

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



UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH:

INTERFERENCE CAUSED BY FIRST LANGUAGE ON THE PRONUNCIATION
OF ENGLISH VOICED / VOICELESS FRICATIVE AND AFFRICATE
CONSONANT SOUNDS /ð/, / /, /tʃ/, and /ʃ/: A LITERATURE REVIEW WORK
SUPPORTED WITH SOME FIELD DATA COLLECTED AMONG STUDENTS OF
THE B.A. IN ENGLISH EMPHASIS ON TEACHING OF THE FOREIGN
LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR,
SEMESTER II – 2011

IN ORDER TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF:

LICENCIATURA EN IDIOMA INGLES OPCION ENSEÑANZA

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TO GOD ALMIGHTY: I Truly Thank God for giving me the strength and dedication to complete this important stage on my life. May he be honored by this project.

TO MY MOTHER: For your love, guidance and help to reach every single goal along my life. Thank you for teaching me the value of life and encouraging me to continue looking forward to the future.

TO MY BROTHER; Roberto Carlos Lopez Rivas: For giving me the courage to continue with the process, even after the hard times we went through inside my family and thanks for your financial support granted through my career.

TO THE REST OF MY FAMILY: I would like to thank my loved ones, who have supported me throughout the entire process, both by keeping me harmonious and helping me putting pieces together. I will be grateful forever for your love.

TO MY FRIENDS: For their help, care and support. You represent a very important part in my life.

In addition, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor **MAT. Rhina Franco** for the continuous support of our research, for her patience, motivation, enthusiasm, and immense knowledge. Her guidance helped us in all the time of research and writing of this thesis.

Last but not least I thank my fellows **Patricia Cecibel Mancía García** and **Nataly Vanessa Umaña Mejía**, for the stimulating discussions, for the sleepless nights we were working together before deadlines, and for all the fun we have had in the last years. I could not have imagined having better peers for the research.

MARIA ROXANA LOPEZ RIVAS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TO MY DEAR GOD: For giving me the strength and knowledge to begin and end this journey, for all his mercy and support I will always be thankful.

TO MY FATHER, HERNAN UMAÑA: For his unconditional love and support, for giving me the chance to achieve my goals. I appreciate a lot that he always trusted me and encouraged me to never give up.

TO MY MOTHER NATALIA MEJIA DE UMAÑA: For giving me an exceptional help and the opportunity to be a professional, despite of all the financial difficulties that she faced, she has always given me her support and help.

TO MY BROTHER ROBERTO EFRAIN UMAÑA MEJÍA: For his trust and help. Thanks so much for giving your financial help and moral support without hesitating.

TO THE REST OF MY FAMILY: I would like to thank all of them for their love, support and understanding.

TO MY FRIENDS: For advising me and giving me the motivation to continue and reach my goals.

TO MY COWORKERS: For making this journey easy to handle, for their understanding and mutual support, thanks a lot. I greatly appreciate Patricia Mancía that you always keep a smile and a positive attitude, as well I appreciate and thank a lot Roxana Lopez for your commitment and willingness. Without you girl I would never have been able to finish this journey, thanks a lot for everything.

In addition I want to thank my husband Roberto Carlos Lopez Rivas, thank you so much for helping me in all this process, for your love, patience and understanding. I will always appreciate all the sacrifices that you have done for me.

NATALY VANESSA UMAÑA MEJIA

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TO GOD ALL MIGHTY: For all this work would not have been possible without his will.

TO MY PARENTS, CECIBEL DE MANCIA AND FRANCISCO MANCIA: I will never find enough words to express all my thankfulness toward you. I am who I am thanks to you. Thank you for your endless love and support.

TO MY SISTER: Despite the fact you are my little sister, you have been a great support to me. Thanks for staying by my side in the sleepless nights in this process.

TO MY FAMILY: Thank you all for standing by my side, for your contributions and for your encouragement words. You are a great part of my life.

TO MY CO-RESEARCHERS: A special thanks goes to Maria Roxana Lopez Rivas and Nataly Vanessa Umaña Mejia. Thank you for never surrender in the rough times and for all your effort to assemble this project. *WE DID IT!*

TO MY PROFESSORS: I would like to express my deepest appreciation to all those who provided me the possibility to complete this goal especially to the teachers of the Foreign Languages Department. I would particularly like to thank Miguel Carranza who gave me constructive comments and encouragement during my years of study.

Last but not least, a special gratitude I give to Ivan Enrique Alarcon, who motivated me to continue and not giving up in accomplishing this dream.

PATRICIA CECIBEL MANCIA GARCIA

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I. INTRODUCTION

The present undergraduate work is based on the interference caused by the mother tongue on the pronunciation of English voiced / voiceless fricative and affricate consonant sounds. Although the work has an emphasis on Literature Review, it is supported with a small field research carried out at the Foreign Languages Department (FLD) of The University of El Salvador among students in different years of studies of the BA in English: Emphasis on Teaching, during the second semester of the year 2011.

Speaking a second language is an advantage to personal and professional development. In over 70 countries English is one of the official or semi-official languages spoken, and it is used to communicate in all the continents either as a native language or foreign language. Because of that English is certainly one of the most studied languages in the world. When learning a foreign language, we all want to achieve the highest degree of language competence; however, many learners fail to attain this because they can face some difficulties. Among these difficulties we can find language transfer and interference.

The purpose of this study is to describe how mother tongue can interfere in second language pronunciation. Even though the mother tongue can interfere in different ways when learning a foreign or second language, this work concentrates on how first language interferes in the pronunciation of the target language especially in the pronunciation of fricative and affricate sounds /ð/, / /, /tʃ/, and /ʃ/. Therefore, a research in which these sounds are transferred from L1 when learning English as a foreign language was carried out based on the importance that reaching a high level of performance in a second or foreign language implies.

This work is divided in the following parts. First, there is the introduction, in which a general view of the research is presented. Then, the objectives that led this work can be found. The third part includes the justification explaining the reasons for its

development. In the fourth part there is the theoretical framework which is the central part of this work. This part describes ways how mother tongue can interfere when learning a foreign or second language, problems faced by learners and also a combination of what is explained by experts in their theories and what happens in the practice; to do this, data gathered among students of the Foreign Languages Department studying English is discussed in this part. In the research methodology, the steps in the development and the strategy for analyzing data are described. The instruments to gather the information were designed by the researchers, and the analysis of the data is included in this section of the work. Finally, there are the conclusions and recommendations reached by the researchers after having analyzed the data obtained.

II. OBJECTIVES

A. GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

- To carry out a literature review work supported with some field research based on the mother language interference in the pronunciation of the English fricative and affricate consonant sounds /ð/, / /, /tʃ/, and / ʃ / when learning English as a foreign language.

B. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- To describe how first language interferes in the pronunciation of voiced / voiceless English fricative and affricate consonant sounds.
- To identify common English pronunciation mistakes made by students of *Licenciatura en Idioma Inglés opción Enseñanza* at the Foreign Languages Department when pronouncing English voiced / voiceless fricative and affricate consonant sounds.
- To compare different experts' researches based on language interference in the pronunciation of fricative and affricate consonant sounds.

