



# BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA

FACULTAD DE LENGUAS

## The Problems and Benefits of Acquiring Intelligible Pronunciation Faced by Spanish-speaking ELT Students

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Spanish-speaking ELT Students**

This thesis has been read by the members of the thesis committee of:

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## **Abstract**

In a world driven by globalization and the need to communicate in an international environment, pronunciation, along with other linguistic factors, plays an important role in the understanding of both the speaker and the listener. The following research project aims to analyze the benefits of acquiring an intelligible (understandable) pronunciation for non-native English-speaking students, as well as the problems this process entails.

Based on a review of literature on the importance of improving the pronunciation of the second language, the data was collected through a questionnaire that was administered to non-native English-speaking learners of an undergraduate program in English Language Teaching in a university in central Mexico. The results showed that among the most outstanding benefits were the following: job opportunities in and outside the country, avoiding misunderstandings, professionalism, and self-confidence. Regarding the problems that the acquisition of intelligibility entails, it was found that poor pronunciation instruction, characteristics of the mother tongue, and lack of motivation were the factors that hinder the correct acquisition of pronunciation in the second language.

## **Acknowledgement**

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **1.0 Chapter Introduction**

Globalization has had a significant impact on society. For this reason, today's society demands professionals, including language teachers, who can communicate effectively. In a world moved by globalization, the need to communicate with people from other countries has increased. When it comes to communicating in an international context, the English language is, without a doubt, the lingua franca; therefore, the demand for qualified English teachers in non-native-speaking countries has also grown.

ELT students have not only realized the advantages of learning a foreign language but also consider that speaking English is a requirement to be fully involved in modern society. According to the BUAP's English Language Teaching (ELT) graduate profile (n.d.) "the graduate will be a highly competent teacher"; therefore, the graduate must know and master each of the skills including sub-skills such as pronunciation. According to the British Council (n.d.), sub-skills are behaviors that work together to communicate effectively. Pronunciation is a sub-skill that may be difficult to develop; however, acquiring it brings benefits to non-native speakers, and such benefits are reflected in speech. Nonetheless, the importance of intelligible pronunciation depends entirely on the individual's opinions and needs.

Therefore, this thesis focuses on investigating intelligible pronunciation and ELT students' problems and the benefits of developing it.

## **1.1 Rationale**

Based on my experience studying abroad; I had the chance to speak to people from many different countries and cultures of the world. During that time, I received many comments praising my English abilities, especially pronunciation. At the same time, some other people who did not know anything about Mexico thought my mother tongue was English. Certainly, those comments increased my self-confidence to speak so I stopped being afraid of committing mistakes.

On the contrary, the opinions about the language level of colleagues coming from Spain or China were different. Some people doubted the level of their English without considering their cultural background, vocabulary, or grammar they used when speaking. These aspects may easily be recognized by language teachers; however, not many people pay attention to them. Simultaneously, I concluded that pronunciation is perhaps the first individual's image; that is, it is the first impression people have of one's language skills.

## **1.2 Location of the Research**

The principal purpose of this investigation was to make future English teachers aware of the benefits of having an intelligible pronunciation. The research needed to be carried out at a language school. Therefore, this investigation was carried out at a public university located in central Mexico. The participants were studying for a bachelor's degree in ELT. They should have already taken the Phonetics and Phonology class as a requirement since this inquiry presented the benefits of intelligibility and the problems they have when acquiring it.

### **1.3 Research purpose**

The purpose of this study was not only to recognize the benefits of intelligibility but also to identify the common problems that ELT students face in the process of acquiring pronunciation.

### **1.4 Research Aims**

1. To explore the problems hindering the acquisition of intelligibility
2. To analyze the benefits, and to find out if intelligibility plays an important role in communication.

### **1.5 Research questions**

The questions to be explored in this research are the following:

1. What are the problems future ELT students face in acquiring an intelligible pronunciation?
2. What are the benefits of having an understandable pronunciation from the students' perspective? Does ELT students' self-confidence increase when they have intelligible pronunciation? If so, how?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The findings of this research could help to recognize the difficulties Spanish speakers face in the process of acquiring an intelligible pronunciation. Moreover, the information collected during this inquiry could benefit teachers' understanding of the importance of raising awareness of the significance of intelligibility. Additionally, this study may help me to provide better teaching to English learners in the future by considering their needs for the improvement of the teaching of sub-skills.

## **1.7 The Context of Research**

This research focuses mainly on the branch of language acquisition; nonetheless, it is also necessary to review the branch of phonetics and phonology to understand the problems in uttering English sounds. Language acquisition is a field of great importance to the community being studied to understand the learning process in foreign language teaching. At present, several studies demonstrate the importance of understandable pronunciation. However, there are still no studies that relate both variables (intelligibility and self-confidence) or demonstrate the difficulties of acquiring intelligibility. Moreover, little is known about its benefits.

## **1.8 Chapter Conclusion**

In the present chapter, the issues related to the benefits and problems of acquiring intelligibility were presented. Participants of this study need to belong to a specific group (ELT students); therefore, the study subjects and characteristics were addressed throughout this chapter. At the same time, the purpose and development of the investigation were explained in detail. In the following chapter, the literature review will be provided.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction to Chapter II**

This chapter contains the literature review necessary to carry out this study, and it is divided into four main topics discussed as follows: 1. Language Learning Theories (to better understand second language learning). 2. Speaking sub-skills (to recognize the role of each of them and how they work together). 3. Intelligibility (to better understand the role of pronunciation). 4. Phonetics and Phonology (to acknowledge the importance of this area of linguistics).

#### **2.1 Language Learning Theories**

In order to understand human behavior and how people acquire or learn a language, it is necessary to take a look at the different learning theories; but before that, the meaning of ‘theory’ will be discussed. Throughout time, humans have attempted to explain certain things that at first glance cannot be explained. However, to provide a logical explanation scientists follow a process that starts with an interpretation of the phenomenon, better known as theory. According to Nixon (2004, p.p. 34) a theory “faces outwards in three different directions: towards the analytical interpretation of intent action; towards the speculative evaluation of alternative courses of action; and towards the explanatory justification of the principles underlying practice”. Likewise, Sambrook (2011) believes that a theory tries to give an analytical explanation to the questions *how*, and *why* of a specific phenomenon. Therefore, it can be said that a theory is a generalization and explanation based on the analysis of a specific phenomenon. In the pedagogical area, it is essential to know the theories that explain how individuals learn.

Language Learning theories try to explain how apprentices learn new knowledge. Language instructors must know the theories that relate to second language learning. In the words of Mitchell, Myles and Marsden (n.d.), language learning theories “contribute to more general understanding about the nature of language, of human learning, and of intercultural communication, and thus about the human mind itself, as well as how all these are interrelated and affect each other” (Para. 1) These theories are based on certain principles that modify the way of teaching, likewise, they are the basis of teaching methodologies. The purpose of the following table is to make a comparison of the three main learning theories behaviorism, cognitivism, and constructivism. The content of the table is based on Ertmer and Newby (2013)’s article “*Behaviourism, Cognitivism, Constructivism: Comparing Critical Features From an Instructional Design Perspective*”.

**Table 2.1 Language learning theories (Ertmer and Newby, 2013).**

<b>BEHAVIOURISM</b>	
How does learning occur?	Learning is accomplished when a proper response is demonstrated following the presentation of a specific environmental stimulus. The key elements are the stimulus, the response, and the association between the two.
Factors that influence learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental conditions.</li> <li>• Stimuli and consequences within the environment.</li> </ul>
The role of memory	Memory, as commonly defined by the layman, is not typically addressed by behaviorists although the acquisition of “habits” is discussed.
How does transfer occur?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applications of learned knowledge.</li> <li>• Stimulations involving identical or similar features.</li> </ul>
Types of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies that are most useful for building and strengthening stimulus-response associations.</li> <li>• Facilitating learning that involves discrimination, generalization, associations, and chaining.</li> </ul>
Assumptions/principles in instructional design	Behaviorism was used as the basis for designing many of the early audio-visual materials and gave rise to many related teaching strategies, such as Skinner’s teaching machines and programmed texts.

Instruction	Instruction is structured around the presentation of the target stimulus and the provision of opportunities for the learner to practice making the proper response.
<b>COGNITIVISM</b>	
How does learning occur?	Cognitive theories focus on the conceptualization of students' learning processes and address the issues of how information is received, organized, stored, and retrieved by the mind. The learner is viewed as a very active participant in the learning process.
Factors that influence learning	Environmental conditions, instructional explanations, demonstrations, illustrative examples, and matched non-examples that are all considered to be instrumental in guiding student learning, and feedback.
The role of memory	Learning results when information is stored in memory in an organized, meaningful manner.
How does transfer occur?	When a learner understands how to apply knowledge in different contexts, then transfer has occurred.
Types of learning	reasoning, problem-solving, information-processing
Assumptions/principles in instructional design	Many of the instructional strategies advocated and utilized by cognitivists are also emphasized by behaviorists. Cognitivists make use of feedback.
Instruction	Cognitive theories emphasize making knowledge meaningful and helping learners organize and relate new information to existing knowledge in memory.
<b>CONSTRUCTIVISM</b>	
How does learning occur?	Constructivism is a theory that equates learning with creating meaning from experience (Bednar et al., 1991 in Ertmer and Newby 2013). Even though constructivism is considered to be a branch of cognitivism (both conceive of learning as a mental activity), it distinguishes itself from traditional cognitive theories in a number of ways.
Factors that influence learning	Learner and environmental factors. Interaction between these two variables that create knowledge.
The role of memory	Memory is always under construction as a cumulative history of interactions.
How does transfer occur?	Transfer can be facilitated by involvement in authentic tasks anchored in meaningful contexts.
Types of learning	The constructivist view does not accept the assumption that types of learning can be identified independent of the content and the context of learning (Bednar et al., 1991).
Assumptions/principles in instructional design	Knowledge is not abstract but is linked to the context under study and to the experiences that the participants bring to the context. As such, learners are encouraged to construct their own understandings and then to validate, through social negotiation.

