually teach? _____
3. Have you ever received any special training on how to prepare yourself to teach and evaluate pronunciation?
Yes _____ No _____
Where? _____
4. In your opinion, which are the internal factors that affect the student's pronunciation proficiency in the sixth semester of Bachelor Degree in English Teaching major?
5. Which are the external factors that affect the students' oral performance and pronunciation proficiency in the sixth semester of Bachelor Degree in English Teaching major?

6. Do you emphasize on your students' oral performance (no matter what course you are teaching) in order to help them improve?
Yes _____ No _____
In what way? _____
7. Do you use different kinds of resources to evaluate pronunciation? _____
8. Do you have any special pattern or guide for preparing a pronunciation exam? _____
What is it? _____
9. Do you improve your knowledge through different sources constantly? _____
How? _____
10. Which of these phonetics and linguistics aspects do you consider more important when you evaluate and test student's pronunciation?
 - a. Stress _____
 - b. Intonation _____
 - c. Pronunciation _____
 - d. Rhythms _____
 - e. Pitch _____
 - f. Coherence _____
 - g. Comprehension _____
 - h. Listening _____
 - i. Vocabulary _____
 - j. Fluency _____Others _____

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR COLLECTING DATA ABOUT STUDENT'S EXPERIENCE DURING THE
THIRD YEAR OF BACHELOR DEGREE IN ENGLISH TEACHING

Objective: To find out the student's pronunciation necessities when learning English language.

1. What is the subject that you enjoyed the most along your studies at the university? _____
2. Why? _____
3. Do your teachers apply some skills that allow you to practice the pronunciation into the classroom?
Yes _____ No _____
4. If yes, which ones?
 - √ Pronunciation
 - √ Listening
 - √ Speaking
 - √ Writing
 - √ Reading
5. Do these activities accomplish their objective and help you to improve your pronunciation? _____
6. Do your teacher's pronunciation influence in a positive way in your performance in an oral exam?

7. Do you ask your teacher to pronounce a difficult word for you?
Yes _____ No _____
8. Are all the phonetic symbols difficult for you?
Yes _____ No _____ Why? _____
9. How do you use these symbols in order to improve your speaking? _____
10. What of these factors affect your oral communication?
 - √ The presence of strangers near around and observing.
 - √ People around talking passing by.
 - √ You don't have time to practice because of your work.
 - √ You avoid establishing communication with your classmates.
 - √ You consider yourself not able to get English pronunciation proficiency.
 - √ You don't feel confidence with yourself.
 - √ You get nervous easily because you rarely practice in the target language.
11. Do you think your teachers must include activities that make you improve your pronunciation?
Yes _____ No _____ Why? _____
12. In which subject do you consider that you learnt more about pronunciation?
a) _____ b) _____ c) _____ d) _____
13. Do you agree with teacher's methodology applying when he/ she correct you into a classroom?
Yes _____ No _____ I don't know _____
14. Do you consider that the study plan of Bachelor Degree has to include any other subjects that help the way you pronounce?
Yes _____ No _____ I don't know _____
15. In your opinion, which of the following subjects could help you get a better pronunciation?
 - √ English pronunciation II
 - √ Advanced English pronunciation
 - √ Advanced Intensive English III
 - √ Advanced linguistics
16. How often do you go to the laboratory to reinforce your speaking comprehension?
a) Twice a week _____ b) Once a week _____ c) Seldom _____ d) Never _____

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT
ORAL TEST**

Objective: To compare FLD's students' production of sounds that do not belong to Spanish language with an English native speaker.

Instruction: Read carefully the following list of words.