III. JUSTIFICATION

As undergraduate students of English teaching, researchers are conscious of the importance of having a standardized type of pronunciation when learning a foreign language so that communication interference can be prevented. The interest to do a research on how first language interferes on the pronunciation of foreign language consonant sounds rises on the need to make students aware of mother tongue influence in English pronunciation, how this can interfere with communication, and how they can overcome this problem if they face it at some point during the course of their studies.

The importance of the present work is to find out what experts say about the reasons for pronunciation mistakes on the pronunciation of the affricate and fricative sounds /ð/, / / /tʃ/, and / ʃ / when learning a foreign language to compare that with what actually happens in our classrooms to later give some recommendations on how this can be overcome. The main point here is to find out if what happens with learners of English in other environments happens here in our classrooms. Experiences lived by others can help us understand better what goes on in our classes.

For this bibliographical research different books and articles were consulted; also data collected from students in the Foreign Languages Department were used. There are some researches carried out in the Foreign Languages Department related to this topic; however, we consider important to find more information that can bring fresh information related to it. As stated before, some field research was done in order to make comparison between theory and practice. This makes this research relevant to be carried out.

Even though learners can have a hard time pronouncing certain sounds when learning English, we have concentrated mainly in the pronunciation of fricative and affricate sounds. These sounds are the voiced fricative /ð/, the voiceless fricatives

/ / and / ʃ /, and the voiceless affricate /tʃ/. As an example of this pronunciation problem the sound / / can be mentioned. It is spelled in conventional spelling as “th”. “Think” correct pronunciation is /θɪŋk/ and is commonly mispronounced as /sink/ or /tink/ and these mispronunciations occur when students replace the phonemes / / for /s/ or /t/ at the beginning of a word.

The present research intends to provide an insight of the most common transfer mistakes that students of the Foreign Languages Department make in the pronunciation of fricative and affricate English sounds. We expect both the students and teachers of the Foreign Languages Department benefit from this research by getting to know how language transfer and common transfer mistakes can prevent them from becoming proficient in the pronunciation of the second language.

**IV. INTERFERENCE CAUSED BY FIRST LANGUAGE ON THE
PRONUNCIATION OF ENGLISH VOICED / VOICELESS FRICATIVE AND
AFFRICATE CONSONANT SOUNDS /ð/, / ʃ/, /tʃ/, and /ʒ/: A LITERATURE
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EL SALVADOR, SEMESTER II – 2011**

There are many books and articles written by researchers about interference and transfer in second language acquisition. This bibliographical research is based on some previous works related to the topic. The thesis underlying this research is that first language influences on the pronunciation of foreign language fricative and affricate sounds. Here, we discuss the phenomenon of interference, the environment where this occurs and the most common errors identified within the collected information. It also includes a brief description of how these errors can turn into fossilized items.

A. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FIRST AND SECOND LANGUAGE

During the period of the 70's and the 80's various studies were conducted with first and second language learners showing that phonemes played a role in speaker's native categories. There are various theoretical positions or models about the relationship of first and second language. These models explained the functioning of L1 in L2 and how they affect each other. Some of the most famous theories of first language acquisition are Behaviorist, Nativist, and Functional approaches.

Brown (2000) defines the Behaviorist Approach as effective language behavior to be the production of correct responses to stimuli. This Approach focuses on de immediately perceptive aspects of linguistic behavior, the publicly observable responses, and the relationship or associations between those responses and events in the world surrounding them. It proposes that one learns to comprehend an utterance by responding appropriately to it and by being reinforced for that

response. This approach was highly questioned for its emphasis on empirical observation and the scientific method and for leaving genetic and interactionist domains untouched; however, it is still acknowledge as a first language acquisition theory.

The term nativist is derived from the fundamental assertion that language acquisition is innately determined; that we are born with a genetic capacity that predisposes us to a systematic perception of language around us, resulting in the construction of an internalized system of language (Brown, 2000). The most recent researches in the nativist tradition follow a line of inquiry through a genre of child language acquisition research which posits that all human beings are genetically equipped with abilities that enable them to acquire language. Eric Lenneber, Chomsky, Jean Berko, are contributors to the Nativist approaches. They have made important contributions to our understanding of the first language acquisition process such as freedom to explore the unseen, unobservable, underlying, abstract linguistic structures being developed in the child that the scientific method restricted; systematic description of the child's linguistic repertoire; and the construction of potential properties of Universal Grammar.

The Functional Approaches focus on the constructivism, social interaction, cognition and language, functions of language, and discourse. All these focus even more deeply into the essence of language. Two emphases emerged to research: Researches began to see that language was a manifestation of the cognitive and affective ability to deal with the world, with others, and with the self, and that the generative rules proposed under the nativistic framework were abstract, explicit, and logical, yet they dealt specifically with the forms of language and not with the deeper functional levels of meaning constructed from social interaction.

On the other hand, there is an integrated theory of Second Language Acquisition. The basis for structuring this theory are the result of the integration of a subset of categories and subcategories like cognitive variation, one's personality type, interference, the learning of discourse and communicative functions of language (Brown, 2000).

Something else to consider on this respect is that Spanish and English alphabets are similar. The Spanish alphabet has twenty nine letters while the English alphabet has only twenty six. Besides letters, languages have phonemes, the smallest units of sound employed to form meaningful contrasts between utterances. There are approximately twenty four consonant phonemes in English and eighteen consonant phonemes in Spanish. Blum-Kulka and Levenston cited by Sinha (2009), contend that all second language learners begin by assuming that for every word in L1 there is a single translation equivalent in L2. This leads learners to believe that as some words have an equivalent translation in L1-L2 the pronunciation of the words will be the same too. Therefore, the similarity of English and Spanish makes learners susceptible to interference. This research focuses on the voiceless fricative and affricate sounds which can be found both in English and Spanish.

B. PRONUNCIATION

In order to be able to speak a foreign language with a standard pronunciation, a person needs to take some features into account; that is, pronunciation, phonetics and phonology. According to a dictionary definition pronunciation is the way in which a word or language is pronounced or the way in which someone speaks a foreign language. Also, Phonetics is defined as the study of the sounds used in speech. Phonology focuses on the manner, place and voice of articulation.

