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CARRERA DE EDUCACIÓN MENCIÓN INGLÉS

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LICENCIADO EN LENGUA INGLESA MENCIÓN EN
ENSEÑANZA Y ADMINISTRACIÓN DE SISTEMAS
EDUCATIVOS EN T.E.F.L.

THEME
HOW NATURAL APPROACH ACTIVITIES INFLUENCE SEVENTH
GRADERS' PRONUNCIATION AT UNIDAD EDUCATIVA DELFOS

TUTOR

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How natural approach activities influence seventh graders' pronunciation at Unidad Educativa Delfos.

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RESUMEN:

This research was developed to determine the influence of Natural Approach activities to teach pronunciation. This study took place at Unidad Educativa Delfos in Ecuador during 2018-2019 school year. The population of this research was 30 students of 7th grade EGB

and 8 (eight) English teachers. This research was exploratory and theoretical, and it was focused on qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative data was collected through the observations to the teacher and the students. To collect the quantitative data, a pre-test and a post-test were administered before and after the implementation of the proposed project plan. Surveys to the students and the teachers were also conducted. Ten different natural approach activities were implemented in the English class to teach different features of pronunciation: stress, linking, intonation, use of articulators, sounds recognitions, speech sound similarities and differences perception. The differences between the pre-test and the post-test indicated an improvement on students' pronunciation.

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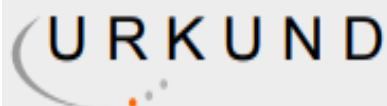
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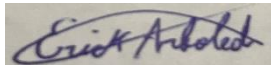
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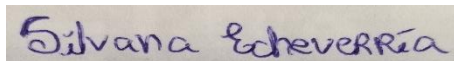
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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mario Mejía A.", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and cursive.

MSC. MARIO MEJÍA A.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to my son who has been my inspiration to finish this project to get my degree. He was the reason that I continued until the end of my career to give him a better life.

Erick Arboleda

DEDICATION

Firstly I dedicate this project to God, who gave me a lot of strength, courage and hope to elaborate and continue with my thesis work. To my parents who give me strength every day, and who throughout my life they provide me well-being and most importantly education, they being my support at all times.

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ABSTRACT

This research was developed to determine the influence of Natural Approach activities to teach pronunciation. This study took place at Unidad Educativa Delfos in Ecuador during the school year. 2018-2019. The population of this research was 30 students of 7th grade EGB and 8 (eight) English teachers. This research was exploratory and theoretical, and it was focused on qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative data was collected through the observations to the teacher and the students. To collect the quantitative data, a pre-test and a post-test were administered before and after the implementation of the proposed project plan. Surveys to the students and the teachers were also conducted. Ten different natural approach activities were implemented in the English class to teach different features of pronunciation: stress, linking, intonation, use of articulators, sounds recognition, speech sound similitudes and difference perception. The differences between the pre-test and the post-test indicated improvement on students' pronunciation.

Keywords: natural approach, pronunciation, speaking, stress in words, linking, intonation, sound recognition, sound prediction.

RESUMEN

Este estudio tuvo como objetivo determinar la influencia de la implementación de actividades basadas en el enfoque natural para enseñar pronunciación. Este estudio se llevó a cabo en la Unidad Educativa Delfos en Ecuador durante el año escolar. 2018-2019. La población de esta investigación fue de 30 estudiantes de 7° grado EGB y 8 (ocho) profesores de inglés. Esta investigación fue exploratoria y teórica, y se centró en métodos cualitativos y cuantitativos. Los datos cualitativos se recolectaron a través de las observaciones realizadas al profesor y los alumnos. Para recopilar los datos cuantitativos, se administró un pre-test y una postest antes y después de la implementación de la propuesta. También se realizaron encuestas a los alumnos y profesores. Se implementaron diez actividades basadas en el enfoque natural durante la clase de inglés a través de las cuales se enseñaron diferentes aspectos de la pronunciación: acento, vinculación, entonación, uso de articuladores, reconocimiento de sonidos, similitudes con el sonido del habla y percepción de diferencias. Las diferencias entre el pre-test y el postest indicaron una mejora en la pronunciación de los estudiantes.

Palabras clave: enfoque natural, pronunciación, expresión oral, inglés, actividades, acentuación de palabras, acentuación de oraciones, vinculación, entonación, reconocimiento de sonidos, predicción de sonidos.

INTRODUCTION

English pronunciation, as a feature of the speaking skill, is quite difficult for language learners. Most of the complications come from the irregular spelling of the English language, and the primary cause of the students' low level in pronunciation comes from the lack of practice and the implementation of languages teaching methods and approaches that encourage and promote pronunciation learning.

In order to teach pronunciation, the natural approach represents an appropriate resource to help students to develop and learn the different features of pronunciation. Therefore, this research is intended to determine the influence of natural approach activities in 7th grade EGB students' pronunciation. This project was carried out at Unidad Educativa Delfos in Ecuador during the 2018-2019 school year.

The research is structured as follows:

Chapter I describes the background and the statement of the problem, presents the research questions, the broad and specific objectives, the significance of the study, the scope and delimitation, the hypotheses, the identification of the variables and their operationalization.

Chapter II presents the literature review, the theoretical review, the legal and the conceptual framework. It includes relevant previous content about the variables studied in our project.

Chapter III refers to the type of research, methods, techniques and instruments, the research population, the sources, resources and timeline, the processing, presentation, and analysis of results and the preliminary conclusions. It also shows all the statistics that were necessary to determine data necessary for this study.

Chapter IV presents proposed project plan. It has the 10 different actives that were chosen carefully to practice, reinforce, and improve students' pronunciation. It explains the process of the activities that are in the proposal and the way its application should be carried out with the booklet, manual or guide done by the investigator.

Finally, the conclusions obtained and the recommendations are exposed.

CHAPTER I

1. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Background of the Problem

The lack of communication in students in EFL classroom is notorious in many institutions of our country. Unidad Educativa Delfos, the place where this project is conducted, is not the exception. Pronunciation is essential in the communicative process. If pronunciation is incorrect, the message will not be understood by the receiver correctly, and communication will not be effective. Some drawbacks have been observed in 7th graders' pronunciation. For this reason, this group of students was chosen to be part of this project.

Previous class observations have evidenced that the level of the English teachers could be one of the problems. According to Ecuadorian law, English teachers must have a B2 certificate that accredits their proficiency in the foreign language. If teachers did not have an appropriate level of English, they would communicate using the L1 in the classroom. It is evident that this would not be an appropriate environment for students who are learning a foreign language.

Motivation is another essential factor that should be considered in an EFL class. The population of this research project are thirty students of 7th grade who have similar characteristics: they are in A1 level of English, they like learning the foreign language but need to be continuously motivated since they do not get involved in the learning process.

Consequently, teachers must create an excellent L2 learning environment by planning their lessons carefully and implementing activities that are suitable to the students' ages and interests. It is known that the use of correct pedagogical techniques, methods, and approaches are helping to improve students' pronunciation. For this reason, a selection of the most suitable ones will be made in this research.

There are other situations which are notorious. Seventh graders do not use L2 in the classroom even with basic vocabulary they prefer to use L1. This is a severe problem in this group because they are not using the content that they have learned during previous school years. Teachers have to set rules about using English during class.

Another important factor that was observed is the students' indiscipline. It is not helpful to have a classroom with indiscipline problems moreover in a foreign class where teachers need the students' attention.

It also was observed that students have serious problems to communicate their ideas and thoughts in the foreign language due to, the lack of vocabulary, grammar rules, and pronunciation mistakes. These drawbacks will have a negative impact on all the people who are involved in the educational process. Teachers and students will not be confident about the results. The inefficient communication will generate bad grades on students creating uncertainty and discomfort in parents and authorities.

All these situations have generated an interest in the development of this research. The authors think that it is necessary to diagnose the possible causes of this problem and provide a possible solution for it.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

To what extent do the Natural Approach activities influence on seventh graders' English Pronunciation at Unidad Educativa Delfos?

1.3 Systematization of the Problem

What are the causes that promote the incorrect pronunciation of students?

What are the characteristics of the Natural Approach activities?

What should be considered in the selection and application of Natural Approach activities?

What are the advantages of learning a second language naturally?

How does the incorrect pronunciation affect students' communication skills?

What are the most common pronunciation mistakes on EFL students?

How can the use of L1 affect students' pronunciation?

What is the importance of pronunciation in the communicative process?

How does pronunciation benefit students with their speaking problem?

1.4 Broad Objective

To determine how the Natural Approach activities influence on seventh graders' pronunciation at Unidad Educativa Delfos.

1.5 Specific Objectives

To identify the reasons why seventh graders students at Unidad Educativa Delfos have pronunciation problems.

To characterize the Natural Approach activities.

To verify the effects of the Natural Approach activities on seventh graders' pronunciation.

To figure out the theoretical aspects of the research variables: Natural Approach Activities and English Pronunciation.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Our project has great relevance because "Pronunciation" is one of the most challenging aspects to teach to young learners. With this research we try to show a different and innovated way that students can learn a better pronunciation naturally.

If teachers use appropriate teaching procedures with the correct implementation of innovating activities, learners will be more involved and motivated to communicate their thoughts and ideas in the target language. As a consequence, with constant practice, students will improve their pronunciation skills.

On the other hand, parents and authorities will be proud of listening to their children to speak in L2 with efficient pronunciation. They will recommend the institution to other people for the satisfaction that they will have with the school.

In the theoretical aspects, our research project will contribute to future research that is related to the improvement of pronunciation in primary students.

1.7 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This investigation took place at "Unidad Educativa Delfos" that is located in the city of Guayaquil at "Av. Las Aguas, Guayaquil 090613". It is part of the institutions of the "Distrito 6".

The institution has approximately 600 students, 60 teachers and 20 people between administrators and janitors. It is a private and co-educational institution. Students from this school belong to the middle class. The 7th graders 'students form our population for this investigation. They are a group of 30 students between the age of 11 and 12 years old. They receive 6 hours of English per week with a single teacher for this subject.

1.8 Hypothesis

The Natural Approach activities have a positive influence on the seventh graders' pronunciation.

1.9 Identification of Variables

- **Independent Variable:**

Natural Approach activities

- **Dependent Variable:**

Pronunciation

CHAPTER II

2. RESEARCH THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

This chapter describes previous studies or researches already developed to prevent the elaboration of similar investigations on how natural approach activities influence seventh graders' pronunciation. In the same way, this chapter shows a theoretical background which is relevant to support the study.

2.1 Literature Review

Aguilar (2017) in his research searched for providing teachers with ten different lesson plans consisted of activities based on the Natural Approach and TPR for the improvement of the communicative competence in 9th-grade students. Data were collected from two groups in a public high school through the implementation of a survey. The purpose of the survey was to know the preferences that the students had about language learning activities in order to design adequate lesson plans. Effectively, the information was obtained, and the lesson plans were designed. The lesson plans as they were determined were based on the Natural Approach and TPR, and they were created to encourage the development of the communicative competence of the students in the English language.

Manik (2016) conducted a study to find out whether English songs could be used to teach proficiently original pronunciation and master it. Classroom Action Research was the method used for this study. The research took place at HKBP Nommensen University, and the sample consisted of the students of the eight semesters of English. The research was lead in two cycles and songs were used as media. Quantitative data were collected through the application of an oral test, and the qualitative data were collected on diary notes, questionnaire and observation sheets. The researcher concluded that students mastered their pronunciation through the use of songs. It was revealed that students that frequently listen to English songs are more attentive to pronunciation than those students that never listen to English songs. Therefore their stress, intonation and other aspects of pronunciation are developed significantly.

Mendoza (2016) explored gesturing as a Natural Approach to impact stages of ESL students. The objective of the study was helping ELL students to comprehend spoken English through gesturing. The effect on the primary and secondary language by the teacher's use of bodily and facial gestures was determined through a quantitative design.

Data were collected in three settings by recording and observing interaction with the child by using facial expressions, body motions, and various voice expressions. The results indicated that there was an effect on the number of words spoken in two out of three settings.

Murphy and Baker (2015) conducted research to review the story of over 150 years of the teaching of English pronunciation. It was highlighted that pronunciation did not receive enough attention in language classrooms before the second half of the XIX century. During the studied time the teaching of pronunciation was organized around four waves of instructional innovations. The first wave initiated in the 1850s and imitative-intuitive ways of teaching were prioritized for over three decades. The second wave took place around the 1900s, and it observed the formation of the International Phonetic Association. A third wave emerged later by the mid-1980s; during this wave, teachers were introduced to a different way to teach pronunciation; it was with communicative purposes. The fourth wave arose in the mid-1990s, and it was related to the cognitive sense of pronunciation teaching.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 The Natural Approach

The Natural Approach has been identified as a traditional language teaching approach which is based on the total use of the target language, without referring to the use of grammar rules. In the natural approach, an emphasis is made on exposure or input more than practice or language production. In other words, the Natural Approach focuses on comprehension more than production ((Rodgers & Richards, 1986).

2.2.1.1 Objectives of the Natural Approach

The Natural Approach was designed to introduce learners to the language, helping them to become intermediates and being able to interact in a target language situation. However, this interaction is not necessarily accurate in terms of grammar, and the students do not need to know every single word in a semantic domain, they need to make the meaning clear (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). From the beginning, the Natural Approach goals are set, and the students know what they are going to learn, for example:

- Basic personal communication skills (oral: listening-comprehension, written: reading and writing letters)

- Academic learning skills: (oral: listening to a lecture, written: taking notes in class)

On the other hand, the Natural Approach applies to different learning situations. The approach goals also depend upon the learner needs, the skills they want to develop and the level they are being taught. In this context, the goals of a Natural Approach class are based on an assessment of student's needs, considering the situations in which they will use the target language and the topics they are supposed to communicate.

It is important to mention that the students will not learn grammar structures, this approach is entirely functional, and the students are expected to deal naturally with given situations. The use of this approach is also based on the reduction of the affective filter by getting the students involved in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, being exposed to vocabulary learning that will be useful to personal communication (Rodgers & Richards, 1986).

2.2.1.2 Theories of the Nature of the Language

For Krashen and Terrell (1983) the primary function of language is communication; thus, according to them, the Natural Approach is an example of a communicative approach. Other language teaching methods like the Audiolingual Method, in which grammar was the central component of language, were rejected by them. According to Krashen and Terrell, those methods were built around theories of the structure of language and not around theories of language acquisition.

Krashen and Terrell (1983) also emphasize the primacy of meaning when they refer to the nature of language. Vocabulary is considered necessary, and they have the view that a language is essentially its lexicon. Otherwise, language is considered as a way of communicating meanings and messages, and they state that people demonstrate that they have acquired language when they can understand messages in the target language.

However, Rodgers and Richards (1986) have a view of language that consists of lexical items, structures, and messages. There is no certain novelty in their view just that real importance is given to messages in the Natural Approach. As well as in perception as in production, the lexicon is considered critical in the construction and interpretation of messages. Lexical items in messages are essentially grammatically structured, and those messages that are more complex involve more complex grammatical structure.

2.2.2 Theories of Language Learning

For Krashen and Terrell (1983) the grounded theory of second language acquisition which is supported by several scientific studies were based for the birth of the Natural Approach. This approach of second language acquisition consists of five main hypotheses:

- The Acquisition-Learning hypothesis,
- The Monitor hypothesis,
- The Natural Order hypothesis,
- The Input hypothesis, and
- The Affective Filter hypothesis.

THE ACQUISITION-LEARNING HYPOTHESIS

The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis affirms that proficiency in a foreign language just can be achieved in two unique ways: Acquisition and learning. The acquisition is referred to as an unconscious process that involves naturally understanding the language and using it to communicate. Learning, in contrast, is the process in which language rules are learned consciously. Consequently, formal teaching is necessary for "learning" to occur, so correcting mistakes helps to learn the rules. Therefore, based on this theory, learning is different from acquisition (Rodgers & Richards, 1986).

The Monitor Hypothesis

The Monitor hypothesis describes how acquisition and learning are related. Krashen states that acquisition is the utterance initiator of language, and learning is the "monitor" or the "editor" (Rodgers & Richards, 1986):

1. *Time*. The learner must have enough time to choose and apply a learned rule.
2. *Focus on form*. The learner must be focused on the correctness or the form of the output.
3. *Knowledge of rules*. The learner is expected to know the rules.

2.2.2.3 The Natural Order Hypothesis

According to this Hypothesis, acquiring grammar rules is a natural process. In first or second language acquisition some grammar rules are acquired earlier than others. Error occurs

during acquisition because they are signs of naturalistic developmental processes (Rodgers & Richards, 1986).

2.2.2.4 The Input Hypothesis

The Input Hypothesis explains how second language acquisition takes place. It involves four main issues.

First, the Input Hypothesis is only applied to the acquisition, and not to learning.

Second, when acquirers receive second language input, they improve and progress.

Third, fluent speaking cannot be taught directly; instead, it is learned independently in time, once the acquirer has developed understanding.

Fourth, the acquisition will usually be provided automatically if their comprehensible input is enough (Rodgers & Richards, 1986).

2.2.2.5 The Affective Filter Hypothesis

Krashen sees the emotional state or attitudes of the students as a filter that freely permits, frustrates, or blocks input necessary to be acquired. A low affective filter is required since it impedes or blocks less of this necessary input. The hypothesis is built on second language acquisition. Three kinds of affective or attitudinal variables have been identified:

1. Motivation: If students are motivated, they will be successful.
2. Self-confidence: students with self-confidence tend to have better performance.
3. Anxiety: Low anxiety facilitates second language acquisition.

Learners with high motivation, self-confidence, and low level of anxiety are better prepared for success in second or foreign language acquisition.

In brief, these five hypotheses have clear implications for language teaching, such as:

1. Enough comprehensible input must be presented.

2. Any material that helps comprehension is valuable. Acquiring vocabulary is more useful than the study of syntactic structures.
3. Listening and reading are the primary skills to develop.
4. Students' work should center in meaningful communication, and interesting topics must be discussed in order to lower the affective filter.

2.2.1.1 *The Role of Instructional Materials*

According to Krashen and Terrell (1983), the primary goal of materials in the Natural Approach is to supply the extra-linguistic context that helps the learner to understand the language and thus to acquire it. It can be possible by making classroom activities as meaningful as possible, relating them to real life, and by promoting real-life situations to communicate.

In this approach, topics come from authentic materials, and its purpose is to foster comprehension and communication. Visual aids are significant since they supply the content for communication and facilitate the acquisition of vocabulary during the lesson. Additionally to pictures and visual aids, schedules, brochures, advertisements, maps, and books at levels appropriate to the students are also recommended if a reading component is included in the course. Games, for example, are seen as useful classroom materials since while trying to achieve the goal they put the language in practice (Rodgers & Richards, 1986).

2.2.1.2 *The Teachers' Role*

According to Rodgers and Richards (1986), the Natural Approach teacher has three fundamental roles:

Firstly, the teacher is the person in charge of providing students with comprehensible input in the target language. Primarily, the class is enthusiastic about providing input for acquisition, and the teacher is the main generator of that input. The teacher is responsible for generating a constant movement of language input while providing a multiplicity of nonlinguistic signs to help the students in interpreting the input. The Natural Approach requires much more teachers' attendance than many contemporary communicative methods.

Secondly, an exciting and friendly classroom atmosphere is created by the teacher in the Natural Approach, and a low affective filter is provided for language learning. Reducing the affective filter is achieved in part due to those Natural Approach techniques that avoid that students speak before they are prepared for it, not correcting their mistakes, and providing them with topics and exciting subjects.

Lastly, the teacher must provide students with a variety of classroom activities, involving different group sizes, content, and contexts. The teacher is responsible for collecting materials and designing their use. These materials, according to Krashen and Terrell (1983) are based not just on teacher perceptions but on elicited student needs and interests.

Teachers who apply the Natural Approach are in charge of explaining the students the expectations and organization of the method since in many cases these will interrupt students' views of what language learning and teaching are supposed to be.