Instruction	Instruction shifts from teaching to learning, from the passive transfer of facts and routines to the active application of ideas to problems.
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### **2.1.1 Nature and Nurture in Language Learning**

Linguists have tried to explain how humans learn their mother tongue or a foreign language at an early age throughout time, and there are various theories that clarify how a language is acquired. However, the linguist’s bias towards certain learning theories influences the path their theories take. In simple terms, nature refers to an innate attribute that is acquired by belonging to a certain species; for instance, a newborn human will be able to communicate verbally by the fact of being a human being. On the contrary, nurture refers to how the environment and interaction in which a child develops influence the language acquisition process.

Nature and Nurture have helped to study several mental disorders and diseases such as autism and depression in psychology; however, it has been a debate in terms of language acquisition. In the 1970s, the Nativist theory, also called the Universal Grammar hypothesis of Chomsky suggested that “our capacity for producing and understanding verbal correspondence is coded into our brains from birth” (Smith, 2016, pp. 1). This position corresponds to the “nature” point of view. On the contrary, for Vygotsky, in 1962, explained that “another role of language is the establishment of communication through social interaction which can be considered as the main contributing factor of child language development” (Dastpak, Behjat & Taghinezhad, 2017, pp. 233).

### **2.1.2 Language Transfer**

Linguistic transfer, also known as cross-linguistic influence is a term used in language acquisition. This phenomenon occurs when L1 has an influence on L2 learning and certain

linguistic aspects tend to be overly influenced by the mother tongue. This phenomenon is mainly observed in beginners. Nevertheless, language transfer does not always negatively affect the acquisition of a language.

According to Feng (2017, pp. 1076), “Language transfer can be used to explain the interaction among factors in the process of second language learning and influence the acquisition and use of language, and help learners learn the correct language strategies”. In the case of speakers of Roman languages such as Spanish, where the grammar of L1 is not very different from that of the target language, the L1 will be of assistance in creating complex sentences. On the contrary, Japanese learners may struggle in structuring a sentence in English with the correct order, as their language follows the structure of *subject-complement-verb* and *not subject-verb-complement*. This phenomenon varies depending on everyone’s L1 and language knowledge. There are various perspectives and theories on language transfer. The following are some of the theories mentioned by Daftarifard and Shirkhani (2011) in the article “Transfer across Second Language Acquisition Theories”.

- *Transfer: Different views:* In this theory, there are six main reasons for language interference:
  1. Non-native speakers do not make the same errors as native speakers.
  2. Language knowledge plays an important role in the type and number of errors one can make.
  3. L1 is used as a basis of L2.
  4. Learners are not able to remove the aspects of L1.
  5. Individual habits have also an effect on language acquisition.
  6. Interlingual generalization.

- *Transfer from Typological Perspective:* The characteristics of L1 affect the correct or failure to learn L2. The lack of certain aspects of L1 that exist in L2 also affects the correct learning of L2.
- *Dynamic Model of Transfer:* In this vision, language transfer starts with phonological features; due to the lack of specific phonemes in L1, the individual tries to substitute the unknown sound with a similar one of the mother tongues. Later on, this phenomenon has an impact on more complex features of the language.
- *Study of Language contact:* According to this point of view, the region of the speaker also modifies the language due to the contact with indigenous languages.

*Reverse and Backward transfer:* The presence of L1 is not always the one that affects the L2, sometimes the L2 also influences the perception of L1, i.e., this phenomenon can weaken or enhance L1.

## **2.2 Phonetics and Phonology: An approach to oral production**

Phonetics and phonology are a branch of linguistics in charge of studying and understanding the production of sounds of a certain language. Each language has its sound system, and the English language is no exception. As an English learner, it is worthwhile knowing and identifying the variety of sounds of the target language; and if possible, learning it by heart to reduce pronunciation mistakes when real communication takes place. This section is an overview of the outstanding factors in phonetics and phonology that influence pronunciation.

### **2.2.1 Articulatory Phonetics**

Articulatory phonetics studies the production itself or “how they are made” (Davenport & Hannahs, 2010). In other words, “Articulatory phonetics is concerned with the physical mechanisms involved in producing spoken language” (Huffman, 2021). Understanding articulatory phonetics is useful for spoken communication in English. A study made in Ecuador showed that the use of articulatory phonetics inside the classroom was beneficial for the students since they developed better pronunciation in English (Rojas, Inca, Escobar, Rodríguez, 2018). Articulatory phonetics is one of the important variables tested in this research.

### **2.2.2 Vocal tract, place of articulation, and manner of articulation**

To be able to produce sounds and create a complete discourse, there are several organs (in phonetics called articulators) inside the human body that contribute to the creation of those sounds, that set of organs are the respiratory system and the vocal tract (Ladefoged, n.d.) the vocal tract (appendix 1) is studied in many scientific fields such as medicine, music, and linguistics as well. Sound production starts in the lungs where the air is produced, and then the airflow moves to the larynx, when the airflow reaches the vocal folds there are two possibilities: if they are separated, it allows the air to flow without any obstruction, and

produces *voiceless* sounds. On the contrary, if the vocal folds are closed it provokes air to create vibration and produces *voiced* sounds. Subsequently, the mouth, tongue, lips, and sometimes the nose are responsible for modifying and giving shape to the airflow to finally produce a variety of sounds (*place and manner of articulation*). (Roach, 1998, Yule, 2010, Rojas, Inca, Rodríguez, 2018, Ladefoged, n.d.).

It is said that the *place of articulation* is where sound is produced or how the tongue influences the production of sound, the following chart shows the different places of articulation according to Yule (2010).

<b>Place of articulation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Representation</b>
Bilabials	Sounds produced by upper and lower lips	[p], [m], [b], [w]
Labiodentals	Sounds produced by upper teeth and lower lip	[f], [v]
Dentals	Sounds produced by the tongue tip behind the upper front teeth	[θ], [ð]
Alveolars	Sounds produced by the front part of the tongue on the alveolar ridge	[t], [d], [s], [z]
Palatals	Sounds produced by the tongue and the palate	[ʃ], [tʃ], [ʒ], [dʒ], [j]
Velars	Sounds produced by the back of the tongue against the velum	[k], [g], [ŋ]
Glottals	Sound not produced with the tongue	[h]

While the place of articulation refers to where the sound is produced, the *manner of articulation* deals with how the sound is produced to be able to differentiate sounds from the same place of articulation. The following chart based on Yule (2010) indicates the different manner of articulation of English.

<b>Manner of articulation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Representation</b>
Stops	Sounds produced by stopping the air to let it go abruptly	[p], [b], [t], [d], [k], [g]
Fricatives	Sounds produced by blocking the air and letting it go out through the narrow opening	[f], [v], [θ], [ð], [s], [z], [ʃ], [ʒ]
Affricates	Sounds produced combining a brief stopping of the air with an obstructed release	[tʃ], [dʒ]
Nasals	Sounds produced by raising the velum not letting air enter the nasal cavity	[m], [n], [ŋ]
Liquids	Sounds produced by letting the air pass around the side of the tongue	[l], [r]
Glides	Sounds produced by the tongue in motion	[w], [j]
Glottal stops	Sounds produced when the air is released after the vocal folds were closed	[ʔ]
Flaps	Sounds produced by tapping the alveolar ridge with the tongue tip	[ɾ]

### **2.2.3 Segmental and suprasegmental features**

A phoneme is the minimal unit of sound in words, this feature is called a *segmental* feature, in other words, they are individual sounds such as vowels and consonants. On the other hand, *suprasegmental* features (also known as *prosody*) are related to a more complex level of speaking such as stress syllables, intonation, and rhythm, those features help the speaker to have a more natural way of speaking.

A study made by Wang (2020) showed that segmental and suprasegmental features work together in spoken communication; however, there are two opposite views in teaching them. Some teachers consider that suprasegmental features are more important for intelligibility and others disagree. Moreover, the research made by Veenendaal, Groen & Verhoeven (2015) applied to 99 primary school students in the Netherlands showed that prosody or suprasegmental features helped them in the development of their reading comprehension. Therefore, communication starts with segmental features (basic sounds) to switch to a more complex form for speakers to be able to fulfill communication needs.

### **2.3 Speaking and the Sub-skills**

To better understand what speaking sub-skills are, it is necessary to comprehend what skills and speaking skills per se are in language learning. There are four skills in foreign language learning; two of them are considered passive skills, which are listening and reading. On the other hand, speaking and writing are considered active skills because the speaker needs to use their knowledge of language and cognition to produce oral or written discourse. For the purpose of the study, only the speaking skills will be discussed. Torkey (2006, pp. 30) defines the speaking skills as “the secondary stage students’ ability to express themselves orally, coherently, fluently and appropriately in a given meaningful context to serve both

transactional and interactional purposes using correct pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary and adopting the pragmatic and discourse rules”.

In 1987, Bygate suggested that skill is the correct use of knowledge, i.e., the knowledge that is not used cannot be considered a skill. There are two perceptions of knowing whether a specific knowledge can be considered a skill, which are:

- *Motor-perceptive skills*: This type of skill “involves perceiving, recalling, and articulating in the correct order sounds and structures of the language” (pp. 5).
- *Interaction skill*: In this type of skill, decision-making in speaking out is crucial. It is the ability to decide the right words and phrases based on the intention you have with the hearer.

Developing active skills, speaking, and writing, (also called expressive skills) is of greater difficulty for the learner; therefore, the environment in which they develop plays an important role. According to Mackey (1971), general knowledge of the language such as grammar and vocabulary is extremely important; however, for the learner to fully develop speaking, it is necessary to be immersed in the language. This can be achieved by living in a country where the language is spoken and living with a native family. Nonetheless, the possibilities of traveling abroad are not feasible for some learners; therefore, there are alternatives to develop this skill as mentioned in Duran, Güvey, and Kuru's study (2021) where they used cartoons to teach speaking to primary school children. These kinds of methodologies and teaching strategies will be discussed in later sections.