Pronunciation deals with more than individual sounds. It involves word stress, intonation, mouth position and voicing. In order to produce a consonant sound, the air is partially or completely blocked as it moves through the mouth. English consonant sounds are classified into stop, fricative, affricate, nasal, liquid, and glottal. Spanish sounds are classified into fricatives, affricate, nasal, lateral, and aspirate. According to experts, many foreign language learners associate their native language sounds with the target language ones due to the similarities they find in both languages. For instance, the lingua-dental voiced fricative /ð/, the

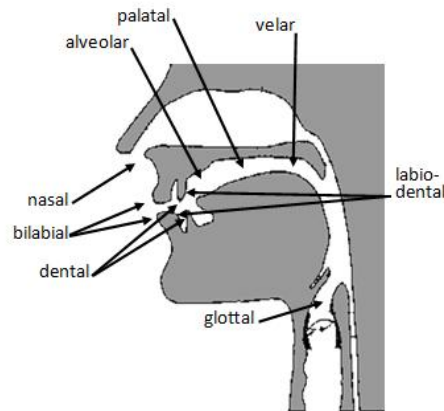
lingua-dental voiceless fricative /θ/, the lingua-palatal voiceless fricative /ç/, and the lingua-alveolar voiceless affricate /tʃ/ are English sounds that somehow contrast with the Spanish interdental fricative /ð/, alveo-palatal voiceless affricate /tʃ/ sounds. A fricative sound is produced by forcing the breath stream through a constriction formed by articulators in the vocal tract. An affricate sound is characterized as having both a fricative and a stop manner of production.

Sounds of languages called phonemes are represented using symbols. To represent phonemes of all languages that can be read by anyone learning a foreign or second language, the International Phonetic Association (1999) has created a phonetic alphabet. The International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is a set of symbols used for representing the sounds or phonemes of language in written form. These phonemes can be classified according to their manner of articulation, place of articulation and voice.

According to their manner of articulation, sounds are classified into stops, fricative, affricate, nasal, liquid and glide. Also, sounds can be classified according to their point of articulation into bilabial, labio-dental, lingua-dental, lingua-alveolar, lingua-palatal, lingua-velar, and glottal (figure 1). Voicing is a third feature; it refers to whether the vocal cords are vibrating during the production of a particular consonant. In this research we deal with the lingua-dental voiced fricative /ð/, the lingua-dental voiceless fricative /θ/, the lingua-palatal voiceless fricative /ç/, and the lingua-alveolar voiceless affricate /tʃ/.

These English sounds were chosen for this investigation because they have similar counterparts in Spanish and there are some learners that substitute them for the closest Spanish sound in certain environments. There are some sounds that are much alike to the Spanish ones at the time of pronouncing them. Based on what has been previously said, the lingua-dental voiced fricative /ð/, the lingua-dental

voiceless fricative / ʃ /, the lingua-palatal voiceless fricative / ʃ /, and the lingua-alveolar voiceless affricate /tʃ/ English sounds were compared to their Spanish counterparts in order to identify the influence of Spanish on these particular sounds.



To support what experts say, a small field research on first language interference on pronunciation was conducted. As part of the research students from the Foreign Languages Department were asked to read a list of words, some sentences and two paragraphs both in English and Spanish Containing the above mentioned sounds.

Just to mention an example, the students who were interviewed related the pronunciation of some words in their mother tongue, Spanish, with words that belong to the foreign language, English. In the interview, when students were asked to pronounce the words action, collection, distribution, information and vacation the phoneme / ʃ / was substituted by the Spanish phoneme /tʃ/ , which is present in the Spanish words *chaleco*, *cuchillo* and *leche*. This relationship is presented because both phonemes sound similar in Spanish and in English.

C. TRANSFER AND INTERFERENCE

Language acquisition is a very important aspect of human development. If language did not exist it would be almost impossible to communicate. During the first three years of their lives, individuals acquire their first language by listening to sounds and words and reproducing them in a natural way. As humans we can learn more than one language to communicate with others whether being a child or an adult. However, when learning a foreign language interference from one language to another can occur.

Foreign language learners appear to accumulate structural entities of the target language but demonstrate difficulty in organizing this knowledge into appropriate, coherent structures. There seems to be a significant gap between the accumulation and the organization of the knowledge. Derchet and Eliss say "If the structures of the two languages are distinctly different, then one could expect a relatively high frequency of errors to occur in L2, thus indicating an interference of L1 on L2." Dulay et al (1982) define interference as the automatic transfer due to habit of the surface structure of the first language onto the surface of the target language. Lott (1983) defines interference as 'errors in the learner's use of the foreign language that can be traced back to the mother tongue'. Ellis (1997) refers to interference as 'transfer', which he says is 'the influence that the learner's L1 exerts over the acquisition of an L2'.

The relationship between the two languages must then be considered. Albert and Opler (1978) claim that people show more lexical interference on similar items. So it may follow that languages with more similar structures (e.g. English and French) are more susceptible to mutual interference than languages with fewer similar features (e.g. English and Japanese).

The significance of transfer influences has long been an important and controversial topic. As the articles and books used for this research indicate, this

problem has had a long life among not only foreign language teachers and researchers but also among linguists interested in matters of language changes. The data obtained in the field research on fricative and affricate sounds pronunciation shows that transfer is an extremely important factor in foreign language learning. Thus, the focus of this research is on the data collected where researchers found out that mother tongue has a lot of influence on the foreign language that is being learned. For instance, in the pronunciation of the words cloth /kloʊ/, death /deɪt/, think /ɪŋk/, supervision /ˌsuːpərˈvɪʒən/, collection /kəˈlekʃən/, stitch /stɪtʃ/, information /ˌɪnfərˈmeɪʃən/, action /ˈækʃn/, and situation /ˌsɪtʃuˈeɪʃən/, the Spanish sounds /tʃ/ and /t/ tend to influence in the pronunciation of the English sounds /ʃ/ and /t/.

D. ERRORS AND MISTAKES

Human learning is fundamentally a process that involves the making of mistakes, misjudgments, miscalculations, and erroneous assumptions that form an important aspect of learning virtually any skill or acquiring information. Language learning in this sense is like any other human learning. While children are learning their first language, they make countless “mistakes,” which, from the point of view of adults, are grammatical and pronunciation mistakes. However many of these mistakes that children make are logical in the limited linguistic system within children, but, by carefully processing feedback from others, children slowly but surely learn to produce what is acceptable speech in their native language.

Foreign language learning is a process that is clearly not unlike first language; nevertheless, inevitably, learners will make mistakes in the process of learning. Researchers and teachers of second language have come to realize that the mistakes a person makes in this process of constructing a new system of language needed to be analyzed carefully, for them possibly to hold in them some of the keys to the understanding of the process of second language acquisition. As

Corder, (197:167) noted: “Learner’s errors are significant in (that) they provide to the researchers evidence of how language is learned or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learner is employing in the discovery of the language”.

Pronunciation is one of the most outstanding features of a person’s speech. Learning to pronounce the sounds of English in natural speech is a crucial part on the process of second language acquisition. However, many learners may have difficulty with particular sounds, sounds combination, putting sounds in particular positions or by transferring sounds from their mother tongue into the second language.

Being these one of the most difficult challenges that second language learners face and in order to analyze learner language in an appropriate perspective, it is crucial to make a distinction between mistakes and errors, basically two different phenomena; and it is really important for teachers and students to have a better understanding about the difference between errors and mistakes, so they can be appropriately corrected. In general terms ‘Errors’ and ‘Mistakes’ are defined as “A wrong action attributable to bad judgment, or ignorance, or inattention” (The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language). However, there are experts’ explanations to this respect.