2.2.1.3 *The Students' Role*

Rodgers and Richards (1986) describe the students' role in the following stages:

In the initial stage of a lesson, students are requested for the input and the knowledge that they possess on a specific topic. Students' roles are seen to change according to their stage of linguistic development and are encouraged to make some decisions. They need to decide when to speak, what to speak about, what linguistic expressions to use in speaking, what vocabulary and structures are essential for their activities and projects.

Secondly, in the pre-production stage students are allowed to participate in the language activity without having to respond in the target language. For example, students can perform the teacher requirements, according to the description they must identify student colleagues, point to pictures, and so on.

In the early-production stage, students respond to simple questions using single words and short phrases, fill in charts, and use fixed conversational patterns.

In the speech-emergent phase as students become more responsible for their language learning, their success in the foreign language learning increases, students participate in role play and games, share personal information and opinions, and participate in group problem-solving.

In the Natural Approach classroom, students have four kinds of responsibilities:

- a. Give information about goals they are expected to achieve so that acquisition activities can focus on topics and situations adapted to their interests.
- b. Learn and use oral communication techniques to regulate input.
- c. Make the decision about the propitious time to develop speech.
- d. Decide with the teacher the time to be dedicated to learning grammar through exercises.

Students are expected to participate in communication activities with other students. Communication activities are based on real-life practice and promote a sense of friendship, which reduces the affective filter.

2.2.1.4 *Natural Approach Activities and Techniques:*

As it was mentioned before, the primary goal of a class taught according to the Natural Approach is presenting comprehensible input in the target language. Teachers focus their lessons on objects or pictures observed around in the classroom. With the purpose of reducing stress, the first phase in this approach is mainly a silent point, where nothing seems to be happening; students are not required to talk until they feel ready.

Then, when learners are ready to talk in the target language, the teacher offers the students opportunities to give simple responses and provides them with comprehensible language by speaking slow and making distinctions into the sounds. The learning is progressive starting from yes/no questions and using the vocabulary previously heard by the students in the class. New words will be used by the students when they become familiar with them after hearing them many times before.

Visual resources exposed in the classroom like charts, pictures, ads can be used for the teacher to help the students to learn vocabulary and create simple sentences by answering simple questions, promoting class interaction, working first in pairs or small groups and subsequently encouraging discussions with the whole class. Acquisition activities based on meaningful communication are emphasized.

2.2.1.5 Procedure: Activities and Techniques

Krashen and Terrell (1983) suggest the use of different activities, based on the Natural Approach.

Some examples of the procedure of how to use Natural Approach activities are shown below. These activities provide comprehensible input, without producing responses in the target language (Rodgers & Richards, 1986, p. 139).

1. Use of TPR [Total Physical Response] requirements such as: "Open the book. Sit down. Raise your hand."
2. Use TPR to teach names of classroom objects "Touch a pencil," "take out your books."
3. Identify classmates using the name of physical characteristics or clothing such as eyes, big, brown, etc. Then a student is described. "He has big brown eyes." Questions like "Who is the boy with big brown eyes?" are straightforward to understand by attending to keywords, gestures, and context.
4. Use pictures, like those from magazines, to teach new vocabulary, just a few words must be taught. A task can be to give a picture to a student, and the rest of the class must remember the name of the student based on the particular picture, e.g. "Peter has the picture of the tree," also the teacher will ask questions like "Who has the picture of the tree? alternatively, Does Luis have the picture of the tree? Students respond to the name of the classmate or a short answer yes, he does or no, he does not.
6. Combine the use of pictures with TPR. "Juan takes a picture of the monkey with the banana and gives it to a student with the long hair."
7. Observe pictures and combine them with commands and conditionals. "If there are kids in your picture, raise your hand."
8. Point to the picture according to the given description. Picture 1. "There is a tree in this picture. It is big and green. Who is under it? A boy.

A permanent flow of "comprehensible input" must be maintained by the teacher during the activities. The teacher must keep using essential vocabulary items, appropriate gestures, context, repetition, and paraphrasing to ensure the comprehensibility of the input.

Some techniques used in this approach were borrowed from other methods and adapted to the Natural Approach theory. Command-based activities are adapted from Total Physical Response; the situation-based practice of structures and patterns, mime, gesture, and context used to produce questions and answers are part of the Direct Method. Those activities intended to share information in order to complete a task, group-work activities are similar to those used in the Communicative Language Teaching.

In brief, activities from other approaches can be adopted, but the essence of the Natural Approach consists in the use of standard techniques provided by comprehensible input and a classroom environment that reduces learner anxiety, and help the students to increase self-confidence. The purpose of these activities and techniques and the use given to them will determine if they can be innovative.

2.2.3 Pronunciation

Pronunciation is defined as the sounds produced and used by people to make meaning when speaking. Pronunciation includes the segment of the languages that are represented by all the consonants and vowels and, also contains the suprasegmental aspects such as stress, rhythm, intonation and the quality of the voice. Segmental and suprasegmental aspects of the language are never separated; they work together and are combined when people speak (Yates & Zielinski, 2009).

2.2.3.1 Pronunciation in the English Language

English is the language used for international communication and speakers need to be able to exchange information effectively, both orally and in writing. According to Morley (1991), "intelligible pronunciation is an essential component of communicative competence" (p. 513), so it is significant in language learning that students develop their pronunciation, in this way, they will be able to communicate fluently. Paying attention to pronunciation will determine that the listener can comprehend the message (Fangzhi, 1998).

2.2.3.2 Aspects of Pronunciation

As it was aforementioned, pronunciation consists of both suprasegmental and segmental aspects. They can be analyzed in isolation, but it is essential to know that when people speak they work together; therefore teachers have to understand how these aspects work, although learners do not need to know this theory. Traditional approaches have mainly focused on the segmental features; however, learners need to be taught in both segmental and suprasegmental (Morley, 1991).

2.2.3.2.1 Suprasegmental Aspects of Pronunciation

Suprasegmental refers to how the sounds of speech work in sentences and at discourse. Having a domain of the suprasegmental aspects of English, regarding pronunciation guarantees the production of intelligible speech in English and the verbal ability in general. These suprasegmental aspects of the speaking skill refer specifically to intonation, rhythm, stress, linking and connecting, speed, assimilation, and contractions (Morley, 1991).

2.2.3.2.2 Segmental Aspects of Pronunciation

Segmental features of pronunciation refer to the phonemes or individual sounds which have the purpose of making meaning. These features are vowels, diphthongs, and consonants and are produced by putting the tongue in different parts of the mouth while speaking (Morley, 1991).

2.2.3.3 Production: Articulation of Speech Sounds

English speech sounds are all produced by air which comes from the lung into the throat and then passes through the mouth or the nose. The other organs of speech modify the stream of air in some way in order to produce the sound. In this case, the vibration and the characteristic of the sound waves are determined by human vocal organs.

Syafei (1988, p. 5) says that the organs of speech can be classified into the moveable and the immoveable speech organs. The moveable speech organs are the lips, the tongue, the soft palate, the vocal cords, the lower teeth, and jaw. The immoveable speech organs are the upper teeth, the upper teeth ridge, and the hard palate.

The shapes formed by the lips make different sounds. The lips, the tongue, and the teeth can be all combined to produce sounds or to avoid the air to escape from the mouth.

The movements of the tongue throughout the mouth and its combination with other organs help humans to produce speech.

2.2.3.3.1 Use of Articulators

Articulation of vowels and consonants are mentioned below:

a. Vowels

Vowels are sonorous, and they are produced by changing the placement of the tongue and shaping the lips. The shape of the lips can produce rounded vowels; also nasal vowels can be pronounced by lowering the vellum. Considering the degree of vocal constriction during the vowels articulation, they can be tense or lax (Dobrovolsky, 1997).

The phonetic alphabet chart contains seven short monophthongs: /ɪ/, /ʊ/, /e/, /ə/, /ɒ/, /ʌ/, /æ/; and five long monophthongs: /i:/, /u:/, /ɜ:/, /ɔ:/, /ɑ:/. The difference is found in the shape of lips and the position of the tongue. The distance between the tongue and the upper part of the mouth are *Close*, mid and *open*, and the part of the tongue that is raised is defined as front, center, and back. The front, close vowel /i:/ indicates that the lips are most spread, and during the back, close vowel /u:/ the lips are most rounded (Kelly, 2006)

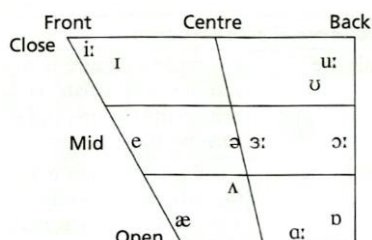


Figure 1 The articulation of vowels

Source: Kelly, G (2006)

b. Diphthongs

Diphthongs are formed by the sound of two vowels in one syllable. They are divided into two groups. Closing diphthongs that glide towards a closer vowel, they are /eɪ/, /aɪ/, /ɔɪ/, /aʊ/ and /əʊ/. Centering diphthongs that glide towards a more central vowel. They are: /ɪə/, /eə/, /ʊə/ (Kelly, 2006).

c. Consonants

Consonants are sounds in which the airflow is partly obstructed in the mouth. The 24 consonants of the English language are divided according to three aspects: the articulation place of the sounds, how those sounds are articulated, and whether they are voiced or unvoiced (Roach, 2009).

Consonants place of articulation:

- Bilabial: both lips are used.
- Labiodental: a lower lip and upper teeth are used.
- Dental: the teeth and the tip of the tongue are used.
- Alveolar: the tongue blade and the alveolar ridge are used.
- Post-alveolar: the tip or blade of the tongue in the area between alveolar ridge and hard palate are used.
- Palatal: the tongue in the area of the hard palate is used.
- Velar: the back of the tongue touches the soft palate.
- Glottal: a sound made by air passing between the vocal folds.

Consonants manner of articulation:

- Plosive: there is a complete closure in the vocal tract, not allowing the air to come through and then releasing it quickly.
- Fricative: for vocal organs are very near each other so that the air passing through makes a hissing sound.
- Affricate: starts as a plosive by creating a complete closure and then releasing it slowly as a fricative.
- Nasal: there is a complete closure not allowing the air to flow through the mouth but allowing it to escape through the nose.
- Lateral approximant: there is closure between the alveolar ridge and tongue allowing the air to flow only along the sides of the tongue.
- Approximant: two vocal organs come close together but without actually touching each other.

The 24 consonant sounds can be observed in the chart below. In the case of pairs of voiced and unvoiced consonants, the voiced is placed on the left, and the unvoiced can be observed on the right.

Table 1
English consonant phonemes

		PLACE OF ARTICULATION							
		Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
MANNER OF ARTICULATION	Plosive	p b			t d			k g	
	Fricative		f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ			h
	Affricate					tʃ dʒ			
	Nasal	m			n			ŋ	
	Lateral approximant				l				
	Approximant	w				r		j	

Source: Roach, E (2009)

2.2.2.3.2 Use of Word and Stress in sentences

a. Stress in words

Stress on both the word and the sentence levels is another significant feature of pronunciation. Yates (2002, p. 21) defines stress in words as "accent or emphasis given to a particular syllable of a word". The emphasis on the stressed syllable can be described as louder, longer and different in pitch. Words with two syllables always have one stressed and one unstressed syllable. Words with three and more syllables also have secondary stress, which is less strong than the primary one. Hence, there are three levels of stress in words: primary, secondary and unstress (Yates, 2002).

b. Stress in sentences

Stress in sentences is another level of stress. Jackendoff (1994) explains that it is a way of giving significance to a particular word in an utterance. Yates (2002, p. 22) supports Jackendoff's explanation by claiming that "the most important words tend to be stressed."

2.2.2.3.3 Use of Linking

a. Linking sounds

Linking refers to the way of pronouncing two words joined. By joining the two words while pronouncing them, it will be easy to say them, and they will sound smooth.

According to the BBC (2009) in English sounds can be linked in the following ways:

- **Linking consonants to vowels:** this happens when the ending of the first word is a consonant sound, and the beginning of the next word is a vowel sound.
- **Linking vowels to vowels:** this happens when the ending of the first word is a vowel sound, and the beginning of the next word is also a vowel sound.

b. Disappearing sounds

The sounds /d/ or /t/ may not be pronounced if it occurs between two consonants. (BBC , 2009).

c. Joining sounds

Those words that end in a consonant sound and the next word starts with the same consonant sound, are pronounced just as one (BBC , 2009).

d. Changing sounds

Those words that end in a consonant sound and the next word starts with another consonant sound that ending or beginning sound can change (BBC , 2009).

2.2.2.3.4 Use of Intonation

Intonation refers to the changes produced in the sounds by the rise and fall of the voice when speaking. In other words, the intonation begins at the central movement of the tonic syllable. As it was mentioned previously, the movement can be a rise, a fall, a rise with a fall, a fall with a rise or flat. Additionally, intonation many times defines the meaning and also provides information about the speaker's attitude.

Intonation plays a crucial role in speech; it indicates when speakers have finished the points they wish to communicate to people, indicate an agreement or a disagreement and their mood is conveyed in their tone of voice. If a speaker expresses in English with a flat intonation, this may sound boring and uninteresting. Using the wrong intonation may, therefore, sound offensive (Yangklang, 2013)

2.2.2.4 Perception

2.2.2.4.3 Speech Sound Discrimination

When learning a language, it is necessary to develop the ability to discriminate and produce phonemes to communicate in a foreign language. During face to face communication, it is

easier to discriminate sounds, but the difficulty is found in a noisy situation or long distance communications (Piia & Hua, 2014).

2.2.2.4.4 Ability to perceive similitudes and variations between speech sounds

To be able to perceive similitudes and variations in the target language is necessary to learn to differentiate them from the sounds of the mother tongue. The distance perceived between the sounds of the mother tongue and the target language defines the assimilation of the target language sounds (Ingham, 2014).

2.2.2.5 Prediction

2.2.2.5.3 Spelling and pronunciation

Spelling refers to the way words are visually structured (using letters of the alphabet), while pronunciation refers to how these words are formed verbally (using different speech sounds).

Both spelling and pronunciation are notorious aspects of English, as there are many inconsistencies, irregularities, and seemingly illogical aspects to how each is formed. Spelling words in English are complicated; even natives find it difficult to spell words accurately (English grammar, 2010).

2.2.2.5.4 Ability to predict the sounds of the speech from the spelling of the words

Being aware of the pronunciation rules and its relation to the spelling of the words helps learners to improve their ability to make speech sounds predictions.

2.2.2.5.4.1 Regular features of English Pronunciation and Spelling

In order to develop the speech sounds prediction ability it is important for students to learn the pronunciation and spelling features exposed in the tables below.

The links of the spelling and the pronunciation of consonants are analyzed in the next five tables:

a. Simple consonants

In the consonants shown in the table below just one main sound is associated

Table 2
Simple consonants

Letter	Sound	Examples
b	/b/	bus, rubber, lab
d	/d/	did, address, buddy
f	/f/	family, perfect, brief
h	/h/	high, adhere
j	/dʒ /	jam, project
k	/k/	kick, chicken, lucky
l	/l/	long, help, doll
m	/m/	my, moon, beam
n	/n/	not, oxygen, plant
r	/r/	rain, detergent
s	/s/	sat, space, pages
t	/t/	tip, fight, tune
v	/v/	violet, give, never
w	/w/	web, awake
z	/z/	zero, puzzle

Source: Kelly, G. (2006)

a. Silent consonants

Some letters are not pronounced, but they appear in spellings. They can be observed in the chart above.

Table 3
Silent consonants

Letter	Silent in
b	plumber
c	check
d	handsome
g	sign
h	why
k	knife
l	chalk
n	hymn
p	receipt
s	island
t	castle
w	sword

Source: Kelly, G. (2006)

b. Consonants with different "flavors."

Some consonants can be pronounced in different ways (exceptions to the rules). The examples can be observed below.

Table 4
Consonants with different "flavors."

Letter	Alternative pronunciation
c	/k/ Car
	/s/ Circle (followed by i)
	/ʃ/ Ocean
g	/g/ goal
	/dʒ/ general (some exceptions: give, get and girl)
	/ʒ/ mirage
s	/s/ similar
	/z/ reason (between two vowels)
	/z/ hands (at the end of a word)
	/ʃ/ mansion (between a consonant and followed by i)
t	/z/ mission (between two vowels)
	/t/ term
x	/ʃ/ situation, picture (words that end in -ure)
	/ks/ fix
	/gz/ exam, exact
y	/z/ xylophone
	/j/ yes
	/i:/ city
	/aɪ/ why, apply

Source: Kelly, G. (2006)

c. Double consonants

Most doubled consonants do not change their pronunciation from their single sound (e.g., swim, swimming). Nonetheless, some doubles change and they are shown below:

Table 5
Double consonants

Letters	Pronounced as	
cc	/ks/	successful
gg	/dʒ/	suggestion
ss	/ʃ/	passionate
zz	/ts/	pizza

Source: Kelly, G. (2006)

d. Digraphs and other combinations of consonants

Digraphs are two letters that represent a sound in a word. Some digraphs have more than one sound

Table 6
Digraphs and other combinations of consonants

Letters	Pronounced as	
ck	/k/	kicker
ch	/tʃ/	channel
	/k/	characteristic
	/ʃ/	machinery
gh	/g/	ghetto
	/f/	coughing
ng	/ŋ/	ring
ph	/f/	elephant
qu	/kw/	queasy
sh	/ʃ/	ship
tch	/tʃ/	watchman
th	/θ/	bathroom
	/ð/	those
wh	/w/	when
	/h/	whom

Source: Kelly, G. (2006)

Now, in the following tables, vowel letters and sounds are analyzed:

a. The sound of vowels

The five vowels have their most basic sounds when they appear in very short words, that is, between two letters of simple consonants.

Table 7
The sound of vowels

Letter	Pronounced as	
a	/æ/	mat
	/ɑ:/	car
e	/e/	red
i	/ɪ/	tip
o	/ɑ: /	hot
u	//	cut

Source: Kelly, G. (2006)

a. Digraphs and other combinations of vowels

Vocal digraphs are vowels that are written with two letters. Some of them are single sounds, but others, like “ai” or “ei,” are diphthongs, in which the combination contains the basic sounds of both vowels, but they glide together. Examples can be observed in the chart below.

Table 8
Digraphs and other combinations of vowels

Letter	Pronounced as			
ai	/eɪ/	rain		
ea	/i:/	beat	/eə/	near
	/eɪ/	great	/ɪə/	near
	/e/	dead	/ɑ:/	heart
ee	/ɜ:/	ready		
	/i:/	feed	/ɪ/	been
ei	/i:/	seize,	/eɪ/	eight
	/aɪ/	either		
ie	/aɪ/	lie	/i:/	Niece
	/e/	friend	/ɪə/	pierce
oa	/əʊ/	goal		
ou	/əʊ/	soul		
	/aʊ/	house		
ue	/u:/	blue,	/ju:/	queue
ui	/u:/	Suit	/aɪ/	guide
	/ju:/	juice		

Source: Kelly, G. (2006)

Knowing these rules have some advantages:

- The teacher and the students are more aware that there is a regularity to the system of English orthography.
- Students gain some familiarity with clues which may help them to pronounce new, but similar words in the future.
- Students gain some familiarity with clues which may help them in recognizing some spoken words and in visualizing them, as an aid to spelling them.

In general, the most significant benefit should be that the students may become less dependent upon the teacher and the dictionary, and have more confidence in their judgment of how a word is pronounced.

2.2.2.6 *Teaching Pronunciation*

As has been stated throughout this theoretical framework, pronunciation is generally taught on isolated features. When teachers include it in their lesson plans, they typically cover any of the following: consonant and vowel sounds, changes to these sounds in the stream of connected speech, stress in words patterns, rhythm, and intonation (Jenkins, 2004).

On the other hand, Griffiths (2004) states that pronunciation can be taught easily by using exercises that are easy and entertaining for students, regardless of their level. When students perform oral expression activities with more freedom, the primary objective is to achieve fluency in speech.

