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FACULTAD DE LENGUAS

THE USE OF CONNECTED SPEECH AMONG
MODERN LANGUAGE STUDENTS AT
BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction to the Problem	1
1.2 Purpose of the Study	4
1.3 Research Questions	4
1.4 Significance of the Study	5
1.5 Definition of Terms	5
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW	8
2.1 Overview of Pronunciation and Teaching	8
2.1.1 Defining Pronunciation	8
2.2 Studying the Sounds of Language: Phonetics and Phonology	9
2.2.1 Defining Phonetics	9
2.2.2 Defining Phonology	10
2.3 Dimensions of Phonological Description: Segmentals & Suprasegmentals	10
2.3.1 Segmental Aspects of Pronunciation	10
2.3.1.1 Defining phoneme	11
2.3.2 Classification of Phonemes	12
2.3.3 Vowels and Diphtongs	18
2.3.4 Distinctive Features	19
2.3.5 Tongue Height	19
2.3.6 Frontness & Backness	19
2.3.7 Tenseness & Laxness	20

2.3.8 Lip rounding	20
2.3.9 Consonants	21
2.3.9.1 Distinctive Features	22
2.4 Place of Articulation	22
2.4.1 Manner of Articulation	22
2.4.2 Voicing	23
2.4.3 Semivowels	23
2.4.4 Distinctive Features	25
2.4.5 Allophones: Positional Variation	25
2.4.6 .Allomorphs	25
2.5 Suprasegmental Aspects of Pronunciation	27
2.5.1 Adjustments in Connected Speech	28
2.5.2 Linking	29
2.5.3 Assimilation	30
2.5.4 Elision	30
2.5.5 Stress	32
2.5.6 Rhythm	32
2.5.7 Intonation	33
2.5.8 Fluency	34
2.6 Acquisition, Learning and Teaching of Pronunciation	35
2.6.1 Second Language Acquisition	35
2.6.2 Factors Involved in L2 Acquisition	36
2.6.3 Factors affecting second language acquisition	36
2.6.4 Factors Related to Acquisition of Phonology	40

2.6.5 Age and the Critical Period Hypothesis	40
2.6.6 Input, and Exposure to the Target Language	40
2.6.7 Explicit Phonological Instruction	41
2.6.8 Aptitude, Attitude, & Motivation	42
2.7 The Mother Tongue and Contrastive Analysis	42
2.8 Focus on Teaching pronunciation	43
2.8.1 Language Teaching Methodology	43
2.8.2 Dimensions of Methodology: Approach, Design, Procedure	43
2.9 The Role of Teaching pronunciation in Different Methods	44
2.9.1 Audiolingual	44
2.9.2 The Natural approach	44
2.9.3 Silent way method	45
2.9.4 Communicative language teaching	46
2.9.5 Suggestopedia	46
2.9.6 Total physical response	47
2.9.7 Community language learning	47
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY	49
3.1 Methodology	49
3.2 Participants	49
3.3 Instrument	49
3.4 Procedure	50

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS	51
4.1 Intonation	52
4.2 Rhythm	54
4.3 Deletion	56
4.4 Fluency	58
4.5 Linking	60
4.6 Assimilation	62
4.7 Weak Forms (Reductions)	64
4.8 Contractions	66
4.9 Stress in contractions	68
4.10 /ed/ simple past spelling rule	70
4.11 Plurals	71
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS	72
5.1 Summary	72
5.2 Implications	74
5.3 Limitations of the Study	75
5.4 Directions for Further Research	76

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the Problem

Learning a foreign language is not an easy process; it takes time, it requires the development of skills, and learning elements such as pronunciation's features. English as a Foreign Language refers to the language that is learned in a context in which learners must do an extra effort in order to find more opportunities to practice the skills they are developing due to the fact that, they just have the chance of practicing inside their classrooms. In fact, at the faculty of languages, English learners, especially studying in a school like the LEMO BUAP in advanced level, usually are provided with knowledge about language in a pronunciation course.

The aim of this research is focussed on teaching connected speech pronunciation. Pronunciation might be developed by learning phonetics and phonology. According to Yule (1996, p. 26) "phonetics is the general study of the characteristics of speech sounds. (...) articulatory phonetics, which is the study of how speech sounds are made, or articulated. Other areas of study are acoustic phonetics, which deals with the physical properties of speech as sound waves in the air, and auditory phonetics (or perceptual phonetics) which deals with the perception, via the ear, of speech sounds". Moreover, Yule (1996, p. 42) describes "phonology as essentially the description of the systems and patterns of speech sounds in a language. It is, in effect, based on a theory of what every speaker of a language unconsciously knows about the sound patterns of that language. (...), phonology is concerned with the abstract or mental aspect of the sounds in language rather than with the actual physical articulation of speech sounds".

Another definition of phonetics “deals with speech sounds themselves, how they are made (articulatory phonetics), how they are perceived (auditory phonetics) and the physics involved (acoustic phonetics)” while phonology “deals with speech sounds that are organised into systems for each individual language, for example: how the sounds can be combined, the relations between them and how they affect each other”, Davenport and Hannahs (1998, p.3). This means that both, phonetics and phonology study sounds, but the first one studies the sounds in an isolated way, and the second one deals with how they work as a group.

Moreover, phonology studies connected speech which deals with “processes such as assimilations, deletions, reductions (or weakenings) which accounts for an increase in gestural overlap and a decrease in gestural amplitude. In casual rapid speech, consonantal gestures can be overlapped to hide each other when they occur in different ranges, or to completely bend their characteristics when they occur in the same range”, Browman & Goldstein (cited in Hardcastle and Laver 1997, p. 399). That means when speakers produce their speech in a rapid way some sounds can be modified or can suffer alterations in the production.

Therefore, in order to enhance the role that connected speech plays when pronunciation is introduced, teachers should be aware of students’ strengths and weaknesses when they pronounce. Avery and Ehrlich (1992) state that teaching aspects of pronunciation, specially connected speech features, in the classroom is essential to increase students’ pronunciation and comprehensibility. Thus, the teaching of connected speech pronunciation is the aim of this research because suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation such as, stress, intonation, and rhythm are useful for students when learning the spoken language. Another case was presented by Dauer and Browne (1992) they did a research about how to teach connected speech. Their findings were that teaching connected speech to learners of English is a powerful tool and learners showed an improvement of different skills. They mentioned some of them which are:

a quick improvement of actual pronunciation, listening comprehension, grammar, and some others. Taking into account connected speech advantages mentioned above, it might be valuable for English LEMO students to be prepared about connected speech. Based on our experience, we took phonetics and phonology class within the major. During the course, we got the feeling that we were taught mostly with theoretical classes and there was not enough practice to really improve our pronunciation on suprasegmental aspects. Thus, if we had learned connected speech in our phonetics class at the B.A. level, it would have been helpful.

For this reason the connected speech process has an important role in teaching pronunciation. In order to search the use of connected speech, it was necessary to use a descriptive method which was non participant and it was important to provide a reading adapted from Viorst, J. 1998 *Imperfect Control: our lifelong struggle with power and surrender* to fifteen students of target language VII, and ask them to read it with the purpose of recording them and after that analyzing their production. So, it is suggested in this thesis to teach connected speech to students of Modern Languages (LEMO) at Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP), where English is taught as a foreign language.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this paper is to find out the pronunciation in terms of the use of connected speech by LEMO students in advanced level of English at BUAP in order to know if they can manage connected speech or not. Connected speech might be advantageous for EFL students, because of the linkage that exists between connected speech pronunciation and the development of listening skill when it is taught. EFL students might face certain problems when they try to speak or understand speech of a foreign language because speech is often spoken in a connected way. This means that speech comes with linked words in order to reach fluency. Then, when students are asked to get certain information from any speech, it could be difficult for them because they did not assimilate the processes that connected speech phenomenon deals with.

1.3 Research Questions

1. Can students at LEMO in advanced level of English manage connected speech when they pronounce?
2. What are the main elements of connected speech that students at LEMO can manage?
3. Do students in advanced level of English at LEMO have problems with their connected speech?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research can be useful to enrich the phonetics and phonology field on students of advanced level of English at LEMO BUAP; because, it will contain information about researches that have been carried out by experts, such as Avery and Ehrlich (1992) and Celcia-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (1996) for mentioning some, in teaching pronunciation and connected speech. In addition, its findings may help professors, with a similar background and context, to teach pronunciation in EFL contexts in order to make decisions and redesign their goals and objectives when they teach pronunciation because, they can take into consideration connected speech.

1.5 Definition of Terms

Assimilation: Yule (1996, p. 47) defines Assimilation as “when two sound segments occur in sequence and some aspect of one segment is taken or “copied” by the other, the process is known as assimilation. If we think of the physical production of speech, we realize that this regular process happens simply because it’s quicker, easier and more efficient for our articulators as they do their job”.

Connected Speech: According to Browman & Goldstein (cited in Hardcastle and Laver 1997, p. 399), connected speech are “processes called assimilations, deletions, reductions (or weakenings) that can be accounted for by an increase in gestural overlap and a decrease in gestural amplitude”.

Content Words: Avery and Ehrlich (1992, p. 75) define content words as “those words that express independent meaning included in this group are: nouns, main verbs, adverbs, adjectives, question words (e.g. why, when, what), demonstratives (e.g. this that, these, those). Content words are usually stressed”.

Function words: “Are those that have a little meaning or non meaning in themselves, but which express grammatical relationships. Functions words include: articles (a, an, the), prepositions (e.g. at, to, of), auxiliaries (e.g. will, have and forms of the verb be), pronouns (e.g. her, him, it, them), conjunctions (e.g. and, or, as, that), relatives pronouns (e.g. that, which, who). Function words are usually unstressed unless they are to be given special attention” (Avery and Ehrlich, 1992, p. 75).

Intonation: According to Orion (1997, p. 62), intonation “creates the melody of the language we speak. (Each language has its own very melody). Our voices rise and fall in tones like notes in a musical scale. The different notes we produce are called pitches”.

Linking: “Connecting groups of words together is referred to as a linking” (Avery and Ehrlich, 1992, p. 84).

Phonetics: According to Yule (1996, p. 26) “phonetics is the general study of the characteristics of speech sounds. (...) articulatory phonetics, which is the study of how speech sounds are made, or articulated. Other areas of study are acoustic phonetics, which deals with the physical properties of speech as sound waves in the air, and auditory phonetics (or perceptual phonetics) which deals with the perception, via the ear, of speech sounds”

Phonology: Yule (1996, p.42) describes “phonology is essentially the description of the systems and patterns of speech sounds in a language. It is, in effect, based on a theory of what every speaker of a language unconsciously knows about the sound patterns of that language. (...), phonology is concerned with the abstract or mental aspect of the sounds in language rather than with the actual physical articulation of speech sounds”.

Total deletion: This term “involves the loss of all the muscular events that were associated with the original consonant”, Mowrey and Pagliuca, (cited in Bybee 2001, p. 73). Also Yule

(1996, p. 48) define “deletion is the process of not pronouncing a sound segment that might be present in the deliberately careful pronunciation of a word in isolation”.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter the theoretical background will be discussed. Thus, there are three areas which are related to this research. First, the phonetics and phonology study; second, language acquisition, and finally teaching pronunciation.

2.1 Overview of Pronunciation and Teaching

The main focus of this study is related to the domain of pronunciation. Thus, it is important to review deeply teaching pronunciation.

