SOME ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION PROBLEMS WITH THE VOWEL SOUNDS /I/,/U/ AND /ə/ AT AN ADVANCED LEVEL AND SOME STRATEGIES TO SOLVE THEM

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Deysi Yaneth Calpa Guancha

Ingrid Lorena Moncayo Oquendo

School of Human Sciences

Department of Linguistic and Languages

English and French Program

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Deysi Yaneth Calpa Guancha

Ingrid Lorena Moncayo Oquendo

ADVISOR

Miguel Hernández Pantoja

School of Human Sciences

Department of Linguistic and Languages

English and French Program

University of Nariño

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ABSTRACT

This research was aimed at finding some English pronunciation problems that students of ninth semester of the English and Spanish program at the university of Nariño were having ,when they were faced with the pronunciation of the English vowels /I/,/U/ and /ə/.

To find out the frequency of the mispronunciation of the above-mentioned vowels ,it was necessarytoapply a pre-test which consisted a dialogue.To improve pronunciation of the vowels object of this study , it was necessary to apply different pronunciation strategies and techniques such as: Listening, drilling,reading,and minimal pairs.It took us 40 hours to apply the strategies that had been designed .

Finally, a post-test which consisted of a reading was administred to the students to see if the strategies had been useful in the improvement of the pronunciation of the vowel sounds /I/,/U/ and /ə/.

# RESUMEN

Esta investigación tuvo como objeto encontrar algunos problemas de pronunciación del ingles que los estudiantes del programa de Ingles-Español tuvieron, cuando ellos se enfrentaban a la pronunciación de las vocales inglesas /I/, /U/ y /ə/.

Para averiguar la frecuencia de las vocales antes mencionadas fue necesario aplicar un pre-test que constaba de un dialogo, para mejorar la pronunciación de las vocales objeto de este estudio, fue necesario aplicar diferentes estrategias y técnicas de pronunciación tales como escucha, repetición, lectura, y pares mínimos , nos tomo 40 horas la aplicación de estas estrategias que habían sido diseñadas.

Finalmente, se aplico a los estudiantes un post-test que constaba de una lectura para ver si las estrategias habían sido útiles en el mejoramiento de la pronunciación de los sonidos vocálicos /I/, /U/ y /ə/.

INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is the most relevant skill in the language-learning process because it is the first factor people notice when one is speaking a foreign language. It involves both the articulation of sounds and also the suprasegmentals: stress, pitch, rhythm and intonation.

People are afraid of communicating in a real context because they do not feel comfortable in producing a good speech in front of native speakers, teachers or partners. It is thought that they are not prepared for spontaneous communication, and although they have a lot of vocabulary and make a good use of grammatical rules, they feel afraid of not making themselves understood when they are speaking English.

Oral skills are extremely necessary for an effective communication in the English-speaking process for all people.

They will encourage students to be able to understand and make themselves understood. At the same time, they will help them to get confidence and feel sure at the moment of speaking.

To acquire a good English pronunciation is important because when students achieve this ability, they can communicate easily when they are speaking.

Therefore, there are lots of things to take into consideration in order to achieve an appropriate English pronunciation. So, we hope to find some English pronunciation problems that students of the ninth semester of the English

and Spanish program at the University of Nariño are having, when they are faced with the pronunciation of the English vowels /I/, /U/, and /ə/.

We suggest some strategies without forgetting that pronunciation has to do with a number of different elements and each one of them is important for speaking clearly and fluently, and may improve the student's English pronunciation.

CHAPTER ONE: TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC ASPECTS

Some English pronunciation problems with the vowels /I/, /U/ and /ə/ at an advanced level and some strategies to solve them.

Theme

The problems that students of the ninth semester in the English-Spanish program at the University of Nariño have regarding the pronunciation of the vowels /I/, /U/ and /ə/ and some strategies to improve the pronunciation of the students.

Problem Description

The pronunciation of the English vowels /I/,/U/and /ə/ is a complicated issue because these vowels do not exist in Spanish, and besides, it is dificult to change the bad pronunciation habits of students of advanced levels.

Advanced level students think they can communicate in English in an excellent way, simply because they have studied English for a long time, and sometimes assume the pronunciation of a word according to their experience. For this reason, they do not make sure to consult the correct pronunciation in the dictionary or ask their teachers or some other people who have a good command of English. But they do not know that English pronunciation needs constantly feedback because it is necessary in the process of the language learning.

It will be very difficult for advanced level students to

change bad pronunciation habits, however pronunciation strategies will help them avoid mispronunciations and get a high level of efficiency in their language performance.

Some learners are bad listeners, beacuse they do not focus on the quality of a certain sound and, therefore, it is difficult for them to discriminate vowel sounds which sound alike but, in reality are different. Consequently the pronunciation of these students is not good enough to express themselves in an appropiate and comprehensible way. Murphy (1991) believes that role of the teacher in this case is very important because Oral-skilled teachers must always connect speaking, listening, and pronunciation teaching although the focus in any class or activity may highlight one or another.

More broadly, classes on Oral skills may use reading and listening activities as the basis for speaking activities.

Delimitation

This research was carried out in the ninth semester of the English-Spanish program at the University of Nariño located in the city of Pasto in" Las Acacias neighborhood. "This research attempted to identify some English pronunciation problems with the vowels /I/, /U/, and /ə/ that the students have when they speak English and, on the other hand, to implement some strategies in order to improve their English pronunciation.

Formulation of the Problem

What is the incidence of the implementation of strategies in the English pronunciation process of the students who are in the ninth semester of the English and Spanish Program at the University of Nariño?

Objectives

The objectives of the study are presented to show the intention and the purpose of the study.

General Objective

To identify how frequently the vowels /I/, /U/, and /ə/ are mispronounced by the students of the ninth semester in the English-Spanish program at the University of Nariño and to implement some strategies to help them acquire a better English pronunciation.

Specific Objectives

To provide listening and reading activities in order to improve the students pronunciation of the vowels /I/, /U/, and /ə/.

To analyze the incidence of the strategies in the pronunciation of the vowels /I/, /U/, and /ə/.

Significance

Everybody wants to be able to speak English like a native speaker, but English pronunciation is always a big problem for ESL learners.

Our purpose with this monograph was to find out how often the students of the ninth semester of the English –Spanish

program at the University of Nariño mispronounced the vowel sounds /I/, /U/, and /ə/, when they are speaking English. We suggest some strategies in order to help students to improve their pronunciation of the above-mentioned vowels.

To acquire a good English pronunciation is important because students may achieve better performance in a real situation and demonstrate that pronunciation is one of the main difficulties in communication.

We assumed that by giving students appropriate strategies, we helped them keep improving their English pronunciation even after they leave the classroom.

Hypothesis

The implementation of strategies in the pronunciation of the vowels /I/, /U/, and /ə/ of the students of the ninth semester of the English and Spanish Program at the University of Nariño provides them with a significant improvement in their English pronunciation.

Independent variable

The implementation of strategies in the pronunciation of the vowels /I/, /U/, and /ə/ for students of the ninth semester of the English and Spanish Program at the University of Nariño.

Dependent Variable

The Improvement in the pronunciation of the vowels /I/, /U/, and /ə/ for students of the ninth semester of the English and Spanish Program at the University of Nariño.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Pronunciation

According to Nunan (2001) pronunciation plays a central role in both, personal and social lives. It is an important resource within the communicative competence when learning a second language. If a student is able to get a good pronunciation level, he or she will be able to communicate to each other in a clear way, so there will be an effective communication.

According to Seidlhofer (2001) pronunciation is defined as the production and perception of significant sounds of a particular language in order to achieve meaning in context throughout its use. This includes the production and perception of segmental sounds, stressed and unstressed syllables, and the "speech melody", or intonation. Acquiring a good or acceptable English pronunciation is an important feature not only in class but also in real life.

It is important to take into consideration several aspects such as: Syllable Stress, Word Stress, Sound Pronunciation, Pitch level, Rhythm, and Intonation Patterns. These aspects are important in the pronunciation process so students might get a better communicative competence in a real context:

Stress: It is the emphasis given to a particular syllable within a word or a particular word within a group of words. In individual word stress, it is generally referred to as accent.

Syllable Stress: In some words which contain more than one syllable, there will be one syllable which is more heavily stressed than the others. We say that this syllable carries the primary stress. In some longer words, other syllables carry the secondary stress.

Word Stress: In some sentences which contain more than one word, there will be one word which is more heavily stressed than the others. We say that this word carries the primary stress.

Sound Pronunciation: It refers to the way individual sounds are produced in all their combinations.

Pitch level: It is the variation (raising and falling) of the speaker's voice. The use of pitch is called intonation. For English, three pitch levels have often been recognized: normal pitch level, higher than normal level, lower than normal level.

Rhythm: It is a stage of language which provides a kind of musical framework for language, and it also helps to convey meaning.

Intonation Patterns: It is the term used to describe the pitch or melody pattern of any group of words. The most well-known use for English intonation is to communicate basic grammar, such as the use of a falling pitch on the sentence, "You're coming." compared to a rising pitch at the end of the question form, "You're coming?"

Taken from:(http:/iteslj.org/Articles/Vitanova-pronunciation.html).

Paulette Dale and Lillian Poms (1986) argue that some of the commonest mispronounced sounds non-native speakers produce when they speak English are those that don't exist in the L1, such as:

Consonant Sounds: /s/-/z/, /t/, /ð/, /θ/, /p/-/b/, /f/-/v/, /k/, /g/, /w/, /l/-/r/ /h/, /m/, /n/, /ŋ/.

