



**BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA**

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**FACULTAD DE LENGUAS**

**STRATEGIES ELT UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS  
USED AUTONOMOUSLY TO IMPROVE THEIR  
PRONUNCIATION**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
OF LANGUAGES FOR THE DEGREE OF  
“LICENCIATURA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS”**

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Strategies ELT Undergraduate Advanced Students Use Autonomously to  
improve their pronunciation.

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## DEDICATIONS

To God for giving me life to reach this point of my life.

To my mom who is a very important person in my life and always supports me all the time.

God always blesses her.

To my dad who always encourages me to reach my goals and always supports me all the time. God always blesses him.

To my sister who is a very important person in my life and has always taken care of me.

To my nieces Benedith Michell and Maria Fernanda whom I love so much and who make me feel alive because they are my happiness.

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## Table of contents

DEDICATIONS	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
ABSTRACT	9
<b>CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION</b>	11
1.1 Introduction	11
1.2 Rationale	15
1.3 Aims	15
1.4 Research questions	16
1.5 Significance of the study	16
1.6 The context of the research	17
1.7 Chapter conclusions	18
<b>CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	19
2.0 Introduction	19
2. 1 Definition of pronunciation	20
2.2 Perspectives to teach pronunciation	21
2.3 Teachers' Role	24
2.4 Pronunciation goals	28
2.5 Which English is the best to teach and learn?	29
2.6 English as a Lingua Franca	30
2.7 Fossilization	31
2.8 Intelligibility	32
2.8. 1 Factors Affecting intelligibility	33
2.9 Suprasegmental Elements	35
2.9.1. Stress	36
2.9.1.2 Rhythm	38
2.9.1.3 Intonation	39
<b>3.0 Autonomous Learning in the English Language</b>	43
3.1 Autonomous Learning from a Social Cognitive Perspective	46
3.1.2 Autonomous Learning from Constructivism	49
<b>4.0 Pronunciation Learning Strategies</b>	52

4.1 Pronunciation Learning Strategies Taxonomies	55
4.2 Kolb's learning theory	67
5.3 Chapter conclusions	72
<b>CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY</b>	73
3.0 Introduction	73
3.1 Method	73
3.2 Context of the study	73
3.3 Participants	74
3.4 Instruments	74
3.5 Data Collection Procedures	75
3.6 Data Analysis Procedure	76
3.7 Conclusion	77
<b>CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS</b>	78
4.0 Introduction	78
4.1 Students' personal information	79
4.1.1 Students' background	80
<b>4.2 General question</b>	81
<b>4.3 Specific questions</b>	87
4.3.1 Strategies most frequently used	87
4.3.1.1 Cognitive Strategies	88
4.3.1.2 Metacognitive strategies	90
4.3.1.3 Affective strategies	93
4.3.1.4 Social strategies	95
4.3.1.5 Memory Strategies	97
<b>4.3.2.1 Strategies least frequently used</b>	101
4.3.2.2 Cognitive Strategies	101
4.3.2.3 Metacognitive strategies	103
4.3.2.4 Affective Strategies	105
4.3.2.5 Memory strategies	107
4.4 Students opinions	109
4.5 Chapter conclusions	112
<b>CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS</b>	113
5.0 Chapter overview	113

5.1 Discussions to research questions, findings and their significance	113
5.3 Study contributions	122
5.4 Implications for teachers	123
5.5 Implications for students	124
5.5 Limitations of the study	124
5.6 Reflection	125
5.7 Directions for further research	126
<b>REFERENCES</b>	127
<b>APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE</b>	138

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 4.1 Participants' age.....	78
Figure 4.2 Participants' gender.....	78
Figure 4.3 Participants' semester at the University.....	79
Figure 4.4 Participants' English Background.....	79
Figure 4.5 Participants' previous English knowledge.....	80
Figure 4.6 Pronunciation Learning Strategies groups.....	82
Figure.4.7 Participants' Cognitive Strategies Preference .....	83
Figure 4.8 Metacognitive strategies Participants' preference.....	83
Figure 4.9 Affective strategies Participants' level of usage.....	85
Figure 4.10 Social strategies Participants' preference.....	85
Figure 4.11 Memory strategies Percentage of usage by the participants.....	86
Figure 4.12 Participants practice pronunciation by repeating words.....	88
Figure 4.13 Participants repeat words after native speakers.....	89

Figure 4.14 Participants listen to radio or TV in English.....	90
Figure 4.15 Participants pay attention to someone’s pronunciation.....	91
Figure 4.16 Participants find ways to improve their pronunciation.....	91
Figure 4.17 Participants have clear goals for improving pronunciation.....	92
Figure 4.18 Participants encourage themselves to work their pronunciation.....	93
Figure 4.19 Participants use sense of humor when they mispronounce some Words.....	94
Figure 4.20 Participants analyze their feelings related to pronunciation.....	94
Figure 4.21 Participants learn pronunciation with others.....	95
Figure 4.22 Participants help others in learning pronunciation.....	96
Figure 4.23 Participants memorize pronunciation of a given word.....	97
Figure 4.24 Participants memorize pronunciation by associating them In the situation where they heard.....	98
Figure 4.25 Participants memorize pronunciation of words by repeating Them many times.....	99
Figure 4.26 Participants memorize words by putting them in a context.....	99
Figure 4.27 Participants speak with foreigners to practice pronunciation.....	101
Figure 4.28 Participants observe movements of articulators.....	102
Figure 4.29 Participants do exercises to make their jaw and lips flexible.....	103
Figure 4.30 Participants take a look of theoretical knowledge before Practicing a given word.....	104
Figure 4.31 Participants try to relax when talking in English.....	105
Figure 4.32 Participants do not encourage themselves to speak in English.....	106



Figure 4.33 Participants memorize the pronunciation of a word by remembering  
The locations.....107

Figure 4.34 Participants record words whose pronunciation they want to  
Memorize and listen to the recording several times.....108

Figure 4.35 Participants use flash cards which they put from  
‘I want to learn’ pile to ‘I haven’t learnt pile’ .....108

Figure 4.35 Participants do not encourage themselves to speak in English. 106

Figure 4.36 Importance of pronunciation for participants107

Figure 4.37 Participants’ thoughts about their phonetics and phonology class108

Figure 4.38 Necessity of adding more courses of Phonetics and phonology. 109

Figure 4.39 Courses of phonetics and phonology should be added to the curricula. 109

## **LIST OF TABLES**

TABLE 2.1 Characteristics of syllable and Stressed Time Language 37

TABLE 2.2 Characteristics of Learner Autonomy 45

TABLE 2.3 Types of Human Functioning 47

TABLE 2.4 Oxford’s Pronunciation Learning Strategies 57

TABLE 2.5 Peterson’s taxonomy based on Oxford’s Learning Strategies 58

TABLE 2.6 Eckstein’s taxonomy based on Kolb’s construct second language acquisition 61

TABLE 2.7 Calka’s taxonomy based on Oxford and Peterson 62

TABLE 2.8 Kolb’s Construct and Pronunciation Theory 69

## ABSTRACT

This thesis reports on the results of a quantitative research concerning pronunciation learning strategies. This study was carried out in School of Languages of BUAP in Puebla, Puebla in 2018. This study seeks to explore the strategies ELT undergraduate students used autonomously to improve their English pronunciation. To reach this objective four research questions were addressed, which are: What are the strategies ELT undergraduate students use autonomously to improve their pronunciation?, Which pronunciation strategies are most frequently used by ELT undergraduate advanced students at School of Languages of BUAP?, Which pronunciation strategies are less frequently used by ELT undergraduate advanced students at School of Languages of BUAP? And, what are students' opinions concerning pronunciation? Research data were collected using a questionnaire adapted from the study of Rokoszewska, (2012). The participants were 12 pre-service English teachers (9 females and 3 males). The participants' answers were analyzed using data coding. The research findings revealed that from 60 strategies listed in the questionnaire only 38 were most preferred by the participants. Furthermore, the groups of metacognitive strategies were most favored by the participants and the least preferred group of strategies by the students was memory strategies.

In summary, this study has attempted to explore the least and most frequent strategies used by ELT undergraduate students from the School of Languages and to know students' opinions regarding English pronunciation.

## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

There is no single definition of pronunciation but some linguists define it as the study of speech organs and how sounds are made (Kelly, 2007). Furthermore, Cook (1996 as cited in Gilakjani, 2016) defined pronunciation as the production of English sounds. Besides that, according to Yates (2002 as cited in Gilakjani, 2016) pronunciation refers to the production of sounds that are used for making meaning. The fact that English pronunciation is usually neglected may not always be the result of teachers' indifference but it can rather express teachers' doubts of not being able to teach English pronunciation in the right way.' (Kelly, 2007, p. 13).

Furthermore, Baker wrote 'The problem is that in English courses there is usually little or no time allocated to teaching pronunciation and the majority of lesson planning is devoted to vocabulary and grammar progress' (Baker, 1990, p.1).

Additionally, for some teachers pronunciation is important. According to Laroy (1995) students need to perceive the sound of English as if they were babies and they were learning to speak. Additionally, Tennant (2007) says that teachers need to help students make their speech to sound intelligible for others in the same way. Moreover, pronunciation is one of the most important requirements of a learner's competence and it is also one of the most important features. Good pronunciation leads to learning while bad pronunciation promotes great difficulties in language learning (Pouhosein Gilakjani, 2011). Additionally, Bruck, and Genesee said that if the purpose of the language is to communicate with each other it can be reached through proper pronunciation. They also defend that linguists have shown the importance of pronunciation and for that reason, they developed a standardized code IPA

(International Phonetic Alphabet). Finally, they support that proper pronunciation helps our speech to be intelligible as well as its effectiveness also they care about pronunciation because they uttered that pronunciation has not received the importance of teaching language.

Lastly, taking into account those comments, we can say that pronunciation is an important part when learning a language. For instance, we had to learn pronunciation unconsciously when we were children in order to make our speech understandable.

Another topic that concerns this study is autonomous learning and it takes part in this research paper. In language learning there is a controversy to define autonomy. Holec (1981) defines autonomy as ‘the ability to take charge of one’s learning’. Moreover, Dickinson (1987) says that autonomy is an attribute of learners, rather than learning situations.

Taking into account these definitions we can say that autonomous learning makes the learner independent so he or she is responsible for their own process of learning and he or she has to construct their own learning.

Additionally, Nucamedi (2014) states that various case studies and reports of experimental teaching techniques regarding autonomy have been applied but for better learning and teaching, more research must be conducted in this area. In the same line, Eckstein (2007) supports that the number of studies regarding pronunciation learners' strategies is staggeringly low. He argues that only four studies have recognized this gap in research during the past thirty years (Derwing & Rossiter, 2002; Osburne, 2003; Peterson, 2000; Vitanova & Miller, 2002). Moreover, according to Akyol, (2012) in Turkey have carried out some studies that aimed to investigate pronunciation strategy use of Turkish English language learners. In one of these studies, the participants were 82 university students

of English Language Teaching Department. Forty-two students were students of the first year the other students were in the preparatory at the same Department. The students were between 17 to 26 years old and 33. The instrument applied to the students was the Pronunciation Strategies questionnaire based on taxonomies of pronunciation learning strategies presented by Oxford (1990) and Peterson (2000). It contained a Likert-scale with five categories 'always', 'frequently', 'sometimes', 'rarely' and 'never'. The questionnaire was composed of 52 items the students were asked to rate how frequently they use such strategies and contained some open-ended questions. Lastly, the study reveals that the most used strategy was 'I associate English pronunciation with Turkish pronunciation'

Several other studies have been conducted to explore pronunciation learning strategies such as the study that was conducted by Rokoszewska (2012) in which she applied a questionnaire to first grade English majors based on Calka's (2011, cited in Rokoszewska, 2012, p.393) Pronunciation Learning Strategies Questionnaire. The questionnaire investigated 18 strategies and 64 tactics. It consisted of 65 statements with a Likert-type scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means never and almost never, 2 for rarely, 3 for sometimes, 4 for usually and 5 for always.

This study conducted in Jan Długosz University, Częstochowa, Poland showed that students of English who on average use pronunciation learning strategies rather occasionally, should receive some strategy-based.

This brings up the question if the students used some strategies or techniques to improve their pronunciation in English while they are studying their major degree at the

University. As a consequence, this research paper aims to explore the different strategies students from LEI of the School of Languages of BUAP use to improve the pronunciation in English.

## **1.2 Rationale**

I am interested in carrying out this research because as a native Spanish speaker I faced a lot of problems in English pronunciation. Furthermore, when I was taking phonetics and phonology lessons I observed that some of my classmates also had problems when pronouncing some words. In addition, when I was taking workshop V I could notice that my teacher mispronounced some words.

Finally, when I was taking target language V I also could notice that some of my classmates had problems in pronunciation. However, they were expected to have a good pronunciation because they had already taken ‘phonetics and phonology’ during the second semester of the major.

## **1.3 Aims**

The main purpose of this work is to explore the different strategies that students from LEI of the School of Languages of BUAP use autonomously to improve their pronunciation in English. It is worth investigating this topic because there is little research in this area as Nucamedi (2014) states that various case studies and reports of experimental teaching techniques regarding autonomy have been applied/published but for better learning and teaching, more research must be conducted in this area. As well as, Eckstein (2007) recognizes that there are not many studies done regarding pronunciation learners’ strategies and he adds that only a few studies have recognized this gap in research during the past thirty years. Finally, this study aims to explore how students improve their pronunciation through autonomous learning as well as describe students’ needs concerning pronunciation.

## **1.4 Research questions**

This project addresses the following research questions:

### **General question:**

- Which group of strategies that ELT undergraduate students use autonomously to improve their pronunciation the most?

### **Specific question:**

- Which specific pronunciation strategies of each group are most frequently used by ELT undergraduate advanced students at School of Languages of BUAP?
- Which specific pronunciation strategies of each group are less frequently used by ELT undergraduate advanced students at School of Languages of BUAP?
- What are students' needs concerning pronunciation?

## **1.5 Significance of the study**

This study is significant for the reason that results will provide some insights about the strategies that LEI students used autonomously to improve their English pronunciation while they are studying the major. It is relevant to add that through this study, both teachers and students will benefit. The results will provide students some tools that they could use autonomously to improve their pronunciation as well as it will help all the students who are in the process to reach an advanced level. For teachers, it will provide evidence about the strategies that the learners used when they are acquiring English pronunciation. Furthermore, teachers will find useful information that perhaps they can apply but also to make think in



new ideas to improve students' pronunciation. Finally, this study can also have positive implications for teachers when taking a decision on how to help or guide students to improve their pronunciation.

### **1.6 The context of the research**

This research was carried out in the School of Languages at BUAP. The School of Languages has the program of English Language Teaching so this study took into account students who are enrolled in that program. Pre-service English teachers who are in the four year of the program. During these semesters that they have already taken five English courses named 'target language, one of them focuses on the development of speaking skill. Moreover, they had two English language workshops called 'workshop II' and 'workshop IV' both of them are focused on 'listening and speaking skills'.

Additionally, they had one subject named 'phonetics and phonology'. The main aim of the mentioned subject is to provide theory and practice that can help students to improve their pronunciation. Nevertheless, in my own experience, those subjects are not enough because I have realized that many students face a lot of problems in pronunciation and some of them are not understood. Consequently, this study aims to explore the strategies that advanced students use autonomously to improve their pronunciation.

## **1.7 Chapter conclusions**

In this chapter the main objective of the project was presented which is to explore strategies ELT undergraduate advanced students used autonomously to improve their pronunciation in English. Then the research questions were presented as well as the objectives of the study. Besides the reason to carry out this research, as well as the location where this study took place, were presented. The next chapter will discuss the theoretical framework that will be the basis of this research. Chapter III will show information about the methodology used by giving a description of the method, instrument and the procedure that leads this study. Moreover, Chapter IV will present the findings of this project and the research questions will be presented and answered. Lastly, in Chapter V the conclusions of this work will be offered.

## **CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, some information related to the research will be presented in order to help us to understand the perspectives taken to explore this issue. In the first place, some definitions of phonetics and phonology as well as a brief explanation about some types of phonetics. Moreover, some perspectives to teach pronunciation are presented. It shows the importance of pronunciation in language teaching. The third topic refers to the teachers' role in an EFL classroom. Furthermore, it is important that students set goals in pronunciation if they want to be intelligible or they want to sound like a native speaker. Another topic that is part of this research is related to which English is the best to teach and learn that refers to the different types of 'Englishes' that exist in the world of English language teaching. Additionally, English as a Lingua Franca is part of this chapter because this kind of English refers to the one spoken by non-native speakers. Fossilization concerns in this study because there are students that make mistakes in pronunciation and sometimes these mistakes are difficult to change and correct and it is related to pronunciation learning strategies because it can help us to understand if those students apply any strategy. The next topic talks about intelligibility that explains a little bit about what it is, and some factors that affect it. Another topic concerning this study refers to suprasegmental elements of speech that take into account stress, rhythm, and intonation. Autonomous learning takes part in this research and talks about autonomous learning from a social cognitive perspective as well as from the view of constructivism. Pronunciation learning strategies mainly concern in this study because it is the main purpose of it. As well as it is important to take a look at previous studies done regarding this issue. To understand

pronunciation learning strategies it is important to review some of the taxonomies that exist in this area such as the taxonomy developed by Oxford (1990) it was the first taxonomy related to pronunciation then the taxonomy created by Peterson (2000) on the basis of Oxford's taxonomy, Eckstein (2007) and Calka (2011). Finally, it is presented Kolb's (1984) theory that helps us to understand Eckstein's (2007) taxonomy.

## **2. 1 Definition of pronunciation**

There are different sounds systems in the world. In fact, each language that exists has its own pronunciation and sounds but how we can define phonetics. There is not a single definition but some linguists define it as the study of speech organs and how sounds are made (Kelly, 2007). Moreover, Ball (2017) says that phonetics is the branch concerned with human speech sounds.

There are different types of phonetics. According to Kelly (2007), there are five types of phonetics and she identified the following.

- Physiological phonetics: refers to the anatomical, neurological and physiological bases of the speech.
- Articulatory phonetics: consists in the actions and movements of the speech organs in producing sounds.
- Acoustic phonetics: means the nature and acoustics of the sounds waves, which transmit speech.
- Auditory phonetics: how the ears receive speech.
- Perceptual phonetics: how speech is perceived by the brain.

In Addition, there is another branch of linguistics that is phonology. Panevová and Hana (2010) define phonology as the study of how sounds are made in a particular language and try to discover the psychological patterns and underlying organization of sounds shared by native speakers. Moreover, Ladefoged (1982) says that phonology is concerned with the description of systems and patterns of distinctive sound that occurs in a specific language.

Furthermore, phonetics and phonology cannot be separated because both of them help us to understand how sounds are made and how sounds are distributed.

In my opinion, phonetics and phonology are an important part of teaching and learning English because they will help us to pronounce in an appropriate way. But it is not just important in learning English it is also important in teaching and learning other languages. Phonetics and phonology are important because it helps us to understand how sounds are made as Panenová and Hana (2010) support.

## **2.2 Perspectives to teach pronunciation**

Today, English is an international language that is used almost everywhere. It is the third language spoken in the world and there are between 300 and 400 million of people who speak English as first language and also is spoken by 200 million of people as a second language, and exists 67 countries where English is an official language.