- | | |
|------------|-----------|
| 1- Think | 4- Sink |
| 2- Thank | 5- Sank |
| 3- Thick | 6- Sick |
| 1- Math | 4- Mass |
| 2- Faith | 5- Face |
| 3- Mouth | 6- Mouse |
| 1- Bath | 6- Bat |
| 2- Both | 7- Boat |
| 3- Booth | 8- Boot |
| 4- Faith | 9- Fate |
| 5- Ruth | 10- Root |
| 1- Then | 2- Zen |
| 1- Breathe | 4- Breeze |
| 2- Clothe | 5- Close |
| 3- Bathe | 6- Bays |
| 1- Share | 5- Chair |
| 2- Shoe | 6- Chew |
| 3- Sheep | 7- Cheap |
| 4- Shop | 8- Chop |

APPENDIX THREE: TABLE TO DETERMINE SAMPLE SIZE

TABLE FOR DETERMINING NEEDED SIZE *S* OF A RANDOMLY CHOSE N SAMPLE FROM A GIVEN FINITE POPULATION OF *N* CASES SUCH THAT THE SAMPLE PROPORTION *p* WILL BE WITHIN $\pm .05$ OF THE POPULATION PROPORTION *P* WITH A 95 PERCENT LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE¹

<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>S</i>
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	169	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	196	3000	341
80	66	420	201	3500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361
110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	100000	384

Note: *N* is population size; *S* is sample size.

Statistical Techniques and Analysis of Data/193.

1. Krejcie, R. V. and Morgan, D.W. Determining sample size for research activities, *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 1970, 30, 607-610.

APPENDIX FOUR

RAW DATA FROM STUDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

1) What is the subject that you enjoyed the most along your studies at the University?

1) Subject	Frecuency	%
English	25	29.41
Reading and Conversation	17	20.00
Didactics	11	12.94
Pronunciation	6	7.06
English composition	4	4.71
English grammar	4	4.71
Literature	4	4.71
Syntax	3	3.53
Linguistics	10	11.76
Teaching practice	1	1.18
Total	85	100.00

2) Why?

		Frecuency	%
A	Learn methodology	9	10.59
B	Like the teacher's methodology	17	20.00
C	Variety of topics	5	5.88
D	Clear explanations	1	1.18
E	It helps them to pronounce	3	3.53
F	We can practice different skills	4	4.71
G	Deep analysis of the language	4	4.71
H	To improve vocabulary	3	3.53
I	Learn structures	8	9.41
J	The teacher's funny	9	10.59
K	It was interesting	12	14.12
L	Practice speaking	2	2.35
M	Learn vocabulary	1	1.18
N	It is easy	4	4.71
P	We read a lot	3	3.53
	Total	85	100.00

3) Do your teachers apply activities that allow you to practice the pronunciation into the classroom?

	Frecuency	%
Yes	76	89.41
No	9	10.59
Total	85	100.00

4) Subjects

		Frecuency	%
PLSWR	Pronunciation, Listening, Speaking, Writing, Reading	35	41.18
PSR	Pronunciation, Speaking, Reading	10	11.76
S	Speaking	9	10.59
PSWR	Pronunciation, Speaking, Writing, Reading	2	2.35
SWR	Speaking, Writing, Reading	2	2.35
PLS	Pronunciation, Listening, Speaking	2	2.35
PLSR	Pronunciation, Listening, Speaking, Reading	1	1.18
PSW	Pronunciation, Speaking, Writing	1	1.18
PWR	Pronunciation, Writing, Reading	1	1.18
LSR	Listening, Speaking, Reading	1	1.18
LS	Listening, Speaking	1	1.18
SR	Speaking, Reading	3	3.53
PS	Pronunciation, Speaking	1	1.18
P	Pronunciation	1	1.18
L	Listening	1	1.18
R	Reading	3	3.53
LSWR	Listening, Speaking, Writing, Reading	6	7.06
PL	Pronunciation, Listening, Speaking	1	1.18
NA	No answer	4	4.71
Total		85	100.00

Activities

	Frecuency	%
Pronunciation	55	18.97
Listening	49	16.90
Speaking	71	24.48
Writing	47	16.21
Reading	64	22.07
None	4	1.38
Total	290	100.00

5) Do these activities accomplish their objective and help you to improve your pronunciation?

	Frecuency	%
Yes	64	75.29
No	13	15.29
No answer	2	2.35
More or less	2	2.35
Not always	2	2.35
Sometimes	2	2.35
Total	85	100.00

6) Do your teachers pronunciation influence your performance in an oral exam?

	Frecuency	%
Yes	59	69.41
No	15	17.65
Sometimes	7	8.24

7) Do you ask your teacher to pronounce a difficult word for you?

