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**Pronunciation challenges in English language faced by Target
Language 5 students at LEI- BUAP**

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Languages for the Degree of
Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés

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Puebla, Pue. July 2021

**PRONUNCIATION CHALLENGES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE FACED
BY TARGET LANGUAGE 5 STUDENTS AT LEI-BUAP**

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Foremost, I would like to thank my thesis director PhD. Benjamin Gutierrez Gutierrez to lead me during the research process. This work would have been impossible without his support, guidance, motivation and patience. I am sure that PhD. Gutierrez was the best option to advise me during the development of this work.

In addition, I thank my readers PhD. Josué Cinto Morales and PhD. María Amelia Xique Suárez; the feedback they provided helped me to increase the quality of this research and also to clarify ideas and grammar aspects. I really appreciate the time and the interest that they showed during the revisions of my work.

DEDICATIONS

There are not enough words to thank my mother Francisca Carrasco Hernández for all the love and the support that she has given me since the moment I was born. My eternal gratitude to her and my father Pedro Lezama Mendoza for the advice, the time and everything that they have done for me to help me to reach my goals.

Finally, I would like to thank my siblings who gave me encouragement when I did not feel motivated to carry on. Specially, I am really grateful to my eldest brother Luis Humberto Lezama Carrasco who always has been a good example and a guide in my life.

ABSTRACT

This research paper is focused on to determine and describe the main challenges that students at an advanced level on Target Language subject, in this case, Target Language 5 (TL5), face developing pronunciation skill at Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés (LEI) in Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP). It is necessary to take into account the context of the research in an international, national and local field, some organizations such as UNESCO, CEFR, ANUIES, SEP, and the MUM program are considered.

Moreover, to have a determination of challenges in pronunciation, it is essential regarding some aspects of second language acquisition theories since behaviourism to constructivism, from these emerge some other elements such as communicative approach. In the development of pronunciation are also included the four primary skills in L2, reading, writing and speaking; all of these topics are developed since the communicative approach perspective to give coherence and guidance to this research.

In the part of pronunciation, some compatible features consider as possible challenges in the development of this skill are studied. These elements are suitable to measure the level of difficulty to develop the pronunciation skill according to Target Language 5 students at LEI. All aspects previously mentioned are considered to create the questionnaire used in the instrument. This questionnaire and authors, personal conclusions and graphics which support the results are explained. The findings are related to the variables involved in the pronunciation challenges in the English language, such as intonation, speech rhythm, stress, and L1 transference to L2 and some other aspects. At the end of this work, the challenges in English pronunciation are determined by answering the study questions.

Finally, some crucial situations are exposed and features of the current research which could be guided to further study to improve or change to have a better perspective about specific results obtained, those are concerned with the instrument, participants, and the methodology.

INDEX

AKNOWLEDGMENTS	i
DEDICATIONS.....	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iii

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Justification	5
1.3 Research Questions:	7
1.4 General Objective.....	7
1.4.1 Specific Objectives	7
1.5 Hypothesis.....	7
1.6 Methodology	7
1.7 Limitations	9
1.8 Implications.....	10
1.9 Research Organization	10
1.10 Key Terms	12
CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	14
2.1 Second Language Acquisition theories.....	14
2.1.1 Behaviorism.....	15
2.1.2 Monitor Theory	15
2.1.3 Universal Grammar	17
2.1.4 Constructivism.....	19
2.2 Second Language Teaching	19
2.3 Second Language Learning.....	21
2.4 Phonetics and Phonology in L2.....	23
2.5 Communicative Approach	25
2.5.1 Reading.....	25
2.5.2 Writing.....	26
2.5.3 Listening	28

2.5.4 Speaking	29
2.5.4.1 Pronunciation in L2	30
2.5.4.1.1 Intonation.....	31
2.5.4.1.2 Speech rhythm	33
2.5.4.1.3 Stress.....	35
2.5.4.1.4 L1 Pronunciation transfer to L2	37
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY	40
3.1 Subjects	40
3.2 Instrument	41
3.3 Final Instrument	41
3.4 Procedures	42
3.5 Data Analysis	43
CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS	44
4.1.1 Rising Intonation.....	44
4.1.2 Falling Intonation.....	50
4.2 Speech Rhythm	54
4.2.1 Linking sounds.....	55
4.2.2 Tempo.....	57
4.2.3 Stress Placement.....	60
4.3 Stress	62
4.3.1 Vowel Quality.....	62
4.3.2 Vowel Duration.....	65
4.4 L1 Pronunciation transfer to L2	67
4.4.1 Consonants and vowels.....	67
4.4.2 Syllable structure	70
CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS	73
5.1 Context	73
5.2 Conclusions	75
5.3 Research Questions	84
5.4 Implications.....	86
5.5 Limitations	87
5.6 Directions for Further Research	87

REFERENCES	89
APPENDIX I	95
APPENDIX II	99

INDEX FIGURES

Figure 4.1: In the following sentence, where do you locate the rising intonation? “Is Jensen your name?”	46
Figure 4.2 In the following sentence, where do you locate the rising intonation? “Your name is Jensen”	47
Figure 4.3 For you, what level of difficulty is it to locate the rises in a sentence?	49
Figure 4.4 In the following sentence, where do you locate the falling intonation? “Is Jensen your name?”	52
Figure 4.5 In the following sentence, where do you locate the falling intonation? ”Your name is Jensen”	53
Figure 4.6 For you, what level of difficulty is it to locate the falls in a sentence?	54
Figure 4.7 Choose the option in which the sounds are not correctly linked.....	56
Figure 4.8 For you, what level of difficulty is it to link sounds in English?	57
Figure 4.9 For you, what level of difficulty is it to speak English speedily when it is necessary?	58
Figure 4.10 For you, what level of difficulty is it to pause your speech when it is necessary?	59
Figure 4.11 In which one of the following examples is the stress correctly placed?	60
Figure 4.12 For you, what level of difficulty is it to stress the right syllable in a word?	61
Figure 4.13 In which one of the following words the vowel sound is this /ɪ/?	63
Figure 4.14 For you, what level of difficulty is it to differentiate among vowel sounds?....	64
Figure 4.15 In which one of the following words the vowel duration is not long?	65
Figure 4.16 For you, what level of difficulty is it to identify the vowel duration in a word?	66
Figure 4.17 For you, what level of difficulty is it to pronounce the vowels in the following words?	68
Figure 4.18 For you, what level of difficulty is it to pronounce the consonants in the following words?	69
Figure 4.19 Which one of the following options is the correct syllable separation of the word “caterpillar”?	70

Figure 4.20 For you, what level of difficulty is it to separate English words by syllables?.71

INDEX TABLES

Table 2.1 Characteristics of stressed and unstressed syllables.	36
Table 4.1 Rising Intonation in declarative and affirmative statements	45
Table 4.2: Falling intonation in declarative and affirmative statements.....	51

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Indeed, when someone learns a language, it is essential to achieve regular communication, and this is possible through the acquisition of the second language (L2) pronunciation, but how easy or difficult is it to acquire L2 pronunciation? This thesis explains the different challenges that the second language learners face or could face during the process of pronunciation development at Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés (LEI) in Languages Faculty from Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP), however, to talk about these challenges we need to know about the educational program and what is behind this.

First of all, most of the language schools around the world base their programs on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The Council of Europe (2001) explains that this is an international standard for describing language ability; this framework is the basis of the development of syllabus, evaluation and the material used in the process of teaching and learning a second language. The CEFR evaluates accuracy in listening, speaking, reading and writing. The relevance of this reference lies in the fact that speaking and listening skills are firmly related to the pronunciation sub-skill and therefore being aware of the common European framework is indispensable for this research. It also gives a real vision about the levels of language abilities for different purposes such as travelling, getting a job or academic studies.

It is also relevant to mention the institutions that are related to education in an international field. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is one of the leading organizations around the world that encourages cooperation among nations through education, science, culture, communication and information; learning

another language opens up the mind to different cultures, ways to live and helps to know other ways to perceive the world, namely, beyond linguistics aspects learning a second language contributes to the cultural enrichment of any person. However, "the way languages are taught changes constantly and vary from one country to another and even within the same country because of the different concepts of language paradigms, teaching and the conception of the language that is taught", UNESCO (2003, p. 17).

Additionally, economic issues are closely related with education that is why among Canada, the USA and Mexico there exists a conventional arrangement called the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The economic redistribution implies an educational change to have equality in relations with the United States. This agreement also fosters students' mobility among the countries that are members of NAFTA, this is very beneficial for English and in general, for languages learners because travelling abroad, where the language that is being learned is spoken, is very significant for L2 acquisition, Barragán (2007). NAFTA provides us with a new economic field and the education field around the world must be updated to be prepared to face it.

Aboites (2008) claims that one of the purposes of NAFTA is to consider education as a service to make it part of the trade by international and local producers, this with the aim to ease the flow of knowledge through borders. This implication is relevant in English learning and teaching because one of the purposes to study English is to travel for working or study, but it is also related to economic aspects. According to Aboites (2008), the knowledge can be considered a commercial activity, it is merchandise when knowledge becomes patents or research products, and thus it is possible the free transit of people who possess the knowledge what is remarkable in chapter sixteen of NAFTA Temporary Entry for Business Persons.

Additionally, in the national ambit, Secretaría de Educación Pública SEP plays the most

important educational role in Mexico. According to Nuevo Modelo Educativo SEP (2017), “the domain of the English language is essential to face the challenges of the XXI century. For this reason, children and young people need a complete education, to develop intellectually and professionally”. This model also wants students, since elementary levels of education; develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skills to be graduated from upper middle training as bilingual professionals and SEP aspires that teachers also become bilingual.

SEP (2017, p. 168) states that teaching English in Mexico implies that students use, employ, recognise and reflect about English with the purpose of developing abilities to be participants in social, oral and written activities with English native or no native speakers. The study program of SEP is based on two frameworks; the first one is the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) and Marco de Referencia Nacional developed by SEP, this framework offers descriptive scales of English domain as well as the equivalences with the international scales of the Council of Europe. SEP is relevant to mention because future English teachers might work following SEP statements.

Even though SEP is the essential organisation in Mexico in the field of education, BUAP is also related with the Asociación Nacional de Universidades e Instituciones de Educación Superior (ANUIES). This association has a vital role in national university education. ANUIES put together the leading public and private higher education institutions in Mexico and BUAP is among them. One of the functions of ANUIES is the study of the general problems of higher education in the Republic and the adoption of proposals and recommendations that improve their services, as well as, promote knowledge specialization in research and more top education centres that are taught according to regional characteristics. Among the topics that concerns ANUIES, it is autonomy, financing, planning,

academic improvement, teacher training and evaluation, ANUIES (2017).

BUAP is associated with different organizations, but it is an autonomous university and has developed its model called Modelo Universitario Minerva (MUM), which considers, in one of its axis about foreign languages, three dimensions: Communication, Production (speaking and writing), and Comprehension (listening and reading) BUAP in Programa de Integración MUM (2009, p. 52). Languages Faculty, specifically Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés (LEI) at BUAP also finds quality in education through the association with different international, national and local organisations; it is in charged to form English teachers who can meet the current demands of society on the teaching and learning of second languages and to achieve the required competitiveness, it is necessary to master the language skills, among them, speaking ability. Many factors are involved in the development of speaking as a skill, such as pronunciation; when a L2 learner does not have a clear articulation or diction, the communication may not be possible.

At LEI, the responsibility of developing a clear pronunciation is more significant since teacher-students will be models and guides for their students in the future, and mainly because in the relation teacher-student, teacher should not model mistakes or incorrect forms in pronunciation which could lead to students' misunderstanding and confusion. This research determines the main difficulties in pronunciation development through this question: What are the pronunciation challenges in English faced by TL 5 students at LEI?