Furthermore, Baker wrote ‘the problem is that in English courses there is usually Moreover, people who speak English as a second language they learned it at the school. Learners of English need to know some features about the language such as grammar, vocabulary, phonetics and phonology. However, some teachers do not consider

pronunciation when teaching English. For example, Kelly says ‘English pronunciation is usually neglected may not always be the result of teachers’ indifference but it can rather express teachers’ doubts of not being able to teach English pronunciation in the right way.’ (Kelly, 2007, p. 13). little or no time allocated to teaching pronunciation and the majority of lesson planning is devoted to vocabulary and grammar progress’ (Baker, 1990, p. 1). These authors agree on that there is not much interest in teaching pronunciation in the classroom and most of the lesson and syllabus are focused on grammar and vocabulary.

Besides that, some teachers do not include pronunciation in their classes because of time but it can show that they are not able to teach it or they need to develop some skills that help them to teach pronunciation in the right way.

In addition, for some teachers’ pronunciation is important when teaching English. Anderson (1984) mentions that it should not be taught as grammar and vocabulary. He says that is necessary more that sounds need to be assimilated by students and Laroy says: ‘Learners need to perceive the new sounds as babies who hear the language for the first time’ (Laroy, 1995, p. 5-12).

Furthermore, good pronunciation is needed for communication as Tennant (2007) says that teachers need to help students make their speech to sound intelligible for others in the same way, Harmer (2005) assumes that it is just needed for purposes of communication even so he says that a ‘perfect accent’ is not needed.

Finally, Kenworthy (1987) postulates that ‘Language learners often show enthusiasm for pronunciation. They feel it is something that would help them to communicate better’ (p.4). Additionally, Kelly mentions that is important to teach pronunciation to avoid

misunderstandings when talking in English and also she claims that if a nonnative speaker use suprasegmental elements in a wrong way it can also cause communication problems.

In my personal opinion, pronunciation has not played an important roles in teaching and learning a new languages as Kelly (2007) and Baker (1990) uttered. Moreover, pronunciation is not allocated in English classes because of time. Besides that, some teachers care about pronunciation as Anderson (1984) and Laroy (1995) find out in their studies. Finally, an intelligible pronunciation is needed to avoid misunderstandings and to reach the purpose of what we want to communicate as an English teachers we should encourage our students to have a proper pronunciation.

### **2.3 Teachers' Role**

Teachers play an important role in the process of teaching pronunciation. Morley (1991) utters that teachers should pay special attention to reevaluating learners' necessities and learners' goals. She also states that teachers should attribute an important part to the directions in language learning and they must teach theory and pedagogy related to pronunciation. In addition, she supports that 'not attending to a student's pronunciation needs is an abrogation of professional responsibility'.

In light of the above, according to Gilakjani (2016), teachers should create a good learning environment that helps learners to perceive the sounds, he says that as result learners can learn native-like pronunciation and learn gestures and body language. As for, he supports that teachers should be mindful of the pronunciation problems that their students face and teachers should correct them when they make mistakes. Therefore, he states that teachers should be able to teach pronunciation to the learners and must have facilities such as different kinds of materials that help teachers to teach pronunciation. On the other hand, Morley (1991) expressed that teachers should not teach but they have to facilitate learner's learning pronunciation she believed that the role of teacher is like a 'coach', a speech coach and a pronunciation coach.

Furthermore, bestowing to Wells (2005) teachers should encourage students to be fluent and accurate in order to interact with native speakers. Moreover, part of the teachers' work is to be a facilitator that helps learners in their learning process. In addition, Kenworthy (1987) identifies some duties that the teacher needs to develop in the working area. She identified the following.



- **helping learners to hear.** In this part, Kenworthy (1987) says that one duty of teacher is to help learners perceive sounds. She claims that they need to hear sounds as they acquire the sounds of their first language. In addition, teachers need to pay attention that the students are hearing and producing the sounds according to the appropriate categories and help them to develop new categories if it is necessary.
- **helping learners make sounds.** All languages that exist in the world are different and each one has a level of difficulty and sounds system for that reason some sounds of English will not exist in your mother tongue. So, one technique that is used for some teachers is imitation, students need to imitate sounds but for some of them will be difficult to imitate the new sounds so part of the teachers' work is to give them some advice that help learner to make sounds.
- **providing feedback.** During the process of learning teachers need to tell learners how they are doing. Besides that, students sometimes may be overdoing something and they mispronounced something may be one reason is the way that the word is written.
- **pointing out what is going on.** Learners need to pay attention to what they are doing. Because when they are speaking they are unconsciously controlled. Therefore, they may not be conscious when a word is stressed or they say it in a different way that affects the message and the listener

misunderstands it. ‘Teachers need to make students aware of the potential of sounds’ (Kenworthy, 1987).

- **establishing priorities.** ‘Learners need to be aware of their pronunciation. They may notice that something of their pronunciation is not right so, they need the help of the teacher in establishing a plan for action, in deciding what to concentrate on and when to leave well enough’ (Kenworthy, 1987)
- **devising activities.** As English teachers, we need to pay attention to the most difficult sounds for our students in order to develop some activities and materials that help them to improve.
- **assessing progress.** Part of the work of the teacher is to assess the learner’s progress so the teacher needs to provide feedback to learners but sometimes providing feedback is difficult because students can lose their motivation.

Sardegna and Molle (2008) in their paper named ‘Empowering students with pronunciation learning strategies’ they address new roles for pronunciation teachers and they identify the following responsibilities of the teacher:

1. Facilitating learners’ self-instruction with explicit pronunciation rules, recordings, or charts.
2. Fostering learner autonomy and self-direction by encouraging learners to choose the strategies that fit their own needs, to take charge of their own learning process, and to examine the effectiveness of their strategy use.

3. Enhancing learners' self-involvement by giving them more challenging, interesting or rewarding tasks, and encouraging them to be responsible for improving the targets they choose to work on.
4. Equipping learners with perception, prediction and production strategies by overtly teaching them how, when and why use the strategies.

My own view of this is that teachers play an important role when teaching pronunciation as Morley (1991) said. Nowadays most of the classes are not teacher-centered. The Teacher is just a facilitator that helps students in their learning process. To conclude this, teachers as facilitators or coaches as Morley called them have many responsibilities in teaching pronunciation and helping learners to improve their English pronunciation such as encouraging learners to be fluent, providing feedback, correcting students' mistakes, assessing their progress, fostering learner autonomy etc.

## 2.4 Pronunciation goals

Everything in life has a goal to reach for example, for a football player one goal could be to win the FIFA world cup that is the maximum championship in the world. Moreover, for an actress or actor could be to obtain an Oscar but for some teachers and learners of English one goal is to speak like a native speaker or just to be understood. According to Kenworthy (1987), some learners of English will want to reach a native-like pronunciation because in their areas of work, some of them will have native speakers as colleagues or they will want to work in an English speaking country.

Moreover, learners who keep in mind to be English teachers they want to approach a native accent as well as they want to be familiar with different accents of English to teach in a better way. In addition, Fraser (cited in AMEP fact sheet, 2002) suggests that learners of ESL need to be able to 'speak English with an accent or accents, of their choice which is easily intelligible'. Nevertheless, for non-native English teachers just want their learners to reach comprehensibility and intelligibility, instead of native-like pronunciation.

On the contrary, non-native English teachers may themselves subscribe to the native-speaker model, leading to feelings of insufficiency, anxiety and self-consciousness in their identity as an English speaker and teacher (Golombek & Jordan, 2005)

Finally, from my perspective as English teachers, we need to set up what goal we want our learners reach in pronunciation if we want them to reach a native-like pronunciation as Kenworthy (1987) stated or just to reach intelligibility as Fraser (cited in AMEP fact sheet, 2002) supports. Moreover, as a learner, you need to keep in mind what your goal is if you want to acquire an English accent or you just want to be understood by non-native and native

speakers. Besides that, you need to be aware that there are many accents of English and you will decide which is easier for you.

## **2.5 Which English is the best to teach and learn?**

There are many kinds of English none speaks the same. It depends on the geographical area where you live. For example, in West Africa they are used to speak English for General Communication Purposes. On the contrary, if you live in an area where English for General Communication Purposes is not spoken by their inhabitants of that place you must take as your model some form of spoken English no matter what you choose.

Moreover, as an English Teacher and learner of it you need to be aware and aim to acquire a good variety of English accents. Many researchers have not come to an agreement in order to choose which English should be taught. According to Farrell and Martin (as cited in Teaching Pronunciation at Secondary level, p. 16-17), the problem as it might be thought is not unequivocal.

On the other hand, some students will have a preferred accent in mind such as British, American, Irish or any variety of English.

Furthermore, it depends on what your purpose is. In English Language Teaching exists different types of English. For example:

- **English as a Second Language.** People who lived in an English country learn it and they do not speak the language. For example, the official languages of Canada are English and French so, some of them learn English as a Second Language, and many others learn French as a Second Language.

- **English for Specific Purposes.** This type of English is related to different areas of study for example an engineer should learn this type of English because he or she wants to learn specific vocabulary.
- **English as Foreign Language.** People, who live in a country where English is not spoken and they are learning English, speak it.
- **English as a lingua franca.** Two non-native speakers speak this English.

As we can see, there are different types of English that can be useful according to the necessities of the learner. In my own point of view, teachers of English should be familiar with these types or branches of English because they will teach English according to the necessities of people as I mentioned before and according to the different areas of learning.

## **2.6 English as a Lingua Franca**

English has been increasing his power in the world due to the economic power of the United States of America. However, it is also applied in politics, commerce and technology. Gubbins and Holt (2002) say that English becomes a necessity on the business grounds because it helps to bound good business and public relation makes communication easier (p. 7-15). For that reason ‘English as a Lingua Franca’ has emerged and it refers to communication in English between nonnative speakers.

However, Meierkord (1996) describes it in terms of ‘English as a Medium of Intercultural communication’. Moreover, Jenkins (2000) supports the idea that it can be defined as ‘English as an International Language’. But when English is chosen as the means of communication among people from different first language backgrounds, across lingua cultural boundaries, the preferred term is ‘English as a Lingua Franca’

(House 1999; Seidlhofer 2001). We cannot deny that English functions as a global Lingua Franca.

There is a paradoxical situation for the majority of the users of English; it is 'English as a Foreign Language' all the verbal communication in English does not involve native speakers at all on the contrary there is a tendency for native speakers to be regarded as custodians over what is acceptable usages.

Speaking personally, English has become a world language that is almost presented everywhere as Meierkord (1996) describes that English is a medium of intercultural communication. For example, we can find it in advertisements, books, news, films etc. Besides that, as Gubbins and Holt say that it becomes a necessity in the world of business so it promoted that English becomes a lingua franca.

## **2.7 Fossilization**

Sometimes is difficult to change something in another's mind. For example, it could be difficult to change one's mind, opinion, or behavior. A teen who has been behaving oneself badly since he or she was a child will be difficult to change that behavior.

The same happens in language acquisition when a learner of certain language makes the same mistake and the teacher does not correct that mistake the learner will repeat it, known as 'fossilization'.

For example, when a learner has been studying English for a long time and he or she is not able to distinguish between /s/ and /z/ and mispronounces the word 'because' he or she pronounces /s/ instead of /z/ at the end of the word, so this error seems to be part of

the person. Moreover, when a student starts to learn English they feel they are making progress since they begin from zero and they will realize that their teacher and classmates understand when they pronounce /s/ and /z/. But if he or she continues making the same error it seems to be frozen in time like a fossil so their error becomes fossilized it is very hard to change it.

In my own experience when I was in the third semester I had a teacher who said wrong the word ‘determine’ he distorted like /dɪˈtɜrmaɪn/ instead of /dɪˈtɜrmaɪn/ I think he had it fossilized since they started to learn English so it will be hard to correct it.

Additionally, Nemser (1971) described this phenomenon as a ‘stabilized intermediate system’. Besides that, Selinker (1972) coined the word ‘fossilization’ and defined it as ‘the permanent cessation of interlanguage learning before the learner has attained linguistic structure and in all discourse domains.

Finally, fossilization is taking an important part of teaching pronunciation because some learners will have a fossilized word that will be difficult to spot-on if the teacher does not notice it and they continue growing with this error.

## **2.8 Intelligibility**

In the world of second language acquisition, we cannot deny the role of pronunciation to make a speech intelligible for nonnative and native speakers. Moreover, for some learners of English is important to reach a native-like pronunciation but some others one goal at least is to reach ‘intelligibility’ that is close to native-like but what does it mean?



Here is one definition ‘intelligibility is being understood by a listener at a given time in a given situation’ (Kenworthy, 1987). Jenkins (2000) refers to the notion of ‘accommodation’ to explore the dynamic interplay between speakers and hearers, suggesting that L2 users of English strategically make an adjustment in their speech which leads to convergence with or divergence from the interlocutors’ speech.

Moreover, we can say that intelligibility helps us to make a better speech when we talk the more words a listener is able to identify accurately when said by a particular speaker; the more intelligible that speaker is (Kenworthy, 1987). On the contrary, when a listener does not get our speech we can say that it is not intelligible.

In my own point of view intelligibility is very important because it helps us to avoid misunderstandings as Kenworthy (1987) supports that intelligibility makes our speech understandable for others. However, there are some factors that can affect intelligibility those factors will be explained in the next section.

### **2.8. 1 Factors Affecting intelligibility**

As it has been already mention, when set intelligibility as your goal you are close to native-like pronunciation but there are some factors that could affect it.

As English has been expanding over the world and according to House (2002) many countries have developed their own English and have made some modifications in grammar, pronunciation, and semantics and lexical while it can be understood in a given area also can be the source of misunderstandings for speakers who are not familiar with that version of English. Moreover, Jung (2010) says that it is part of external aspects such as the environment and the regions where English is spoken. These can be some factors that affect intelligibility.

Consequently, Acar (2007) states that one of the speaker's abilities should be to recognize at least two varieties of English their regional variations, and international English.

Jenkins (2003) carried out research in which she found another aspect that can affect the intelligibility of English she identified the followings substitutions of dental fricatives, the lack of reduced vowels, the significance of nuclear stress, and the distinction between short and long vowels. Besides that, another group of researchers says that shared or different L1 backgrounds have an impact on the intelligibility of L2 and they called it Interlanguage Speech Intelligibility Benefit (ISIB) (Bent and Bradlow 2003; Munro, Derwing and Morton 2006; van Wijngaarden 2001). Those authors support the idea that Interlanguage Speech Intelligibility Benefit helps speakers of the same L1 to have a successful communication in L2 because they share the same linguistic knowledge and they are able to comprehend and interpret their mistakes. On the other hand, some studies have demonstrated that sharing interlanguage has some disadvantages in communication (Major et al. 2002).

Hayes et al. stated that discrepancies like these suggest that the interlanguage speech intelligibility benefit is likely mediated by more factors than merely the native language backgrounds of talkers and listeners. Among other things, critical factors may include L2 proficiency of the listeners [...] and L2 proficiency of the talkers (Hayes et al., 2008, p. 666)

As I presented before there are many factors that can affect intelligibility, and it has been already mentioned that intelligibility can be influenced by speakers' linguistic background, the different accents of English that exist over the world, grammar features, pronunciation features, etc. Finally, intelligibility also can be affected by speakers' cultural background but it is still set up as a goal in language learning especially in English language learning.

## 2.9 Suprasegmental Elements

According to Kelly (2000) suprasegmental features are elements of speech that we can apply to groups of segments or phonemes. Moreover, Lehiste (1970) states that suprasegmental features of speech are associated with stretches that are larger than the segment (whether vowel or consonant), in particular pitch, stress, and duration. On top of that, according to Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (Richard, Platt, and Weber, 1985, p.281), suprasegmentals are units that extend over more than one sound in an utterance such as stress and tone. From my part, a suprasegmental feature is a term commonly used in the English teaching area that refers to the rhythm, intonation and stress of the speech.

What we are mainly concerned with here is the importance of suprasegmental features according to Shafaat and Sumaiya (2015) support that these features improve the English accent and pronunciation. Secondly, suprasegmental is part of the spoken language and what it means is different from the written language. Moreover, according to Celce-Murcia et al. (1996) learners who use improper rhythm pattern and misconnect words are complicated to understand by native speakers and if these learners use inappropriate intonation they can be seen as rude people; and if they do not use stress and rhythm, they may not be understood at all.

Besides that, Ogden (2009) said “Suprasegmental elements are important for making all kinds of meanings, in particular, speakers’ attitudes or stances what they are saying”. Suprasegmental elements are also called *prosody* which includes (stress, rhythm, intonation and connected speech) are the main features. (Gilbert, 2008, p. 41). Speaking personally,

suprasegmental elements play an important role in pronunciation because without using them appropriately we can create misunderstandings in a conversation.

### **2.9.1. Stress**

According to Celce-Murcia et al. (1996) stress refers to syllables within an utterance that is longer, louder, and higher in pitch. On the one hand, stress denotes the way we emphasize something or give it prominence but referring to the language stress denotes the sounds of the speech (Dalton & Seidholfer, 1994).

In English exists stressed and unstressed syllables Celce-Murcia et al. (1996) establish that there are three levels of word stress such as strongly stressed, lightly stressed, and unstressed syllables or primary, secondary, and tertiary stress. According to O'Connor (1980) pronouns, prepositions, articles, are generally unstressed words. On the other hand, full verbs such as *eat, love, take, try, etc.*, nouns, adjectives, adverbs are stressed words. By the same token, Avery & Ehrlich (1992) statement that English words can be divided into two categories *content words and function words*. Content words speak of those words that express independent meaning and include *nouns, main verbs, adverbs, adjectives, questions words, and demonstratives*. Those words are always stressed. Additionally, function words refer to words that have little or no meaning, but those words denote grammatical relationships. In this group of words comprise *articles, prepositions, auxiliaries, pronouns, conjunctions, and relative pronouns*. These words are always unstressed. According to Burns

et al. (1992) support that most of the unstressed syllables use a *schwa* and they say that schwa is the most frequently occurring vowel sound in English.

Furthermore, Carr (1999) says that a given word has a stress pattern he analyzed the word *kangaroo* and he says that it contains a syllable with secondary stress, followed by an unstressed syllable, followed by a syllable with primary stress as well as the statements that a native speaker has to memorize the stress pattern of each word since they are a child. Similarly, Avery (1992) states that EFL students want to know if there is a certain rule for the placement of the stress but unfortunately there is no specific rule, stress patterns must be memorized at the same time with a new word.

Moreover, Solé (1991) makes a distinction between syllable time language and stressed time language, in this case she compares Spanish that is a syllable-timed language and English that we have seen is a stressed time language. She says that the differences between them are the following:

**TABLE 2.1 Characteristics of Syllable and Stressed Time Language**

<b>SYLLABLE TIMED</b>	<b>STRESSED TIMED</b>
<b>Weak vowel reduction</b>	Strong vowel reduction
<b>Simple syllable structure</b>	Complex syllable structure

<b>Absence of secondary stress</b>	Presence of secondary stress
<b>Metric system of a syllabic time</b>	Metrical system of accentual type

**Chart adapted from Solé (1991)**

As we can see, stress is an important part of pronunciation but it could be something difficult for the learner to know where the stress takes place for the simple reason that there is not a specific rule for word stress as Avery (1992) uttered. Finally, if the learner wants to know where the stress is and pronounce the word appropriately he or she has to memorize the stress pattern.

### **2.9.1.2 Rhythm**

Music has a certain rhythm that helps to sound good, heart-beat has rhythm, and bodily movements such as walking and breathing have a rhythm as well as in nature, bird song has a certain rhythm that helps birds to communicate between them. The language also has a certain rhythm that helps to make our speech understandable for others, for instance, word and sentence stress combine to create the rhythm of an English utterance that is the regular patterned beat of stressed and unstressed syllables and pauses (Celce-Murcia, M. Brinton, & M. Goodwin, 1996, p. 152). According to Pike (1945) there are two kinds of rhythm in languages, *syllable time rhythm* which refers to those languages where the syllables tend to occur at certain intervals and as a consequence, most of the syllables have a tendency

to have the same length. Likewise, exist those languages where the syllables of a word incline to occur at regular intervals this is called as the *stressed-timed* language it means that the syllables do not have the same length it will vary. English is a stressed-time language and saying a sentence in a stressed-time language will take some time depending on the syllables that receive the stress and most of the languages that exist over the world are syllable time (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992).