2.2.2.7 *The Role of the Teacher in Teaching Pronunciation*

The role of the teacher in pronunciation is viewed as a coach. A coach is in charge of supplying information, working as a model, offering cues, suggestions and constructive feedback about performance, setting high standards, providing a wide variety of practice opportunities, and overall supports, encouraging the learner, and giving special consideration to the use and selection of songs for the pronunciation features being practiced. (Morley, 1991).

2.3 Legal Framework

The Ley Orgánica de Educación Intercultural (National Assembly, 2015) determines the rights of all people, communities, and nationalities to be educated in their language and the official languages of intercultural relations, as well as in other languages related to the international community.

In the same way, according to the Acuerdo Ministerial 2016-0020-A, the teaching of the English language was disposed as mandatory from the 1st grade of EGB until the 3rd year of BGU, this means that all the educative system of Ecuador was required to teach English. This normative indicates that the students must achieve a B1 level according to the Common European Framework for Language Reference when they finish high school. The students must be able to read and write without difficulty (Ministry of Education, 2016).

Also, the Article 124 of the Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior (National Assembly, 2010) states that “Es total responsabilidad de las instituciones pertenecientes a el Sistema de Educación Superior proveer a los estudiantes dominio de un idioma extranjero”. For this

reason, it is essential that students learn English since high school. In this way, they will be proficient when they start university.

2.4 Conceptual Framework (glossary)

Approach: An approach is how a language is seen from the theoretical point of view and suggests how that language can be learned. An approach shows different teaching methods to be used in class and by using them the learning process becomes easier (British Council, 2008).

Articulation: It refers to how sound is produced through the mouth and throat. (Richards, Platt, & Weber, 1985).

Comprehension: is the faculty of intelligence through which we can understand things to understand their reasons or to make a clear idea of these (Macrae, 1978).

Learning: Refers to the lasting changes in knowledge or behaviors that an individual experiment along life (Naaba & Bukari, 2017).

Listening: It consists of perceiving the sounds of the language by the ears. When listening, the sounds of the speech they are processed into words and sentences (Richards, Platt, & Weber, 1985).

Natural language: It is a language that has native speakers, in contrast with an artificial language (Richards, Platt, & Weber, 1985).

Phoneme: is the minimum unit of a sound of the phonological system of a language (Richards, Platt, & Weber, 1985).

Speaking: is the realization of a language, that is, the individual act by means of which a person makes oral use of a language to be able to communicate, elaborating a message according to the rules and grammatical conventions that he shares with a given linguistic community (Richards, Platt, & Weber, 1985).

Speech: Refers to the ability to express thoughts and feelings by articulate sounds (Richards, Platt, & Weber, 1985). It is also human vocal communication that involves the use of language.

Auditory perception: Refers to the perception of information and stimuli that are received through the ears. Auditory perception requires a listener to detect different kinds of acoustic signals and to judge the difference between them according to differences in such acoustic characteristics as their frequency, amplitude, duration, the order of occurrence, and rate of presentation (Richards, Platt, & Weber, 1985).

Teaching: Consists of sharing knowledge and experiences. Teaching is a system and a method of instruction, a set of knowledge, principles, and ideas that are taught to someone. (Naaba & Bukari, 2017).

CHAPTER III

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Type of Research

As a starting point, this research is scientific since the researcher applies a theoretical framework which is derived from science. In the same way, this research is factual as it is based on real-life facts.

According to the levels of research, this study is descriptive since it is used when a phenomenon is present and needs to be studied in depth. The influence of natural approach activities on students' pronunciation has not been yet described. This study facilitates a greater understanding of how this phenomenon can be viable. Therefore, this research is exploratory.

On the other hand, this research is supported by a conceptual framework which means that this is a theoretical study. Also, this study analyses the relationship between two variables; thus it is bivariate research. The dependent variable is pronunciation, and the independent one is natural approach activities.

According to the study method of the variables, this research is focused on qualitative and quantitative methods. In qualitative studies, the researcher relies on the collection of data through instruments that allow answering questions about how or why a specific phenomenon occurs. The use of the quantitative approach allows the use of statistical models about the problem investigated.

This research is of field since the researchers went to the place where the problem was happening.

Finally, considering the data for this study were collected directly in the institution where the problem was detected, this research is a field investigation.

3.2 Methods, Techniques and Research Instruments

The qualitative data were collected through the conduction of observations to the teacher, and the students and the quantitative data were collected through the application of a pre-test and a post-test. Moreover, also, two surveys were applied to both teachers and students.

3.2.1 Class Observation form for the Students

Before the intervention process, students were observed in class with the purpose of collecting information to discover their strengths and weaknesses in English pronunciation. Seven aspects were observed. A Likert scale was used to measure the frequency in which the students performed the actions observed. The scale used consisted of the following adverbs of time: Never, rarely, sometimes, often and always. Notes were taken to register the actions (Appendix A).

3.2.2 Class Observation form for the Teacher

Observation of the teachers was conducted to recognize the method employed by them in their lessons and, in the same way, to identify the students' reactions. By observing the teachers in class, it would be easier to determine the activities to include in the proposal and how those should be taught. Six aspects were observed. A Likert scale was used to measure the frequency in which the teachers performed the actions observed. The scale used consisted of the following adverbs of time: Never, rarely, usually, often and always. (Appendix B).

3.2.3 Students' Survey

A survey to the students was applied with the purpose of identifying their experiences and inquire into the activities that they enjoy the most when learning the language. In this way, a propitious selection of the activities would be made based on their answers. This survey consisted of a questionnaire which included eight different questions about the kind of activities that students like for learning pronunciation and the strategies and techniques the teacher uses to teach pronunciation (Appendix C).

3.2.4 Tests

To measure different features of English pronunciation a pre-test was administered to 7th grade EGB students before the implementation of the proposal. The test was administered at the beginning of the school year. The same test was implemented as a post-test four weeks later, after the implementation of the proposal (Appendix D).

The pre-tests and the post-test were assessed with the information contained in a rubric designed to evaluate pronunciation in the A2 level determined by the Common European Framework of Reference (Appendix E). The pronunciation aspects assessed were the following: Use of stress in words, use of stress in sentences, use of linking, use of intonation, use of articulators, ability to perceive differences between speech sounds, ability to predict

the sounds of the speech from the spelling of the words. The assessment was based on the following scale: Elementary (0-4), Pre-intermediate (5-6), Intermediate (7-8), upper-intermediate (9) and Advanced (10).

The test consisted of three (3) tasks. It was a listening a speaking test and lasted approximately 15 minutes.

The tasks were divided as follows: Task 1: Reading aloud, Task 2: Auditory discrimination, Task 3: Pronounce for spelling.

3.2.5 Teachers' Education Survey

In order to collect information about the teachers' experience concerning TEFL, a teachers' questionnaire was administered to them. It consisted of 10 closed-ended questions and was administered by the researcher (Appendix F).

3.3 Research Population and Sample

From a universe of 600 students, this research was applied to the 30 students that belong to 7th-grade EGB at "Unidad Educativa Delfos" in Guayaquil-Ecuador. Eight (8) teachers were also part of the population of this research.

3.4 Sources, Resources, and Timeline

Table 9
Sources

Sources	Requirements
Computer	To develop the research project
Internet access	To research all the information required for the development of the study and the proposal.
Printer	To print the thesis, the proposal, the instruments.
Paper	To print all the necessary material.

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

Table 10
Resources

Description	Number	Price	Total
Internet connection	6 months	240	240
Flash	1	8	8
Copies	60	18	18
Printer	1	300	300
Totañ		566	566

Source: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

Table 11
Timeline

N°	Activities	2018							
		Months	Jun	July	Ago	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dic
1	Presentation of the topic research								
2	Elaboration of Chapter I: Problem statement								
3	Elaboration of Chapter II: Literature Review								
4	Chapter III: Conduct research								
5	Data analisis								
6	Findings and Conclusions								
7	Proposal								
8	Conclusions and recommendations								
9	Project Revision								
10	Project corrections								
11	Submission								

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

3.5 Processing, presentation, and analysis of results

3.5.1 Observation Forms

With the purpose of identifying the reasons why seventh graders students at Unidad Educativa Delfos have pronunciation problems, observations to the participants and the teachers were done. The results are presented in the following lines.

3.5.1.1 Observation Form of the Students

During the class, the researchers observed that teachers and the students used their mother tongue most of the time. For this reason, it was not easy to determine their strengths and weaknesses regarding pronunciation. However, some data was obtained from the speaking activities in which they were required to use the language.

- Speaking English is not easy for the students, their pronunciation was not clear, they spoke with many pauses and hesitation, and in some cases, they over articulated the words trying to pronounce the words correctly.
- Regarding word and stress in sentences, it was easier for them to pronounce isolated words than long phrases or sentences. The teacher usually corrected them their pronunciation in certain words, even those familiar.
- In the case of dialogues or questions and answers activities, the students had difficulties to follow the conversation since they did not understand their partners. In this situation was determined that some students had listening comprehension problems and for others speaking and pronunciation was difficult.
- Concerning sounds recognition and discrimination, most of the students frequently asked the teacher to repeat the words since it was not easy for them to identify the words or expressions the teacher was saying, and in the case of reading, most of the students did not recognize the pronunciation of the words even seeing them written.
- About intonation, the students spoke English with a flat intonation; this sounded uninteresting. However, it was observed that some students tried to sound natural but their pronunciation was not accurate so, this made a difference in the intonation.

3.5.1.2 Observation Form of the Teacher

After observing the teachers at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the lessons, the following observations were obtained.

- The teachers did not focus their lessons on developing students' speaking skill; however, some speaking activities were carried out, such as dialogues, role plays.
- In some cases some of the teachers played recordings or showed videos, it was very positive for the students to practice listening, considering this skill is connected to the speaking skill, and therefore it helps to learn and improve pronunciation.
- Most of the teachers mainly focused their lessons on grammar teaching; the lessons were simple and clear enough for the students to understand. Other teachers focused on reading and writing, providing the students with plenty of exercises and activities to develop these skills.
- The lessons were organized; the teachers gave an introduction to the beginning of the lessons set the objectives and develop the lessons as planned.
- The strategies were almost focused on the same activities, dialogues, reading activities, group works.
- Activities focused on the development of pronunciation were not observed at all; the teachers neither explained pronunciation rules nor included them in their lessons. They just corrected students when they pronounced words in the wrong way.

3.5.2 Survey for the Students

Thirty students of 7th grade answered a survey in order to identify their experiences and preferences in their English classes with the purpose of providing them with a dynamic proposal based on the natural approach to teach them English pronunciation. The results are shown below:

Table 12

Question 1: How old are you?

Descriptor	<i>f</i>	%
11 years old	8	27%
12 years old	22	73%
13 years old	0	0%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: 7th-grade students

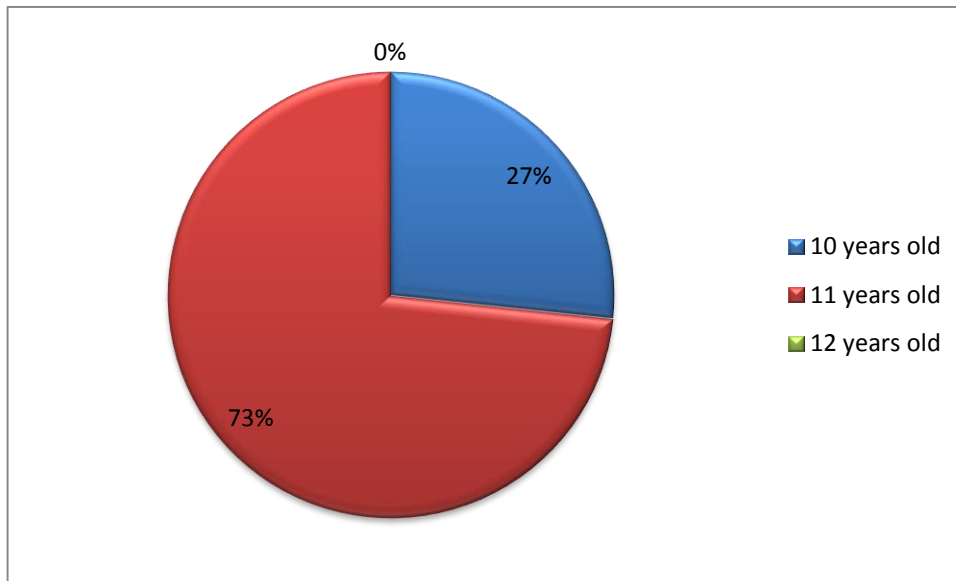


Figure 2. How old are you?

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

As observed in the previous chart, the students' age is between 10 and 11 years old. This is considered an important age for learning a language since they are young children that are still developing their brains and are open to receive any information and linguistic stimulus.

Table 13

Question 2: What is your attitude towards learning English?

Descriptor	<i>f</i>	%
Very positive	18	60%
Neutral	9	30%
Very negative	3	10%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: 7th-grade students

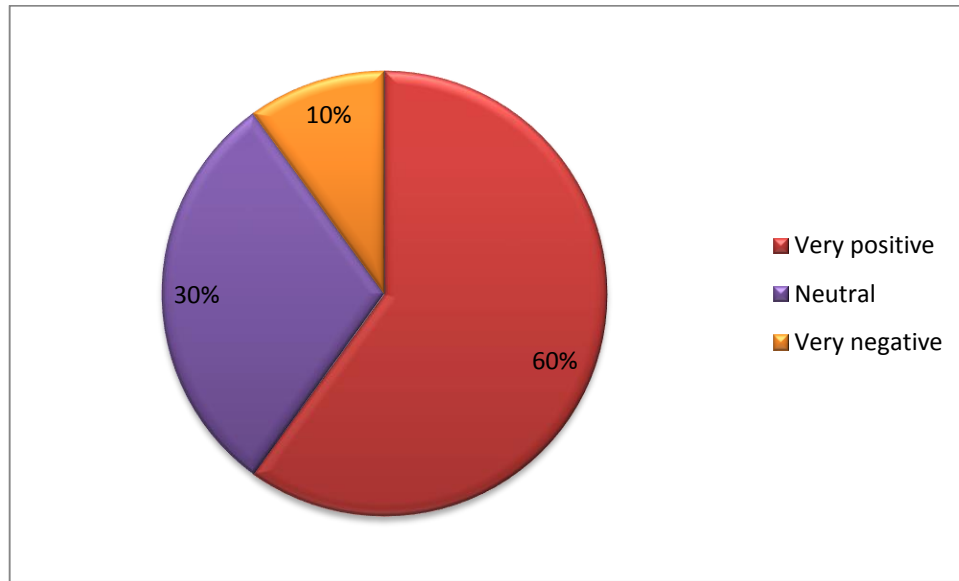


Figure 3 What is your attitude towards learning English?

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

Students expressed that they have a very positive attitude towards learning English. Students' attitude is essential because it determines the flow of the lessons. If they are willing to learn the language, better results will be obtained at the end of the course. With the support of the students, the lessons will be more dynamic, and the interaction will be more natural.

Table 14

Question 3: Do the activities proposed by the teacher in the English class, motivate you to learn English?

Descriptor	<i>f</i>	%
Always	2	7%
Often	4	13%
Sometimes	8	27%
Rarely	13	43%
Never	3	10%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: 7th-grade students

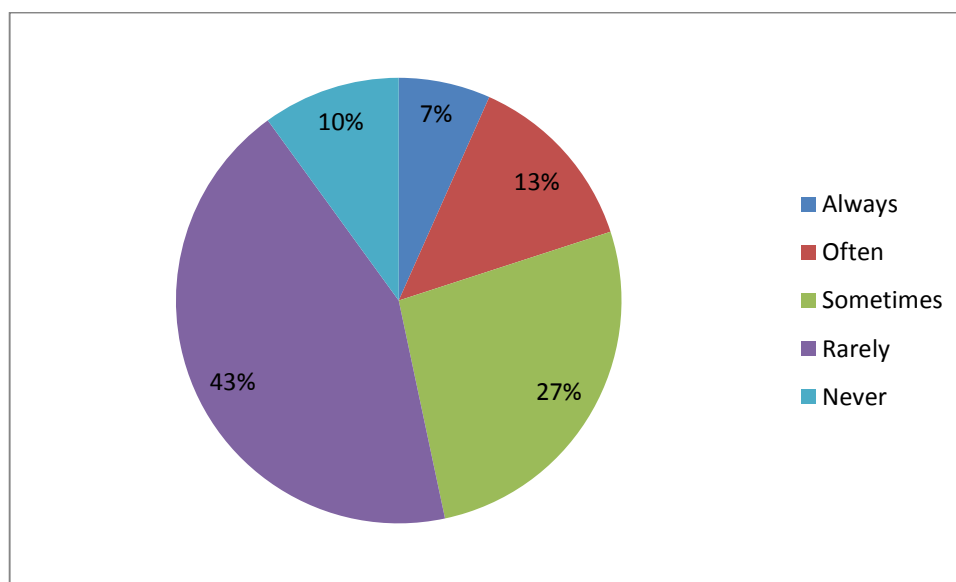


Figure 4. Do the activities proposed by the teacher in the English class, motivate you to learn English?

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

The students feel the activities proposed by the teachers do not motivate them to learn English. Even when the students are positive towards their learning, if the teachers do not motivate them with interactive and interesting activities the students will be bored and apathetic to learn. It is important to incorporate to the lesson's activities that get the students 'attention and makes them being interested in language learning.

Table 15

Question 4: What is your proficiency level in the English language?

Descriptor	<i>f</i>	%
Beginner	25	83%
Intermediate	5	17%
Advanced	0	0%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: 7th-grade students

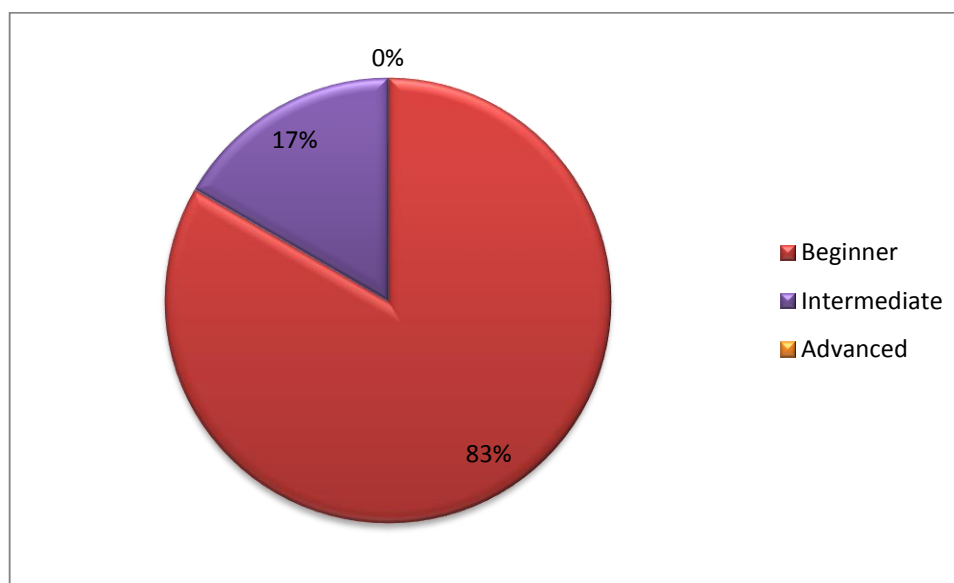


Figure 5. What is your proficiency level in the English language?

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

The students consider themselves as beginners. According to the CEFR of languages, 7th-grade students are basic users of the language which corresponds with the students' self-evaluation. At this level, as beginners, the students must achieve specific abilities that prepare them to pass to the intermediate level.

Table 16

Question: What language skill would you like to develop the most?