1.2 Justification

The relevance of this thesis is based on the necessity to know what students dealt with in the process of pronunciation development but focused on the experience of advanced level students. The Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés (LEI) program establishes as a graduated profile that each LEI graduate will be a highly competent teacher. He or she will have knowledge of the Anglophone cultures, in addition, will manage the English language at an acceptable academic level., what means that graduate students will be teachers who domain the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), and managing the language at B2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference, focusing in communicative approach. BUAP (2009)

LEI program establishes academic levels: basic, training and terminal. The program is structured by 42 subjects of which 39 are obligatory and three optional; it is also structured by linguistics, teaching, investigation, culture and target language subjects, BUAP (2009). What concerns to this research is the part of linguistics that “provides the principles for understanding the nature of language, the process through it and the rules to use it correctly in different situations and contexts” and the part of target language whose purpose is”. To provide theoretical and practical elements that allow understanding, explains the foundations of the use of the English language”, BUAP (2009, p. 51). To be aware of the purposes of these two areas may give us a better perception of what could be the challenges that students face in certain stages of the major.

The program contains five subjects of the target language; TL 5 is the last one, and the most advanced. Most of the students have already taken phonetics and phonology subjects previously, and those are closely related with pronunciation. In this subject, the students are introduced to the International Phonetic Alphabet and the organs of speech. It is established

that in TL 5 all the knowledge obtained, in previous target language subjects, is applied; it is supposed that in this stage of the primary students already developed enough competences to understand and being understandable while they speak and listen to the sender, however, pronunciation allows or inhibits to communicate effectively.

In LEI program there are four workshops and one of them is exclusively related to speaking, to they practice speaking and pronunciation. Also in each subject these skills are practiced. Then, despite the tools that the Languages Faculty gives to students, there are still problems in pronunciation. It is necessary to know about these challenges so students and teachers are aware about this complicated process which could be frustrating for LEI students.

During the development of speaking skill some elements to make the process more difficult are observed, such as, lack of motivation, shame for speaking in front of a particular audience, lack of practice and it is popular to observe problems with English pronunciation. These pronunciation problems provoke misunderstanding during a dialogue or discourse. Thus, the primary objective of language, to communicate, is not achieved.

Indeed, the acquisition of a second language is a long process that needs many elements to have success. Many challenges for students and teachers surround the teaching and learning of English as a foreign or second language, however, in a school dedicated to forming English teachers these challenges must be considered so they do not affect future students.

1.3 Research Questions:

- What are TL 5 students' perceptions about their pronunciation development?
- What are the factors involved in the development of pronunciation?
- What are the main factors that affect the development of English pronunciation in L2 learners?

1.4 General Objective

- Recognise and determine the challenges that LEI TL 5 students face to develop English pronunciation.

1.4.1 Specific Objectives

- Recognise the challenges that LEI TL 5 students face in the development of English pronunciation.
- Determine what the challenges that LEI TL 5 that students face in the development of English pronunciation are.

1.5 Hypothesis

Target Language 5 (TL 5) students at LEI face English pronunciation challenges because they do not place the stress correctly in words.

1.6 Methodology

This research is carried out following a quantitative approach, the primary objective is to determine the English pronunciation challenges, and this is possible through numerical results. Daniel & Harland (2017) explain that the quantitative approach is used in research to determine relationships among variables and to state study results in differential forms.

Additionally, this research takes into account observable and unobservable phenomena and according to Daniel & Harland (2017) numbers are useful to represent both of them.

This research work is carried out following a quantitative approach because it is pretended to determine the challenges in pronunciations according to students' opinion and this will be achieved through numerical and statistical analysis of the data obtained. According to Babbie (2010), "Quantitative research focuses on gathering numerical data and generalizing it across groups of people or to explain a particular phenomenon". In this particular case, this study is descriptive since the students' opinions are described to determine the most common challenges to achieve pronunciation without measuring cause-effect relationships among variables.

The usefulness of a survey in this work lies on its characteristics. As Walston, Redford & Bhatt (2017) state, surveys are used to obtain quantitative results and provide the research features of a specific population and they are used when there is a considerable number of participants. In this research, seventeen students participated, so it is the most viable method and technique for this research to achieve the objectives.

Moreover, the design of this research is transversal, also called cross-sectional, this is because of the features of the work. As Degu & Yigzaw (2006) argue, cross-sectional study is used to analyse factors that do not change over time, and it contains analytical components which analyse data to demonstrate differences between exposed and non-exposed groups, or descriptive, which does not involve comparison, according to the purpose of the research; even cross-sectional could contain both components. The transversal design is used to collect data at a specific point of time; then, the transversal design is the most adequate for this work because it is required to know the perceptions that students have about pronunciation development, and at that stage of the language acquisition they already have enough

experience to express their viewpoints.

Finally, according to the precision of the results that the research obtains and the practical factors involved in the process, the appropriate instrument is a questionnaire. This instrument is adapted to the quantitative approach, so this instrument allows to categorize and classify the data obtained giving numerical results, this according to what Degu (2006) established.

1.7 Limitations

This research is conducted to determine the English pronunciation challenges faced by advanced students at LEI; however, only two groups were used in this work. There were not too many participants because more people involved in the study would have lengthened the research time, but the information collected covers the study needs. Even though the reduced group of participants and the specific population do not allow generalization, this thesis could be more useful for English teachers and university learners that are preparing to be English teachers, but it is possible adapting and adopting the information and data to different contexts and purposes. Besides, any recording test of pronunciation was used; the research was based only on the students' interpretation and perceptions about English pronunciation in this context.

Moreover, some excellent documents, books and articles to support argumentation were old works, some of them are classics so were useful but in other cases were not. Also, the selection of material was an arduous and meticulous task. Sometimes it seemed that any work would be helpful for this study purpose, however, to read repeatedly was always necessary to find appropriate information, being careful all the time to not plagiarize any work.

1.8 Implications

Pronunciation is one of the most evident characteristics of effective performance in any language; it is a factor that allows communication and understanding among fellows who learn or speak the same languages. The awareness of the variables involved in the development of pronunciation might modify the teaching process at LEI or at any school where this research is useful.

Besides, this research could change the view about the role of pronunciation and lead teachers to pay attention to possible problems in this sub-skill among the student community. Therefore, it is essential to know the students' awareness of their difficulties in producing English sounds. Also, taking into consideration a broader field, this research might be fruitful for an international audience interested in Second Language (L2) teaching and learning, especially Spanish native speakers. Pronunciation is not an intensely studied field, but the development of the Communicative Approach makes it relevant in the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) process.

1.9 Research Organization

This research is structured by five chapters. In the first chapter, institutions and organizations involved in the Second Language Acquisition are included to introduce the main aspects of this thesis. In addition, the main objectives and research questions to establish the intention of the present work are presented.

The second chapter is related to the theory that supports this work. In this part, information about Second Language Acquisition is discussed, in order to give a general overview about the main challenges that pronunciation involves. Thus, four SLA theories are mentioned in this research, among them, Constructivism. Also, elements associated with L2

teaching/learning and phonetics and phonology are described. The four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) are explained from the perspective of the communicative approach. In this section, the theory that supports the development of pronunciation in L2 is presented and then, four aspects that L2 students face as the challenges during the language acquisition are shown.

Additionally, in the third chapter, the subjects, instrument, procedures and data analysis are explained; those are essential aspects involved in the methodology. The participants, the piloted instrument and the final one are the main points in this chapter. Then, a method to analyse the data obtained is described. Finally, the results and conclusions obtained are discussed in the last chapters.

The fourth chapter consists in the presentation of the data obtained with the instrument, this information is displayed in graphics and descriptions and arguments backed by theory from the theoretical framework. In this section, nine important aspects considered as challenges in the development of the pronunciation are exposed; this, according to Target Language 5 students' perceptions. These challenges are divided into four categories: Intonation, Speech Rhythm, Stress and Pronunciation transfer.

Finally, the last chapter includes a compilation of data analysis results and the study questions are answered in this part with the support of theory from the theoretical framework. In this part of the research: the implications, limitations and directions, besides, directions for further research are exposed.

1.10 Key terms

Acquisition: “Something that emerges spontaneously when learners engage in normal interaction in the L2, where the focus is on meaning” (Vanpatten & Williams, 2007, p.78).

Technique: “A technique is implementational that actually takes place in a classroom. It is a particular trick, stratagem, or contrivance used to accomplish an immediate objective. Techniques must be consistent with a method, and therefore in harmony with an approach as well.” Antony (1963 pp. 7, 63 cited in Richards & Rodgers 2004, p. 21)

Communicative Competence: “Knowing when and how to say what to whom” (Freeman & Anderson, 2011 p. 115 cited in McDonough & Shaw & Masuhara 2013 p. 23)

Segmentals: “They are individual phones whereas suprasegmentals operate above the level of the segmentals” Fleur (2013) p. 5

Pitch: in Phonetics “It is the fundamental frequency (F0) which is the rate of vibrations of the vocal chords” Fleur (2013 p. 5)

Accent: In phonetics, they characteristics of pronunciation which are associated with the person’s regional or society. “In phonology, a type of perceived prominence heard on a spoken word or syllable”. Crystal (2001 p.2)

Speaking: Language oral skill in which are involved elements as fixed phrases, fillers, slangs, and non-standard language. Renandya & Jacobs (2016)

Pronunciation: The production of sounds of speech, including articulation, stress, and intonation, sometimes following standard acceptability. Butterfield (2012)

Intonation: Fleur (2013), affirms that intonation refers to all aspects of suprasegmentals, such as accent, length or intonation contour.

Stress: Teschner & Whitley (2004, cited in Bian 2013 p. 78), stress refers to “the greater prominence or loudness that a vowel or syllable exhibits within a word, in at least two degrees: strong/weak (or primary/secondary)”.

Rhythm: Gashaw 2017 p. 13) defines, “rhythm in language refers to the periodic recurrence of certain patterns of sound in utterances. Syllables take the place of musical notes or beats, and in many languages, the stressed syllables determine the rhythm”

Challenge: In the academic field, Hackett (2012) affirms that when something is challenging, it expects rigor or high standards.

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter, some relevant aspects to structure this research are presented. The elements to consider are shown, from the most general to the most specific. The theoretical framework is headed by the development of some Second Language Acquisition theories, such as Behaviorism and Constructivism. In addition, this chapter contains theory related to Second Language teaching-learning; also, the explanation about the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) focused on communicative approach is developed. Speaking skill is the last one displayed; as the main aspect in this research, pronunciation and the challenges involved in the acquisition of this element of language.

2.1 Second Language Acquisition theories

How a language is acquired has been explained through theories by many people throughout history. Their importance lies on the fact that investigations in linguistics advance because of them. According to VanPatten & Williams (2015), a theory is a group of statements that provide explanations about how and why a specific phenomenon occurs, and theories predict the course of events. Besides, VanPatten & Williams (2015) suggest that a theory is useful to comprehend and know the process of what is happening. However, as Saville-Troike (2006) argues, it is probable that Second Language Acquisition (SLA) researchers do not agree about all the answers given by linguistics investigations because the Second Language Acquisition is complicated, so the explanations and theories related to SLA could vary. In conclusion, each theory has particular characteristics that give to the people involved in teaching-learning process tools to face the complexity of SLA and also promotes the continuous progress of the linguistics field.

2.1.1 Behaviorism

Behaviourism is one of the pioneer theories in the field of language acquisition giving new guidelines to language teaching and learning. According to VanPatten & Williams (2007), behaviourism explains a person or animal behaviour but just taking into consideration external factors, so the context and environment in which a person acquires a language is the most relevant factor in behaviourism. In the field of language acquisition we have that a person can purchase a language as easily as to acquire a new behaviour, as Dastpak & Behjat & Taghinezhad (2017, p. 231) claims, "behaviourists believe that speaking a language is a skill and there is no difference between speaking a language and other behaviours". In addition, modern behaviourism was enriched with Pavlov's experiments which evidenced the stimulus and the response, what is called classical conditioning. Moreover, as Saville Troike (2006) claims, behaviourism guesses that in SLA are involved transference of components in L1 to L2, these are positive if are similar or appropriate to both languages and they are harmful if the transfer interferes with SLA. In short, behaviourism has roots from psychology and gives a new outlook to language teaching and learning, explaining that a language is acquired as a behaviour; according to behaviourism, internal factors are not involved in SLA.