Abercrombie (1964) claims that in the English language the rhythm is organized into feet. He says that the foot of the word begins with the stressed syllable and then all the unstressed syllables until a new foot begins. In the same way, Carr (1999) says that the foot is a central part of the rhythm of English. He statements that the foot of English arises in a stressed syllable; it does not matter if the syllable has primary or secondary stress, as well as unstressed syllables, are part of the foot.

### **2.9.1.3 Intonation**

It is universally acknowledged that to sound good music needs a melody. The language also needs a melody to express something different every time we speak. Intonation is often called the melody of the language since it refers to the pattern of tone changes that we use when we speak (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992). Moreover, according to Carr (1999) intonation is something that we perceive and is produced by a variety of phonetic means. For O'Connor (1980) says that the language is not spoken in the same way he supports that the voice changes every time we speak it means that the voice goes up and down and make notes, all of this mix up to create tunes added to that he says that we can say words with a different

tune but it does not change the meaning of the word but it adds something to the word referring to speaker's feelings and all of these is called intonation.

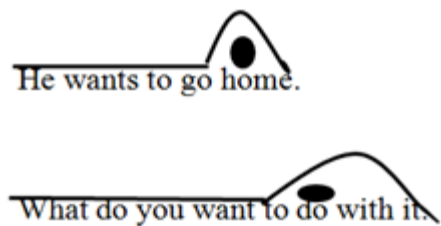
On the contrary, Celce-Murcia et al. (1996) say that to understand what intonation is, it is necessary to define *pitch*. Pitch means the highness or lowness of the voice (Celce-Murcia, M. Brinton, & M. Goodwin, 1996). Nevertheless, they define intonation as the entire melodic line that involves the rising and falling of the voice. Finally, we can say that intonation is part of the language that helps us to express something in a different way. For instance, to express if we are angry, sad, polite, etc.

Every language has a different intonation sometimes we can believe that it is the same for all languages. According to Carr (1999) in English there are *tone groups* or sometimes called *intonation groups*. However, Avery & Ehrlich (1992) called these tone groups as *intonation patterns*. They explain that intonation patterns play an important role in language because it is related to the meaning and also is related to the pitch they say that pitch function as a sign to make a difference between word meanings. If we examine the function of pitch within one word-utterance in English, we find that it does not change the fundamental meaning of the word itself. Rather, it reflects the discourse context within which a word occurs (Celce-Murcia, M. Brinton, & M. Goodwin, 1996). Avery & Ehrlich (1992) divided intonation patterns into two parts. Firstly, the final *intonation* which includes *rising-falling* and *rising intonation*. Secondly, *non-final intonation* which takes into account *rising-falling intonation* and *continuation rise*. Alternatively, Carr (1999) distinguishes it into the functions of intonation which are *attitudinal function* which includes *rise-fall tone* and *fall-rise tone*.



What is more, he includes *syntactic function* which refers to *non-restrictive relative clauses* and *restrictive relative clauses*.

Rising-falling intonation or rise fall tone often conveys a sense of strong agreement or disagreement (Carr, 1999). On top of that, Avery & Ehrlich (1992) say that this is the most common intonation pattern and it includes declarative sentences, commands and *wh*-questions and as well as tag questions. Let's see the following examples:



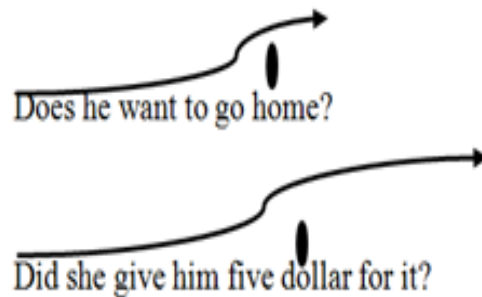
We can see that in each case the pitch rises in the main sentence stress and falls over the remaining part of the sentence. When the pitch falls to the bottom it indicates that the speaker has finished speaking.

Rising intonation or fall-rise tone often conveys a sense of agreement up to a point (Carr, 1999. On the contrary, Avery & Ehrlich (1999) say that this kind of is used to express doubts. However, rather than a sharp decline in pitch level after the stressed syllable, as with

the rising-falling intonation pattern, the voice continues to rise (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992) for example:



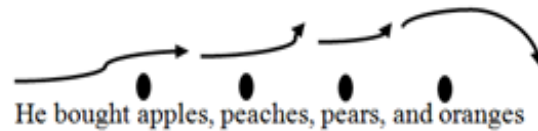
Non-final rising-falling intonation or non-restrictive intonation refers to sentences that have two different intonation patterns such as 'The members of the government, who opposed sanctions, began to shout.' In this case the sentence means that all the members were in favor of sanctions. Another example is the following:



In this case we can see a fall at the end of the sentence to the lowest pitch possible indicates that we have finished speaking.

Continuation rise or restrictive relative clause is usually used with lists. The pitch of the voice rises slightly on each noun of the list, indicating that we are not yet finished talking

but the final noun of the list, we find the familiar rise fall (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992 p.79). For instance:



In short, we can say that intonation is also an important part of pronunciation because it helps us to express something in a different way. Moreover, we have something that is called intonation patterns or groups such as rising-falling intonation, rising intonation, non-final rising-falling intonation, and continuation rise. Every group has a different function to develop when we are speaking it can rather express the speaker's feelings or thoughts.

### **3.0 Autonomous Learning in the English Language**

When you are a baby your mother takes care of you because you cannot do anything by yourself but when you become to grow up you will start to do things by yourself and until you reach a mature age you will be autonomous. However, in language learning, there is a controversy to define autonomy. Holec (1981) defines autonomy as 'the ability to take charge of one's learning' to have and grasp the responsibility for all decisions made by the learners such as determining the objectives, defining the contents and progression of learning, selecting methods and techniques to be used for better learning, monitoring the procedure and evaluating what has been acquired.

Furthermore, Dickinson (1987) says that autonomy is an attribute of learners, rather than learning situations. On the other hand, autonomy in the field of language learning is a goal for philosophical, pedagogical, and practical reasons. Besides that, the term autonomy has been used in five different ways (Benson & Voller, 1997, p.2). For example, autonomy has been used in situations in which learners study entirely on their own and an inborn capacity which is suppressed by institutional education. Furthermore, the term has been used to refer to a set of skills that can be learned and applied in self-directed learning, the right of the learners to determine the direction of their own learning, and the exercise of learners' responsibility of their own learning.

There is a second point of view and it is based on the psychology of the learner. Little (1991) place a little of psychology at the heart of the learner and he combines his definition with Holec's definition and he creates the following definition: Autonomy in language learning depends on the development and exercise of a capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making, and independent action (see Little 1991, p. 4); autonomous learners assume responsibility for determining the purpose, content, rhythm, and method of their learning, monitoring its progress and evaluating its outcomes (Holec 1981, p. 3).

Moreover, Sinclar (2000) suggests 13 characteristics of learner. The following table illustrates that:

<b>TABLE 2.2 Characteristics of Learner Autonomy</b>
Autonomy is a construct of capacity.
Autonomy involves a willingness on the part of the learner to take responsibility for their own learning.
The capacity and willingness of learners to take such responsibility is not necessarily innate.
Complete autonomy is an idealistic goal
There are degrees of autonomy.
The degrees of autonomy are unstable and variable.
Autonomy is not simply a matter of placing learners in situations where they have to be independent.
Developing autonomy requires conscious awareness of the learning process.
Promoting autonomy is not simply a matter of teaching strategies.
Autonomy can take place in both inside and outside the classroom
Autonomy has a social as well as individual dimension.
The promotion of autonomy has a political as well as psychological dimension.
Autonomy is interpreted differently by different cultures.

**Chart taken from Borg & Saleh (2012)**

In contrast to, some accounts start by defining what autonomy learner *is not*. Esch (1998, p. 37), for example, states that: *it is not self-instruction/learning without a teacher; it does not mean that intervention or initiative on the part of a teacher is banned; ... it is not something teachers do to learners; i.e. a new methodology; ...it is not a single easily identifiable behavior; ...it is not a steady state achieved by learners once and for all.*

In short, we can say that many researchers and educators have not reached an agreement to define autonomous learning and they have not placed the role of it in language learning. However, based on the definitions we can say that autonomous learning is a process in which the student takes responsibility for their own learning and he or she is in charge of the knowledge he or she acquires.

### **3.1 Autonomous Learning from a Social Cognitive Perspective**

To begin with this topic firstly, it is necessary to understand what social cognitive perspective is. According to Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory, humans are motivated to engage in different activities due to cognitive processes that use information as a result from personal action or from others' action. Furthermore, Carr (1999) says that social cognitive theory is intentional and is influenced by the environment and cognitive processes.

Besides that, Ponton & Rhea (2006) say that autonomous learning is the result of the interaction among the environment, the person, and behaviors and is the instrument through which self-motivated personal is realized and for that reason is also linked to social cognitive theory. Additionally, according to Bandura (1986) states that social cognitive theory recognizes five types of human functioning:

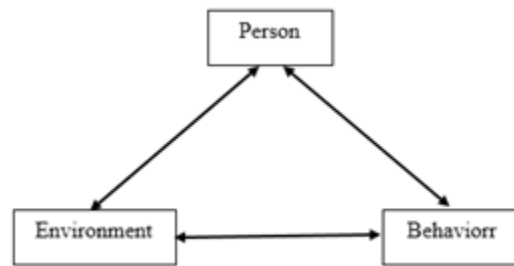
**TABLE 2.3 Types of Human Functioning**

· <b>Symbolization</b> : refers to person's ability to create mental image or
· <b>Forethought</b> : it is the ability to make imaginary images about the future that encourage the person to pursue their objectives.
· <b>Vicarious learning</b> : it refers to the ability to learn from others.
· <b>Self-regulation</b> : it allows the person to choose and manage some activities that help them to reach their goals.
· <b>Self-reflection</b> : it refers to a person's ability to reflect about the consequences of past experiences stored information in the long term memory.

**Chart adapted from Ponton & Rhea (2006)**

Furthermore, in social cognitive theory (SCT), learning is viewed as knowledge acquisition through cognitive processes of information. In other words, in SCT, the social part acknowledges the environmental origins of much of human thought and action, whereas the cognitive portion recognizes the influential contribution of cognitive processes to human motivation and action (Stajkovic, 2002, p.127).

On the other hand SCT supports that human action, the environment, and human behavior have a relationship and those aspects are reciprocal. We can represent those aspects with the following diagram.



**Adapted from Stajkovi (2002)**

In SCT this relationship does not necessarily have to have symmetry because all three factors can be present at a particular time, in a different organizational environment. It does not mean that it can apply equal and simultaneous influence on the employee.

In brief, we can say that social cognitive theory is related to the environment and the society where a person lives. This environment as well as the society can influence a person's learning process and it can result in autonomous learning.



### 3.1.2 Autonomous Learning from Constructivism

First of all, it is necessary to define what constructivism is. According to Wang (2014), social constructivism refers to the knowledge that comes from the interaction with the society. He supports that knowledge is not an objective existence independent of the subject (human being) but it is an active construction in human activity of knowing the outer world. Furthermore, the Modelo Universitario Minerva (MUM) which is an educational model created by Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla (BUAP) and constructivism is one of the approaches that is based on. According to MUM constructivism demands from student's active participation and developing their independence by themselves. Besides that, according to Perkins (1991) constructivist assumptions about learning could be summarized as "knowledge is actively constructed by learners as they are trying to make sense of their experiences, learners form, elaborate and test candidate mental structures until a satisfactory one emerges". Additionally, Piaget believes that knowledge acquisition is a process of continuous self-construction. He states that children acquire knowledge through the interaction with the surrounding world. Language is also part of Piaget's theory of development and learning. He supports that children become aware of their environment via language as they go through stages and processes language acquisition plays an important role. These stages he is referring to are *assimilation, accommodation and equilibration* (Piaget, 1973). Assimilation is the step where the children associate the new objects and events according to the knowledge they already have. Accommodation refers to the process where the children modify their existing knowledge according to the new experiences that occur around them. Finally, between these two steps arise a disequilibrium and contradiction due to the existing information and more conscious mode of thinking and the new knowledge

they are acquiring, this disequilibrium has to be solved via equilibrium process making a balance between them.

Constructivist approach acknowledges learning in context (Duffy & Jonassen, 1991) and learning of knowledge could only be achieved through meaningful activity, learning is a continuous, lifelong process resulting from acting in situations (Brown, 1989) learners should identify, pursue and reflect on their own learning goals while solving the genuine problems in the world. That is, learners are to be self-aware and autonomous. In this respect, the necessary constructivist conditions for learning (in Driscoll, 2000, pp. 382-3 and elsewhere) could be summarized as follows:

1. Embedded learning in complex, realistic and relevant environments (Duffy & Jonassen, 1991).
2. Provide for social negotiation (cooperative and social-moral atmosphere) as an integral part of learning (Piaget, 1973; Vygotsky, 1978; Bruner, 1966; De Vries, 2002).
3. Support multiple perspectives and the use of multiple modes of presentation (Duffy & Cunningham, 1996; Honebein, 1996).
4. Encourage ownership in learning (Duffy & Cunningham, 1996; Honebein, 1996).
5. Provide adequate time for learners' investigation and in-depth engagement (De Vries, 2002)
6. Nurture self-awareness of knowledge construction process (Jonassen, 2003; Duffy & Cunningham, 1996). (Duffy & Cunningham, 1996)

After defining what constructivism is, it is also important to mention that constructivism has a deep relationship with language learning. In words of Reinfried (2000) constructivist language learning should be action oriented where language is learned through collaboration, free creation is praised, and learning is accomplished by doing projects and self-teaching. He declares that constructivist language learning should be learner centered that supports individualization of learning and autonomy.

Moreover, according to the “Common European Framework of Reference for languages” (2011) promotion of plurilingualism has been of concern for the European Union, for the Education Committee has drawn some concepts in language learning and teaching. Some of these concepts are action oriented approaches that encourage active learning of the language learners, autonomy and self-awareness in learning, cognitive and social aspects of learning, using instructional technologies and diverse media in the process of teaching and learning languages, promotion of lifelong learning.

Finally, in my personal opinion autonomous learning is an important part of learners’ learning process because they can construct their own learning. Students can select the best technique to help them in their learning process as well as they can set up the objectives they want to reach.

#### **4.0 Pronunciation Learning Strategies**

To begin with this topic, it is necessary to say that pronunciation learning strategies may be defined as “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning pronunciation easier, faster more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations” (Oxford, 1990). Moreover, it is important to say that there is not much research done in this field. A study was carried out by Peterson (2000). He conducted a diary and some interviews were applied to investigate pronunciation learning strategies used by 11 Spanish learners who were at three different levels (beginner, intermediate and advanced). The results showed that the most strategies used were cognitive and memory, compensation, and affective strategies were less preferred. In addition to Peterson’s (2000) there is another study carried out by Eckstein (2007) based on Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning theory. Eckstein’s study attempted to investigate the gap of pronunciation learning strategies among students of English as a second language (ESL). He applied a strategic pronunciation learning scale to 183 learners of an intensive English program. In Eckstein’s study the participants’ scores were compared with their scores of spontaneous pronunciation on a program-end speaking assignment. The results showed that frequently noticing others’ English mistakes asking for pronunciation help, and adjusting facial muscles all correlated significantly with higher spontaneous pronunciation skill as well as showed that students who have better pronunciation used most frequently pronunciation learning strategies rather than poorer learners. Lastly, Eckstein proposed a new taxonomy that categorizes pronunciation learning strategies (PLS) into pedagogically-founded groups based on Kolb’s experiential learning theory.

There are many other studies done in this field like the study carried out by Calka (2011) who tried to create a new taxonomy based on Oxford's (1990) work and Peterson (2000). The participants of this study were first-year students of English of two private teacher training colleges in Olsztyn in October 2008. This study aimed to identify the Pronunciation Learning Strategies the students used before completing a course in practical phonetics in order to plan and receive appropriate training. She applied two questionnaires. The first one consisted of 65 statements written in Polish. The participants were asked how often they use a given way of learning using a Likert-scale. The results obtained showed that the subjects used cognitive and metacognitive strategies. The second one aimed to examine the frequency of use of particular strategies. The questionnaire was composed by 65 statements organized from most to least used. The results of this study showed that rote learning was the most popular strategy. Besides that, planning learning or revising theory on pronunciation was the least strategy frequently used.

Another study was carried out by Rokoszewska (2012) in which she applied a questionnaire to first grade English majors based on Calka's (2011, cites in Rokoszewska, 2012, p.393) Pronunciation Learning Strategies Questionnaire. Apart from this, the questionnaire investigated 18 strategies and 64 tactics. It consisted of 65 statements with a Likert-type scale from 1 to 5 where 1 means never and almost never, 2 for rarely, 3 for sometimes, 4 for usually and 5 for always.

Additionally, the participants were 63, which 44 were females, 19 were males between 20 years old, the youngest participant was 19 years old, and the oldest one was 26 years old. This study conducted in Jan Długosz University, Człuchowa, Poland showed

that students of English who on an average use pronunciation learning strategies rather occasionally, should receive some strategy-based.

Furthermore, in Turkey Akyol (2012) conducted an experimental study which attempted to gain some insights related to pronunciation learning strategies and diverse tactics that help students to learn and produce the target language. Furthermore, in words of Akyol (2012) ‘this is an experimental study which attempts to elicit a general view over the pronunciation learning strategy use and to compare whether there is any significant difference between the group of learners taking a pronunciation course and the group not attending to any specific course on pronunciation learning.’ The participants were two groups of the Akdeniz University, totalling 82 students. Forty two of them were in the first year of the four-year degree program; the rest of them were in preparatory training in an intensive English course before enrolling in the same University.

Moreover, the results showed that the most frequently rated strategy was ‘*I associate English pronunciations with Turkish pronunciations*’ (Akyol, 2012). The other most favored strategies were recording someone to hear the pronunciation and perceiving contrasts between English and Turkish. The least frequently utilized strategies were ‘*I use phonetics symbols or my own codes to remember the pronunciation*’. The other ones were repeating after teachers or native speakers, trying to imitate teachers’ mouth movements and trying to learn something about phonetics.

Apart from this Hişmanoğlu (2012) conducted a study with 38 participants in Cyprus to see if there is any difference between the pronunciation strategies used by successful and unsuccessful learners. He discovered that advanced students tend to use the most metacognitive strategies and self-evaluation as part of it. The results also showed that several

students reported that they use affective strategies such as using humor to control their nervousness and making fun of themselves about their mispronunciations. On the contrary, it was revealed that students do not use social strategies in general. He concluded that advanced English as a Foreign Language students tend to use several strategies belonging to a different group. Even so, metacognitive, affective and compensation strategies were the highest. The least frequently used were the social strategies.

Lastly, the recently study was carried out by Muhammad (2014). The purpose of this study was to investigate which are the strategies used by fourth-year EFL college students. He applied a questionnaire to 40 students and it was composed of 20 items based on Eckstein's (2007) taxonomy. The results he obtained from his study showed that the students use all types of strategies but with a different variation of usage. Nevertheless, the strategies belonging to the group of concrete experience were the most used by them rather than other kinds of strategies.