Vowel Sounds: /i/-/ I /, / e /, /ε/, /a/, /u/-/U/, /ʌ/, /O/, /ə /, /œ/.

Dale and Poms (1986, p.2) state that Spanish Speakers feel a need to improve oral ability to use English as a second language. They find frustrating to hear, "I cannot understand you because of your pronunciation", they also know that Spanish Speakers might be afraid to use certain words because they will mispronounce them. In other words, as long as Spanish learners need to improve every day oral communication by the use of pronunciation rules, recordings, and dictionaries and through different activities which are necessary to help them to pronounce words and phrases in an appropriate way, they will avoid using words that may express a different meaning.

Acording to Avery and Ehrlich, (1992, p.95) "many pronunciation problems vary with the native language". ESL students generally have more difficulty with the pronunciation of the vowels, this is because there are more vowels in English than in most other languages. "The distinction between tense and lax vowel pairs of English almost always creates

problems for second language learners because they often produce the two vowels of each pair identically".

Suzanne Firth,(1992, p.215) assert that when students have pronunciation problems, teachers must develop self-correcting and self-monitoring strategies which can be achieved by focussing on motivation, explanations, practice and feedback.

Self-correction and self-monitoring minimize dependence and maximize self-reliance, allowing students to continue pronunciation improvement outside the classroom.

So, we consider that in order to improve English pronunciation, students must have access to good strategies and mainly, they must have an individual interest in recognizing and correcting their own pronunciation problems.

According to Brown (2001, p.110), the task in Advanced levels is focused on minor errors and an ongoing attemp to automatize language and in the delicate interplay between focal and pheripherical attention to selected aspects of language. On the other hand, the role of the teacher is to create effective learning opportunities even within a predominantly learner centered classroom.

Morley (1994) underlies that the prevalent focus in pronunciation teaching nowadays should be designing "new-wave instructional programs". Moreover, she stresses that these new instructional designs should take into account not only language forms and functions, but also issues of learner self-involvement and learner strategy training. In other words,

students should become active in their own learning process.

According to Murphy (1991) oral-skilled teachers connect speaking, listening, and pronunciation teaching although the focus in any class or activity may highlight one or another. Pronunciation in Language Use and Language System

Yule and Macdonald (1994) state a few general principles to take into account; pronunciation in pedagogy, which should be established before considering suggestions and materials for classroom practice. Precisely because of the complex nature of pronunciation, the primary consideration must always be the learners and what they may bring to the classroom in terms of their own identity and their purposes for language learning. They suggest that the individual learner may be the most important variable in pronunciation teaching and its success or failure. The wide variety of learners' factors emphasizes the necessity for teachers to have at their disposal an equally wide range of theoretical knowledge and methodological options.

According to Brown (2001, p.284), the most important learners' variables are age, exposure to the target language, amount and type of prior pronunciation instruction, aptitude, attitude, the motivation, and the role of the learner's first language (L1). It should be noted that many of these are dependent on the learning purpose and setting in which instruction takes place.

Guidelines for sound-spelling correspondences can also be

found in pronunciation dictionaries such as Wells' (1990).

Kenworthy (1987) includes a chapter on orthography and

grammar, demonstrating how exploiting the morphological

regularity of English spelling can facilitate pronunciation

teaching.

Teaching Oral Skills in an EFL Context

When teaching speaking skills, EFL teachers need to be

particularly adapted at organizing authentic, motivating, and

varied class activities. The use of authentic, engaging

materials should be the basis for in-class activities. Nunan

(1993).

Background

According to Brown,(2005, p.22), the highly influential

Coleman Report (Coleman 1929) had persuaded foreign language

teachers that it was impractical to teach oral skills and that

reading should become the focus. Then World War II broke out,

and suddenly the US was thrust into a worldwide conflict,

heightening the need for Americans to become orally proficient

in the languages of both their allies and their enemies. The

time was ripe for a language teaching revolution. The US

military provided the impetus with funding for special,

intensive language courses that focused on aural/oral skills;

these courses came to be known as the Army Specialized

Training Program (ASTP) or, more colloquially, the "Army

Method". Characteristic of these courses was a great deal of

oral activity-pronunciation and pattern drills and

conversation practice-with virtually none of the grammar and translation found in traditional classes. The Army Method came to be known in the 1950s as the Audio-lingual Method. (Brown, 2005, p.23).

Ronald Carter and David Nunan (1986) explain that although sometimes pronunciation is referred to as the "Cinderella" of foreign language teaching, pronunciation actually stood at the very beginning of language teaching methodology as a principled, theoretically founded discipline, originating with the late-nineteenth-century Reform Movement. Closely connected with this movement was the founding of the International Phonetic Association (IPA) and the development of the International Phonetic Alphabet, which is still the universally agreed transcription system for the accurate representation of the sounds of any language.

The advent of communicative language teaching (CLT) has created a dilemma for methodology. The view that "intelligible pronunciation is an essential component of communicative competence" (Morley 1991) is generally accepted, and with it the necessity of teaching pronunciation on the segmental and suprasegmental levels. At the same time, the emphasis has shifted from drills and exercises to communicative activities based on meaningful interaction which, if successful, direct learners' attention away from language form and towards the messages they want to communicate. However, for language items to be learnt, they must be noticed and therefore highlighted,

which, in turn, is difficult to do if the language used should

be as communicatively "authentic" as possible.

On their account, Ronald Carter and David Nunan (2001)

considering that the study of sounds dates back to antiquity,

it would be practically impossible to summarize the research

base of this field. Fortunately, there is a number of

accessible introductory texts to help teachers with an

understanding of phonetics and phonology, such as Clark and

Yallop (1990), Ladefoged (1993) and Roach (2000). Recent

introductions written specifically for teachers include Dalton

and Seidlhofer (1994), Celce-Murcia et al.(1996) and

Pennington (1996).

Audio-lingual Method

We have taken into account the Audio-lingual Method in

this analysis because great importance is attached to

pronunciation in foreign language teaching regarding this

method. It focuses on the development of oral skills (speaking

and listening) and it makes a deep study of the phonetic and

phonology of the sounds. It is aimed at facilitating students

the use of L2 with communicative purposes in the same way a

native speaker does. The ALM proposes a curricular plan with

communicative purpose that is to say, it pretends to enable

the students to pronounce correctly and speak the foreign

language fluently. (Brown, 1994, p.56)

This method wants to emphasize the difference between the

sounds of the first language (in this case Spanish) and those

of the target language (English), by establishing a comparison between the two languages involved in the process. The audio lingual method considers that the sounds are the principal elements in learning, whereby, with this method, students learn to discriminate and to produce both, sounds and the intonation patterns. (Brown, 1994, p.57)

Audio-lingual Method features.

Materials: One of the main materials used to teach an L2, according to the Audio-Lingual Method is the tape recorder. This is an essential instrument used to learn the foreign language through conversations and dialogues. They show the native sounds that students ought to learn.

Repetition: The teacher pronounces a sound, a word or a statement; students repeat and try to reproduce the emission in a similar way that teacher does.

Substitution: The teacher models the pronunciation of a statement and asks students to repeat it.  Then he gives a word or phrase and the students repeat it and change the respective sound.

Minimal pairs drill: The teacher chooses some couples of words. They are different in one sound only.  The teacher pronounces them more than once.  The students make the difference, repeat and imitate teacher's pronunciation.

Dialogue and Memorization: Students are given a short dialogue to memorize, and then they must perform the dialogue.

Complete dialogues:   The students have to fill in the

blanks in the dialogues by providing the proper English word that must be inserted in the text. This activity is much like a cloze activity.

Taken from: (http//www.gsu.edu/esljmm/ss/prolinks.html).

It is also important to keep in mind the following characteristics that A.L.M mentions in order to acquire a good pronunciation. (Adapted from Prator and Celce-Murcia 1979):

New material is presented in dialogue form. Dependence on mimicry, memorization of set phrases, and over-learning.

Structures are sequenced by means of contrastive analysis and taught one at a time.

Structural patterns are taught using repetitive drills.

There is little or no grammatical explanation. Grammar is taught by inductive analogy rather than by deductive explanation.

Vocabulary is strictly limited and learned in context.

There is much use of tapes, language labs, and visual aids.

Great importance is attached to pronunciation.

Very little use of the mother tongue by teachers is permitted.

Successful responses are immediately reinforced.

There is a great effort to get students to produce error-free utterances.

There is a tendency to manipulate language and disregard content.

For a number of reasons, the ALM enjoyed many years of popularity, and even today, adaptations of the ALM are found in contemporary methodologies. The ALM was firmly rooted in respectable theoretical perspectives of the time.

There are some tips, which can help students to solve their pronunciation problems while speaking and learning a foreign language:

Learn pronunciation rules

Consult the pronunciation in dictionaries for English learners to perfect their pronunciation.

Pay special attention to word stress.

Listen to songs and film dialogues to improve your intonation skills.

Record your speech and compare it with the original.

Master your pronunciation skills uttering tongue twisters.

Use computer programs to make language learning easier.

Listen to texts in background mode.

Read aloud to polish the pronunciation of difficult sounds.

The tips mentioned above are very important in the English pronunciation learning process.  According to this investigation with the students of the ninth semester of English and Spanish program, it has been considered that these activities are a good resource to improve English

pronunciation.

On the other hand, acquiring a good English pronunciation depends on a learner's accomplishment and a good feedback. In other words, there are students who are more attentive than others, for this reason, they have more facilities in order to develop the different skills of the target language. But it is also necessary that teachers implement apropriate strategies according to the learner's level. Taken from (http//www.qwertytudios.com/speech/tts-study/study-accurate-pronunciation/intonation-skills.html).