2.1.2 Monitor Theory

Krashen developed Monitor Theory in 1970-1980, also called the Monitor Hypothesis, this was one of the most important and influential theories to the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), this was even the first theory developed for this purpose; as VanPatten & Williams (2007) suggests, this theory is very known by language instructors, so this is closely related to language teaching. According to Saville-Troike (2006), this theory has a specific relation with what Chomsky called Language Acquisition Device (LAD), which refers to humans who are born with the innate knowledge of a language. Five hypotheses form monitor

theory: Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis, Monitor Hypothesis, Natural Order Hypothesis, Input Hypothesis and Affective Filter Hypothesis; one of them is closely related with Chomsky's idea of language acquisition device, this is Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis that refers to the difference between acquisition (subconscious), in which LAD has an important role and learning (conscious) that is more related with L2. The conscious and unconscious learning could be related with the acquisition of L2 pronunciation depending on the context of the learner. Nevertheless, the distinction between learning and acquisition is not so convenient for some other authors who criticize Monitor Theory. In the opinion of Gregg (1984, cited in Bahrani, T. 2011), what Monitor Theory proposes is difficult to believe; Gregg does not support Krashen's idea about the separation of learning and acquisition systems to learn a language. In short, Monitor Theory was developed in a moment in which was innovative and probably represented a radical change in the perception of Second Language Acquisition; it also opened a debate about this field of language.

Although teaching is an essential part of language acquisition, this is not a fact that everything that is taught is learned, as VanPatten & Williams (2007) remark, one of the Krashen's purposes with this theory was to try to explain why certain things taught are not learned and why some things learned are not taught. The role of monitoring in the process of language teaching-learning is critical and crucial. As reported by Abukhattala (2012), the process of acquisition makes to emerge statements that are corrected by monitors which are divided into three kinds: 1) over-monitor users, who do not feel confident while they speak because they verify each sentence they say thus, making their speech not fluent. The second, under-monitor users, who pay particular attention to meaning do not commit mistakes, so they are more fluent. Finally, the third one is optimal monitor users; these users use the monitor when they think it is necessary, they also can adopt specific first language (L1) rules to second language (L2) without losing coherence.

On the other hand, some authors criticize some concepts from Krashen's Monitor Theory; apparently, some information given by Krashen is not truthful. In the opinion of Bahrani (2011), the Krashen's theory is weak in relation with its veracity because, even though it provides many allegations of SLA, Krashen does not support it with empirical evidence. In summary, Krashen's Monitor Theory has a vital role in the perception of SLA, there are different opinions regarding this theory, but the contributions to the language teaching was genuinely relevant; and if it is linked to the Monitor Theory with pronunciation, it could recognize the pronunciation teaching role, even though, some pronunciation aspects are not learned by teaching them.

2.1.3 Universal Grammar

Universal Grammar (UG) claims that how the first language (L1) is acquired does not differ a lot from how the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is carried out. As White (2003) suggests, the linguistic system that L2 learners develop is not different to the L1 learners' linguistic system and language principles because they are "universal" and innate. Additionally, in the process of second language acquisition, the relevance of L1 is remarkable since it represents a basis for L2. White (2003) points out that, second language learners could use their L1 grammar basis as instruments to develop L2 grammatical systems; this is because, according to UG, humans are endowed with a structural system that allows them to acquire languages as long as they are exposed to sensory experience.

It is important to mention that any language is acquired because of the gathering of certain factors that could affect, or merely giving rise to the language acquisition. Chomsky (2000, cited in Iskandar 2015) states that there are two main factors that make possible SLA, and these are: 1) the initial states, and 2) the course of experience. In addition to this, Vanpatten and Benati (2010 cited in Iskandar 2015) remark that the initial state is the point from which

the student starts to learn the L2. According to Universal Grammar, what the learner acquires about the language is a mix of brain knowledge aspects, which are innate, and outside knowledge that could be the experience and the context in which the learner is involved. Furthermore, in the opinion of Roberts (2017), UG provides rules for each person that regulate our language and alert us when the speaker deviates from the right or appropriate parameters, Roberts names this as “linguistic judgements”.

In short, UG, unlike behaviourism, considers that language acquisition is not only related to external factors but about the internal structure of human beings. Namely, the mind is crucial and affects the process of SLA because this acquisition is not just a behaviour, it is more complicated than that and pronunciation could be related to both factors internal and external.

Moreover, Universal Grammar has been considered as a series of principles, which are universal and, in some way, govern the acquisition of any language. As Saville-Troike (2006) states, all the languages possess principles, and some of them are formed by parameters that manage the language depending on the spoken language. Additionally, Cook & Newson (1996) remark that these principles are innate and concerned to the internal part of humans, they also are strictly related to the language acquisition process. White (2003) refers to parameters as settings or values which are responsible for cross-linguistic variation. In addition to this, White also claims that UG principles in interlanguage grammar become strongly relevant when the learner achieves enough linguistic knowledge that is acquired not only from L2 input or L1, what means that general learning principles, which are not explicitly related with linguistics, are also relevant in the SLA. In summary, principles and parameters could be collected from L1 as innate knowledge and these also come from other learning principles. However, L1 and L2 input still influences the SLA and, of course, pronunciation.

2.1.4 Constructivism

This theory is relatively recent, and some of the contributors are Piaget and Vygotsky. In the field of SLA, it represents a significant step because this theory pays more attention to exact language instead of the traditional language teaching in which students repeat what teachers ask. According to Brown (2000), all humans can create or construct their perceptions of the reality in which they are immersed and, even though they could share context similarities with some other humans, each of them might have their construction of meaning and all of them are accepted. Constructivism is focused on the process of construction, as Spivey (1997, pp. 23-24 cited in Brown 2000) claims, this theory promotes construction of meaning through making L2 learners enter into social practices of everyday life. Furthermore, Jordan (2004) states that in L2 class focused on construct it is common that students are engaged to participate in problem-solving, interaction and developing their critical thinking. In summary, Behaviorism is a theory that makes students more participants in their language learning process taking into consideration the social factors of L1 and L2. Thus, learners focus on the use of the language not only on the knowledge of it.

2.2 Second Language Teaching

The role of teachers in the process of Second Language Acquisition might differ depending on the methods, techniques, and students' needs; however, teachers' main objective always is to make sure that students receive input in the best way. According to Macaro (2003), the input could be considered as the main path in SLA. Input in L2 might be difficult to acquire or understand for learners, so teachers have to make easier the acquisition of this, thus students advance to the next learning stage, that based on the Teachability Hypothesis, it is not advisable to teach what represents more difficulty than what results appropriate to the

students' current stage because they will fail. Additionally, the principal objective of a Second Language Learner is to achieve communication in L2; this depends on how spoken English is taught and in this process, the mother tongue could be taken into account. As Haycraft (1995) claims, teachers decide what kind of English they will teach, this could be his own English. However, he tries to teach some different types of the language in order to students learn to speak and understand the most amount of kinds of spoken, and it is important to consider the variations in English pronunciation; Haycraft also remarks that teachers could contrast students' L1 with L2 but just when is possible. However, it is essential not to fall into the practice of translation because this can become an obstacle to the L2 learner. On the other hand, L2 must have the central role inside a Second Language classroom; it means that L1 must not be the chief language used by teachers and for learners. Sweet & Jaspersen cited in Cook (2016) point out that Second Language has to be used all the time inside the classroom to students familiarize with it as much as possible, this also is helpful to practice pronunciation.

Furthermore, the teacher has the enormous responsibility to select the more appropriate methods and techniques according to students' necessities, and teachers have to adapt teaching techniques and methods if students require it. In the opinion of Haycraft (1978) teachers create and change techniques, and these modifications are based on the effectiveness of some of them and on the issues they deal with. However, some traditional and famous methods and techniques have been created along the time trying to satisfy the L2 learners' needs, some of them are relatively recent but their purpose, in general, is to guide the teachers' work, giving those tools and structure for the language classes. Some of the more influential models are Grammar-translation, Audiolingualism, Communicative Language Teaching and Task-Based Learning.

Grammar-translation is one of the pioneers in language teaching methods, in fact, it is one of the most ancient but still used in L2 teaching. As Tan (2016) comments, Grammar translation purposes were that students write and read classical texts by using translation, focusing on grammar issues, and memorising vocabulary. According to Howalt & Widdowson (2004), this method was created especially for secondary school students, and the basis is on the teaching of grammar and translation that is not the center of a class anymore. The characteristics of this method do not allow using it with children because it requires higher domain in L1 language to achieve L2 acquisition.

Furthermore, the changes in Second Language Teaching (SLT) have been radicals, the newer methods and techniques have been developed to get communication competence instead of mastering grammar issues. In the opinion of Nunan (1999), SLT is guided to make successful SLA through tasks, in which learners' practice L2 are inserted in simulations of real context. Additionally, Macaro (2003) suggests that this approach consists in learning the new language through the practice of problem- solving. Then, SLT makes learners develop linguistic competence required to have a good performance in real situations of the second language. In short, the evolution of these methods along the history of language teaching has been remarkable, mainly because of the priorities that each of them has taken into account, since mere translation to communication in real contexts, and consequently, the pronunciation has gained more importance in the SLA.

2.3 Second Language Learning

As previously was mentioned in this work, Monitor Theory points out two different systems which are part of the acquirement of a second language. However, these two systems are not entirely separated. According to Krashen (1981), adults possess two methods to develop

second language abilities: language acquisition that is subconscious that consists in meaningful interaction and natural communication where the message is the most important; and language learning that is conscious which includes in the adoption of explicit grammatical rules. Despite the fact these systems are independent, they are interrelated in the way that subconscious acquisition has more relevance concerning conscious learning. In contrast, Fillmore (1989 cited in Akhter & Amin & Saeed & Abdullah & Muhammad 2015 p. 130) suggests that “some elements of language use are at first conscious and then become unconscious through practice”, then we can assume that there are stages in which acquisition and learning are an essential part to learners thrive second language abilities.

Additionally, acquisition and learning should lead to students to get communicative competence. Nunan (1999) contends that each learner is different, so they require particular communicative requirements that have to be established in the curriculum (what is taught) and learning process (how it is explained), making learners the centre of the class. According to Nunan, this kind of class prepares students to deal with critical pedagogical decisions through the development of the skills they need to make these essential choices; then learners become the point of reference to choose the elements of the curriculum.

Furthermore, in second language learning there are involved many elements that make more difficult, easier or slower the process for the learner. Focusing on adult learners Akhter & Amin & Saeed & Abdullah & Muhammad (2015) claim that age is a factor that determines the learners acquisition of the faculties they need to acquire L2. These faculties are what allowed the purchase of L1; adult learners have fewer advantages because when the critical period ends puberty starts, this stage of the human growing produces psychological and emotional interference, among them, ego. Ego is a notion of the language that is associated with the fear to commit mistakes, therefore, influences SLA so they could not feel the

confidence to practice in front of some other people and they do not develop speaking and pronunciation skills. In short, the Second Language Learning process is different but not separated from Second Language Acquisition. Recently the notion of the purpose of the acquisition of any language has changed, it means that SLA and Second Language Learning are oriented to learners developing communicative competence further beyond to learn grammatical constructions. In this process, some factors are present, they modify the course of the learning and acquisition progress, and here is where the teacher interferes to guide students, so they do not fail in the L2 learning process.

2.4 Phonetics and Phonology in L2

The role of Phonetics and Phonology in the process of Second Language Acquisition is very relevant, especially in the development and perfecting of L2 learners' speech. As Clark & Yallop & Fletcher (2007) declare, phonetics and phonology are closely related with speech and how humans produce and perceive it, phonetics and phonology are also concerned with the communicative ability because people develop it through the recognition of each other's pronunciation and perception of sound waves. Clark & Yallop & Fletcher define phonetics as the study of organs that allow the production of speech, such as, tongue, larynx, among others, it also focuses on the sounds speech, the units of sounds as well as how the sound is transmitted. In addition, Mott (2011) claims that phonetics is divided into three parts. These components are: articulatory phonetics, related to the production of speech sounds by humans and how they are produced; acoustic phonetics that is focused on the study of physical elements of speech sound during the transmission from speaker to hearer; and auditory phonetics, related with the response to speech sounds and what happens into the brain and the ear. Furthermore, Clark & Yallop & Fletcher (2007) claims that phonology is sometimes

related with the study of the structure of speech and with the systems in the sounds of specific languages. Moreover, Odden (2013) states that phonetics and phonology study the sounds of the languages but specifically phonology investigates what the sounds of a language are and the rules of combining sounds; unlike phonetics, phonology focuses on cognitive abstraction sounds, which represent the sounds produced by humans in specific languages. Additionally, phonology analyses how mental units of sounds, represented by symbols, behave in grammar and also studies the suprasegmental vowels and consonants, which are particular features such as, stress, pitch, duration, among others.