2.1.1 Defining Pronunciation

Pronunciation is part of every single language; some authors have defined pronunciation as having their own definition of the term. According to Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994) pronunciation is “significant” because it is part of a code and by this medium we can interpret language, it is part of a system to achieve communication, and it is seen as a speaking act. Stevick (cited in Pennington, 1996) claims that pronunciation is essential in order to share with others the use of language and by this medium people catch the attention of others. As seen pronunciation is the production of sounds of a particular language as a part of a code; it is useful to convey meaning; however, it is not the unique way in which people share the use of the language.

2.2 Studying the Sounds of Language: Phonetics and Phonology

It is essential to do a review of these studies in order to distinguish the difference between phonetics and phonology, and their importance when pronunciation is taught. Talking about sounds of the English language, it is vital to be concise about all the phonemes that the International Phonetic Alphabet has; especially because of the regional varieties of English that exist. According to Clark, Yallop and Fletcher (2007, p. 120-121) state that “English can be said to have twenty one vowel phonemes (...). But nine of these are clearly diphthongs rather than simple vowels, and five are distinctively long (although not necessarily in contrast with the short vowels of precisely the same quality)”.

2.2.1 Defining Phonetics

The study of phonetics is essential in this thesis in order to understand the importance of teaching pronunciation. Thus, Kelly (2000, p. 9) defines “the study of pronunciation as consisting of two fields namely phonetics and phonology. Phonetics refers to the study of speech sounds (...) phonetics deals with the physical reality of speech sounds”. Similarly to Avery and Ehrlich (1992, p. 11), “the study of how sounds are produced and how the position of the mouth can be changed to produce different sounds is called phonetics”. In addition, Sommerstain (cited in Hardcastle and Laver 1997) claims that “phonetics deals with the capabilities of human articulatory and auditory systems with respect to the sounds of prosodic features available for use in language and with the acoustic characteristics of these sounds and features themselves”. That is, phonetics studies the sounds in isolation; it focuses on two characteristics; first how sounds are produced, how speakers move their articulatory system in order to produce sounds; second, how they are perceived.

2.2.2 Defining Phonology

The term of phonology must be reviewed in order to emphasize its importance in this research. Sommerstain (cited in Hardcastle and Laver, 1997, p. 676) says that “phonology, in a sense begins where phonetics leaves off. It is concerned with the ways in which the sounds and prosodic features defined by phonetics are actually used in natural languages”. In contrast, Kelly (2000, p. 9) points out that “phonology deals with system and pattern of the sounds which exists within a particular language”. In addition, Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994) claim that the realm of phonology is the study of how sounds are used and how they form a system together. Hence, it is said that phonology in contrast to phonetics deals with the whole system of sounds.

2.3 Dimensions of Phonological Description: Segmental & Suprasegmental

In the study of pronunciation, it is necessary to learn these aspects that are part of phonetics and phonology. There is a distinction between segmental and suprasegmental; the first one describes the aspects of speech referring to individual sounds, and the second one, describes those aspects beyond the segmental ones: rhythm, intonation and stress (Avery and Ehrlich, 1992).

2.3.1 Segmental Aspects of Pronunciation

Segmental aspects of pronunciation refer to individual sounds or phonemes’ features when teaching second language phonology. According to Avery and Ehrlich (1992) the segmental aspects of pronunciation deal with individual sounds, that is, the segmental aspects are vowels, consonants, and diphthongs. Also they say that many teachers put more effort in teaching segmental aspects than teaching suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation, because of the lack of time in their lessons. Furthermore, it seems that there are more difficulties teaching

vowels than consonants. In the following paragraphs will be described in detail. On the other hand Kelly, G. (2000, p. 3) says that “phonemes, as we have seen, are units of sounds which we can analyse. They are also known as segments.”

2.3.1.1 Defining phoneme

Phoneme is an essential part of any language. In this section these components will be discussed. Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994) claim that a phoneme is a speech sound easy to recognize in a system of a precise language. Meanwhile, Underhill (1994. p. VIII) gives his contribution about this term in the next sentence “a phoneme is the smallest sound that can make the difference in meaning”. Jones (1973 p. 49) defines “a phoneme which may be described roughly as a family of sounds consisting of an important sound of that language”. In addition, Cruttenden (1994) assert that phonemes are part of a language and those phonemes form a system of “significant sound units”. As seen, a phoneme is described as the “smallest speech sound” that gives meaning; it is part of language, and it plays an important role in teaching pronunciation.

2.3.2 Classification of Phonemes

This chapter will show a very clear classification of English phonemes. The following classification will be divided into vowels and consonants features. Giegerich, H. J. and Carr, P. have made tables of classifications of phonemes that basically are divided into consonants and vowels. Giegerich, H. J. (1992, p. 33 - 34) claims that “phonemes inventories vary not only from language to language but also from accent to accent.” The Table below shows consonant phonemes that are common to all accents of English with one probable exception.

Figure 1. English consonant phonemes.

Towards a sound system for English: consonant phonemes

Table 2.1 *English consonant phonemes: basic inventory*

/p/	pie	Pooh	leap	rip	ripe	
/t/	tie	two		writ	write	mitten
/k/	kye	coo	leak	rick		
/b/	buy	boo		rib		
/d/	die	do	lead	rid	ride	
/g/	guy	goo	league	rig		
/tʃ/		chew	leech	rich		Mitchum
/dʒ/		jew		ridge		pigeon
/m/	my	moue		rim	rhyme	
/n/	nigh	gnu	lean		Rhine	
/ŋ/				ring		
/f/	fie		leaf	riff	rife	
/θ/	thigh		Leith			
/s/	sigh	sue	lease		rice	
/ʃ/	shy	shoe	leash			mission
/v/	vie		leave			
/ð/	thy				writhe	
/z/		zoo			rise	mizzen
/ʒ/						vision
/l/	lie	loo			rile	
/r/	rye	rue	leer			
/w/	Wye	woo				
/j/		you				
/h/	high	who				

Giegerich, H. J. English Phonology; An Introduction. (1992 p. 34)

Carr, P. (1999) affirms that there is a phoneme system which is shared by most varieties of English and it is shown in the table below.

Figure 2. English consonant phonemes.

English Phonemes	
(4) English consonant phonemes	
/p/	as in <i>pie, pit, rip</i>
/b/	as in <i>buy, bit, rib</i>
/t/	as in <i>tie, tip, writ</i>
/d/	as in <i>die, dip, rid</i>
/k/	as in <i>cool, kit, rick</i>
/g/	as in <i>ghoul, git, rig</i>
/tʃ/	as in <i>chew, chit, rich</i>
/dʒ/	as in <i>Jew, gin, ridge</i>
/θ/	as in <i>thigh, thin, with</i>
/ð/	as in <i>then, that, scythe</i>
/f/	as in <i>fie, fit, riff</i>
/v/	as in <i>Venn, vat, leave</i>
/s/	as in <i>sigh, sit, lease</i>
/z/	as in <i>zoo, zip, please</i>
/h/	as in <i>high, hip</i>
/ʃ/	as in <i>shy, ship, leash, mesher</i>
/ʒ/	as in <i>measure</i>
/w/	as in <i>wet, win</i>
/l/	as in <i>lie, lip, real</i>
/r/	as in <i>rye, rip</i>
/j/	as in <i>year</i>
/m/	as in <i>my, meat, rim</i>
/n/	as in <i>nigh, neat, sin</i>
/ŋ/	as in <i>sing, ring</i>

Carr P. *English Phonetics and Phonology: An Introduction*. (1999 p.54)

The classification of phonemes concerns also vowels. Giegerich, H. J. lists three inventories of vowel phonemes: vowel phonemes of received pronunciation, vowels of Scottish standard English and vowel phonemes of general American. Giegerich, H. J. (1992, p. 44) claims that “Most areas of southern Britain (that is, excluding Scotland and to some extent the north of England) share a standard vowel system that has a little regional variation.” Also asserts that this southern British standard is known as the one to be referred to as received pronunciation (RP) that is used by the upper-middle and upper classes as well as by most newsreaders of network of BBC and it is related to ‚general American’, that is a regular model accent used in teaching English as a foreign language. The table below shows The Southern British Standard vowel phonemes.

Figure 3. Vowel phonemes of received pronunciation.

Table 3.1 *Vowel phonemes of Received Pronunciation*

	Closed syllables	Open syllables
/i/	beat peel dean seem	bee knee tea
/ʊ/	bit pill din bid	
/e/	bait pale Dane same	bay Tay hay
/ɛ/	bet den pet bed	
/ɑ/	Bart darn bath psalm	Shah bra car
/a/	bat Dan pal Sam	
/u/	boot pool Luke fool	shoe coo two
/ʊ/	put pull look full	
/o/	boat pole both foal	show know toe
/ʌ/	butt done putt some	
/ɔ/	bought caught dawn short sport	Shaw shore paw
/ɒ/	cot don lock stop cough	
/aɪ/	bite pile dine like	shy buy nigh
/aʊ/	bout down fowl lout	cow now brow
/ɔɪ/	noise voice coin joist	coy boy joy
/ɪə/	beard weird fierce	beer fear idea
/eə/	Baird laird scarce	bear fare hair
/ʊə/	gourd	pure tour sure
/ɜ/	bird heard word work	burr fur her
/ɔ/	bottom hammock	butter China comma

Giegerich, H. J. English Phonology; An Introduction. (1992 p. 45)

According to Giegerich, H. J. (1992) Scottish standard English (SSE) is a variety of standard English spoken in Scotland that differs in lexical and syntactical characteristics from standard English used in England, and it is spoken with accents that are very different from accents of standard English due to Gaelic Influence.

Figure 4. Vowel phonemes of Scottish standard English.

Table 3.2 *Vowel phonemes of Scottish Standard English*

	Closed syllables	Open syllables
/i/	beat peel dean seem here	bee knee tea
/ɪ/	bit pill din bid bird	
/e/	bait pale Dane same hair	bay Tay hay
/ɛ/	bet pet den bed heard	
/a/	Sam psalm darn bath car	Shah bra
/ʊ/	pool pull fool full sure	shoe coo two
/o/	boat pole both shore sport	show know toe
/ʌ/	butt done some word fur	
/ɔ/	caught cot dawn don cough short	Shaw paw
/aʊ/	bite pile dine like	shy buy nigh
/aʊ/	bout down fowl lout	cow brow now
/ɔɪ/	noise coin joist	boy coy joy
/ɔ/	butter bottom hammock	China comma

Giegerich, H. J. English Phonology; An Introduction. (1992 p. 46)

Also, Giegerich, H. J. (1992, p. 47) asserts that “general American (GA) is a cover term used for the group of accents in the United States that do not bear the marked regional characteristics of either the East (more precisely, eastern New England and New York city) or the south (mainly ranging from Virginia, the Carolinas and Georgia to Louisiana and Texas.)” GA is one of the three ‘standard English’ that can be found in the United States, it is the most common and it is used by television network in the United States.

Figure 5. Vowel phonemes of General American.