Just as in written speech, there are also genres in speaking. Each genre describes an ability to communicate in L2 in different situations based on the speaker's vocabulary knowledge, culture, and environment. Carter and McCarthy (1997) in their book “*Exploring Spoken*

*English*” mentioned the genres of speech related to foreign language learning and teaching, and described them in the following way:

- *Narrative*: Description of everyday activities. It is necessary to have a listener.
- *Identifying*: Giving personal information.
- *Language-in-action*: Description of the activities the speaker performs when speaking.
- *Comment-elaboration*: The speaker gives their opinions, and comments on specific events.
- *Service-encounters*: Interaction when selling and buying.
- *Debate and argument*: The ability to defend one’s point of view.
- *Language, learning, and interaction*: Using L2 in a formal context (inside the classroom) and informal context (outside the classroom).
- *Decision-making/negotiating outcomes*: The way in which the speaker finds the solution to any problem, and the ability to negotiate.

Speaking a language entails more than just understanding the writing system or grammar of a language, it is also necessary to develop all the skills to be considered a proficient speaker: “When we talk about the four main skills, we think about smaller skills, or subskills, which make up each of the main skills” (Cambridge English, 2009, pp. 2) It is necessary to become aware that skill is the set of other skills that work together to produce or understand the target language. In this section, the subskills related to the oral production of a language will be discussed, with an emphasis on the importance of pronunciation.

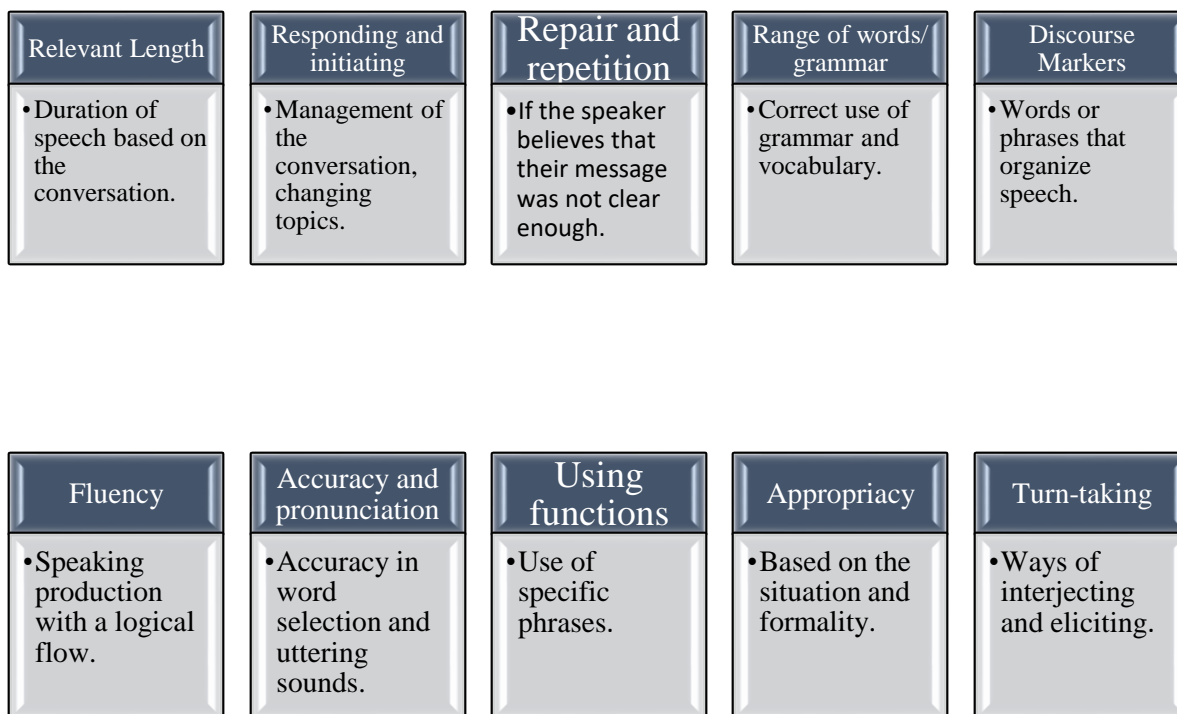
### **2.3.1 Subskills related to the oral production**

To be part of a conversation in a foreign language it is necessary to develop certain subskills. In the case of the speaking sub-skills, not only oral production is taken into account but also the interaction and the way a conversation flows. They are also part of the speaking skill development. Speaking “involves communicative performance and other important elements such as, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension” (Larasanti & Dianti, 2019 in Hashem, 2021, pp. 52).

In the research made by Katawazai and Sandaran (2019), the main sub-skills essential for the development of any of the four main skills are described. According to their study, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation are the basic sub-skills. They argue that vocabulary is the main aspect of communication, in the absence of vocabulary, it is not possible to convey meaning. However, grammar is also important when it comes to communication. It is not possible to express a complex message using only vocabulary. For such situations, grammar is essential. In addition to the two sub-skills already mentioned, pronunciation plays an important role in foreign language acquisition, especially in spoken communication. In this case, pronunciation is important for the learner to communicate smoothly, but also the intelligible pronunciation of the teacher is important for the learner to distinguish the sounds of the L2.

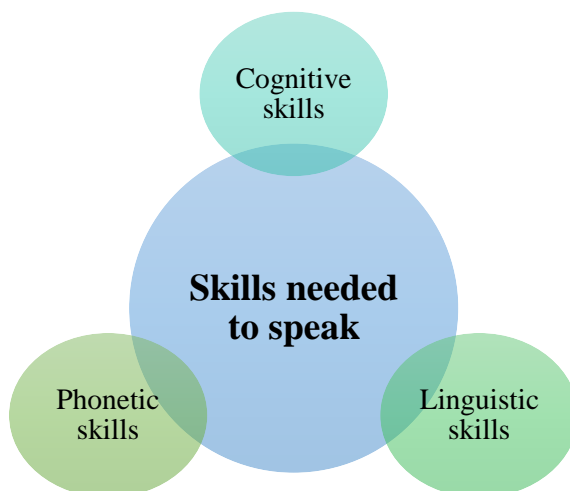
The following figure shows the subskills belonging to the speaking skill. The figure was designed based on the manual “*Teaching Speaking Sub-skills*” by Lackman 2010.

**Figure 1: Speaking sub-skill**



The CEFR was created to standardise levels of proficiency in second language learning. This handbook explains the four main skills and competencies needed when learning a foreign language. This handbook does not mention explicitly what the sub-skills of speaking are; however, it does mention the activities that the speaker needs to improve in order to be able to communicate in the second language. Figure 2 contains the skills described in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment handbook (n.d.) by the Council of Europe.

**Figure 2: Speaking Sub-skills (CEFR)**



- *Cognitive skills*: Ability to plan and organize messages.
- *Linguistic skills*: Ability to create a sentence or sentences.
- *Phonetic skills*: Ability to utter sentences.

As already mentioned, sub-skills are the speaker's abilities used to cope with various situations when interacting orally. In the case of speaking, it is necessary to understand grammatical functions and vocabulary to express oneself. However, it is also necessary to develop other skills such as pronunciation, fluency, and social skills in order to be considered a proficient speaker of a foreign language, but more importantly, for the communication process to occur successfully.

### **2.3.2 The Importance of Pronunciation**

It is common for beginner learners to be curious about pronunciation at the start of their target language studies. And questions such as: *how does the target language sound?* Or *how difficult is its pronunciation?* come to their minds. In simple words, pronunciation could be defined as the process of making the characteristic sounds of a language. The AMEP Research Centre (2002) established that the function of pronunciation is based on two

important phonology characteristics called *segmental* and *suprasegmental* features working together during the oral practice of a language. As determined by Britannica (2021), pronunciation is, in the speaker's view, the uttering of phonemes that functions along with other features such as pitch, loudness, and duration in oral production, for listeners it is a tool to perceive a message.

Accordingly, Pourhossein (2016) claimed that pronunciation is the production of sounds; these uttered sounds should not be an obstacle to understanding when a conversation takes place. Therefore, pronunciation is the oral production of the smallest units of speech known as phonemes necessary for the speaker to be completely understood by the listener. There are different types of pronunciation, and those differences are based on regional, and at times, sociocultural aspects that build individuals' manner of speaking. Therefore, for a conversation to flow smoothly in the L2, the learner should be aware of the importance of the target language pronunciation.

Although every individual has their perception of the importance of pronunciation, the way individuals utter sounds in L2 varies according to personal characteristics, L1 phonology, and experience studying the language. Nonetheless, the main purpose of learning a foreign language, especially English is to be able to communicate with people with a different linguistic and cultural background from one's own, and understandable pronunciation is the first step to comprehending what the speaker intends to convey.

The English language has evolved as any other language, it is said that Modern English has 44 sounds, 24 of them are consonant sounds and 20 are vowel sounds. This information varies according to different authors (Bizzocchi, 2017). Due to the variety of sounds of English, pronunciation takes an important role in oral communication. Many Spanish speakers have difficulties articulating words that are slightly different in pronunciation such as: *taught*,

*tough, thorough, though, and thought*, for this reason, mistakes in pronunciation could lead to misunderstandings in real life. ‘Intelligible pronunciation is one of the necessary components of oral communication’ (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, Goodwin, 2007, p.8), Suwartono (2006 in Widi, n.d., p.3) established that “pronunciation is an essential part in a language, for the nature of language is spoken”. Besides, Steed and Delicado (2014) claim that pronunciation should not be classified as a sub-skill as it includes other aspects such as interpretation and the ability to negotiate within the discourse.

Many studies have been held in the EFL discipline regarding the importance of pronunciation for English language learners. The study made on 300 secondary school students by Abu Bakar and Ridhuan (2015) on the importance of pronunciation from the students’ perspective, showed four general aspects that learners consider fundamental, which are: awareness, accuracy importance, achievement of intelligibility, and interest in improving pronunciation. At the same time, Derwin (2003 in Steed & Delicado, 2014), found out that “pronunciation is a critical part of communication” and for Rao (2018), learners should focus on pronunciation to learn English. In contrast, Steed and Delicado (2014) affirm that teachers consider that pronunciation is not a significant feature to teach but it will be acquired eventually when interacting with native speakers; however, this is not always an option for some university students due to economic issues and academic grades.