Some factors make lower or do not enable the acquisition of phonetics and phonology in L2, age and transfer are some of the most relevant and these are concerned with biological issues. As Bohn & Munro (2007, p. 99) observes, “the putative biological factors at play are thought to exert immutable constraining effects on the acquisition of L2 phonology”. The age is a significant factor in the acquisition of L2, and this is supported by Leneberg (1967 cited in Jette & Edwards & Zampini (2008). Leneberg suggests the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH), this hypothesis mentions that at a particular stage of biological growth, the human brain is no longer capable of producing and recognizing innovative sounds, it means, sounds that are not from L1. The cause of this event is the end of neural plasticity and, as a result, the culmination of hemispheric lateralisation in the human brain.

In summary, phonetics and phonology are used by teachers to help students develop communicative competences. Thus, they have a better performance in speeches inside and outside the classroom. L2 teachers have to be aware of the factors that stop or make difficult the process of SLA; this probably means that teachers must be competent in the field of phonetics and phonology in order to guide students to they be competent in pronunciation and in the rest of L2 skills.

2.5 Communicative Approach

Communicative Approach also referred as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) revolutionized the vision of language teaching in which the primary purpose was to master grammatical rules completely. As McDonough & Shaw & Masuhara (2013) state, CLT changed the goal of language teaching from the entire domain of grammatical aspects and linguistic properties to the domain of communicative competence. In addition to this, Richards & Rodgers (2006, cited in Elwell 2012) declare that it is necessary that learners develop communicative proficiency, even more than vocabulary and grammar. Moreover, Elwell (2012) suggests that CBLT could be compiled into three guesses, which promote learning, these are the following: activities that involve real communication, activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks and language that is meaningful to the learner.

As Jabee (2014) states, the need to develop communicative skills to be competent in any language has made the implementation of the communicative approach is essential. In summary, the teaching methods influence directly on the second language acquisition of any learner, however, all students could have different needs, and the teachers' task is to identify those needs to adopt and adapt the appropriate methods to apply on the development of the curriculum.

2.5.1 Reading

The purpose of the implementation of the Communicative Approach in an L2 classroom is that learners develop their skills focused on achieving communication. Reading is part of the four skills that learners should develop to be competent in L2. Learners to communicate and understand each other use these skills. Widdowson (1978) affirms that reading goes beyond

the understanding meaning of words, reading also refers to the recognition of the value of the elements involved in the discourse and how these elements are associated with each other. Besides, reading skill, like the rest of language skills, is oriented to students communicating and exchanging their ideas through this one. Reading, as already was mentioned, is more complicated than knowing the meaning of the words printed in such a text. Sadoski (2004) suggests three faculties to have adequate performance in reading; these are Decoding, which refers to learners pronouncing and transforming what is written into spoken language. Comprehension is the fundamental competency of reading and it refers to the learner generating an analogue idea regarding what was read. This competency is divided by Gray (1996, cited in Sadoski 2004) into three levels: the literal level (reading the lines), the inferential or interpretative level (reading between the lines) and the critical applied level (reading beyond the lines); and finally, response which is concerned with the learners attitude that the learner takes according to what is read. At the same time, these reactions are divided into levels, and these are: Applied level, Critical level and Appreciate level, all of these competencies and levels are directly related with communication, learners can connect with their classroom fellows or even with the author of the texts, all this through reading skill.

2.5.2 Writing

Since a communicative perspective, writing is carried out through collaborative tasks because the interaction is necessary to write collectively. As Storch (2013) comments, collaborative writing implies the participants exchange their ideas and opinions to obtain an accord and thus produce a text. In addition to this, Ede & Lunsford (1990, cited in Storch 2013) suggest three main characteristics of collaborative writing: the interaction is real and independent in the whole writing process, all the integrants of the collaborative writing participate in the decisions about the text produced, and writers construct one text. This final product is the

result of the combination of each individuals' input. Additionally, Weissberg (2006) points out four presumptions about writing which are related to the development of communicative competence. The first presumption says that an L2 lesson is more efficient when they are communicative and meaningful for learners, in this sense writing involves that the writer and the reader behave cooperatively and interactively. The second presumption refers to the implications of the use of communicative language, in writing, classmates work together critically to judge their texts doing coherent works. The third presumption suggests that interaction is considered a way to learning language through the dialogue but not only among learners but also teacher-learners to introduce writing issues or to agree during the writing process; the last presumption is concerned with social interaction, this suggests that through social communication learners can develop literacy skills, such as writing.

Therefore, communicative competence in L2 is concerned not only with the act of talking but also with written language. L2 learners must be immersed in the practice to achieve writing competence, and this acquisition is not so different from the acquisition of any other language skill. Williams (2003) claims that learners could become competent in writing, as they did in oral language, by comprehending and internalising. Also, Renandya & Jacobs (2016) claims that internalising refers to the L2 learner's immersion to several language inputs. Thus their abilities to recognise words, the addition of vocabulary and the expansion of the ability to understand oral and written documents make learners competent. Moreover, when an L2 learner tries to write a word whose spelling is unknown, the student is guided by the pronunciation and recognition of sounds to relate them with the written way and write it on the paper. In summary, the language skills are not separated, it means that each of them can be used to develop another one.

2.5.3 Listening

Listening is considered a receptive skill and is a primordial part of the interaction, what it means that promotes the communicative language. In the opinion of Widdowson (1978), listening is the skill that allows the recognition of the functions of sentences during the interaction, listening also provides the value of each part of the speech. This skill allows the interpretation of saying and it is carried out through the aural medium that refers to the way in which the language is manifested. Also, listening skill is part of the communicative competence because, as Flowerdew & Miller (2005, p. 12) remarks, “the Communicative Approach looks at what people do with language and how they respond to what they hear”. Flowerdew & Miller also proposes three models to the learning of listening skill. These models are Bottom-Up that is referring to the acquisition of the smallest units of sounds (individual sounds or phonemes) to develop understanding. The second model is the Top Down model, unlike bottom-up needs the previous knowledge of the learner and in this model listening skill is guided by specific purposes. Finally, the third model is called Interactive Model which incorporates and synthesizes the two previous models.

Pronunciation is crucial in the development of listening skill, since pronunciation is not only about production but also about the reception. It is usual that L2 learners with pronunciation difficulties also have troubles in listening comprehension. Furthermore, Lynch & Mendelsohn (2009, cited in Aponte-de-Hanna 2012) suggests that the interactive process, known as parallel processing, has to be used by learners to perceive, interpret and respond to what is heard. In short, listening skill could be taught by following specific models to guide learners in the acquisition of it, and it is remarkable that listening and speaking skills are not separated, even though listening is passive and receptive, its role in communication is essential.

2.5.4 Speaking

The development of speaking skill in Second Language Acquisition is complex for teachers and learners because of the importance of this skill, namely, is probably the most desired second language ability to acquire by L2 learners. Speaking might be considered more difficult to acquire than other skills, such as writing. Renandya & Jacobs (2016) claim that in spoken language, unlike written language, there are elements as fixed phrases, fillers, slangs, and non-standard language which could make more complicated the acquisition of this skill. Additionally, Folse (2006) states that it is essential to determine why students want to learn to speak in L2, and the curriculum should be based on this purpose. Folse also suggests that an L2 teacher has to organise a communicative class focused on fluency, pronunciation, language accuracy and listening ability. These kinds of classes are named as conversation, speaking, discussion or oral communication class, so speaking is very linked with a communicative approach. In addition to this, Baker & Westrup (2003) claim that speaking skill has been disregarded in L2 classes, but with the implementation of the Communicative Approach, this vision of Speaking changed. Baker & Westrup (2003) declare that the use of speaking activities inside the classroom reinforce the learning of new vocabulary, students practice the language they are learning, and speaking activities allow learners to experiment with the language immersed in emulations of real situations in order to practice real communication.

Moreover, learners need to develop speaking as a skill in a practical way. According to Goh & Burns (2012, cited in Farrell & Vos (2018) “L2 learners require to integrate language and discourse knowledge with speaking skills, resulting in output which is both accurate and fluent in various speaking contexts” (p. 76). To sum up, there are some abilities that learners

should have in order to acquire speaking skill successfully. Thus a class focused on communication promotes the practice of speaking by using real communication.

2.5.4.1 Pronunciation in L2

Pronunciation can be considered as a sub-skill that permits learners to be more competent in the production of spoken language. As Jette & Edwards & Zampini (2008) suggest, in the language teaching field, communication is the primary objective and pronunciation plays a vital role to achieve this objective, namely, pronunciation makes learners reach their highest level of communicative competence. However, a clear pronunciation is enough to communicate; it is not necessary to achieve a native pronunciation in L2; in the opinion of Bohn & Munro (2007) “current views of foreign-accented speech hold that native pronunciation in L2 is not only uncommon but unnecessary”. In addition to this, Baker & Westrup (2003) claim that an L2 speaker needs to possess a proper pronunciation enough to understand any message from other speakers.

Despite the fact there are many types of spoken English, it is relevant to get mutual intelligibility. Baker & Westrup also points out that pronunciation requires that learners know and practice the sounds of spoken English, stress, how to link the sounds and intonation. Furthermore, pronunciation instruction is relevant in any stage of the SLA; Pennington (1996) suggests that teachers have to focus the classes on the students’ needs and the age is not a determinant of the instruction of pronunciation, whose goal is that students obtain intelligibility, accuracy, and fluency. In summary, L2 teachers and learner's needs pronunciation to be competent to face communicative situations which require understanding and production of speech, however, in L2, native pronunciation is not required, it is difficult to say if it is possible for adult L2 learners, but a clear pronunciation is enough to be communicatively competent.

2.5.4.1.1 Intonation

Intonation is an important skill to produce and understand speech, through intonation the speaker can transmit the sense of the sentence and his or her emotions. In the opinion of Vassiere (2004, cited in Gokgoz & Medin & Tesserolo 2014), intonation provides to the listener important information that makes easier the understanding of the speaker's speech, the data provided could be informational, attitudinal or emotional; taking into account this points the listener and the speaker can reach successful communication. Additionally, Trouvain. & Gut (2007) claims that when there is no correspondence between the meaning and the intonation, the message could be comprehended in a wrong way and in the attempt to make concordance between meaning and the "wrong" intonation the communication process fails. As result, the real purpose of the speech is not understood. The role of intonation in the development of pronunciation, and in general of the speaking skill, is so relevant because, as Damar (2014, cited in Yurtbaşı 2017) affirms, the instruction of intonation in an L2 class contributes to the development of communicative competence and to obtain and improve the intelligibility of the speaker's speech.

Additionally, patterns of the pitch are crucial factors that affect and change intonation. As Ladefoged (2006) claims, when a person speaks steady-state pitch is not present in the discourse because the pitch goes up and down, thus to change the intonation gives a different meaning to the speech. The pitch goes up and down also refers to the rising and falling intonation. Gimson (1970 & 2010, cited in Delongová 2010) states that rising intonation is presented in Yes/No questions, to indicate unfinished and continuative utterances, showing overtones of politeness, encouragement, pleading, among others. Moreover, the same author declares that the falling intonation pattern in speech suggests matter-of-fact statements, "wh questions" and it is usually used to demonstrate positive character. These patterns of speech

provoke difficulties in L2 learners, as shown in Su Zibo & Hu Die's research (2011, cited in Wenkai Chen 2013) about the pitch movement of words with one, two or more syllables located at the end of declarative questions. According to this research, most of the 48 participants from first-year English majors, could locate the rising in short words; however, they failed more in rising tone long words (two or more syllables). On the other hand, Zhang Jing's study results (2012, cited in Wenkai Chen 2013); demonstrate that most learners commit more mistakes identifying the falling-rising intonation than just the falling intonation. Indeed the purpose of intonation is not only about having correct pronunciation but also about getting the meaning. This is shown in a Raphael Atoye's study (2005, cited in Gokgoz & Medlin & Tessarolo 2014) 85.7% of the 120 third-year English students could perceive the correct intonation changes in sentences. But only 25.7% could correctly identify the meaning conveyed through those changes, which suggests that teaching social meaning of intonation might be more relevant, for non-native speakers of English, than phonological aspects.