Descriptor	<i>f</i>	%
Reading	2	6%
Writing	5	17%
Speaking	20	67%
Listening	3	10%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: 7th-grade students

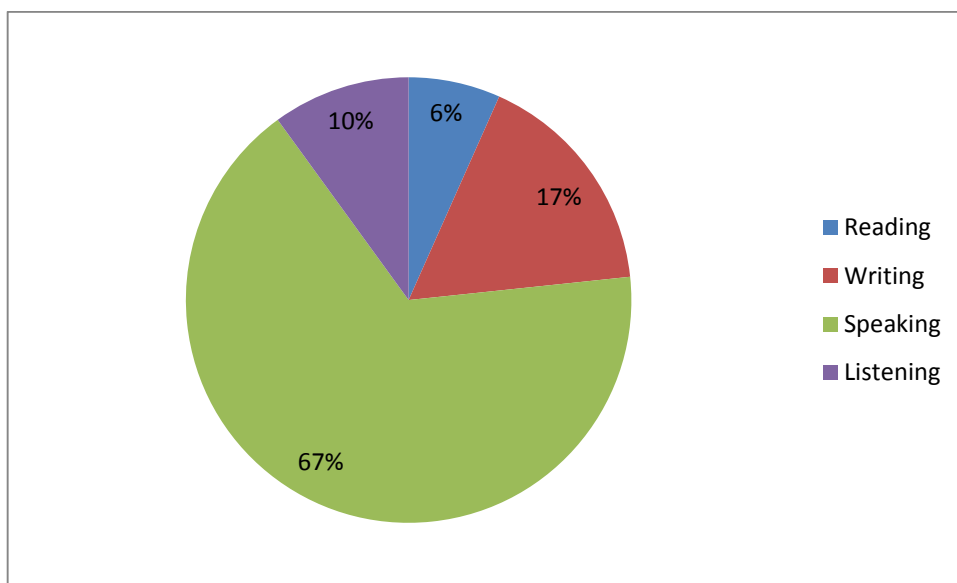


Figure 6. What language skill would you like to develop the most?

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

According to the students' answers, speaking is the skill they want to develop the most. Also writing is essential for them to learn. However, although the students have preferences about the skills they want to develop, it is important to clarify them that all four language skill are interrelated and it is essential and necessary to learn them all to be competent and proficient in the language.

Table 17

Question 6: What is your learning style?

Descriptor	<i>f</i>	%
Visual	5	17%
Auditory	10	33%
Verbal	15	50%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: 7th-grade students

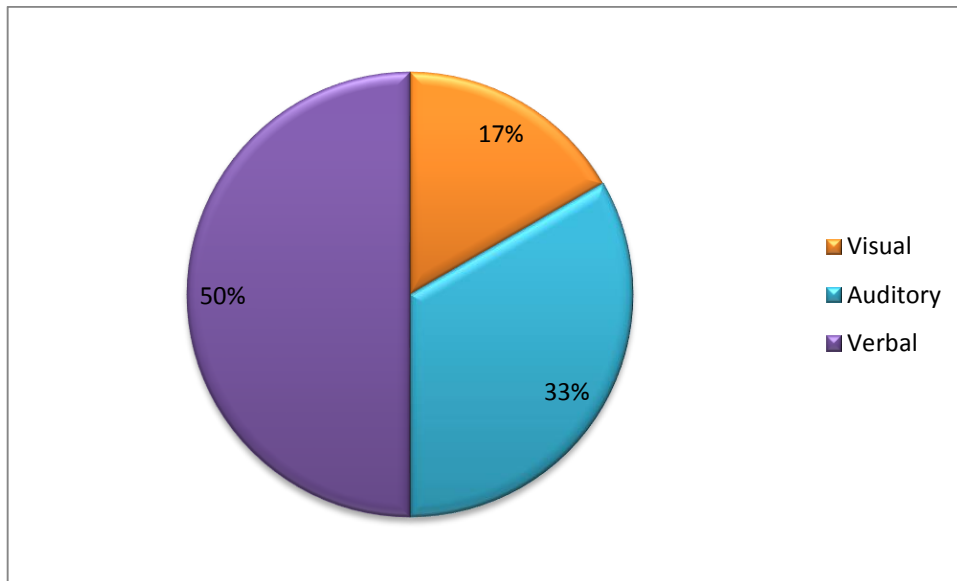


Figure 7. What is your learning style?

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

Most of the students expressed that their learning style is verbal. The verbal learning style refers to speaking and writing skill which coincides with the students' preferences since they have stated that they want to develop their speaking and writing skills. These students enjoy activities based on language reasoning in which they can create their ideas and sharing with others as well as express their thoughts.

Table 18

Question 7: How frequently do you use the English language in your class?

Descriptor	<i>f</i>	%
Always	2	6%
Often	2	6%
Usually	6	20%
Rarely	8	28%
Never	12	40%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: 7th-grade students

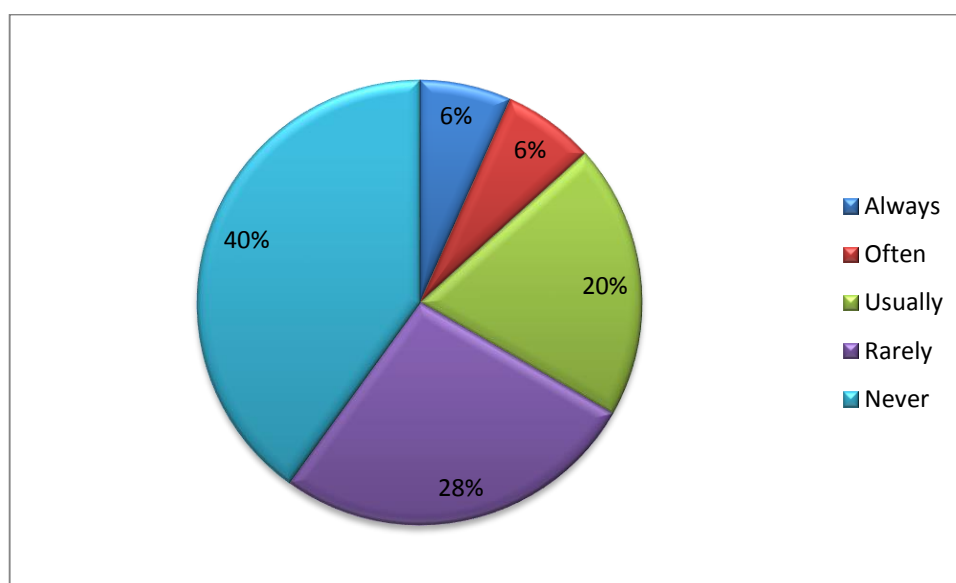


Figure 8. How frequently do you use the English language in your class?

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

In the chart below can be observed that most of the students do not speak English in class. This may occur because the teachers do not propose oral activities in which students are involved or required to speak English. It is important to remember that speaking comes from listening and those activities are also essential to help students to develop this skill.

Table 19

Question 8: Would you like to improve your pronunciation?

Descriptor	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	30	100%
Not, but considered	0	0%
No	0	0%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: 7th-grade students



Figure 9. Would you like to improve your pronunciation?

Source: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

Regarding this question, all of the students stated that they want to learn English pronunciation. Considering pronunciation is important to speak, to comprehend what is said and to read especially aloud, become imperative to be taught. But that must be carefully taught because it is a very complex feature of the language, and based on the natural approach it must be taught without explaining any rules.

3.5.3 Pre-test and Post-test Analysis and Interpretation

The students' assessment in the pre-test and post-test was based on the CEFR for level A2. The criteria proposed for the evaluation was as follows: use of stress in words, use of linking, use of intonation, use of articulators, sound perception and sounds prediction. The assessment scale is the following: 1-4 points (Elementary), 5-6 points (Pre-intermediate), 7-8 points (Intermediate), 9 points (Upper-intermediate), 10 points (Advanced).

With the purpose of assessing the speaking skill of the students of 7th grade during the tests, the following rubric was used.

Table 20
Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Elementary 0-4	Pre- interme diate 5-6	Interme diate 7-8	Upper- interme diate 9	Advanced 10	Total
Use of stress in words						/10
Use of stress in sentences						/10
Use of linking						/10
Use of intonation						/10
Use of articulators						/10
Ability to perceive differences between speech sounds.						/10
Ability to predict the sounds of the speech from the spelling of the words						/10
TOTAL (Average of 7 criteria)						/10

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

The results obtained, before and after, were analyzed descriptively. The data were used to measure different aspects of the students' pronunciation.

In the following tables, the results evidenced in the pre-test and the post-test can be observed.

Table 21
Students' grades obtained during the pre-test

Learner (L)	Use of stress in words	Use of stress in sentences	Use of linking	Use of intonation	Use of articulators	Sound perception	Prediction of speech sounds	Average	Scale
L1	5	4	5	3	4	5	4	4,3	E
L2	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	3,4	E
L3	3	3	4	3	3	4	3	3,3	E
L 4	5	4	5	5	4	4	4	4,4	E
L 5	8	8	9	7	8	7	7	7,7	I
L 6	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	2,3	E
L 7	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	3,9	E
L 8	2	2	2	1	2	1	1	1,6	E
L 9	4	3	3	4	3	2	3	3,1	E
L 10	5	6	5	5	6	5	5	5,3	PI
L 11	7	8	8	7	8	7	8	7,6	I
L 12	6	6	5	4	5	4	5	5,0	PI
L 13	5	4	3	4	5	3	4	4,0	E
L 14	2	2	3	2	3	2	2	2,3	E
L 15	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	2,7	E
L 16	9	8	8	9	8	9	7	8,3	E
L 17	8	7	7	8	7	7	7	7,3	I
L 18	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	2,7	E
L 19	6	5	6	6	5	5	5	5,4	E
L 20	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	1,6	E
L 21	8	8	8	7	7	8	7	7,6	I
L 22	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	2,6	E
L 23	5	6	5	5	6	6	5	5,4	F
L 24	4	4	4	3	4	3	3	3,6	E
L 25	6	6	5	6	5	6	6	5,7	PI
L 26	3	3	2	3	2	2	3	2,6	E
L 27	5	4	5	5	6	5	5	5,0	E
L 28	9	8	8	8	7	8	7	7,9	I
L 29	5	6	6	5	6	7	6	5,9	PI
L 30	1	2	3	2	2	2	1	1,9	E
Average	4,73	4,57	4,57	4,37	4,50	4,33	4,23	4,5	E
%	47,3%	45,7%	45,7%	43,7%	45,0%	43,3%	42,3%	45,0%	

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

Table 22

Students' grades obtained during the post-test

Learner (L)	Use of stress in words	Use of stress in sentences	Use of linking	Use of intonation	Use of articulators	Sound perception	Prediction of speech sounds	Average	Scale
L1	7	6	7	5	6	7	6	6,29	PI
L2	6	6	5	6	5	5	5	5,43	PI
L3	5	5	6	5	5	6	5	5,29	PI
L 4	7	6	7	7	6	6	6	6,43	PI
L 5	9	9	10	8	9	8	8	8,71	I
L 6	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	PI
L 7	6	6	6	5	6	6	6	5,86	PI
L 8	5	5	5	4	5	4	4	4,57	E
L 9	6	5	5	6	5	5	5	5,29	PI
L 10	7	8	7	7	8	7	7	7,29	I
L 11	8	9	9	8	9	8	9	8,57	I
L 12	8	8	7	6	7	6	7	7,00	I
L 13	7	6	5	6	7	5	6	6,00	PI
L 14	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	PI
L 15	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	PI
L 16	10	9	9	10	9	10	8	9,29	UI
L 17	9	8	8	9	8	8	8	8,29	I
L 18	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	I
L 19	8	7	8	8	7	7	7	7,43	I
L 20	5	5	4	5	5	4	4	4,57	E
L 21	9	9	9	8	8	9	8	8,57	I
L 22	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	PI
L 23	7	8	7	7	8	8	7	7,43	I
L 24	6	6	6	5	6	5	5	5,57	PI
L 25	8	8	7	8	7	8	8	7,71	I
L 26	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5,00	PI
L 27	7	6	7	7	8	7	7	7,00	I
L 28	10	9	9	9	8	9	8	8,86	I
L 29	7	8	8	7	8	8	8	7,71	I
L 30	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	4,71	E
Average	6,70	6,57	6,53	6,37	6,50	6,37	6,20	6,46	PI
%	67%	65,6%	65,3%	63,6%	65%	63,6%	62%	64,6%	

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

Table 213
Use of stress in words

Test	Score
Pre-test	4,73
Post-test	6,70

Source: Pre-test and Post-test

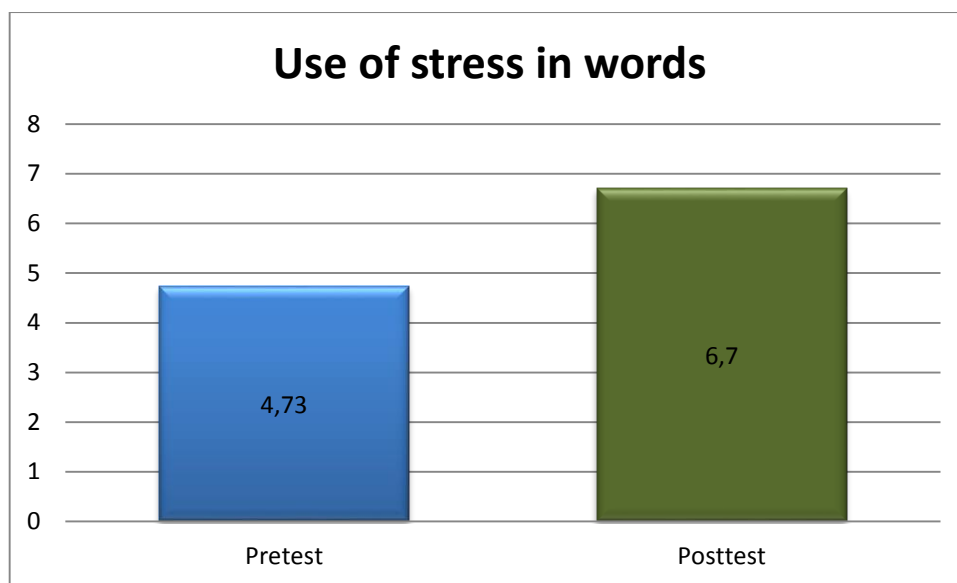


Figure 10. Use of stress in words

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

According to the chart above, in the pre-test the students had difficulties with the use of stress in words; however, after the application of the proposal, the students improved this important aspect of their pronunciation. The use of the activities based on the natural approach helped the students to identify stress in words placement. As they listened to different words and paid attention to their pronunciation, they started to recognize them and at the same time to pronounce them correctly. If words are correctly stressed, it would be easier for the listener to identify them; also communication will be clear, precise and easily understandable. Therefore, to make it possible, the natural approach activities focus on the understanding of the message which indicates it has a positive influence on the development of pronunciation.

Table 24
Use of stress in sentences

Test	Score
Pre-test	4,57
Post-test	6,57

Source: Pre-test and Post-test

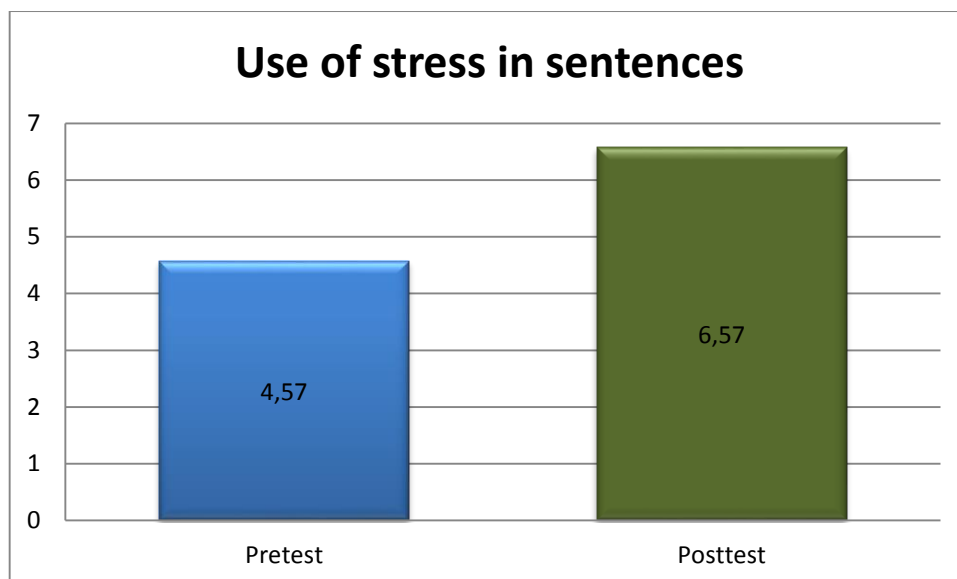


Figure 11. Use of stress in sentences

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

As it can be observed in this figure, during the pre-test it was tough for the students to pronounce the different sentences suggested, accurately considering that pronouncing sentences as a group of words it is necessary to maintain the stress, the rhythm, the intonation, so it was complicated for many of them.

Then, as it is shown in the figure above, during the post-test, the students demonstrated they had improved the pronunciation of the stress in sentences. Through the use of natural approach activities, students learned how to pronounce sentences naturally, stressing correctly and also, they developed their ability to pay attention to other features of pronunciation like rhythm and intonation.

Table 25
Use of linking

Test	Score
Pre-test	4,57
Post-test	6,53

Source: Pre-test and Post-test

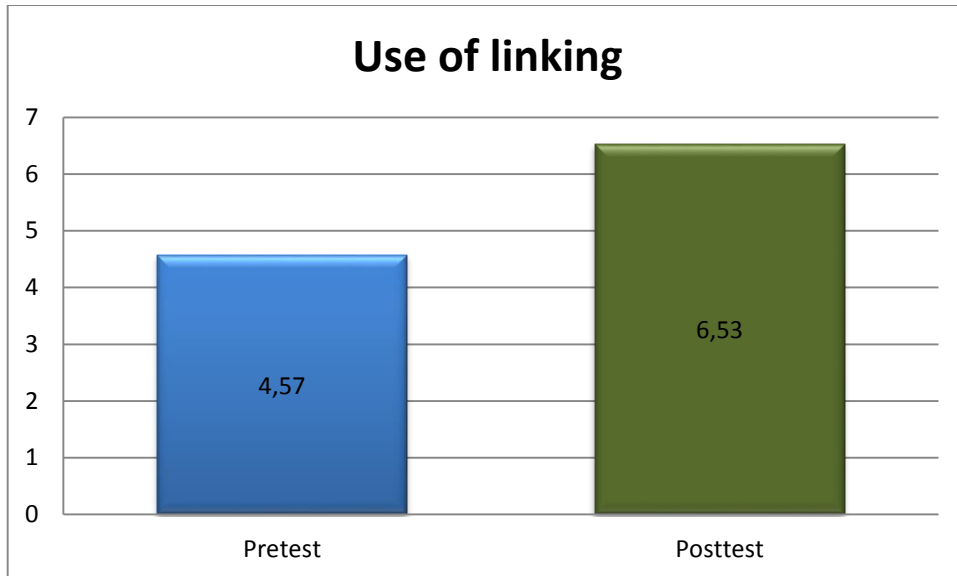


Figure 12. Use of linking

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

It is evident that the use of linking was not easy at the beginning for many of the students. Joining the pronunciation of two words was a hard task for them, however in the post-test, after the implementation of the different activities focused on this particular aspect, the students learned how to link words, pauses were considerably reduced, and their pronunciation was significantly more fluid.