#### **4.1 Pronunciation Learning Strategies Taxonomies**

Language learning strategies taxonomy developed by Oxford (1990) consisted in two groups' *direct strategies* and *indirect strategies*. Direct strategies refer to the ones that help learners deal with the new language and are divided into memory, cognitive and compensation strategies. Nevertheless, indirect strategies are the ones that help learners to manage learning in general and consist of metacognitive, affective and social ones. In words of Oxford's (1990) 'the direct class is composed of memory strategies for remembering and

retrieving new information, cognitive strategies for understanding and producing the language, and compensation strategies for using the language despite knowledge gaps’ (pp. 14-15). In the same way, she says that the second group is composed of “metacognitive strategies for coordinating the learning process, affective strategies for regulating emotions, and social strategies for learning with others” (p. 15). The following table explains Oxford’s (1990) taxonomy of language learning strategies.

**TABLE 2.4 Oxford’s Pronunciation Learning Strategies**

<b>DIRECT STRATEGIES</b>	<b>FUNCTION</b>	<b>EXAMPLE</b>
<b>Memory strategies</b>	Remembering and retrieving new information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating mental linkages.</li> <li>• Applying images.</li> <li>• Reviewing well.</li> <li>• Employing action.</li> </ul>
<b>Cognitive</b>	Understanding and producing the language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practicing.</li> <li>• Receiving and sending messages.</li> <li>• Analyzing and reasoning.</li> <li>• Creating structure for input and output.</li> </ul>



<b>Compensation strategies</b>	Using the language despite knowledge gaps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guessing intelligibility.</li> <li>• Overcoming limitations in speaking and writing.</li> </ul>
<b>INDIRECT STRATEGIES</b>	<b>FUNCTION</b>	<b>EXAMPLE</b>
Metacognitive	Coordinating the learning process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centering your learning.</li> <li>• Arranging and planning your learning.</li> <li>• Evaluating your learning.</li> </ul>
Affective	Regulating emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lowering your anxiety.</li> <li>• Encouraging yourself.</li> <li>• Taking your emotional temperature.</li> </ul>
Social	Learning with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asking questions.</li> <li>• Cooperating with others.</li> <li>• Empathizing with others.</li> </ul>

Chart taken from Chun-Hui (2012)

In addition, according to Rokoszewska (2012) exists different taxonomies of pronunciation learning strategies in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) such as the one developed by Peterson (2000) based on the studies done by Oxford's (1990) classification and entails six strategy groups, 12 strategies and 43 tactics. The following table explains Peterson's (2000) taxonomy.

**TABLE 2.5 Peterson's taxonomy based on Oxford's Learning Strategies**

<b>OXFORD'S STRATEGY TYPES</b>	<b>PRONUNCIATION LEARNING STRATEGIES</b>
Memory strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Representing sounds in memory.</li> </ul>
Cognitive strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Practicing naturalistically.</li> <li>▪ Formally practicing with sounds.</li> <li>▪ Analyzing the sound system.</li> </ul>
Compensation strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Using proximal articulations.</li> </ul>

Metacognitive strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Finding out about TL pronunciation.</li> <li>▪ Setting goals and objectives.</li> <li>▪ Planning for a language task.</li> <li>▪ Self evaluating.</li> </ul>
Affective strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Using humor to lower anxiety.</li> </ul>
Social strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Asking for help.</li> <li>▪ Cooperating with peers.</li> </ul>

**Chart adapted from Chun-Hui (2012)**

Another taxonomy was developed by Eckstein (2007) based on Kolb's (1984) learning construct. Eckstein listed 28 PLS and related them to four stages or groups of pronunciation acquisition. The first stage is called *concrete experience* and is referring to the input and practice. The second stage called *reflection on observation* refers to noticing and feedback. The third stage talks about *abstract conceptualization* and means that learners make hypotheses about the target language. The last stage is called *action based on new conceptualization* and in this stage learners test the hypotheses made in the previous phase. The following table is Eckstein's classification.

**TABLE 2.6 Eckstein's taxonomy based on Kolb's construct second language acquisition**

<b>Kolb's (1984) Learning Cycle Construct</b>	<b>Pronu nciation Acquis ition Constr uct</b>	<b>Pronunciation Learning Strategies</b>
<b>Concrete Experie nce</b>	Input / Practice	<p><b>Input</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intent listening</li> <li>• Focusing on articulatory gestures of others</li> <li>• Active listening</li> <li>• Eagerly listening to new sounds</li> <li>• Putting self in proximal points for hearing L2 pronunciation: TV, Movies, Radio, etc.</li> <li>• Representing sounds in memory</li> <li>• Focusing on individual syllables of words</li> </ul> <p><b>Practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading aloud</li> <li>• Practicing new sounds</li> <li>• Imitating and/or mimicry of native speakers</li> <li>• Practicing 'mock talk' or imitating L2 prosody using L1 words</li> <li>• Talking aloud/role-play</li> <li>• Memorizing the pronunciation of words</li> <li>• Helping facial muscles become accustomed to accommodating L2 pronunciation</li> <li>• Practicing different sounds, first in isolation and then in the context of words</li> <li>• Repeating after tapes in a language laboratory</li> </ul>

<p><b>Reflection on Observation</b></p>	<p>Noticing / Feedback</p>	<p><b>Noticing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noticing the intricate differences between L1 and L2 pronunciation</li> <li>• Focusing on suprasegmentals of language</li> <li>• Intent listening</li> <li>• Distinguishing errors among other speakers</li> <li>• Focusing on articulatory gestures of others</li> <li>• Listening carefully to errors made by native speakers to infer key sounds or structures</li> <li>• Acquiring a general knowledge of phonetics</li> </ul> <p><b>Feedback</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-monitoring</li> <li>• Focusing on suprasegmentals of own speech</li> <li>• Using phonetic symbols and transcriptions</li> <li>• Monitoring and eliminating negative interference</li> <li>• Active listening</li> <li>• Asking for help</li> <li>• Cooperating with peers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Abstract Conceptualization</b></p>	<p>Hypothesis forming</p>	<p><b>Hypothesis Forming</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring and eliminating negative interference</li> <li>• Self-correcting</li> <li>• Acquiring a general knowledge of phonetics</li> <li>• Doing special exercises for sounds not existing in the learner's native language</li> <li>• Finding out about the target language pronunciation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Action Based on New Conceptualization</b></p>	<p>Hypothesis testing</p>	<p><b>Hypothesis Testing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeating new words according to new hypotheses</li> <li>• Skipping difficult words</li> <li>• Rehearsing sounds</li> <li>• Using proximal articulations</li> <li>• Increasing or decreasing volume of speech</li> <li>• Using a slower rate of speech</li> <li>• Using clear speech</li> <li>• Lowering anxiety</li> </ul>

**Chart taken from Eckstein (2007)**

The taxonomy most recent was developed by Calka (2011) on the basis of Oxford's (1990) and Peterson's (2000) works. The following table represents Calka's taxonomy.

**TABLE 2.7 Calka’s taxonomy based on Oxford and Peterson**

		Direct strategies
Group of Strategies		Tactics
<b>Memory strategies</b>		
<b>A. Representing sounds in memory</b>	(1)	Grouping Making up songs, rhymes, sentences, etc., to memorize pronunciation
	(2)	
	(3)	<p>Making associations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visual associating the pronunciation of a word with the place where one has seen Its transcription; associating sounds with mental or actual pictures; visualizing transcription of a given word.</li> <li>• Auditory associating the pronunciation of a word or sound with words or sounds existing in other languages, nature</li> <li>• Visual-auditory associating the pronunciation of a word or sound with a situation in which One has heard it.</li> </ul>
	(4)	Using phonetic symbols or one’s own code.
<b>B. Reviewing well</b>	(1)	Regular revisions of new words’ pronunciation.
<b>C. Employing action</b>	(1)	Using mechanical techniques, e.g. using flash cards
	(2)	Making notes: creating posters, vocabulary lists with transcription, highlighting, etc.
<b>D. Rote-learning</b>	(1)	Repeating a word (aloud or silently) several times over.
	(2)	Listening to a recorded list of words several times over to memorize their pronunciation.

<b>Cognitive strategies</b>		
<b>A. Practicing pronunciation</b>	(1)	<p>Formally practicing with sounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Phonetic drills.</li> <li>• Repeating after target language (TL) speakers.</li> <li>• Repeating simultaneously with TL speakers. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeating simultaneously with TL speakers, imitating their voice, gestures, etc.</li> <li>• Imitating mouth movements made by TL speakers</li> <li>• Listening to recordings to identify the pronunciation of new words ( practicing perception)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	Table 10.1 (Continued)	
		Direct strategies
<b>Group of Strategies</b>		Tactics
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading aloud, reciting, acting out dialogues, etc.</li> <li>• Whispering in order to ‘feel’ articulation better</li> <li>• Exercising speech organs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing speech organs in the mirror when speaking the TL.</li> <li>• Talking to oneself in the TL.</li> </ul> </li> <li>. Rehearsing.</li> <li>• Completing various phonetic exercises.</li> <li>• Doing transcription exercises.</li> </ul>
	(2)	<p>Practicing naturalistically with a clear communicative aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Using media.</li> <li>• Speaking with foreigners in the TL.</li> </ul>

<b>B. Receiving and sending messages on pronunciation</b>	(1)	Using resources, e.g. pronunciation dictionaries, books, websites on phonetics and phonology.
<b>C. Analyzing and reasoning</b>	(1)	Reasoning deductively: forming and using pronunciation rules, testing hypotheses.
	(2)	Analyzing contrastively: comparing TL sounds with sounds existing in other languages, imitating TL native speakers speaking the learner's mother tongue in order to feel the differences between the languages and analyzing pronunciation mistakes they make.)
<b>D. Creating structure for input and output</b>	(1)	Taking notes: using phonetic symbols or one's own code to write down the pronunciation of new words; taking notes on pronunciation rules and information on phonetics and phonology.
<b>Compensation strategies</b>		
<b>A. Guessing intelligently</b>	(1)	Guessing the pronunciation of new words (e.g. on the basis of their spelling.)
<b>B. Overcoming limitations in pronunciation</b>	(1)	Using L1 pronunciation if the word in the TL and in the L1 is spelled in a similar way.
	(2)	Using proximal articulation.
	(3)	Avoiding words whose pronunciation one does not know.
<b>(Continued)</b>		
		Indirect strategies
<b>Strategies group</b>		Tactics
<b>Metacognitive strategies</b>		



<b>A. Centering one's learning</b>	(1)	Revising theoretical knowledge on phonetics before doing a pronunciation task.
	(2)	Paying attention to pronunciation in general (directed attention); or concentrating on a given phonetic feature (selective attention.)
<b>B. Arranging and planning one's learning</b>	(1)	Searching information on pronunciation learning.
	(2)	Organizing learning.)
	(3)	Setting short and long term aims.
	(4)	Planning for a language task.
	(5)	Seeking practice opportunities.
	(6)	Planning pronunciation learning (selecting materials, exercises, strategies, etc.)
<b>C. Evaluating one's learning</b>	(1)	Self-monitoring.
	(2)	Self-evaluation (recording oneself to evaluate one's pronunciation).
<b>Affective strategies</b>		
<b>A. Lowering anxiety</b>	(1)	Using relaxation techniques, e.g. breathing, laughter, music.
<b>B. Encouraging oneself</b>	(1)	Encouraging oneself to work on pronunciation (55) or to speak in the TL.
	(2)	Rewarding oneself for success or effort put in pronunciation learning.
<b>C. Taking one's emotional temperature</b>	(1)	Listening to one's body.
	(2)	Having a sense of humor about one's mispronunciations.
	(3)	Analyzing one's feelings connected with pronunciation learning.

	(4)	Discussing feelings with others.
<b>Social strategies</b>		
<b>A. Asking questions</b>	(1) (2)	Asking for help. Asking for correction.
<b>B. Cooperating with others</b>	(1)	Cooperating with peers and/or advanced users of the TL.
	(2)	Peer tutoring.

**Chart taken from Pawlak, Waniek-Klimczack & Majer (2011)**

As a conclusion we can say that there have been many studies done that attempted to research pronunciation learning strategies. For example, the work done by Oxford (1990) then Peterson (2000) carried out a study with eleven Spanish students. Moreover, Eckstein (2007) attempted to develop a new taxonomy based on Kolb's learning theory. In the same way Calka (2011) developed a new taxonomy based on Oxford's (1990) and Peterson's (2000) investigations. Furthermore, we have the studies that aimed to investigate the strategies used by students to improve the pronunciation such as the study carried out by Rokoszewska (2012), Akyol (2012) et al. Finally, we can say that the taxonomy used by Rokoszewska and Calka is similar to Oxford and Peterson due to that Calka mixed Oxford's and Peterson's taxonomy. However, the taxonomy developed by Eckstein is different because he created a new one based on Kolb's theory.

## 4.2 Kolb's learning theory

In order to understand Eckstein's (2007) taxonomy it is necessary to explain Kolb's theory. In this section it will be explained.

Nowadays, Kolb's (1984) theory has been gaining much interest in the area of learning due to the ability to explain learning in different fields. In words of Kolb (1984) experiential learning theory emphasizes the role that experience plays in the learning process. It can be defined as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience"(Kolb 1984, p. 41). On the one hand in words of the Keeton and Tate (1978) demarcated that experiential learning is 'learning in which the learner is directly in touch with the realities being studied. It is contrasted with the learner who only reads about, hears about, talks about, or writes about these realities but never comes in contact with them as part of the learning process.' A similar definition is given by March (2010) contrasting his definition of experiential knowledge 'lessons extracted from the ordinary course of life and work,' with academic knowledge 'generated by systematic observation and analysis by experts and transmitted by authorities.'

Moreover, according to Kolb (1984) there are four different types of abilities that students need to develop: *concrete experience abilities*, *reflective observation abilities*, *abstract conceptualization abilities* and *active experimentation abilities*. Furthermore, Kolb (1984) uttered that learners should be able to involve in new experiences then they have to reflect and see their experiences from different points of view. Therefore, they must be able

to create concepts in order to formulate theories and they have to use these theories to make decisions and solve problems. Eckstein (2007) supports that this process can be applied in the area of pronunciation he explained this process giving an example like the following he said that a student can find the word *brought* and centers on the vowel sound. The initial exposure is *concrete experience*. As a consequence it can encourage students to consider how the vowel pronunciation differs from the expectations they have about the pronunciation this is called *reflection and observation* and this is followed by *abstract conceptualization* in this step the student might make comparisons with the pronunciation vowel in *brought* to all the same medial vowel or spelling. We can test it when a student begins to speak with prescribed vowel sounds and encounters effective or ineffective communication with the interlocutors. In either case the student can use other's reactions as a tool of concrete experience that starts the cycle again. The following figure represents the cycle.

Moreover, Dörnyei and Skehan (2003) are researchers in language and they have applied Kolb's theory to the language acquisition process. They stated that concrete experience in Kolb's theory is related to *input* in SLA. According to Eckstein (2007) input is any stimulus whereby learners encounter the language. Furthermore, Dörnyei and Skehan linked reflection on experience to the construct of noticing in second language acquisition. However, they failed to apply Kolb's theory to pronunciation acquisition.

According to Eckstein (2007) the work done by Dörnyei and Skehan (2003) is helpful but lacking since they do not take into account pronunciation. Conversely Eckstein linked Kolb's theory with pronunciation acquisition theory. The following table illustrates the relation between them.

**TABLE 2.8 Kolb's Construct and Pronunciation Theory**

<b>KOLB'S (1984) LEARNING CYCLE</b>	<b>PRONUNCIATION ACQUISITION CONSTRUCT</b>
<b>CONCRETE EXPERIENCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>INPUT</b></li> <li>• <b>PRACTICE</b></li> </ul>
<b>REFLECTION ON OBSERVATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>FEEDBACK</b></li> <li>• <b>NOTICING</b></li> </ul>
<b>ABSTRACT CONCEPTUALIZATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>HYPOTHESIS FORMING</b></li> </ul>
<b>ACTION BASED ON NEW CONCEPTUALIZATION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>HYPOTHESIS TESTING</b></li> </ul>

**Chart taken from Eckstein (2007)**

As we can see in the table above *concrete experience* is related to *input* and *practice*. Pronunciation input refers to the context where the learner is in contact with the target language or where it encounters it such as the radio, conversations or visual diagrams of phonemes (Eckstein, 2007). Practice means the act of producing the sounds either in isolation or communicative context. Both input and practice offer the learner some concrete experience with a target pronunciation of sound (Muhammad, 2014). Moreover, *reflection on observation* is linked to *noticing* and *feedback* of pronunciation. In words of Eckstein (2007)

noticing denotes the attenuation—both intentionally and unintentionally—to pronunciation rules and patterns.

Pronunciation feedback is a function of an interlocutor's ability to understand and cognitively process the pronunciation of a speaker. It is a gauge whereby a speaker determines the accuracy or acceptability of a particular utterance (Eckstein, 2007). Furthermore, *abstract conceptualization* is related to *hypothesis forming* stage of pronunciation acquisition. It is the mental process that attempts to bridge the gap between actual pronunciation and target pronunciation based on feedback from others or learner-noticed discrepancies (Muhammad, 2014).

Besides that *conceptualization* is connected with *hypothesis testing*. According to Eckstein (2007) it refers to the mental process that attempts to bridge the gap between actual pronunciation and target pronunciation based on feedback from others or learner-noticed discrepancies. Lastly, *action based on new conceptualization* is related to the *hypothesis testing* stage of pronunciation. This stage consists in making changes in pronunciation according to the new hypotheses.

Eckstein (2007) supports that Kolb's (1984) theory in the area of pronunciation can help to make sense of pronunciation acquisition theory as well as can help to categorize pronunciation learning strategies. Furthermore, he claims that experiential learning is more appropriate to be adopted as the theoretical foundation for pronunciation learning strategy categorization. In the same way in words of Chang (2012) said that Kolb's (1984) construct

better reflects the processes inherent in pronunciation acquisition, and can be further connected to pronunciation learning strategies.

Finally, Eckstein (2007) supports that in each one of the areas that Kolb's (1984) theory and the connection with the pronunciation area, learners can be benefited by knowing strategies that help them to improve their pronunciation as well as the learners who do not feel any progress or fail in any of these areas can also be benefited from pronunciation learning strategies by adopting new strategies that help them to improve their pronunciation.

To conclude this we can say that Kolb's (1984) theory is helpful in pronunciation learning acquisition. It helps us to understand some areas of knowledge and the relationship with pronunciation learning. Finally, we can understand Eckstein's (2007) taxonomy previously seen in this chapter.

### **5.3 Chapter conclusions**

In this chapter the theoretical framework related to pronunciation learning strategies used in autonomous way has been constructed in order to have a basis to carry out the data analysis of this project which attempted to give a description of the pronunciation learning strategies and the different studies done in this area as well as the taxonomies developed to classify pronunciation learning strategies. Moreover, it is hoped a level of understanding regarding this topic can be constructed and it will concern Chapter V. In the next chapter the research methodology used to carry out this investigation will be discussed as well as the setting will be presented.



## **CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY**

### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter is divided into seven sections. The first section explains the research method used for this project. Furthermore, the second section presents the context of the study. Then, there is a description of the participants. Finally, there is an explanation of instruments used to collect data as well as the data collection procedures and the conclusion

### **3.1 Method**

The present study is quantitative since its main objective is to explore the most and less frequently strategies used by ELT undergraduate students to improve their English pronunciation. According to Creswell (2009) quantitative research is a study for testing objective theories by exploratory the relationship between them. In words of Kothari (2004) quantitative research is based on the measurement of quantity or amount. It is applicable to phenomena that can be expressed in terms of numbers. In the same line, it is used to answer questions on relationships within measurable variables with an intention to explain, predict, and control phenomena (Leedy, 1993).