Many authors use these words interchangeably, which can be right for certain situations, but some would deem a particular word as more appropriate than the other. This is a general definition. However, Ellis (1997) raises the need to distinguish between errors and mistakes and makes an important distinction between the two. He says that errors reflect gaps in the learner’s knowledge; they occur because the learner does not know what is correct. Mistakes reflect occasional lapses in performance; they occur because, in a particular instance, the learner is unable to perform what he or she knows. Basically a mistake refers to a performance error that is either a random guess or a “slip”, in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly. All people make mistakes, in both native and

second language; mistakes must be carefully distinguished from errors of a second language learner.

While, according to James (1998), mistakes can be self-corrected if attention is called to them and pointed out to the speaker. Therefore, if no self-correction occurs, we are still left with no means to identify errors vs. mistakes. So, we can turn to frequency of deviant form as a criterion. However, an error cannot be self-corrected. Like for instance, sometimes if, on one or two occasions, an English learner pronounces the word CLOTH as: /klɔd/ but on other occasion it's been pronounced as: /klɔt/, it is difficult to determine whether the pronunciation of Cloth is a mistake or error. Therefore, further examination needs to be done and reveals such utterances as /klɔt/ instead of klɔ to determine if that can be corrected or no, so it can be seen as an error or mistake based on James definition of the two terms.

Errors and mistakes as a result of the combination of learners' previous knowledge with the new one being taught by the teacher is well-known as transfer. It appears that as in any teaching process, errors and/or mistakes on the learners' part arise as a problematic situation that needed to be studied. In fact, the research conducted provides evidence relevant to a number of issues in second language phonology.

E. ENVIRONMENT

The second language learning environment encompasses everything that language learner hears and observes in the new language. Regardless of the learning environment, the learner's goal is mastery of the target language. The learner begins the task of learning a second language from point zero (or close to it) and, through the continuous accumulation of the mastered entities of the target language, eventually amasses them in quantities sufficient to constitute a particular

level of proficiency (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982 and Ellis, 1984). Therefore, it is very hard for some people to learn the second language pronunciation as it has to be done.

We are surrounded by the Spanish language, which is our mother tongue, since the moment we are born. Everybody around us speaks Spanish as well. Since the very moment that we go to school classes are taught in our mother tongue. For instance, in the conducted field research to support this work, fourteen students from the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador were interviewed. Each student filled in a profile in which information about their English learning background was asked. The majority of students who were interviewed had not had any influence of English as a second language in the past (see Annex 2).

In El Salvador, English is not our second language and it is not mandatory to be taught in schools. As a matter of fact, the acquisition of an accurate pronunciation through the time becomes a hard task to achieve for learners of English not only at the University of El Salvador, but also in Private Universities where the English language is also taught. Therefore, pronunciation is usually influenced by the mother tongue and the Spanish environment around students.

Our brain processes the information in Spanish and there is a kind of non-language blocking device as Krashen (1981) mentioned on his input hypothesis, which posits that a learner-internal 'filter' is all that is involved in preventing the L2 input from getting into the otherwise available language. Chomsky (1980) as well pointed out that there is a Structure-Dependency that the totality of all native L1 ambient inputs is inefficient to allow the structuring of feasible linguistic rules: the inputs simply run counter to any possible logical-formation of linguistic configurations. However, contrary to what Chomsky affirms, in the small research conducted we found out that not all of the students failed to pronounce the fricative and affricate sounds that they were asked to pronounce.

F. FOSSILIZATION

As part of the learning process, fossilization is a consequence of errors and mistakes. Due to the inconvenience that fossilization represents when learning a foreign language, for instance English, a considerable number of researchers have focused on investigating the fossilization of specific linguistic features. One of the researchers that investigated about fossilization was Selinker (1972), who points out that “fossilizable linguistic phenomena are linguistic items, rules, and subsystems which speakers of a particular native language will tend to keep in their interlanguage, relative to a particular target language, no matter what the age of the learner or amount of explanation or instruction he receives in the target language”.

This phenomenon happens as part of the learning process and might affect some learners. Learning a new language implies studying new grammatical and phonetic rules which in many occasions contrast with those of the target language. Our brain inevitably resorts to the native language and at some point sounds, vocabulary and structure of L1 are used as if they were part of the L2. The problem is that this can stay true for a long time without the learner noticing it and then fossilization happens to any or all of the above mentioned.

We also found that not only Selinker (1972) investigated about fossilization, but also Han's (2009) did, and both researchers gave as a possible solution for this inconvenience to provide feedback in order to avoid students master the pronunciation errors and that these ones later on get fossilized. We strongly agree with Selinker and Han's, because we believe that these mistakes can be corrected in class with the help of the teacher, but it is also important for students to realize about their mistakes and correct them in order to follow their process of learning the language in a good way. This correction will help students to acquire a better English pronunciation.

G. COMPARING THEORY–PRACTICE FINDINGS OF MOTHER TONGUE INFLUENCE IN THE PRONUNCIATION OF FRICATIVE AND AFFRICATE SOUNDS

As it was mentioned at the beginning of this work, to support the bibliographical research a small field research was also carried out, it was to find out how First language interferers on the pronunciation of foreign language fricative and affricate consonant sounds. We found that even though the interviewees that participated in the project at the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador had gone through more than three years in their studies, they still showed problems with the pronunciation of the sounds under study.

Fourteen students were interviewed as part of the investigation process, and they were asked to read ten words in English and Spanish in isolation; ten sentences in English and Spanish as well as two paragraphs one in English and the other in Spanish (see annex 1). Even when these students have gone through certain process of exposure to the foreign language, it is still difficult for them to overcome this fossil because their environment is surrounded by the native language and it is affecting their foreign language pronunciation.

In the test, participants were asked to read the following English words: *this, beach, jet, connection, think, distribution, selfish, conclusion, job, action, stitch, profession, cloth, imitation and blueberry*. Also, they were asked to read the Spanish words *ficha, vanidad, dibujar, nieve, evolución, bueno, chaleco, leche, atención, llegar, maravilloso, televisión, Clotilde, dado, mayor*. In the English words the sounds were the following: /t/, /d/, /ð/, / /, /b/, /v/, / ʃ /, /tʃ/, /s/, /j/, and /dʒ/. The Spanish sounds were /t/, /d/, /b/, /v/, /f/, /s/, / ʃ /.

When reading the words *cloth* /kloʊ / and *death*/deθ /, both containing the fricative sound /θ / we found that six students had problems when pronouncing these words and four students failed pronouncing the word *think* /ɪŋk/. Students tended to

pronounce the consonants *TH* as /t/ or /d/; this may happen because even though these phonemes are part of the Spanish phonetic alphabet, the letter h in Spanish doesn't have any sound at all in certain environments. They adapted the pronunciation of the words to their Spanish peers, and they came with the sound with /t/ and /d/.