Table 26
Use of intonation

Test	Score
Pre-test	4,37
Post-test	6,37

Source: Pre-test and Post-test

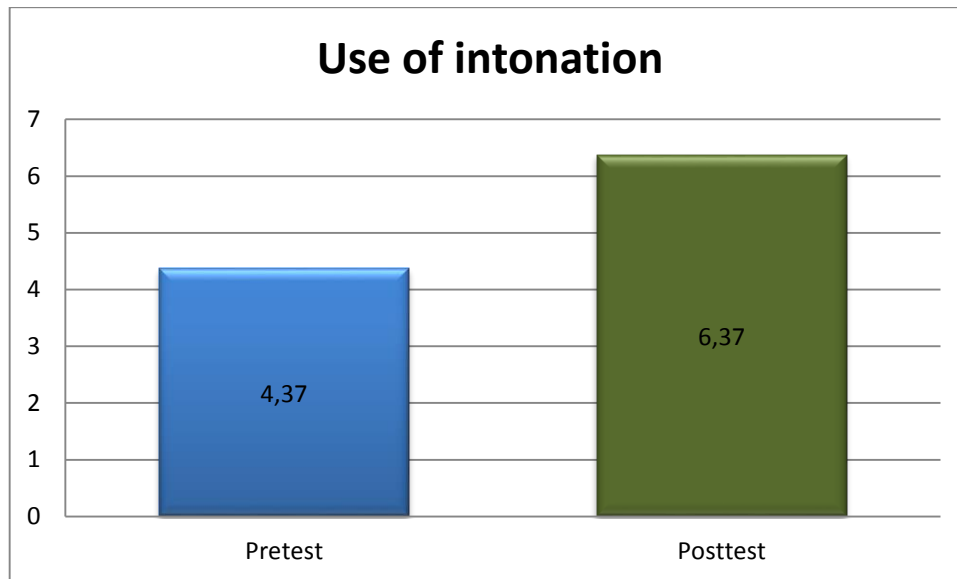


Figure 13. Use of intonation

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

The figure above shows that during the pre-test the students had problems intonating in English, they had a flat intonation what made the students very difficult to follow and understand. Later, during the post-test and after practicing pronunciation with different activities, their intonation improved, what they said was more comprehensible and they were easier to follow.

Table 27
Use of articulators

Test	Score
Pre-test	4,50
Post-test	6,50

Source: Pre-test and Post-test

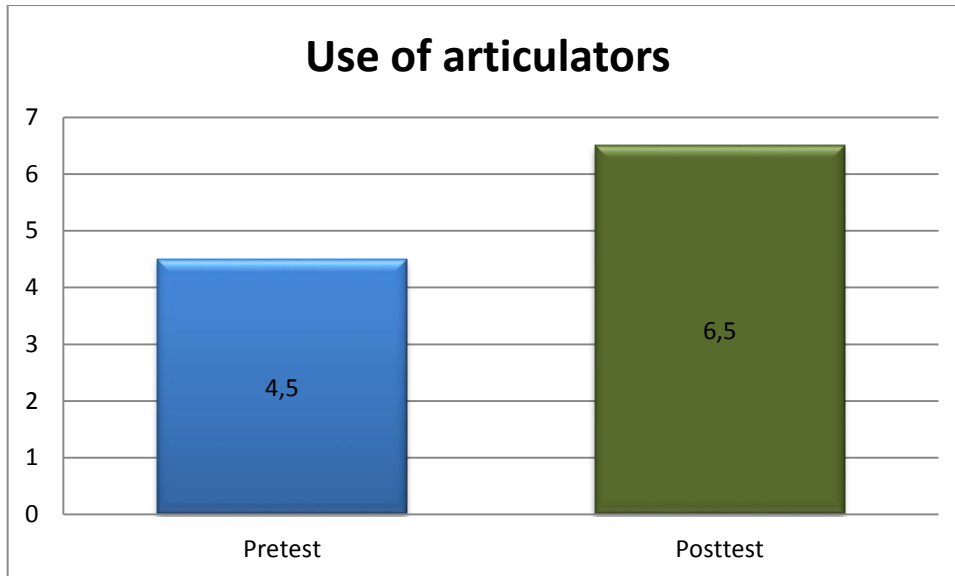


Figure 14. Use of articulators

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

Considering Spanish and English sounds are different, the position of the articulators is different too. As students did not have enough practice pronouncing the English language during the pre-test, their articulation was not correct; they articulated the sounds as they would do in Spanish. Later, with much practice and natural and authentic activities, students learned about the position of the articulators and improved their pronunciation reducing their foreign accent and making pronunciation clearer.

Table 28
Sound perception

Test	Score
Pre-test	4,33
Post-test	6,37

Source: Pre-test and Post-test

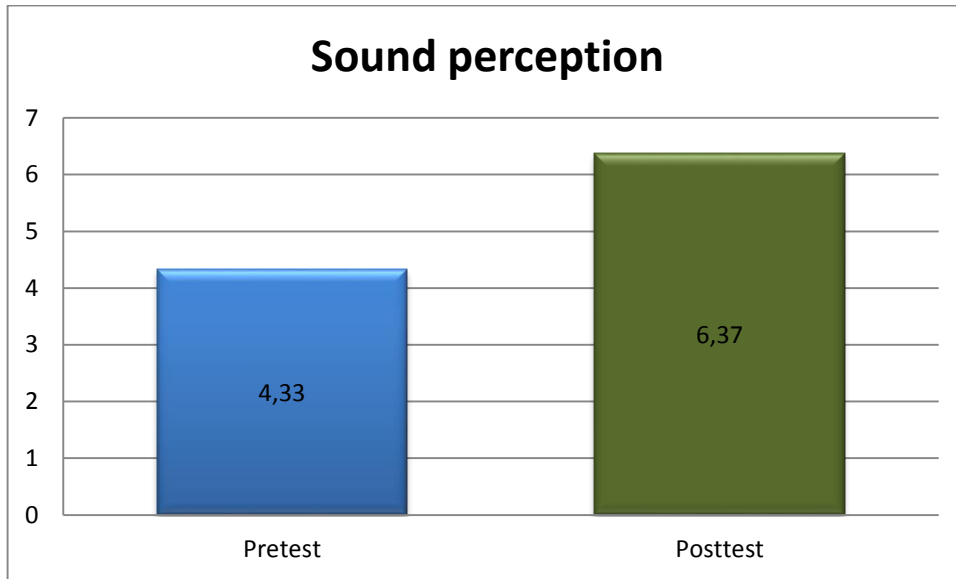


Figure 15. Sound perception

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

The graph above shows one of the most challenging aspects of pronunciation for the students. Recognizing speech sounds was a difficult task for them during the pre-test, considering the difference between the pronunciation of the Spanish and the English sounds. However, after the application of the proposal, the students assimilated most of the English sounds and were able to discriminate and produce them.

Table 29
Sound prediction according to the spelling

Test	Score
Pre-test	4,23
Post-test	6,20

Source: Pre-test and Post-test

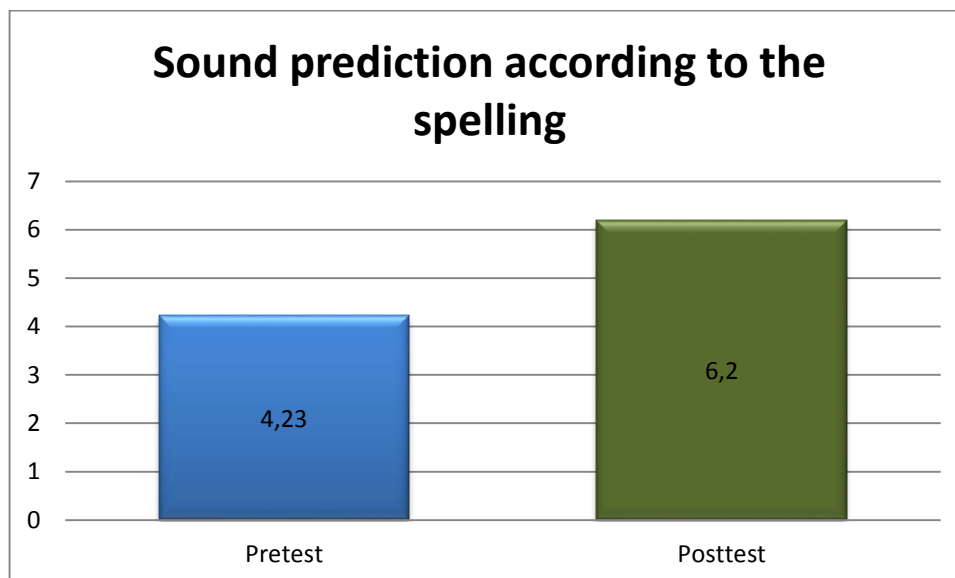


Figure 16. Sound prediction according to the spelling

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

The figure above shows the results obtained in the most challenging aspect of pronunciation for the students during the pre-test. Predicting speech sounds according to the spelling of the words was very complicated for the students since they did not know the differences between the spelling of the words and their pronunciation. After carrying out different activities based on the natural approach to improve this aspect the students learned about those differences and paid more attention to the spelling of the words, they established relationships between different words with similar spelling and improved their pronunciation.

Table 30
Arithmetic mean results of the students' pre-test-post-test scores in their pronunciation level

Tests	Score
Pre-test	4,50
Post-test	6,46

Source: Pre-test and Post-test

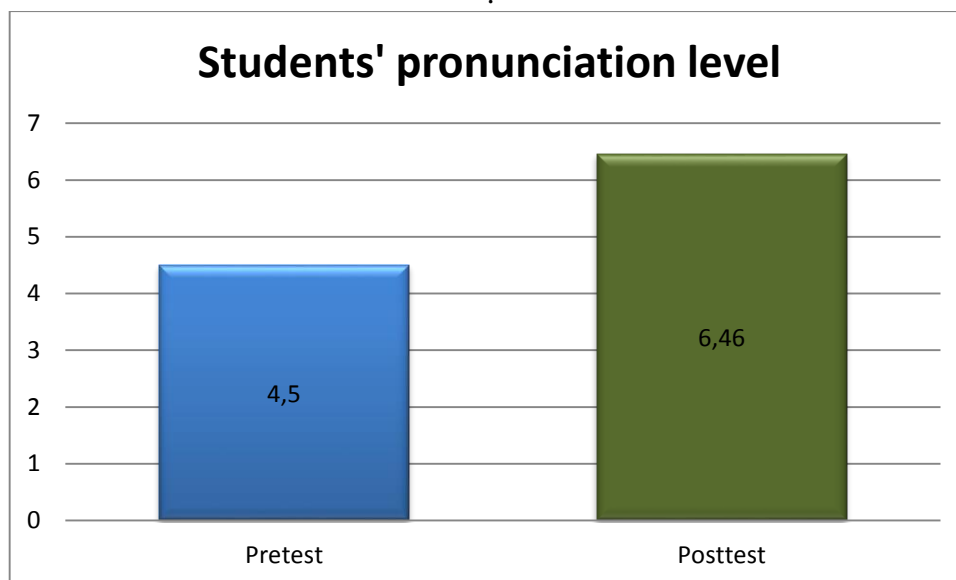


Figure17. Students' pronunciation level

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

As it can be observed, the pronunciation level of the students of 7th grade was improved from the pre-test. The results indicate that the difference in scores from the pre-test to the post-test was very significant for the students. All the activities carried out during the application of the proposal based on the natural approach, helped the students to become more competent in their pronunciation concerning the different features assessed during the tests such as the use of stress in words, the use of linking, the use of intonation, the use of articulators, sound perception and sounds prediction according to the spelling of the words.

Table 31
General pre-test results

Descriptor	<i>f</i>	%
Elementary (1-4)	17	57%
Pre-intermediate (5-6)	7	23%
Intermediate (7-8)	6	20%
Upper-intermediate (9)	0	0%
Advanced (10)	0	0%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: 7th grade students

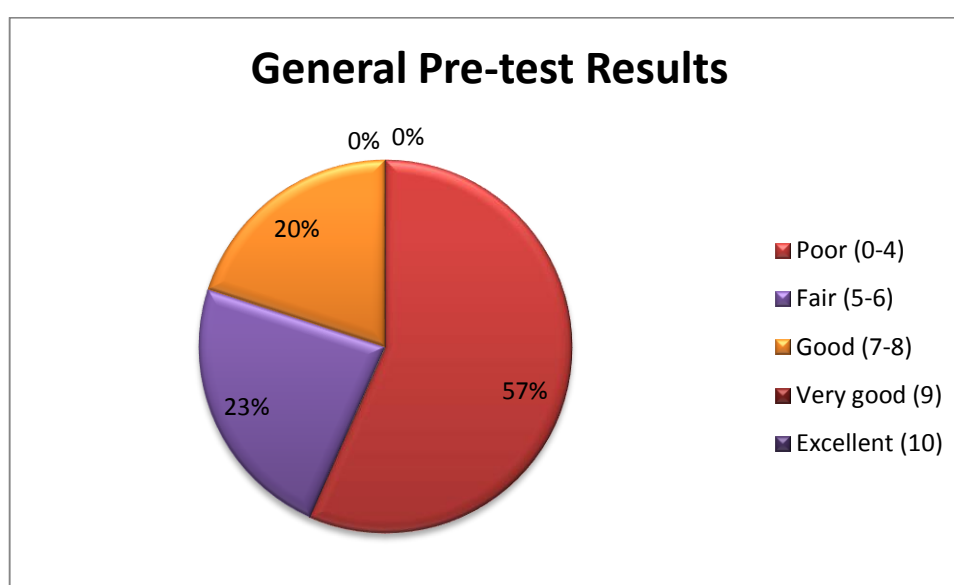


Figure 17. General pre-test results

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

The graph above reveals that most of the students had a low level in pronunciation; this is due to the lack of activities proposed by the teachers to develop this feature of the speaking skill. The students did not have enough practice using the articulators' so it was not easy to understand them when they spoke. Additionally, they did not know how to intonate sentences and how to stress words in the correct place, linking was also a difficult task for them since they did not know how to link final sounds with the beginning of the next words. Perceiving and predicting words was very difficult for them since they used to confuse English with Spanish pronunciation.

Table 22
General post-test results

Descriptor	<i>f</i>	%
Elementary (1-4)	3	10%
Pre-intermediate (5-6)	14	47%
Intermediate (7-8)	12	40%
Upper-intermediate (9)	1	3%
Advanced (10)	0	0%
TOTAL	30	100%

Source: 7th grade students

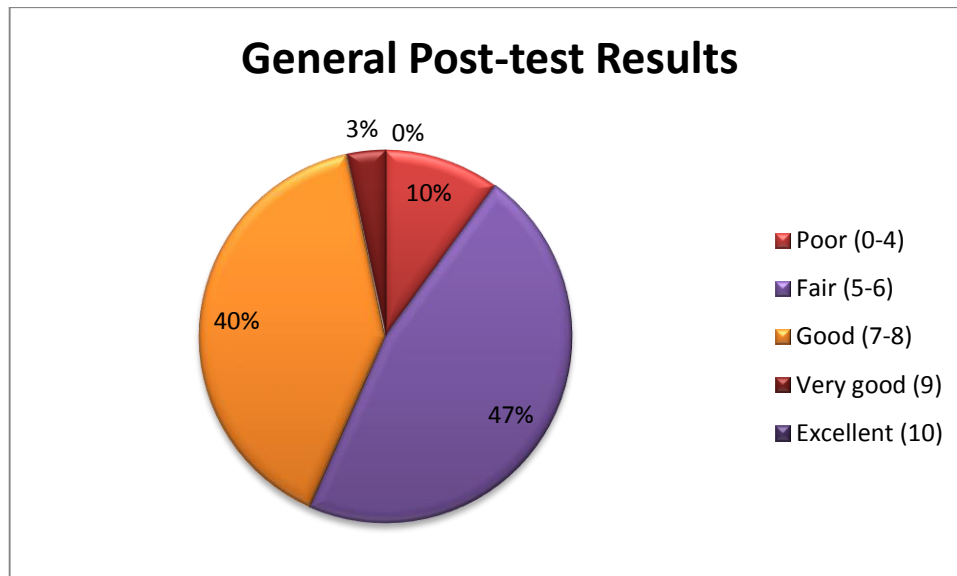


Figure 18. General post-test results

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

It can be observed in the graph above that the pronunciation level of the students was increased during the post-test. All the activities implemented during the proposal based on the natural approach helped the students to become more proficient in the different features of pronunciation. During the post-test, students stressed words and sentences accurately, their intonation was more precise, and they used their articulators carefully trying to pronounce accurately. The students used to feel more confident when they spoke.

Table 23
Final Pre-test and post-test criteria' results comparison

Criteria	Pre-test	Post-test
Use of Stress in words	4,73	6,70
Use of stress in sentences	4,57	6,57
Use of linking	4,57	6,53
Use of intonation	4,37	6,37
Use of articulators	4,50	6,50
Sound perception	4,33	6,37
Sound prediction according to the spelling of the words	4,23	6,20

Source: Pre-test and Post-test (experimental group)

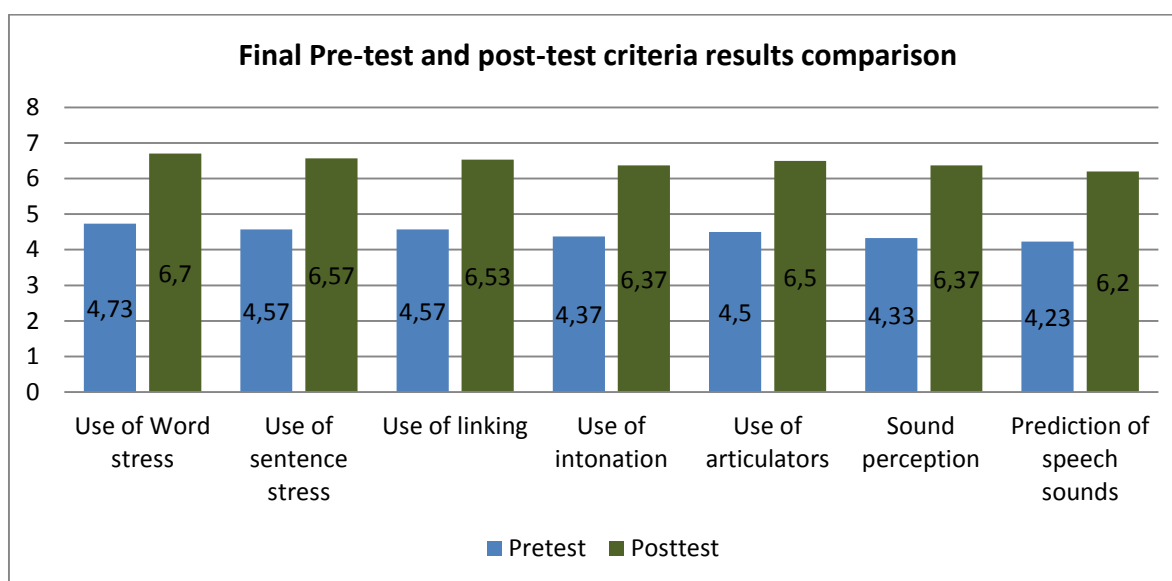


Figure 19. Comparison pre-test and post-test results

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

As observed in the figure above, the results of the pre-test and the post-test indicate the effect that the proposal had on the improvement of the different features of pronunciation. This graph reveals that natural approach activities helped the experimental group to reduce the affective filter by feeling comfortable, providing learning in a warm atmosphere; in this way, students could develop their pronunciation skills.

The activities implemented strengthened the ability to use stress in words, stress in sentences and intonation which are considered essential in language learning since they give clues to the listener to identify which parts of the sentences or the speech are more important. Also, the use of linking helped the students to sound more fluent, and in the same way, articulators allowed the students to produce different sounds, so students were able to pronounce words more accurately. Sound perception and prediction were developed through the different listening activities carried out.

3.5.4 Teachers survey

With the purpose of collecting information about teachers' experience in TEFL, a short questionnaire was administered to 8 teachers. The results and a brief interpretation of them are described below.

Table 24

Question 1: Which academic level have you reached?