In addition to this, Fleur, C. (2013), affirms that intonation refers to all aspects of suprasegmentals, such as accent, length or intonation contour. Cruttenden, (1986, cited in Fleur 2013 p. 5) suggests "each intonation group has a standard pitch contour which changes in predictable ways, for example when an emphasis is added. Intonation can provide attitudinal meaning in English, and other languages", and this author suggests, teaching intonation to L2 learners is not only essential to improve pronunciation but also as a communicative skill. In short, the instruction of intonation in L2 classes makes lighter that learners develop pronunciation and communicative competence, through the adequate use of intonation the student reaches the competitiveness enough to understand and be understood during the discourse, namely, the literal meaning does not always give us the real message and purpose of what is said.

2.5.4.1.2 Speech rhythm

Speech rhythm is a critical aspect of achieving the capability of being understood, since errors in speech rhythm in the second language make communication more difficult. As Roach (2002:67, cited in Gashaw 2017 p. 13) defines, “rhythm in language refers to the periodic recurrence of certain patterns of sound in utterances. Syllables take the place of musical notes or beats, and in many languages, the stressed syllables determine the rhythm”, and English is one of the languages in which rhythm is regulated by stress. Speech rhythm is part of prosodic aspects. According to Adams (1979, cited in Gut 2009), some circumstances could affect the correct use of rhythm in L2 learners, these are the insufficient durational difference between unstressed and stressed syllables, the use of pauses, missing native linking mechanisms, the adequate placement of stress and vowel English reduction. Moreover, related to tempo, how fast a person speaks has been related to fluency and with the domain of a language and personality perception could be influenced by speed. According to Gross (2012, cited in Yurtbaşı 2015), most of foreign language learners pursue speaking speedily rather than accuracy and temporary emotional state impacts the rate of speech. In tempo, besides speed, pauses also are factors that modify the speech rhythm and these factors are perceived in the speaker’s fluency. Skehan (2003) & Tavakoli y Skehan (2005, cited in Kian Pishkar & Ahmad Moinzadeh & Azizallah Dabaghi 2017) claim that in pronunciation fluency are involved aspects which determine fluency, in particular, interruption fluency that is concerned with the continuous flow of speech, and the number and duration of pauses measures it.

In addition to this, Crystal (1997, cited in Gut 2009) points out that pitch, loudness/prominence, and tempo are patterns involved in language rhythm. Tempo is much related with specific challenges faced by English second language learners; this is because the tempo is about speed, linking sounds and pauses, probably linking sounds, at least for

Spanish native speakers it is an issue arduous to dominate. In the opinion of Yurtbaşı (2016, p. 2) “One of the most important aspects of speaking clearly and trying to understand what is said is to distinguish the speech styles. Most native speakers do not just speak fast -- as many students believe they do-- but they rather connect their words and change the sounds of their words accordingly”, he also mentions that when two sounds are connected they are not sound as they do individually and when they are connected correctly, the speech is understood clearly.

There are three types of linking occurring in oral communication: consonant-to-vowel or vowel-to-consonant combinations and consonant-to-consonant also called assimilation. In short, as was mentioned, the tempo is about understanding and being understood which means it is essential to develop this kind of abilities to be communicative competence with native and non-native speakers.

The role of speech rhythm in SLA is meaningful to develop pronunciation, and in general speaking skill. The improvement of oral skill is also concerned with the rhythm in a language, Yurtbaşı (2015 states that the use of appropriate rhythm patterns and stress placement makes possible oral communication. Lin, (2012, cited in Yurtbaşı 2015) also suggests that Second Language learners could face rhythm problems, such as the misplacement of stress or the wrong length, giving as result that they do not reduce syllables when it is necessary; also L2 learners usually emphasize syllables that do not need to be stressed and do not connect speech. It is usual that L2 learners do not stress correctly, when it is necessary because of the interference of L1. About this Peperkamp & Dupoux 2002 & Archibald (1997 cited in Malik & Akhter & Ahmed & John (2018) claim that previous investigations have found that some stress patterns of L1 interfere with the stress placement in L2, and thus learners’ speech sounds unnatural and incomprehensible. In summary, the

correct speech rhythm makes possible a more natural pronunciation and then an oral skill, especially in languages where the rhythm is so significant to give the right meaning of what is said, thus misunderstandings are avoided, and successful communication is reached.

2.5.4.1.3 Stress

The stress is part of the production of an understandable speech because in all the languages around the world the prominence is produced in different ways and where the prominence is strong is where the stress is located. According to Teschner & Whitley (2004, cited in Bian 2013 p. 78), stress refers to “the greater prominence or loudness that a vowel or syllable exhibits within a word, in at least two degrees: strong/weak (or primary/secondary)”. In addition to this, Dalton & Seidlhofer (1994) define stress, at a level of discourse, as the way in which a sound is emphasised, also refers to the prominence given to the discourse. Dalton & Seidlhofer claim that the stress could also be present in the sounds of speech and the listeners can notice that. Furthermore, those authors suggest two functions of stress: linguistic foregrounding function, which refers to the lack of correlation with some features such as loudness; and muscular effort in production, that is about the way in which speakers’ accomplish the impression of prominence. In addition to this, Collins & Mees (2013) point out some indicators of stress, specifically in the English language. These indicators are intensity that is perceived by the listeners as loudness. Pitch variation is probably the most critical factor involved in stress because it is one of the determinators of it. Vowel quality, the stress is also determined by central or peripheral vowels. Finally, Vowels duration, what it means that some vowels are shorter (this happens in unstressed syllables) than other syllables, and this is more explained in the table below taken from Collins. & Mees (2013, p. 130)

Table 2.1 Characteristics of stressed and unstressed syllables.

	Stressed	Unstressed
1. Intensity	Articulation with greater breath/muscular effort Perceived as greater loudness.	Less breath/muscular effort Perceived as having less loudness.
2. Pitch	Marked change in pitch	Syllables tend to follow the pitch trend set by previous stressed syllable
3. Vowel Quality	May contain any vowel (except /ə/ Vowels have clear (peripheral) quality Diphthongs have clearly defined glide	Generally have central vowels /ə ɪ ʊ/ or syllabic consonants Vowels may have centralised quality Diphthongs tend to have a much reduced glide
4. Vowel duration	Vowels have full length	Vowels are considerably shorter

Moreover, some factors are involved in the production of stress, Fry (1958, cited in Bian 2013 p.201) claims that these factors are pitch, intensity, and duration. This last factor is concerned with vowel quality, and it may affect the pronunciation. According to Lehiste (1970, cited in Peggy P.K. Mok 2011), the difference between long and short vowels can differ among languages, and Peggy P.K. Mok (2011) determines that the speaker controls speed speech. However, vowel length distinction is determined by the language; vowel quality also represents

and varies according to the accent of the speaker, this is stated by Müller (2007) "...vowels are readily mutable by speakers and changes in vowel quality are widely exploited to establish differences between accents." (p. 64). Besides, as it is observed in table 2.1, a stressed syllable or vowel is longer than unstressed ones. Stress is divided in two ways: "when it is considered in the linguistic environment of a word (including compound) being in isolation, it is called word stress; when it comes to a sentence (including phrase) that represents a form of connected speech, it is termed sentence stress" (p. 89). As a summary, stress makes it possible to communicate without difficulties about the meaning of the speech. In English, the appropriate use of stress is significant, because the stress applied to the wrong syllable could change the meaning of the words and the speech is misunderstood.

2.5.4.1.4 L1 Pronunciation transfer to L2

The L2 learners deal with various challenges. Among them we can find transfer that as Sharwood (1996 cited in Prieto 2005) claims, is the power of the mother tongue on the target language, affecting the development, performance, and comprehension of L2. As Odling (1989, cited in Prieto 2005) states, the transfer can be divided into two types; dominant transfer, where the first language dominates any other and borrowing transfer, in which others dominate the first language. However, Weinreich (1953 cited in Jette & Edwards & Zampini 2008) suggests other types of transfer, but especially sound transfer and they are the followings: sound substitution, phonotactic interference, prosodic interference, phonological process, under differentiation and reinterpretation of distinctions.

There are many aspects involved in L2 pronunciation, but vowels and consonants are indispensable pieces in the acquisition. This is better described by two hypothesis, both were contrasted by Perwitasari & Klamer & Witteman & Schiller, O'Neills (2015, p.1), they mentioned The Feature Hypothesis which suggests that those aspects in L2 which do not

allow to make comparisons to L1 are more challenging to acquire. On the other hand, the Linguistic Desensitization Hypothesis claims that all the L2 learners “are sensitive to durational cues when perceiving L2 vowels and predicts that vowel duration will be used to differentiate the non-native vowel contrasts. Because vowel duration is easy to access and salient, the hypothesis predicts that L2 learners employ durational information, which is contrastive in the L1”. Negative transfer or interference could be caused by the different languages systems, Lin (1994, cited in Ching-Ying Lin 2014) suggests that when in L1 and L2 exist different linguistic systems it avoids learners performing correctly in the target language. Interference does not only affect individual phonemes as Weinberger suggests (1997, cited in Qian Liu, 2011) negative transfer also includes syllable structures and individual phonemes.

The learners’ L1 also has an important role in the development and learning of L2 pronunciation. However, this influence could be negative. In the opinion of Munro (2018), the L1 sound system impacts the manner in which the learner acquires L2 pronunciation. Regarding L1 influence, it is necessary to mention transference, which is concerned with L1 patterns affecting L2 pronunciation. This phenomenon, according to Sewell (2016), usually happens in early language learning stages. Hansen (2006 p. 153, cited in Sewell 2016) proposes a sequence related to these stages of transfer. The first stage refers to learners using similar consonants in order and position from L1, which is “adequate” to L2. At the second stage, consonants are modified according to the learners’ L2 needs, at this stage, transfer still dominates; during the third stage marked consonants emerge and transfer phenomenon reduces; at the fourth stage, it is supposed that learners almost achieve native speaker-like phonology. Furthermore, Weinreich (1953, cited in Sewell 2016 p. 55), claims that there are significant features of the language that could be transferred from L1 to L2. These features are “sounds: an equivalent or near-equivalent from the L1 is substituted for an L2 sound;

processes: a phonological process from the L1 is transferred to the L2; phonotactics: the syllable structure of the L1 affects the pronunciation of L2 syllables; and prosody: intonational patterns may be transferred from the L1 to the L2”.

In brief, sometimes it is convenient the L1 reference to pronounce L2 sounds. However, the transfer of patterns from L1 to L2 is a phenomenon that could affect the development of L2 pronunciation, but there are stages that learners have to accomplish as a natural process to L2 pronunciation achievement.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter are presented the characteristics of the subjects who participated answering the instrument, also are explained the reasons why they were chosen among all the people at Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés (LEI) and how these features are useful to get the objective of this research. Also it is shown, the relevant information about the development of the instrument, the structure and the process to make it more appropriate for this investigation.. Afterwards, the steps to apply the instrument are described, likewise the way and the tools employed to discriminate the information obtained from the questionnaire.

3.1 Subjects

In this study, seventeen students from two classes of Target Language 5 at Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés (LEI) in Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP) were selected to answer the questionnaire. The participants were chosen because they are at the most advanced level of target language subjects, according to the LEI program. Seven women and ten men between 21-26 years old were taken into account; all the participants have already taken the subject phonetics and phonology, so this fact would make more accessible the understanding of some symbols used in the instrument. In addition to this, the total of years that they have studied English language ranges between 2 and a half years and ten years. These participants answered the questionnaire in order to achieve the purpose of this research: recognize and determine the challenges that LEI Target Language V students face to develop English pronunciation

3.2 Instrument

For this research, an instrument was designed to determine the pronunciation challenges faced by target language five students at LEI. The whole participants were notified about the privacy with which their data would be handled and the purpose of the instrument by text at the heading of the questionnaire. Also at the beginning, some descriptive information was required, and they were the participants' age, gender, and the total of years studying English and if they have already taken the subject phonetics and phonology; this kind of information was necessary to be more specific to report the information collected.