### **3.2 Context of the study**

This study was carried out in the School of Languages from BUAP. The school is located in downtown Puebla City, Mexico. This school was chosen because the research is focused on ELT undergraduate students and attempts to investigate the strategies that they used to improve their pronunciation and the School has the undergraduate program of English

Language Teaching (ELT). In this program students had subjects such as target language I, II, III, IV and V. Target Language V is focused on the development of speaking skill. Furthermore, students took subjects like ‘Workshop II’ and ‘Workshop IV’ both of them are focused on the development of listening and speaking skills as well as students took phonetics and phonology class. Additionally, the ELT students will be English teachers so they may have a good pronunciation or at least an intelligible communication.

### **3.3 Participants**

The participants of this research were students who were taking the research seminar II subject, they are approximately in the 8<sup>o</sup> semester of the major so it means they almost graduated from University. They were selected by “convenience” (Kuzel, 1992 and Patton, 1990 cited in Miles and Huberman 1994, p.28). Additionally, the participants were twelve LEI students from the School of languages (9 females and 3 males). All the participants are Mexican and their ages range from 20 to 27 years old.

### **3.4 Instruments**

A questionnaire was used for this study. In words of Brown (2001) “Questionnaires are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers”. Moreover, a questionnaire is a written list of questions, the answers to which are recorded by respondents. In a questionnaire respondents read the questions, interpret what is expected and then write down the answers (Kumar, 2011, p. 138).

Besides that, the questionnaire is divided into four sections personal information, background, opinions and Pronunciation Learning Strategies (PLS). The first part includes questions such as *gender, age*. The second part includes three multiple-choice questions such as *have you taken an English course before enrolling in the University? A) Yes B) No*. The third section consisted of four multiple-choice questions and contains questions such as *why do you think pronouncing well is important? A) Good pronunciation is needed for communication B) it is something that would help me to communicate better C) to avoid misunderstandings when talking in English D) it helps me to make the communication easier*. The PLS questionnaire is based on Calka (2011) on the basis of Oxford's (1990) and Peterson's (2000). It takes into account 60 strategies. It consisted in 60 statements likert-type scale from 1 to 5 where 1 stood for *never* 2 *almost never* 3 *sometimes* 4 *almost every time* 5 *every time*. This questionnaire was taken and adapted from the study done by Katarzyna Rokoszewska that is called '*The influence of pronunciation learning strategies on mastering English vowels*'.

### **3.5 Data Collection Procedures**

To gather data for this study a questionnaire was taken and adapted from the study of Rokoszewska (2012) that is called '*The influence of pronunciation learning strategies on mastering English vowels*'. The questionnaire was revised and piloted by the teacher in charge of the research seminar class and the thesis supervisor. In addition, the research participants were preferred by "convenience" (Kuzel, 1992 and Patton, 1990 cited in Miles and Huberman 1994, p.28). Finally, the questionnaire was applied to research seminar

students who answer it according to their criteria and based on their experiences. Once all the questionnaires were answered by the participants the data analysis started.

### **3.6 Data Analysis Procedure**

It implicates preparing data for analysis in order to understand the data (Creswell, 2009). The data were classified using a coding process. Rossman and Rallis (1998) support that coding is a process where the data are organizing into categories to bring meaning to information. Similarly, Tajfia (2011) says that coding refers to assigning numbers or other symbols to the categories or responses. From the data obtained, four categories were found and separated. Moreover, Dey (1993) supports that the categories should have two aspects and internal and external aspects. The internal aspect must have a meaningful relation with the data and the external aspect must be meaningful to other categories. Besides that, Creswell (2009) mentions that data analysis implicates gathering open-ended data by asking general questions and creating an analysis from the information supplied by the participants. Lastly, in order to get the results, the data were analyzed using Excel as a tool to get the information needed for this research project.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

To conclude this chapter presented the method, context, and participants, a description of the instrument used in this project, the data collection procedures, and the data analysis. Finally, the findings of this study will be presented in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS**

### **4.0 Introduction**

In this chapter, the results and findings will be described and discussed. Those will be presented in the following order: firstly, students' personal information, background and opinions. Secondly, general research question. Finally, it is presented with the specific research questions of the research.

#### **General question**

- 1) What are the strategies ELT undergraduate students use autonomously to improve their pronunciation?

#### **Specific questions**

- I. Which pronunciation strategies are most frequently used by ELT undergraduate advanced students at School of Languages of BUAP?
- II. Which pronunciation strategies are less frequently used by ELT undergraduate advanced students at School of Languages of BUAP?
- III. What are students' needs concerning pronunciation?

## 4.1 Students' personal information

In order to contextualize the study some information about the participants will be provided. This information is shown in the next figure.

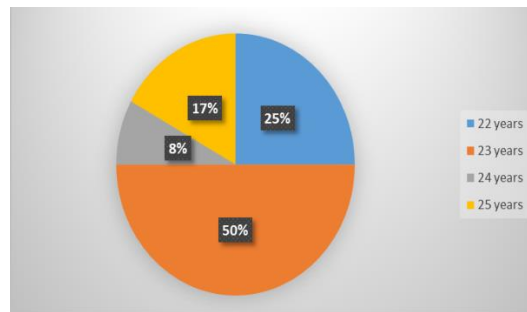


Figure 4.1 Participants' age

As seen above most of the students are 23 years old, 25% are 22 years old, 17% are 25 years old and only 8% are 24 years old.

The following graph show participants' gender

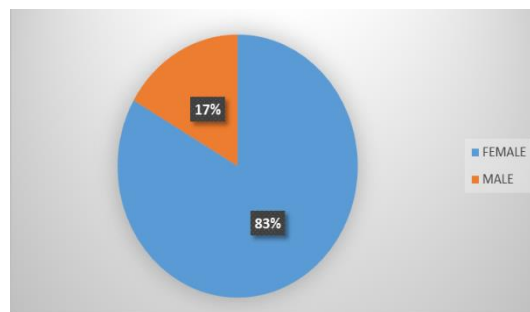


Figure 4.2 Participants' gender

As we can observe in the graph above 83% are female and only 17% are male.

Personal information about students will be provided in order to have a general idea about them. Participants were asked about in which semester they were enrolled by the time the study was carried out and this information is shown in figure below.

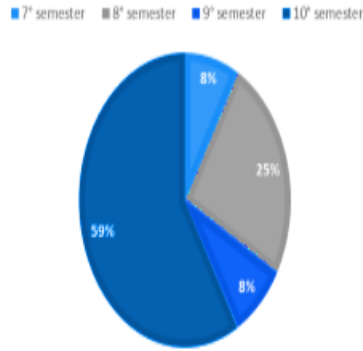


Figure 4.3 Participants' semester at the University

As it is shown above most of the participants are studying the 10° semester, 25% are in the 8° semester, 8% are in the 7° semester and the other 8% are in 9° semester.

After viewing the results obtained in students' personal information, I will explain the results obtained in the next section of the questionnaire that is called background.

#### 4.1.1 Students' background

For this study it is needed to offer some information about students' English background in order to have a wide panorama about if the participants have taken an English course before enrolling in the university. This information is explained in the next figure.

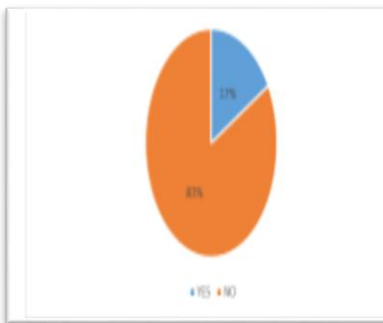


Figure 4.4 Participants' English Background



As *figure 4.4* shows, most of the students had not taken an English class before and only 17% of the participants had taken an English course before enrolling in the University.

The following graph explains where the participants have taken an English course.

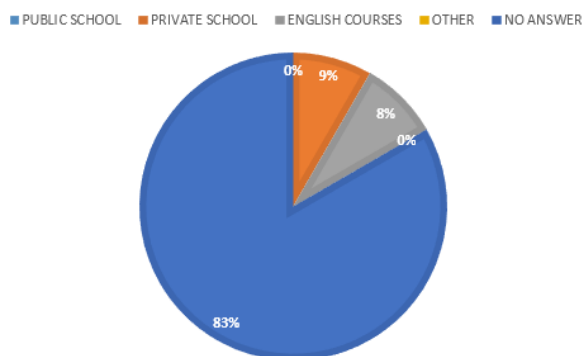


Figure 4.5 Participants' previous English knowledge

As we can see in the graph above, 83% of the participants did not answer the question *where?* Because they answered “no” to the previous question, 9% replied in private school and 8% said English courses.

Finally, the participants were asked if they have already taken phonetics and phonology class and all of them said that they had already taken this class.

## 4.2 General question

The main research question aimed to explore the strategies ELT undergraduate advanced students use autonomously to improve their English pronunciation. Pronunciation learning strategies may be defined as “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning pronunciation easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations” (Oxford, 1990). Furthermore, in order to answer the general

question and according to students' answers they used different strategies belonging to a different group.

According to students' responses from 60 strategies that the questionnaire included they chose only 38. Furthermore, those strategies are divided into groups. The first group is cognitive strategies which refers to use patterns and formulas. The second group is metacognitive strategies that helps students to coordinate their learning process. Affective strategies aids students to control their emotions. Additionally, social strategies refers to the ones to help students to learn with others. In the following graphs the results will be summarized in the following order first a general graph then it will be presented a further description from the most used until the least used group.

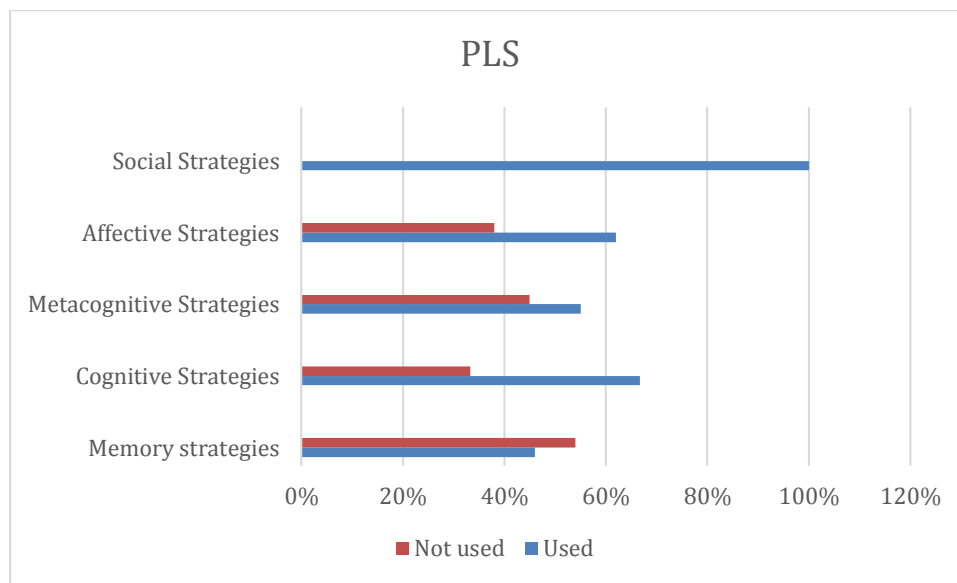


Figure 4.6 Pronunciation Learning Strategies Groups

The group of cognitive strategies is the most preferred by the participants. The results are shown in the following graph.

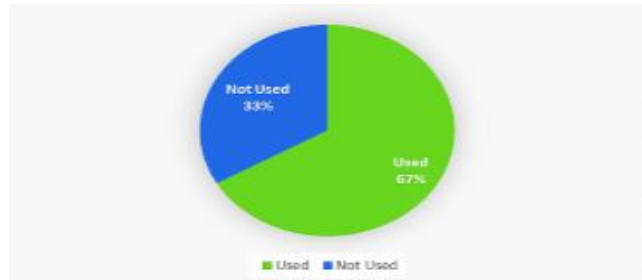


Figure.4.7 Participants' Cognitive Strategies Preference

As we can see in the *figure 4.7* from 24 statements that Cognitive strategies included, 16 strategies are used by the students that represent the 67% of the strategies, and only 8 strategies were not used by them that signifies 33 % of the strategies. In the same way, in the study carried out by Calka (2011) she found that the students used cognitive strategies the most. Similarly, Akyol (2012) and Peterson (2000) found that cognitive strategies were most preferred. Finally, Erbay et al, (2016) they reported that the most used group of strategies was cognitive.

The second most used group of strategies is *metacognitive* from 11 strategies that this group takes into account the students chose 6 strategies

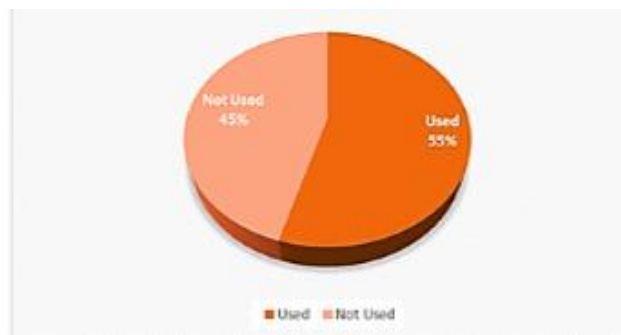


Figure 4.8 Metacognitive strategies Participants' preference

As we can see in the graph above, 55% of the strategies were used by the participants, 45% of the strategies are not used by them. Calka (2011), Akyol (2012) and Erbay et al. (2016) reported that metacognitive strategies are the second strategies most used by students in their studies. Finally, according to Oxford (1990) metacognitive strategies are for coordinating the learning process.

The third most used group is *affective strategies* from 8 strategies the participants use 5

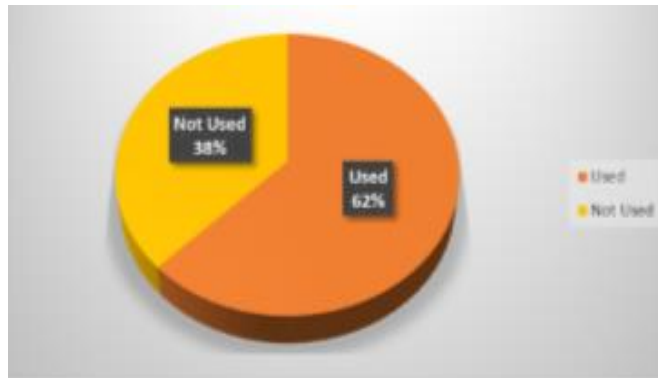


Figure 4.9 Affective strategies  
Participants' level of usage

In the graph above we can observe that 62% of the strategies are used by the students, and only 38% are not used by them. However, Erbay et al (2016) reported that in their study affective strategies were less used. The same happened in the study carried out by Peterson (2000) where she found that affective strategies were the least favored among the students.

The fourth group is social *strategies*. Students reported that they used all of them. It will be explained below.

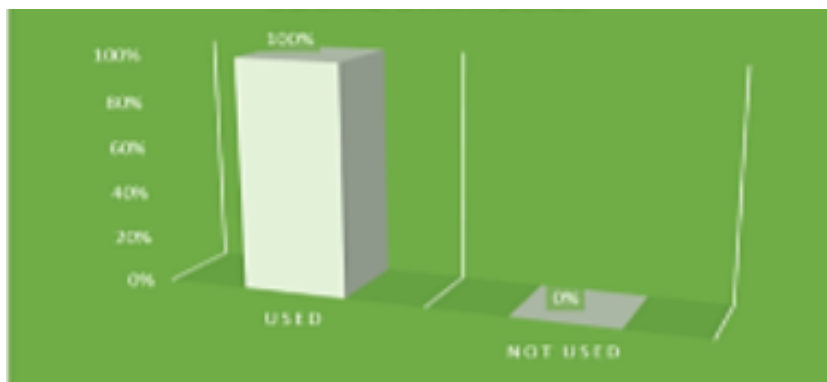


Figure 4.10 Social strategies  
Participants' preference

In the graph above it is illustrated that students used social strategies. However, due to the number of strategies this group takes into account is considered less used. In the same way Peterson (2000) said that these kinds of strategies were less used among students. Lastly, Erbay et al (2016) discovered that social strategies are not popular.

The fifth group is *memory strategies* the participants said that they use only 6 strategies out of 13 that this group involved

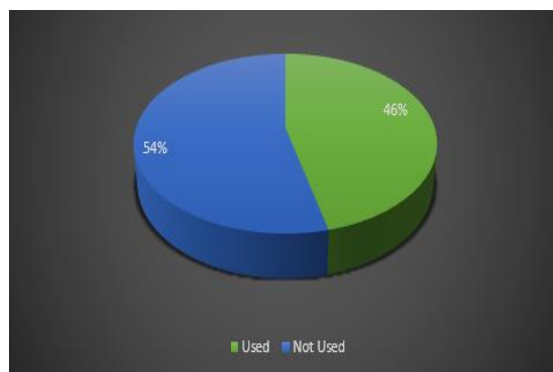


Figure 4.11 Memory strategies  
Percentage of usage by the participants

In the figure above we can observe that 46% of the strategies and 54 % were not used by them. Then, this group is less used by the participants. Correspondingly, Peterson (2000) reported that these strategies are not very popular among the participants. On the one hand, Akyol (2012) discovered that these strategies were most favored. On the other hand Erbay et al. (2016) informed that these groups of strategies were most chosen.

### **4.3 Specific questions**

After answering the main research question it is important to response the specific questions of this research which are:

- I. Which specific pronunciation strategies of each group are most frequently used by ELT undergraduate advanced students at School of Languages of BUAP?
- II. Which specific pronunciation strategies of each group are least frequently used by ELT undergraduate advanced students at School of Languages of BUAP?

Finally, it is important to mention that the students took into account in the study used a variety of strategies fit in different strategy groups. The results will be presented below.

#### **4.3.1 Strategies most frequently used**

In order to respond to the first specific question: Which specific pronunciation strategies of each group are most frequently used by ELT undergraduate advanced students at the School of Languages of BUAP? The results will be presented below. Firstly, cognitive strategies, secondly metacognitive strategies, thirdly affective strategies, and finally, memory strategies.

### 4.3.1.1 Cognitive Strategies

According to participants' answers strategy 14 which consists of practicing pronunciation by repeating words was one of the most used by them. The following graph shows the results.

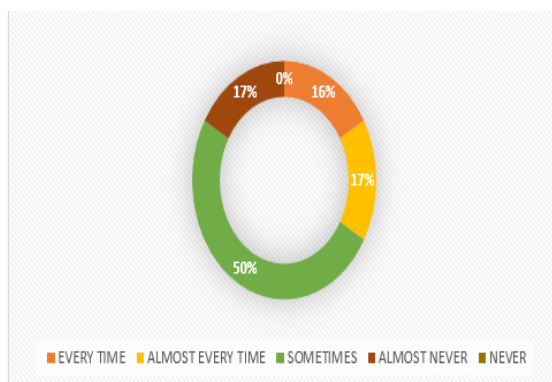


Figure 4.12 Participants practice pronunciation by repeating words

As we can see in the graph above 50% of the participants said that they use it *sometimes*, 17% replied *almost every time*, 16% answered *every time*, and only 17% reported that they use it *almost never*. Equally, Rokoszewska (2012) and Peterson (2000) found that students sometimes use this strategy

Furthermore, students reported that they try to repeat sounds, sentences, words etc. after a native speaker. The *figure 4.13* displays the results obtained from the questionnaire.