## 2.4 Intelligibility

The words accurate and correct are synonyms for the word intelligible, however, they are slightly different in meaning. This difference may cause misunderstandings when used to refer to pronunciation since there is no “*correct pronunciation*” and no one’s pronunciation is better than another, especially in the English language, which is spoken in many regions of the world and there are many variations of it. *Intelligibility* is a terminology mostly used in linguistics; referring to the pronunciation that is easily understood by the listeners. Yazan (2015, pp.1) suggested that intelligibility is “a relevant concept for English language teachers to the extent that they aim to prepare students to communicate successfully with users of various Englishes and in lingua franca contexts”.

The study made by Jung (2010) in South Korea on 91 undergraduate students showed that students consider mispronunciation can be one of the causes of misunderstandings during the conversation. They also mentioned (based on Krashen’s theories of 1982) that non-native students have difficulties in developing native-like pronunciation since this sub-skill is acquired in the environment in which an individual develops and it is not a learned skill.

In the study made by Yenkimaleki and Heuven (2022), a comparison is made between the nativeness and intelligibility approaches in prosody instruction. The nativeness aim is to acquire a native pronunciation of the L2, this approach has been criticized since the learners must learn how to pronounce perfectly the sounds of L2 regardless of the level at which the learner is, and regardless of their mother tongue. On the other hand, the only aim of the intelligibility approach is to be understood by the listener regardless of the speaker’s linguistic background. Therefore, intelligible pronunciation is the production of the sounds of a language that not only non-native speakers can understand, but also native speakers of the target language. The use of terms “*correct pronunciation*” or “*accurate pronunciation*”

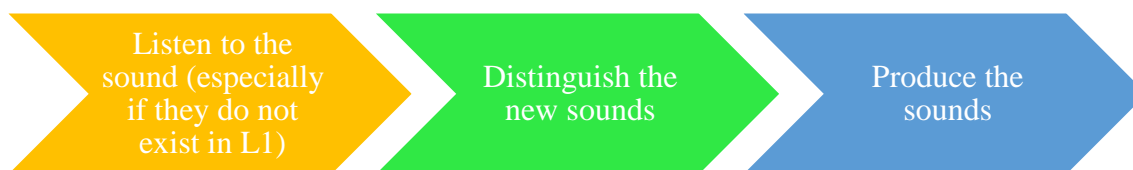
should not be used in the field of foreign language teaching since it is almost unachievable for EFL learners to pronounce like a native speaker of the language. However, learners and teachers should understand and promote the importance of clear and understandable pronunciation.

### **2.1.1.3 Pronunciation instruction**

Pronunciation is an important factor in oral communication; for that reason, teachers should devote the time it deserves during the lessons. Therefore, several techniques have been developed for the improvement of pronunciation teaching/instruction. It is known that pronunciation is a difficult aspect to acquire when learning EFL and requires special attention. However, due to the difficulty of producing certain sounds in English, and the fact that there are many non-native teachers in Mexico, some instructors may choose not to focus on teaching pronunciation.

Non-native English language teachers have a difficult task since they must master the language as it is their L1 to be an excellent model for students. In the words of Widi (n.d.), mentioned that the presence of the teacher is of great importance for the acquisition of pronunciation, as most of the time they are the only example students have. Therefore, the pronunciation acquisition process can only be achieved with both teacher's and learner's participation (Rauber, n.d.). Nonetheless, due to the linguistic background, non-native English teachers prefer to omit teaching pronunciation due to the lack of confidence in this area (Foote, Tracey & Derwin, 2010 in çakır and Baytar, 2014). In contrast, some studies show that most learners consider intelligible pronunciation an important feature to acquire (Rajadurai, 2001 in Abu Bakar & Ridhuan, 2015, çakır and Baytar, 2014, Gutiérrez, 2005). Albeit the importance of pronunciation may be underestimated by educators and learners (Chen, 2016), several techniques have been applied during classes to facilitate pronunciation

instruction. Baker and Westrup (2000) mentioned that proficient pronunciation goes beyond producing segmental sounds correctly, English instructors should also teach word stress, and sentence stress so as not to change the meaning of the message, intonation, and linking sounds. They also suggested that for a learner to improve their pronunciation, they must follow this learning process.



Each teacher and student have their own way of teaching/practicing pronunciation. The following table is a compilation of some of the pronunciation teaching techniques mentioned in Widi, n.d., çakır & Baytar (2014), Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin (2007), Rauber, (n.d.), Rao, (2018), Chen, (2016), Szypra-Kozłowska, (2014) that are used by both teachers and learners to improve and teach English pronunciation.

<b>Pronunciation instruction techniques</b>	<b>Improvement of pronunciation (learners)</b>
Feedback. Drilling. Correct pronunciation modeling. Raise awareness of inconsistency in writing. and pronunciation in the English language. Teaching sounds to influence the listener's understanding. The teaching of the influence of the sound /ə/ in pronunciation. Raise awareness of stress syllables in English. Remind the students to be careful and aware of how sounds are pronounced. Slow down speech. The teaching of minimal pair contrast (words similar in spelling but have different pronunciations in L2). The teaching of Prosody.	Error correction. Use of dictionary and mastering of the IPA. Repetition. Understand letter-sound combinations. Reading aloud. Mastering segmental and suprasegmental features. Articulatory training. Auditory training. Understand the difference in Phonetics in L1 and L2. Phonemic transcription. Exposure to the language.

Use of songs, poems, games, technology, and tongue twisters. Use of Fidel wall charts.	
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Among these techniques created to improve learners' pronunciation the most popular ones inside the classroom are giving feedback, drilling exercises, raising awareness of the importance of stress syllables, and repetition. Moreover, in modern times there are different approaches to pronunciation instruction which according to Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin (2007) are: the *intuitive-imitative approach* which is based on the learner's input and output abilities to understand and produce, and producing an approximation to the same sound, and the *analytic-linguistic approach* that is focused on the use of instruments such as the IPA, vocal apparatus, and articulatory representations for the student to be able to produce sounds.

#### **2.4.2 The difficulties of the English language from a pronunciation perspective**

Although English has some properties that make it easy to learn compared to other languages, its pronunciation may be grueling for some students to master. L1 has a strong presence in learning a foreign language, it makes the learning process possible at basic levels. However, there is also a negative transfer in L2 learning if L1 is always taken as a basis as is the case of pronunciation. In addition to L1 transfer, another factor that is involved in reaching intelligibility is the fact that there are some inconsistencies in the English language itself.

English is classified as easy to learn since it does not have as many inflections as other Indo-European languages. The wide variety of its vocabulary and its flexibility allows different disciplines like science, technology, and language to adopt it as a lingua franca (Crystal, 2003). However, English, like all languages in the world, has a difficult side, which is: pronunciation and spelling. Widi (n.d., p.3) claims that "pronunciation is the most important

and difficult problem that non-native speakers have to face when studying English”. The elements in pronunciation that confuse learners are listed as follows: accent, stress, intonation, and rhythm (Gilakjani & Ahmadi, 2011, in Widi, n.d.), nonetheless, these aspects should not be avoided when teaching/practicing pronunciation. Pronunciation and spelling are related to each other, according to Rao (2018), learners need to understand and master English pronunciation to be able to spell and write correctly because the “English spelling system is irregular and more complex” than other systems, as is the case with Spanish. For that reason, people who aim to work directly with people overseas, and even people who do not have the need to interact with people from other countries should improve their pronunciation to be able to communicate orally without any problem.

#### **2.1.2.1 Problems and benefits of the acquisition of intelligibility**

Although the IPA was created to facilitate the learning of pronunciation of any language in the world, many language students are unaware of it, these students are more likely to make pronunciation errors than those who are aware of the usefulness of the IPA. There are several external factors in addition to the difficulties of the language itself that make non-native speakers struggle to acquire an intelligible pronunciation in English. Although pronunciation is one of the most difficult aspects to acquire, there are benefits to having an understandable pronunciation.

As stated by Gilakjani and Ahmadi (2011, in Widi, n.d.), those external factors or personal elements that interfere in improving pronunciation are as follows: students’ motivation, exposure to the language, attitude towards learning pronunciation, teachers’ instruction, learners’ age (adults have more difficulties to learn a new language than young people), personality, and mother tongue. The presence of these factors causes some students to

develop better pronunciation than others. Accordingly, Agung, Laksmi, and Yowani (2021) presented the factors that influence L2 pronunciation negatively:

1. *Native language*: There are several factors that may become a negative transfer in L2 pronunciation, such as aspiration, intonation, rhythm, and melody.
2. *Prior English Pronunciation Learning*: In this case, pronunciation instruction is important; if the student receives good pronunciation instruction from the beginning and if they have had the opportunity to practice and correct their pronunciation, the student is more likely to achieve intelligibility than those who did not receive this type of instruction.
3. *Phonetic Ability*: Each person has different abilities and excels in a specific one. There are people who are able to differentiate more sounds than others. Moreover, the number of foreign languages the individual is able to speak is also essential, i.e., if the student has learned two languages before English, they are more likely to identify sounds different from those in L1.
4. *Learner's age (Critical Period Hypothesis)*: It is observed that the human brain has the capacity to acquire more knowledge at an early age, in the case of pronunciation, it is more complex and takes more time for adults to recognize and copy unfamiliar sounds. However, it is not unachievable; with discipline and proper pronunciation instruction, the individual may be able to acquire intelligibility.
5. *Learner's attitude and Psychological Factors*: The personality and attitude of individuals play an important role in the acquisition of intelligibility; past experiences inside the classroom are a factor in helping or hindering the student to achieve an understandable pronunciation.

6. *Intonation factor in the Target Language:* The intonation of a word or sentence must be learned in order to correctly establish whether the word/sentence is a statement, a question, or a suggestion.
7. *Motivation:* In addition to the linguistic aspects, motivation is fundamental for acquiring or not acquiring intelligibility. This part considers what the purpose of learning the foreign language is for the learner, and what they want to achieve.
8. *Instruction:* As mentioned above, the role of the teacher is fundamental in making the learner aware of the importance of pronunciation from the most basic levels. In addition, the teacher is often the only model the learners have as a reference. Therefore, a poorly understood pronunciation by the teacher may cause learners to make the same mistakes.