Descriptor	f	%
Secondary school	0	0%
Graduate degree	6	75%
Master	2	25%
PhD	0	0%
TOTAL	8	100%

Source: Teachers Unidad Educativa Delfos

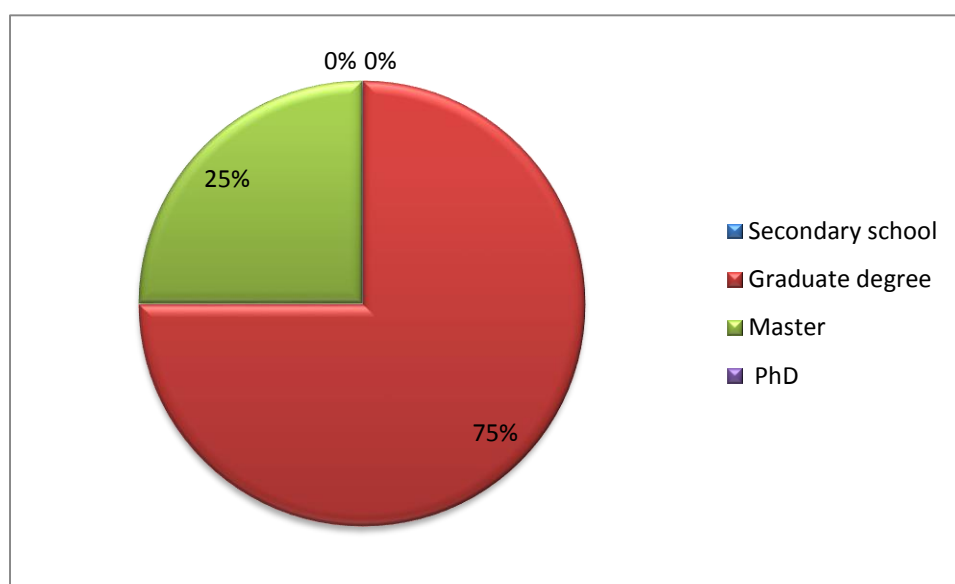


Figure 20. Which academic level have you reached?

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

The figure above exposes that most of the teachers obtained a university degree. Based on this it is demonstrated that 75% of the teachers of this school are professional in the TEFL field. Likewise, the rest of the teachers, representing the 25% studied a master program. Therefore, the students in this school are being taught by professional teachers which guarantees the students' language learning.

Table 25

Question 2: Where did you learn the English language?

Descriptor	f	%
School	0	0%
Another country	1	12%
English Institute	2	25%
College	5	63%
TOTAL	8	100%

Source: Teachers Unidad Educativa Delfos

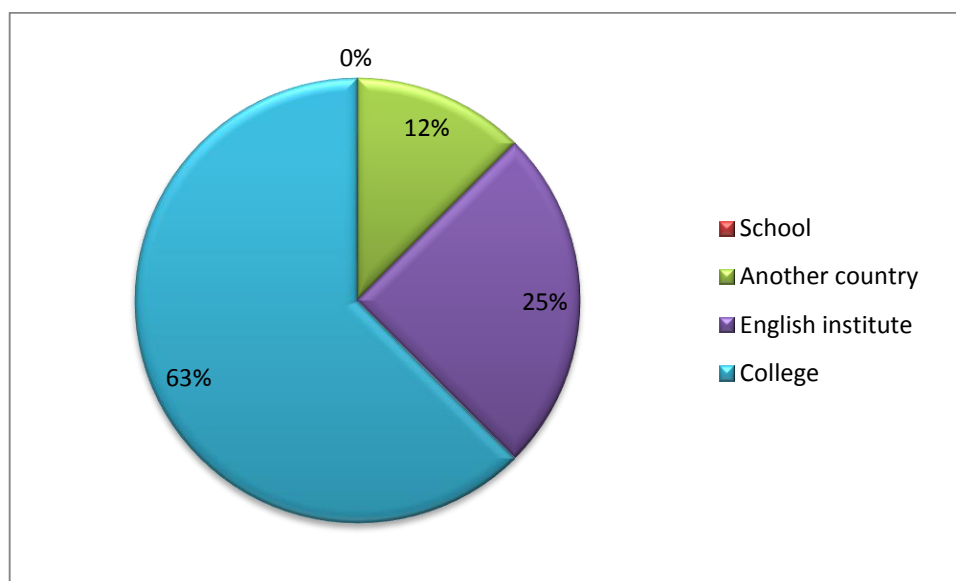


Figure 21. Where did you learn the English language?

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

The previous figure indicates that most of the teachers (63%) have learned English at College. Other 25% has learned in an English institute and 12% in another country. All these places to learn English are positive; however each one of them has its benefits, for example, learning English in another country will help people to learn a more accurate pronunciation, instead, for those who learn at College or institutes will be more difficult to develop the pronunciation.

Table 26

Question 3: 3. How much time have you been a language teacher?

Descriptor	f	%
1-3 years	1	12%
b. 4-7 years	5	63%
c. 8-11 years	2	25%
d. 12 and on	0	0%
TOTAL	8	100%

Source: Teachers Unidad Educativa Delfos

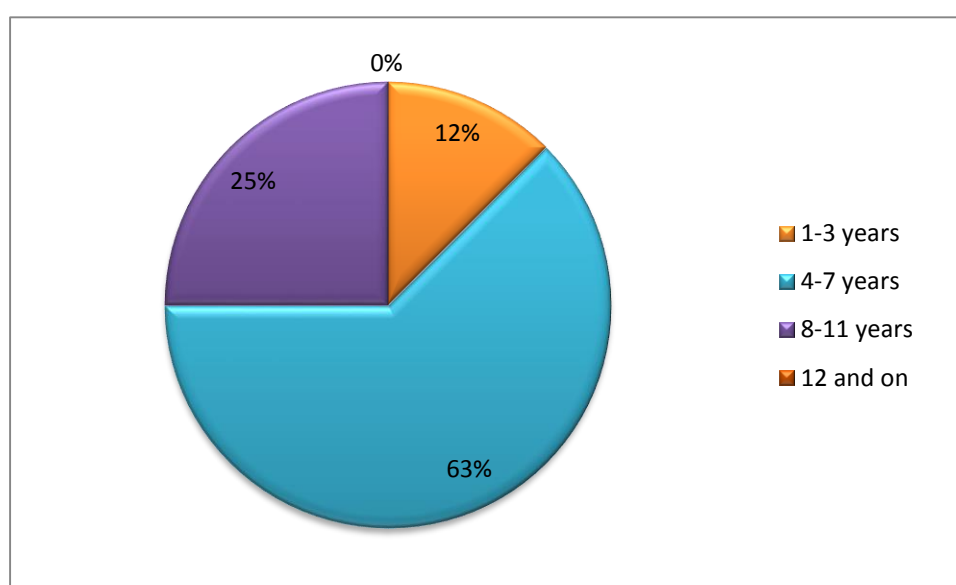


Figure 22. How much time have you been a language teacher?

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

The chart above shows that 63% of the teachers have been working as EFL teachers for a period of 4 and 7 years, this time is considered enough to have experience in the teaching area. On the other hand, the teaching process for these teachers as for the newest have been challenging since they have had to adapt their teaching to a new era of students, who demand the use of technologies and the development of more active lessons different from the traditional ones in which the students were passive learners.

Table 27

Question 4: How long do you spend teaching English during the week?

Descriptor	<i>f</i>	%
5-19 horas	2	25%
20-29 hours	4	50%
30-39 hours	2	25%
40 hours or more	0	0%
TOTAL	8	100%

Source: Teachers Unidad Educativa Delfos

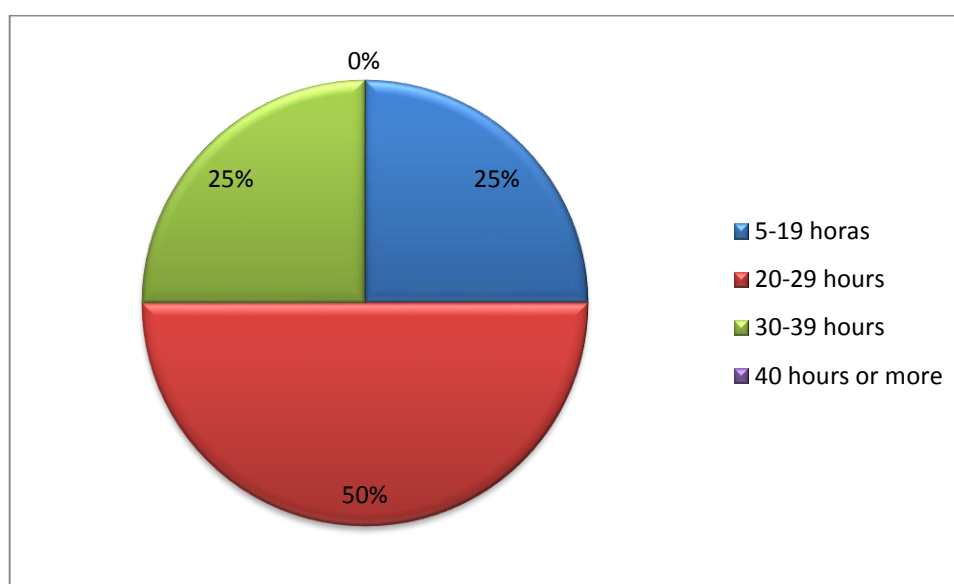


Figure 23. How long do you spend teaching English during the week?

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

The figure above indicates that the half of the English teachers work between 20 and 29 hours during the week, in the same way, a quarter of these teaches about 30 and 39 hours, and the other part teaches less than 19 hours, this means that all of them teach English daily, in this way they are always active in preparing their classes. Moreover, these teachers see the students at least three times a week; this allows them being more in contact with the students and become more responsive in the lessons.

Table 28

Question 5: How much do you use the foreign language during the class?

Descriptor	f	%
Sometimes	5	62%
Most of the times	3	38%
Always	0	0%
TOTAL	8	100%

Source: Teachers Unidad Educativa Delfos

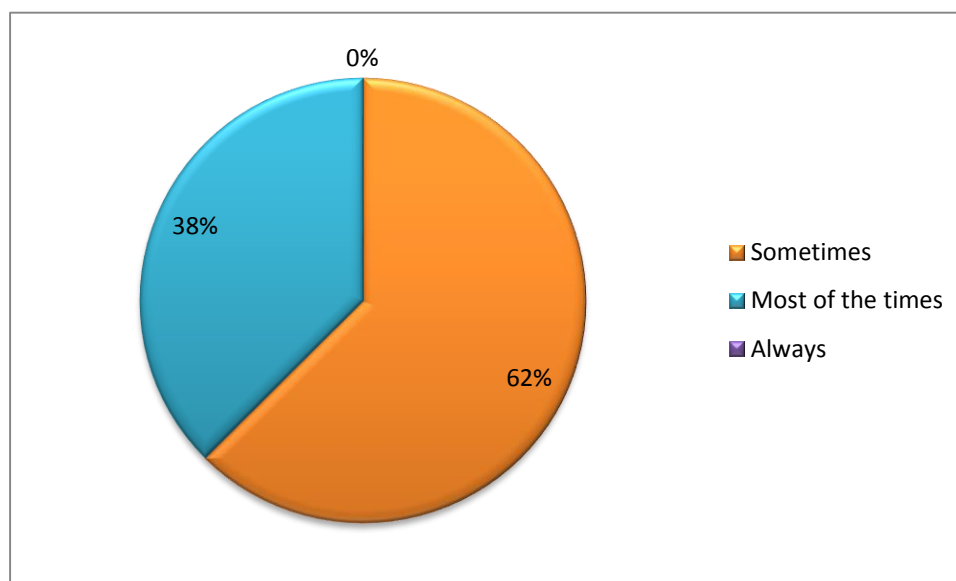


Figure 24. How much do you use the foreign language during the class?

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

Regarding the use of the target language in the class, in this case, "English," most of the teachers have recognized that they do not use the L2 in class very frequently. This situation does not allow students' learning process to flow and at the same time, it limits the development of their listening and speaking abilities, which are part of the standards recommended by the CEFR to be achieved in each level of language learning.

Table 29

Question 6: Have you recently obtained a language proficiency certificate?

Descriptor	f	%
Yes	1	12%
No	7	88%
TOTAL	8	100%

Source: Teachers Unidad Educativa Delfos

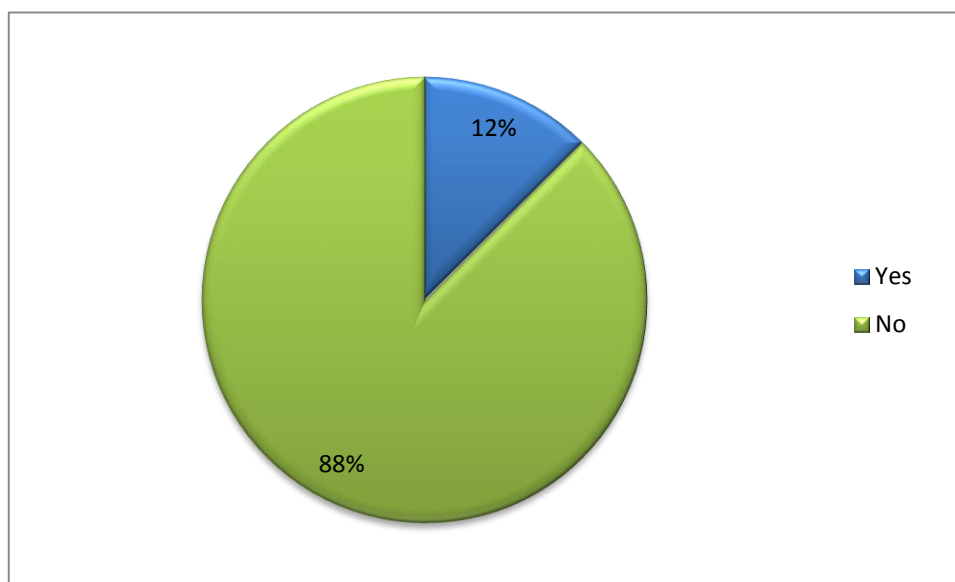


Figure 25. Have you recently obtained a language proficiency certificate?

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

Considering that most of the teachers have not obtained a language proficiency certificate recently, it is important for the institution to ask the teachers to be active in their learning. By taking proficiency exams, teachers can be aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and by taking advanced courses, they can improve those fails, reinforce their strengths and become more competent in their area.

Table 30

Question 7: Which language proficiency level have you reached?

Descriptor	<i>f</i>	%
Beginner	0	0%
Intermediate	2	75%
Advanced	6	25%
TOTAL	8	100%

Source: Teachers Unidad Educativa Delfos

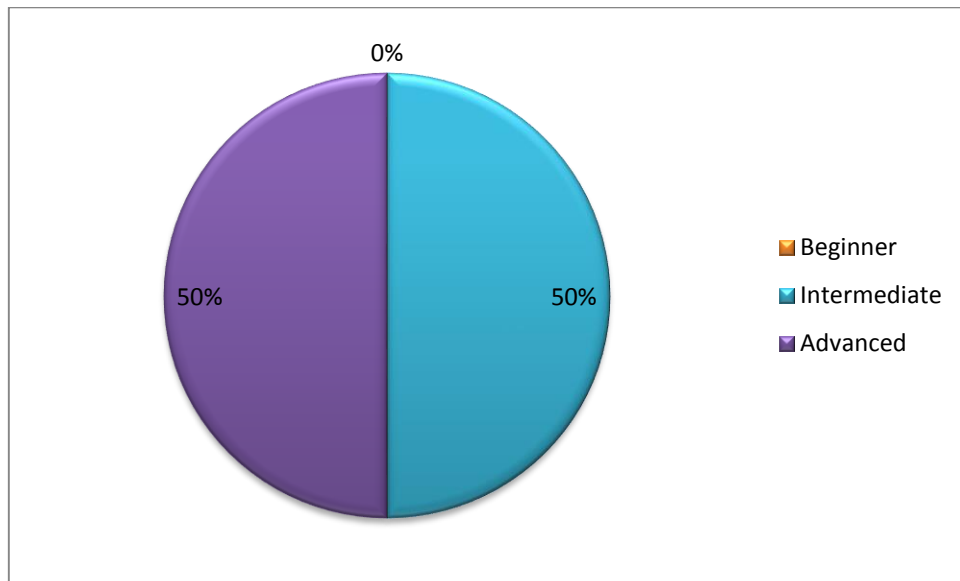


Figure 26. Which language proficiency level have you reached?

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

By observing the graph above, the teachers have intermediate-advanced knowledge of the English language; it indicates that their proficiency level of English goes from B1 level and achieves the C1 level according to the CEFR of languages. That means that students are exposed to learn from proficient English teachers, which will be positive for the students to develop their language skills.

Table 31

Question 8: What is your teaching level?

Descriptor	<i>f</i>	%
Need to improve	0	0%
Good	0	0%
Very good	6	75%
Excellent	2	25%
TOTAL	8	100%

Source: Teachers Unidad Educativa Delfos

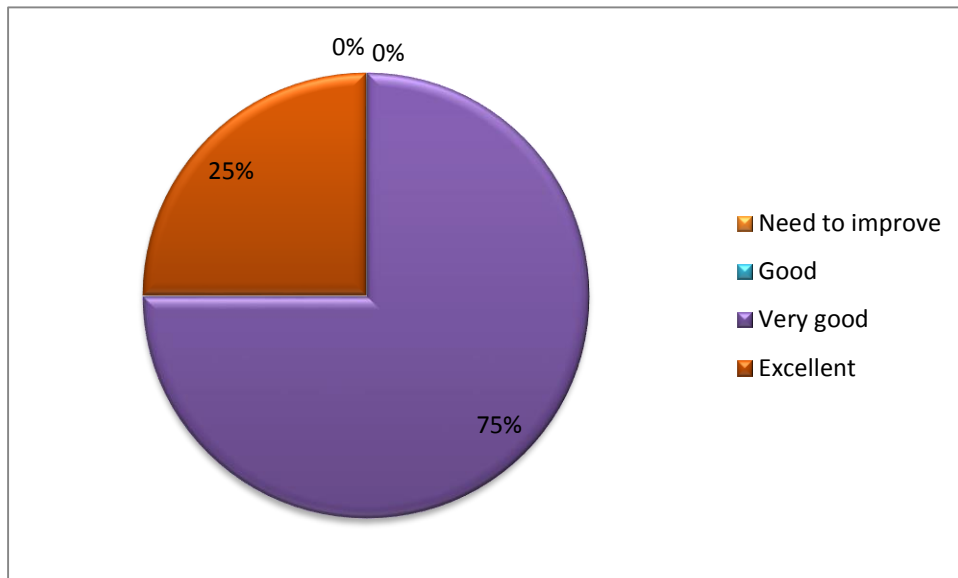


Figure 27. What is your teaching level?

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

The previous chart indicates that 75% of the teachers consider themselves as very good teachers; that means that at the end of their courses they are supposed to meet the students' expectations, they make all possible to help the students to improve their skills and pay particular attention to their weaknesses regarding language learning.

Table 32

Question 9: Are you frequently preparing in the TEFL area?

Descriptor	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	2	25%
No	6	75%
TOTAL	8	100%

Source: Teachers Unidad Educativa Delfos

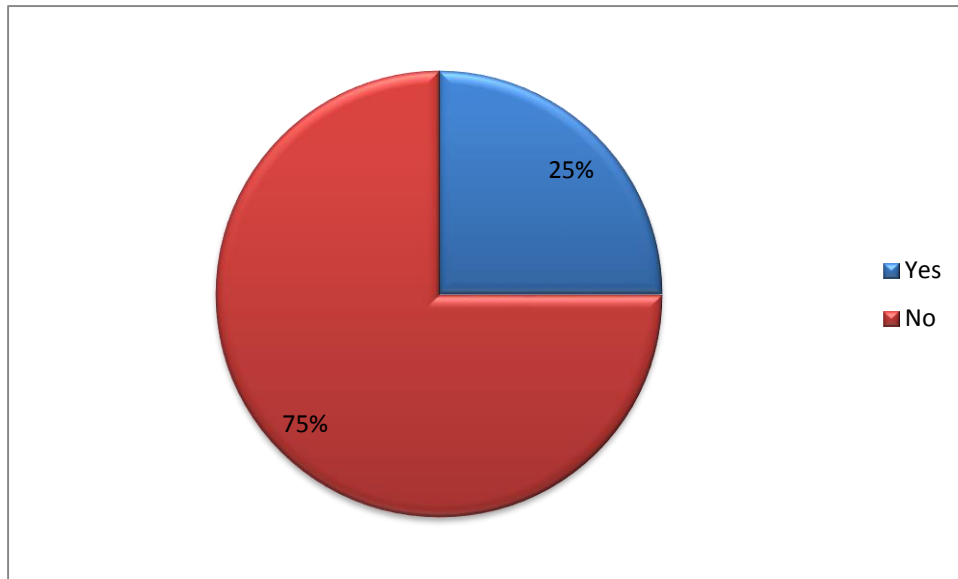


Figure 28. Are you frequently preparing in the TEFL area?