The sounds were compared by using words with the same combination of phonemes in Spanish and English. When pronouncing the English word *this*, participants tended to pronounce "th" like in the Spanish word *dibujar*. They did not differentiate the sound /ð/, from the sound /d/. Participants did not realize of the mother tongue sounds transfer at the time of pronouncing the English words. Transfer happens naturally when learners have not become fully proficient yet, but they are approximating the target language. However they still preserve some features of their first language (or L1).

When listening to the audio aid, it could be noticed that the pronunciation and use of the sounds in English and Spanish was barely identified by the English learners. Students are not aware of the association they made when saying the words. Based on the purpose of this test, the student's pronunciation of English and Spanish were compared and the most common transfer mistakes found were: most of the words that end in 'tion', such as *distribution, collection and connection*, which have a similar ending and pronunciation on the Spanish words *chaleco, leche and chorro*. We could also find the "th" sound in words like *teeth* pronounced without the -th sounds like 'tiit' or *this* that is pronounced more like "dis", as the phoneme /d/ that is presented in the Spanish words *dibujar*. Also, words that have a vowel sound like in the cases of *agency or vacation* which Spanish speakers tend to pronounce them as the Spanish words *vacación* and *agencia* (due to the similitude in the spelling the transfer is automatically made).

The relationship between first and second language, pronunciation, transfer and interference, errors and mistakes, environment, and fossilization are considered important by researchers and the awareness of these is a helpful tool for the

accurate production of foreign language sounds. Many are the authors involved in the second language research as well as different opinions and findings; however, most of them conclude that the main barrier for learner's native like pronunciation is their mother tongue since they are surrounded by it.

Spanish, which is our first language, tends to have an influence on the second language learning process. We strongly agree with the researchers based on the findings from the small research we carried out. The results indicate that students' pronunciation is affected by some Spanish sounds; such is the case of the affricate /tʃ/ and fricative /ʃ/ in certain environments. As a result, interference mistakes and errors are committed. If these ones are not handled in the most appropriate way in order to improve the students' performance on their pronunciation, this can open the door to fossilization.

V. METHODOLOGY

The present research is a bibliographical research supported with some field research to collect the necessary information related to the interference of first language (L1) on the pronunciation of foreign language (L2) voiced and voiceless fricative sounds. The bibliographical research and the field research were combined. The two activities were paralleled and they are explained one after the other.

To carry out the bibliographical research we followed the six steps proposed by Bella Burgos et al in their thesis "Correcting Common Oral Learners Mistakes Focused on Grammar (2009). The first step was to select the topic, the second step was to search for the literature, the third step was to develop the argument. In this step the facts to support the topic were organized in logical order. The fourth step was to survey the literature. The fifth step was to critique the literature and the sixth step was to write a review when all the information was ready.

The first step was to select a topic. It was relevant to think about a suitable interest to be investigated. It had to present a daily problem that required attention to know more about with the purpose to benefit readers. Therefore, the topic selected was chosen among a variety of topics. It was narrowed and we decided to focus the research on the interference of first language (L1) causes on the pronunciation of foreign language (L2) voiced and voiceless fricative and affricate consonant sounds.

The second step was to search for the literature. Here, it was necessary to look for different books, articles, and web sites that contained information related to the topic under research. There was a wide selection of literature. To discriminate the information, reading techniques such as skimming and scanning were used. The importance of the contents was arranged through flash cards and notes to mark the important points to take into account in the investigation.

The third step was to develop the argument. In this step the facts to support the topic were organized in a logical order. Having the arguments, they were evaluated

until the most relevant ones were chosen to help us in our investigation. They worked as evidence of the effective source to be used for the investigation and to support our research.

The fourth step was to survey the literature. Here the outline was prepared to start shaping the work. To elaborate the outline we followed some steps. In the first one the data was assembled to have the information according to its importance. The second step was to synthesize the information to present the most relevant. Finally in the third step the data collected was analyzed to study the logical connection of the information gathered.

The fifth step was to criticize the literature. At this point the literature had to be related with the topic under investigation and see what information was the best one to be included in our research. Besides that, it had to present additional entries to support the existing theories with the purpose of solving the research problem.

The sixth step was to write the review. When all the information was ready, it was possible to start writing the report. Through constant revision, auditing and editing the paper had to be refined until having the final report. Following all this steps to review the literature helped us to present a well based investigation easy to understand for readers.

It is very important to mention that the bibliographical information that was found included articles written in the 70's, 80's and 90's, and the most recent one was written by Sinha in 2009. All these articles include very important information that helped us better understand the relationship between first and second language and how interference and transfer occur. Other important researches that helped and made us understand the importance of the environment on the English learning process were the ones conducted by Dulay, Burt & Krashen in 1982 and Ellis in 1984.

Information found based on an investigation carried out by Ellis (1997) was of great interest and provided more details about the acquisition of second language and what the consequences that are usually presented during the learning process are.

This investigation also provided information about errors and mistakes that a non-native speaker makes when learning a foreign language. The last but not least important factor that was taken into account was fossilization and it was of great help to find articles and books such as the one written by Selinker (1979) and Han's(2009) which provided a lot of details about it.

Finding all this information was very helpful to the research, however, in order to support and compare the gotten bibliographical information with a real setting, we decided to conduct a small field research. The purpose was to find out if learners in an environment somehow different from the one described in the sources consulted, show the same interference problems when pronouncing L2 fricative and affricate consonant sounds.

To find the necessary information for this part of the research we decided to take students from the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador as research sample. Fourteen students studying the major English Teaching at the Foreign Languages Department were chosen to participate on this investigation; all of them were chosen randomly. The students were from different levels of study, gender and age (more details about them can be found the data presented (See Annex 2).

The number of fourteen participants was chosen without any statistical instrument because this was just used to have some points of comparison between what is found in books and what happens in our classrooms. Another reason for choosing this number of students as sample was because the semester was about to finish and most of the students were taking their final tests. The students were interviewed and the data was recorded. The data collected was analyzed by listening carefully to each recorded tape, to find out what were the fricative and affricate sounds that were influenced by the mother tongue pronunciation.

It was very important to carry out this field research to find out if the results would be the same ones as the ones found in the literature consulted. To carry out this

field research it was necessary to follow up the steps suggested by Yvonne N. Bui in her book *How to Write a Master's Thesis*.

On the first step, the population that was going to participate on the study was selected. The second step was to present the sample. The third step was to select the research strategy to see which was the most appropriate one related with the purpose of our research. The fourth step was to decide the data collection techniques to analyze and criticize the data gathered. After collecting the data, the fifth step was to analyze and present the results with an explanation of the limitations that were presented during the investigation.

A. Population

There were a total number of 2124 students enrolled at the Foreign Language Department. From all of these students, 1064 were studying the major in English Teaching. The fourteen participants that were chosen to be interviewed were students from this major. All of them were chosen randomly for the reasons mentioned above. The population taken was at different levels that included Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced English, studying Composition, Reading and Writing, Grammar; Literature, Didactics, and Linguistics. At this point all participants had studied at least one or more of the mentioned subjects. Their ages ranged between seventeen and twenty two years old when they started to study their major at UES. All of them have had Salvadorian instructors and were Spanish speakers. These students were chosen to be interviewed and recorded in order to collect the necessary data needed to develop this part of the investigation.