Similarly, the study made by Tlazalo and Basurto (2014) on Mexican university students listed the above-mentioned aspects. In addition, they claimed that the lack of confidence affects not only students but also teachers. Poor or little instruction in the area of phonetics and phonology causes teachers and consequently students to lack confidence in teaching/acquiring pronunciation. The emotions and personality of each individual are of great importance in language learning. [çakır](#) and Baytar (2014), mentioned that one reason why students fail to improve their pronunciation is the lack of confidence due to poor articulation of L2 sounds and the motivation or aim to develop an intelligible pronunciation. These aspects are known as “the Affective Filter Hypothesis” developed by Stephen Krashen in 1985.

The presence of the mother tongue has both positive and negative effects on foreign language learning. In terms of pronunciation, each language causes different interference e.g., a

Japanese speaker has different pronunciation problems when speaking in English than a French speaker; nonetheless, Japanese speakers have more advantages in pronouncing the sound /r/ in Spanish than Chinese speakers. In the opinion of [çakır](#) and Baytar (2014) speakers face problems when learning pronunciation because of the lack of some sounds in their language. Therefore, each speaker has some advantages or disadvantages in uttering English sounds based on their mother tongue.

Acquiring intelligible pronunciation is difficult by nature. However, it brings benefits to those who manage to develop it. According to Hori and Sun's study (2016) on Asian English learners, it was concluded that by developing intelligibility, learners also develop listening skills, since an individual who has knowledge of phonetics and phonology has a high ability to differentiate sounds and does not find it difficult to understand native and non-native pronunciations. Likewise, Jenkins (2000) claimed that learners discover the benefits of improving pronunciation when effective communication takes place. Although it is of utmost importance to be aware of the importance of pronunciation, little is known about it.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Chapter Introduction**

The present chapter contains the methodology that was carried out to conduct this research. The data in this research was collected through a questionnaire. Therefore, this chapter is divided into six sections mentioned as follows: research setting, subjects of the study, research methodology, instruments, data collection procedure, and data analysis. All six sections are explained in detail below.

#### **3.1 Setting**

To conduct this study, it was necessary to carry it out in a language school, specifically in a university since the participants needed to be students specializing in English language teaching. Therefore, the study was carried out at a public university in Mexico. The language department of this university offers a bachelor's degree program in ELT. Throughout the course of study, the students are trained in general university education, linguistics, pedagogy, research, culture, and the target language itself. The area of Phonetics and Phonology, where English pronunciation is learned in more depth is not studied until the fourth semester.

#### **3.2 Subjects of the study**

The participants in this study were 62 ELT students. The EFL students are Mexican citizens who learn English as a foreign language. To analyze the phenomenon related to pronunciation it was necessary to have a sample of students who have already finished their studies of the target language. The sample was taken from two writing courses, therefore, the participants were studying between the fifth and sixth semester of their studies. At the time of taking this subject, it is estimated that participants have a level B2 (or higher) according

to the CEFRL. The samples were selected non-statistically in this study. They were subject-type samples since their behavior, feelings, and opinions were analyzed.

### **3.3 Research Methodology**

The methodology of a research is a list of steps to follow based on the research needs to achieve the objective. Mishra and Alok (2017, pp. 2) stated that “the scientific approach which is adopted for conducting a research is called methodology”. Likewise, Baena (2017, pp. 31) declares that methodology “nos ayuda a organizarnos a sistematizar los datos y a evitar que tengamos obstaculos que entorpezcan nuestro trabajo” [It helps us to organise ourselves, to systematise the data and to avoid obstacles to our work]. In addition, Kumar (2011, pp. 36) proposes that “at each operational step in the research process you are required to choose from a multiplicity of methods, procedures and models of research methodology which will help you to best achieve your research objectives”. In other words, the methodology of a research project is the instruments and steps considered to perform the inquiry to successfully achieve the research objectives.

This research was developed through a qualitative methodology considering the objective of the research, which is to identify the problems and benefits of intelligibility based on students' opinions. Mack et al. (2005, p.p. 1) explained the main purpose of the qualitative inquiry which is “to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves. Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular populations”. This type of methodology was chosen since students' opinions and experiences were the main information analyzed throughout this investigation.

The characteristics and needs of this research require a case study as a method. This method was selected based on the phenomenon, and the type of data collected since it is fundamental

to understanding and interpreting ELT students' perceptions of intelligibility and experiences. Case studies, in the words of Starman (2013, p.p. 31) "highlight a developmental factor, which means that the cases are generated and evolve over time, often as a series of specific and interrelated events that occur in that particular time and that particular place".

### **3.4 Instruments**

This section shows the instrument applied in this study to collect information; this instrument was selected according to the purpose of this study. Furthermore, it assisted the researcher in obtaining relevant information in a way that was easy to carry out for both the researcher and the participants.

#### *Questionnaire*

In the first stage of the research, a questionnaire was administered to collect general information related to the benefits and problems of acquiring intelligibility in spoken English and ELT students' perception of pronunciation, and their language background. This questionnaire was made using open and closed questions (see appendix 1) in order to obtain the necessary information. The questionnaire was administered to a larger number of participants during this process.

### **3.5 Data Collection**

Based on the aims of this study; after selecting the participants of this study, and the instruments, the data collection process was carried out. Since the COVID-19 pandemic has been controlled and academic institutions have implemented safe return to work, the questionnaire was conducted face-to-face, therefore, it was answered in paper sheets. This form of data collection allows participants to answer questions honestly as teachers are present.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

After collecting sufficient information, and considering that this research is qualitative, the process of data analysis was carried out. Data analysis is the process in which the ideas that provide answers to the research questions are taken. Likewise, information that is not relevant to the research is discarded. “The process of performing certain calculations and evaluation in order to extract relevant information from data is called data analysis” (Ibrahim, 2015, pp. 99). In order to carry out the analysis process of this research, two data analysis methods were used: coding and triangulation.

- Coding

Since open-ended questionnaires tend to produce long answers, this method was used to sort the information. According to Belotto (2018), this method helps to classify the information found even when such information is large. Such classification helps the researcher to identify the main themes of the research. “In qualitative data analysis, a code is a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, theory building, and other analytic processes”(Saldaña, 2013, pp.4). The information obtained after administering

the questionnaire was classified into three categories mentioned as follows: the main problems of acquiring intelligibility from the point of view of Spanish-speaking students, the benefits and problems of acquiring intelligibility, pronunciation instruction, and intelligibility and self-confidence.

### **3.7 Chapter Conclusion**

During Chapter Three, the points related to methodology and data collection were discussed. The development of the methodology was of great importance to the research as it helped to delineate the type of information sought, the context in which the research was conducted, the characteristics of the individuals who participated in the research, the instruments that facilitated the collection of information, and the way in which the data was subsequently analyzed. Throughout the next chapter, the collected data will be analyzed in detail, as well as the results of the research.

## CHAPTER IV

### **4.0 Chapter Introduction**

The results obtained from the first phase of data collection are presented below. The purpose of this study is to know what the benefits are of acquiring an intelligible pronunciation are and to explore the opinions of future English language teachers about the difficulties they have had throughout their undergraduate studies as non-native speakers of the English language.

### **4.1 Aims and Research questions**

The aims of this study are the following:

1. To explore the problems hindering the acquisition of intelligibility
2. To analyze the benefits, and to find out if intelligibility plays an important role in communication.

The questions to be explored in this research are the following:

1. What are the problems future ELT students face to acquire an intelligible pronunciation?
2. What are the benefits of having an understandable pronunciation from the students' perspective? Does ELT students' self-confidence increase when they have intelligible pronunciation? If so, how?

### **4.2 Problems of acquiring intelligibility for non-native ELT students**

This information was collected through a questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 13 open and closed questions related to the acquisition of pronunciation. This questionnaire was administered to 62 students who have already taken the Phonetics and Phonology class. In the following section, the problems of acquiring an intelligible pronunciation are discussed. It is important to mention that each individual had different needs and problems.

#### **4.2.1 General information**

This section shows the general information and background of the participants learning pronunciation in the academic environment and outside the classroom. It is important to know what their previous experiences are and what their goals and objectives are in learning the English language. Students were asked about the class that helped them to improve their pronunciation. In this question, they had to choose from different options, which are shown in the following table. Taking that into account, the information provided can be analyzed based on the background of students.

Class	Number of participants
Target Language I	7
Target Language II	6
Target Language III	26
Target Language IV	32
Target Language V	12

**Table 4.1: Number of participants who selected the class in which they learned pronunciation significantly.**

The students' answers show that the most fruitful class in the acquisition of pronunciation was Target Language IV class and III. However, only 7 and 6 (n=62) students selected Target Language I and II classes, which indicates that the improvement in pronunciation was not as relevant in the first years of training of the participants as it was in the latest courses.

Other answers	
Studies in the USA	2
Private school	1
Cultural studies	1
Learning Assessment	1
Phonetics and Phonology	6

**Table 4.2: Other classes in which students improved their pronunciation.**

In the same question, students were given the option “other”. They wrote the following:

- Living in a native country
- Studies in a private institution
- Subjects such as “Learning Assessment” and “Cultural Studies”

As can be seen in the previous table, 6 students wrote that they improved their pronunciation in their Phonetics and Phonology class. 2 students studied in the USA so they learned English there. In addition, one student improved his/her pronunciation in private lessons, one in the “Cultural Studies” subject, and another student in the subject “Learning Assessment”. It can be inferred that for these participants, the subjects mentioned were not relevant in the acquisition of pronunciation since they have taken different courses at different times with different teachers or they have acquired the language in a native-speaking country.

#### 4.2.2 Difficult-to-learn aspects of English pronunciation for Spanish speakers

Participants were given a table where they had to choose which of the aspects of Phonetics and Phonology were more difficult for them. It should be mentioned that the participants were allowed to choose more than one option. The following table represents the most difficult aspects of English pronunciation according to Spanish speakers. The numbers on the table represent the times an aspect was mentioned.