The instrument was developed through four categories and its indicators: intonation (rises and falls), speech rhythm (linking sounds, speed/pauses, and stress placement), stress (vowel quality and vowel duration) and L1 pronunciation transfer to L2 (consonants/vowels and syllable structure). Each section was structured by two questions per indicator and three possible answers. The scale used in most of the items was of difficulty, however, in each indicator, there is one question designed to guide the participant to recognise and remember the pronunciation issue, and thus he or she would be able to answer the next question about the level of difficulty of this issue. See Appendix I.

3.3 Final Instrument

The instrument was piloted before the application; this process was carried out with nine Seminar II students in order to identify possible syntax mistakes or misunderstandings that could affect the results. In the first part, about the descriptive data, the objective of the instrument had been written after the privacy statement and the word "thesis" was used, it was necessary to modify the order of these short texts and use "research" instead of "thesis".

Furthermore, all the sections had been titled by the name of each of the four categories,

and this was a mistake because this information does not have to be provided to the participants in order to not intervene in their answers. Moreover, in the scale of difficulty there were four options “very difficult, difficult, more or less difficult and not difficult”, however, it was necessary to have odd options in order to obtain a better contrast while making graphics and comparisons and to avoid equal numbers which would not be so useful in this research. Some items were changed because they gave clues to the participants who could induce the participants’ answers. Moreover, specific options were changed, and some others were grouped into charts in order to make the instrument more feasible for the purposes of this research. Finally, a thank sentence was added at the end of the questionnaire as part of the formality protocol. See Appendix II.

3.4 Procedure.

In order to administer the instrument, it was necessary to find out the schedule and the classrooms of all the Target Language 5 subjects to ask for permission to the teachers of each class to not interfere with their work. The teachers even requested for the instrument and the research; then, the questionnaire, that was already approved, was applied to 17 participants in total (10 from a morning class and seven from an afternoon class) from Target Language 5 subject. The morning class answered the questionnaire at 9:30 am, in order that the majority of the students were present because their class started at 9:00 am. The instrument was administered to the afternoon students at 3:00 pm to not interfere with their activities previously established by their teacher. Both groups answered the questionnaire in around ten minutes, no one asked for help or expressed doubts about the instrument. Afterwards, the questionnaires were collected and the results obtained were registered in different tables using Excel and Word, starting with the descriptive data and following the order used in the questionnaire in order to keep a sequence and not to lose the coherence during the data

reporting.

3.5 Data Analysis

First of all, the answers from the 17 questionnaires were counted, and the results were divided into sections, following this order: The data collected was registered in five tables using Excel. One for the descriptive participants' information and the rest for each section of the questionnaire (intonation, speech rhythm, stress and L1 pronunciation transfer to L2).

From these tables were created graphics, using Excel as well; there is one graphic per answer, which allows being more meticulous to find out the pronunciation challenges faced by Target Language 5 (TL 5) students at LEI. For the data analysis, they were used bar graphics because they allow us to observe the tendency clearly and to compare the categories and indicators based on the answers provided by the participants and thus, make a better analysis and appreciation of the differences and similarities among the responses. Afterwards, all the graphics were described, in order to provide an analysis and perception of the results presented on each of them. In chapter III, it was mentioned all that is related to the design of the instrument and its application, likewise the participants and the procedure to process the data obtained from the questionnaire. In the following chapter, it is explained what was obtained from the instrument, through graphics and detailed descriptions about the findings of each question of the instrument.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

In this chapter, all the data collected from the instrument used for this research is shown, which is related to the challenges faced by target language five students at LEI in Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla. This information is divided into four sections; these were the ones used in the questionnaire. The first category is intonation which has as indicators rises and falls; the second category is speech rhythm, and its indicators are linking sounds, tempo, and stress placement; then to the category of stress were established as indicators: vowel quality and vowel duration; and finally L1 pronunciation transfer to L2 whose indicators are consonants/vowels and syllable structure.

4.1 Intonation

In this section, rising and falling were considered like two critical patterns of intonation, which were taken into account as the indicators. Six questions structure this first section, two about rises, the same number about falls by using one declarative and affirmative statement per each item and the rest dedicated to the level of difficulty according to the participants' perceptions locating raising and falling intonation.

4.1.1 Rising Intonation

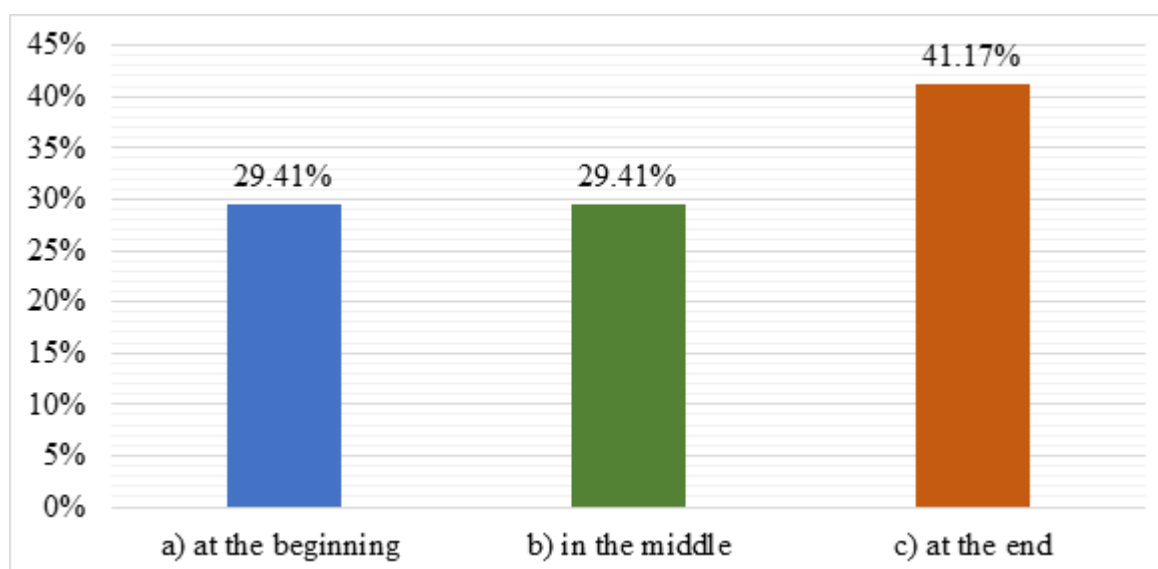
The rising intonation was divided into two questions, question number one was related to declarative statements, and question number three was about affirmative ones. The first question of this section was designed with the purpose of the participants to identify the location of rising intonation in a simple sentence so they realise what rising intonation is. They had to underline the option that they considered correct according to where the rising tone is located. In total, 17 responded to the questionnaire that represents the 100% of the whole of participants, seven answered that intonation is situated at the end, 5 in the middle

and the same quantity said at the beginning. In relation to the third question of the instrument about the rising intonation in a positive statement, it was found that seven declared that the intonation must be at the end of an affirmative sentence, six of them identified this rising at the beginning, and just four declared that it must be in the middle. The results are shown in table 4.1 and the percentages in Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2 to be discussed.

Table 4.1 Rising Intonation in declarative and affirmative statements

Item	at the beginning	in the middle	at the end
In the following sentence, where do you locate the rising intonation? “Is Jensen your name? (Declarative question)	5 = 29.41%	5 = 29.41%	7 = 41.17%
In the following sentence, where do you locate the rising intonation? “Your name is Jensen” (Affirmative statement)	6 = 35.29%	4 = 23.52%	7 = 41.17%

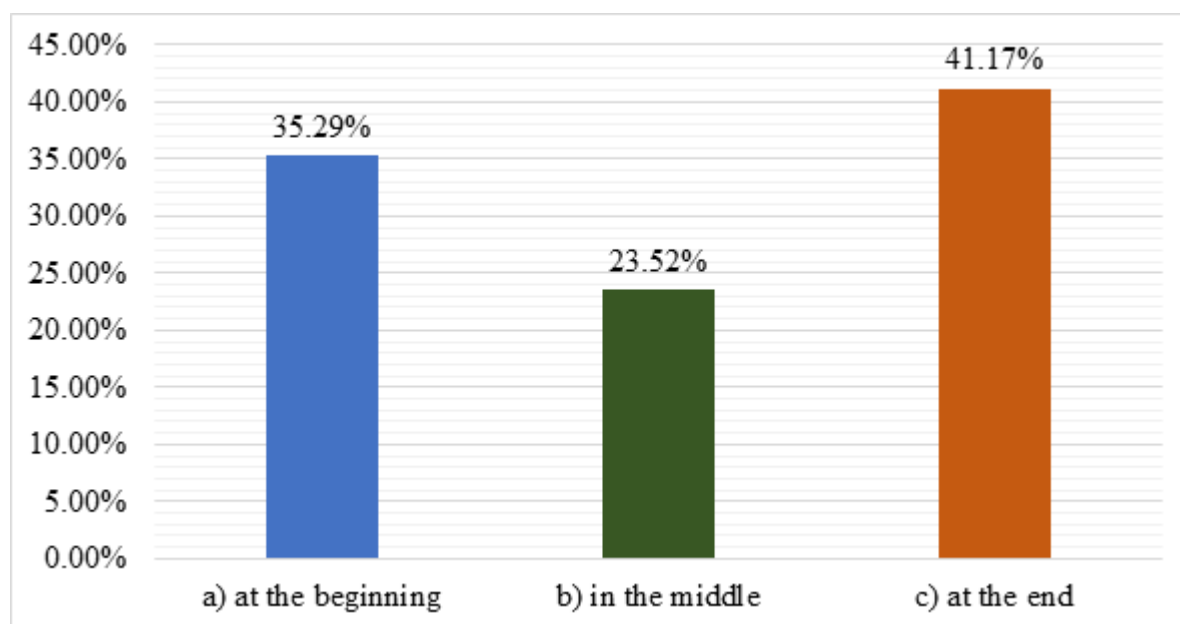
Figure 4.1: In the following sentence, where do you locate the rising intonation? “Is Jensen your name?”