Savignon (1972, p.52) says the essence of CLT is the engagement of learners in communication in order to allow them to develop their communicative competence; terms sometimes used to refer to features of CLT include process oriented, task-based and inductive, or discovery oriented.

The advent of communicative language teaching (CLT) has created a dilemma for methodology. The view that "intelligible pronunciation is an essential component of communicative competence" is generally accepted, and with it the necessity of teaching pronunciation on the segmental and suprasegmental levels. At the same time, the emphasis has shifted from drills and exercises to communicative activities based on meaningful interaction which, if successful, direct learners' attention away from language form and towards the messages they want to communicate. However, for language items to be learnt, they must be noticed and, therefore, highlighted, which, in turn,

is difficult to do if the language used should be as communicatively "authentic" as posible.(Morley 1991)

Teaching Pronunciation

Concerning this issue Janet Goodwin (cited in Celce-Murcia, 2001) In "Teaching pronunciation," the goal of instruction is three-fold: to enable our learners to understand and be understood, to build their confidence in entering communicative situations, and to enable them to monitor their speech based on input from the environment.

These quotes highlight why teaching pronunciation is so crucial to students. Pronunciation is the language feature that most readily identifies speakers as non-native.

If we teach learners how to employ pauses, pitch movement, and stress to achieve the above communicative goals, then they will have accomplished a great deal of "functional communicability."(Learners ability to function successfully within the specific situation she/he faces) Morley (1991).

As students gain communicative skill, they also need to gain confidence in their ability to speak and to be understood. To accomplish this, materials should be designed around situations learners will actually face, move carefully from controlled to free production in our practice activities, and provide consistent targeted correction. It is a good factor to implement with the students of the experimental group because, sometimes, learners do not capture a real attention to their own pronunciation problems as well as those

of others. So, it is considered that if they pay attention to these difficulties, learners' English pronunciation, will be improved because, learners learn through their own errors and of course, errors others make.

By teaching learners to pay attention to their own speech as well as others', we help them to make a better use of the input they receive. Good learners should pay attention to certain aspects of the speech monitoring activities which will help them to focus their attention on such features both in classes and beyond them.

Definition of Terms

Ability: The physical or mental power or skill needed to do something.(Monolingual Dictionary-Cambridge University Press 1995).

Audio-lingual method: A method of foreign or second language which emphasizes the teaching of speaking and listening before reading. The theory behind the Audio-lingual method is the Aural-Oral approach to language teaching. (Dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics).

Communicate: To give successful thoughts, feelings, ideas or information to others through speech, writing, bodily movements or signals. (Monolingual Dictionary-Cambridge University Press 1995).

Encourage: To advise strongly (someone) to do something, or make (someone) believe they are able to do something, or to support (something) or make (something) more likely. (Monolingual Dictionary-Cambridge University Press 1995).

Highlighting: Making key words or sections in a passage with the use of a colored pen, making them easier to identify or remember when studying or reviewing. (Dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics).

Improve: To (cause something to) get better. (Monolingual Dictionary-Cambridge University Press 1995).

Intonation: The sound changes produced by the rise and fall of the voice when speaking. Technical term used to describe the various kinds of voice inflections that occur along with

the vowels and consonants. (Monolingual Dictionary-Cambridge University Press 1995).

Knack: A special skill, or the ability to use or to something easily. (Monolingual Dictionary-Cambridge University Press 1995).

Method: A way of teaching a language which is based on systematic principles and procedure and the application of views on how a language is best taught and learned. (Monolingual Dictionary-Cambridge University Press 1995).

Mispronounce: To pronounce a word or sound wrongly. (Monolingual Dictionary Cambridge University Press 1995).

Pitch level: The relative height of a speakers voice which is perceived by the listener. (Dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics).

Pronunciation: To speak with a certain accent. (Monolingual Dictionary – Cambridge University Press 1995).

Pronunciation Patterns: something which is used as an example. To copy the same sounds, stress and rhythm. (Monolingual Dictionary-Cambridge University).

Pronounce: To say a word or a letter in a particular way. (Monolingual Dictionary-Cambridge University Press 1995).

Rhythm :  A strong pattern of sounds, words or musical notes which is used in music, poetry and dancing. (Monolingual Dictionary-Cambridge University Press 1995).

Stress: To pronounce a word or syllables with greater force than other words in the same sentence or other syllable in the

same word. (Monolingual Dictionary-Cambridge University Press 1995).

Sound: Quick changes of pressure in air when somebody talks. (Monolingual Dictionary-Cambridge University Press 1995).

Syllable: A unit in speech which is often longer than one sound and smaller than a whole word. (Dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics).

Skill: A special ability to do something. (Monolingual Dictionary-Cambridge University Press 1995).

Strategy: A procedure used in learning, thinking, etc. which serves as a way of reaching a goal. In language learning are those conscious and unconscious processes which language learners make use of learning and using a language. (Dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics).

Word stress: It means, stressing the most important words in a sentence, saying them with more force and loudness than other words, holding them longer and saying them on a higher pitch. (Dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

A problematic situation is inside the advanced classrooms concerning the English pronunciation that is why this research project had an important objective which was to help to solve this problem taking into account some learning and teaching strategies.

This chapter provides information about the methodology used when working on our research; it covers, the population, sample, data gathering procedure, and instruments.

Population

Population refers to all the individuals who took part in an investigative process. In this case, the Linguistic Department Program at the University of Nariño has a total of 128 students at the English and Spanish program in ten semesters (going from first to Tenth).

Setting

This research was carried out at the English and Spanish program of the University of Nariño which is located in the northern part of Pasto, the foreign language (English) is spoken by teachers and advanced learners who are involved in the field of this research.

Sample

The students of the ninth semester of the English-Spanish program at the University of Nariño took part in this investigative process. There are 20 students who are attending English Advanced Conversation classes.

Data gathering procedure: In order to develop our research, we chose to make observation, a pre-test and a post-test.

Techniques

This study was carried out through observation in advanced conversation classes; we realized the attitude of the students towards the second language, lack of vocabulary and shyness to participate in spite of being advanced learners and weaknesses in some of the aspects of pronunciation mentioned before such as stress, intonation, pitch and so on.

We realized that students of the ninth semester of the English and Spanish Program had problems with the pronunciation of the following vowels /I/, /U/ and /ə/.

Furthermore, another technique we applied was the tests. For these tests we took into account the following aspects:

A Pre-test in the form of a dialogue for advanced level which was used to find out how often the vowels /I/, /U/ and /ə/, were mispronounced by the ninth semester students of the English-Spanish program at the University of Nariño at the beginning of this study.

A Post-test in the form of a reading which contained the vowels mentioned above following the same procedure used in the Pre-Test; but this reading was more complex in terms of grammatical structures, vocabulary and sounds.

Instruments

The pronunciation problems of students of the ninth semester that were found in advanced conversation classes,

were written in a notebook.

Tests were divided into two parts. The first one was the Pre-Test that implemented a dialogue in which each student was tape recorded. This test attempted to identify how often the vowels /I/, /U/ and /ə/ were mispronounced. The second one was the Post-Test that implemented a reading. This test attempted to demonstrate the improvement of the pronunciation of the mentioned vowels.

Once the frequency of mispronunciation of the above mentioned vowels was found in the Pre-Test applied, some strategies were implemented in order to help students to improve their English pronunciation. These strategies were entitled according to the vowel sounds that we pretended to study. In the application of these strategies, we spent 40 hours and two hours four each activity.

Research type

In the qualitative approach, we carried out this study through a descriptive research type. This research type makes reference to those studies which intend to obtain information regarding the actual state or situation of a problem or phenomenon.

Design

The investigation was qualitative because through this study was observed the attitude, behavior, and the internal and external factors that affect the pronunciation of students in the vowels mentioned above. It was also quantitative

because, during this investigation two tests were applied, which measured the amount of students who had English pronunciation difficulties in the vowels mentioned.

The purpose of this monograph was to find out how often the students of the ninth semester of the English-Spanish program at the University of Nariño mispronounced the vowels /I/,/U/,/and /ə/ when they speak English. Some strategies will be suggested in order to help students to improve their English pronunciation of the above mentioned vowels.

Stages in the research

In this research, it was necessary to distribute its stages in the following way:

Preliminary observation of the ninth semester students

Analysis of observation

Analysis of the results

Application of the Pre-Test (Dialogue)

Analysis of the results

Creation of some strategies to be applied later.

Application of the post-test (reading)

Analysis of the results    .

Application of the some of the strategies for the vowels /I/,/U/,/and /ə /.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

This chapter explains the analysis of the results which were obtained through the procedure explained before, It entails, therefore, the method used to find how often the vowels /I/, /U/, and /ə/ were mispronounced. To accomplish this, the research results were laid out to indicate how often the vowels /I/, /U/, /and /ə/ were mispronounced in the pre-test, then we applied some of the strategies and finally we applied the post-test, to see if the students made an improvement in the pronunciation of the above-mentioned vowels.

Analysis of the results

Taking into account the data gathered in the observation process in advanced conversation classes with the native speaker, we realized that advanced learners' participation was poor because some students were afraid of making mistakes or simply they did not know what to say regarding a certain topic and besides their tone of voice was low.

According to Brown,(2001) there are some factors that affect English Pronunciation learning: the native language, the age, the exposure to the target language, the motivation and concern for a good pronunciation.

After observing the students of the ninth semester of the English and Spanish program, it was possible to identify the same factors that Brown had identified.