Table 3.3 *Vowel phonemes of General American*

	Closed syllables	Open syllables
/i/	beat peel dean seem here	bee knee tea
/ɪ/	bit pill din bid	
/e/	bait pale Dane same scarce	bay Tay hay
/ɛ/	bet den pet bed	
/ɑ/	car psalm cot stop don	Shah bra
/a/	bat Sam Dan bath	
/u/	boot pool Luke fool sure	shoe coo two
/ʊ/	pull put look full	
/o/	boat foal both sport	show know toe
/ʌ/	putt butt done some	
/ɔ/	caught dawn short cough	Shaw paw
/aɪ/	bite dine like file	shy buy tie
/aʊ/	bout down fowl lout	cow brow now
/ɔɪ/	noise voice coin joist	boy coy joy
/ɜ/	bird heard burr fur	
/ə/	butter bottom hammock	China comma

Giegerich, H. J. *English Phonology; An Introduction.* (1992 p. 47)

Carr, P. (1999, p. 60) says that “Accents of English vary considerably in their vowel phoneme system and in the range of allophones that those phonemes have.” Carr presents two vowel phonemes systems the RP (Received Pronunciation) and GA (General American), also asserts that Received Pronunciation and American English “are typically contrastive for most speakers of those accents”

Figure 6. Received Pronunciation and General American vowel phonemes.

(13a) RP vowel phonemes	(13b) GA vowel phonemes
/ʌ/ as in <i>putt</i>	/ʌ/ as in <i>putt</i>
/ʊ/ as in <i>put</i>	/ʊ/ as in <i>put</i>
/u:/ as in <i>pool, shoe</i>	/u:/ as in <i>pool, shoe</i>
/ɪ/ as in <i>pit</i>	/ɪ/ as in <i>pit</i>
/i:/ as in <i>peat, lea</i>	/i:/ as in <i>peat, lea</i>
/ɛ/ as in <i>pet</i>	/ɛ/ as in <i>pet</i>
/eɪ/ as in <i>pate, lay</i>	/eɪ/ as in <i>pate, lay</i>
/ɒ/ as in <i>pot</i>	
/oʊ/ as in <i>pole, low</i>	/oʊ/ as in <i>pole, low</i>
/ɔ:/ as in <i>port, law</i>	/ɔ:/ as in <i>law, short, caught</i>
/æ/ as in <i>pat</i>	/æ/ as in <i>pat</i>
/ɑ:/ as in <i>part, Shah</i>	/ɑ/ as in <i>part, Shah, pot</i>
/ɜ:/ as in <i>pert, furry</i>	/ɜ/ as in <i>pert, furry</i>
/ɔɪ/ as in <i>coin, boy</i>	/ɔɪ/ as in <i>coin, boy</i>
/aɪ/ as in <i>pile, buy</i>	/aɪ/ as in <i>pile, buy</i>
/aʊ/ as in <i>pout, cow</i>	/aʊ/ as in <i>pout, cow</i>
/ɪə/ as in <i>fierce, leer</i>	
/ɛə/ as in <i>scarce, lair</i>	
/ʊə/ as in <i>gourd, lure</i>	

Carr P. *English Phonetics and Phonology: An Introduction*. (1999 p.60)

Griegerich and Carr, both authors claim that English phonemes vary from country to country in which English is spoken, also they present the most common systems of vowel and consonants phonemes.

2.3.3 Vowels and Diphthongs

Therefore, there is a slight difference between diphthong and vowel, these concepts are studied in this paper. The term vowel has been defined by many authors. In order to understand this term, the following definitions will be reviewed. On one hand, Cruttenden (1994, p. 27) defines vowels as “those segments which occur at the centre of syllables”. On the other hand, some other authors define vowels as follows; first, Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994, p. 178) say that “a speech sound is where the airstream escapes the vocal tract unobstructed”; second, Trask, states (1999. p. 339). “A speech sound produced with no obstruction of the airstream” The concept of vowel is referred in terms of phonetics to those sounds which are produced without obstruction of air stream in the vocal tract. It means that when we articulate vowels the air escapes easily.

Since a diphthong is part of segmental aspects of pronunciation, it is necessary to study its definitions. Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994. p.175) claim that “diphthong is a vowel sound where a glide from one vocalic position to another takes place, e.i. /eI/ in place”. Similarly Fromkin, Kurtiss, Bruce, Hayes, Hyams, Keatin, Koopman, Munro, Sportiche, Stabler, Steeriade, Stowell, and Szbolcsi (2000, p. 509) assert that “some vowels are represented as sequences of vowel symbols because the tongue and/or lips moves from one position to another. Such vowels are called diphthongs”. Moreover, Avery and Ehrlich (1992, p.238) claim that a diphthong is a “complex vowel sound composed of a vowel followed by a semivowel, e.g. /aw/, /ay/, /oy/”. As seen a diphthong defined as a complex sound, it is the

combination of two vowels because, when it is produced, the speech organs (lips and tongue) begin in one position to produce a vowel sound and end with another position.

2.3.4 Distinctive Features

In order to learn more about vowels, it is necessary to review how different sounds can be produced according to the position of the tongue or lips. Articulator characteristics of vowels will be discussed. Depending on the position of the tongue, different vowel sounds can be produced. As a matter of fact, it is essential to discuss the main characteristics of the tongue.

2.3.5 Tongue Height

The first characteristic that is presented is *tongue height*, which has been defined as follows. Avery and Ehrlich (1992); Carr, (1999), and Davenport and Hannahs (1998) agree defining tongue height as the position of the tongue if the sound is produced in high, mid or low position, even though some authors mentioned just two positions. In conclusion, tongue height refers to the tongue position. It is mainly said that this speech organ can be high, mid, and low position.

2.3.6 Frontness & Backness

The second characteristic of tongue position to be discussed is frontness and backness. Avery and Ehrlich (1992) argue some vowel sounds are produced by moving the back or the front of the tongue. Furthermore, Davenport and Hannahs (1998, p. 39-40) add that “Parallel to the consonantal place, vowels are also classified horizontally, as front, central and back, referring to which part of the tongue is highest, with the front being equivalent to velar”. As an

example Roach (1983. p. 12) explains “i and ae (...) in making the two vowels described above, it is the front part of the tongue that is raised. We could therefore describe i and ae as comparatively front vowels. By changing the shape of the tongue we can produce vowels in which a different part of the tongue is the highest point. A vowel in which the back of the tongue is the highest point is called back vowel”. As a conclusion, the idea of frontness refers when the front tongue is raised when a vowel is articulated by contrast the tongue can be raised in the back part of it. Thus, we can classify vowels as front or back vowels.

2.3.7 Tenseness & Laxness

The third characteristic of vowels is tenseness and laxness. Avery and Ehrlich (1992) argue that tense vowels are the result of muscle tension, in contrast to lax vowels which are the result of having the muscle lax. Similarly to Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (1996, p. 96) point out that “the tense vowels (...) are articulated with more muscle tension than the lax vowels”. For instance, Roach (1983 p. 25) says that “some writers give the label tense to long vowels and diphthongs and lax to the short vowels”. Therefore, tenseness is another characteristic of vowels and it refers to the muscle tension when a vowel is produced differently to laxness which there is no muscle tension.

2.3.8 Lip rounding

Lip rounding is the last characteristic of vowels to be described. As seen, it involves the lips when articulating vowel sounds. In order to explain the theory of lips rounding the following definitions are presented; Davenport and Hannahs (1998. p. 40) suggest “the third classification has to do with the attitude of lips, which are either round or unround when making vowel sounds. If you look at the mirror you should be able to see that when you

produce the vowel in English “see” your lips are unround (or spread), while for the vowel in “sue” your lips are rounded”. This is a clear example in which we can understand clearer this concept. Nevertheless, Roach (1983. p. 15) asserts “rounded, where the corners of the lips (pushed towards each other) are brought towards each other and the lips pushed forward” Hence, lip rounding is another characteristic of vowels and it involves the movement of lips, these can be rounded or not, when producing a vowel sound.

2.3.9 Consonants

The theory of vowels has been already discussed. Actually, it is necessary to review the theory behind consonants as well. For this reason in the following part the definitions of consonants will be presented. The first definition will be reviewed. According to Underhill (1994. p. 29) “consonant sounds are made by restricting or blocking the airflow in some physical way, and this restriction, or the release of the restriction, is what gives the consonant its characteristic sound. By the contrast, vowels require the vocal tract to be open, so that the airstreams escape unobstructed”. Similarly to Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994 p. 29) define consonant as “speech sound produced by creating an obstruction to the airstream during articulation”. In addition there is a point of coincidence in these definitions. Avery and Ehrlich (1992) agree with the authors above saying that consonants have the characteristic of obstructing the air stream. That is, consonants have the characteristic of blocking the airstream when they are produced in contrast to vowels.

2.3.9.1 Distinctive Features

Articulators such as tongue, lips and mouth, can produce speech sounds. Consonants are obtained when the mouth narrows and involves some obstruction of the airstream. In order to clarify this section, place of articulation, manner of articulation and voicing features must be presented as well.

2.4 Place of Articulation

In order to have a clear idea of where consonants are produced, it is important to find an explanation about this. According to Underhill (1994, p. 30), “the place in the vocal tract where the physical restriction or block to the air flow takes place is referred to as place of articulation, i.e. where the characteristic component sounds of that consonant are initiated”. Furthermore, Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994, p. 177) agree saying that “the location in the vocal tract where a particular speech sound is produced; this is usually stated in terms of active articulator (the part which moves) and the passive articulator (the part which is touched/ the part towards which the active articulator is moved)”. Furthermore, places of articulation are classified as follows: bilabial, labiodental, interdental, alveolar, alveopalatal and velar. In other words, the main point in this term is referred to the place where there is an obstruction of the air flow, when a production of sound occurs.

2.4.1 Manner of Articulation

The concept of manner of articulation is related to the way in which consonants are produced. Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994, p. 176) say that manner of articulation refers to the “way in which the obstruction of the airstream is produced”. Also Avery and Ehrlich (1992) and Underhill (1994) agree that the place of articulation is related to the way in which the air

flow is obstructed. Moreover, according to Avery and Ehrlich (1992) the classification of consonants in relation to the manner of articulation is divided into stops, fricatives, affricates, nasals, retroflex, lateral, and semivowels (glides). As seen, manner of articulation refers to how the airstream is blocked or partially obstructed by the speech organs when consonants are articulated.

2.4.2 Voicing

Voicing is a concept that usually is occupied when teaching pronunciation; also it is important to clarify the term voicing. According to Avery and Ehrlich (1992, p. 12), “voicing is a vibration of the vocal cords”. Furthermore, Dalton, and Seidlhofer (1994, p. 178) add “voicing; voiced sounds accompanied by a vibration of the vocal cords, voiceless sounds are not; all vowels are voiced, consonants may be either”. In addition, Underhill (1994, p. 30) claims that voiced sounds require using the vocal cords to vibrate by contrast to voiceless. That is, voicing is the result of the vibration of the vocal cords in some sounds.

2.4.3 Semivowels

According to Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994, p. 178), semivowel is “also called approximant or glide; extremely close vowel articulation which almost turns into a consonant, e.g. English /j/ /w/”. In addition, Avery and Ehrlich (1992, p. 23) say that “other consonant sounds of English produced with little turbulence in the airstream are the initial sounds of the words “wet” “yet”. The phonetic symbols for these sounds are identical to the English letters /w/ /y/. These sounds are often called semivowels because they are made with a relatively wide-opening in the mouth”. The precedent definitions provide also, examples of semivowels. Cruttenden (1994, p. 190) add “A semivowel is a rapid vocalic glide onto a syllabic sound of greater steady duration”. In other words, semivowel is a vowel which can be accompanied

for “little turbulence” of the air stream; hence, it is a vowel that “almost becomes a consonant”.

2.4.4 Distinctive Features

English has some contrastive sounds. It means that some speech sounds can be replaced for another one in order to obtain a change of meaning. That is called minimal pairs but, there are two variations in pronunciation of a speech sound that do not alter the meaning of a word. The following paragraphs illustrate these variations called allophones and allomorphs.