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

In the results of the figure above it is observed that teachers do not attend to TEFL seminars or courses frequently. This means that they are not receiving any training to be updated in the teaching language area. The school should provide teachers with training in order to bring them up to date in the educational area as well as in the language area.

Table 33

Question 10: Do you use teaching strategies or activities based on the natural approach to encourage students' active learning?

Descriptor	<i>f</i>	%
Never	4	50%
Rarely	3	37%
Usually	1	13%
Every time	0	0%
TOTAL	8	100%

Source: Teachers Unidad Educativa Delfos

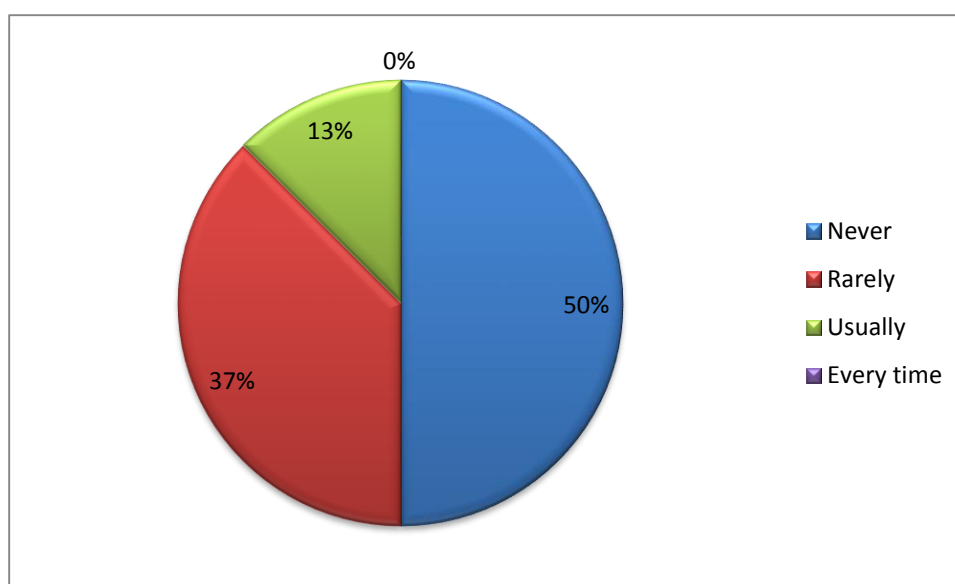


Figure 30. Do you use teaching strategies or activities based on the natural approach to encourage students' active learning?

Elaborated by: Arboleda Solis, E. & Echeverría Luna S. (2018)

The figure above exposes that the EFL teachers do not frequently use activities based on the natural approach used by the EFL teachers. The natural approach is contrary to the use of grammar rules, and some of the teachers focus their lessons on it. Moreover, the use of this approach is also based on the reduction of the affective filter, but as the target language is not frequently used in the classroom, the students do not often feel that pressure of using the language. In this case, it is suggested to employ new strategies based on this approach to help the students learn the language in a friendly and relaxed environment and provide them with authentic activities whose unique goal is that students learn English pronunciation and therefore to communicate in the language.

3.6 Preliminary Conclusions

After analyzing the data obtained for this research, it was determined that the teachers of 7th grade of “Unidad Educativa Delfos” focus too much on the explanation of grammar rules and do not motivate students to speak and develop the different features of the speaking skill like pronunciation, stress, intonation. Due to the lack of practice of these aspects, students are not able to speak English, and it is more difficult for them to become competent in this skill.

A significant difference could be observed between the results obtained in the pre-test and those evidenced in the post-test. In the pre-test it was identified a low level in pronunciation this meant 45% out 100%, however, after applying the proposal, those students increased their level to 64,6% out of 100%, which represents a significant increase based on the CEFR for languages in the level A2.

Instead, the results of the observations done to the teachers and the students permitted to verify the results gotten in the pre-test since it is evident that there was a limited application of pronunciation activities in class, and the method applied was not the most indicated to improve the students' pronunciation. Likewise, the survey applied to the teachers showed that even if they have a degree in language teaching, they need to improve their teaching techniques to encourage the achievement of oral competence in the students. That is why this study has been considered feasible, and the pronunciation activities based on the natural approach to 7th-grade students was proposed and implemented.

CHAPTER IV

4. PROPOSED PROJECT PLAN

4.1 Title

Handbook: Natural approach activities for teaching and learning English pronunciation.

4.2 Justification

Regarding speaking, pronunciation is one of the most challenging features for English language learners to develop. In this particular case, most of the 7th graders at Unidad Educativa Delfos have difficulties in pronouncing words and sentences accurately, which blocks or limits the communicative process. Considering that situation, this handbook has been created as a resource for teachers to help 7th-grade students to learn English pronunciation.

The idea of creating this handbook comes from the necessity of changing the common language teaching methods used by teachers; this proposal pretends to introduce the students in a naturalistic environment making emphasis on developing communication without giving importance to the conscious acquisition of grammar rules and the correction of their mistakes. Therefore, this handbook is useful since it will give teachers' the possibility to use different activities to teach pronunciation without using grammar rules, just with simple activities based on the natural approach.

On the other hand, this proposal will contribute to the improvement of English language learning of EGB students, giving them the opportunity of learning English interactively. Moreover, becoming proficient in the English language will provide them with a lot of opportunities in their future jobs as well as in their lives in general, since they will be able to communicate with people everywhere considering English is the universal language for communication.

4.3 Objectives

4.3.1 Broad Objective

- To provide activities to help students to learn pronunciation in the English language.

4.3.2 Specific Objectives

- To expose the students to learn the accurate pronunciation of vocabulary and expressions that will be useful to personal communication.
- To promote the natural development of English pronunciation through understanding language and through using language for meaningful communication.
- To encourage the students to use the target language in different daily life situations.

4.4 Content Framework of the Proposed Project Plan

The Handbook: Natural approach activities for teaching and learning, is organized in the following way:

1. Cover page

2. **Activities:** The proposal consisted of 10 different activities for teaching pronunciation features based on the natural approach. These activities are:

- Activity 1: Stress in words bingo
- Activity 2: Stress in sentences and meaning
- Activity 3: Practicing linking sounds through listening
- Activity 4: Expressing emotions
- Activity 5: Tongue twisters
- Activity 6: Word game
- Activity 7: Auditory discrimination
- Activity 8: Tongue Twisters
- Activity 9: Beanbag Rhyme Game
- Activity 10: Asking questions game

Each activity contains:

- Time
- Skill
- Feature
- Description of the activity
- Objectives
- Instructions

HANDBOOK

Natural approach activities for teaching and learning English pronunciation.

Erick Arboleda

Silvana Echeverría



ACTIVITY 1

Stress in words bingo

Time: 80 minutes

Skill: Speaking

Feature: Pronunciation (use of stress in words)

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY:

This activity goes over words noun/verb pairs where the stress is on the first syllable for nouns and the second for verbs

OBJECTIVES

- To help students to contrast the nouns and verbs which have the same spelling.

PREPARATION:

- Prepare and copy enough bingo cards for all the students (each bingo card must have 16 blanks)
- Give eight pairs of examples of words of which the noun forms and verb forms have the same spellings but different sentences patterns.
- Put the words in context to show students the difference between the verb and the noun without explaining any rule (use “v”, or “n”, to help them to differentiate the words in the paper).
- Drill the students with pronunciation.

CONDUCTING THE ACTIVITY:

- Give each student a bingo card.
- The students put down eight pairs of words taught of which the noun forms and verb forms have the same spellings in the blanks below randomly.
- The students listen to the teacher to decide which word to cross out in the paper. For example, if the teacher says, "Per'fume", the students have to cross out "Perfume (v.)."
- The student who crosses out four blanks in a row horizontally, vertically or diagonally would be the winner.
- The first student to do so should yell bingo.
- The students will then have to read back the words they have crossed out using correct stress patterns to prove they have the correct words marked.

-
- The teacher may continue the game and stop appropriately (quite many students have finished the game).
 - For an added twist, have the winning student be the next person to read the selected words.
-

Bingo card

Perfume (v)	Desert (n)	Insult (n)	Update (v)
Protest (n)	Permit (v)	Export (n)	Increase (v)
Insult (v)	Export (v)	Perfume (n)	Permit (n)
Desert (v)	Update (n)	Increase (n)	Protest (v)

ACTIVITY 2

Stress in sentences and meaning

Time: 60 minutes

Skill: Speaking

Feature: Pronunciation (use of stress in sentences)

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY:

This activity allows students ears to understand the *meaning* and also to pick up the important parts of the *sentence*.

OBJECTIVES:

- To help students to develop stress in sentences according to the meanings.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- The teacher puts the target sentence on the board
 - I wanted her to read the sentence.
 - The teacher puts the possible meanings on the board.
 - 1 And she did.
 - 2 Not him!
 - 3 Not write it down.
 - 4 Not the word.
 - 5 Me, not you!
 - The teacher says the sentence in different ways to indicate different meanings. The students listen and choose the correct meaning.
 - I wanted her to read the sentence. 3 Not write it down.
 - I wanted her to read the sentence. 4 Not the word.
 - I wanted her to read the sentence. 5 Me, not you!
 - I wanted her to read the sentence. 1 And she did.
 - I wanted her to read the sentence. 2 Not him
 - Each student says the sentence making emphasis on one of the meanings, and their classmates choose the correct meaning.
 - All students repeat the activity saying the sentence with a meaning.
-

Activity 3

Practicing linking sounds through listening

Time: 60 minutes

Skill: Speaking

Feature: Pronunciation (use of linking)

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY:

This activity helps students *to practice how to* link two sounds so that they are easy to flow together.

OBJECTIVES:

- To help students to link words to each other to speak faster, more natural and more fluent.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- The students listen to the following video:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qSo5dDoXYAM>
 - As they listen, they find the linked words in the transcript below:
 - P: I have to ask you something very important now.
 - J: I know what you gonna say. You don't have to say it.
 - P: No, I do. I do. I have to say it. Tell me what you want me to do. You want me to take you out of here? Just let you run away? See how far you could get?
 - J: Why would you do such a foolish thing?
 - P: On the day of my judgment...when I stand before God.....and he asks me why did I... did I kill one of His true...miracles...what am I going to say? That it was my job? Is it my job?
 - J: You tell God the Father it was a kindness you done. I know you're hurting and worrying. I can feel it on you. But you ought to quit on it now. I want it to be over and done with I do. I'm tired, boss. Tired of being on the road, lonely as a sparrow in the rain. I'm tired of never having me a buddy to be with....to tell me where we're going to, coming from, or why. Mostly, I'm tired of people being ugly to each other. I'm tired of all the pain I feel and hear in the world...every day. There's too much of it. It's like pieces of glass in my head...all the time. Can you understand it?
-

-
- P: Yes, John, I think I can. Well, there must be something we can do for you, John. There must be something that you want.
 - J: I ain't never seen me a flicker show. Heaven I'm in heaven. And my heart beats so that I can hardly speak. And I seem to find the happiness I seek when we're out together dancing cheek to cheek.
 - J: Why, they's angels. Angels, like up in heaven.
- Students work in pairs and practice the dialogue pronouncing the linking sounds.
-



Activity 4

Expressing emotions

Time: 60 minutes

Skill: Speaking

Feature: Pronunciation (use of intonation)

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY:

The students listen to a song and based on the lyrics they express different feelings and emotions paying particular attention to the intonation.

OBJECTIVES:

- To help the students to improve their intonation by expressing feelings and emotions.

PREPARATION:

- The teacher plays twice the song: “Happy sand song” by Randler music.
- The teacher plays, and the students sing along with the lyrics.
- The students understand the meaning and check pronunciation.
- The students sing the song and memorize the lyrics.
- The students sing trying to imitate the singer, paying particular attention to intonation.

CONDUCTING THE ACTIVITY:

- After learning the song, each student selects a sentence of the song and expresses their emotions using words like (happy, sad, hopeful).
 - Each student must change the sentence using the emphasis and pitch that reflects their feeling. For example, the real lyrics say “So I guess I'll sleep in tomorrow.” The student says a new sentence with a different intonation: So I guess I'll be happy tomorrow.
-

HAPPY SAD SONG

By Randler music

It's all in the past, yeah
Though I wish it would have lasted
You used to hold me all through the night
and keep me warm
But now the cold reminds me that you're
not here anymore
So I guess I'll sleep in tomorrow
Stay in bed try to forget my sorrow
'cause when you're gone I have no reason
to get up Nothing seems to heal this
wound, I wish the pain would stop
The smell of your perfume is stuck to my
clothes
It forces me to remember the things I miss
the most
I hide away in my room and tell people
I'm fine
I just don't want them to see me when I
cry
So I guess I'll sleep in tomorrow
Stay in bed try to forget my sorrow
'cause when you're gone I have no reason
to get up
Nothing seems to heal this wound, I just
wish the pain would stop
Wo-oh-oh, Wo-oh-oh
Nothing seems to heal this wound, I just
wish the pain would stop

Why did you have to let go, what we had
was unique
I'm left here hurt I feel so week
Why did you have to let go, what we had
was unique
I'm left here hurt I feel so week
So I guess I'll sleep in tomorrow
Stay in bed try to forget my sorrow
'cause when you're gone I have no reason
to get up
Nothing seems to heal this wound, I just
wish the pain would stop
Wo-oh-oh, Wo-oh-oh
Nothing seems to heal this wound, I just
wish the pain would stop
Wo-oh-oh, Wo-oh-oh
Nothing seems to heal this wound, I just
wish the pain would stop

Expressing Emotions



ACTIVITY 5

Tongue Twisters

Time: 80 minutes

Skill: Speaking

Feature: Pronunciation (use of articulators)

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY:

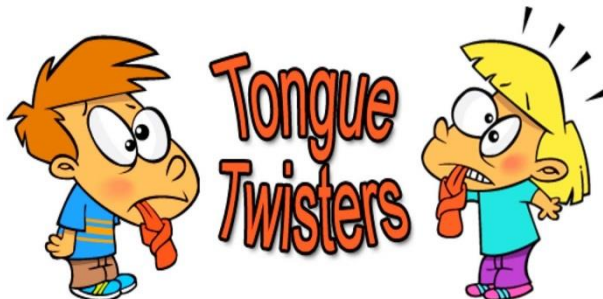
Tongue twisters consist of a sequence of words whose sounds often repeated when spoken quickly are difficult to pronounce correctly.

OBJECTIVES:

- To help students to strengthen the muscles necessary for proper speech while they practice the correct placement of their tongue, lips, and teeth.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- The teacher writes some English tongue twisters on the board or on pieces of paper to distribute to students.
 - She sells sea shells on the seashore
 - A proper copper coffee pot
 - Around the rugged rocks the ragged rascal ran
 - Red lorry, yellow lorry, red lorry, yellow lorry
 - A big black bug bit a big black bear o Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?
- The teacher asks them to read the tongue twisters aloud. Then faster. Then three times in a row.



ACTIVITY 6

Word game

Time: 80 minutes

Skill: Speaking

Feature: Pronunciation (recognizing sounds)

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY:

Through word games that make emphasis on sounds, students understand how speech sounds work.

OBJECTIVE:

- To help students to recognize and differentiate speech sounds.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- The teacher tells the students that they are going to learn a word game.
- The teacher says "We're going to pretend we are going on a trip. When you go on a trip you need to take lots of things with you. On this trip, we're going to a carnival. Say "carnival." What is the first sound? Yes, it's the /k/ sound, so everyone must take something that starts with the /k/ sound, like this: 'I'm going to the carnival and I'm taking a coat.' Say those words: "carnival", "coat". "What else could I take?".
- The teacher asks the students to propose a new story. The story can be changed depending on a specific sound or the recent experiences of the students.



ACTIVITY 7

Auditory discrimination

Time: 40 minutes

Skill: Speaking

Feature: Pronunciation (Ability to perceive differences between speech sounds)

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY:

In this activity, students can practice auditory discrimination of consonant and vowel sounds and rhyming words.







OBJECTIVES:

- To help students to discriminate between letters with similar sounds.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- The teacher gives each student a pair of pictures.
- Each picture must be identified with a word (both words have “similar” sounds)
- The teacher pronounces a word that refers to one of those pictures.
- The student must identify the picture related to the word pronounced by the teacher.

Pictures and words:

Bear 	Pear 
Stairs 	Stars 
Bus 	Boss 

ACTIVITY 8

Tongue Twisters

Time: 80 minutes

Skill: Speaking

Feature: Pronunciation (speech sounds prediction)

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY:

Tongue twisters consist of a sequence of words whose sounds are often repeated.

OBJECTIVE:

- To help students to practice and predict individual speech sounds found in different words and sentences.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- The teacher gives a long tongue twister to each student.
- The teacher read the first line of the tongue twisters, and the students must continue reading them trying to pronounce correctly by predicting the sounds from the spelling. (The teacher reads one at the time).
 - Tongue twisters suggested:

Whether the weather is warm,
Whether the weather is hot,
We have to put up with the weather
Whether we like it or not.

Hello happy Harry, how are you?
Henry hides his horse on Halloween
How unhappy Harry is!
He hates his horrible hair.
Please help him!

A fly and a flea in a flue Were imprisoned, so what could they do? Said the fly,
"Let us flee!" "Let us fly!" said the flea.

And they flew through the flaw in the flue. Said the flea to the fly as
he flew through the flue, "There's a flaw in the floor of the flue " Said the fly to
the flea as he flew through the flue, "A flaw in the floor of the flue doesn't bother
me. Does it bother you?"

Betty bought a bit of butter, the butter Betty bought was a bit bitter, and made her
batter bitter.

But a bit of better butter makes better batter. So Betty bought a bit of better butter,
making
Betty's bitter batter better

ACTIVITY 9

Beanbag Rhyme Game

Time: 40 minutes

Skill: Speaking

Feature: Pronunciation (Ability to perceive similarities between speech sounds)

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY:

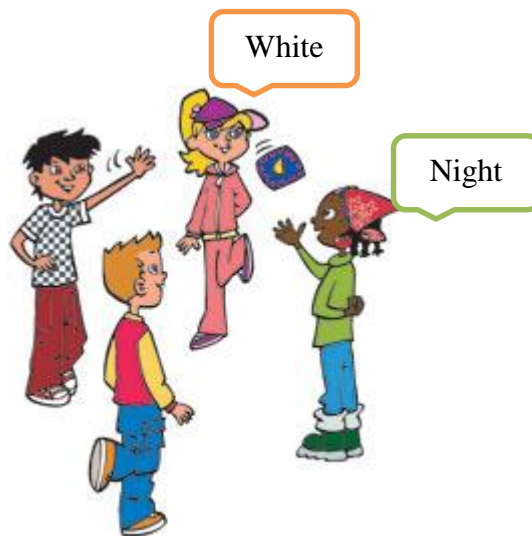
Rhyming is a phonemic awareness skill, so this rhyming activity focuses on how words sound.

OBJECTIVES:

To help students to notice similar sounds within words and at the same time to experience the rhythm of language.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- The teacher (holding the beanbag) says a word (e.g., white).
- The teacher then passes the beanbag to a student. That student is to think of a word that rhymes with white, say the new word aloud, and then pass the beanbag to another student.
- The game continues until the students can think of no more rhyming words.
- The student who is holding the beanbag at that point begins the game with a new word.



ACTIVITY 10

Asking questions game

Time: 40 minutes

Skill: Speaking

Feature: Pronunciation (use of intonation)

DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY:

Through this game, students ask questions with different question words. Students are given five minutes to ask questions to their classmates.

OBJECTIVES:

- To help students to ask questions using the correct intonation.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- The class is divided into pairs (A and B), and each student is given a worksheet.
- The students look at the words they have in the worksheet and think about questions that can be possible to use.
- When the students are ready, they have five minutes to complete the task.
- Student A then asks questions to the classmate trying to produce as many words as possible. When Student B guesses words, Student A marks the guessed word. If Student B does not guess the word after trying a few times, Student A puts a negative.
- After five minutes, the students stop and swap roles. The process is then repeated with Student B asking the questions. When everyone has finished, pairs add up their points. The pair with the highest combined score wins the game.