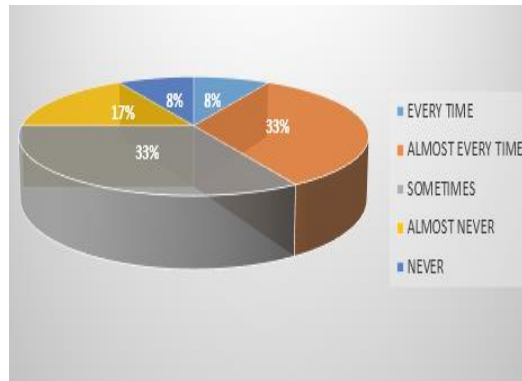


Figure 4.13 Participants repeat words after native speakers

In *figure 4.16* we can observe that 33% of the students said that they *sometimes* use this strategy, 33% reported that *almost every time*, 8% responded that *every time*, 17% replied that *almost never*, and only 8% chose *never*. In the same way Rokoszewska (2012) reported that the learners sometimes repeated after target language speakers. Nevertheless, Peterson (2000) reported that the learners every time use this strategy as well as in the study carried out by Calka (2011).

In addition, according to participants' responses they used different strategies to improve their pronunciation such as listen to the radio and/or watch TV in English. In the following figure we can see the results obtained from the questionnaire.

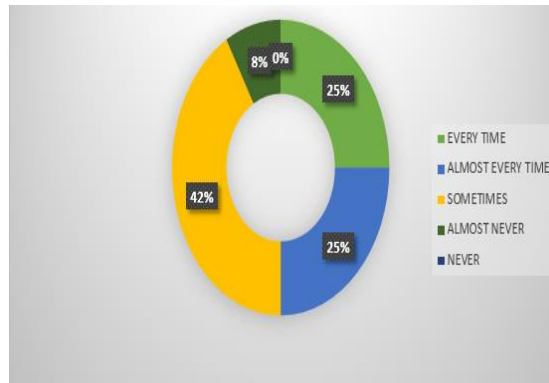


Figure 4.17 Participants listen to radio or TV in English

The figure above shows the results and we can say that 42% of the participants agree that they use this strategy, 25% said *almost every time*, 25% only 8% reported that they *almost never* listen to the radio and watch TV in English. Vahideh (2009) established that the students sometimes listen to music and watch TV. Nevertheless, Rokoszewska (2012) found that students usually use media to improve their pronunciation.

#### 4.3.1.2 Metacognitive strategies

According to students' responses the following strategies belonging to this groups are most frequently used by them

Students reported that they pay attention when someone is speaking in English in order to see how this person is pronouncing a given word. The following graph illustrates the results.

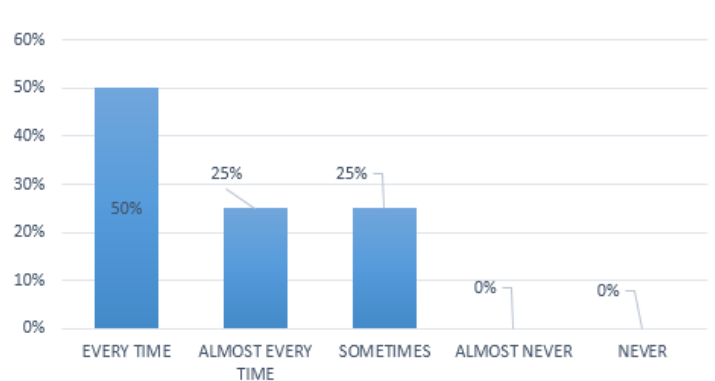


Figure 4.15 Participants pay attention to someone's pronunciation

The graph above shows that 50% of the participants said that they pay attention *every time* to someone's pronunciation, 25% reported that they practice it *almost never* and 25% chose *sometimes*. Similarly, Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) agree on that the students most of the time pay attention to pronunciation when someone is speaking.

Besides that, students reported that they try to find out ways to improve their pronunciation in English. The graph below shows the results obtained from the questionnaire.

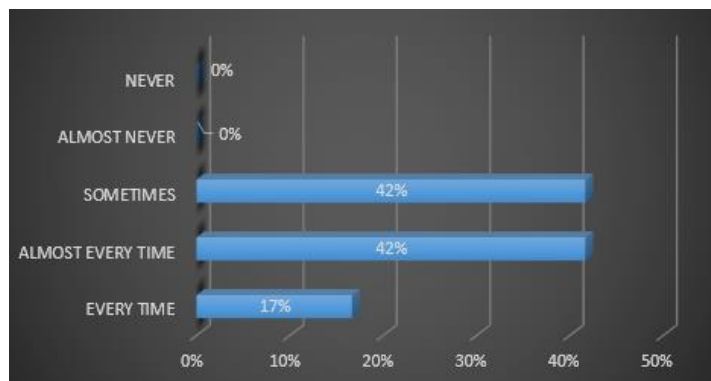


Figure 4.16 Participants find ways to improve their pronunciation

As we can see in *figure 4.16* 42% of the participants replied that *sometimes* use this strategy, 42% answered *almost every time* and only 17% agree on that *every time*. Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) reported that this strategy was most preferred by the students.

Furthermore, the participants described that they have clear goals to improve their pronunciation. The next graph displays the results.

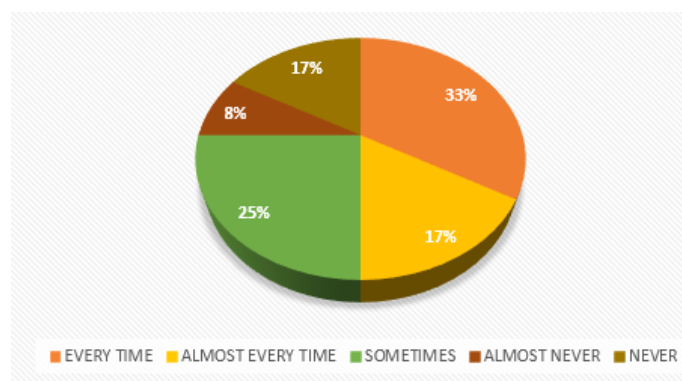


Figure 4.17 Participants have clear goals for improving pronunciation.

The graph above shows that 33% of the participants reported that they use this strategy *every time*, 25% said *sometimes*, 17% agree on that *almost every time* they have clear goals in order to improve their pronunciation, 17% answered *never* and only 8% replied *almost never*. However in the study done by Rokoszewska (2012) she found that this strategy was least used by the students as well as Calka (2011) and Murat (2012) agreed that this strategy was least preferred by the participants.

### 4.3.1.3 Affective strategies

Students reported that they used some affective strategies to improve their pronunciation. The following strategies are the ones that students used the most.

The participants of this study reported that they encourage themselves even if they think that something is wrong or when they do not feel learning. The graph below illustrates the results.

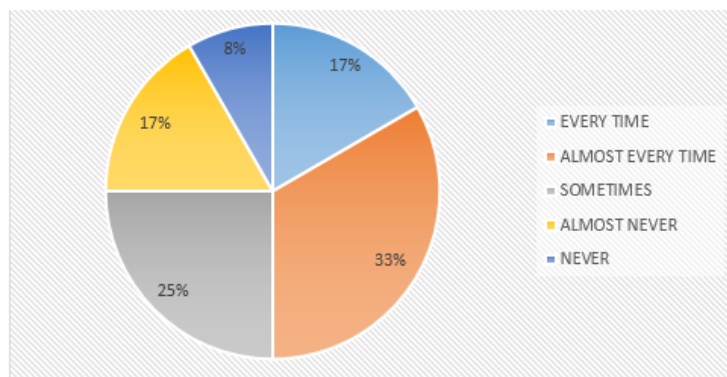


Figure 4.18 Participants encourage themselves to work on their Pronunciation.

As we can see in *figure 4.18* 33% of the participants replied *almost every time*, 25% answered *sometimes*, 17% chose *every time*, 17% said that they use this strategy *almost never* and only 8% reported that they *never* used it. In the same way Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) agree that this strategy was most favored by the participants.

Besides that, students informed that they used a sense of humor when they mispronounced some words. In *figure 4.19* we could see the results.

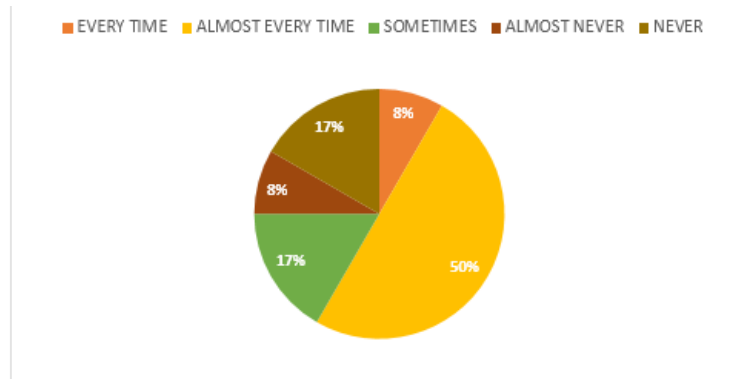


Figure 4.19 Participants use sense of humor when they mispronounce some words.

As we can observe in the graph above 50% of the students reported that they apply it *almost every time*, 17% replied *sometimes*, 8% chose *every time*, 8% of them answered almost never and 17% said *never*. Equally Rokoszewska (2012), Murat (2012) and Calka (2011) agree on that students use humor to lower anxiety about mispronunciations when talking in English.

Finally, students stated that they analyze their feelings related to pronunciation. The next figure will show the results.

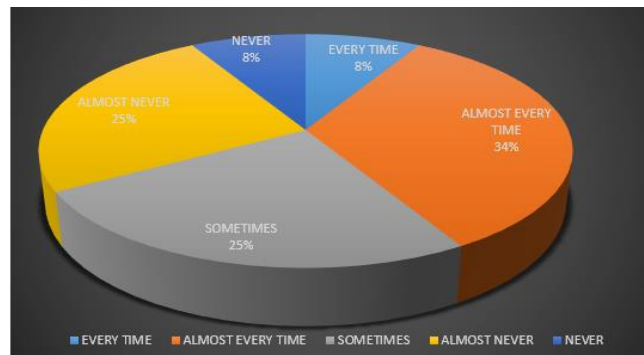


Figure 4.20 Participants analyze their feelings related to pronunciation.

The graph above demonstrates that 34% of the participants replied *almost every time*, 25% chose *sometimes*, 8% answered *every time*, 25% agreed that they use it *almost never* and only 8% said *never*. On the one hand Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) supports that this strategy was less favored by the students.

#### 4.3.1.4 Social strategies

According to students' responses they used some affective strategies that help them to improve their English pronunciation. The following strategies are the ones that students reported that they use the most.

The participants agree that they learn pronunciation practicing with other students or friends. The results are shown in the following graph.

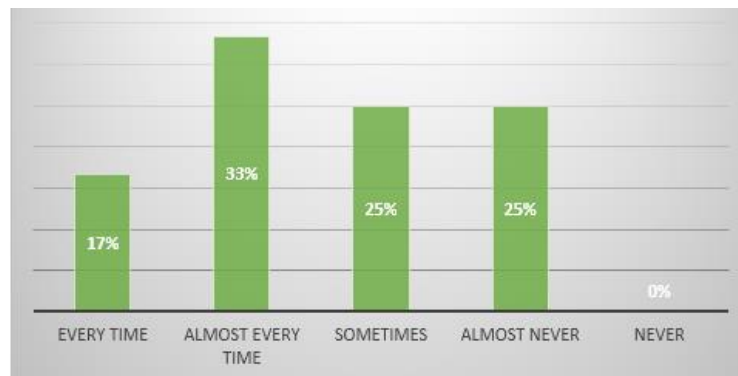


Figure 4.21 Participants learn pronunciation with others.

As we can see in the graph above 33% of the participants said that they *almost every time* learn pronunciation with their peers, 25% answered *sometimes*, 17% replied *every time*,

and only 25% said *almost never*. By the same token Rokoszewska (2012) supports that this strategy was most preferred by the students. However Calka (2011) found that this strategy was least used by the students.

Finally, the participants stated that they help others to improve their pronunciation. The following graph shows the results obtained from the questionnaire applied.

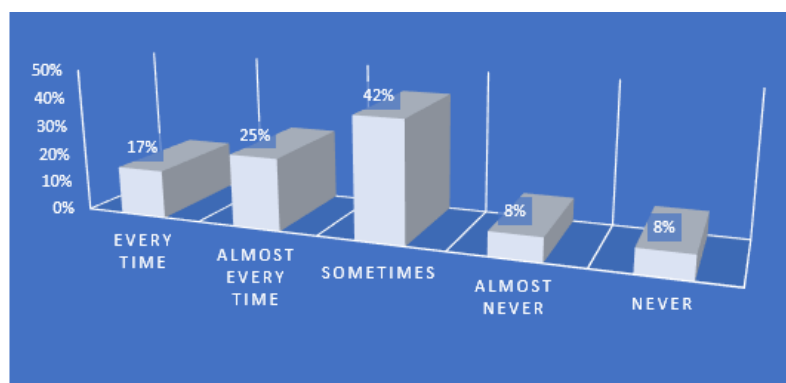


Figure 4.22 Participants help others in learning pronunciation

In the *figure 4.22* is shown that 42% of the students reported that they *sometimes* help others in learning pronunciation, 25% replied *almost every time*, 17% answered *every time*, 8% chose *almost never* and only 8% said *never*. Similarly, Rokoszewska (2012) reported that the students were involved in peer tutoring. On the contrary, Calka (2011) and Murat (2012) said that students do not give importance to cooperating with peers



#### 4.3.1.5 Memory Strategies

Based on students' responses, strategy 1 consists of memorizing the pronunciation of a given word. The frequency of usage for this strategy is shown in the following graph.

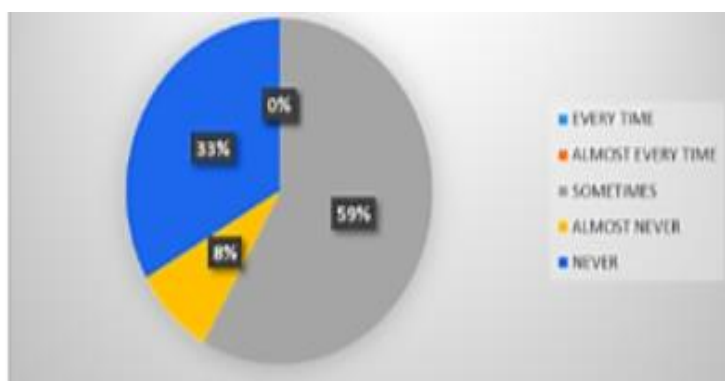


Figure 4.23 Participants memorize pronunciation of given word

As we can see in the graph above, most of the participants said that they *sometimes* use this strategy, 33% of them responded *every time* and only 8% answered *almost never*. However, Rokoszewska (2012) reported that auditory associations were less used by students to improve their pronunciation such as relating the pronunciation of a new word with existing sounds.

Based on students' answers they said that strategy 8 which consists in memorizing words by associating them with the situation they heard they agree on this strategy is one of the most used. The results are presented in figure 4.12

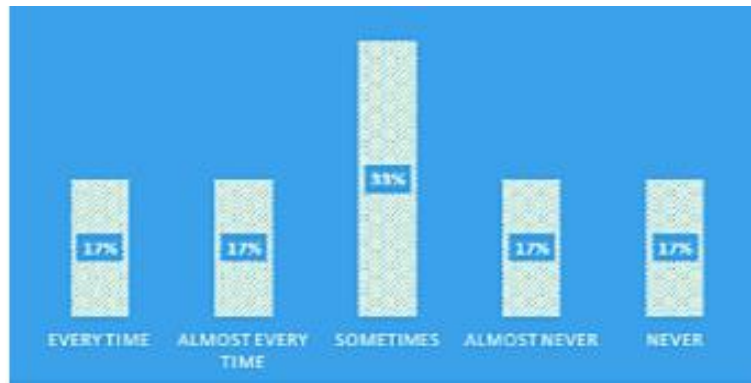


Figure 4.24 Participants memorize the pronunciation by associating them  
In the situation where they heard

In the *figure 4.24* we can observe that 33% said that they use it sometimes, 17% reported that they use it every *time*, 17% replied *almost every time*, 17% agree on that they *almost never* use this strategy. By the same token, Rokoszewska (2012) supports that the students sometimes use visual-auditory associations like linking the pronunciation with a situation where they heard it.

Finally, Calka (2011) in his study reported that many students memorize words by associating them with a situation in which they had heard them.

According to the results obtained from the questionnaire students agree on that strategy 9 which refers to memorizing pronunciation of words by repeating them many times is one of the most used by them. The following graph shows the results.

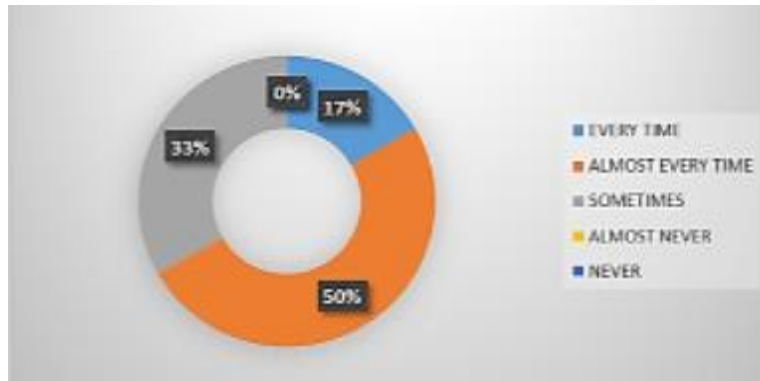


Figure 4.25 Participants memorize pronunciation of words by repeating  
By repeating them many times

In the *figure 4.25* it is noticeable that 50% of the participants reported that they use this strategy *almost every time*, 33% said that they use it *sometimes* and only 17% of them agree that they practice it *every time*. Similarly, Rokoszewska (2012) uttered that this strategy was the most often used by the students and eventually Calka (2011) and Eckstein (2007) found that the students memorize words that are difficult to pronounce.

Moreover, strategy 11 refers to memorizing the pronunciation of a given word by relating it with a context. According to students' responses it is one of the most used. The figure 4.26 illustrates the results.

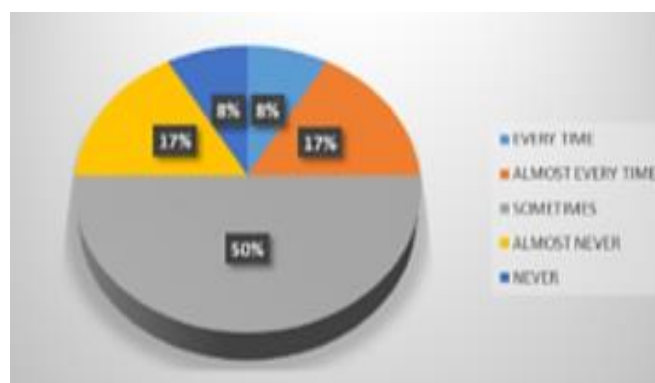


Figure 4.26 Participants memorize words by putting in a context

As we can see in the graph above most of the students said that they use this strategy *sometimes*, 17% replied that *almost every time*, 17 % answered *almost never*, 8% agreed that they use it *every time* and only 8% reported that they use it *never*. However, in the study carried out by Rokoszewska (2012) this strategy was less common use by the students as well as in the study done by Calka (2011).

### 4.3.2.1 Strategies least frequently used

In this part the second specific question: Which specific pronunciation strategies of each group are least frequently used by ELT undergraduate advanced students at the School of Languages of BUAP? Will be answered. The results will be presented below. Firstly, cognitive strategies, secondly metacognitive strategies, thirdly social strategies, and finally memory strategies.

### 4.3.2.2 Cognitive Strategies

The following results display the least frequently strategies used by ELT undergraduate students.