Based on the results, it can be said that less than 50% of the participants identified the rising intonation at the end of the sentence “Is Jensen your name?” This is the most common pattern, because it is a declarative statement, and as it was mentioned previously in chapter II, Gimson (1970 & 2010, cited in Delongová 2010) declares that rising intonation located at the end of the sentence is related to Yes/ No questions, like the example used in this item. However, 29.41% of people said that the rising intonation is located at the beginning and the same percentage said in the middle, despite most of them choosing the more appropriate answer. The difference among the correct option and the rest of them was just of two participants, as it is observed in previous table 4.1. This result allows us to perceive that almost half of the total of participants can locate the rising intonation in a simple declarative sentence, but more than the half could not place the increasing tone. This conclusion can be interpreted as the students are not able to locate the rising tone because they are worried about delivering the message not paying attention to the intonation. This need provokes misunderstandings at the moment to hold a conversation because to achieve communicative competence it is necessary

reciprocal intelligibility. This is supported by Baker & Westrup (2003) who states that pronunciation requires that learners know and practice the sounds of spoken English and acquire abilities like intonation to understand and be understood. See Figure 4.2

Figure 4.2 In the following sentence, where do you locate the rising intonation? “Your name is Jensen”

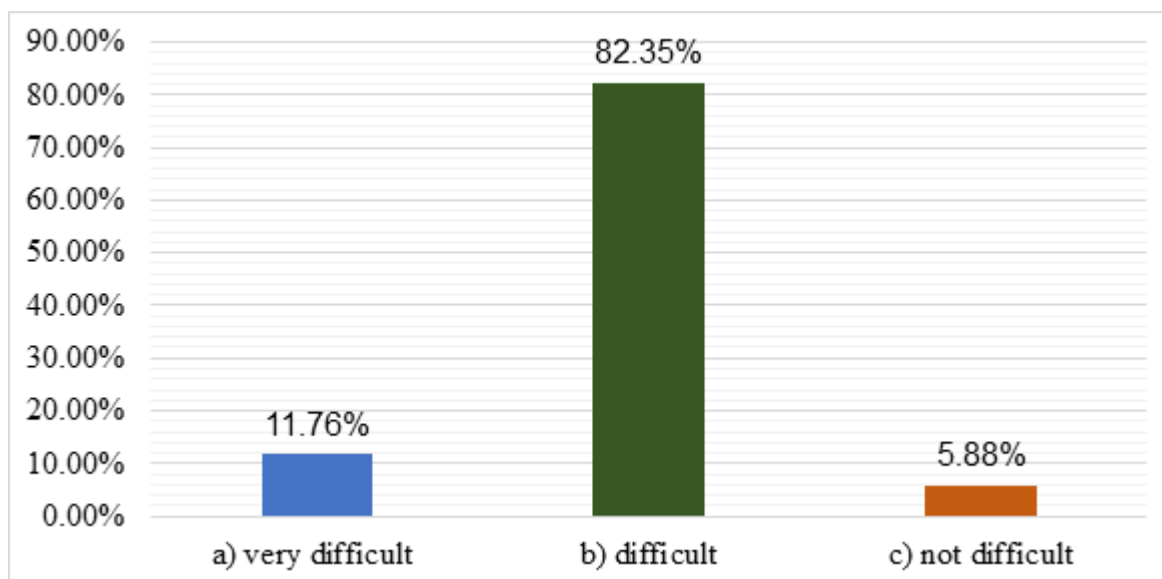


It can be observed that the majority of the participants located the rising intonation at the end of the statement. However, being an affirmative sentence, to find the rising tone at the beginning is the most appropriate pattern. According to Gimson (1970 & 2010, cited in Delongová 2010), rising intonation is not placed at the end of an assertive statement, however almost half of the students set the rising tone at the end of the sentence, but 35% located it at the beginning. The difference between the most chosen option and the most appropriate option is minimum. However, this means that only 35.29% that represents around a third part of the total are capable of placing rises in affirmative statements. This is used to occur when the attitudinal character of the sentence is not taken into account. Namely, the sentence used in

this item is to give information, and with this purpose, there are no emotions involved which might affect or modify the intonation. This conclusion is backed by Vassiere (2004, cited in Gokgoz & Medin & Tessarolo 2014), who declares that intonation provides to the listener important information that makes easier the understanding of the speaker's speech, the data provided could be informational, attitudinal or emotional.

Besides, after the two previous questions, a difficulty level question was included about the location of rising intonation to know the participants' perception after answering those questions. It was important to get the objective of this research; three options were presented as difficulty scale. 82.35% of people chose the option "difficult", 11.76% said "very difficult", and only 5.88% of the total of participants considered that is not difficult to locate this kind of intonation in sentences. See figure 4.3

Figure 4.3 For you, what level of difficulty is it to locate the rises in a sentence?



The previous figure provides a visible contrast about the responses, “difficult” was the most recurrent chosen option, it is meaningful to know how the learners feel about the location of intonation, specifically after doing the exercises when they had to locate rises in two different types of sentences. The results suggest that most of the people who cooperated answering this questionnaire consider it difficult to locate rising intonation and a minimum percentage consider not challenging to identify it. This reaction could be caused because of the number of syllables. Despite the sentences were short they consisted of more than two syllables; this is supported by Su Zibo & Hu Die’s research (2011, cited in Wenkai Chen 2013) that found that there are more difficulties finding the rising intonation in long words and the same happens with sentences in which are implied more than two syllables.

4.1.2 Falling Intonation

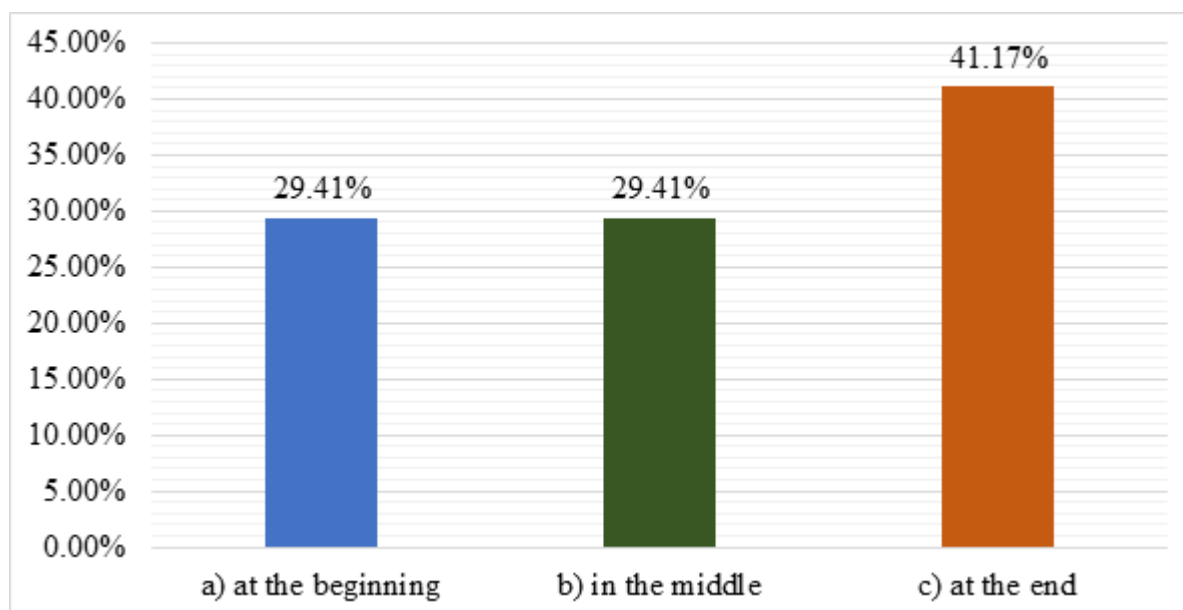
This category was divided into two questions, in the instrument; question number 2 was about declarative statements and the number 4 concerned affirmative ones. These two kinds of sentences were chosen to identify falling intonation in two different statements and they contrast between them. The students had to select the option that describes where they locate the falls in each sentence. In total 17 people participated, this number represents the 100% of the total, seven answered that intonation is situated at the end, 5 in the middle and the same number said: “at the beginning”. In addition, about the falling intonation in a positive statement, the results showed that 8 located the tone in the middle, five at the end and four at the beginning. This information is presented in Table 4.2 and Figure 4.4 and Figure 4.5 to be analysed.

Table 4.2: Falling intonation in declarative and affirmative statements

Item	At the beginning	In the middle	At the end
In the following sentence, where do you locate the falling intonation? “Is Jensen your name? (Declarative question)	5 = 29.41%	5 = 29.41%	7 = 41.17%
In the following sentence, where do you locate the falling intonation? “Your name is Jensen” (Affirmative statement)	4= 23.52%	8 = 47.05%	5 = 29.41%

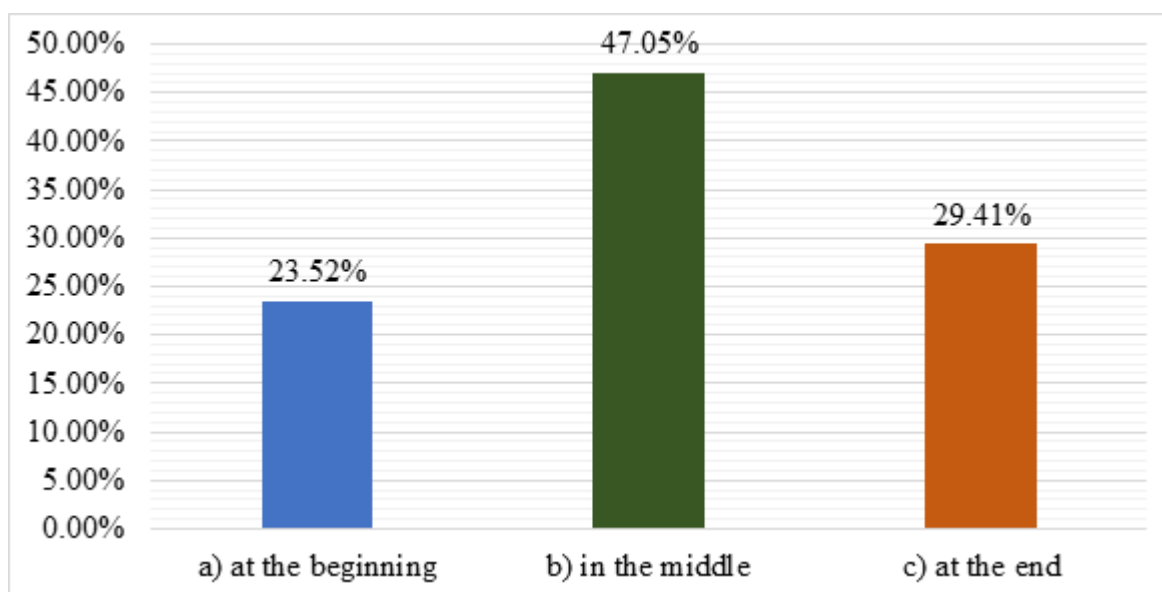
This item was designed to know where learners locate the falling intonation in the same sentence used in question 1. The objective to use the same sentence in two different questions was to realise if the participants analyse them or if they answer without scrutinising. The results obtained showed that most of the participants, 41.17%, located the falling intonation at the end of the sentence, 29.41% in the middle and the same percentage of people at the beginning. These results can be observed in figure 4.4

Figure 4.4 In the following sentence, “Is Jensen your name? ”Where do you locate the falling intonation?



The displayed results demonstrate that almost 50% of the participants located the falling intonation at the end of the statement, however as the rising intonation is situated at the end of the example, the falling tone must not be at the same place. In addition to this, the same percentage chose the options “at the beginning” and “in the middle” which avoids contrasting those options. It is also important to mention that the results shown in Figure 4.4 were precisely the same, what can be understood as the students confuse falling intonation with rising intonation, so they could not identify it in this sentence. Moreover, being this a falling rising sentence might represent a more significant challenge than ascending location, this is backed by a Zhang Jing’s study (2012, cited in Wenkai Chen 2013) which determines that most of the learners commit more mistakes identifying the falling-rising intonation than just the falling tone.

Figure 4.5 In the following sentence: "Your name is Jensen" where do you locate the falling intonation?

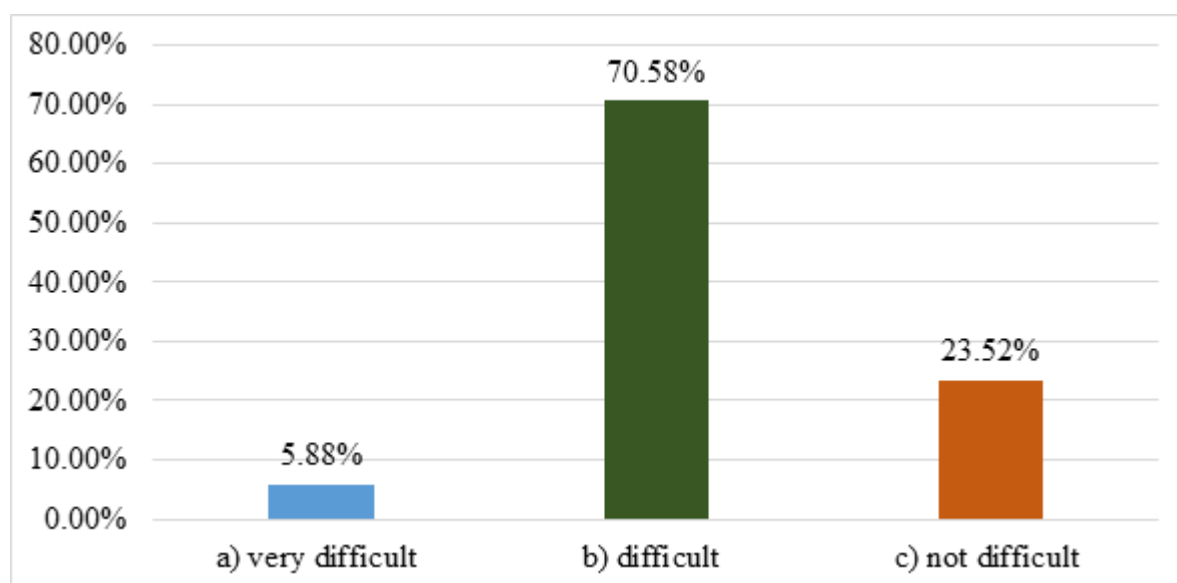


The falling intonation is located at the end of the sentence; however, only 29.41% of the participants chose that option. And most of them identified the falling intonation in the middle, despite the fact the difference was only 3 people, as was shown in table 4.2, it is relevant to say that students have more difficulties finding the falling intonation including the rising ones. This affirmative statement simply provides information on what means that they are not emotions involved that affect the intonation. But, the participants did not locate appropriately the falling tone because they did not identify the character of the sentence, this is supported by Cruttenden, (1986, cited in Fleur 2013 p. 5) states that the changes in pitch and intonation can give attitudinal meaning.

