

**THE ANALYSIS OF THE PRONUNCIATION OF THE SOUNDS ?b ?- ?v? BY  
NON- NATIVE SPEAKERS.**

**By**

**MONICA ANDREA RIOBAMBA  
ANA GABRIELA VILLOTA SOLARTE**

**Submitted to the School of Human Sciences  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of B. A. in the Department  
of Linguistics and Languages  
University of Nariño  
December, 2003**

**THE ANALYSIS OF THE PRONUNCIATION OF THE SOUNDS ?b ?- ?v ? BY  
NON- NATIVE SPEAKERS.**

**By**

**MONICA ANDREA RIOBAMBA  
ANA GABRIELA VILLOTA SOLARTE**

**Advisor:  
MIGUEL HERNANDEZ**

**Submitted to the School of Human Sciences  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of B. A. in the Department  
of Linguistics and Languages  
University of Nariño  
December, 2003**

## **ABSTRACT**

Not much has been said about Pronunciation and its problems around us and that's why it is important to clear up that pronunciation is one of the important parts of communication, as it is well known that English pronunciation is a difficult stage in the learning of a foreign language, because the sounds and the rules are different from those of our mother tongue. There are different ways to learn and teach English pronunciation but students present some difficulties to the pronunciation of certain sounds, especially those which do not exist in our mother tongue.

Taking this as reference; the present research study centered its attention in the pronunciation of the sounds [b] and [v].

First of all the students were chosen, and then they were tested and recorded pronouncing the sounds in complete words and in each of its positions inside the sentence (beginning, middle, and at the end) it was done in order to get the Data that this research needed to realize the problems students have with these two specific sounds. This research made use of two kinds of tests which are listening discrimination and pronunciation tests. The results obtained concluded that students have problems with the pronunciation of these two sounds [ b ] and [ v ], because they do not establish the difference and their pronunciation and their listening discrimination between [b] and [v], at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the English word.

## RESUMEN

No se ha hablado mucho acerca de la Pronunciación y sus problemas a nuestro alrededor, y por eso es importante aclarar que la pronunciación es una de las partes mas importantes de la comunicación, como se conoce la pronunciación del inglés es una etapa difícil en el aprendizaje de esta lengua extranjera. Hay diferentes formas de enseñar y aprender la pronunciación del inglés, pero los estudiantes tienen dificultades en la pronunciación de ciertos sonidos, especialmente con aquellos que no existen en nuestra lengua materna. Considerando lo anterior; esta investigación ha centrado la atención en la pronunciación de los sonidos [b] – [v] del inglés.

En primer lugar se escogieron los estudiantes con los que se trabajó, luego fueron evaluados, y posteriormente se grabó la pronunciación de los sonidos [b] – [v] utilizando palabras que llevaran estos sonidos en las tres posiciones (inicio, medio y final), esto con el fin de obtener la información necesaria para establecer los problemas que los estudiantes presentan con la pronunciación de estos dos sonidos particularmente. En esta investigación se hizo uso de dos clases de pruebas: Listening Discrimination y Pronunciation Tests. Con los resultados obtenidos, se concluye que los estudiantes tienen problemas con la pronunciación de los sonidos [b] – [v] del Inglés, porque ellos aun no establecen una diferencia en la pronunciación y el escucha de una palabra en inglés, teniendo en cuenta la posición del sonido dentro de la palabra (inicio, medio y final).

To Lina María and Karol  
Sofía, who are the reasons of  
all my projects .

To my partner Andrea for  
sharing good moments in  
the University.

GABRIELA

To my mom, because her love, support and efforts have pushed me always to success. To Francisco Rosero for his understanding, help and support and because a part of what I am is thanks to him. To Franz because he has always been by my side sharing all the moments of my life. To Gaby for her friendship and loyalty.

ANDREA

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors want to thank to:

- ✍ Professor Miguel Hernandez for his help during the process of the development of this research.
- ✍ Professor Helda Alicia Hidalgo for her support, help and time.
- ✍ Professor Christian Tovar because his comments and aids were important to this investigation.
- ✍ Jenny Bacca for her patience, and because her friendship helps in the development of this research.
- ✍ Adriana for her patience, and to be in the mood to help us.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY</b>	
The Problem .....	1
Description of the problematic situation .....	2
Problem Analysis... ..	3
Problem Statement .....	3
Problem Evaluation .....	4
Delimitations .....	4
Objectives .....	6
Significance .....	6
Limitations.....	7
<b>CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Teaching English in Primary school .....	9
Learning the First Language .....	10
Learning the second Language .....	13
Comparing L1 and L2 Acquisition .....	14
Error Analysis .....	15
<b>CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>26</b>
Design Method .....	26
Participants, setting and sample .....	27
Procedure .....	28
Pilot study .....	30
Data Analysis .....	30
Ethical Issues .....	30
<b>CHAPTER IV: RESULTS</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	<b>43</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>47</b>
<b>APPENDIX</b> .....	<b>48</b>



## LIST OF APPENDIX

<b>Appendix A Encuesta .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Appendix B Test .....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Appendix C permission letter.....</b>	<b>53</b>

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Throughout this part of the research, it is important to show and support why it is necessary to work in this field of pronunciation. Therefore, to develop this part of the investigation, aspects related to the problem were researched such as description, delimitation, objectives, significance and other aspects which would clarify the errors of the sounds [v] and [b] that students make in their English pronunciation.

#### **1.1 THE PROBLEM**

Within the process of learning an L2 there are four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) that influence the communicative abilities, giving the students the capacity to understand and to be understood.

Pronunciation is a relevant part of the process. To acquire good pronunciation, students have to follow a step-by-step process. In this process, the students make errors while learning and this affects the quality of their English pronunciation and by extension, communication. Taking these aspects into account, it was decided to do a study in the field of pronunciation. Special attention was focused on the pronunciation of 'b' and 'v' to determine if these errors were the result of several educational aspects such as methodology, attitudes and aptitudes, which involve both teachers and students.