Worksheets:

Student A	Student B																																																								
<p>A. Ask Student B questions to help him/her guess the words in the box, e.g. 'What colour is the sky?' (blue)</p> <p>When Student B says the correct word, put a tick next to the word. If Student B cannot guess the word after a few questions, put a cross. You have five minutes to ask your questions.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td>1. blue</td> <td>2. eighteen</td> <td>3. sushi</td> <td>4. uncle</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5. button</td> <td>6. textbook</td> <td>7. salt</td> <td>8. German</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9. winter</td> <td>10. espresso</td> <td>11. park</td> <td>12. pounds</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13. doctor</td> <td>14. school</td> <td>15. spoon</td> <td>16. Beyonce</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17. car</td> <td>18. queen</td> <td>19. London</td> <td>20. July</td> </tr> <tr> <td>21. midnight</td> <td>22. fishing</td> <td>23. ear</td> <td>24. wedding</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25. square</td> <td>26. half</td> <td>27. mountain</td> <td>28. waitress</td> </tr> </table> <p>B. Now, answer Student B's questions.</p>	1. blue	2. eighteen	3. sushi	4. uncle	5. button	6. textbook	7. salt	8. German	9. winter	10. espresso	11. park	12. pounds	13. doctor	14. school	15. spoon	16. Beyonce	17. car	18. queen	19. London	20. July	21. midnight	22. fishing	23. ear	24. wedding	25. square	26. half	27. mountain	28. waitress	<p>A. Answer Student A's questions.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td>1. key</td> <td>2. cinema</td> <td>3. Australia</td> <td>4. jacket</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5. Thai</td> <td>6. spaghetti</td> <td>7. Leonardo DiCaprio</td> <td>8. midday</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9. football</td> <td>10. summer</td> <td>11. English</td> <td>12. wife</td> </tr> <tr> <td>13. teacher</td> <td>14. dollars</td> <td>15. kilometer</td> <td>16. telephone</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17. tea</td> <td>18. Eiffel Tower</td> <td>19. red</td> <td>20. December</td> </tr> <tr> <td>21. bus</td> <td>22. round</td> <td>23. hair</td> <td>24. quarter</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25. designer</td> <td>26. lake</td> <td>27. morning</td> <td>28. planet</td> </tr> </table> <p>B. Now, ask Student A questions to help him/her guess the words in the box, e.g. 'What do you use to open a locked door?' (key)</p> <p>When Student A says the correct word, put a tick next to the word. If Student A cannot guess the word after a few questions, put a cross. You have five minutes to ask your questions.</p>	1. key	2. cinema	3. Australia	4. jacket	5. Thai	6. spaghetti	7. Leonardo DiCaprio	8. midday	9. football	10. summer	11. English	12. wife	13. teacher	14. dollars	15. kilometer	16. telephone	17. tea	18. Eiffel Tower	19. red	20. December	21. bus	22. round	23. hair	24. quarter	25. designer	26. lake	27. morning	28. planet
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4.6 VALIDATION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT PLAN

“HOW NATURAL APPROACH ACTIVITIES INFLUENCE SEVENTH GRADERS’ PRONUNCIATION AT UNIDAD EDUCATIVA DELFOS”

To fulfill the requirements of this research project we have asked three experts in the field of English teaching as a foreign language to validate the proposed project plan.

Expert Information

Name: Luis León Valiz
 Profession: English teacher
 Occupation: Management in ELT teacher
 Phone Number: 099712 78 73
 University: Universidad Laica Vicente Rocaforte de Guayaquil

Rating Scale

Aspects	Very Significant	Significant	Somehow Significant	Not that Significant	Not Significant
Introduction	✓				
Objectives	✓				
Relevance	✓				
Sequence	✓				
Presentation	✓				
Depth of Study	✓				
Language	✓				
Comprehension	✓				
Creativity	✓				
Impact	✓				

Comments: Good perspective on the Natural Approach which will surely make impact and help teachers who need it.

Signature



"HOW NATURAL APPROACH ACTIVITIES INFLUENCE SEVENTH GRADERS' PRONUNCIATION AT UNIDAD EDUCATIVA DELFOS"

To fulfill the requirements of this research project we have asked three experts in the field of English teaching as a foreign language to validate the proposed project plan.

Expert Information

Name: Janeth Mora
Profession: English Teacher
Occupation: Director of English Area
Phone Number: 0990536501
University: Universidad Laica Vicente Rocaforte

Rating Scale

Aspects	Very Significant	Significant	Somehow Significant	Not that Significant	Not Significant
Introduction	✓				
Objectives	✓				
Relevance		✓			
Sequence	✓				
Presentation	✓				
Depth of Study		✓			
Language	✓				
Comprehension	✓				
Creativity	✓				
Impact	✓				

Comments: the activities included in the project promoted an interactive participation between students.

Signature Janeth L. Mora L.

“HOW NATURAL APPROACH ACTIVITIES INFLUENCE SEVENTH GRADERS’
PRONUNCIATION AT UNIDAD EDUCATIVA DELFOS”

To fulfill the requirements of this research project we have asked three experts in the field of English teaching as a foreign language to validate the proposed project plan.

Expert Information

Name: Lorena Silvia Tapia Forón
Profession: Teacher
Occupation: Academic Director - Teacher
Phone Number: 0989882567
University: Universidad Laica

Rating Scale

Aspects	Very Significant	Significant	Somehow Significant	Not that Significant	Not Significant
Introduction	✓				
Objectives	✓				
Relevance	✓				
Sequence	✓				
Presentation	✓				
Depth of Study	✓				
Language	✓				
Comprehension	✓				
Creativity	✓				
Impact	✓				

Comments: The topic was well develop. and present useful information for teachers and students development.

Signature 

4.7 Impact of the Proposed Project Plan

The current proposed project plan will have a significant impact on the students since it will help them to learn English pronunciation as native does that means naturally. They will learn how to perceive sounds and how to reproduce them, stressing and intonating accurately.

In the same way, teachers will be benefitted from this handbook since they will have different activities to teach English pronunciation to their students, considering pronunciation is not a subject that can be taught in isolation, in this case, pronunciation will be taught through listening and speaking activities. Through these activities, students will not be conscious that they are learning pronunciation since their teachers will not explain any grammar rules.

From the psychological point of view, this proposal will help the students to reduce their affective filter which means that they will feel relaxed during the lessons and the activities while they are learning English pronunciation, developing their listening and speaking skills simultaneously. Therefore, by providing students with a warm and comfortable learning atmosphere, they will be able to develop and practice the foreign language while they feel confident and safe.

On the other hand, the application of this proposal will be an original activity which can be applied in all the educational levels of the Unidad Educativa Delfos and also in other educational institutions in the country and the world, since it will be an open proposal.

All of the reasons mentioned above highlight the impact of the current proposed project plan and the importance of applying it in the English classroom to improve students' pronunciation.

CONCLUSIONS

This study was developed with the purpose of helping 7th-grade EGB students at Unidad Educativa Delfos to improve their English pronunciation by teaching the English lessons based on the natural approach. Based on the findings obtained the conclusions below emerged.

The reasons why seventh graders students at Unidad Educativa Delfos had pronunciation problems were identified, the teachers did not have a good level in English, L1 was mostly used in the class, and they were not motivated since they did not feel they got involved in the teaching and learning process.

In order to solve that problem, the implementation of different activities was proposed. The natural approach was selected to focus the pronunciation activities on. It was considered the most appropriate approach to teach pronunciation since rules were not explained and the affective filter was reduced, the students felt confident and learned in a warm atmosphere.

The natural approach activities contained in the Handbook that was designed to teach pronunciation had a positive effect on the development of this feature of the speaking skill in the students. The results obtained in the post-test corroborated that 7th graders improved their pronunciation abilities after receiving the treatment with the activities proposed. Students improved the ability to stress words and sentences; their speech became more intelligible since they learned how to intonate better; they also became proficient in recognizing the sounds of the speech and learned how to perceive the differences and similarities of sounds.

Finally, the natural approach is considered effective for teachers and students to teach and learn English pronunciation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After obtaining the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

To the school:

It is recommended for the school to implement the proposal about Natural approach activities to teach pronunciation to all the grades in the school since the features of pronunciation included in this proposal are not based on a special curriculum, they can be taught to all language levels.

To the teachers:

It is recommended to revise the different language methods and approaches in order to use the most suitable according to the topic or the skill to be taught. Moreover, it is important to use the target language in the classroom; if the teacher does not use it, the students will not find it necessary to use it. However, the use of English in the class must not be mandatory; it must be as natural as possible.

To the students

Students must create and intrinsic motivation to learn English. Although it is important for teachers to motivate students to learn, the students must motivate themselves, they must think about their future and the importance of learning a language and especially English, which is the lingua franca.

To the researcher

It is important to continue researching the use and adaptation of the different language methods and approaches, and it is suggested that the findings of this research can be exposed in the language classrooms, for new researchers to become curious and want to learn more about the application of the natural approach.

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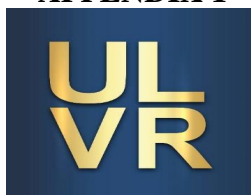
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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX 1



**Universidad Laica VICENTE ROCAFUERTE de Guayaquil
FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN
CARRERA DE EDUCACIÓN MENCIÓN INGLÉS**

Form for observing students

The weaknesses and strengths of the students in pronunciation will be in this class observation form. With this information will be easier to select adequate natural approach activities.

	Aspects	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Students:	Pronunciation is clear enough to be understood. Pronounce very familiar words with constant errors. Conversational partners need to ask for repetition from time to time. Over-articulate words. <i>Recognize sounds.</i> Show control of intonation. Show control of word and stress in sentences. Comments/observations:					

Source: Adapted from ©UCLES (2011).

APPENDIX 2



Universidad Laica VICENTE ROCAFUERTE de Guayaquil
FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN
CARRERA DE EDUCACIÓN MENCIÓN INGLÉS

Form for observing teachers

The methodology and teaching techniques used by the teachers will be identified after collecting the data in this observation form. With this information will be easier to select adequate natural approach activities.

Aspects	Never	Rarrelly	Sometimes	Often	Always
-Sufficient exercises were presented to ensure word recognition.					
Instructional materials were effectively used.					
- Varied activities/strategies were used.					
-Teaching strategies were congruent with the objectives.					
- Activities were focused on developing the students' pronunciation.					
- The approach used was appropriate to teach spontaneous pronunciation.					

Comments/observations:

APPENDIX 3



Universidad Laica VICENTE ROCAFUERTE de Guayaquil

FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN

CARRERA DE EDUCACIÓN MENCIÓN INGLÉS

Survey (students)

The goal of this survey is to collect specific data about 7th-grade students' skills on the topic of the learning of English. Based on their responses different activities will be proposed to encourage the students to enhance their pronunciation.

Instructions: Choose the answer that best suits you.

- 1. How old are you?**
a. 11 b. 12 c. 13
- 2. What is your attitude towards learning English?**
a. Very positive b. Neutral c. Very negative
- 3. Do the activities proposed by the teacher in the English class, motivate you to learn English?**
a. Always b. Often c. Sometimes d. Rarely d. Never
- 4. What is your proficiency level in the English language?**
a. Beginner b. Intermediate c. Advanced
- 5. What language skill would you like to develop the most?**
a. Reading b. Writing c. Speaking d. Listening
- 6. What is your learning style?**
a. Visual b. Auditory c. Verbal
- 7. How frequently do you use the English language in your class?**
a. Always b. Usually c. Often
d. Rarely e. Never
- 8. Would you like to improve your pronunciation?**
a. Yes b. No, but considered c. No

APPENDIX 4



Universidad Laica VICENTE ROCAFUERTE de Guayaquil
FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN
CARRERA DE EDUCACIÓN MENCIÓN INGLÉS

Student's name: _____

Grade: _____

Date: _____

Pre-test and Post-test

The following test will help the researcher to get information about 7th grade students' pronunciation level.

Pronunciation test directions:

This is a pronunciation test. This test includes three tasks that will assess different aspects of your pronunciation. For each type of task, you will be given specific directions. It is to your advantage to pronounce the best you can. It is also important that you answer each question according to the directions. The pronunciation test takes about 15 minutes long and is divided into three parts:

Question	Task	Time	Evaluation Criteria
Task 1	Reading aloud	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Use of stress in words- Use of stress in sentences- Use of linking- Use of intonation- Use of articulators
Task 2	Auditory discrimination: Number dictation	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ability to perceive differences between speech sounds
Task 3	Pronounce for spelling	5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Ability to predict the sounds of the speech from the spelling of the words

Task 1:

Reading aloud

Directions: Read the following passage aloud and pay particular attention to your pronunciation.

Time: you will have 5 minutes to read the passage

Today's telephone has a long history as a part of American technology. It is American because an American, Alexander Graham Bell, invented it. The story begins very long ago, when there were no telephones. The only way to get a message to someone else was to write it and send it. Long ago there were messengers who traveled on foot. They were people who would run from place to place, transporting messages to other people. They would run miles, and they had great endurance.

Later, communications improved in that people would send letters that traveled by wagons. In time, the mail would travel by train. After the invention of a new communications tool, people could send messages quickly. That tool was the telegraph, which used a line that went from one place to another. It took years to put all the telegraph lines across America. At one end of the line, a person used a device to send a message by code.

At the other end, the message would be received and translated by another person. With those telegraph lines, people could send messages almost immediately, although it was not "person to person." The telegraph was a remarkable invention, but it did not let people talk to each other.

Taken from: <https://bit.ly/2Heeb1K>

Task 2:

Auditory discrimination

Activity 1

Listen to your teacher saying the words in Column 1 and Column 2 below.

Column 1	Column 2
Bag	Back
Girls	Curls
Grime	Crime
Bear	Pear
Bus	Boss
Luck	Lock
Ran	Run
Match	Much
Stairs	Stars
Cat	Cart
Wear	Were
Men	Man
Said	Sad
File	Fill
Hair	Hear/here

Activity 2

Listen to your teacher saying one of the words from Activity 1. Say if you think the word is in

Column 1 or Column 2.

Activity 3

Listen to your teacher saying two words from Activity 1. If the words are the same, circle S below. If you think the words are different, circle D below.

1. S D
2. S D
3. S D
4. S D
5. S D
6. S D
7. S D
8. S D
9. S D
10. S D

Activity 4

Listen to your teacher reading the sentences below. Circle the word you hear.

1. Give me that bag/back!
2. The girls/curls were blonde.
3. The city is full of grime/crime.
4. That's a very big bear/pear
5. Do you like the new bus/boss?
6. She had no luck/lock, unfortunately
7. I ran/run in the park every day.
8. He isn't enjoying this match/much.
9. There were a lot of stairs/stars.
10. There's a cat/cart in the road.
11. They wear/were very expensive clothes
12. I have never met the men/man.
13. It is said/sad that he is very ill.
14. Can you file/fill these, please?
15. It's beautiful hair/here.

Task 3

Pronounce for spelling

Directions: Listen to your teacher pronouncing the words in column 1. Then you pronounce the words in column 2.

Column 1	Column 2
For	Coffee, off
Sit	Missing, kiss
Know	Knee
Talk	Half, could
Gentle	Gin, gym, refrigerate
Vision	Measure, lesion
Yes	Yellow
Why	My, by, apply
Passion	Permission, pressure
Phone	Photograph, graphology
This	Brother, bathe
Cat	Hat, fat
Cut	Bus, hut
Learn	Heard
Die	Pie, cried

Source: Authors

APPENDIX 5
ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

Source: Own elaboration

Criteria	Elementary 0-4	Pre-intermediate 5-6	Intermediate 7-8	Upper-intermediate 9	Advanced 10	Total
Use of stress in words						/10
Use of stress in sentences						/10
Use of linking						/10
Use of intonation						/10
Use of articulators						/10
Ability to perceive differences between speech sounds.						/10
Ability to predict the sounds of the speech from the spelling of the words						/10
TOTAL (Average of 7 criteria)						/10

APPENDIX 6



Universidad Laica VICENTE ROCAFUERTE de Guayaquil
FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN
CARRERA DE EDUCACIÓN MENCIÓN INGLÉS

Teacher's name: _____

Grade: _____

Date: _____

Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is intended to gather information related to the experience and academic preparation of the teachers.

Instructions: Choose one of the possible options based on your information.

1. Which academic level have you reached?

- d. Secondary school
- e. Graduate degree
- f. Master
- g. PhD

2. Where did you learn the English language?

- a. School
- b. Another country
- c. English institute
- d. College

3. How much time have you been a language teacher?

- a. 1-3 years
- b. 4-7 years
- c. 8-11 years
- d. 12 and on

4. How long do you spend teaching English during the week?

- a. 5-19 hours
- b. 20-29 hours
- c. 30-39 hours
- d. 40 hours or more

- 5. How much do you use the foreign language during the class?**
- a. Sometimes
 - b. Most of the times
 - c. Always
- 6. Have you recently obtained a language proficiency certificate?**
- a. Yes
 - b. No
- 7. Which language proficiency level have you reached?**
- a. Beginner
 - b. Intermediate
 - c. Advanced
- 8. What is your teaching level?**
- a. Need to improve
 - b. Good
 - c. Very good
 - d. Excellent
- 9. Are you frequently preparing in the TEFL area?**
- a. Yes
 - b. No
- 10. Do you use teaching strategies or activities based on the natural approach to encourage students' active learning?**
- a. Never
 - b. Rarely
 - c. Usually
 - d. Every time

ANNEXES

Implementation of the proposed project plan

Handbook: Natural approach activities for teaching and learning English pronunciation.



Figure 29. The researcher conducting the natural approach activities with 7th-grade students at Unidad Educativa Delfos



Figure 30. The researcher implementing the natural approach activities with 7th-grade students at Unidad Educativa Delfos

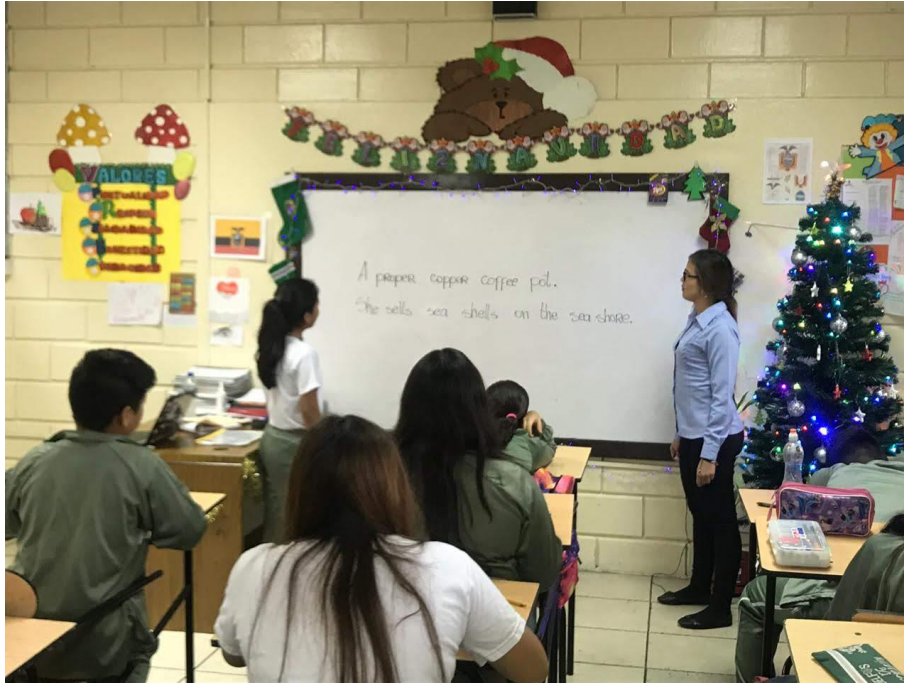


Figure 31. 7th-grade students participating in the activities