Place of articulation	21
Manner of articulation	21
Voiced sounds	13
Voiceless sounds	22
Segmental features	25
Suprasegmental features	28
None	1

**Table 4.3: Difficult aspects of English pronunciation.**

As can be seen in Table 4.3, 28 participants chose suprasegmental features as the most difficult aspect of pronunciation, and 25 students considered segmental characteristics as the most difficult. For 22 identifying and producing voiceless sounds was a hard task. 21 students mentioned that the place of articulation is one of the most difficult aspects of speaking English, at the same time 21 students considered that the manner of articulation is the hardest

aspect to learn in the phonetics and phonology class. Voting dropped significantly on voiced sounds, in which only 13 students chose this aspect. Finally, only one student mentioned that there was no difficult aspect of acquiring English pronunciation. It is important to mention that each person has a different and unique perception and production of sounds due to their language study background, and the way in which everyone has been exposed to the language despite being classmates.

In an open question, students were asked about their difficulties with intelligible pronunciation. Their answers were analyzed, and some themes were found. They are shown in the following table. The number shown in the table refers to the number of times this comment was mentioned, it does not refer to the number of people since some participants wrote more than one problem.

<b>Possible problems when not having an intelligible pronunciation</b>			
<b>Problem</b>	<b>Times mentioned</b>	<b>Problem</b>	<b>Times mentioned</b>
Insufficient communication	23	None	2
People do not understand the message	17	Accent also matters	1
Misunderstandings	12	Not take part in the conversation	1
Word confusion	10	Bad impression	1
Misunderstanding as a listener	9	Losing the listener's attention	1
Not being able to talk to native speakers	4	Unlikely to find a good job	1
There are unknown sounds	3	Not being able to express oneself	1
Low self-esteem and confidence	3		

**Table 4.4: Possible problems of having poor pronunciation.**

Aspects such as insufficient communication (23), people not understanding the speaker's message (17), and misunderstandings (12) were the most mentioned possible problems.

Among the least mentioned problems are the role of accent in pronunciation acquisition, not being able to be part of a conversation, bad impression to the listener, losing listeners' attention or interest in the conversation, difficulty in finding a job, and not being able to express one's ideas clearly. As can be seen in the table, the problems may vary probably due to each student's interest in learning the language. Some of the problems mentioned by the students are related to language learning, other people mentioned communication problems, and other students mentioned external factors and factors that may influence in the future.

#### **4.2.3 Reasons for not acquiring an intelligible pronunciation**

In addition, the information collected from an open question about the reasons for not acquiring an intelligible pronunciation was categorized into three main sections since most of the comments are related to each other. The following table shows the three themes in which the answers were categorized. The number shown in the table refers to the times this comment was repeated by the participants. In some responses, there were more than two reasons mentioned.

<b>Reasons for not acquiring an intelligible pronunciation</b>	<b>Times mentioned</b>
<b>Mother tongue</b>	
Language interference	5
Sounds are difficult to pronounce	3
Poor sound identification	3
Total: 11	
<b>Pronunciation instruction</b>	
Teachers do not correct the pronunciation mistakes and poor teaching	10
They do not know Phonetics and Phonology	7
Teachers are not good models	2
Poor pronunciation instruction in the first levels	1
Total: 20	
<b>Students' lack of interest in pronunciation</b>	

Students do not practice	33
Little exposure to the language	7
Little interest	6
Total:46	
<b>Other</b>	
Difficulty in pronouncing certain sounds	3
Affective filters (lack of confidence...)	3
Total: 6	

**Table 4.5: Possible reasons why learners do not achieve intelligibility.**

It is observed that students' lack of responsibility is the main reason for not acquiring an understandable pronunciation: 33 students (n=62) do not practice it, 7 have little exposure to the language and 6 are not interested in improving their pronunciation. In the second place, students consider that poor pronunciation instruction is also an important factor. It is observed that 10 students consider that teachers do not correct their pronunciation, 7 students consider that people who make pronunciation mistakes may not know about Phonetics and Phonology. 2 students agree that teachers are not good models to improve their pronunciation, and 1 student considers that the teaching of pronunciation in the first English levels was not good enough.

In contrast, comments on the sounds of the mother tongue are very few. 5 students think that their mother tongue interferes with their L2. For 3 students, sounds of the English language are difficult to pronounce and 3 participants cannot identify sounds easily. These comments are focused on the interference of Spanish to produce L2 sounds. In addition, L2 sounds are very different from L1 that they cannot be reproduced or identified by a Spanish speaker. It can also be observed that the teacher's participation in the acquisition of L2 pronunciation is important for the participants. Good pronunciation instruction may make students feel interested in improving their pronunciation. On the other hand, the comments suggest that the little or non-participation of the teacher in the acquisition of the students' pronunciation can affect the students' performance.

The most mentioned reasons by the participants are shown bellow:

Creo que se debe a diferentes factores como los siguientes: problemas físicos o en la anatomía del estudiante, falta de práctica y la motivación, continuar repitiendo los mismos errores sin la intención de mejorar. (Participant 51).

I think this is due to different factors such as: physical problems or in the student’s anatomy, lack of practice and motivation, and continuing to repeat the same mistakes without the intention of improving.

Se debe a la falta de instrucción y práctica causada por la nula supervisión y seguimiento de parte de los docentes. (Participant 14).

The lack of instruction and practice caused by the null supervision and follow-up by the teachers.

In a closed question, students were asked to select the factors that have prevented them from developing intelligibility. Students were able to select more than one answer. The following table shows the factors that may have prevented ELT students from acquiring an intelligible pronunciation.

<b>Factors that prevented students from acquiring intelligibility</b>		
<b>Factors</b>	<b>Score</b>	
Poor pronunciation teaching	39	
Little exposure to the language	37	
Lack of motivation	21	
Mother tongue	14	
Personality	9	
Difficulty identifying different sounds	6	
Age	1	
Other	No factors	2
	Lack of practice	1

**Table 4.5: Difficulties in acquiring English pronunciation.**

In this question, 39 students (n=62) considered that the lack of good pronunciation teaching is the most outstanding factor for not acquiring intelligibility. The difference is minimal with those who think that little exposure to the language in real situations may be the reason (37 students). The number decreased significantly in the “lack of motivation” factor where 21 students considered it an important factor. On the other hand, 14 students think that their L1 is the cause that prevents them from improving their pronunciation, this factor is related to the “difficulty identifying different sounds” factor with 6 votes, since the production and

identification of L2 sounds are related to the mother tongue. The factors least selected by the students were: Age (1 student), lack of patience (1 student), and only 2 students considered that none of the factors have been an impediment for them to improving their pronunciation. These 2 students only represent 3.3% of the participants. However, for the other 96.7% of the students, there is usually more than 1 factor that does not allow them to improve their pronunciation.

### **4.3 Benefits of acquiring intelligibility for non-native ELT students**

In this section are the questions that addressed the benefits of improving pronunciation, as well as the role of the Phonetics and Phonology class as part of the training of EFL students based on the experiences and opinions of the participants.

#### **4.3.1 The Role of the Phonetics and Phonology class according to ELT students**

In a closed question, students were asked about the aspects of Phonetics and Phonology that have been of great help in improving their pronunciation. The following table shows the number of times that aspect was selected by the students.

<b>Phonetics and Phonology usefulness</b>	
<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Number of times</b>
Place of articulation	41
Voiced sounds	38
Manner of articulation	35
Voiceless sounds	30
Suprasegmental features	23
Segmental features	18
None	4

**Table 4.6: Phonetics and phonology aspects that have helped learners to improve their pronunciation.**

The results show that for 41 students (n=62) learning about the correct place of articulation helped them to have a better pronunciation in English. The difference is minimal with the

number of students who believe that voiced sounds are the ones who have really helped them (38 students). According to 35 participants, manner of articulation is the aspect that has been the most helpful. Regarding voiceless sounds, 30 students chose this aspect. The number decreased medially for the aspect of suprasegmental features in which 23 participants considered it helpful for improving their pronunciation. One of the least chosen aspects was “segmental features” with only 18 participants who chose it. On the other hand, 4 mentioned that none of the above features were helpful for them to improve their pronunciation.

In addition, in an open question, students were asked their opinions about the Phonetics and Phonology class, specifically they were asked if they considered that their pronunciation improved after taking the class, and if they put into practice what they learned. For this question, only 58 answers from the 62 participants were considered since some answers were ambiguous and did not answer the question clearly. The information collected was categorized into two sections: positive, and negative opinions about the class. Of the 58 responses, 67.2% of the participants stated that they improved their pronunciation in certain aspects, while 32.8% of the students strongly considered that their pronunciation did not improve. The following chart shows the aspects that the students could improve, as well as the reasons why a certain number of students do not consider that they have improved their pronunciation.

<b>Positive opinions about the Phonetics and Phonology class (67.2%)</b>	<b>Negative opinions about the Phonetics and Phonology class (32.8%)</b>
The class helped students to correct intonation.	The absence of the teacher did not allowed students to improve their pronunciation.
The class helped students to improve their accent in English.	Their knowledge expanded; however, they do not consider that they have improved their pronunciation.

Learning the IPA helped students to identify new sounds.	Improper pronunciation instruction.
Propper pronunciation instruction.	Lack of practice.
The class made students aware of their mistakes.	They improved their knowledge in another class.
	The class was not helpful.
	The class focused on L1 rather than L2.

**Table 4.7: Students opinions about the Phonetics and Phonology class.**

Within the affirmative answers, it is clearly mentioned that the teacher provided the appropriate material so that the students could not only identify but also reproduce the sounds of English in a simpler way. On the contrary, those who gave a negative comment on the class affirmed that the material or teaching of the class did not allow them to improve their pronunciation. For this reason, it can be affirmed that correct pronunciation instruction is vital for students to improve their pronunciation since sometimes they are the only models that students have. The fact that the subjects of study will be the next teachers and models for future students, it is mandatory that they achieve intelligible pronunciation.

#### **4.3.2 Speaking sub-skills most developed in English classes**

In a closed question, students were asked to rate the speaking sub-skills that students developed the most in their English classes. The table below shows that sub-skills of appropriacy based on the situation, answering and starting a conversation, and the correct use of grammar seems to be the most developed sub-skills in the participants' classes. Meanwhile, sub-skills such as speed duration, fluency, and turn-taking are the least developed when engaging in a conversation.