## **1.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEMATIC SITUATION**

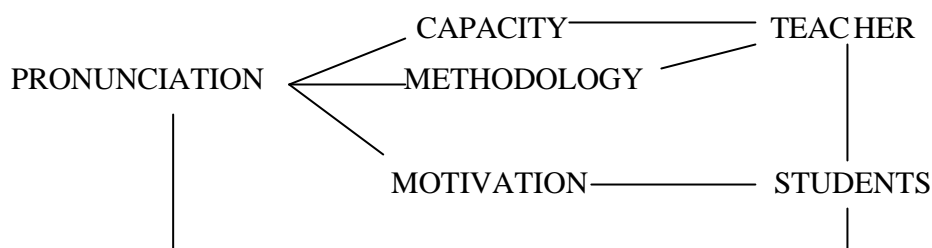
The teaching of a foreign language has been established as an obligatory subject in the curriculum by the new “Ley General de Educación”. The purpose of this law is to give the students an opportunity to know a new culture and language. As it is known, there are many problems related to the teaching of English, because the educational resources come from English-speaking countries and are then adapted to our culture and educational system. This law has created a situation where teachers with limited knowledge of English are not only being forced to teach the language, but at levels that they are not trained to teach. On the other hand, students are unable to appreciate acquiring a foreign language because they are unaware of its value, and this in turn affects the normal learning of the language.

In this research, it is important to detect some of the factors which prevent the correct pronunciation of /b/ and /v/ and also why students have difficulty differentiating between these two sounds. As a result, their English pronunciation is the same for both sounds.

## **1.3 TENTATIVE PROBLEM STATEMENT**

What happens when students of the fifth level of a primary school pronounce [b] – [v] sounds?

## 1.4 PROBLEM ANALYSIS



There are a lot of variables, which influence the process of learning a foreign language; therefore it is necessary to analyze methodology because the teacher must have an effective method for teaching English.

On the other hand, the motivation that students feel for English could be a factor which influences their results while learning a foreign language.

Another aspect is the aptitude that teachers must possess for teaching English in a competent manner and in response; students should demonstrate the capacity for acquiring, learning and adapting all their senses to the new language.

## 1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT

What are the most generalized errors in the pronunciation of  $\text{b}^{\text{h}}$ - $\text{v}$  sounds, among native speakers of Spanish who are in the fifth level of a public primary school in Pasto?

## **1.6 PROBLEM EVALUATION**

First of all, it is important to say that this research is not trivial, because pronunciation is an important resource within the communicative competence of the learning of L2; if students acquire a good pronunciation, they will be able to communicate with each other effectively. This research works with a sample of six students, both male and female who belong to a fifth level of primary school.

## **1.7 DELIMITATIONS**

### **1.7.1 CONCEPTUAL**

**ERROR:** When a learner has not learned something and consistently gets it wrong.

**MISTAKE:** When the learner sometimes uses the incorrect form, this is an inconsistent deviation.

**LANGUAGE ACQUISITION:** The learning and development of a person's language. It is studied by Linguistics and Psycholinguistics and Applied Linguistics, and enables the understanding of processes used in learning language, to help identify stages in the developmental process, and to give a better understanding of the nature ( Elliot1981).

**LABIODENTAL:** Describes a speech sound which is produced by the lower lip touching or nearly touching the upper teeth.

**BILABIAL:** Describes a speech sound which is produced by both the upper and lower lips.

**SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION:** The process by which people develop proficiency in a second or foreign language, this term has been used particularly in USA by researchers interested in:

- a. Longitudinal studies and case studies of the development of syntax and phonology and second and foreign language learners.
- b. Analysis of the spoken and written discourse.
- c. The study of the other aspects of language of language development.

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE:** A language which is not a native language in a country. A foreign language is usually studied either for communication with foreigners who speak the language, or for reading printed materials in the language.

**NATIVE SPEAKERS:** A person considered as a speaker of his/her native language. The intuition of a native speaker about the structure of his/her language is one basis for establishing or confirming the rules of the grammar.

**ASSIMILATION:** When a speech sound changes, and becomes more like another sound which follows it or precedes it.

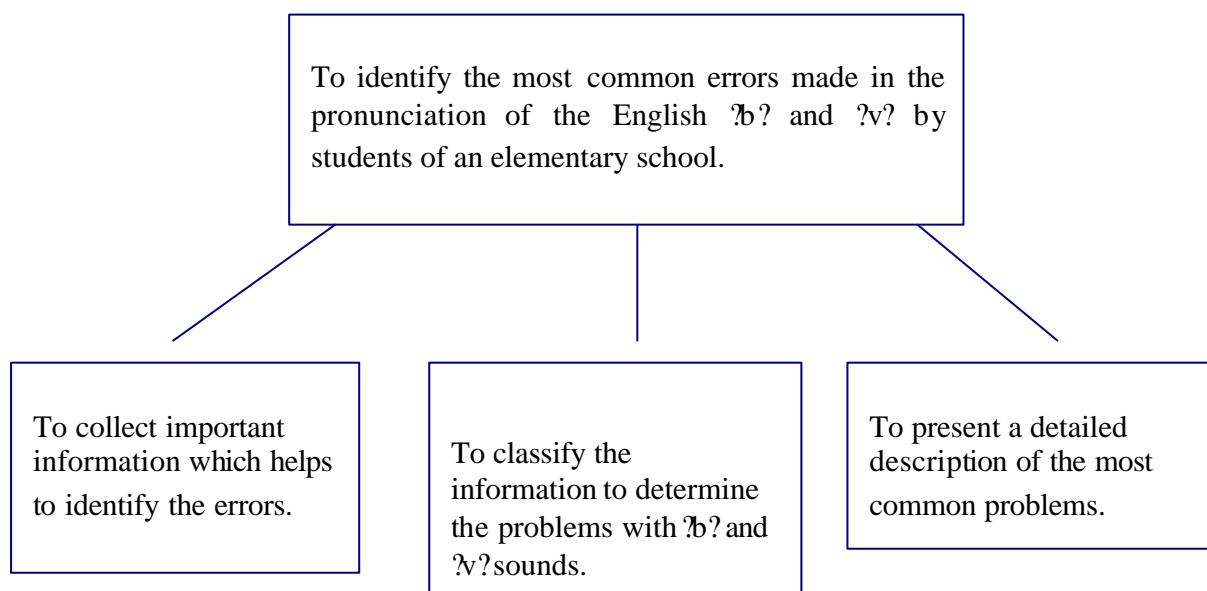
### **1.7.2 POPULATION**

This research works with six (6) students of primary school, three girls and three boys, between the ages of nine and ten years, who are of poor socio-economic backgrounds.