	Frecuency	%
Yes	67	78.82
No	16	18.82
No answer	1	1.18
Sometimes	1	1.18
Total	85	100.00
No answer	4	4.71
Total	85	100.00

8) Are all the phonetic symbols difficult for you?

	Frecuency	%
Yes	35	41.18
No	46	54.12
NA	4	4.71
Total	85	100.00

Why?**Yes**

	Frequency	%
Difficult to memorize	6	14.29
Lack of explanation about their pronunciation	4	9.52
Trouble to pronounce	10	13.33
Similar sounds	2	4.76
Confusing sounds	2	6.67
Not familiarly	1	2.38
They are strange	1	3.33
Extra effort	1	3.33
I do not care about them	1	3.33
No answer	14	33.33
Total	42	94.28

Why?**No**

	Frequency	%
Already learned and studied	19	44.19
I know them	4	9.30
I understand them	1	2.33
Easy to remember	1	2.33
Familiarly to them	1	2.33
I like them	1	2.33
It depends on practicing	1	2.33
No answer	11	25.58
Need to be memorized	4	9.30
Total	43	100.00

9) How do you use these symbols in order to improve your speaking?

	How?	Frequency	%
A	In a dictionary	16	26.23
B	Writing pronunciation with new words	6	9.84
C	Making association	4	6.56
D	Pronouncing the words	4	6.56
E	Learning new vocabulary	2	3.28
F	Practicing	2	3.28
G	I do not use them	2	3.28
H	I can not use them	1	1.64
I	I do not know them	1	1.64
J	I am not used to them	1	1.64
K	Words difficult to pronounce	1	1.64
L	No answer	21	34.43
Total		61	

10) What of these factors affect your oral communication?

		Frecuency	%
A	The presence of strangers near around and observing	28	20.44
B	People around talking passing by	25	18.25
C	You don't have time to practice because of your work	9	6.57
D	You avoid establishing communication with your classmates	7	5.11
E	You consider yourself not able to get English pronunciation proficiency	7	5.11
F	You don't feel confidence with yourself	14	10.22
G	You get nervous easily because you rarely practice in the target language	40	29.20
N	None of them	4	2.92
NA	No answer	2	1.46
AT	Any of them	1	0.73
Total		137	100.00

11) Do you think your teachers must include activities that make you improve your pronunciation?

	Frecuency	%
Yes	80	94.12
No	5	5.88
Total	85	100.00

Why?

		Frecuency	%
A	Practicing and improving	27	31.76
B	Important to help students	20	23.53
C	Proficiency	9	10.59
D	Fluency	6	7.06
E	English environment	4	4.71
F	None	15	17.65
G	Completely necessary	4	4.71
	Total	85	100.00

12) In which subject do you consider that you learnt more about pronunciation?

	Frecuency	%
Pronunciation	49	26.92
Reading and conversation	33	18.13
Linguistics	18	9.89
Phonology	7	3.85
Syntax	2	1.10
Didactics	7	3.85
Literature	6	3.30
English	31	17.03
Morphology	6	3.30
Grammar	14	7.69
Composition	6	3.30
Phonetics	3	1.65
Total	182	100.00

13) Do you agree with teacher's methodology applying when he/she correct you into a classroom?

	Frecuency	%
Yes	56	65.88
No	19	22.35
I do not know	10	11.76
Total	85	100.00

14) Do you consider that the study plan of Bachelor Degree has to include any other subjects that help the way you pronounce?

	Frecuency	%
Yes	71	83.53
No	8	9.41
I do not know	6	7.06
Total	85	100.00

15) In your opinion, which of the following subjects could help you to get a better pronunciation?

	Frecuency	%
English Pronunciation II	40	29.20
Advanced English Pronunciation	45	32.85
Advanced Intensive English	17	12.41
Advanced linguistics	34	24.82
None	1	0.73
Total	137	100.00

16) How often do you go to the laboratory to reinforce your speaking comprehension?

	Frecuency	%
Twice a week	0	0.00
Once a week	2	2.35
Seldom	19	22.35
Never	64	75.29
Total	85	100.00