2.4.5 Allophones: Positional Variation

One of the variations that speech sound may present in pronunciation is called allophones. Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994, p. 174) define as “allophones different phonetic realization of one phoneme non distinctive; often depends on sound environment; e.g. the /p/ in /pot/ is aspirated, but the /p/ in spot is not”. Meanwhile, Davenport and Hannahs (1998, p. 96) assert that “The abstract underlying units are known as phonemes while the predictable surface elements are known as allophones”. “Although the production of a word can be represented by a sequence of phonetic symbols; the phonemes in the context of a word do not necessarily have the same sound as when they are spoken in isolation. What happens is that the phonemes are run together so that, each one interacts with and modifies the quality of its neighbors. These variations of a single phoneme, resulting from the pressure of its phonetic context, are called allophones (literally different sound)” Underhill, (1994, p. 50).

2.4.6 Allomorphs

Another variation in pronunciation of speech sounds is the pronunciation of morphemes. For instance, the formation of the regular past tense of English verbs corresponds to the pronunciation rule of regular plurals, in terms of grammatical endings. According to

Fromkin, Roadman and Hyams (2011, p. 270) state “like plurals, some irregular past tenses conform to no particular rule and must be learned individually, such as go/went, sing/sang, and hit/hit. And also like plurals, there are three phonetic past-tense morphemes for regular verbs: [d], [t], and [əd]”. Fromkin, Roadman and Hyams (2011) summarize the regular past tense rule on English verbs in more general terms.

Avery and Ehrlich (1992) agree with Fromkin, Roadman and Hyams (2011) declaring that the grammatical endings are suffixes that are present in verbs and nouns that give grammatical information to them such as past tense, and number. The past tense is one example of this, that is the (-ed) suffix. Taking into consideration the voiced /d/ and voiceless /t/ sounds, the rule can be predictable. In a verb, if the final sound of the verb which is in the simple form is voiced the grammatical ending pronunciation should be voiced /d/, for example “explained”. However if last sound of the simple form is voiceless the sound of the ending is voiceless /t/, for example “diminished”. In addition if the verb which is in its simple form the last sound is the voiced or voiceless sound /t/ - /d/ the past pronunciation is /əd/, for example “wanted”.

Fromkin, Roadman and Hyams (2011) represent the rule as follows. First, the [əz] plural has in common the property of being sibilants; thus, after the segments ([s], [ʃ], [z], [ʒ], [ʒ], [tʃ], [dʒ]) the segment [əz] must be added, in order to form the plural. Second, after the voiceless segments [p], [t], [k], [f], [θ] the segment [s] must be added. And, after the voiced segments (e.g. [b], [d], [g], [v], [ð], [m], [n], [ŋ], [l], [r], [a], [ɔɪ]) the segment [z] must be added.

Avery and Ehrlich (1992) suggest that if the final sound of a noun is voiced the pronunciation of the plural will be voiced /z/, example “signs”. When pronouncing a noun which the final sound is voiceless the pronunciation of the plural will be voiceless, for

example parents. Finally there are nouns which are pronounced as /əz/ those are the nouns which final sound is /s/, /z/, /ʒ /, /ʃ /, /tʃ /, /dʒ /. This rule can apply to the third person of the singular in present tense and in possessive pronouns. For example, the voiced sound in the noun “power” the possessive (,s) sound is voiced /z/. The verb “recalls” is pronounced as voiced ending /z/.

In conclusion, the pronunciation of grammatical endings (allomorphs) suffer an alteration in pronunciation; however, it does not alter the meaning as well as allophones.

2.5 Suprasegmental Aspects of Pronunciation

According to Avery and Ehrlich (1992, p. 185) suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation deal with rhythm, stress, and intonation and they claim “suprasegmental aspects are extremely important in the communication of meaning in spoken language. It is the suprasegmental that control the structure of the information. (...)What is more, being able to comprehend or convey the intended attitude in English hinges on mastery of suprasegmentals.”

Furthermore, Kelly, G. (2000, p. 3) asserts that “suprasegmental features, as the name implies, are features of speech which generally apply to groups of segments, or phonemes. The features which are important in English are stress, intonation and how sounds change in connected speech”. Some examples of stress are presented in content words such as “idealism”, “realism” and “immaturity”, these words were taken from the instrument used in this research. The word “idealism” is stressed in the second syllable /aɪ ' diə, lɪ zəm/. The word “realism” has its stress on the first syllable /' riə, lɪ zəm/. Another example of stress is the word “immaturity” /, ɪ mə' tjʊ əri ti /, the stress is shown on the first syllable. Taking

about examples, here some intonation examples are given. First of all, it is claimed that the most common intonation pattern is rising-falling intonation which is found in declarative sentences, commands and WH questions (Avery and Ehrlich, 1992). For instance, through the instrument, the following phrases were taken. “Now what are you going to do?” “I don’t know what happens” and “I like to understand them.”

In sum, teaching suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation is crucial for learners of English in order to achieve comprehensibility and reduce frustration. Frustration might not take place due to the fact that listening skills can be improved; as it is claimed by some authors such as Avery, Ehrlich, Dauer and Brown (1992). So that, teachers can change their goals, that is, instead of focus their lessons on segmental aspects they can focus lessons on suprasegmental aspects of pronunciation.

2.5.1 Adjustments in Connected Speech

This is the main theory to review in this chapter; due to, it is the main focus of this research. Connected speech phenomenon occurs when a speaker talks in normal circumstances, it is important to have knowledge about connected speech when teaching pronunciation, as well. Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994, p. 114) claim that “connected speech processes of assimilation, elision, and linking alter the sound of words and make them differ from the “ideal” shape they have when they are pronounced in isolation. The resulting reduction of phonetic information about words and word boundaries is probably responsible for the widespread feeling among foreign language learners that the native speakers of any language speak too fast”.

Moreover, Underhill, (1994, p. 58) “connected speech is not just the sum of its individual words. Continuous connected speech consists of a flow of sounds which are modified by a system of simplifications through which phonemes are connected, grouped, and modified”. Additionally, Hewings and Goldstein (1998, p. 73) claim that “it is sometimes difficult to understand native speakers of English when they are talking at normal speed which can sound very fast. One reason is that the pronunciation of some words is different when they are said at normal speed, or in slow, careful speech, from when they are used in connected speech.”

In conclusion, connected speech is the result of many changes in pronunciation that happen when native speakers produce utterances at normal speed and this makes it difficult for foreign language learners of English to know where a word boundary is and what happens with some words that suffer alteration like deletion, assimilation, fluency, linking, intonation, rhythm and stress in English.

2.5.2 Linking

Linking is the result of the pressure of casual speech production. Celcia-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (1996, p. 158) claim that linking also called *liaison* takes place when connecting words by their last letters to the first letter of the next word. Moreover, Kelly (2000, p. 111) points out that “when two vowel sounds meet, speakers often link them in various ways”. Similarly Roach (1983, p. 144) comments “in our hypothetical “mechanical speech” all words would separate units placed next to each other in sequence; in real connected speech, however, we sometimes link words together in a special way”. Dalton C. and Seidlhofer B. (1994, p. 27) add that “we may also insert sound in order to make for a smoother transition (linking)”. Whereas, Orion (1997, p. 53) asserts that “we say the words in

the phrase smoothly, connecting the sound of the last word to the beginning sound of the next word without stopping after each word. This joining and blending of words is called linking”. Thus, linking occurs when speakers link the final sound of a word to the initial sound of another word, it happens especially when people have a rapid speech production.

2.5.3 Assimilation

Assimilation is part of connected speech. Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (1996, p. 159) claim “a second example of an adjustment in connected speech is the process of assimilation, during which a given sound (the assimilation sound) takes on the characteristics of a neighboring sound (the conditioning)”. Besides, Roach (1983, p. 138) argues that “in cases where we find a phoneme belonging to a neighboring sound we call this an instance of assimilation, assimilation is something which varies according to speaking rate and style: it is more likely to be found in rapid, casual speech, and less likely to be present in slow, careful speech”. Moreover Kelly (2000, p. 109) asserts that “the term assimilation describes how sound modifies each other when they meet, usually across word boundaries but with in the words too (...). The best description is that in readying our articulators for the next sound, certain sounds are either absorbed, or modified into others”. In other words assimilation occurs when two sounds are closed to each other and one of them loses its quality and takes the quality of the next sound as a result of being together. In addition, it can happen due to the minimal effort of speakers when they articulate sounds.

2.5.4 Elision

There is another modification in speech besides the described above; another is called elision, some other authors call it deletion. According to Roach (1983, p. 142), “the nature of elision may be stated quite simply: under certain circumstances sounds disappear; one might

express this in more technical language by saying that in certain circumstances a phoneme may be realized as zero, or have zero realization or be deleted". According to Kelly (2000, p. 110), "the term elision describes the disappearance of a sound". Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (1996, p. 163) define elision as "an even more radical form of adjustment in connected speech as in a deletion (also known as elision, ellipsis, or omission): the process whereby disappears or is not clearly articulated in certain contexts". As seen, different alterations or modifications of sounds can occur in connected speech, in this particular case sound may disappear in certain circumstances.

2.5.5 Stress

Stress is an aspect of pronunciation which has to be managed or controlled by students of English in order to reach English pronunciation's objectives, also it is important for the present research because it is part of the production of sounds, and also it gives meaning to certain words in a sentence. Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, et al.(1978, p. 230) claim that "stress in phonetics, the degree of emphasis or loudness, measurable in terms of intensity, muscular activity or air pressure".

In addition, Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994, p. 230) affirm that "in English we can use the word "stress" to refer generally to the way we emphasize something or give it prominence (...) if we listen to spoken language we can hear that certain elements seem to be given more prominence or emphasis" as seen in a speech we can hear some words that are given more emphasis even in a word there are some syllables that have more emphasis so in some way they give different or special meaning. Furthermore, Roach (1983, p. 93) asserts that "the production of stress is generally believed to depend on the speaker using more muscular energy than is used for unstressed syllables". Thus, this term in phonetics and phonology is used to refer to those syllables in which there is more muscular energy when they are produced.

2.5.6 Rhythm

The rhythm varies from language to language. Actually, English is not the exception. Roach (1983, p. 134) claims that "the notion of rhythm involves some noticeable event happening at regular intervals of time (...). English speech is rhythmical, and that the rhythm is detectable in regular occurrence of stressed syllables". Also, Carr (1999, p. 107) says that "it is often said that the rhythm of English is stress-timed. What this means is that the regular

recurring beats found in the speech of English speakers (rhythm of English speech) fall on stressed syllables (...) one of the consequences of this kind of rhythm is that English beat may consist of a stress syllable followed by a sequence of unstressed syllable". Moreover, Broughton, Brumfit, et al. (1978, p. 228) argue that "rhythm is the pattern of sound length and stress in speech". That is, rhythm occurs in small intervals of time. We can detect it in English by paying attention to the beat of stresses and unstressed syllables.

2.5.7 Intonation

Intonation is another issue to discuss in the present research. According to Avery and Ehlich (1992 p. 76) state that "intonation is often called the melody of language since it refers to the pattern of *pitch* changes that we use when we speak. (...) These pitch changes are called *intonation patterns* and play an important role in conveying meaning" Roach (1983, p. 150) asserts that "any attempt at definition must recognize that the pitch of the voice plays the most important part (...) when we speak normally the pitch of our voice is constantly changing".