### 1.7.3 GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

The public school is located in the downtown area of Pasto. There are morning sessions and the students belong to a low socio-economic status. This school offers levels from pre-school to fifth level of primary school.

## 2. OBJECTIVES



## 3. SIGNIFICANCE

English has become, and continues to be one of the most important languages. As a future English teacher, it is imperative to know the importance of teaching it as a foreign language.

The development of the four skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening) is important within the educational process because the new “Ley General de Educación”, has established English as an obligatory subject in the schools’ curriculum.

This study intends to describe and point out the errors that students make. To do this, it will be based on observations and a direct contact with students who have these difficulties. To accomplish this, recordings, open questions, and some pronunciation tests were used to get information about the difficulty of pronouncing /b/ /v/ in English.

This research will provide the opportunity to find out whether it is an educational problem or if there are external factors that influence L2 acquisition.

#### **4. LIMITATIONS**

1. Students do not like to take an active part in the research, and when they do, they view it as obligatory.
2. Some students demonstrate a dislike for English and this could be an obstacle to develop the observation.
3. The lack of interest for English classes by both students and teachers.
4. Parents do not allow their children to be participants in the research.
5. The institution could establish some conditions about schedules of different activities in English classes.



In this chapter, the most relevant aspects have been explored in order to explain the purpose and the significance of this research by means of the explanation of the problem, its delimitation, and the most important objectives that will be developed throughout the research.

In the next chapter, the research will be further developed, and based on some literature references and theories that clarify and describe some reasons why students make errors in pronouncing English.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In our field of study, it is important to know how the process of L1 and L2 learning is carried out, taking into account some important aspects and stages that are presented during this period. Therefore it is necessary to deal with important themes that help to clarify the problem of study, such as the teaching of English in primary school, the learning process of L1 and L2, the rules of phonology; and, above all, the error analysis in English pronunciation.

#### **2.1 TEACHING ENGLISH IN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

In the last century, English has gained acceptance as one of the most important languages in the world. In Colombia, as stated previously, the teaching of English was established as a law by the "Ley General de Educación".

The most important objectives for teaching English should be the linguistic and grammatical proficiency, the development of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing); and the knowledge learned with reference to cognitive, affective and psychomotor learning.

The objective of the teaching of any foreign language must result in the mastery of the target language and at the same time the development of the cognitive capacities. Carroll (1966) alleged: "The learning of the language is a process in which the learner acquires phonological, grammatical and lexical structures of a second language through the study

and analysis of these structures. Theory gets more value to the comprehension of the structure of a second language than the fluency of its use".

Nevertheless, the objective of learning should be as Torrey purports, "learning of language is learning to understand and to be understood by other speakers of that language".

On the other hand, Joan Though (cited in Bastidas 2002) affirms: "The early years of childhood provide an optimum period for learning languages" (p. 161). But children do it by means of imitation. Thus, the acquisition of pronunciation is an important part - they learn what they hear and they internalize the pronunciation.

To Penfield (cited in Bastidas 2002, P. 161) the capacity that children have for learning foreign languages starts in the flexible mechanism which is an advantage in the adaptation of other habits of speech.

## **2.2 LEARNING THE FIRST LANGUAGE.**

To Prato, From birth, man must learn how to communicate with the world around him. His first efforts are limited; but through trial and error and other strategies he becomes a member of the linguistic community to which he belongs. Nevertheless the ignorance that parents and teachers have about children's language development during language acquisition causes most of the learning problems that we see in our schools nowadays.

Language has been analyzed on psychological, biological and linguistic bases. The most important researcher for the cognitive theory has been Jean Piaget. He considers that the

acquisition of the language is reached when children have obtained a certain level of sensorio-motriz intelligence.

To Piaget, all knowledge comes through action and all action makes schemes (the scheme is a kind of practice concept). For him, language is a particular and special case of the semiotic function; however it is not limited to just this function but other semantic acts.

Piaget concludes that language is a product of intelligence and not vice versa.

On the other hand, Chomsky considers that all human beings are born with minds that are pre-disposed to acquire language.

All children are born into a first-level linguistic community, and this is usually the family. This linguistic medium will be the "Input" which aids in the development of the Language Acquisition Device (LAD). As time goes by, children get to know the language, that is, they acquire linguistic competence and speak "Output".

## **LANGUAGE ACQUISITION.**

Linguists focus their attention on the babbling stage, because they think that this stage is indispensable to the post-language development.

In Spanish, in the process of language acquisition the phonetic game of babbling consists of the union of a consonant with a vowel like: 'da-da-da', 'ta-ta' and later on, 'pa-pa', 'ma-má'.

So, the babbling stage is a result of the child's imitation of the language spoken by adults. Children acquire the language at the same time as they are able to understand it. There is

no specific period of time in which children can learn or acquire its frameworks, but they are able to hear, to analyze, to choose and to incorporate their language. Children do it by means of linguistic competence which they develop step by step. When they are playing with their language, they draw conclusions that all masculine forms end in "o", and the feminine in "a". For example, the male of 'vaca' will be 'vaco'. In that way, they discover that plurals are formed by adding an "s", so for 'lapiz', the plural becomes 'muchos lapiz'. Additionally they know that the verb "comer" is, "yo como" in present tense; and "yo comí" in past tense; therefore they use the same rule for verbs such as "saber" y "poner":

PRESENT

Yo pongo

Yo sabo

PAST

Yo poní

Yo sabí

These kinds of errors are considered "errores constructivos", because while doing this, children are showing their capacity to construct a cognitive framework by using the rules in a conscious way. Chomsky claims that children make mistakes before they start talking; but they never say things like: "¿está el hombre que aqui es alto?" or "¿es el hombre que alto se irá?". With this, Chomsky (cited in Prato, P. 24) shows that the rules are independent from the grammatical framework in the initial 'So' state. Performance produces competence, but never totally, because children have many ways to express what they know about their

language; additionally, other linguistic factors such as shyness, the lack of attention, and weariness may limit the act of speaking.