B. Sample

The sample of the students of the major in English teaching from the Foreign Languages Department taken for the small field research was the following:

Academic year	Female	Male
First year	0	1
Second year	3	1
Third year	2	2
Fourth year	2	1
Fifth year	2	0
Total	9	5

The fourteen students of English, studying for the English teaching major at the University of El Salvador, San Salvador, were chosen randomly as sample for this study. The students were taking English classes. That is, all of them had four hours of English instruction a week, but they had different instructors. Students came from different parts of the country. The students met the following criteria: (1) they were students from the University of El Salvador studying at The Foreign Language Department, (2) they had passed Basic English, and (3) their native language was Spanish.

C. The research strategy

To carry out the small field research, some investigations conducted by authors such as Selinker (1972), Baljit, B.(1999), Cheng-ling (2009) and some others were taken into account. They made a very important input related to the interference of first language in the pronunciation of second language. It aimed was at discovering

if the native language has an important impact in the pronunciation of fricative and affricate English phonemes.

Also other authors who were chosen for this bibliographical study were Baljit Bhela, Cheng-ling Alice Cheng, Ellis, Avanika Sinha, Galasso, Han and Odlin. These authors were chosen because the studies they made years before have valuable content to help with this investigation. All of the studies that were conducted by these researchers aimed at analyzing and identifying the influence of mother tongue in second language learning. These studies had an outstanding contribution on how to identify and deal with this phenomenon during the process of learning-teaching English. For this reason it was a great help for the researchers to gather all the information about the researches made by them to sustain the project.

Finding all this bibliographical information was a great help to follow up a research among students of the Foreign Languages Department.

D. Data collection techniques

The data collection technique used to carry out the research was an interview in which each student was asked to read words in isolation, statements and a paragraph. These were in English and Spanish. In addition, the data was recorded. In order to collect the information that supported the proposal of the research an instrument was designed.

The instrument consisted on a list of ten words in Spanish and ten in English, a set of ten statements also in languages, and two paragraphs, one in English and the other in Spanish (See Annex 1). The words that were used are very common in both languages and contained the fricative and affricate consonant sounds surrounded by different environments within the sample text used for the study.

This interview guide helped us analyze the pronunciation of fricative and affricate sounds. The sounds were the lingua-dental voiced fricative /ð/, the lingua-dental

voiceless fricative / /, the lingua-palatal voiceless fricative / ʃ /, and the lingua-alveolar voiceless affricate /tʃ/. The aim of using this instrument in the research was to record every interviewed to later on analyzed the data collected.

E. Methodological Process

After collecting the required information, the data was organized by putting the recordings in order, gathering categories and patterns by dividing words into consonant and vowel sounds and searching for alternate explanation of the data, in other words, to summarize the data. An interview data matrix was elaborated to accomplish that.

The interviews were recorded at the Foreign Languages Department Building, and the researchers analyzed them to determine the consonant sounds and the vowel sounds that were pronounced as they would sound in Spanish by each respondent. The data was transcribed by using broad transcription form Phonetics: Sounds of American English and Fonética: Los sonidos del Español, programs that belong to the University of Iowa, which follows the 1996 version of the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet).

F. Limitations

The principal limitations were that all of the students had a different schedule and were taking different courses. Unfortunately it was not possible to have all of them in the same room to pass the instrument under the same condition. To interview them it was necessary to do some of the interviews in the aisles out of the classrooms of the Foreign Language Department Building since the classrooms were not available for that purpose.

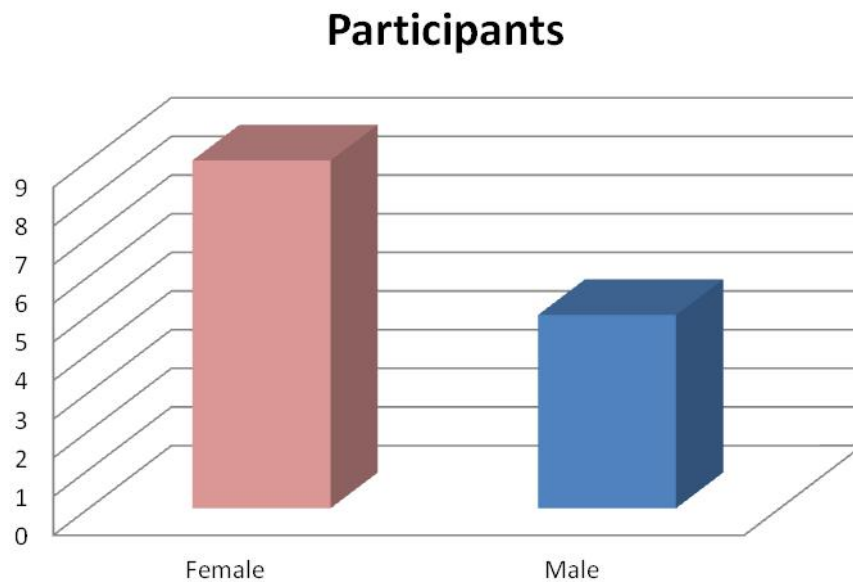
All of the activities mentioned above took place from October 24th to November 3rd of the year 2011. These activities were programmed in a timetable. The five

phases developed were 1) Review of related literature; 2) Design research project profile; 3) Pilot instruments; 4) Gathering and analyzing of data and 5) Report of the result obtained.

VI. FIELD RESEARCH DATA ANALYSIS

An oral test was applied to a small sample of students from the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador. They were asked to read words, sentences and a paragraph with fricative and affricate sounds. This test was administered to fourteen students from different academic years from the English teaching major.

The following analysis is based on the information gathered through the instrument: an oral test administered to students from different academic levels of the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador.



All the data were analyzed in terms of mispronunciation and transfer. Researchers listened to the recordings and identified the most common phonological mistakes made by each student. The table below shows the words from the test that respondents failed to pronounce correctly.