Furthermore, Broughton, Brumfit, Flavell, et al. (1978, p. 221) claim that "the patterns by which the pitch of the voice rises and falls in speech". Moreover, Carr (1999, p. 128) asserts that "what is perceived by intonation is produced by a variety of phonetics means, the most important is of which is the pitch. By pitch is meant rate of vibration of the vocal cords". Thus, intonation plays an important role in pronunciation, due to, it gives tones to the language we speak by changing the pitch of our voice, also it gives meaning. Moreover, there is falling and rising intonation. Some examples of rising and falling intonation are the following. In the "wh" question "what did you do yesterday?" the pitch falls at the end of the phrase while in the phrases "I just can't believe it!" and "What Am I here for?" the pitch ends with a rising intonation.

2.5.8 Fluency.

Fluency has been defined by many authors with many different points. Although some authors have different perspectives they agree with some points. Broughton, Brumfit, et al. (1978, p. 215) assert that fluency is the “ability to speak or write as naturally and easily but not necessarily as accurately as a native speaker can”.

Moreover, Riggenbach (2000, p. 6) claims that “the term fluency has often been used to describe general foreign language proficiency in terms of “flow”, “continuity”, “automaticity ” or “smoothness of speech”. Reggenbach (2000, p. 8) affirms that “fluency refers to a range of acoustic-phonetic temporal features in natural connected speech”. Also, Beardsmore (1974) cited in Reggenbach (2000, p. 8) affirm that “fluency has been associated with the ability to manipulate connected speech”. In other words, this term refers to a learners’ ability to speak easily and without stopping. In addition, some authors do an emphasis in a learners’ capacity to use connected speech.

According to the instrument used in this research, it is necessary to define what “fluent reading “means. Fountas, I. C, and Pinnel G. S, (2006, p. 62) state that “fluent reading is usually described as being fast and expressive. Rapid word recognition is a necessary factor, but that alone does not explain reading fluency, which is as complex as comprehension itself”. When students read, they might read putting words together, which may make students be fluent readers. Because of that, Fountas, I. C, and Pinnel G. S, (2006, p.64) define “fluent readers as correctly reading ending punctuation (for example, using a falling tone when there is a question mark). Fluent readers avoid a monotonous, singsong “reading voice”. Their tones rise and fall; pauses are strategic, adding to the interpretation. They sound as if they are

speaking, not reading individual sounds”. In addition, Fountas, I. C, and Pinnel G. S, (2006) affirm that language is always processed because there is a clear evidence of notable behaviors.

To conclude, reading fluently is not only a matter of being fast when reading but also students’ grammatical knowledge plays an important role. Reading fast does not mean being fluent reader, especially if readers mispronounce words. This might affect the comprehensibility of the reading.

2.6 Acquisition, Learning and Teaching of Pronunciation

In order to make a connection between learning and teaching pronunciation, it is important to do a review of acquisition and the theories behind teaching and learning a second language.

2.6.1 Second Language Acquisition

Second language acquisition (SLA) is a term that is used in Linguistics to refer to a language that is learned after the mother tongue is acquired. Gass and Selinker (1994, p. 4) assert that “this is the common term used for the name of the field. (...) as with the phrase “second language” L2 can refer to any language learned after learning the L1, regardless of whether it is second, third, fourth or fifth language. By this term, we can mean both the acquisition of a second language in a classroom situation, as well as in more “natural” exposure situations”. Similarly Scovel (1998, p. 129) affirms that “second language acquisition (SLA) is the study of how people acquire language, which means an analysis of the errors a person makes”.

In addition, Gass and Selinker (2001, p. 5) assert, that “second language acquisition refers (...) to the learning of a non native language in an environment in which the language is spoken (...) this may or may not take place in the classroom setting”. Thus, second language acquisition refers to the study of how people learn another language. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that this concept is used to describe a language that is learned after the mother tongue, also to describe the environment in which this language is learned; for instance, in the classroom and contrast it where this language is used.

Talking about the acquisition of a language, it is relevant to define foreign language learning. According to Brown (2007. p. 116), “foreign language contexts are those in which students do not have ready-made contexts for communication beyond the classroom. They may be obtainable through language clubs, special media opportunities, or an occasional tourist, but efforts must be made to create such opportunities (...)”. Most EFL students do not have the opportunity of listening to native speakers in daily life. That means that taking into account that learning English is a foreign language for Mexican English students, it is extremely hard for students to interact and practice in a real English environment their knowledge about the language they are learning.

2.6.2 Factors Involved in L2 Acquisition

In this section there is a revision of some aspects that affect the learning of a second language; those can be external or internal factors.

2.6.3 Factors affecting second language acquisition

Not only students’ willingness plays a very important role in acquiring a language but also external motivational factors might be very closely related to learning a second language.

External motivation, seen as an external factor, are fairly necessary in second language acquisition because they perform functions and as a proof of that Gardner, Smythe, Clement, and Glikzman, (1976). and Oller (1977) (cited in Krashen 1981, p. 21) say that “motivational variables...determine whether or not students avail himself of...informal language contexts”.

Dulay and Burt (1977) (cited in Krashen S 1981, p. 22) have captured the concept “open” by positing the presence of a “socio-affective filter”. They state that “performers with high or strong filters will acquire less of the language directed at them, as less input is “allowed in” to the language-acquisition device”. From this, Krashen (1981, p. 22) agrees saying that “the existence of that filter may explain which alternative models the acquirer will internalize (e.g. why children acquire the dialect of their peers rather than that of their elders), why acquisition prematurely ceases in some cases, and often what parts of language are acquired first”. Thus, it can be said that attitudinal factors in language acquisition might contribute to an effective second language learning-acquisition.

Krashen (1981, p. 22) establishes a summary of attitudinal factors classifying them into two types of motivation: integrative and instrumental motivation. He argues that “integrative motivation should encourage the acquirer to interact with second language (L2) speakers of the second language out of sheer interest, and thereby obtain intake. Instrumental motivation should encourage performers to interact with L2 speakers in order to achieve certain ends”. Based on this classification it is clear that while the existence of integrative motivation reaches a low affective filter, the presence of instrumental motivation reaches a stronger one.

Therefore, integrative motivation deals with a transparent high willingness turned into a positive attitude to learn or acquire input and consequently, learner can get more knowledge of a second language. Moreover, H. D. Brown (1977) cited in Krashen (1981, p. 23) declares that “presumably the person with high self-esteem is able to reach out beyond himself more

freely, to be less inhibited, and because of his ego strength, to make the necessary mistakes involved in language learning with less threat to his ego". In addition, empathy seems to play an important role either in terms of attitudinal factors, because Schuman (1975) cited in Krashen (1981, p. 23) suggests that "(...) the natural factors that induce ego flexibility and lower inhibitions (assumed to relate to increased empathy) are those conditions which make the learner less anxious, make him feel accepted and make him form positive identifications with speakers of the target language".

Two more personality factors that are completely related to self-confidence and they deal clearly with the effectiveness and success of a second acquisition-learning language. They are presented as attitude towards the classroom and attitude towards the teacher. Seliger (1977) cited in Krashen (1981, p. 23) argues that students who have "high input generator" may be because they like the teacher as well as they feel comfortable and relaxed in the classroom and when this is presented, students may seek out intake by volunteering. Moreover, Krashen S (1981, p. 24) agrees saying that "positive attitudes towards the classroom and teacher may also be a manifestation of self confidence and/or integrative motivation"; for this reason, the attitude towards classroom and teacher may be a strong factor to convey second language acquisition.

When acquiring a language, student's capacity and willingness to learn a second language is of crucial importance. Thus, in this section it must be mentioned internal factors in second language learning. Aptitude and attitude play a very vital role in what concerns internal factors because they may help to acquire and learn a language. In other words, the attitude and aptitude might facilitate second language learning; as Krashen S (1981, p. 19) states "both language aptitude (as measured by standard tests) and attitude (affective variables) appear to

be related to second language achievement, but are not related to each other. It is possible to have high aptitude and low attitude, low aptitude and high attitude, or both high, or both low...aptitude is directly related to conscious learning, while attitudinal factors may be more closely linked to acquisition”.

Similarly Carroll (1973) cited in Krashen (1981, p. 19) declares aptitude as the “rate at which persons at the secondary school, university level learn to criterion”. Carroll also says that aptitude is formed by three different and major components. The first one is called “phonetic coding ability” Carroll. (1973) (cited in Krashen (1981, p. 19), the second one is named “grammatical sensitivity” which is defined by Carroll (1973, p. 7) as “the individual’s ability to demonstrate his awareness of the syntactical patterning of sentences in a language”. Consequently, Carroll (1973) (cited in Krashen (1981, p. 20) makes clear that “although performance on this component (grammatical sensitivity) does not require the subject actually knows grammatical terminology, it does involve a conscious meta-awareness of grammar”

Chomsky defines the concept aptitude in terms of learning or acquiring a second language with the name “linguistic competence”. Chomsky (1965) (cited in Krashen (1981, p. 20) defines competence as “ it involves some kind of “knowledge” of the grammatical rules of a language, this “knowledge” is ordinarily out of conscious awareness...nevertheless some adolescents and adults (and even some children) can be made to demonstrate an awareness of the syntactical structure of the sentences they speak...even among adults there are large individual differences in this ability, and these individual differences are related to success in learning foreign languages, apparently because this ability is called upon when the student tries to learn grammatical aspects and apply them in constructing and comprehending new sentences in that language”

2.6.4 Factors Related to Acquisition of Phonology

In this section some aspects that may affect the acquisition of phonology will be reviewed in order to know why a second language is difficult.

2.6.5 Age and the Critical Period Hypothesis

Age and critical period are elements that affect the learning of the production of speech. Brown (2007) affirms, after some observations, that in some way, children are “better” learning another language than adults. In addition, Scovel (1998, p. 125) affirms that “critical period hypothetically, approximately the first ten years of life. Some linguistic researchers believe that certain aspects of language acquisition (e.g. sounding like a native speaker) can never be fully acquired if they have not been learned a language during this period”. Moreover, Brown (cited in Nunan, 1991, p. 101) asserts that “the critical period is biologically determined period of life when language can be acquired more easily and beyond which time language is increasingly difficult to acquire. The critical period hypothesis is such a biological timetable”.

Thus, age plays an important role in the acquisition of a language and in the critical period hypothesis. The critical period hypothesis points out that there is a biological time in which after certain age, people do not learn another language similarly as they learn their mother tongue. Hence, they face difficulties learning another language.

2.6.6 Input, and Exposure to the Target Language

Input is one of the theories that are related with language acquisition. Krashen (cited in Gass and Selinker, 1994) says that there is a way to learn a second language that can be achieved by understanding messages or by “comprehensible input”. That is, learners acquire

the language by being exposed to the language, not necessarily by learning grammar rules. Furthermore, Brown (2007, p. 383), claims that input is “the process of comprehending language (listening and reading)”. In addition, Gass (1997, p. 87) affirms that according to the input hypothesis, developed by Krashen, “acquisition takes place by means of a learner’s access to comprehensible input. That is, only a certain portion of the input is useful for the development of linguistic knowledge”. In other words, Krashen claims that “input” is the information that is received by learners, he emphasizes that there is a scale for the importance for grammar information and for some other information that is received by listening and reading the language.