## **2.3 LEARNING A SECOND LANGUAGE**

Having a wider knowledge of L2 is important to establish the difference between acquisition and learning, according to Krashen (1986). L2 acquisition is a similar process to L1 acquisition, because children are exposed to the language environment, in which they can interact, as with their mother tongue; however learning according to Krashen refers to the knowledge of the grammatical rules and the capacity to use it in real life situations.

Chomsky proposed that the acquisition process was essentially one of rule formation not habit formation. In current discussions, the term "acquisition" is often identified by subconscious aspects of learning, while the term "learning" is reserved for the conscious aspects.

In this research "communicative competence" was taken into consideration, and this consists of four major components:

- *Grammatical competence*: It refers to the code that is used in the real language; it includes the use of vocabulary, rules of pronunciation and sentence structures.

- *Sociolinguistic competence*: It refers to how grammatical forms can be applied in different contexts to express functions.

*Discourse competence*: It involves terms such as 'cohesion' and 'coherence'; the former refers to how speakers link words or phrases using devices; the latter refers to the ability needed for communicating and judging the relationship that governs the idea in a text.

*Strategic competence:* It is concerned with the use of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies.

Inside the leaning process of L2, it is important to point out some models that can describe the process that students have in the development of this period. One of them is '*creative construction*'. In this model, a learner "constructs" a series of internal representations of the L2 system; it happens by means of a communicative process.

Another model is '*learning skills*', which consists of a step-by-step process of knowledge leading to an entirely whole system.

On one hand, Nativists have supported that L2 acquisition depends on the significant, specialized innate capacity for learning acquisition. Others, like the Behaviorists have pointed out that the learners' experience is more important than the innate capacity; while the Interactionists have concluded that internal and external processes are responsible in L2 acquisition.

## **2.4 COMPARING L1 AND L2 ACQUISITION**

First of all, it is important to state that L1 and L2 acquisition follow similar processes, but their stages of development are different. This is because first language acquisition is an innate capacity in the speaker, while the process of second language acquisition is shown as having a systematic approach.

Some children adopt simultaneous acquisition in which they have the capacity to acquire two languages; the first one at home, and the second in their classroom. However, problems develop when they enter pre-school and realize that they cannot use their mother tongue as they would at home. They try to communicate, but nobody understands them; thus they

realize that it is necessary to communicate their needs in a different manner. This is dealt with in two ways: avoidance or adaptation. In avoidance, they stay as far away as possible from the activity and say nothing, or, they adapt to the situation and try to find other means of communicating with others around them. Thus, we realize that development plays an important role in the way children develop different skills by themselves.

## 2.5 ERROR ANALYSIS

Through phonetics, it is easy to study the articulatory, acoustic and auditive aspects of sounds. There are three kinds of phonetics, but in our case only two are relevant :

*Articulatory phonetics:* It studies the different articulatory organs and movements which are used in the production of the speech sounds.

*Auditive phonetics:* It studies the listening and perception of speech sounds.

Within sound production we can identify two kinds of sounds:

**Voiced sound:** it is the sound produced by the vibration of the vocal cords.

**Voiceless sound:** it is the sound produced without the vibration of the vocal cords.

In all languages, there are voiced and voiceless sounds. On the other hand, in the discussion of consonants, there are important aspects such as.

1. *Place or point of articulation:* where the air stream is obstructed in the mouth  
There are six places in which the air is obstructed: lower lip, lower teeth, upper teeth, alveolar ridge, palate and soft palate.
2. *Manner of articulation:* the way in which the air stream is obstructed.



3. *Position and function of vocal cords*: it refers to the passing of the air stream through the vocal cords.

Taking into account the place or point, the manner of articulation and the function of the vocal cords, consonants could be:

**Place**: bilabial, labiodental, interdental, alveolar, alveopalatal and velar.

**Manner**: stops, fricatives, affricates, nasals, liquids and glides.

**Function**: voiced and voiceless.

Also, taking into account sound production, it can be concluded that these three aspects (position, manner and function) are important to acquire a correct pronunciation.

Students, therefore, during the acquisition of English as a second language pronounce sounds incorrectly. Students frequently made both errors and mistakes. It is, however, necessary to establish the difference between the two.

**Error**: when a learner has not learnt anything and consistently gets it wrong.

According to Burt and Kirpasky (1972, cited in Norish) there are two types of errors.

**Local**: it affects a part of a sentence.

**Global**: it affects a whole sentence.

**Mistake**: when a learner sometimes uses the wrong form; this is an inconsistent deviation.

In order to explain the problem of this study, it is considered important to identify the types of general errors. There are three main processes:

1. Transfer of rules from the mother tongue.
2. Generalization ( overgeneralization) of L2 rules
3. Simplification by omission.

The first one is an interlingual process. Here, the learner uses references from his “mother tongue” in organizing L2 DATA. According to Barry Taylor, this kind of error is more common among beginners than intermediate students. Corder (1978) expresses that “the L1 provides a rather rich set of hypotheses which learners can use”, and in fact, many students make use of these to transfer knowledge from their mother tongue into the other language. The second and third types of errors are “intralingual”. Generalization is a “fundamental learning strategy” , in this type of error we construct “rules “ , but sometimes our predictions are wrong , because for some reasons the rules do not apply to a particular item; or the item belongs to a different strategy that is covered by another rule. That is why our initial errors are an overgeneralization of the rule and this results in the wrong prediction.

One example in language learning could be a rule to make plurals:

A plural can be made by adding an “S” to the singular form, but when a student says “we saw two mouses” he has over generalized the rule, because it is one of the exceptions of the rule. The third type of error is simplification, Jurgen Meisel (1980) describes this process as a help to the learners’ development of a form of language. This is a stage in children *telegraphic speech*; for example the omission of inflections and other morphemes.

The three processes work together and reinforce each other, because they are part of the normal psychological reality of L2 learning.

In the field of English pronunciation it is important to take into consideration some factors which influence it, such as:

***Stress:*** 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.

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

***Intonation:*** is the term used to describe the pitch or melody pattern of any group of words.

## **PHONOLOGICAL PROCESSES**

Within phonology there are some processes which are important to review, because the results obtained could be based on them or take them as a resource to explain the results.

? **Assimilation:** It is a process by which a segment is modified by its neighbors.

There are two kinds of assimilation, there are:

***Regressive assimilation:*** It is when the assimilated sound is influenced by the sound which follows it. (right – left).