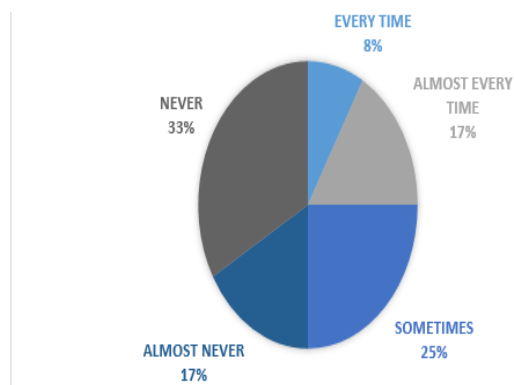


Figure 4.27 Participants speak with foreigners to practice pronunciation.

As we can see in the graph above 33% of the participants said that they *never* speak to foreigners in English, 17% answered *almost never*, 25% chose *sometimes*, 17% replied *almost every time* and only 8% responded *every time*. On the one hand Rokoszewska (2012)

and Calka (2011) supports that students always speak with foreigners in order to practice and improve their pronunciation.

Besides that, students reported that they do not observe themselves making movements of the mouth while they speak in English. The following graph shows the results.

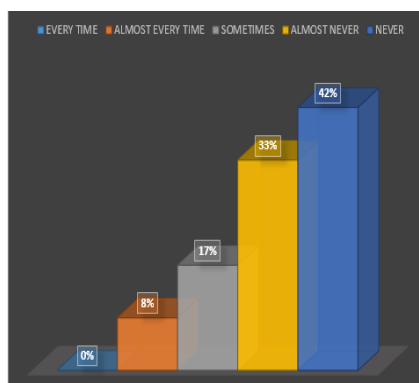


Figure 4.28 Participants observe movements of articulators.

The graph above shows that 42% of the students *never* pay attention to the movements when talking in English, 33% answered *almost never*, 17% reported that *sometimes* they pay attention to that, and only 8% agree on that *almost every time*. Equally Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) support that the students *never* observe their movements when talking in English. On the contrary, Erbay et al. (2016) found that students usually pay attention to their movements.

What is more, according to students' answers they do not practice any exercise to make jaw and lips flexible. The results are shown in the following graph.

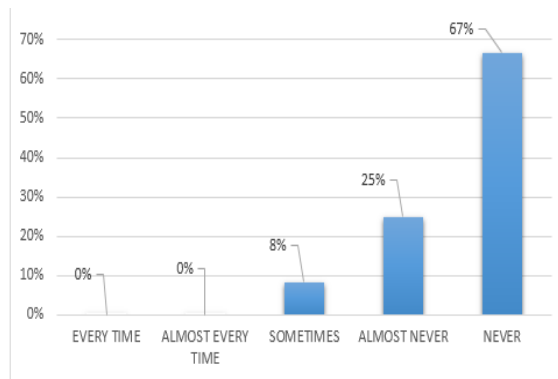


Figure 4.29 Participants do exercises to make their jaw and lips flexible.

In *figure 4.29* we can see that 67% of the participants *never* do exercises to improve their pronunciation, 25% replied *almost never* and only 8% chose *sometimes*. In the same way, Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) agree that students never exercise speech organs.

#### 4.3.2.3 Metacognitive strategies

According to students' responses' these strategies were least favored by them.

Moreover, students agreed that they never take a look of theoretical knowledge before practicing pronunciation of a given word. The results are displayed in the following graph.

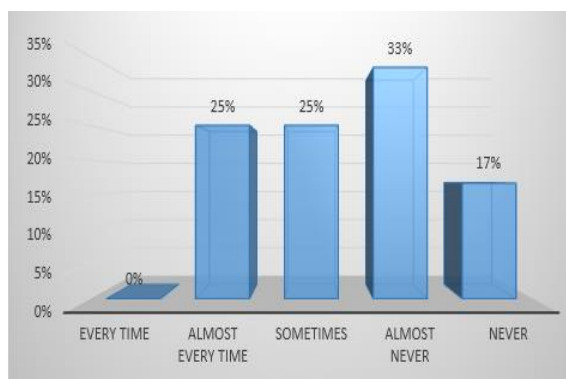


Figure 4.30 Participants take a look of theoretical knowledge before practicing a given word.

In *figure 4.30* we can observe that 33% of the students *almost never* revise theoretical knowledge before practicing, 25% of them replied *sometimes*, 17% reported that they *never* use it and 25% answered *almost every time*. By the same token, Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) reported that this strategy was not favored by the students.

Apart from this, students reported that they do not plan or set time for learning pronunciation. The following graph illustrates the results obtained from the questionnaire applied.

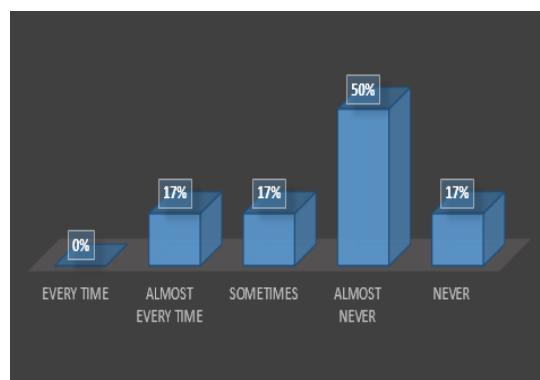


Figure 4.33 Participants plan or set up time for pronunciation learning.



The graph above shows that 50% of the students *almost never* plan their pronunciation learning, 17% answered *never*, 17% replied *sometimes* and 17% chose *almost every time*. Correspondingly, Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) agree on that the students never plan pronunciation by selecting materials or strategies.

#### 4.3.2.4 Affective Strategies

According to the results obtained from the questionnaire applied this strategy is least preferred by ELT undergraduate students from the School of languages of BUAP.

Additionally, according to students' responses they do not try to relax when they read or speak in English even if they feel nervous. In *figure 4.31* are shown the results obtained from the questionnaire applied.

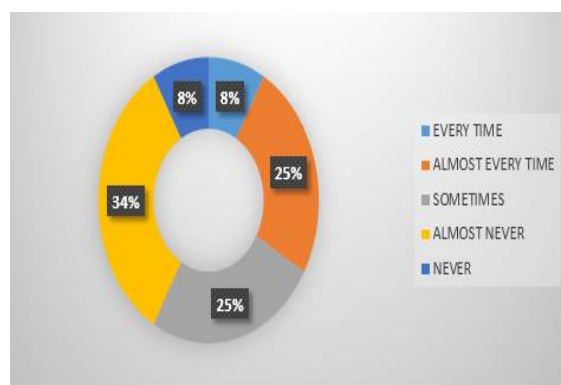


Figure 4.31 Participants try to relax when talking in English

As we can see in the graph above 34% of the students reported that they *almost never* try to relax if they feel afraid of reading or speaking aloud, 25% said *sometimes*, 8% replied *never*, 25% agreed that they *almost every time* use it and only 8% chose *every time*. However, Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) found that the students quite often used relaxation techniques.

On top of that, students reported that they do not encourage themselves to speak in English. In *figure 4.32* are shown the results obtained from the questionnaire applied.

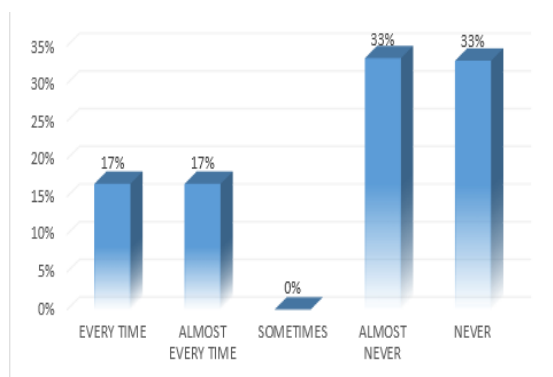


Figure 4.32 Participants do not encourage themselves to speak in English.

In the graph above is shown that 33% of the participants *never* encourage themselves to speak in English, 33% said that *almost never*, 17% replied *almost every time* and 17% answered *every time*. Nevertheless, Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) supports that the students quite often encourage themselves to speak in English even if their pronunciation is not good.

#### 4.3.2.5 Memory strategies

According to students' responses the following strategies were least preferred by them. Students reported that they memorize the pronunciation of new words by remembering the location of their transcription on the page, board. The results are shown in the following graph.

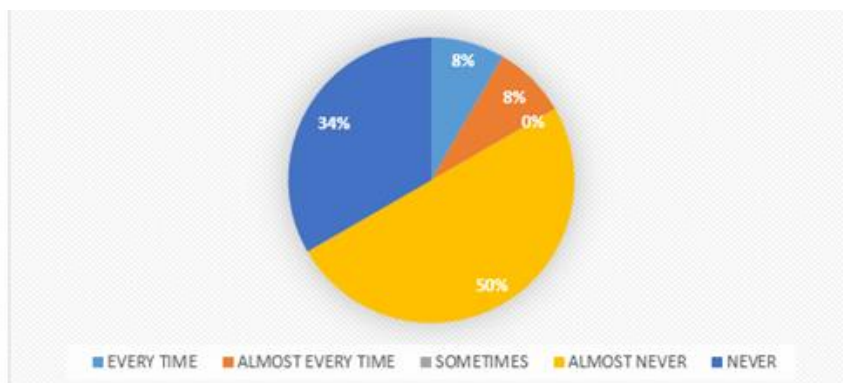


Figure 4.33 Participants memorize the pronunciation Of a word by remembering the locations.

As it is shown in the graph above 50% of the participants said that they *almost never* memorize a new word by remembering the location, 34% reported that *never* apply it, 8% answered *almost every time* and only 8% replied *every time*. On the contrary, Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) reported that the students link the pronunciation of a new word with the place where they have seen its transcription.

According to students' answers they record the pronunciation of people who pronounce well and they try to memorize the words. In *figure 4.34* are shown the results.

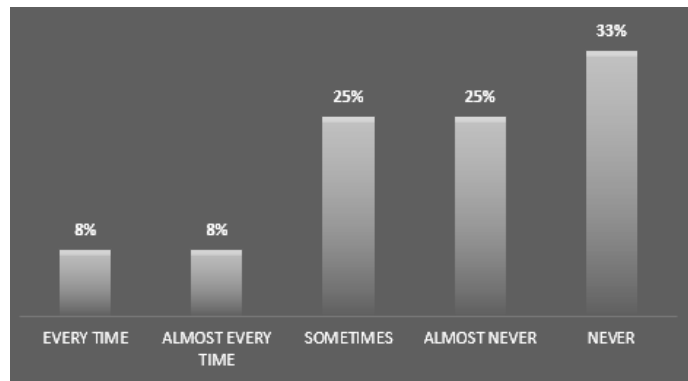


Figure 4.34 Participants record words whose pronunciation they want to memorize and listen to the recording several times over.

The participants agree that they do not use any material or visual aids to learn pronunciation of new words. The following graph illustrates the results obtained from the questionnaire.

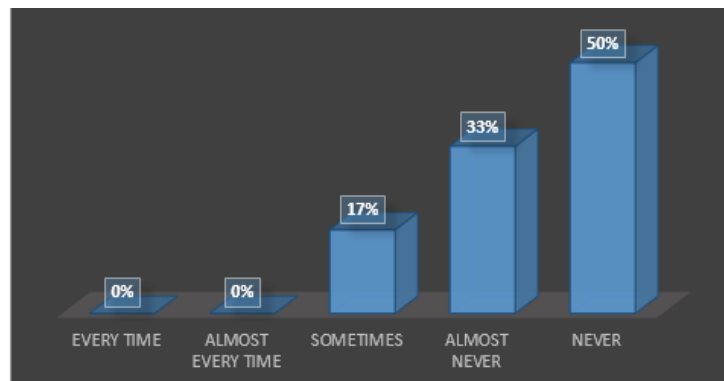


Figure 4.35 Participants use flash cards which they put from 'I want to learn' pile to 'I haven't learnt' pile

As we can see in the figure above 50% of the participants replied that they *never* use flash cards in order to improve their pronunciation, 33% answered *almost never* and only

17% responded *sometimes*. In the same way Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) agree on that the students never use mechanical techniques such as flash cards.

#### 4.4 Students opinions

In order to understand the findings of this study some discoveries about what students think about pronunciation will be explained. The following graph represents the results:

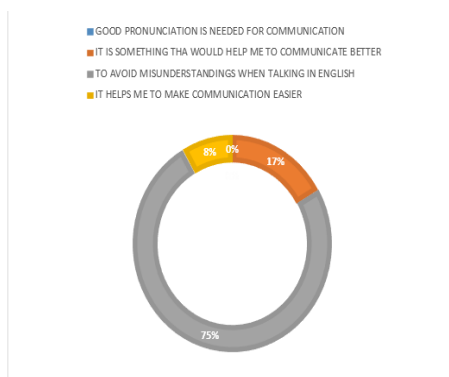


Figure 4.36 Importance of pronunciation for participants

As we can see in *figure 4.36* most of the students think that pronunciation is important to avoid misunderstandings when talking in English as Kenworthy (1987) supports that it is important to teach pronunciation in an EFL classroom to avoid misunderstandings when talking in English. Furthermore, 17% of the participants supports that pronouncing well is important because it is something that would help them to communicate better as Kenworthy

(1987) postulates that ‘Language learners often show enthusiasm for pronunciation. They feel it is something that would help them to communicate better’ (p.4).

Finally, 8% of the students believe that pronouncing well is important because it helps them to make communication easier as Tennant (2007) says that the teachers need to help students to make their speech intelligible in order to make the communication easier.

Besides that, it is also important to know what participants think about their phonetics and phonology classes. This following graph presents the results

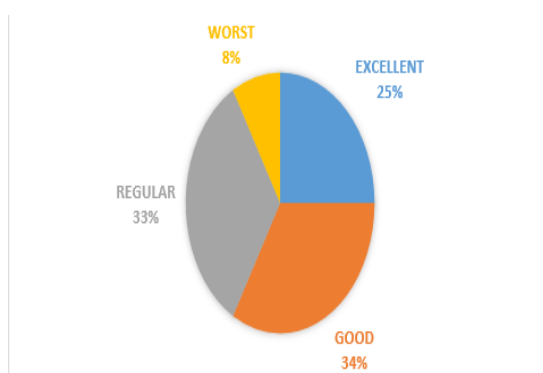


Figure 4.37 Participants’ thoughts about their phonetics and phonology class

As we can see in the graph above 34% of the participants say that their ‘phonetics and phonology classes were good, 33% of them think that was regular, 25% of the participants support that it was excellent and only 8% of them report that it was worse.

Moreover it is important to know if they think it is needed to add more courses of phonetics and phonology to the curricula. In *figure 4.38* the results will be explained.



Figure 4.38 Necessity of adding more courses of Phonetics and phonology.

As we can see in *figure 4.38* 75% of the participants answered ‘yes’ and only 20% say ‘no’. It is that more than 50% of the students agree that more courses should be added.

Additionally, students were asked how many courses of phonetics and phonology should be added. The results of this question are shown in the following graph.

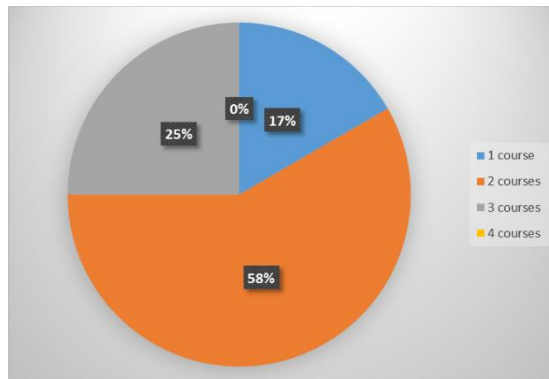


Figure 4.39 Courses of phonetics and phonology should be added to the curricula.

Moreover, 58% agree that 2 courses of phonetics and phonology courses should integrate the curricula, 25% support the idea that 3 courses are necessary and only 17% decided that only 1 course is needed.

#### **4.5 Chapter conclusions**

This chapter presented the results obtained from the Pronunciation Learning Strategies Questionnaire. The collected data was done with the purpose to find answers to the research questions of the project. In the next chapter we will finish the project with the conclusions and some important findings that this study revealed.



## CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

### 5.0 Chapter overview

After having presented the results of this research some important conclusions about the strategies used by ELT undergraduate advanced students to improve their pronunciation autonomously will be presented. Furthermore, a reflection and some suggestions for further research will also be mentioned.

### 5.1 Discussions to research questions, findings and their significance

As mentioned before, the present research was exploratory that collected opinions and thoughts and the strategies used by twelve LEI students from the School of Languages at the BUAP so we will avoid making generalizations. The main objectives of this study were to explore the different strategies ELT undergraduate advanced students at the School of Languages of BUAP used autonomously to improve their pronunciation in English and to explore and describe the most and least strategies frequently used by them as well as students' needs concerning pronunciation.

**GRQ: What are the strategies ELT undergraduate students use autonomously to improve their pronunciation?**

The answer of this research question is divided into five groups. Firstly, cognitive strategies, secondly metacognitive strategies, thirdly affective strategies, then social strategies and lastly, memory strategies.

Firstly, the results of this project shows that LEI advanced students use cognitive strategies the most. Similarly, in the study carried out by Calka (2011) she found that the students preferred this kind of strategy the most. In the same line, Akyol (2012) and Peterson (2000) found that cognitive strategies were most preferred. Finally, Erbay et al, (2016) reported that the most used group of strategies was cognitive.

Secondly, the second group of strategies most used by them was metacognitive strategies. According to Oxford (1990) this group of strategies are for coordinating the learning process. It means that the students try to find ways to improve the pronunciation. Calka (2011), Akyol (2012) and Erbay et al. (2016) reported that metacognitive strategies are the second group of strategies most used by students in their studies.

Moreover, the third group of strategies most favored by the participants was affective strategies. However, Erbay et al (2016) reported that in their study affective strategies were less used. The same happened in the study carried out by Peterson (2000) where she found that affective strategies were the least favored among the students.

Besides that, the groups of strategies least favored by the students were social and memory strategies. In the same way Peterson (2000) said that these kinds of strategies were less used among students. Likewise, Erbay et al (2016) discovered that social strategies are not popular. Finally, according to Peterson (2000) reported that memory strategies are not very popular among the participants. On the one hand, Akyol (2012) discovered that these strategies were most favored. On the other hand Erbay et al. (2016) informed that this group of strategies were most chosen.

**SRQ1. Which pronunciation strategies are most frequently used by ELT undergraduate advanced students at the School of Languages of BUAP?**

The answer of this research question is divided into five parts. First, memory strategies. Second, cognitive strategies. Third, metacognitive strategies, then affective strategies. Lastly, social strategies.

Firstly, the students said that they memorize the pronunciation of certain words by associating them with their mother tongue or sounds of machines, animals and devices. It is fascinating that the students mention that because in certain ways the Teachers of phonetics and phonology can create some strategies that help students to improve their pronunciation based on this. However, Rokoszewska (2012) reported that auditory associations were less used by students to improve their pronunciation such as relating the pronunciation of a new word with existing sounds. Moreover, the results showed that the students memorize the sounds of new words with the context where they heard them also they repeat it several times in order to memorize their pronunciation. By the same token, Rokoszewska (2012) supports that the students sometimes use visual-auditory associations like linking the pronunciation with a situation where they heard it. Likewise, Calka (2011) found that many students memorize words by relating them with the situations where they listened to. Moreover, Rokoszewska (2012) uttered that students repeat words many times and eventually Calka (2011) and Eckstein (2007) found that the students memorize words that are difficult to pronounce by repeating them.