2.6.7 Explicit Phonological Instruction

Since the term “explicit” refers to “Expressed in a way that is very clear and direct.” (Longman dictionary 1978, p. 549), it is necessary for students to improve their second language skills. Moreover, it is essential to teach not only segmental phonological aspects but also suprasegmental phonological features. In order to establish explicit phonological instruction within the classroom, teachers must be well prepared and qualified to teach specific phonological aspects and also to develop students’ abilities such as listening, speaking and reading skills. A listening example might be asking students to listen any recording and catch intonation patterns, linking, assimilation, deletion, stress and rhythm. This listening task must be done after the teacher has already explained a wide explanation of suprasegmental aspects to students. Talking about speaking skill, an example might be asking students to pronounce phrases using suprasegmental features. Finally an example of reading task could be making students read an informal speech in order to figure out suprasegmental characteristics.

2.6.8 Aptitude, Attitude, & Motivation

Aptitude attitude and motivation are some aspects that are related to second language acquisition as well. Gass and Selinker (1994, p. 50) claim that “aptitude is an important factor in explaining differential success in second language learning”. In addition, Brown (2007, p. 377) argues that “attitude a set of personal feelings, opinions, or basis about races, cultures, ethnic groups, classes of people, and languages”. Moreover, Brown, (2007, p. 386) affirms that “motivation the anticipation of reward, whether internally or externally administered; choices made about goals to pursue and the effort exerted in their completion”. Thus, there are three more elements that might affect second language acquisition. The first element is aptitude which is related to learners’ ability to learn easily and fast another language. The second element is attitude which is related to learners’ perspective about cultures, languages, etc. the last element is motivation which is related to the efforts that students do by themselves to achieve their goals.

2.7 The Mother Tongue and Contrastive Analysis

The mother tongue is another aspect that intervenes in the acquisition of a second language, it is necessary to do a review of this theoretical information in order to understand the role of pronunciation instruction. Lado (cited in Gass and Selinker, 1994, p. 53) claims “it has always been assumed that in second language learning situation learners rely extensively on their native language”. In addition, Gass and Selinker (1994, p. 59) argue that “contrastive analysis is a way of comparing languages in order to determine potential errors for the ultimate purpose of isolating what needs to be learned and what does not need to be learned in a second language situation”. In other words, it is claimed that learners of a second language

take their mother tongue as a tool in order to learn another language. Moreover, there is a hypothesis that has relation to this. The contrastive analysis involves doing a list of similarities and the differences in order to focus the differences between the first and the second language; it is more probable that students make mistakes in those differences than in the similarities of the second language.

2.8 Focus on Teaching Pronunciation

As pronunciation is the main focus of this research, it is essential to do a review of methodology in the field of language teaching. Thus, methodology information is presented.

2.8.1 Language Teaching Methodology

Methodology is related to many aspects. Hence, Nunan (1991, p. 2) asserts that “syllabus design is concerned with what, and when; methodology is concerned with how”.

2.8.2 Dimensions of Methodology: Approach, Design, Procedure

It is the aim of teachers to find out and use a method to teach in the classroom, and it involves doing a research in order to use the one that best fulfills the objectives of a teacher plan. A method engages different elements such as an approach, a design and procedure.

Approach “An approach defines assumptions, beliefs, and theories about the nature of language and language learning. **Designs** specify the relationship of those theories to classroom materials and activities. **Procedures** are the techniques and practices that are derived from one’s approach and design” Richards and Rodgers (1982) (cited in Brown H. (2001, p. 14).

2.9 The Role of Teaching Pronunciation in Different Methods.

In order to find out the importance of teaching pronunciation in diverse methods the following theoretical information is analyzed.

2.9.1 Audiolingual

In this method there are two objectives that are classified as short and long-range, the short-range objectives imply to teach students oral abilities. That is, the main focus is “(...) training in listening comprehension, accurate pronunciation, the recognition of the speech symbols as graphic signs, and ability to produce these symbols in writing” Brooks 1964: 113 (cited in Richards, J.C. & Rodgers, T.S. (1986, p. 52). In sum, this method on primary phases is to teach, listening, vocabulary, and grammar in order to achieve pronunciation patterns.

2.9.2 The Natural approach

According to Krashen and Terrell (2000, p. 58) “the natural approach’ main focus is primarily in the acquisition of the ability to communicate messages using the target language. Natural Approach is strongly based on communicative skills”. This approach’s objective is to encourage students to use the target language. It doesn’t matter if students just utter words, short phrases or even a mix of their native language and the target language, because as their development in the acquisition of language is in the long run, they will get grammatical accuracy. Hence, it is crucial that students receive target language input in order to decrease negative affective filters and make students use the target language. Krashen and Derrell also

say in their book that students need to comprehend first, in such a way that they are able to produce utterances later.

From here the importance of the teacher to provide comprehensible input acquisition to students because teachers can measure the speed and level of the learning development of the target language on students. Therefore, if there is a lower affective filter, then there will be a higher probability for students to produce the target language. Finally, it is seen that natural approach method is important because it encourages students to communicate in the target language and also be willing to receive target language input. Therefore, it is crucial that teachers help students to acquire speaking skill; for doing so, pronunciation should be taught as a part of communicative skills.

2.9.3 Silent way method

This method has the purpose of teaching students “correct pronunciation” and “learners learn how to learn a language” Brown H. D, (2007, p 35). Also, he claims that activities should promote oral responses.

Larsen-Freeman (1990, p. 34). describes silent way method by means of four statements; “Silent way method means: 1. Teaching should be subordinated to learning, 2. Language is not learned by repeating after a model; students need to develop their own “inner criteria” for correctness. 3. Errors are important and necessary to learning and 4. It is the student who should be practicing the language, not the teacher.” In conclusion, it can be said that silent way method depends completely on students’ criteria and willingness to learn and speak a language; also oral activities should encourage oral proficiency acquisition.

2.9.4 Communicative language teaching

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 66) “Communicative language teaching is now seen as an approach (and not as a method) that aims to a) make communicative competence the goal of language teaching and b) develop procedures for the teaching of the four language skills that acknowledge the interdependence of language and communication”. In contrast, Littlewood (1981, p.1) states, “one of the most characteristic features of Communicative Language Teaching is that it plays systematic attention to functional as well as structural aspects of language”.

Therefore, Communicative Language Teaching becomes integral when the four skills (speaking, writing, listening and reading) are reached by students, mainly speaking competence because communication is the most important role of this approach. Moreover, Finocchiaro and Brumfit (cited in Richards J. C, (1986, p. 67) list some of the features of CLT and says that “comprehensible pronunciation is sought”. To conclude, Communicative Language Teaching looks for developing the four language skills; though, speaking skill plays a significant role. Thus, comprehensible pronunciation is required.

2.9.5 Suggestopedia

This method has the aim that students learn in an environment of relaxation even though the objective is to “deliver advanced conversational competence quickly” Brown. H.D., (2007, p. 34). Larsen-Freeman (1990, p. 26) agrees saying that “Suggestopedia means that learning is facilitated in a pleasant, comfortable environment. The more confident the students feel, the better they will learn. Communication takes place on two planes, when there is a unity between them learning is enhanced. The means of activating the material should be varied and playful”. After the previous definitions this method is based on students’

confidence and comfort by a pleasant environment because according to the better mood the more effective learning will be.

2.9.6 Total physical response

Another important method is the Total Physical Response and according to Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 73) define as follows “Total Physical Response is a language teaching method built around the coordination of speech and action, it attempts to teach language through physical (motor) activity”. This method was created and developed by James Asher, a professor of psychology at San Jose state University California who says that Total Physical Response is a method based on repetition of commands mainly, and this is effective with children as well with adults because there is an activity, action or movement connected with the command or the verb. Thus, this relation is caught by any person.

Moreover, it is easy for children and adults to make this connection because it is an undemanding method that creates a positive environment for the learning language process. In addition Brown H. D, (2007, p. 34) argue that the objective of this method is to “teach oral proficiency to produce learners who can communicate uninhibitedly and intelligibility with native speakers”. Since, total physical response method deals with commands that convey actions, it is vital to pronounce commands by teachers and students in an accurate way.

2.9.7 Community language learning

According to Richards and Rodgers (1986, p. 90), they state that “Community language learning (CLL) draws on the counseling metaphor to redefine the roles of the teacher (the counselor) and the learners (the clients) in the language classroom”. Moskowitz cited in Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 90) defines “CLL techniques also belong to a larger set of

foreign language teaching practices sometimes described as humanistic techniques”. Thus, this is a method that needs teachers counseling as well as humanist techniques of language learning towards students. Teachers must be out of traditional teaching techniques and materials because the role of the teacher is as a counselor and students are the “clients” and there must be a relationship and interaction between teacher and student.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to explain and analyze the methodology, participants, instruments and procedure that were followed, in order to find out the use of connected speech among students of Modern Language University (LEMO) at Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP) .

3.1 Methodology

In order to carry out this research it was necessary to choose a method that best fits to answer questions that were settled in chapter I. So, a quantitative descriptive method non participant was used for the purpose of this study.

3.2 Participants

In this research fifteen students from Modern Language University (LEMO) at Benemerita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP) participated in order to know the use of their connected speech. They were at the advanced level of English; they are female and males whose ages range from 20 to 25 years old. In addition, they were selected from advanced level (target language VII) because; they had already taken phonetics and phonology as a subject.

3.3 Instrument

The instrument for this research was a reading adapted and taken from Viorst, J. 1998 *Imperfect Control: our lifelong struggle with power and surrender*. The purpose was to make students read this paper which contains elements of connected speech in order to record students and analyze the use of connected speech elements from the speech analysis checklist.

3.4 Procedure

First, students were surprised during a break time in the university's yard and a brief explanation was given to them about the purpose of the interruption. Then they were asked about their target language level in order to know if they were candidates to be recorded as well as seeing if they were willing to be tested by a reading or not. After that; a focus group was selected to be recorded, the instrument was administered to them; meanwhile researchers were recording with a tape recorder. Finally, the recordings were analyzed through a deep listening analysis by researchers, this deep listening analysis was measured by a connected speech checklist elements, see Appendix 1. Then, the results were typed in the computer in order to show the results of this research. The outcomes are shown with graphics in chapter IV.

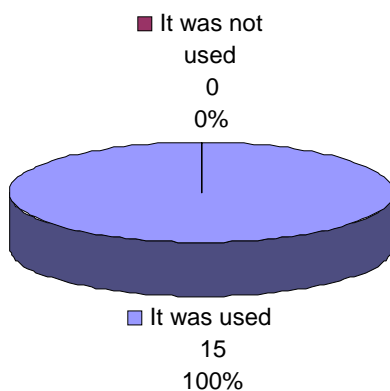
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

In this chapter, the collected data will be presented in order to discuss the information that was found out during this part of the research project. It was crucial to provide a short reading to fifteen LEMO students in the advanced level and record them in order to analyze the use of the elements involved in the production of connected speech (intonation, rhythm, deletion, fluency, linking assimilation, weak forms, contractions, and deletion of weak forms). Thus, the information will be illustrated by graphics of each element giving the percentage of students who used the elements from the speech analysis checklist when they pronounced. The evaluations were carried out based on general standard American English.

4.1 Intonation

As seen, there are elements that are fundamental for the production of connected speech. In the following figure the first suprasegmental element of phonology must be analyzed. Figure 1 shows the use of intonation patterns, that is, students changed the pitch of their voices in order to emphasize the sentence through the reading for example when they saw a question mark they used rising falling intonation pattern. For instance, in the question “what did you do with your life?”, students started pronouncing with rising intonation and ending the phrase with falling intonation. It was found that 100% of students used intonation patterns when they read.