Sub-skill	← Lowest Highest →								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Duration of speech	12	<b>13</b>	5	5	4	3	5	6	3
Repair (mistakes) and repetition	4	4	7	8	4	<b>10</b>	5	5	3
Use of words and phrases that organize speech	4	8	5	4	<b>10</b>	4	<b>10</b>	6	4
Accuracy and pronunciation		3	4	7	10	5	6	<b>13</b>	6
Turn-taking	7	2	4	6	5	<b>8</b>	4	7	4
Responding and initiating	4	5	3	2	8	9	7	3	<b>11</b>
Correct use of grammar	3		<b>11</b>	8	4	8	5	6	9
Correct use of vocabulary		5	3	5	4	3	6	<b>15</b>	5
Fluency	<b>8</b>	2	<b>8</b>	4	4	3	6	6	6
Appropriacy based on the situation	3	3	6	4	1	4	6	4	<b>12</b>

**Table 4.8: Speaking sub-skills developed in English classes.**

*\* For this question some answers were not considered since the participants did not follow the dynamics of the question.*

It is worth mentioning that the importance of these sub-skills is subjective since each speaker has different needs and objectives when learning a foreign language. Therefore, some speakers will focus on developing certain sub-skills more than others; or they may not even develop some sub-skills at all. However, all learners and teachers of a foreign language regardless of their goal of learning the language should be aware that the sub-skills work together to achieve precise and concise communication. Regarding pronunciation and accuracy, many participants consider it to be the second most developed sub-skills; however, the difference is very small compared to the number of participants who ranked these sub-skills as number five. This study does not have a purpose to demonstrate that pronunciation is the most important speaking sub-skill, but to raise awareness in students and teachers of its benefits.

### 4.3.3 Other benefits developed by improving pronunciation

In an open question, students were asked to describe the benefits of having an intelligible pronunciation. The following table represents the participants' opinions through themes. The table also shows the number of times the comment was repeated in the open question.

Benefits of intelligibility	Number of times
To be understood by the listener.	28
Assertive communication.	16
It shows the speaker's proficiency level.	7
You can understand other people.	6
Good teaching in the future.	5
Professionalism.	5
Get better job opportunities.	5
Interact with native speakers.	3
Good academic performance.	3
Active participation in class.	2
Better oral expression.	1
Self-confidence.	1
Better organization of ideas.	1
Expand vocabulary.	1

**Table 4.9: Benefits of intelligibility based on participants' opinions.**

According to the participants, the most outstanding benefit of intelligibility is to be understood by the listeners, there were 28 comments regarding this theme (n=62), and in second place was assertive communication, with 16 comments. The numbers dropped significantly for the rest of the themes. According to 7 students, intelligibility is a way to show one's language proficiency level; 6 students agreed that intelligibility can help them not only to express themselves but also to understand other people. The three themes related to the labor area (good teaching in the future, professionalism, and better job opportunities) obtained the same score: 5. The comments least mentioned were: better oral expression, self-confidence, better organization of ideas, and expanding vocabulary. Below is a comment about the importance of being understood by the listener.

Con una pronunciación más clara, el mensaje que tratamos de transmitir es entregado y comprendido por los oyentes. Al mismo tiempo evita que nuestro público se sienta perdido o confundido en algún punto de nuestro discurso. (Participant 7).

With clearer pronunciation, the message we are trying to convey is delivered and understood by the listeners. At the same time, it prevents our audience from feeling lost or confused at any point in our speech.

Another participant mentioned other benefits of good pronunciation:

Al tener una buena pronunciación puedes obtener mejores notas y lograr ir al extranjero al igual que contar con mayores posibilidades de trabajo en una empresa extranjera. (Participant 60)

By having good pronunciation, you can get better grades and be able to go abroad as well as have better job opportunities in a foreign company.

Participant 54 explained that having an intelligible pronunciation the speaker's self-satisfaction increase:

Yo considero que es la satisfacción propia de hablar perfecto el idioma y además mejora considerablemente la fácil comunicación con otra persona. También puede abrirnos oportunidades de trabajo. (Participant 54).

I consider that it is the personal satisfaction of speaking the language perfectly and it also considerably improves easy communication with another person. It can also open up job opportunities for us.

#### **4.4 Benefits of living abroad (USA and Canada)**

As it has already been mentioned in Chapter 2 of this study, the immersion that the student has is one of the most important aspects when acquiring a foreign language. Therefore, it is important to know what the opinions and experiences on the role of pronunciation of students who have had the opportunity to reside in a native country of the language or a country where Spanish is not the mother tongue. Of the 62 people surveyed, only eight people have had the opportunity to use the language in a more real context and outside the classroom. It is worth

noting that two of the eight participants are native English speakers. It should be noted that most people who have had an approach with native speakers resided in the United States. The places where the participants have lived are Atlanta, Virginia, North Carolina, California. Only one participant lived in Canada. Another student is from Colombia, however, it is a Spanish-speaking country.

#### 4.4.1 The role of pronunciation in students' experiences in other countries

In an open question, participants were asked to share how their experience of living abroad was from a pronunciation perspective. The following table shows how the students rated their stay in the foreign country and the justification for their response. The answer of Participant 3 was not considered since they have lived in a Spanish-speaking country.

Students' experiences with pronunciation in real contexts				
Participant number	Grade			Justification
	Very good	Good	Not specified	
8	X			"I learned to speak in one year. They understood me"
9		X		"I learned to speak in two years"
19		X		"What was understandable to my English teachers was not understandable to native speakers"
20			X	"I felt nervous, but I improved my English by living with foreigners"
42	X			"I loved it, it helped me with my fluency and pronunciation"
49		X		"Most people are understanding when they know you still learning"
54			X	"Nervous at first, but I just relaxed and managed to have stable communication"

Table 4.10: Students' experience speaking English with native speakers.

It is observed that the majority of the participants (3 students), who have been immersed in the context had a good experience in terms of pronunciation (n=7). However, each student had a different comment, Participant 9 did not describe his/her experience with pronunciation, participant 19 considered that one may have a different experience speaking English inside and outside the classroom, and Participant 49 mentioned that native speakers

are considerate with non-native speakers. Two students considered they had a very good experience (n=7). Participant 8 considered that native speakers understood his/her speech and Participant 42 explained his/her fluency and pronunciation improved. Two participants (20, and 54) did not explain if they had a good or bad experience with pronunciation. They agreed that speaking with native speakers made them feel nervous, nonetheless, they managed to communicate with other people.

In addition, in an open question, students were asked to answer whether pronunciation played an important role in being understood by native speakers. The eight participants agreed that their pronunciation was of great help to be understood by native or non-native speakers of English. The following table shows the reasons for being understood by native speakers according to the students.

<b>Do you think that pronunciation plays an important role in being understood by native speakers?</b>			
<b>Participant number</b>	<b>Yes (100%)</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Justification</b>
8	X		“Native speakers notice if one is a non-native speaker”
9	X		“It motivated me to keep speaking”
19	X		“It motivated me to keep speaking”
20	X		“The lack of good pronunciation caused communication problems”
42	X		“It is the key to good communication”
49	X		“It helped enough to get into their social environment”
54	X		“The other person understood my ideas easily”

**Table 4.11: Importance of pronunciation when interacting with native speakers.**

According to 100% of the participants who answered this question intelligibility played an important role when communicating with native speakers. For participants 20, 42, and 54 intelligibility helped them to communicate better. On the other hand, participants 9 and 19 considered that having good pronunciation in English was a motivation when speaking. For Participant 49 pronunciation is a key to feeling included in native speakers’ environment.

#### **4.3.6 The role of intelligibility in students’ level of self-confidence**

Learning a foreign language is related to various factors such as language teaching, immersion in the language, and interest in improving certain skills. Factors such as learners' personality, motivation, and even the learners' age seem to be less important; however, they also play an important role in oral communication. The importance of these factors depends entirely on each individual; therefore, what for one student may be extremely important when learning a language, for another student may be irrelevant. The role of intelligibility and the increase or decrease in self-confidence is related to each individual because people who interact with the speaker also play an important role. According to Bordieu (1991, in Alam et.al. p. 143), "The relationship between linguistic competence and individual social status forms the realization of ownership of English in L2 learning". That is, if the speaker receives good comments about their level of English, it is highly likely that his/ her level of self-confidence will increase.

The Affective Filter Hypothesis by Stephen Krashen relates aspects such as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety with the acquisition of the language. That is to say, the fewer the negative filters, the greater the probability of acquiring L2. According to Krashen (1982, p. 31) "Performers with self-confidence and good self-image tend to do better in second language acquisition". The study made by Alam et.al. (2021) found that the presence of self-confidence is one of the three factors that helped students to improve their L2.

Based on the present investigation, self-confidence in intelligibility acquisition was also considered by some participants.

Una mala producción oral produce una mala comprensión en el mensaje, falta de confianza al hablar y poca fluidez (Participant 36).

Poor oral production produces a poor understanding of the message, a lack of confidence when speaking, and little fluency.

Una comunicación fracturada también puede ocasionar burlas y baja autoestima (Participant 54).  
Fractured communication can also lead to ridicule and low self-esteem.

Based on Stephen Krashen's hypothesis, high levels of negative filters cause students to have problems acquiring a foreign language. Therefore, the improvement of pronunciation can help the learner to reduce their insecurities, which may allow them to communicate effectively. Three students (n=62) mentioned that low self-esteem and self-confidence is one of the possible problems of having poor pronunciation.

Moreover, 3 participants (n=62) also considered that the affective filters prevent them from acquiring intelligibility. As already mentioned, the lack of motivation means that the level of self-confidence does not increase, therefore, it is important to mention that for 24 (n=62) students, intelligibility and self-confidence are related to each other. It has been observed that for the participants of this study, the affective filters have also had an impact on their improvement of pronunciation. However, the students consider that self-confidence is not the only factor that helps/hinders students from improving their oral communication skills.