Acording to Avery and Ehrlich (1992, p.95) many

pronunciation problems vary according to the native language, in this case, Spanish. ESL students generally have more difficulty with the pronunciation of the vowels; this is because there are more vowels in English than in most other languages. The distinction between tense and lax vowel pairs of English almost always creates problems for second language learners because they often produce the two vowels of each pair identically.

The pre-test and post-test data are presented in chart 1 below which includes key words that contain the vowel sounds /I/, /U/, /and /ə/. These sounds were analyzed taking into account the following information:

IPA Transcripton: It includes all of the words which were more difficult to pronounce. These contain their phonological transcription following the IPA notation.

Mispronounced Sounds: It includes the amount of students who mispronounced the vowels sounds /I/, /U/, /and /ə/. This chart also includes other vowel sounds that the students of English- Spanish Program mispronounced.

Pre-test Key words:  signature, written, reveals, private, is, secretive, shapless, family, childhood, initials, depressed, public, example, average, important, if, it, good, descending, look, will, would, horizontal, unfortunately, arrogant.

Post-test key words: it, without, native, language, every, significant, think, target, appear, only, speak, English,

will, surely, powerful, January, influence, sound, out, your,

usually, actually, acquisition, effect, salient, observable,

sentence, successful.

| Key words | IPA transcription | Mispronounced sounds |
|-----------|-------------------|----------------------|
|           |                   |                      |
|           |                   |                      |

Chart 1

Interpretation of the results:

The pre-test consisted of a dialogue which contained some key words with the above-mentioned vowel sounds. It allowed us to identify how often these vowels were mispronounced by the students of the ninth semester of the English and Spanish program.

We analyzed carefully the recording we applied to the students of the ninth semester of the English and Spanish program at the University of Nariño; throughout the text, we prepared words including the above-mentioned sounds in which most of the students made mistakes when they pronounced them.

After applying the pre-test to students of the ninth semester of the English-Spanish program at the University of Nariño, it was possible to identify that the vowel sounds /I/, /U/, and /ə/ were frequently mispronounced; As it is explained by Peter Avery and Susan Ehrlich in their book "Teaching American English Pronunciation", many pronunciation

problems vary according to the native language. ESL students

generally have common pronunciation problems with the English

vowels, (/I /,/ɝ/,/ɚ/,/ʊ/,/ʌ/,/ɔ/,/ə/,/æ/), this is because

there are more vowels in English than in most other languages.

The distinction between tense and lax vowel pairs of English

almost always creates problems for second language learners

because they often produce the two vowels of each pair

identically.

*Pre-test Results*

The following chart contains the mispronounced words which

students of the ninth semester of the English and Spanish

program uttered at the moment they read the dialogue that was

applied in the pre-test. The phonetic transcription was

included according to IPA symbols.

This chart provides the most frequent mispronounced sounds

by students.

Key words take into account the Vowel Sounds /I/, /U/,

/and /ə /.

S= student

Ss= students

| IPA transcription | | Mispronounced sounds | |
|---|---|---|---|
| S**i**g**n**a**t**ur**e** | /sIgnətʃɚ/ | /i/   /a/   /u/ | 18Ss |
| sign | /saIn/ | /i/ | 4 Ss |

| surname /sɝnem/ | /u/ 8 Ss |
|---|---|
| wr**itt**e**n** /rItən/ | /aI/ /e/ 17 Ss |
| r**e**veals /rIvilz/ | /ia/ 7 Ss |
| pr**iva**te /praIvət/ | /i/ /ei/ 16 Ss |
| s**e**cr**et**ive /sIkrItIv/ | /ɛ/ /ɛ/ /i/ 5 Ss |
| sh**a**pel**e**ss /ʃepləs/ | /ɛ/ 15 Ss |
| **i**s /IZ/ | /i/ 18 Ss |
| th**a**t /ðæt/ | /a/ 10 Ss |
| b**i**rthday /bɝθde/ | /i/ 5 Ss |
| F**a**mily /fæməlI/ | /a/ /i/ 7 Ss |
| ch**i**ldh**oo**d /tʃaIlhUd/ | /i/ /u/ 9 Ss |
| Th**a**nks /θæŋks/ | /ɛ/ 10 Ss |
| **i**n**i**tials /InIʃəlz/ | /i/ /i/ /a / 18 Ss |
| d**e**pressed /dIprɛst/ | /i/ 18 Ss |
| P**u**blic /pʌblIk/ | /a/ 9 Ss |
| th**a**n /ðæn/ | /a/ 10 Ss |
| **i**t /It/ | /i/ 18 Ss |
| c**o**ntrol /kəntrol/ | /o / 19 Ss |
| **exa**mpl**e** /Igzæmpəl/ | /i / /a/ 15 Ss |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **a**verage /ævrIdʒ/ | /e/ | 8 Ss |
| **i**mport**a**nt /ImpɔrtԑnT/ | /i/ /a / | 17Ss |
| **I**f /If/ | / i / | 20Ss |
| G**oo**d /gUd/ | / u/ | 17 Ss |
| d**e**scend**i**ng /dIsԑndIŋ/ | / i / | 17 Ss |
| l**oo**k /lUk / | / u / | 17 Ss |
| w**i**ll /wIl/ | / i / | 16 Ss |
| W**ou**ld /wUd/ | / u / | 18 Ss |
| H**o**rizont**a**l /həraIz□ntəl/ | / aI / | 13Ss |
| Kn**o**w /no/ | / au / | 6Ss |
| **U**nfortun**a**tely /ʌnfɔrtʃənətlI/ | / a / / a / | 16 Ss |
| **A**rr**o**g**a**nt /ærəgənt/ | / a / /o/ /a/ | 19 Ss |

Chart 2

After the pre-test was applied, it was noticed that the

vowel sounds /I/, /U/ and /ə/ were the most difficult vowel

sounds  to pronounce for the ninth semester students, so

strategies were  planned to improve them through listening,

reading and drilling activities. On the other hand, this study

also let us identify other vowel sounds which were

mispronounced by the students but with less frequency /æ/, /ʌ/,

/ɜ·/ /ə·/, than above mentioned vowels.

*Post-Test Results*

The following chart contains the mispronounced words which students of the ninth semester of the English and Spanish program uttered at the moment they did the reading that was applied in the post-test. The phonetic transcription was represented using the IPA symbols.

The following chart contains the sounds which the students most frequently mispronounced.

The key words which were used contain the vowel sounds:  / I/ /U/ and /ə/.

S= student

Ss= students

| Key words | IPA transcription | Mispronounced sounds | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **i**t | /It/ | /i/ | 8 Ss |
| W**i**thout | /wIðaUt/ | /i/ | 8 Ss |
| Nat**i**ve | /netIv/ | /i/ | 5 Ss |
| Langu**a**ge | /læŋgwId3/ | /i / | 7 Ss |
| Ever**y** | /ɛvrI/ | /i/ | 8 Ss |
| S**i**gnificant | /sIgnifikənt/ | /i/ | 6 Ss |
| Th**i**nk | /θIŋk/ | /i/ | 7 Ss |

| Targ**e**t | /tárgIt/ | /i/ | 5 Ss |
|---|---|---|---|
| App**ea**r | /əpIr/ | /i/ | 7 Ss |
| Onl**y** | /ɔnlI/ | /i/ | 7 Ss |
| Sp**ea**k | /spIk/ | /i/ | 6 Ss |
| **E**ngl**i**sh | /InglIʃ/ | /i/ | 6 Ss |
| W**i**ll | /wIll/ | /i/ | 6 Ss |
| S**u**rel**y** | /ʃUrlI/ | /u/ /i/ | 7 Ss |
| Powerf**u**l | /paUɚfəl/ | /u/ | 5 Ss |
| Jan**u**ary | /dʒænjUerI/ | /u/ | 7 Ss |
| Infl**ue**nce | /inflUəns/ | /u/ | 5 Ss |
| So**u**nd | /saUnd/ | /u/ | 6 Ss |
| O**u**t | /aUt/ | /u/ | 7 Ss |
| Y**ou**r | /jUr/ | /u/ | 9 Ss |
| **U**s**u**ally | /jU3UəlI/ | /u/ | 8 Ss |
| Act**u**ally | /ǽktʃUəlI/ | /u/ | 6 Ss |
| **A**cquisit**io**n | /əkwəziʃən/ | /u/ | 8 Ss |
| **E**ffect | /əfɛkt/ | /i/ | 8 Ss |
| Sali**e**nt | /selIənt/ | /i/ | 9 Ss |
| **O**bserv**a**ble | /əbzɚvəbl/ | /e/ | 8 Ss |
| Sent**e**nce | /sɛntəns/ | /a/ | 7 Ss |
| Imp**o**ssibil**i**ty | /impəsIbIlətI/ | /ə/ | 7 Ss |

| Succesful | /səksɛsfəl/ | /u/ | 6Ss |
|---|---|---|---|

Chart 3

This analysis let us conclude that the English vowels /I/, /U/ and /ə/ were the most difficult vowel sounds to pronounce for the students of the ninth semester of the English and Spanish program. After applying the Post-Test we noticed that there was a significant improvement in the pronunciation of the vowels /I/, /U/, / ə /. Through these simple examples we attempted to demonstrate this fact:

| | IPA transcription | Mispronounced sounds | |
|---|---|---|---|
| W**i**ll (Pre-Test) | Key words | /i/ | 16 Ss |
| W**i**ll (Post-test) | | /i/ | 4 Ss |
| y**ou**r (Pre-Test) | /jʊr/ | /u/ | 20 Ss |
| l**oo**k (Post-Test) | /lʊk / | /u/ | 5 Ss |
| | | /a/ | 19 Ss |
| arrog**a**nt(Pre-test) | /ærəgənt/ | /a/ | 8 Ss |
| **a**cquisit**io**n (Post-test) | /əkwəziʃən/ | /a/ | 8 Ss |

Chart  4.