Figure 7: Students’ Use of Intonation pattern

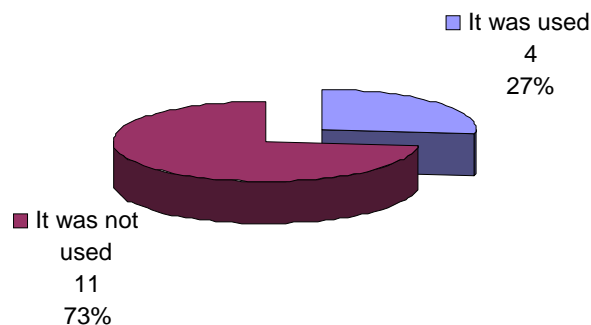


The intonation in the paragraphs that students read was rising-falling intonation, so students accomplished very well this aspect; all of them tried to give the appropriate intonation. The result about intonation could be possible due to the fact that, it is the most frequent intonation that is used in English language.

4.2 Rhythm

In this research, it was important to analyze the rhythm produced by students. Since this is an aspect that is affected when connected speech is produced and because English rhythm is different to Spanish rhythm and our participants are Spanish speakers. The results showed that students used the appropriate rhythm in very few cases. The figure 2 presents the percentages of students who used English rhythm and those who did not. That is, only 27% of students who were recorded reading, used English rhythm and the rest 73% did not.

Figure 8: Students' Use of Rhythm



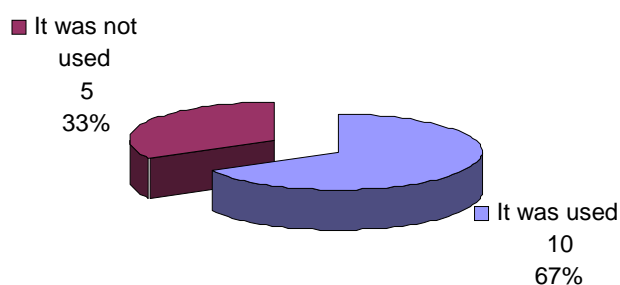
Rhythm is very difficult to achieve owing to as Spanish speakers our language is different to English, and rhythm is not the exception because, it is claimed that Spanish rhythm is syllable timed. On the other hand English is stress-timed and most of the functions

words are unstressed (Avery and Ehrlich 1992). In addition, it may be seen that there might be a lack of practice among students who were analyzed, according to recordings. Nevertheless, students may reach a close native rhythm by practicing, and listening to English recordings made by native speakers. As a matter of fact, it is recommendable to emphasize the knowledge that students get during their classroom instruction, especially about phonetic and phonology field.

4.3 Deletion

As seen in chapter II deletion is another aspect of connected speech. It is essential to analyze deletion in this research with the aim of knowing the amount of students who omitted to pronounce certain letters. For this reason it was imperative to examine how many did it and how many did not and present a graphic as figure number 3 which shows that 67% delete certain words and the rest, which is the 33%, produced every single letter.

Figure 9: Students' use of Deletion



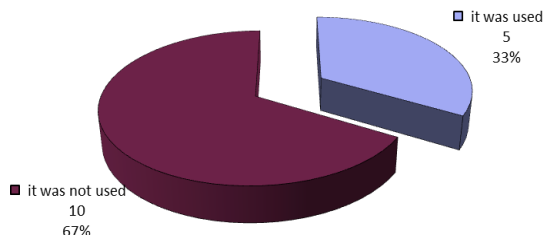
Deletion happened in most of the cases due to, there were some letters, in the provided reading, that are difficult to pronounce, such as “next months”. Most students deleted letter “t” leaving in this way /nexs months/; contrary of what happens when it is pronounced in an isolated way. It was amazing to listen to this production of sounds, and it could be assumed that also our articulators are not prepared to produce the letter “t” of the word “next”, when it

is produced under pressure of time when reading. Nevertheless, that does not mean that students are aware of this modification of sounds, and it could affect the comprehension of speech.

4.4 Fluency

As part of this research fluency should be reviewed. Fluency also occurs when reading and it has a link with pronunciation because it deals with intonation patterns. The 67% did not show fluency and the rest which is 33% did. The results found are presented in here.

Figure 10: Students' use of Fluency



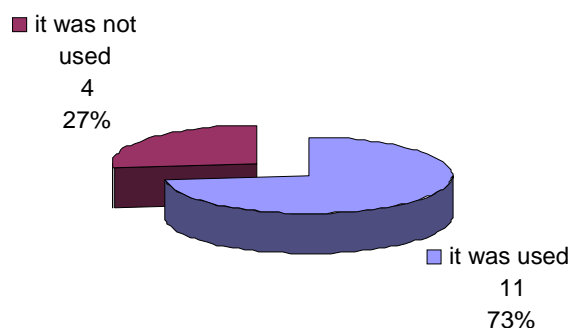
Most of students hesitated when they pronounced certain words and that affected the continuity and flow of the reading; for instance most of them had troubles pronouncing "sighed", "diminished", and "stereotypically". They did a long pause to review the word they had to pronounce. It seems that the doubt students had about how to pronounce some words made them feel insecure. Mispronunciation made participants feel nervous and lose control over pronunciation patterns. Even though students showed competence using intonation patterns, they did not complete the task precisely because fluency features deals with flow

smoothness, continuity and automaticity. So that, it was proved that most of students did not do well on fluency when reading,

4.5 Linking

Linking is another aspect of connected speech. As in many readings there are lots of words that are linked, and the reading that was provided to participants was not the exception. It was found that 73% of students pronounced words together because of the proximity between consonants and vowels, and the 27% did not, as the figure below showed.

Figure 11: Students' use of linking



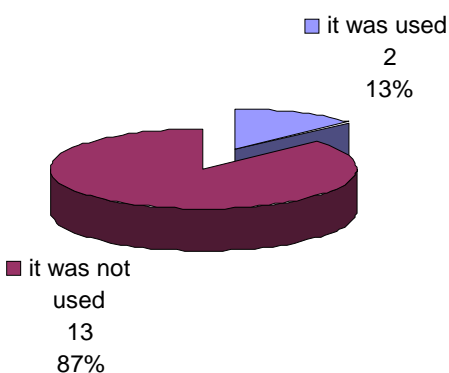
As the table shows most students linked the words, but there were few students who did not. The majority of students linked consonants (C) to vowels (V) for example the phrase “believe it” /bɪ ' li: vɪ t/. However, some students did not link identical consonants, which are represented as (C+C), because identical consonants are pronounced as long consonants for example “feel like” /fi: llaɪ k/ and “can never” /kənne və~/ and students stopped after words. Another example of linking is vowel (V) to vowel (V) is presented in the phrase see

adolescents /si: ædə' le sɒnts/. Finally, it could be assumed that some students are not aware of linkage of different words, but this can be solved by teaching and practicing it.

4.6 Assimilation

Assimilation is the next aspect of connected speech that was analyzed. As it was seen in chapter II, Avery, P. & Ehrlich, S. (1992) assert that assimilation occurs when in the boundaries of a word, the final sound of the first word becomes similar to the first sound of the second word. In this research it was crucial to examine this aspect, because it is common to find this kind of changes in pronunciation. For instance, it happens regularly when the sound “n” and “b” meet each other and “n” becomes an “m” sound. The following information is the percentage of the students who assimilated sounds. The results were the 13% of students did it and the rest 87% did not as it is presented in the figure 6.

Figure 12: students’ use of Assimilation



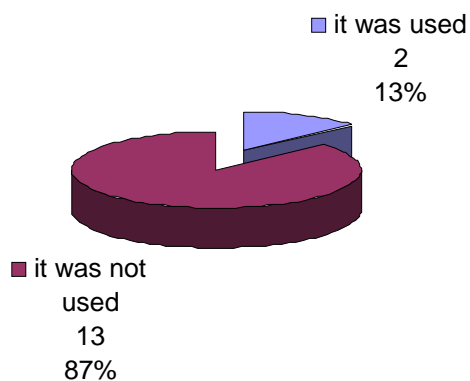
As the graphic below shows very few of the participants assimilated sounds. The reading provided to students contains some words that could be assimilated like “on my own”,

“can’t believe it”, mentioning some. It was found that a low percentage of students assimilate the sounds and others could hardly assimilate or they did not do; it can be interpreted that there is a lack of practice among students who study English as a target language or they have not studied this aspect before. In addition, as they are almost had done with their English levels, they have to be aware of this aspect of connected speech. However, this failure could happen because they got nervous when they are asked to read.

4.7 Weak Forms (Reductions)

As connected speech has been analyzed, function words must be considered in this study. As seen earlier in this chapter function words are unstressed, but they not only are unstressed they suffer other changes in connected speech, they become weak forms. The following graphic, figure 7, shows that only 13% of the participants produced function words as weak forms while 87% of them did not.

Figure 13: students' use of Weak Forms



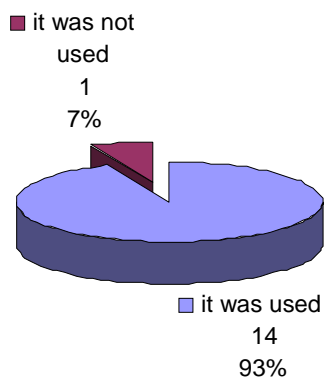
The pronunciation of weak forms was difficult for the majority of the students who participated in this research, it is important to mention that weak forms are usually pronounced as strong forms when they are in isolation, it can be interpreted that students cannot recognize the “schwa” /ə/ sound because in Spanish it does not exist. Nevertheless, this sound can be

mastered with a lot of practice and with the recognition of the sound, and teachers can take into consideration to practice the “schwa” sound /ə/ when they teach pronunciation.

4.8 Contractions

As it was mentioned in chapter II contractions, play an important role in connected speech. For this reason, it was important to take it into account in this research, due to the fact that native speakers find it easier to pronounce the short forms than the full forms. There were a lot of students who pronounced the contraction forms; there was just one case of a participant who avoided pronouncing some of them. Figure 8 presents this information in percentages and those are the following, 93% of the participants pronounce contraction forms, while 7% avoided the production of full forms.

Figure 14: students' use of Contractions



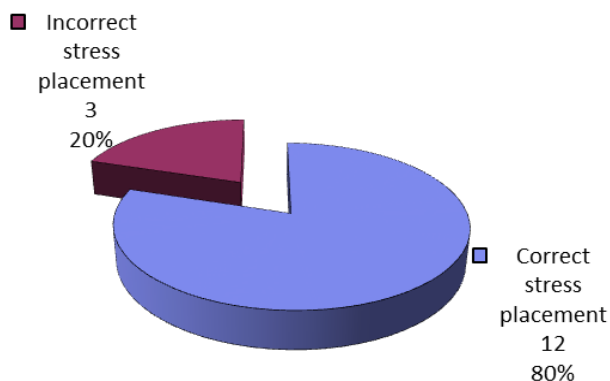
As it was mentioned before, most of the students pronounced contractions, which are reduced in order to make easier the pronunciation. In this research it was found that a few contractions were pronounced in the full form. For instance, the contraction “you’ll” and “I’d”. Generally, most of students did not have any trouble pronouncing them. That could be possible because in the reading those words were represented as contractions; also in the case of “it is” that count as contraction was presented in the full form and students pronounced it in the full form.

Many aspects of connected speech could be reinforced in English classes at the Faculty of Languages. When students are aware of contractions authors such as Avery, P. & Ehrlich S. (1992) claim that students can improve their pronunciation and their listening skill in English.