Respondents number	Word	IPA transcription	Respondent phonetic transcription
All	Category	/kætəgəri/	/'ka-tə-gōr-ē/ (Stress)
12	Agency	/'eɪ-dʒən-si/	/'a-dʒən-si/ or /a-jən-si/
9	Completeness	/kəm'pli:t.nəs/	/kəm'plət nəs/
8	Supervision	/,su:pər'vɪʒən/	/,su:pər'vɪʃən/
8	Distribution	/'dɪs-trə'bju:ʃən/	/'dɪstr 'butʃən/
7	Vacation	/veɪ'keɪ-ʃən/	/veɪ'keɪ-tʃən/ or /va'keɪ-tən/
7	Beach	/bitʃ/	/bɪʃ/
6	Cloth	/klɒθ/	/klɒd/ - /klɒt/
6	Death	/deθ/	/ded/
6	Connection	/kə'nek-ʃən/	/kə'nek-tʃən/
6	Diagrams	/'daɪ-ə-græms/	/dɪ-a-græms/
6	Much	/mʌtʃ/	/mʌʃ/, /matʃ/ or /majʃ/
5	Brushes	/brʌʃɪs/	/brʌtʃɪs/

5	This	/ðɪs/	/dɪs/
5	Follow up	/'fɒl·oʊ·ʌp/	/fo·loʊʌp/
4	Find out	/faɪnd, aʊt/	/find, aʊt/
4	Think	/θɪŋk/	/dɪŋk/ or /tɪŋk/
4	Lamb	/læm/	/lam/ or /lem/
3	Collection	/kə'lek·ʃən/	/ko'lek·tʃən/
3	Stitch	/stɪtʃ/	/es·tɪʃ/
3	Popular	/'pɒp·jə·lər/	/'pop·jə·lər/
3	Information	/,ɪn·fər'meɪ·ʃən/	/,ɪn·fər'meɪ·tʃən/ or /,ɪnfər'ma·tʃən/
3	Page	/peɪdʒ/	/peɪʃ/
2	Action	/'æk·ʃən/	/'ak·tʃən/
2	Situation	/,sɪtʃ·u·eɪ·ʃən/	/,sɪtʃ·u·eɪ·tʃən/

Researchers focused their attention on the consonant phonemes /ʃ/, /tʃ/, /ð/, and / / after listening to the recordings in order to highlight the mother tongue, in this case Spanish, interference in the pronunciation of a second language.

In the instrument given to participants, there were many words which included the English phoneme /ʃ/; in table 1 the most common mispronounced words and the number of students who failed to pronounce them can be observed. The pronunciation of this English phoneme was in most cases associated with the Spanish phoneme /tʃ/ that can be found in words such as *chaleco*, *leche* or *cuchillo*.

Due to the similarity of the phoneme /ʃ/ in Spanish, a transfer mistake occurred when students pronounced the English words with the closest sound they knew, being this /tʃ/.

TABLE 1

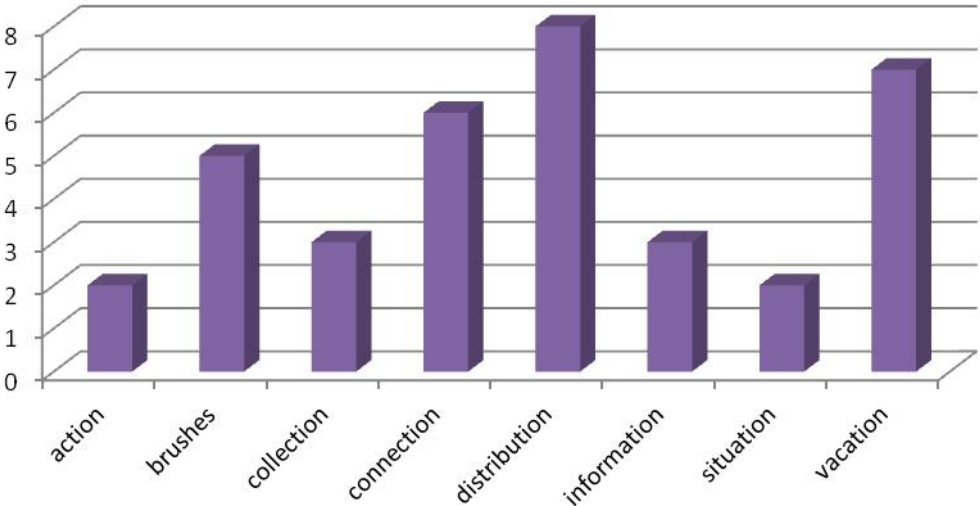
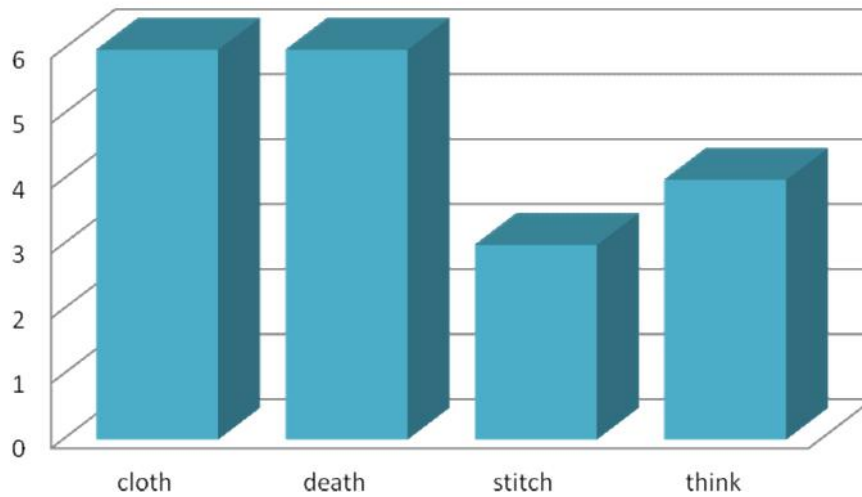


Table 2 shows the number of the respondents that mispronounced the English phoneme /θ/ in certain words, such as *cloth, death, stitch and think*. Furthermore, it can be seen as well that most of the observed errors in pronouncing the sound are attributed to native language influence, considering that the voiceless dental fricative /θ/ never occurs in Spanish sounds. Therefore, it is difficult for the respondents to pronounce it and tend to transfer from the mother tongue. This phoneme was replaced by the Spanish sound /d/. Therefore, *cloth, death think* and *stitch* are pronounce as in *dedo, disco and dado*, on the table you can see how many students made this mistake.

Table 2



The main subject of this bibliographical research has been to review the role or functioning that mother tongue plays on second language acquisition and what its effects are on the phonological processes. After reviewing the preview studies is that learners used some pronunciation rules from their mother tongue into their English speech creating innovative pronunciations for English sounds not found in the speaker's first language. Subsequently, the learners have also produced inappropriate L2 responses, indicating an interference of L1 on L2. Cross cultural studies (Han's, 2009) also showed that the phenomenon of transfer happens as part of the acquisition process and might affect some students, even though we are learning a new language and studying new grammatical and phonetics rules we still keep the native language content and rules in our brains.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

After gathering and analyzing the data obtained through the instrument given to the students and the reading made by the researchers, the conclusions are the following:

1. According to the oral test analysis, the most common mispronunciations made by the students are with the fricative and affricate consonant phonemes /ʃ/, /tʃ/, /ð/, / /, where most of them had problems pronouncing them at the end of the words such as collection, cloth, and supervision among others.
2. Mother tongue sounds influence at the time of producing a similar sound in both languages. We can affirm this based on what we found in the small research data analysis.
3. Phonemes are considered the smallest unit of a language and when these are not mastered the result is poor pronunciation which affects students' oral performance.
4. Students mispronounce more words when reading sentences and paragraphs fluently than in isolation. Albert and Obler (1978) support this conclusion with a similar investigation. They found that languages with more similar structures (e.g. English and French) are more susceptible to mutual interference than languages with fewer similar features (e.g. English and Japanese). In our case the words that were chosen to make this research were a lot similar in both languages (e.g. information, action, conclusion, etc).
5. It has been clearly indicated in this study that second language learners have adopted their L1 structures and phonemes to help themselves in their L2 production. These learners will not attain mastery of the target language as long as the process of transfer equivalence is in place.