After analyzing the Post-test on the basis of the key words, it was also possible to identify other words which must be taken into consideration because the students continued making mistakes in the pronunciation of other vowels such as:

/æ/, /ʌ/,/ɝ/, /ɚ/, For example:

| Words | IPA transcription |
|---|---|
| Interference | /ɪntɚfɪrəns/ |
| observe | /əbzɝv/ |
| but | /bʌt/, |
| factor | /fæktɚ/ |
| work | /wɝk/ |
| learner | /lɝnɚ/ |
| iceberg | /aɪsbɝg/ |
| us | /ʌs/ |
| first | /fɝst/ |

Chart 5.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Through this investigation, some problems in the pronunciation of some English vowels were observed. This let us conclude according to Avery and Erlich, (1992) that many pronunciation problems vary according to the native language. Therefore, ESL students generally have weaknesses in the pronounciation of vowel sounds such as,/ I /, / /U/ ,/ ə/, /ɜ:/,/ æ /ʌ/, /ɚ/ , / ɝ /, /ɒ / because these sounds do not exist in their native language, in this case, Spanish.

This pronunciation study helped us to notice that the vowel sounds which do no exist in Spanish, are the most frequently mispronounced and this situation persists even in advanced-level students.

English pronunciation problems depend on many factors such as lack of motivation to take advantage of the many opportunities that students have to practice and improve their English pronunciation, unwillingness to participate in the different kinds of speaking activities that native and non-native teachers offer to them in their classes. Another aspect is that students do not have confidence in themselves and, besides, do not consult the pronunciation of English words which are difficult for them to pronounce.

This project helped us to find the main causes and consequences that contribute to a bad pronunciation, for example, the students do not pay attention to the

pronunciation of recordings made by native speakers or the pronunciation of their English teachers.and, besides, do not make any effort to improve the articulation habits.

This research also helped us to design some strategies that are easy to apply in classes, such as minimal pairs, drilling,listening and reading activities,etc.

The teacher represents a model for students to imitate, therefore, a teacher must have a good command of the foreign language and be well prepared in all the situations and in all the skills since if the teacher is not appropriately prepared, the students will not have a good model to imitate and, therefore, will acquire bad habits of pronunciation.

After applying the strategies designed for this research, the post test showed us a significant improvement in the pronunciation of the vowels object of this study.

A good English student that is interested in an effective learning of the language is concerned with all of the aspects of the learning-teaching process which will provide him with the necessary tools to become a good English teacher.

Teacher motivation is one of the most important aspects that must play an important role inside the process of learning. If the students are motivated, their results will be better, and, besides, they will not be afraid or nervous to talk with another person.

Something difficult but not impossible to work on is the attitude of the students towards the pronunciation process to

change old pronunciation habits.  For this purpose, it is fundamental the teachers' creativity, interest and the way they introduce and apply in class the activities and materials in the pronunciation process.

The errors of English pronunciation are more common in the student when teachers of a foreign language do not have a complete command of the language.

Students sometimes do not feel able to produce, emit or communicate something in front of native speakers, teachers or in front of their classmates because they think they do not have the necessary tools to face these kinds of real interactions yet.

Furthermore, there is not enough time to give much individual attention to the pronunciation of the students of the ninth semester in the English and Spanish program which is important because not all the students have the same pronunciation problems and because common pronunciation problems include different factors such as: omitting sounds, adding extra ones, or simply pronouncing the word in an inappropriate way.

Recommendations

To help students to recognize the importance of acquiring a good English pronunciation since the beginning of the process because we analyzed that the students of the ninth semester of the English and Spanish program have bad habits of pronunciation which are very difficult to change.

Teachers should make a strong emphasis on the vowel sounds which do not exist in the mother tongue because these were the major pronunciation problems for students of the ninth semester of the English and Spanish program.

Another important thing to bear in mind is that teachers should implement apropriate strategies that help students to improve their English pronunciation. Teachers must also be proficient in the target language and transmit it in an adequate way. They should make creative classes and promote environments for the implementation of conversations and dialogues among students, and carry out a constant feedback to correct the learners' pronunciation.

Teachers are models for students to imitate, therefore, their pronunciation must be excellent so that students can form good habits of pronunciation.

Oral skills are necessary for communication in the English speaking process. For this reason, when somebody teaches English, he/she should emphasize the development of appropriate habits for the correct pronunciation of sounds such as the importance of breathing exercises.

To accomplish a pronunciation close to  that of a native speaker, it is advisable to be in constant contact with the target language such as the case when the student lives in the country where the foreign language is spoken.

In spite of being advanced levels, it is necesary the use of dictionaries to help students to learn the correct pronounciation of some difficult words.

Finally, an important reccomendation is for teachers not to forget the use of the strategies and techniques used to identify the English pronunciation problems.

| Activities | DECEM | JANUA | FEBRUA | MARC | APRI |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Preliminary project | ------- --- | --- | | | |
| Bibliographic collection | | ----- ---- | | | |
| Project | | | ------ ------ | | |
| Instrument Design | | | ------ ----- | ----- --- | |
| project Revision Literature Analysis | | | ------ ----- | ----- -- | ----- --- |
| Data gathering | | | ------ ---- | ----- -- | ----- - |
| Data analysis | | | | ----- --- | ----- --- |
| Final Report | | | | | ----- --- |

timeline

Resources

Researchers: Deysi Yaneth Calpa Guancha and Ingrid Lorena Moncayo Oquendo.

Population: Students of ninth semester in the Spanish-English program at the university of Nariño.

Materials: Photocopies, Tape recorder, a notebook.

| BUDGET | COST |
|---|---|
| PHOTOCOPIES | $30.000 PESOS |
| INTERNET | $10.000 PESOS |
| PRINTING | $40.000 PESOS |
| TOTAL | $80.000 PESOS |

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*What pronunciation exercises are the most efficient for improving pronunciation skills?*

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APPENDIXES

PRE-TEST

APPLIED TO ENGLISH SPANISH PROGRAM FROM NINTH SEMESTER
Read the following conversation between Announcer and Dr
Harris.

ANNOUNCER:

Good evening my friend and in today's program Dr steve
Harris, author of the signatures'Dictionary in which he
explains how important our signatures are in life. Good
evening Doctor and please tell us ,how important our
signatures are?

DR HARRIS

Good evening ,and thanks for the invitation.well let me you
that your signature is the part of your handwriting that says
the most  about your personality.It is quite normal for a
signature to change during a life time,as a signature reflects
how you evolve as a person.Iit is also common to have several
signatures ,for example a more formal signature when you sign
a credit card or passport and a formal signature when you sign
a birthday card.

ANNOUNCER

But how could a signature be more formal or informal than
other?

DR HARRIS

Actually that is sort of a physical aspect of your
signature, for example,an average formal signature  usually

contains a first name and a surname, clearly written

represented by initials.

ANNOUNCER

So,the way we write our own names reveals something

doesn't it?

DR HARRIS

Certainly, the first name represents your private or

family self and the surname represents your public self ,hoe

you are socially and a work.If your first name is more

prominent  in your signature that implies that you have

positive feelings about childhood and your private self is

more important to you but, if your surname is more prominent,

it means that your public self is more important, Even, the

more you wish to keep your private and public self separated.

ANNOUNCER

And what would happen if I only use initials? Does it make

any difference?

DR HARRIS

Indeed, If you use only initial initial for your first

name or surname, it means you are more secretive about that

part of your personality?

ANNOUNCER

And what happens with a shapeless signature? What if you

aren't able to recognize words or initials?

DR HARRIS

In that case,that's not good news .A legible signature implies that you are a person,with a clear ideas and objectives. The more illegible your signature is ,the less assertive you are as a person, and the more you tend to avoid conflicts.

ANNOUNCER

I didn't really know anything about that. We all belive that a signature is just an everyday meaningless action.

DR HARRIS

Well,it isn't . Did you know that is your signature is bigger than the rest of the document you have written a letter for example, that means you are self-confidents and have a high opinion of yourself. If your signature is smaller ,that shows insecurity and low self-steem.

ANNOUNCER

I must be careful  about it .Look, this is my signature,what does it tell about my doctor.

DR HARRIS

A rising signature...... that's good,it means thgat you are the  kind of  person who,whe faced with problems ,will work to overcome them. You are  in control and you are ambitious.

ANNOUNCER

And what if it weren't?

DR HARRIS

Well, in that case take into account that a descending signature shows a  lack of self-confidence and that you tend get depressed ang give up when facing problems.


ANNOUNCER

In that case,it would be better just horizontal signature ,and using capital letters right?

DR HARRIS

It wouldn't be bad.  A  holrizontal signature suggest an emotionally stable person who is well balanced and generally satisfied with the way their life  is going unfournately a signature using capital letters suggest that you are arrogant rather than self-confident.

**PRONUNCIATION APLICATION**

PRONOUNCING /∂/

    The vowel **/ ∂ /** does not exist in Spanish and may be difficult for you to hear and produce. **/∂** / is the sound that results when any vowel in English is unstressed in a word. The vowels in all unaccented syllables almost always sound like /∂/. Any letters or combination of letters can represent the schwa /∂/.