*E.g.* Finger [fɪŋgə] – [fɪŋgə]

**Progressive assimilation:** It is when the assimilated sound takes one of the characteristics from a sound which precedes it. (left - right)

*E.g.* Dogs [dʒgs] – [dʒgz]

? **Epenthesis:** The addition of a sound, or syllable at the beginning in the middle or at the end of a word.

*E.g.* Athlete [æʔlit] – [æʔʔlit]

? **Metathesis:** The transposition of sound within a word.

*E.g.* ask [æsk] – [æks]

? **Neutralization:** It is when two phonemes, sometimes have a contrast and in other times lose it.

*E.g.* writer [rʔʔr] - [raʔdʔr] rider

[raʔDʔr] Flap D

When learners face with a new set of sounds they make use of a strategies, because they think they can use the sounds of their own language to the foreign language, or they try to avoid some sounds. In this part some of this “strategies” are shown.

- ? **Sound substitution:** Learners usually substitute one sound for another and this causes difficulties for the listener. In some cases the sound substituted is not very important and there is a chance to be identified for the speaker because of the context, For example, many speakers who do not have the “th” sound in their native language, it will be substituted for the sound [s]. That’s why the two words thick and sick will be pronounced exactly in the same way.
  
- ? **Sound deletion:** In this case the learner leaves out a sound at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of a word. E.g. The word “hold” would be pronounced like “hole”.
  
- ? **Sound insertion:** It is when learners add sounds when pronouncing words. For example when they pronounce any word beginning with “s”, so **speak** sounds like “espik”.
  
- ? **Links between words:** Here sometimes a linking sound is used, sometimes the sound merges with another and sometimes a composite sound is used.

These are some examples:

*Linking sound:* when saying “go in” speakers add the consonant [w], and it sounds like “go win”.

*Sound merger:* when saying “nice shoes” the final consonant of “nice” merges with the first letter of “shoe” , and it would sound like “ny shoe”.

*Composite sound:* when saying “this year” they do not pronounce the sound “s” follow by [j] as in “yes”, so they use of the [ʃ] between the two words. The phrase will sound like “the shear”.

To foreign students, pronunciation is difficult, because while speaking they make generalization about English which are based on references from their native language.

Another difficulty is the English spelling system. When learners are exposed to written English they start to generalize the rules and how they work, but English spelling is not a regular alphabetic system in which one letter always has the same sound in any given word.

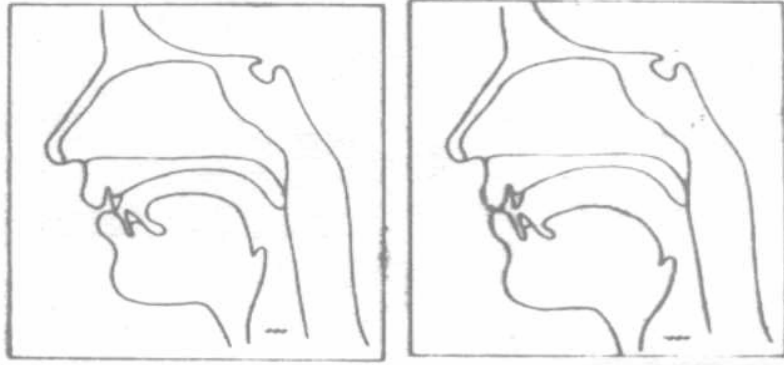
These errors provide bases from which English teachers are able to know how the student is processing the language and they can also provide guides for lesson planning for teachers.

For learners, the analysis of errors will help them realize the origin of these, and subsequently, assist in increasing their knowledge of the language.

The main objective of English teachers should be to give students the capacity of self-correction as native speakers do, because for students the most difficult sounds to pronounce are those which do not exist in their mother tongue.

Taking into account that the sound [v] does not exist in Spanish, students have a lot of difficulty in differentiating the sounds [b] and [v].

Their manner and place of articulation could be seen in the following figure:



[v] Labiodental

[b] bilabial

Fricative

stop

Voiced

voiced

In Spanish, the [b] sound according to articulatory features is:

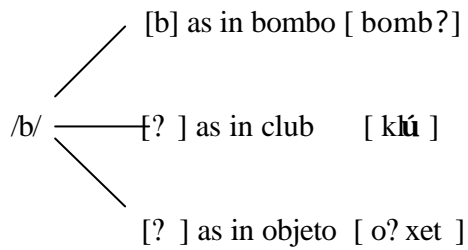
[ b ] Bilabial

Stop

Voiced

The production of the [b] sound is made by bringing the lower lips up toward the upper lip.

In Spanish the [b] phoneme has the following allophones:



The [β̞] allophone is a sound that does not exist in English. In Spanish, the allophone [b] occurs in absolute initial position, after a pause; and also after [m].

It is important to clear up that the [v] sound is not phonemic in any dialect but it does exist in written way. So that learner of English has a lot of difficulty to pronounce this sound, and he/ she tends to substitute [v] for [b].

In English the /b/ and /v/ phonemes have the following forms:

/b/	[b]	/v/	[v]
	[b:]		[v:]
	[b]		[v]
			[f]
			[∅]

The production of the [b] sound is made by firmly joining the two lips. And the production of the [v] sound, the obstruction of the air stream occurs not because the two lips come together but because the bottom lip and the top teeth come together, so that a hissing sound is produced.



These two sounds ([v] [b] ), are found at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of a word:

1. At the beginning : /b/ boat boots

/v/ vote, van

2. In the middle: /b/ Robert

/v/ over

3. At the end: /b/ robe

/v/ cave

It is hard for students to pronounce the [v] sound, and they always pronounce it as [b] or a [ʔ] additionally the sound of [b] and [v] at the end of a word are non-existent in Spanish. As a result of this, students apply a phonological process called deletion which consists of suppressing a sound or a group of sounds.

On the other hand, students frequently change the last sound; in this case a voiced one for a voiceless one, and thus affect its meaning:

cab [kæb]

cap [kæp]

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

An important aspect of research is methodology because through it, the problems that students of English as a foreign language present could be analyzed. To develop this part it will be used various aids which permit the observation and collection of data. In the methodology, aspects such as design, participants, pilot study and the ethical issues were described, and these focused on the problem of the study.