6. Comparing the bibliographical information and the results from our small field research, we conclude that mother tongue affects students' pronunciation of fricative and affricate foreign language sounds in certain environments.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers give the following recommendations based on the results of the combination of the bibliographical-field research carried out:

1. It is necessary to emphasize the standard pronunciation in English of the phonemes here presented by making students aware of them starting in the Basic and Intermediate English courses.
2. Considering that students at the Foreign Language Department are not immersed in an English speaking context, teachers should encourage them to frequently practice in the English Laboratory by recording and listening to themselves and paying attention to the standard pronunciation.
3. Students can be exposed to considerable and meaningful learning and stimulated to actively practice oral skills in order to improve their pronunciation.
4. Errors and mistakes should be monitored on daily basis to improve students' pronunciation. Pertinent feedback should be provided individually and in real-time and should focus on those aspects of pronunciation that need to be improved.
5. The pronunciation subject should start to be taught on the first year of classes and continue on the next two semesters to help students to improve their pronunciation and avoid future fossilization.
6. Even though this study had to do specifically with fricative and affricate sounds, it would be necessary to find information related to other sounds that can cause pronunciation problems to learners and do something about them so that students can perform better in the foreign or second language being learned.

7. Students should be taught early in their studies how to read the phonetic alphabet so that they can make a better use of the dictionary in terms of pronunciation.

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- PHONETICS: The sound of American English
<http://www.uiowa.edu/~acadtech/phonetics/english/frameset.html>
- <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>
- <http://www.macmillan.com/>
- <http://www.merriam-webster.com/>
- <http://scholar.google.com/>

X. ANNEXES

A. ANNEX 1

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

Instructions: In the following exercises you are asked to read and pronounce some English and Spanish words and sentences.

I. Read the following words

1. THIS
2. BEACH
3. JET
4. CONNECTION
5. THINK
6. DISTRIBUTION
7. SELFISH
8. CONCLUSION
9. JOB
10. ACTION
11. STITCH
12. PROFESSION
13. CLOTH
14. IMITATION
15. BLUEBERRY

II. Read the following sentences

1. Tommy's favorite food is fish.
2. Younger children need supervision.
3. Mary has a little lamb.
4. Chad saved money in his piggy bank and now he is rich.
5. My mother gave me a jam sandwich.
6. Nikos is working in a collection agency.
7. Jennifer's death was never resolved.
8. My sister is going on vacation next week.
9. Olivia brushes her teeth before she goes to bed
10. I stayed at my friend's house yesterday.

III. Read the following paragraph out loud

Types of Newspapers in India

Newspapers in India are classified into two categories according to the amount and completeness of information in them. Newspapers in the first category have more information and truth. Those in the second category do not have much information and sometimes they hide the truth. Newspapers in the first category have news collected from different parts of the country and also from different countries. Important news goes on the first page with big headlines, photographs from different angles, and complete information. For example, in 1989-90, the Indian Prime Minister, Rajive Gandhi, was killed by a terrorist using a bomb leaving a lot of ash and terror in the city. This newspaper investigated the situation and gave information that helped the CBI to get more support. They also showed diagrams of the area which helped the reader understand what happened. Unlike newspaper in the first category, newspapers in the second category do not give as much information. They do not have international news, sports, or business news and they do not have classified ads. Also, the news they give is not complete. For example, the newspaper Hindi gave news on the death of the prime minister, but the news was not complete. The newspaper didn't investigate the terrorist group or try to find out why this happened. Also, it did not show any pictures from the attack or give any news the next day. It just gave the news when it happened, but it didn't follow up. Therefore, newspapers in the first group are more popular than those in the second group.

1. Repita las siguientes palabras

1. FICHA
2. VANIDAD
3. DIBUJAR
4. NIEVE
5. EVOLUCION
6. BUENO
7. CHALECO
8. LECHE
9. ATENCION
10. LLEGAR
11. MARAVILLOSO
12. TELEVISION
13. CLOTILDE
14. DADO
15. MAYOR

2. Lea las siguientes oraciones

1. No pongas el vaso sobre el mueble
2. El cuchillo se coloca a la derecha del plato
3. Por la noche paseo por la ciudad
4. Es muy difícil tomar la decisión correcta
5. El camello cruza el desierto
6. En el rio suele haber truchas
7. Los esclavos se compraban y vendían
8. Mira la forma que tiene esa nube
9. Vimos una estrella fugaz
10. Los peces tienen escamas en el cuerpo

3. Lea el siguiente párrafo en voz alta

DENGUE

Las autoridades sanitarias y la población de América, Asia, Europa, África y Oceanía, están siendo testigos de la presentación de brotes ya esporádicos o frecuentes de esta enfermedad y por consiguiente de la presencia de su vector, el mosquito **Aedes aegypti**, en especial en áreas tropicales y subtropicales. Hoy en día ambos, la enfermedad y su vector, son verdaderos protagonistas mundiales debido a su cada vez mayor presencia como consecuencia de la grave ola invernal que afecta al planeta y que según los expertos cada vez será mayor como consecuencia del Calentamiento Global, el Cambio Climático y al irresponsable manejo que el hombre le está dando a la tierra, al medio ambiente y en general a la naturaleza. Uno de los mayores fenómenos naturales, responsable de esta situación, es el conocido como **La Niña** que se verifica en el Océano Pacífico, la causa de semejante trastorno climático global reside en la interacción entre el mar y la atmósfera al este de Australia. Se caracteriza por frecuentes, prolongadas y fuertes lluvias que pueden durar por períodos entre cinco a seis meses que producen masivas inundaciones en zonas agrícolas, ganaderas, planicies y altiplanicies y al bajar los niveles del agua van a quedar grandes lagunas, zonas fangosas y gran cantidad de aguas estancadas con descomposición de material vegetal y cadáveres de animales ahogados.

B. ANNEX 2

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

RESEARCHERS:

MARIA ROXANA LOPEZ RIVAS

PATRICIA CECIBEL MANCIA GARCIA

NATALY VANESSA UMANA

Objective: The purpose of this instrument is to collect information about the similarities and differences of English and Spanish pronunciation for the graduation project of a group of students of the Foreign Language Department.

MAJOR: _____

ACADEMIC LEVEL: _____

YEAR: _____

AGE: _____

GENDER: F _____

M _____

Did you take an English course before studying English as a major? YES _____ NO _____

If your answer is YES: How long and where did you study?

Have you taken any pronunciation classes? YES _____ NO _____

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION TO OUR RESEARCH