    This vowel is the most common in English ,it can be spelled with any of the five vowel letters ,and also with combination of letters.this sound is esay to pronounce. To make it  simply open your mouth very slightly, and makea noise.It does not sound like a formed vowel, and it is not, The lips and the tongue are relaxed, and the voice makes a short, soft noise.

    REMEMBER:  The schwa vowel is a VERY short, quick sound. In Spanish, all vowels are pronounced clearly and distinctly, even in unaccented syllables of words. In English, unstressed vowels should receive much less force than unstressed vowels do in Spanish. You must obscure any vowels that are NOT in accented syllables of words.

    The following words should all be pronounced with **/ ∂ /.** Repeat them carefully after the native speaker .

| /ə / At the Beginning | /ə / In the Middle | /ə /At the end |
|---|---|---|
| Ago | agony | Soda |
| Away | holiday | Sofa |
| Along | company | Zebra |
| Amaze | Buffalo | Reason |
| Upon | relative | Famous |
| Alarm | photograph | Lemon |
| Obtain | government | Cousin |
| Occasion | civilize | Circus |

/ə / spelled:

| "a" | "e" | "i" | "o" | "u" |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arrive | oven | liquid | occur | Upon |
| Ashamed | open | humid | obtain | Suppose |

| Asleep | cement | capital | lemon | Circus |
|--------|--------|---------|-------|--------|
| Away | jacket | typical | contain | Column |
| Signal | darkness | | lesson | Corrugated |

Other spelling of words containing  /∂ / include **"eo", "ou", "iou", and "ai"**

  **Examples:**    pig**eo**n    fam**ou**s    delic**iou**s    nat**io**n
cert**ai**n

    **Note:** the schwa /∂ / can occur more than once and be represented by different letters in the same word.

  **Examples: pres<u>id</u>ent        el<u>e</u>ph<u>a</u>nt        acc<u>id</u>ent PRACTICING**
/∂/

  Listen to the following sentences that feature the sound
/∂/, and repeat them after the teacher

- Students keep up with the field through regular reading and conference attendance.
- They use appropiate principles of classroom management.
- Select an element of your teaching and learning.
- Enjoys the people ; show entusiasm , warmth,rapport,enthusiasm, and appropiate humor.

- I will give it to her later

- She is a person  I told you about .

- Have we got any biscuits?

- There is some tea in the pot.

- It is not such a big deal, really.

- He will have left by now.

PRONOUNCING   **/ I /**

The vowel **/ I /**  does not exist in Spanish and may be difficult for you to recognize and say. You probably substitute the more familiar / i / sound.

To make this sound, lower your jaw slightly. The lips are relaxed.

Examples: when you substitute   **/ i /**  for  **/ I /:**    **hit** becomes **heat ,itch** ,and **each.**

The following words should all be pronounced with **/ I /.** Repeat them carefully after the native speaker.

| /I/ At the Beginning | /I/ In the Middle |
| --- | --- |
| Is | pin |
| It | lift |
| It | give |
| Ill | miss |
| Itch | simple |
| Into | winter |
| Ink | listen |
| Inch | timid |
| Issue | minute |
| Instant | little |

/ **I** / spelled:

| "y" | "ui" | "i" |
|---|---|---|
| gym | build | give |
| Pyramid | quick | lips |
| Symbol | quilt | with |
| System | guilty | gift |
| Rhythm | guitar | differ |

Frequent spelling patterns for / **I** / consist of the

letters "o", "e", "u", and "ee"

Examples: w**o**men      pr**e**tty      b**u**sy      b**ee**n

Hints: The most common spelling pattern for / **I** / is the

letter /i/ followed by a

final consonant.

Examples:      w**in**      th**is**      h**i**t      tr**ip**

beg**in**

Listen to the following sentences that feature the sound

/**I**/, and repeat them after the native speaker.

- I would like a big, red cotton skirt.

- The biggest shirt is of him.

- One student is polish,another is Italian.

- Who is better at it?

-  He is always on time for work, he isvery intelligent and kind.

- Learning English isagoodway to know ideologies  from another country.

- This historical overview culminates in a close look at current state.

-  An effective principle  is interrelated with two characteristics which arebeing productive and receptive.

- Meaningful learning will lead toward better long-term retention than rote learning.

- The typical food in my country is paella,it isvery delicious.


**PRONOUNCING / U /**

   **REMEMBER** The vowel **/ U /** doesn't exist in Spanish and may be difficult for you to hear and produce. You probably substitute the more familiar /u/ sound.

   This vowel is formed by keeping the jaw slightly open.the lips are medium inch apart and pushed outward to make an open circle.

Examples: When you substitute /u/ for /U/: Full sounds like fool.

Cook sounds like kook.

 **/U/**  is spelled "u" "oo", "ou"

| U | oo | o | Eu | Ue |
|---|----|---|-----|-----|
| Rude | School | Doll | New | Due |
| Rule | Fool | To | Drew | Blue |
| June | Tool | Who | Stew | Clue |
| Tune | Noon | Tomb | Knew | Glued |
| Tuna | Stool | Lose | News | Avenue |

| **In the Middle** |
|---|
| Cook |
| Full |
| could |
| Book |

| |
|---|
| Good |
| Stood |
| Look |
| Shook |
| Push |
| Should |
| Put |
| Wood |
| Hood |
| Foot |
| Brook |
| Sugar |
| Cushion |

Hints:

The letters "oo" follow by "D" or "K" are usually

pronounced / U /

Examples:     hood      g**oo**d      w**oo**d      b**oo**k      l**oo**k

c**oo**k

*The letter "u" followed by "sh" is usually pronounced / U /*

Examples:     b**ush**      p**ush**      c**ush**ion

A less frequent spelling pattern for / U / consist of

letters "o"

Examples:          wolf                    woman

   Listen to the following sentences that feature the sound

**/U/,** and repeat them after the native speaker.

- That is a g**oo**d b**oo**k.I read yesterday

-  Please, p**u**ll over

- There a s**u**it for that w**o**man

-  Ther was a young teacher called W**oo**d

-  L**oo**k in the c**oo**kbook for a g**oo**d p**u**dding.

-   He w**ou**ld if he c**ou**ld

-  It should be g**oo**d w**oo**l

-  The w**o**man t**oo**k a g**oo**d l**oo**k at the w**o**lf

-  Whose students just w**ou**ld not use c**ou**ld .

## APPLICATION 2

**MINIMAL PAIRS**

   Minimal pairs are one of the most common difficulties in

pronunciation to Spanish speakers at the moment to use the English.

The term minimal pairs refer to pair of words which have different meaning which differ in pronunciation on the basis of one sound only.

In phonology, minimal pairs are pairs of words or phrases in a particular language, which differ in only one phonological element, such as a phone, phoneme, toneme or chroneme and have a distinct meaning. They are used to demonstrate that two phones constitute two separate phonemes in the language.

Phonemic differentiation may vary between different dialects of a language, so that a particular minimal pair in one accent is a pair of homophones in another. This does not necessarily mean that one of the phonemes is absent in the homonym accent; merely that it is not present in the same range of contexts.

| [ i ]<br><br>[ I ] | [I ]<br><br>[ e I ] | [ I ]<br><br>[E ] |
|---|---|---|
| sheep<br><br>ship | eat<br><br>ate | meet<br><br>met |
| leave<br><br>live | see<br><br>say | mean<br><br>men |
| SEAT<br><br>sit | week<br><br>wake | seeks<br><br>sex |
| green<br><br>grin | creep<br><br>crepe | beast<br><br>best |
| [ I ]<br><br>[ e I ] | [ I ]<br><br>[ E ] | [ I ]<br><br>[ æ] |
| it<br><br>ate | Pick<br><br>peck | big<br><br>bag |
| Pick<br><br>cake | did<br><br>dead | it<br><br>at |
| chin<br><br>chain | sit<br><br>set | sit<br><br>sat |
| Give | Knit | zig |

| gave | net | zag |
|---|---|---|
| [ I ]<br><br>[^] | [ e I ]<br><br>[ E ] | [ e I ]<br><br>[æ ] |
| big                   bug | wait<br><br>                    wet | snake          snack |
| Live                  love | Date                  debt | ate                    at |
| Sick                  suck | Pain                   pen | made                  mad |
| Rib                    rub |  | hate                  hat |
|  [ e I ]<br><br>[^ ] | [ e I ]<br><br>[ow ] | [E]<br><br>[æ] |
| Ape                    up | taste              toast | dead                  dad |
| Lake                  luck | Say                     so | said                  sad |
| Rain                  run | break             broke | man                    man |
| came                come | wake               woke | bed                    bad |
| [E ]<br><br>[^] | [ E ]<br><br>[ a ] | [æ]<br><br>[^] |
| Beg                   bug | Get                   got | grab                  grub |
| Ten                   ton | Step                 stop | swam                swum |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| many money | Red rod | mad mud |
| Net nut | Net not | cap cup |
| [æ]<br><br>[ a] | [æ]<br><br>[a I] | [^]<br><br>[a] |
| an<br><br>on | am<br><br>I'm | hug<br><br>hog |
| Map<br><br>mop | sad<br><br>side | cup<br><br>cop |
| cat<br><br>cot | Dad<br><br>died | luck<br><br>lock |
| Lack<br><br>lock | back<br><br>bike | nut<br><br>not |
| [   ]<br><br>[u] | [^]<br><br>[ow] | [^]<br><br>[   ] |
| Luck<br><br>look | cut<br><br>coat | gun<br><br>gone |
| buck<br><br>book | must<br><br>most | cut<br><br>caught |
| Stud | come | bus |