4.9 Stress in contractions

The use of contractions did not represent a trouble for participants. For most of participants the stress in contractions like “you’ll”, “you’re” and “I’m” was placed correctly. The figure below show the results, twelve students placed correctly the stress in contractions and only three did not.

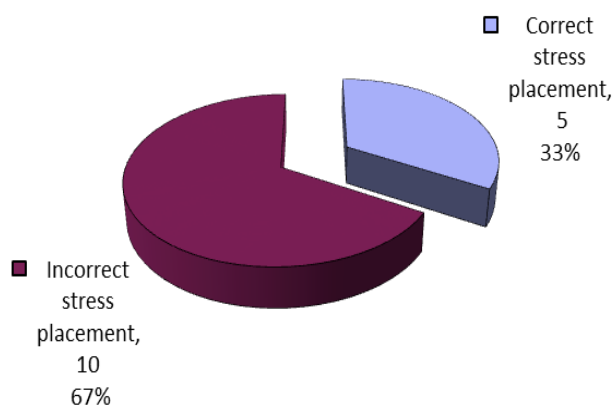
Figure 15:Stress in contractions (You’re, You’ll and I’m)



Most of students placed the stress correctly when they pronounce the “you’ll”, and “I’m” One participant mispronounced “you’ll”, the “l” sound was not articulated so; there was a disappearance of this sound. The contraction “you’re” was pronounced in the full form in a few occasions so that, “are” was pronounced as content word.

Some contractions like “Don't”, “Can't”, and “I'd” were pronounced by students with some issues. Only five students stressed final contraction sounds and ten did not. The figure below shows the percentage.

Figure 16: Stress in contractions (Don't, Can't, I'd)

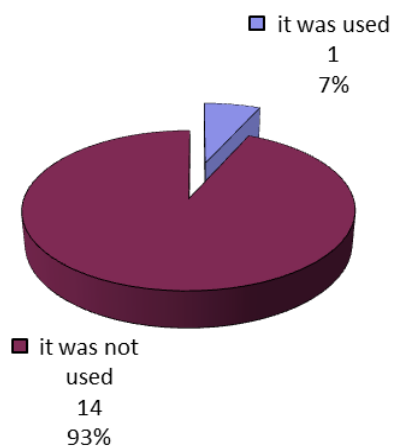


For some students the pronunciation of the contraction “don't” and “can't” was a little bit different than it is in a careful pronunciation. Some of them did not pronounce the /t/ sound; it can be assumed that it happened because the next sound that followed the /t/ sound was a consonant sound. These contractions represent function words that usually are unstressed, but negatives generally are stressed and participants stressed the vowel sound. In addition, some participants pronounced weaker the /d/ sound in the contraction “I'd”, so it was hardly to identify this sound.

4.10 /ed/ simple past spelling rule

Most of students did not pronounce correctly simple past ending. In chapter II the simple past ending spelling rule is explained and students did not follow the rule. They just added a \t\ sound when they saw a verb in past. However there was one single participant who pronounced in the right way all the verbs in past and pronounced voice and voiceless /ed/ ending. Only the 1% pronounced correctly based on simple past spelling rules and the rest did not. The results showed that students need more practice in their phonetics class in order to reach an important improvement in pronunciation matters.

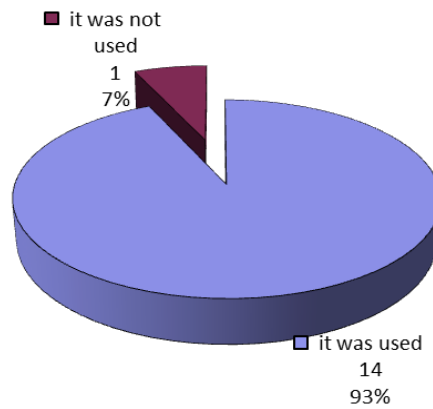
Figure.17:Use of /ed/ simple past ending spelling rule



4.11 Plurals

Plurals were well pronounced by students. They did not have a big problem pronouncing /s/ /z/ /ez/ sounds; they really did a good job applying plural spelling rules. There was only one participant who did not follow spelling plural endings rule.

Figure. 18:Plurals



CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter the main findings of this research will be presented. The chapter will be divided into four sections that are the following: summary, implications, limitation of the study, and directions for further research.

5.1 Summary

As it was presented in chapter I the purpose of this research is to examine the use of connected speech among students of Modern Language University (LEMO) who learn English as a foreign language in order to verify what was learned about this topic through the time they have studied English. In addition and due to the fact that native speakers modify some sounds. Students may face some troubles when they learn and practice aspects related to pronunciation, owing to they are in a country where English is not spoken as a first language and they do not have many chances to interact with native speakers. Thus, teachers will realize what students know about this particular issue of pronunciation. In order to investigate the use of connected speech, it was necessary to use a descriptive method which was non participant and it was crucial to supply a reading adapted from Viorst, J. 1998 *Imperfect Control: our lifelong struggle with power and surrender* to fifteen students of target language VII, and ask them to read it with the purpose of recording them and after that analyzing their production.

In chapter I the research questions were mentioned, and they must be answered in this chapter. There are some issues in a language that are hard to acquire when learning a foreign language; it is possible that some issues are more difficult to learn than others, pronunciation is one that can be difficult to achieve. Thus, the main aim of this research was to test what the

strengths and the weaknesses of connected speech are among LEMO students. The findings were that they can not manage most of these elements very well when they pronounce some words. The weaknesses were: the rhythm, weak forms, assimilations, and fluency. Most of the students did not use these elements when they participated in the reading; students use them in a low percentage. Nevertheless, it could not be said that they had many problems with connected speech, the majority of them showed competence when using some elements such as; intonation, deletion linking and contractions. It can be inferred that they might make an improvement with some practice and if they are willing to learn and they can achieve a near native pronunciation.

In this research some students were analyzed in order to find out whether they will face problems when speaking with a native speaker. As it was mentioned in the last section, students are good in some aspects and in some others are not. For instance, most students did not show fluency when they performed the reading task. Furthermore, students who showed a fluent reading had troubles when pronouncing some words and it was hard to understand some words. As it was mentioned in chapter II, being fluent does not mean to be as accurate as native speakers can. That is, students showed ability to produce utterances easily but they did not show accuracy. On average students can be understood if they have the chance of having a conversation with a native speaker. Also, the problem perhaps, will be that they might not understand a native speaker's connected speech. Native speakers will carry out their own rhythm and students are accustomed to listening and pronouncing the Spanish rhythm, since they are not involved in an English context. Furthermore, students could face problems with assimilations because there is a change in the sound when some words are put together. Also they cannot identify what word they are listening to because of this change.

The last problem is to recognize the sound of weak forms that are pronounced like schwa /ə /, this can be the most important issue to deal with. Because, this sound is very hard to recognize and pronounce; due to, it does not exist in Spanish. In sum, all these aspects may be an obstacle to understand native speakers' speech. In addition, it seems that contrastive analysis theory can be a powerful tool to teach connected speech in order to reinforce those aspects that are different from mother language to foreign language learning processes.

5.2 Implications

Since, LEMO students at BUAP are going to be teachers; they perhaps wish to travel to any English speaking country; they have to succeed in many areas related with the language they are learning, especially the area of pronunciation. So, it is recommendable to be trained in the field of phonetic and phonology in a deep and specific way. That is to use and teach connected speech. As we found in results, it can be assumed that there is a need of practice and reinforcement in some areas of pronunciation such as rhythm, assimilation, weak forms and fluency; not only to learn concepts but also to practice pronunciation. The more students practice, the more they learn. So, it is suggested to have other opportunities to practice connected speech pronunciation, not only one pronunciation course but additional pronunciation workshops. Hence, students of English can be skilled about connected speech in their target language classes as well as in the phonetic and phonology subject. This can be managed by practicing their connected speech in order to master this aspect and be as competent as possible. Thus, if students manage connected speech, they will not perhaps face problems when they interact with native speakers and possibly they will acquire more confidence.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

In this research there were some circumstances that could affect the obtained results. First of all, it could be carried out with a methodology that shows how much students know about the topic in order to check if they know what connected speech is. That is, not only reading a written text can measure the knowledge of connected speech; but also students could be asked to develop a conversation with a specific topic. Perhaps, taking into account that the instrument was applied in Mexico; students might not feel necessary to do a big effort in pronunciation. Possibly, they were not interested in practicing their connected speech to sound like a native speaker or maybe they did not take what we are doing seriously. In addition, many students complained about the tape recorder which they were recorded with. They said it made them feel under pressure and intimidated; also, they might not do their best because of it. Thus, all these aspects might influence the findings.

Finally, another important issue that can be mentioned is the claim that the results could have been improved and enriched with specialists also evaluating students connected speech pronunciation.

5.4 Directions for Further Research

Connected speech can be found as an interesting topic for people who are studying English because there is a variation when students learn to pronounce words in isolation and when words are pronounced in a sentence. So that, this topic can be taken into consideration for future researching, using other methodology. Thus, in order to find out the use or how much students can manage connected speech they can be tested by applying a test which contains examples of connected speech. Another point that could be useful for another research is to find out the impact that connected speech has on the listening skill when it is introduced to students. It can be recommendable to use a qualitative method, which is ethnographic research, or do a quantitative research and test the listening skill before and post an introduction of connected speech theory. It can be useful to do a syllabus in which a contrastive analysis can be performed.

APPENDIX 1: INSTRUMENT

Idealism versus realism and immaturity versus experience are major sources of conflict between generations...

...” you’ll do what I tell you to do because I’m older, because I’m your father, because I said so, because that’s the way that I want it to be” Is superior power’s response to the perennial adolescent question “why?”

“My parents can never compromise,” Ann, age fifteen, complains. It is always what they want to do; they don’t let me do anything on my own. They say, “When you’re eighteen and you out of school, you can do what you want to do. But as long as you’re under my roof, you’ll do what I want you to do” No discussion. I’m not allowed to ask any kind of questions or say what I think, but they can ask things, like “Where did you go yesterday? What did you do with your life? I just can’t believe it” It actually makes me feel like unwanted, Like what am I here for?

It is true that some parents may keep their children dependent and diminished because they cannot bear to relinquish their power. Others overcontrol, because reflecting popular views, they see adolescents stereotypically. Melinda, sixteen, recalls a woman who stopped her and her friend Sheyla in the street to say “if you’re going to be sluts, use protection. Now what are you going to do? Next months you’ll be suffering” The woman had mistaken a weight gain produced, Melinda explained, by an excess of milkshakes for the early signs of unwed pregnancy. As though, Melinda sighed, I don’t know what happens; I’d like to understand them. We all get pregnant... we all do drugs, we all drink.”

Viorist, J. (1998) *Imperfect control*. USA. Fireside. (p. 81)

APPENDIX 1: INSTRUMENT

The evaluation was carried out by using theoretical information and some examples taken from the book “teaching American English pronunciation” by Avery, P. & Ehrlich, S. (1992).

SHAPE KEYS

Function Words = Weak Forms = Rhythm



Minor stress in contractions: •

Content Words = Word Stress = Rhythm



Major Sentences Stress: This major stress helped us to identify the pitch of the voice that rises in first word syllable of major stress and fall in the second syllable of the word. In this way we could identify the intonation pattern. This intonation pattern is: rising-falling, also known as falling intonation.



Intonation: Continuation Rise



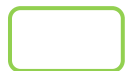
Contractions



Deletion



Assimilation



Linking



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