#### **3.1 DESIGN METHOD**

Qualitative and ethnographic descriptions were chosen because the development of L2 learning of the students could be described. In this kind of research, the researcher can be immersed in real situations that involve the process of learning with the ethnographic description. Three aspects were taken into consideration; culture, behavior and language. Taking into consideration of the aim of the study, it is seen that this research required a qualitative description rather than quantitative description. It therefore only described and applied some techniques to analyze the errors in the pronunciation of [b] and [v] sounds; so, this research raises some questions that could be solved in future experimental designs.

## **3.2 PARTICIPANTS, SETTING AND SAMPLE**

In this section, the chosen institution, group of participants and sample, will be presented:

### **3.2.1 PARTICIPANTS**

The participants in this research were students of the fifth level of a primary school. There were six students (3 boys- 3 girls); from poor socio- economic backgrounds.

### **3.2.2 SETTING**

A public primary school which is located in the down-town area was chosen. This school is near the business section of the city. Its building is an old house rented by the municipality. This school has been in operation since 1902, and it changed its first name, by means of the “resolución 238/2000.” The school offers levels from pre-school to the fifth level. Its students belong to a low social status, and some of them come from regions such as Putumayo and Ecuador. The number of the students is around 315 and there are 11 teachers; most of them are trained in primary level education. On weekends, the same building house function another group of students and offers high school education.

### **3.2.3 SAMPLE**

In order to choose the students from the fifth level, the students were initially observed in their environment, and based on their response to the process of learning the foreign language, they were selected. At the end of the selection process, six children of the fifth level were chosen. There were three boys and three girls.

### **3.3 PROCEDURE**

For accomplishing this research, a detailed description of activities was presented. First, a written permission was needed to make the analysis of data.

After that, the students of fifth level were observed to make the selection. Some samples of their pronunciation were recorded and the collected information reviewed. The data was analyzed and their errors were identified and classified. It was ascertained that the most common errors were with the sounds [b] – [v]. The errors were analyzed based on the available bibliography.

The final report was then presented and written and included the interpretation and discussion of the results.

#### **3.3.1 ASPECTS**

Aspects related to phonetics, listening, speaking and the problems of learning were considered important, because they might have an influence in the right development of L2 learning.

#### **3.3.2 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES**

In this section, it was important to use different aids for the systematic collection of data. Therefore, it was necessary to use triangulation as a technique because it provides an in-depth view of the data, and also gives important information about the condition of L2 pronunciation.

### **3.3.2.1 TRIANGULATION**

This is used in qualitative research and is believed to have more reliability in the collection of information. Moreover, objectivity and reliability are very important to the research process.

### **3.3.2.2 TECHNIQUES**

Various techniques were chosen for the data collection.

- 1 Observation:** The main purpose of this was to study the selected students within their environment to identify their errors.
- 2 Interviews:** These were necessary to analyze the students' level of English pronunciation.
- 3 Pronunciation Tests:** These helped to collect specific data about the problem and, also identified the errors that students have regarding [b] and [v]. It was important to use recordings and videos to collect this data.

## **3.4 PILOT STUDY**

To develop this research, six students who belong to the fifth level of a primary school were chosen. Next, some questionnaires were distributed with the purpose of obtaining information about the errors in the pronunciation of the [b] and [v] sounds.

The format of the questionnaire was constructed to analyze the students' listening discrimination, their manner of reading aloud and their knowledge. The students'

pronunciation was then analyzed and the results were related to the theories about the learning of English as a foreign language.

### **3.5 DATA ANALYSIS**

The data collected from the interviews and tests were analyzed, recognized and interpreted using the model of analysis, proposed by Bastidas (2002). This model uses the following phases; these are: (I) Data collection techniques, (II) Organization of data, (III) Identification of the preliminary ideas, (IV) Generalization, and interpretation of Data and (V) The presentation of the results obtained in a final report.

### **3.6 ETHICAL ISSUES**

According to Bastidas (2002) an important aspect in any research is “ethics”, so this research was carried out using aspects such as:

**3.6.1 PERMISSION** The permission of the principal of the primary school was obtained by means of a formal letter.

**3.6.2 VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION** The participation of the children was voluntary and they could leave when they wanted to.

**3.6.3 AVOIDING DAMAGE** This research did not harm anyone who took part in it, neither psychologically nor emotionally.

**3.6.4 RECIPROCITY** The institution received a written report about the research.

**3.6.5 ANONIMITY** For this investigation, the name of the school and its students have remained anonymous.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **RESULTS**

Up to this point, the theoretical framework and all that it implies has been presented in the last three chapters of this topic. These include the problem, the theoretical support and the methodology given to this research. Now it is necessary to present the results obtained from the tests. This chapter presents the results and an in-depth discussion of the study.

#### **4.1 RESULTS**

Before explaining the results, it is important to remember the objective of this research:

To identify the most common errors in the pronunciation of the English sounds [v] and [b] made by students of an elementary school.

First of all this study wanted to know what students think and how they react about English, to accomplish it a simple test was applied. (Appendix A)

##### **4.1.1 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE PRONUNCIATION**

To discuss this part of the research, it is important to consider some important aspects related to pronunciation which could interfere with the correct learning of English in the primary school. To facilitate this part of the research, the results were divided according to

the two sounds [b] and [v], and analyzed in two parts: listening discrimination and pronunciation tests.

#### **4.1.1.1 LISTENING DISCRIMINATION**

For this part, the results are explained based on the positioning of the sound inside words, besides the results are presented in single words, minimal pairs, and minimal sentences.

The words were pronounced by the teacher, and the students had to underline the words they thought were pronounced.

This was the first test applied to the students and to work this it was necessary to make use of minimal pairs and minimal sentences.

#### **THE SOUND [V] AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WORD:**

The words in capital letters were pronounced by the teacher. The underlined words in this part were:

*Single word:* VOTE = 1

View = 5

*Minimal pair:* Bye = 6

VIE = 0



***Minimal sentences:*** Use that for the VASE/Base

VASE = 5

Base = 1

The sound [v] in the beginning position is one of the most difficult for the students to identify, because this sound does not exist in Spanish pronunciation, therefore the students could not identify this sound.

#### **IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WORD:**

The results show that they have problems with the following words.