## CHAPTER V

### 5.0 Chapter Introduction

Throughout this chapter, I will reflect on the findings collected during the development of this research project. The purpose of this research was to explore the problems and benefits of intelligibility acquisition for ELT learners in Mexico. At the same time, I tried to understand the relationship between intelligibility and self-confidence. When carrying out the investigation, I realized that pronunciation is of great help to students, although each one has had different experiences and difficulties acquiring it. However, most agree that pronunciation can be of great help in their lives as professionals. Next, the findings, limitations, further research, as well as a personal reflection will be discussed.

### 5.1 Findings

During Chapter 4, important information was collected, and a more detailed analysis was made. In the following paragraphs, the research questions will be answered. It is also worth mentioning that during the investigation it was noted that students' background is also related to the perception of the importance of intelligibility.

**RQ1: What are the problems ELT students face in acquiring an intelligible pronunciation?**

The problems that the 62 participants faced when acquiring intelligibility were the following: suprasegmental features (28), segmental characteristics (25), identifying and producing voiceless sounds (22), the place of articulation (21), the manner of articulation (21), voiced sounds (13). The English language has phonetic characteristics that are different from those of the Spanish language, with Spanish having more sound limitations. For this reason, it is somewhat difficult to acquire these characteristics without taking a specialized class, such as phonetics and phonology, or without having learned the language in a native environment.

In addition, the possible problems of not having an intelligible pronunciation are aspects such as insufficient communication (23), people not understanding the speaker's message (17), and misunderstandings (12). The main problem that arises from not having an intelligible pronunciation is the misinterpretation of the message, leading to misunderstandings and even uncomfortable situations between the speaker and the listener. The misinterpretation of messages may also lead the listener to lose interest in the conversation, as mentioned in Chapter 2.

Moreover, the reasons why students do not acquire understandable pronunciation are also part of the problems. The reasons are as follows: poor pronunciation instruction (39), no exposition to the language (37), lack of motivation to improve pronunciation (21), L1 affects pronunciation acquisition (14) difficulty identifying different sounds (6), age (1), lack of patience (1), and only 2 students considered that none of the factors had been an impediment for them to improve their pronunciation. Poor teaching of pronunciation is one of the major problems for which intelligibility is not acquired, either because the teacher did not dedicate enough time to teach this sub-skill during their classes, or because the pronunciation is not followed up once the Phonetics and Phonology class is completed. There are other factors why students do not acquire understandable pronunciation: they have not had enough exposure to the language either inside the classroom or outside, for example, interacting with native speakers, the student has no interest in improving his or her pronunciation, if that is the case it is difficult to know the exact reason.

**RQ2: What are the benefits of having an understandable pronunciation from the students' perspective? Does ELT students' self-confidence increase when they have intelligible pronunciation? If so, how?**

According to the 62 participants of this research, the most outstanding benefits of intelligibility are the following: being understood by the listeners (28), assertive communication (16), showing one's language proficiency level (7), and understanding other people (6). The three themes related to the labor area were also important for some students: good teaching in the future (5), professionalism (5), and better job opportunities (5). Other comments were better oral expression (1), self-confidence (1), better organization of ideas (1), and increasing vocabulary (1). In addition, some participants mentioned that understandable pronunciation helps them have better communication, others considered it a useful tool in their professional lives, and others considered that it has personal benefits. It should be noted that none of the 62 participants had a negative opinion about intelligibility. Of the 62 participants, only 8 have had the opportunity to be abroad (USA and Canada). These 8 students were asked to answer whether pronunciation played an important role in being understood by native speakers. According to 100% of these participants, intelligibility played an important role when communicating with native speakers. The reasons are the following: intelligibility helped them to communicate better (3), having good pronunciation in English was a motivation when speaking (2), and pronunciation is a key to feeling included in native speakers' environment (1). The fact of having contact with people who do not share the same mother tongue possibly promotes an increase in interest or the need to improve the four language skills, including their sub-skills.

Regarding the relationship between intelligible pronunciation and self-confidence, of the 62 students who were surveyed, three students considered low self-esteem and self-confidence is one of the possible problems of having poor pronunciation. The same number of participants mentioned that the affective filters prevented them from developing an intelligible pronunciation. For 24 participants the affective filters had an impact on the

improvement of their pronunciation. It should be noted that although some participants mentioned self-confidence as a possible reason for not acquiring intelligibility, most of the participants did not consider this factor as one of the main ones.

## **5.2 Limitations of the study**

During the process of this study, valuable information was found about the importance of pronunciation for ELT students. However, there may have been some possible limitations in this study.

The first limitation was the size of the sample. Despite having found fruitful information, students' experiences and opinions could have been enhanced by including a larger number of participants.

The second limitation was the time to answer the questionnaire. Although the questionnaire was designed with multiple choice questions, and the original language in which it was designed was changed to save time, I consider that when administering it, some students spent a lot of time answering. At some point, they may have gotten bored of answering and they gave ambiguous or very short answers. This could have had a negative effect on the results obtained.

The third limitation was that at the beginning it was considered that a questionnaire was enough to gather the information needed. Nevertheless, after analyzing the information, I realized that an interview was necessary to corroborate the information collected in the questionnaire.

## **5.3 Further research**

The limitations of this study are areas of opportunity for future research. The importance of good instruction and acquisition of intelligibility will continue to develop in the future. The following are possible topics to be developed:

First, it was found out that it is necessary for students to be aware of the importance of intelligible pronunciation; therefore, it would be a good idea to investigate how to raise awareness of the importance of pronunciation in the EFL classroom, on the other hand, to study the participants who have a good pronunciation and investigate what they do/did to have that good pronunciation.

Second, in this research it was also found that the teachers' participation is also of great importance for the good development of intelligibility; therefore, a study focused on the teachers and their methodology for teaching pronunciation would also be of great help to better understand this issue.

#### **5.4 Personal reflection**

Research is not easy and requires a lot of time and dedication, there were two parts of the investigation that, in my opinion, were the most difficult ones, which are: practically repeating the research from scratch since what I developed in the Thesis Seminar classes were not consistent enough to continue with that topic, and chapter four, in which it took me a long time to categorize and write the results. By completing this research work I have learned various things both academically and personally. As for academics, I have had the opportunity to develop and improve my research skills, which will be of great help in my future academic preparation. Moreover, I learned to be more objective and question my own work. On a personal level, it was pleasant to finish this research work since from the beginning of my university studies I had in mind to graduate with a thesis. Although this research did not allow me to know the opinions of all the EFL students at the institution, at least I had the opportunity to see the way of thinking of some colleagues and it is very interesting to realize that people do not always think the same as you.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

**The Problems and Benefits of Acquiring Intelligible Pronunciation Faced by Spanish-speaking ELT Students**

*Este instrument es estrictamente confidencial y será usado exclusivamente por Karla Andrea González Romero en el estudio "The problems and Benefits of Acquiring Intelligible Pronunciation Faced by Spanish-speaking ELT Students". En ninguna circunstancia esta información será distribuida, reimpressa, o reproducida en cualquier formato sin el consentimiento escrito del participante.*

• **Información personal**

Clase: \_\_\_\_\_ Matrícula: \_\_\_\_\_

Correo: \_\_\_\_\_

1. En cuál de las siguientes clases consideras que has aprendido la pronunciación del inglés de forma satisfactoria (puedes elegir más de una opción)
  - a) Inglés I
  - b) Inglés II
  - c) Inglés III
  - d) Inglés IV
  - e) Inglés V

OTRA: \_\_\_\_\_

2. ¿Qué aspectos de fonética y fonología te han servido más para tener una mejor pronunciación? Puedes elegir más de una opción

Lugar de articulación (Place of articulation)	
Manera de articulación (Manner of articulation)	
Sonidos sonoros (Voiced sounds)	
Sonidos sin voz (Voiceless sounds)	
Características segmentarias (vocales, consonantes, fonemas)	
Características suprasegmentarias (estrés, ritmo, entonación, tono, duración)	

3. En tu opinión, ¿qué aspectos son más difíciles de aprender?

Lugar de articulación (Place of articulation)	
Manera de articulación (Manner of articulation)	
Sonidos sonoros (Voiced sounds)	
Sonidos sin voz (Voiceless sounds)	
Características segmentarias (vocales, consonantes, fonemas)	
Características suprasegmentarias (estrés, ritmo, entonación, tono, duración)	

4. Después de haber tomado la clase de fonética y fonología, ¿crees que mejoró tu pronunciación? ¿Pones en práctica lo que has aprendido? ¿cómo?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. De la siguiente tabla, enumera del 1 al 9 (donde 1 es el más bajo y 9 el más alto) las sub-habilidades relacionadas con las habilidades del habla que desarrollas mejor en tus clases de lengua meta

Duración del discurso		Responder e iniciar (una conversación)	
Reparar (errores) y repetición		Uso correcto de la gramática y vocabulario	
Uso de palabras y frases que organizan el discurso		Fluidez	
Precisión y pronunciación		Adecuación basada en la situación	
Toma de turnos (al hablar)			

6. ¿Cuáles crees que son los beneficios de tener una pronunciación adecuada en el ambiente académico?

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7. En tu opinión, ¿Qué problemas puedes presentar al tener una pronunciación insuficiente?

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8. ¿Cuál crees que es una posible razón por la cual algunos estudiantes no logran tener una pronunciación entendible?

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9. ¿Qué tan importante es para ti tener una pronunciación entendible?

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10. ¿Cuál de los siguientes factores no te han permitido mejorar tu pronunciación? Puedes elegir más de uno

Falta de motivación	
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Poca exposición al idioma	
Enseñanza de la pronunciación insuficiente	
Mi edad	
Mi personalidad	
Mi lengua maternal	
Nunca he sido bueno/a identificando diferentes sonidos	
OTRO:	

11. Has vivido/ estudiado/ trabajado en el extranjero? ¿dónde?

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12. Si tu respuesta fue **SÍ**, ¿cómo fue tu experiencia hablando con extranjeros (desde la perspectiva de la pronunciación)?

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13. ¿Crees que la pronunciación tuvo un papel importante en haber sido entendido o no por extranjeros? ¿Por qué?

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**¡Gracias por participar!**

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