Finally, they said that they remember the pronunciation of certain words by putting in a context. It means that the students need a context in order to learn and memorize the pronunciation of new words so it is necessary that the teacher have to give students a context to help them to improve their pronunciation. However, in the study carried out by Rokoszewska (2012) this strategy was less common use by the students as well as in the study done by Calka (2011).

Secondly, in the group of cognitive strategies the students reported that they practice pronunciation of certain sounds by repeating it in a different way such as changing the speed, dividing the words into syllables. I have to mention that they use it *sometimes*. Equally, Rokoszewska (2012) and Peterson (2000) found that students sometimes use this strategy

Furthermore, most of the students reported that they sometimes practice pronunciation by repeating after a native speaker. Nevertheless, Peterson (2000) informed that the learners every time use this strategy as well as in the study carried out by Calka (2011).

Finally, students watch TV or listen to radio in English to improve their English pronunciation. Vahideh (2009) established that the students sometimes listen to music and watch TV. Nevertheless, Rokoszewska (2012) found that students usually use media to improve their pronunciation. As far as I am concerned TV and radio and other electronic devices can be very helpful to improve the pronunciation especially in a context where there are not many native speakers of English.

Thirdly, in the group of metacognitive strategies we can find that the students every time pay attention to the pronunciation when someone is speaking in English for that reason I think that teachers of English must have a good pronunciation or at least intelligible pronunciation because teachers are the first model that the students have in pronunciation. Similarly, Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) agree on that the students most of the time pay attention to pronunciation when someone is speaking. Therefore, the participants of this study have to reach a good level of pronunciation because they are going to be English teachers. What is more, most of the students are interested in improving their pronunciation because they said that they look for ways that help them to improve it. Similarly, Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) described the same in their studies.

Lastly, the participants reported that they have clear goals to improve their pronunciation. It is fascinating that they mentioned that because it is important to have clear goals in pronunciation especially when you are going to be English teacher and pronunciation could be your presentation card. However, in the study done by Rokoszewska (2012) she found that this strategy was least used by the students as well as Calka (2011) and Murat (2012) agreed that this strategy was least preferred by the participants.

After that, in the group of affective strategies the students described that they every time encourage themselves to improve their pronunciation even though they think that is difficult or even if they do not feel progress. It means that they work on pronunciation even if they face problems with that. . In the same way Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) agree that this strategy was most favored by the participants. Besides that, students informed that they make fun of someone or themselves when talking in English to lower anxiety.

Equally Rokoszewska (2012), Murat (2012) and Calka (2011) agree that students use humor to lower anxiety about mispronunciations. In my point of view using humor may help students to lower anxiety in certain situations such as a lecturer, a speech etc. Because humor makes you feel comfortable.

Finally, the last group of strategies is social strategies. In this group we can find that the strategies most favored were learning pronunciation with their peers or friends and helping others with their pronunciation. By the same token Rokoszewska (2012) supports that this strategy was most preferred by the students. However, Calka (2011) found that learning pronunciation with others was least used by the students. Moreover, according to Rokoszewska (2012) reported that the students were involved in peer tutoring. On the contrary, Calka (2011) and Murat (2012) said that students do not give importance to cooperating with peers and helping others with their pronunciation. In my point of view, it is interesting that the students revealed that because as future English teachers we can create some workshops that help students to improve their pronunciation.

**SQR2. Which pronunciation strategies are less frequently used by ELT undergraduate advanced students at the School of Languages of BUAP?**

In the following paragraphs will be described the results that will answer this specific question.

At the first sight we have memory strategies. According to students' answers they never memorize the pronunciation of a new word by remembering where they saw its transcription on a page, book or board. It means that students would not improve their pronunciation through this strategy or if they saw the transcription of a new word in a book

they will forget the page. On the contrary, Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) reported that the students link the pronunciation of a new word with the place where they have seen its transcription. Moreover, students never record someone's pronunciation in order to memorize and listen to the audio several times trying to imitate him or her. It means that the teachers should avoid assigning this type of work to help students to have a good pronunciation. Likewise, Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) found that students never listen to a recorded list of words several times over to memorize their pronunciation.

Finally, students reported that they never create flashcards to improve their pronunciation and classify them into what they want to learn and have not learned. . In the same way Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) agree on that the students never use mechanical techniques such as flash cards. However, speaking personally, this strategy could be useful to learn pronunciation.

Secondly, in the group of cognitive strategies the students reported that they never speak to foreigners' speakers perhaps because in the context that where we are there are not many foreigner speakers who students can practice with. On the one hand Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) supports that students always speak with foreigners in order to practice and improve their pronunciation.

Apart from this, students never use the strategy to practice in front of a mirror to observe their movements of speech organs. It means that if an English teacher suggests students to practice in front of a mirror they will never do it. Equally Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) support that the students *never* observe their movements when talking in English. On the contrary, Erbay et al. (2016) found that students usually pay attention to their movements. However, for my part I think this strategy can be useful. Finally, students never

do exercises suggested by speech therapists so it means that they do not go to speech therapists if they have problems. In the same way, Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) agree that students never exercise speech organs.

In third place we have metacognitive strategies. On the most striking aspects, the students do not like to check theory related to pronunciation before practicing a new word. It seems that students prefer to practice pronunciation in different ways. By the same token, Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) support that this strategy was not favored by the students.

Lastly, students never plan and set time to learn and practice pronunciation. Correspondingly, Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) agree on that the students never plan pronunciation by selecting materials or strategies. Nevertheless, in my point of view students might have a plan to improve their pronunciation because as I have already mentioned before they are going to be English teachers.

Finally, affective strategies are the last group. Students do not try to relax when they read aloud or speak in English. However, Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) found that the students quite often used relaxation techniques. In the same way, it seems to me that students should try to use relaxation techniques to pronounce well when talking in English especially if they are talking in front of a group. As a final point, students never encourage themselves to speak in English even when they are afraid that their pronunciation is not good. Nevertheless, Rokoszewska (2012) and Calka (2011) supports that the students quite often encourage themselves to speak in English even if their pronunciation is not good.



In my point of view, students have to cheer themselves up to speak in English even if they make mistakes. This would help them to improve their pronunciation.

### **SQR3. What are students' opinions concerning pronunciation?**

In this part we will explore what students think about pronunciation. We will see if the pronunciation is important for them, what they think about their phonetics and phonology classes and lastly if they think that more phonetics and phonology courses should be added to the curricula.

It is surprising that most of the students revealed that pronunciation is important for them to avoid misunderstandings while talking in English. It seems that LEI students are worried about their pronunciation. In the same way, Kelly (2000) mentions that it is important to teach pronunciation to avoid misunderstandings when talking in English.

Besides that most of the students reported that their phonetics and phonology classes were good, 33% replied that were regular, 25% of the students said that were excellent and 8% said that were worst. It is surprising that 25% of the students have said that their classes were excellent. In the same line, Kelly (2000) mentions that pronunciation is usually neglected by the teachers and it can show that teachers are not able to teach pronunciation. Correspondingly, Baker (1990) uttered that in EFL classes there is not time allocated for pronunciation and most of the classes are focused on grammar and vocabulary. Finally, I am concerned about what teachers teach in their phonetics and phonology classes.

Lastly, most of the participants responded that more courses of phonetics and phonology should be added to the curricula. Moreover, they agree that at least two courses

should be part of it, 25% of them claim for 3 courses. One of the most striking of the question is that students claim for more courses of phonetics and phonology in order to improve their English pronunciation. In the same line, according to Kenworthy (1987) postulates that students often show interest in pronunciation because they think that pronunciation would help them to communicate better. I feel strongly that one course of phonetics and phonology is not sufficient and more courses should be added.

### **5.3 Study contributions**

This study investigated the type of strategies that LEI students from the School of Languages at the BUAP used to improve their pronunciation in English as well as their autonomous learning. Therefore, this study attempts to contribute to the investigation and understanding of pronunciation learning strategies and autonomous learning. There are not many studies done in this area as a consequence all the investigations carried out contribute to emphasize the use of pronunciation learning strategies autonomously. In the same line, Eckstein (2007), supports that there are not many studies done concerning pronunciation learning strategies and he adds that only few studies have recognized this gap in research.

The insight of this study suggests that it is relevant to encourage students to use some of the strategies previously presented to improve their pronunciation in target language and to promote autonomy among language learners. This study also recommends that English language teachers should apply some of them to help students reach a good level of pronunciation or at least speech intelligibility.

#### **5.4 Implications for teachers**

Nowadays, pronunciation is not allocated in the curricula or there is not time to teach it as Kenworthy (1987) stated. Moreover, teachers are not able to teach pronunciation due to the lack of knowledge they possess as O'Connor (1980) supports.

The findings of this study carry out some implications. For example, 25% of the participants said that their English phonetics and phonology classes were excellent. Besides that, the results showed that students claim for more courses of phonetics and phonology because they have only one course during their stay at the University and they may feel it is not enough to improve their pronunciation. Moreover, students think that pronunciation is important to avoid misunderstandings when talking English as Kenworthy (1987) supports that. Also she supports that students often show interest in pronunciation because they feel it is something that would help them to communicate better.

Moreover, this study has provided evidence about the different pronunciation learning strategies and it has positive implications that perhaps teachers can apply in order to help students to improve their pronunciation

In conclusion, we can say that it might be important for teachers and the institution to allocate time both in the curricula and in the EFL classes based on the awareness that students claim for that.

## **5.5 Implications for students**

This research project aimed to investigate the strategies that ELT undergraduate advanced students used autonomously to improve their English pronunciation.

This study has shown that the students used cognitive strategies the most and some other strategies belonging to different strategies groups. Moreover, it was revealed that memory strategies were least favored by the participants. Furthermore, as it was mentioned before students are worried about their pronunciation for that reason they claim for more courses of phonetics and phonology. Students think that more courses would help them to have a better pronunciation. It was mentioned by the students that at least two courses of phonetics and phonology should integrate the curricula.

In short, we can say that this study has positive implications because it was revealed that students used PLS to improve their pronunciation. What is more, students could find more strategies that can help them in the process of learning pronunciation and they can use in an autonomous way.

## **5.5 Limitations of the study**

During the process of investigation there were some factors that limited this study. The first one could be the time invested in this study. The second one was the number of participants there were only twelve students consequently I cannot make generalizations about the results. Another one is the difficulty to apply the instrument because some of the participants did not have much time and we did not agree with the time. Finally, it would be

interesting to carry out a similar research with a large number of participants or to carry out an experimental research using the strategies suggested in this research and look at students' improvement in pronunciation. Moreover, it would be curious to develop a curricula taking into account pronunciation and to research what teachers teach in phonetics and phonology classes.

## **5.6 Reflection**

According to this study that implied pronunciation learning strategies used autonomously by LEI advanced students from the School of Languages of BUAP. It was revealed that they preferred cognitive strategies rather than memory strategies. However, they used other different strategies belonging to a different group for example they associate the new words with existing sounds surrounding them as well as with the context where they heard them. Moreover, when they practice pronunciation they repeat several times in the same way or different ones. They every time pay attention to someone who is speaking in English and try to look for ways to improve their pronunciation. It is impressive that students have clear goals to improve their pronunciation. However, they do not plan and set time to practice it. Apart from this they encourage themselves even when they do not feel a progress in their learning process and they make fun of themselves when they mispronounce a word. Additionally, I have to say that it was surprising for me to find that students practice pronunciation with others and help others with pronunciation. In addition, it was surprising that students mentioned that pronunciation is important for them to avoid misunderstandings when talking to another person. Likewise only 24% of the participants agree that their

phonetics and phonology classes were excellent. This brings me up to the question what teachers teach in these courses or if they teach what it is in the course program.

Finally, students claimed that they need more courses in phonetics and phonology. They believe that at least two courses are necessary. It was surprising for me because I was expecting a negative response.

### **5.7 Directions for further research**

As was previously mentioned this study only explored the strategies most and least frequently used autonomously by LEI students to improve the pronunciation in English. Thus, other researches can be carried out. For example, to carry out a similar study with a large amount of participants using just one taxonomy presented in this paper. Moreover, an experimental research can be conducted applying the strategies suggested in this study to measure the improvement of students' pronunciation. Additionally, it can be developed a curricula taking into account pronunciation and pronunciation learning strategies. Finally, it would be interesting to explore what teachers from the School of Languages of BUAP teach in a phonetics and phonology course.

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## APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE



**BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE  
PUEBLA  
FACULTAD DE LENGUAS  
LICENCIATURA EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS  
QUESTIONNAIRE**



**Objective:** The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information about the strategies advanced students of English used to improve their pronunciation for my BA thesis.

This will take around 10 minutes to answer it.

Thanks for your help!

### Section 1. Personal Information

A) Age \_\_\_\_\_ B) Gender \_\_\_\_\_ C) Semester \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 2. Background

1. Have you taken an English course before enrolling in the University?

A) Yes ( ) B) No ( )

2. If you answered 'yes' to the question above, where?

A) Public School B) Private School C) English courses D) other \_\_\_\_\_

3. Have you already taken 'phonetics and phonology' class?

A) Yes ( ) B) No ( )

### Section 3. Opinions

1. Why do you think pronouncing well is important?

- A) Good pronunciation is needed for communication
- B) It is something that would help me to communicate better
- C) To avoid misunderstandings when talking in English
- D) It helps me to make the communication easier

2. I think my 'phonetics and phonology' class was.
  - A) Excellent    B) Good    C) Regular    D)Worst
  
3. Do you think we need more phonetics and phonology courses?
  - A) Yes ( )    B) No ( )
  
4. How many 'phonetics and phonology' courses do you think should integrate the curricula?
  - A) 1    B)2    C) 3    D) 4

**Section 4. Strategies**

**Instructions:** read the statements below and circle the best option to indicate how often you use a given way of learning English pronunciation according to the following scale:

- 1. Never    2. Almost never    3. Sometimes    4. Almost every time    5. Every time**

**PART A. MEMORY STRATEGIES**

1. In order to memorize the pronunciation of a given word I try to associate it with the pronunciation of a different word (in another language I know) or with some sounds (e.g. animals sounds, sounds of machines, devices).....1 2 3 4 5
2. I memorize the pronunciation of a given word by associating it with an image or a picture (in mind or in actual drawing).....1 2 3 4 5
3. I group words that sound similar in order to memorize their pronunciation.....1 2 3 4 5
4. I use visual aids to memorize the pronunciation of new words (e.g. posters with transcription of new words, and marking phonetic symbols with various colours).....1 2 3 4 5
5. In order to memorize the pronunciation of a given word I use phonetic symbols or my own code to write down its pronunciation.....1 2 3 4 5
6. I memorize the pronunciation of a given word by visualizing its transcription.....1 2 3 4 5
7. I memorize the pronunciation of new words by remembering the location of their transcription on the page, board etc.....1 2 3 4 5
8. I memorize the pronunciation of new words when I associate them with a situation in which I have heard them.....1 2 3 4 5
9. I repeat a word several times over (aloud or in my mouth) to memorize its Pronunciation.....1 2 3 4 5
10. I record words whose pronunciation I want to memorize and listen to the recording several times over.....1 2 3 4 5
11. I memorize the pronunciation of a given word by putting it in a context (a sentence, a story, a rhyme, etc.).....1 2 3 4 5
12. I review the pronunciation of recently learnt words regularly.....1 2 3 4 5
13. I use flash cards which I put from 'I want to learn' pile to 'I haven't learnt' pile.....1 2 3 4 5

## PART B. COGNITIVE STRATEGIES

14. I practise pronunciation by repeating sounds, words, sentences, etc., several times in the same way or in different ways (changing speed, dividing words into syllables, etc.).....1 2 3 4 5
15. I repeat sounds, words, sentences, etc., after English speakers.....1 2 3 4 5
16. I repeat sounds, words, sentences, etc., simultaneously with English speakers.....1 2 3 4 5
17. I repeat sounds, words, sentences, etc., simultaneously with English speakers, imitating their gestures and facial expressions.....1 2 3 4 5
18. I listen to the radio and/ or watch TV in English.....1 2 3 4 5
19. I speak to foreigners in English.....1 2 3 4 5
20. I imitate mouth movements made by English speakers.....1 2 3 4 5
21. I observe the movements of articulators in the mirror when speaking English.....1 2 3 4 5
22. I do exercises recommended by speech therapists in order to make my tongue, lips and jaw more flexible.....1 2 3 4 5
23. Before I say something aloud, I practice saying a given word, sentence, etc., in my mind.....1 2 3 4 5
24. I practice my pronunciation by speaking to myself in English.....1 2 3 4 5
25. I practice my pronunciation by reciting texts and/ or acting out dialogues.....1 2 3 4 5
26. I practice reading aloud, paying particular attention to my pronunciation.....1 2 3 4 5
27. I practice whispering to focus on the feeling of articulation.....1 2 3 4 5
28. I look up the pronunciation of unknown words in a dictionary.....1 2 3 4 5
29. I search for information on phonetics and phonology in books, on the internet, etc.....1 2 3 4 5
30. I try to identify and use pronunciation rules.....1 2 3 4 5
31. I analyse the differences between English pronunciation and the pronunciation of other languages.....1 2 3 4 5
32. I complete various phonetic exercises which I find in course-books, computer programs and on internet sites.....1 2 3 4 5
33. I use phonetic symbols.....1 2 3 4 5
34. I listen to recordings several times in order to identify the pronunciation of unknown words (perception practice).....1 2 3 4 5
35. I make notes on interesting phonetic problems.....1 2 3 4 5
36. I imitate native speakers of English, speaking Spanish in order to feel the difference between the two languages better.....1 2 3 4 5
37. I pay attention to pronunciation errors made by native speakers of English speaking Spanish.....1 2 3 4 5

## PART C. METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

38. I try to find as many different ways of practising my pronunciation as I can.....1 2 3 4 5
39. I pay attention to pronunciation when someone is speaking English.....1 2 3 4 5
40. I choose a phonetic problem (e.g. a given sound, word stress, intonation, etc.) and pay attention to it when someone is speaking English.....1 2 3 4 5
41. I try to find out how to improve my pronunciation.....1 2 3 4 5
42. I care for appropriate learning conditions so that my work on pronunciation is as efficient as possible.....1 2 3 4 5
43. Before practising a given pronunciation feature I revise appropriate theoretical

- knowledge.....1 2 3 4 5
44. I plan pronunciation learning – I set the time of learning, select materials, strategies, etc.....1 2 3 4 5
45. I have clear goals for improving my pronunciation.....1 2 3 4 5
46. When I prepare a talk in English, I look up the pronunciation of new words in a dictionary and practice their pronunciation.....1 2 3 4 5
47. I notice my pronunciation problems and I try to overcome them.....1 2 3 4 5
48. I evaluate my progress in pronunciation by recording myself and comparing my pronunciation to the pronunciation of native speakers.....1 2 3 4 5

**PART D. AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES**

49. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of reading aloud or speaking in English.....1 2 3 4 5
50. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid that my pronunciation is not good.....1 2 3 4 5
51. I encourage myself to work on pronunciation even when I think that something is too difficult for me or when I do not feel like learning.....1 2 3 4 5
52. I give myself a reward or treat when I have worked hard on pronunciation.....1 2 3 4 5
53. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am learning English pronunciation or speaking English and I try to relax.....1 2 3 4 5
54. I use a sense of humour about my mispronunciations.....1 2 3 4 5
55. I analyse my feelings connected with learning pronunciation.....1 2 3 4 5
56. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning pronunciation. 1 2 3 4 5

**PART E. SOCIAL STRATEGIES**

57. I ask English speakers to correct my pronunciation when I speak.....1 2 3 4 5
58. I ask others for help if I do not know how to pronounce a given sound or word.....1 2 3 4 5
59. I learn pronunciation with other students, friends.....1 2 3 4 5
60. I help others in learning pronunciation.....1 2 3 4 5