***Single words:*** Level = 4

***Minimal pairs:*** LOVER = 3

Lubber = 3

***Minimal sentences:*** the marble is MARVEL

Marble = 2

MARVEL = 4

The sound [v] in the middle position was difficult to identify, and students had a tendency to look at the teacher's mouth in order to determine what was pronounced.

#### **AT THE END OF THE WORD:**

*Single word:* curve

*Minimal pairs:* DOVE = 5

Dub = 1

*Minimal sentences:* the accident was on the CURVE/curb

CURVE = 4

Curb = 2

In this part, the results changed and the students were able to identify the sound [v] at the end.

#### **THE SOUND [B] AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WORD**

*Single word:* Buy = 6

*Minimal pair:* BAN = 4

Van = 2

The students did not have problems listening to [b] as the initial sound of a word.

#### **IN THE MIDDLE OF A WORD**

*Single word:* Bubble = 3

*Minimal pair:* Ravel = 4

RABBLE = 2

However, they had problems identifying the sound [b] in the words, and this was because the /b/ sound was before a consonant; in this case an [l].

#### **AT THE END OF A WORD**

*Single word:* Robe = 2

*Minimal pair:* ROBE = 6

Rove = 0

At this point, they are unable to establish the difference between the sounds [b] – [v]. They underlined the word randomly and this affected the meaning. In the word ‘robe’, they tried to pronounce the final vowel of the word.

#### **4.1.1.2 PRONUNCIATION TESTS**

It is important to use pronunciation tests, because the results can be complemented with those obtained for the listening discrimination.

In this section, the results changed, and this was very important for this research. Twelve (12) words were chosen for this test and it was important to see and to listen to how the students pronounced and established the difference between [b] – [v].

#### **THE SOUND [V] IN THE BEGINNING POSITION**

The words chosen were VENT – VOW.

The students found it more difficult to pronounce the sound [v] in the beginning of a word, and they used the Spanish allophone [ʋ] which does not exist in English.

### **MIDDLE POSITION**

The two words were CURVES - LOVER

When the students pronounced these words, they pronounced [v] as the allophone [ʋ], which is a bilabial fricative voiced sound.

### **FINAL POSITION**

The two words chosen were CURVE - DOVE

Here the students confused the [v] sound with the allophone [ʋ].

On the other hand they tended to link the sound [v] with the following letter, so they pronounced the word as it is written.

### **THE SOUND [B] IN THE BEGINNING POSITION**

The two words chosen were BEAR – BEST.

These words were pronounced with [b], and there was no problem in their pronunciation.

### **MIDDLE POSITION**

The two words chosen were PREVENT - CUPBOARD.

They pronounced the word 'prevent' with the [p] or [p̚] allophone, because it appears in an intervocalic position.

### **FINAL POSITION**

The two words were CAB - ROBE.

Here the students used the sound [p] instead of [b], at the end of the word.

After showing and explaining the results obtained in the tests, it is important to compare the findings with the current bibliography.

### **THE ANALYSIS OF THE VIDEO**

It was necessary to make a video in which some words were pronounced by the students.

#### **FIRST SECTION**

<b>INITIAL POSITION</b>	<b>MIDDLE POSITION</b>	<b>FINAL POSITION</b>
Bear	Curves	Cab
Vent	Prevent	Dove
Best	Lover	Robe
Vow	Cupboard	Curve

In this section it was observed that words in initial position were pronounced by the students as [ b ]. In the middle, most of them pronounced the [ v ] sound as a b, in the case of CUPBOARD they tended to separate the word to pronounce it in this way Cup-board and some of them replaced the “/ p / “ by the “/ r /” sound. .In the final position the word Cab was pronounced as cap, in the word Robe they make use of [d], [p] sounds and the allophone [ʔ ] to pronounce this word. With the word Curve they tended to pronounced it as it is written or they deafened the last sound.

## SECOND SECTION

In this section only the sound [b] was worked.

### INITIAL POSITION

Breeze

Bless

Break

Brother

### MIDDLE POSITION

Umbrella

Unbroken

Cable

Submit

Subject

Subvert

Subversion

In this case, it was important to notice that students had problems with the pronunciation of the sound [b] in the middle position, specially with the last four words, they pronounced

Submit as “sapmit”, “sadmit” and “sumit”, with Subject they pronounced “sayect” and “sanyect”, in the word Subvert they tended to divide the word in this way sub-vert and they pronounced “sadbert”, the same situation occurred with the pronunciation of Subversion.

### **THIRD SECTION**

In this part it was necessary to work with minimal pairs.

<b>INITIAL POSITION</b>	<b>MIDDLE POSITION</b>	<b>FINAL POSITION</b>
Van – Ban	Curving – curbing	Rove - robe
Veep – Beep	Ravel – Rabble	Curve – curb

In the initial position the word Ban was pronounced as “band”, so the students added the sound “d “ at the end of this word, in the case of Veep – Beep the students pronounced with the sound [b] the two words.

In the middle position Curving – curbing were pronounced in a separate way by the students “curp-bing” and “cur- bing”, the words Ravel – Rabble were pronounced in the same way by the students “rabl”.

In the final position the students changed the final sound for a “p” a “f” or a “d” in the words Rove – Robe, in final position. The words Curve and Curb were pronounced by the students with the sound “p” curp.

Although the students tended to over-generalize the pronunciation of [b] – [v] sounds, they established comparisons with the Spanish and English sounds. They also made use of some allophones (? - f) in their pronunciation.

According to Stockwell and Bowen 1965; (cited in Hernandez, 1980), “Speakers inevitably confused the two sounds at first, showing that they have no contrasted function in Spanish”.

Referring to the comparison of L1 and L2 acquisition, Goddz (cited in Patton, O; Tabors, Katherine), said that “Children have the capacity to keep two languages”. This is true to a certain extent; however children tend to overgeneralize the rules of pronunciation because “... Generalization, of course, is a fundamental strategy in all domains, not only in language.” (Cited in Norish, Jhon. 1982.)

In the field of pronunciation, it can be said that children have a good capacity to acquire a new language, but they do not know or understand the different rules that the new language requires (e.g. place, manner, and point of articulation, phonetics, syntax and semantics).

This is due to the fact that they learn English in a systematical and monotonous way.

Another point worth mentioning is ‘transfer’. This is when a learner uses his/her previous mother tongue experience as a means of organizing the L2 data (cited in Norish; 1982).