| stood | comb | boss |
|---|---|---|
| Tuck<br><br>took | but<br><br>boat | dug<br><br>dog |
| [a]<br><br>[u] | [a]<br><br>[oU] | [a]<br><br>[    ] |
| Lock<br>look | hop<br>hope | cot<br>caught |
| pot<br><br>put | got<br><br>goat | sod<br><br>sawed |
| cod<br>could | want<br>won't | are<br>or |
| shock<br>shoock | rod<br>road | tock<br>talk |
| [a]<br><br>[aU] | [    ]<br><br>[o I ] | [U]<br><br>[u] |
| are<br><br>hour | all<br><br>oil | full<br><br>fool |
| Shot | jaw | pull |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| shout | joy | pool |
| dot<br><br>doubt | ball<br><br>boil | soot<br><br>suit |
| got<br><br>gout | bald<br><br>boiled | could<br><br>cooed |
| [u]<br><br>[oU] | [oU]<br><br>[o I ] | [aU]<br><br>[a I] |
| Bull<br><br>bowl | toe<br><br>toy | mouse<br><br>mice |
| cook<br><br>coke | old<br><br>oiled | tower<br><br>tire |
| should<br><br>showed | bold<br><br>boiled | proud<br><br>pride |
| brook<br><br>broke | cone<br><br>coin | found<br><br>find |
| [aU]<br><br>[o I ] | [ o I]<br><br>[a I] | |
| owl<br><br>oil | toy<br><br>tie | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| vowed<br><br>void | boy<br><br>buy | |
| Sow<br><br>soy | voice<br><br>vice | |
| bough<br><br>boy | alloy<br><br>ally | |

Repeat the following  pair of words and  sentences carefully after the native speaker, and then, write the phonetic symbol **/I/** or /**i/, /U/ or /u/.**

**/I/ ---------/i/**

- J**i**m **is** **i**n the p**i**cture , h**e** was ver**y** th**i**n when h**e** was a ch**i**ld

- S**ee** that wonderf**i**l landscape , s**i**t  down in that f**i**eld

- P**u**t y**ou**r jacket t**oo**

- I   b**e**gan to stud**y** in my fr**ee** t**i**me

-  There were thirt**ee**n guests at the d**i**nner table

-  The box contained s**i**xt**ee**n toy soldiers.

/U/ ----- /u/.

- That is a r**u**de b**oo**k

- My new bl**u**e t**oo**thbrush

- There was a young teacher called W**oo**d.

**APPLICATION FOR /ə/**

Identify the parts of speech of each word.Here are some more word families.

| Noun | Adjective | Person | Verb |
|------|-----------|--------|------|
| Industry | industrial | industrialist | industrialize |
| Invention | inventive | inventor | invent |
| Competition | competitive | competitor | compete |
| Criticism | critical | critic | critize |
| Nation | nationalistic | nationalist | nationalize |
| analysis | analytical | analyst | analyse |

PRONUNCIATION APPLICATION


In order to get an better understanding about the correct pronunciationof a English sound, it is important to practice several exercises such as repetition: repetition and minimal pairs  . but one effective way to improve it is when students face the sound in context. Normally when students learn pronunciation in isolation, it is sometimes difficult for them to apply it in context, because a real context is composed by different sounds that might create confusion due to different phonetic processes that are common in the languages.

Isolated sound repetition is a good warming up activity then, the exercise should be widened to phrases, sentences and may be dialogues or even paragraphs(depending on the sound itself,and its concurrence). In this way student` contact with the specific sound through real language will be adequate.

For teachers, the first task should be defining the sounds that must be practiced.

Example:

/I/, /U/,/ə/

| Sound | Noun sample | Adjective   sample |
|-------|-------------|--------------------|
| /I/   | Engineer    | English            |
| /U/   | Book        | Poor               |
| /ə/   | Table       | Hidden             |

Once  the samples are ready, it is time to start drilling with them through repetiton , each time trying to add a new element in order to increase the difficulty level.

| English | Engineer | Book |
|---------|----------|------|
| A English | An  Engineer | A  Table |
| A English Engineer | A Poor Book | A hidden Table |

When the idea is  to contrast sounds , the combination of these elements should be helpful.

Example:

| Engineer | Book | Table |
|---|---|---|
| An  Engineer | A Book | A Table |
| An English Engineer | An English Book | An English Table |
| A poor engineer | A poor Book | A poor Table |
| A hidden engineer | A hidden Book | A hidden Table |

Listening activities

1.Congratulations! *(in a bar)*

David: Ken, Ken! Over here!

Ken: (comes over) David! Long time no see! What have you been up to lately?

David: No good, I can assure you. And you?

Ken: Much the same, except I do have some big news.

David: Come on, the suspense is killing me.

Ken: No, really. What have you been doing these past few weeks? The last time I saw you were looking for a new job.

David: Well, that's not exactly true. I was thinking about changing jobs. Luckily, that was all taken care of when they offered me a new position in the accounts department.

Ken: A step up in the big business world!

David: I wouldn't exaggerate, but I'm pleased. I had been hoping to get a promotion for a while, so when it finally came through I was relieved. Actually, that's why I was looking for a new job. I just didn't want to work there anymore if they weren't going to recognize my efforts.

Ken: I hear you. Sometimes you can do your best and it seems like the others don't know you exist... I hope they money's better?

David: I got a reasonable raise... Now, enough about me. I'm dying to hear your news.

Ken: Hold on now... I'm getting married!

David: NO! You said you'd never get married. I can't believe it.

Ken: That was then and this is now. You've got to meet Andrea, she's heaven.

David: So come on. This is all news to me. I didn't even know you were dating.

Ken: We weren't. We've just been dating for two weeks now.

David: ... and you're getting married?!

Ken: I know, I know. I can't help it. I'm just completely head over heals in love with Andrea.

David: Well, congratulations my friend! That is fantastic! This calls for a beer!

Ken: Thanks David, I'm glad to hear you feel that way. I thought you might be surprised.

David: Jack! Two pints of your best over here!

### Reading activity

**Dialogue**

Heather: Ron, what are you doing?

Ron: Ah, nothing. I'm just looking up some information on the Internet.

Heather: Like what? Let me see.

Ron: No, no, it's okay. I mean, you know . . .

Heather: Baldness? What are you looking that up for? [*Well, you know . . .* ] I . . . . I mean, you're not that bad off.

Ron: Ah, there you go. Bringing it up again!

Heather: No. I mean it. You look great! Honestly, it's not

that bad.

Ron: Hey, I get enough of it from friends, and the people at work, and now from you!

Heather: Well, maybe you could wear a toupee? I think you'd look great.

Ron: Oh no. And have it slip off my head on to my date's dinner plate as I lean over to kiss her? Uh-uh.

Heather: Well, have you ever thought about seeking medical advice? There are new advances in medicines that not only retard hair loss, but help regenerate new growth.

Ron: Ah, I still don't give much credibility to medical treatment to prevent permanent hair loss.

Heather: Well, what about accepting the fact that you're just losing your hair?

Ron: I just can't give up hope. I know appearances shouldn't matter, but I don't know. I just feel that women just avoid me.

Heather: Come on. You can't be serious.

Ron: No really. I've seen it many times. It just, I don't know

**2. Reading activity**

Pharagraph

 Dear Mom and Dad,

This is my fifth day at summer camp. Life in the great outdoors isn't exactly what I expected, but I'm not starving . . . yet . . . so don't worry about me. I guess I should tell you about what I do every day. First, everyone has to get up at 5:30 A.M. They have this silly old rooster named Harry who loves to wake us up. Next, we have to make our beds and tidy up the cabin before our camp counselor, Jeff, comes to inspect the place.

Then, we have breakfast around 6:30 A.M. After that, we have some free time, so I've been going down to the nearby stream to fish for a couple of hours. But yesterday, the only thing I caught was an old shoe and a tree branch. Great catch, Huh? Then when I was trying to swat a mosquito buzzing around my head, I slipped and fell in the stream and lost my fishing pole. That ended my fishing career.

Well, in the afternoon, there are different activities we can choose from like archery, horseback riding, and hiking. I thought archery would be the sport for me until I shot an arrow through Jeff's pant leg. As you can imagine, I haven't been invited back since.

In the evening, everyone is assigned a different chore to get
dinner ready. Yesterday, I was in charge of cooking the
hotdogs, but I accidently dropped them in the fire, so we had
to settle for beans instead. The other kids are always razzing
me about it.

At night, we sit around a campfire in front of the cabin, sing
songs, and tell ghost stories. That's usually fun, but one
night while trying to find more sticks for the fire, I got all
turned around and got lost. After about an hour of wandering
aimlessly in the forest, I finally found my way back, but no
one seemed to have realized what had happened, thinking that I
just had gone to bed. A bear or wolf could have eaten me and
no one would have known it. I was so beat I just crashed . . .
out like a light.

Well, today is another day and tomorrow I go home . . . and
not a bit too soon. I've learned that camping is just not for
me.

Love,

Brad

**POST-TEST**

APPLIED TO ENGLISH  SPANISH  PROGRAM  FROM  NINTH SEMESTER

Read the following text taking into account all the punctuation signs .Do not forget to make use of a good pronunciation .

THE  NATIVE LANGUAGE EFFECT

It almost goes without saying tha the native language of every learner is an extremely significant factor in the acquisition of a new language.  Most of the time, we think of the native language as exercising an interferering effect on the target language, and indeed the most salient, observable effect does appear to be one of interference.  The majority of a learner´s errors in producing the second language, especially in the beginning levels, stem fromthe learner´s assumption that the target language operates like the native language.