Barry Taylor found that “beginners have more frequent errors in transfer because they have less previous L2 knowledge”, so children learn the L2 in a mechanical way.

The results of the study offer clear evidence that students have not had much opportunity to practice and to listen to English; consequently their oral production and their listening have not developed adequately.



## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **CONCLUSIONS**

Throughout this research some aspects related with English pronunciation, its teaching and its learning could be concluded in this way:

- ? Students were not able to pronounce an English sound that does not exist in their language.
  
- ? Students make use of some learning strategies that they build according to their needs, in the case of language they construct rules taking as base the knowledge of their mother tongue.
  
- ? If students do not have a frequent contact with the second language, their acquiring would be more difficult.
  
- ? The errors of the English pronunciation are more common in the student, when teachers of a foreign language do not have a complete master of the language.

- ? The correct pronunciation of the sounds [b] and [v] by the students was poor, because they presented frequent phonological problems as epenthesis, metathesis, and deletion and adding sounds.
  
- ? Motivation plays an important role inside the process of learning, if students are motivated their results could be better.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Pedagogical**

- ? For this kind of pronunciation problem, it is important to take into account that teacher helps his students in the improvement of English pronunciation by making use of resources and materials that support it.
  
- ? It could be good for the teacher to exaggerate in the beginning stage a difference in the articulation of the sounds [b] an [v].
  
- ? Make use of breathing exercises to develop a correct point and manner of articulation of English sounds.
  
- ? Make use of minimal pairs and minimal sentences to establish the difference between the sounds.

### **Further research**

- ? In order to accomplish a correct pronunciation by the students, it would be useful for the teacher always to remind them the correct pronunciation of a word.

- ? It could be good if teachers make use of records related with pronunciation in their classes, and complement them with songs students like and help them to improve their pronunciation.
  
- ? It would be important and very interesting that the procedure and the techniques used to identify the problems that students have continue being applied to them, by making use of simple tests.

## REFERENCES

- AVERY, P. (1992). *Teaching American English pronunciation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press
- BASTIDAS, J. A. (2002). *Teoría y práctica de la enseñanza del inglés*. San Juan de Pasto: JABA ediciones.
- ELLIS, R (1994). *The study of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- HALLIDAY, M. A. K. (1986). *El language como semiótica social*. México: Fondo de cultura económica.
- HERNANDEZ, M. (1994). *Modulo de fonética*. Pasto: UNIMAR ediciones.
- KENWORTHY, J.(1998). *Teaching English pronunciation*. London and New York: Longman
- NORISH, J. (1982). *Language learners and their errors*. Modern English Publications.
- PRATO, N. L. (1998). *Abordaje de la lectura y la escritura desde una perspectiva Psicolinguística*. Argentina: Ediciones Novedades Educativas.
- RODMAN, R. & HYAMS, N.(2003). *An introduction of language*. Massachusetts: Thomson Heinle
- STOCKWELL, P. & BOWEN, J. (1965). *The sounds of English and Spanish*. Chicago: The University of Chicago press
- TEACH, P. (1981). *Pronunciation skills*. ELTS.

# APPENDIX

## APPENDIX A

UNIVERSIDAD DE NARIÑO

FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS HUMANAS

DEPARTAMENTO DE LINGÜÍSTICA E IDIOMAS

**Encuesta:** dirigida a estudiantes

**Nivel:** 5 de primaria

Marque con una **X** su respuesta.

1. ¿Te gusta el inglés?

Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

2. ¿En la clase de inglés, entiendes lo que tu profesor te dice en este idioma?

Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

3. ¿Crees que tu profesor pronuncia bien las palabras en inglés?

Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

4. ¿Después de escuchar la pronunciación de las siguientes palabras, cuales crees que son las más difíciles para ti?

Bubble \_\_\_\_\_ View \_\_\_\_\_ Robe \_\_\_\_\_

Buy \_\_\_\_\_ Level \_\_\_\_\_ Vote \_\_\_\_\_

5. ¿Crees que es fácil o difícil de adquirir una buena pronunciación?

Marca con una **X** y luego señala tus razones.

**FACIL** \_\_\_\_\_

- a. Porque repito lo que dice el profesor.
- b. Porque el profesor nos enseña la pronunciación oral y mediante representación fonética.
- c. Porque el profesor nos explica cada sonido del Inglés y la refuerza mediante la representación fonética.

**DIFICIL** \_\_\_\_\_

- a. Porque el Inglés no se lee como se escribe.
- b. Porque algunas combinaciones de palabras en Inglés son muy difíciles de pronunciar.
- c. Porque el profesor no nos enseña pronunciación.

**6.** ¿Te ayudas de alguna manera con la pronunciación?

Si \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

¿Cómo? \_\_\_\_\_

**7.** Escoge las formas de aprendizaje para tu pronunciación.

- a. Busco la palabra en el diccionario
- b. Asocio el sonido del Inglés con uno de mi idioma (Español)



c. Escribo debajo de la palabra, como creo que se debe pronunciar una determinada palabra.

**8.** ¿Tienes contacto con el inglés fuera de clase?

Si\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

**9.** ¿Qué clase de contacto?

a. Escucho música en inglés

b. Si encuentro una palabra en inglés busco la forma de traducirla.

c. Tengo amigos que hablan inglés.

**10.** ¿Reconoces, diferencias y aplicas los nuevos sonidos del inglés de manera natural y sin ayuda del profesor?.

Si\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B

UNIVERSIDAD DE NARIÑO

FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS HUMANAS

DEPARTAMENTO DE LINGÜÍSTICA E IDIOMAS

### TEST DE LISTENING DISCRIMINATION

1. Teniendo en cuenta la diferencia entre los sonidos [v]- [b], identifícalos en la palabra escuchada marcándolos con una **X**.

- |                |             |
|----------------|-------------|
| a. Bye_____    | Vie_____    |
| b. Ban_____    | Van_____    |
| c. Marvel_____ | Marble_____ |
| d. Lover_____  | Lubber_____ |
| e. Dove_____   | Dub_____    |
| f. Rove_____   | Robe_____   |

2. Encierra en un círculo la palabra que corresponda al sonido que escuches.

- Use that for the **VASE / BASE**
- I see two **CALVES / CABS**
- The accident was on the **CURVE / CURB**