But what we observe may, like an iceberg, may be only part of the reality.  The facilitating effects of the native language are surely as powerful in the process, or more, so, even though they are less observable.  When the native French speaker who is learning English says "I am here since January", there is one salient native language effect, a verb tense error stemming from French. But the learner´s native French may also facilitated the production of that sentence´s subject-verb-complement word order, the placement of the locative (here), the one-to-one grammatical correspondence of

the other words in the sentence, rules governing prepositional

phrases, and the cognate word (January).

The principle of the Native language Effect stresses the

importance of  that native system in the linguistic attempts

of the second language learner.

The native language of learners exerts a strong influence on

the acquisition of the target language system. While that

native system will exercise both facilitating and interfering

effects on the production and comprehension of the new

language, the interfering effects are likely to be the most

salient.

In your dealing with the Native Language Effect in the

classroom, your  feedback will most often focus on

interference.  That´s perfectly sound pedagogy.

Learners´errors stand out like the tips of icebergs, giving us

salient signals of an underlying system at work. Errors are,

in fact, windows to a learner´s internalized understanding of

the second language, and therefore they give teachers

something observable to react to. Student non-errors ---the

facilitating effects---certainly do not need to be treated.

Don´t try to fix that isn´t broken.

Some classroom suggestions stemming from the native language

effect:

1. Regard learners´errors as important windows to their

   underlying system and provide appropriate feedback on

   them.  Errors of native language interference  may be

repaired by acquainting the learner with the native

language´s  cause of the error.

2. Ideally, every sucessful learner will hold on to the

   facilitating effects of the native language and discard

   the  interference. Help your students to understand that

   not everything about their native language will cause

   error.

3. Thinking directly in the target language usually helps to

   minimize interference errors.  Try to coax students into

   thinking in the second language instead of resorting to

   translation as they comprehend and produce language.  An

   ocasional translation of a word or phrase can actually be

   helpful, especially for adults, but direct use of the

   second language will help to avoid the first language

   ″crutch syndrome″.

Read the following dialogue. Do not forget to keep in mind
punctuation and good pronunciation.

Presidential Elections

**Alex:** This election is going to be close!

**Helen:** I think you're right. The Republicans and the Democrats
are fighting for every vote.

**Alex:** Did you watch the conventions?

**Helen:** Yes, I watched a little bit. The party platforms are
extremely different.

**Alex:** Yes, they are! Watching them on TV, it was hard to
believe they come from the same country!

**Helen:** Oh, it wasn't that bad.

**Alex:** Hmmm, anyway the delegates certainly clapped hard for their nominees.

**Helen:** But it was the same stump speech over and over again. In both parties!

**Alex:** That's what politicians do best. Talk ... the problem is whether they actually do very much.

**Helen:** Oh, you're a pessimist!

**Alex:** I wouldn't say that. It's just that I'm sick and tired of all the attack ads.

**Helen:** I see your point. It would be nice to know what they want to govern the country, rather than why they think the other guy isn't any good.

**Alex:** They treat us like idiots! I hate sound bites.Short simple statements that don't really give me much information. Treat me like I have a brain.

**Helen:** Some say we get what we deserve. Voter turnout is so low, perhaps we don't deserve any better.

**Alex:** But that's why people don't come out to vote. They don't feel represented even if they do vote.

**Helen:** I think we need a third party in this country.

**Alex:** I couldn't agree with you more!

**Helen:** Perhaps a third party would stop the partisanship.

**Alex:** Another thing that I don't think is fair is the electoral system.

**Helen:** No kidding! Just think, a state like California has 54

electoral votes. One vote majority in the popular vote and ALL of those 54 votes go to ONE candidate!

**Alex:** It just isn't fair.

**Helen:** Of course, there are reasons for that.

**Alex:** Hmmm. I guess ...

**Helen:** Are you a registered voter?

**Alex:** Of course! I'm a registered voter and I go to the voting booth to vote. I want that vote to represent my voice.

**Helen:** OK, OK, no need to give a speech.

**Alex:** Ha ha, I just think it's my duty as a citizen to vote.

**Helen:** Yes, I agree with you. If you can vote, vote!

Read the following paragraph

The hardest language

People often ask which is the most difficult language to learn, and it is not easy to answer because there are many factors to take into consideration. Firstly, in a first language the differences are unimportant as people learn their mother tongue naturally, so the question of how hard a language is to learn is only relevant when learning a second language.

A native speaker of Spanish, for example, will find Portuguese much easier to learn than a native speaker of Chinese, for example, because Portuguese is very similar to Spanish, while Chinese is very different, so first language can affect learning a second language. The greater the

differences between the second language and our first, the harder it will be for most people to learn. Many people answer that Chinese is the hardest language to learn, possibly influenced by the thought of learning the Chinese writing system, and the pronunciation of Chinese does appear to be very difficult for many foreign learners. However, for Japanese speakers, who already use Chinese characters in their own language, learning writing will be less difficult than for speakers of languages using the Roman alphabet.

Some people seem to learn languages readily, while others find it very difficult. Teachers and the circumstances in which the language is learned also play an important role, as well as each learner's motivation for learning. If people learn a language because they need to use it professionally, they often learn it faster than people studying a language that has no direct use in their day to day life.

Apparently, British diplomats and other embassy staff have found that the second hardest language is Japanese, which will probably come as no surprise to many, but the language that they have found to be the most problematic is Hungarian, which has 35 cases (forms of a nouns according to whether it is subject, object, genitive, etc). This does not mean that Hungarian is the hardest language to learn for everyone, but it causes British diplomatic personnel, who are generally used to learning languages, the most difficulty. However, Tabassaran, a Caucasian language has 48 cases, so it might

cause more difficulty if British diplomats had to learn it.

Different cultures and individuals from those cultures will find different languages more difficult. In the case of Hungarian for British learners, it is not a question of the writing system, which uses a similar alphabet, but the grammatical complexity, though native speakers of related languages may find it easier, while struggling with languages that the British find relatively easy.

No language is easy to learn well, though languages which are related to our first language are easier. Learning a completely different writing system is a huge challenge, but that does not necessarily make a language more difficult than another. In the end, it is impossible to say that there is one language that is the most difficult language in the world.

**Receptionist**: English Language Center. How may I help you?

**Caller**: Yes. I'm calling to find out more information about your program. For example, what kind of courses do you offer?

**Receptionist**: Well, first of all, the purpose of our program is to provide language learning opportunities to this area's community [*Uh-hum*], whether a student's goal is to master basic functional language skills, let's say, for his or her job, or to study intensively to enter a US college or university.

Read the following text

**Caller**: Okay. I'm calling for a friend who is interested in attending a US university.

**Receptionist**: And that's the kind of, uh, instruction that we provide, from basic communication courses to content-based classes such as computer literacy, intercultural communication, and business English.

**Caller**: Great. What are your application deadlines for the next semester?

**Receptionist**: Well, we ask applicants to apply no later than two months before the semester begins. [*Uh-hum*] This gives us time to process the application and issue the student's I-20.

**Caller**: An I-20?

**Receptionist**: Oh, an I-20 is a form that indicates that we are giving permission for the student to study in our program, and then the student takes this form to the US embassy in his or her country to apply for the F-1 student visa.

**Caller**: Alright. What is the tuition for a full-time student?

**Receptionist**: It's two thousand thirty dollars.

**Caller**: And how does one apply?

**Receptionist**: Well, we can send you an application and you can mail it back to us, or you can fill out our application that's online at our Web site.

**Caller**: And are there other materials I would need to send

in addition to the application form?

**Receptionist**: Uh, yes. You would need to send in a $35 non-refundable application fee [*Uh-huh*], a sponsorship form indicating who will be responsible financially for the student while studying in our program, and a bank statement showing that you or your sponsor has sufficient funds to cover tuition expenses and living costs for the entire year of study.

**Caller**: And how can I send these materials to you?

**Receptionist**: You can either send the application packet by regular mail or you can fax it.

**Caller**: And the application fee?

**Receptionist**: We accept money orders, travelers checks, or credit cards.

**Caller**: Alright. I think that's about it.

**Receptionist**: Okay great.

**Caller**: Oh and what is your name?

**Receptionist**: Ok. My name is Tony Nelson. You can just call and ask for me.

**Caller**: Great. Thank you for help.

**Receptionist**: No problem and please don't hesitate to call again if you have any other questions.

**Caller**: Okay. Goodbye.

**Listening activity**

Here are four people talking about eating out. After you read, answer each question with a paragraph number **(1-4).**

.The last time I went to a restaurant was about 2 months ago. My wife and I wanted to celebrate our wedding anniversary with a good meal so we went to an expensive Italian restaurant in downtown Lisbon. We both had pasta to start and for the main course my wife ordered a steak and I chose fish. For dessert we both ate chocolate cake topped with fresh cream. Delicious!

2. I went to a restaurant yesterday evening with my sister's children. It wasn't very expensive and the menu was very limited. We all had a burger and French fries, and drank cola. It wasn't very good.

3. My boyfriend loves spicy food so this restaurant was perfect. The waiters were all really friendly and polite, and they played traditional sitar music which was very relaxing. The menu offered vegetarian dishes as well as meat dishes served with rice and a sauce - it depended on how hot you wanted it! I chose a mild beef curry but my boyfriend had a lamb 'vindaloo' - he also drank 2 liters of water!!

4. My class at the university went there last weekend. It's a very popular type of restaurant in my country. It generally offers one type of food (a kind of bread with cheese and tomato sauce) which you then choose what ingredients to add on top of it. I asked for ham and mushrooms on mine and my

classmates each had something different so we could taste a
piece of each person's meal.