The last question of the first section was designed to ask directly to the participants how difficult it is for them to locate falling intonation in that kind of sentences. This question was presented at the end of the section because it was necessary that they first get immersed in a situation where they had to locate the fallings. 70.58% said that they consider challenging to

locate this kind of intonation, 23.52% answered that it is not difficult for them and only one person who represents the 5.88% of the participants mentioned that it is very difficult to place falling intonation. This data is presented in figure 4.6

Figure 4.6 For you, what level of difficulty is it to locate the falls in a sentence?



These results confirm that most of the participants consider it difficult to locate falling intonation. Nevertheless, in comparison with figure 4.3 about the difficulty of placing rising intonation, the percentage of people who found challenging to identify rises is higher than in this item. These results are a consequence of learners being very careful about pronouncing and sounding well, but they do not pay attention to transmit the purpose of the sentence. This is supported by Fleur (2013) who suggests that teaching intonation is essential to learners develop the communicative skill, not only about pronunciation training.

4.2 Speech Rhythm

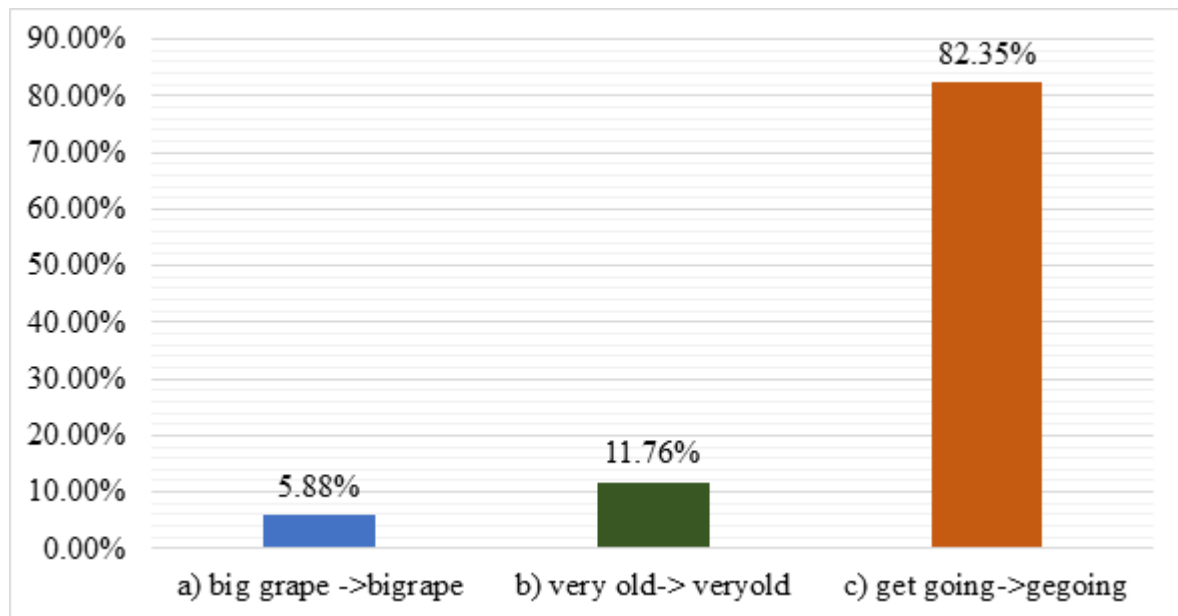
This part is the second section of the questionnaire related to the speech rhythm. In this section three elements of rhythm were taken into consideration. Linking sounds, tempo (speed and

pauses) and stress placement were three indicators taken as essential elements. This part of the questionnaire was designed with six questions and three choices where they could select one that they consider the most appropriate. In some of the cases there are difficulty scales, but in others, some items were added to face some of the possible challenges and then, they were more immersed in the matter to answer the question difficulty scale.

4.2.1 Linking sounds

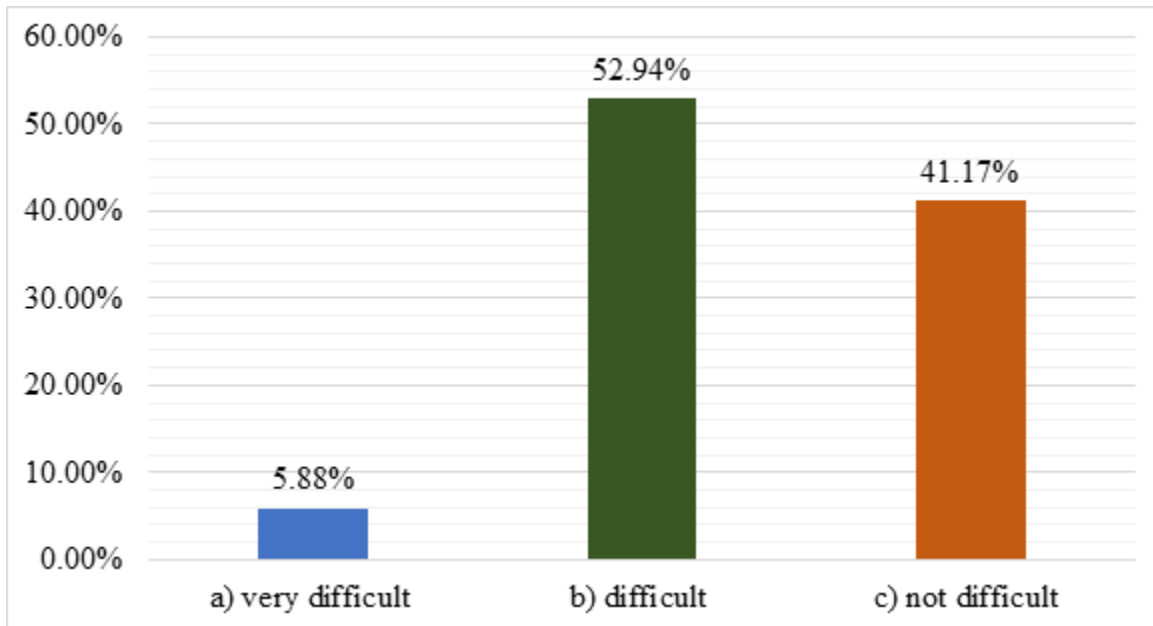
As the first question of this section, it was necessary that the participants identify, among three options, the one in which the sound is not correctly linked. It was not considered essential to write the possibilities by using phonetics transcription, because it was not sure that all of the students had taken the phonetics and phonology subject. The majority of the ones who answered the questionnaire, 82.35%, considered that the option “get going → gegoing” is where the sounds are not linked in a right way, 11.76% chose the option “very old → veryold”, and only one person who represents the 5.88% of the total, said that the option “big grape → bigrape” is where the connected sounds are not correct. These results are explicit in figure 4.7

Figure 4.7 Choose the option in which the sounds are not correctly linked



Almost all the participants chose the option “get going → gegoing”, which is correctly linked, this is because when certain sounds are connected, in this case, /t/ and /g/, the sound /t/ is not pronounced. The fact that almost the whole participants chose an option correctly linked when they had to choose a wrong one suggests that they have difficulties with this ability because they do not know the rules of how to connect certain words, specifically sounds as native speakers do. This argument becomes more solid taking into account what Yurtbaşı (2016, p. 2) states, “native speakers rather connect their words and change the sounds of their words accordingly” and changing sounds also is related to omit some of them. Question number 8 was designed to obtain data about the participants’ perception of linking sounds and it was used a problematic scale to measure their opinions. 52.94% declared that was difficult for them linking sounds, 41.17% considered not challenging to connect sounds and just one person (5.88%) considered very difficult to do it; this is shown up in Figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8 For you, what level of difficulty is it to link sounds in English?



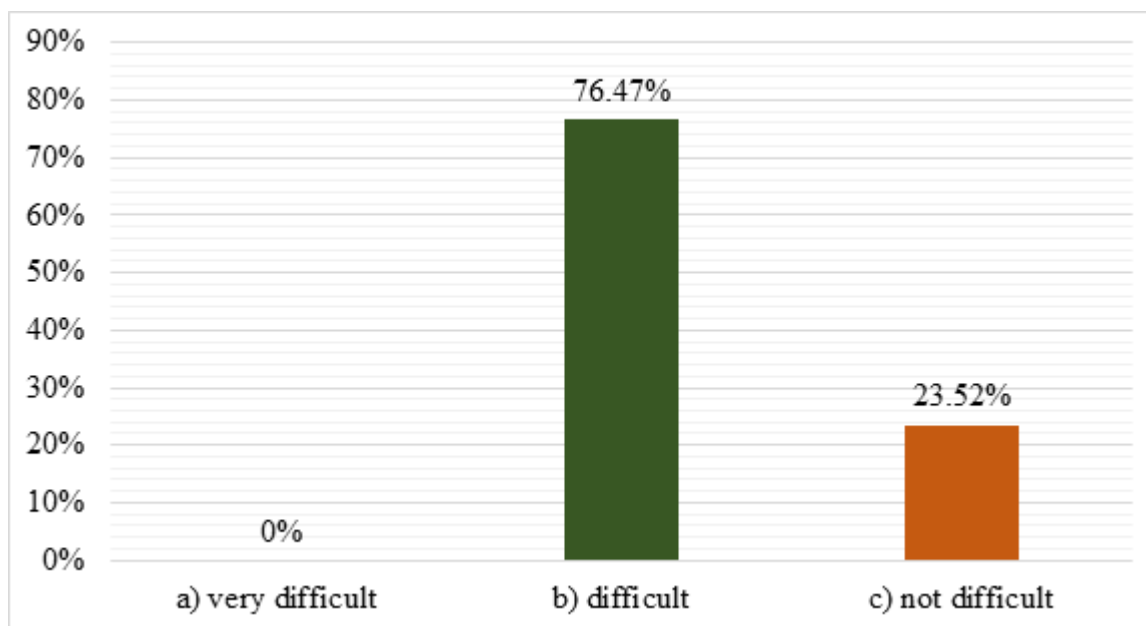
The results can be interpreted as almost half of the participants considered challenging to link sounds, but nearly the other half declared that they do not have problems with it, however, according to Figure 4.7, they have trouble connecting sounds, and this means that they are not aware of the difficulties they face. The participants considered it challenging to connect the speech because they are not used to listening and producing sounds together. That fact means that they pronounce the words as they sound individual and this creates confusion when someone else tries to understand what is saying. The learners also tell words with the same pronunciation as they sound individual and this could modify the meaning of words and whole speech. This fact is supported by Yurtbaşı (2016) who says that when sounds are linked the meaning is distinguishable because it possesses specific characteristics that allow it.

4.2.2 Tempo

In this section about Speech Rhythm, it also included a question related to speed, which is also an essential factor in speech rhythm. This was the ninth question, and it was designed

with a difficulty scale and from the 100% of the participants, 76.47% said that it is challenging to speak speedily when it is necessary, 23.52% and nobody considered it very difficult to do it; this is represented in Figure 4.9.

Figure 4.9 For you, what level of difficulty is it to speak English speedily when it is necessary?

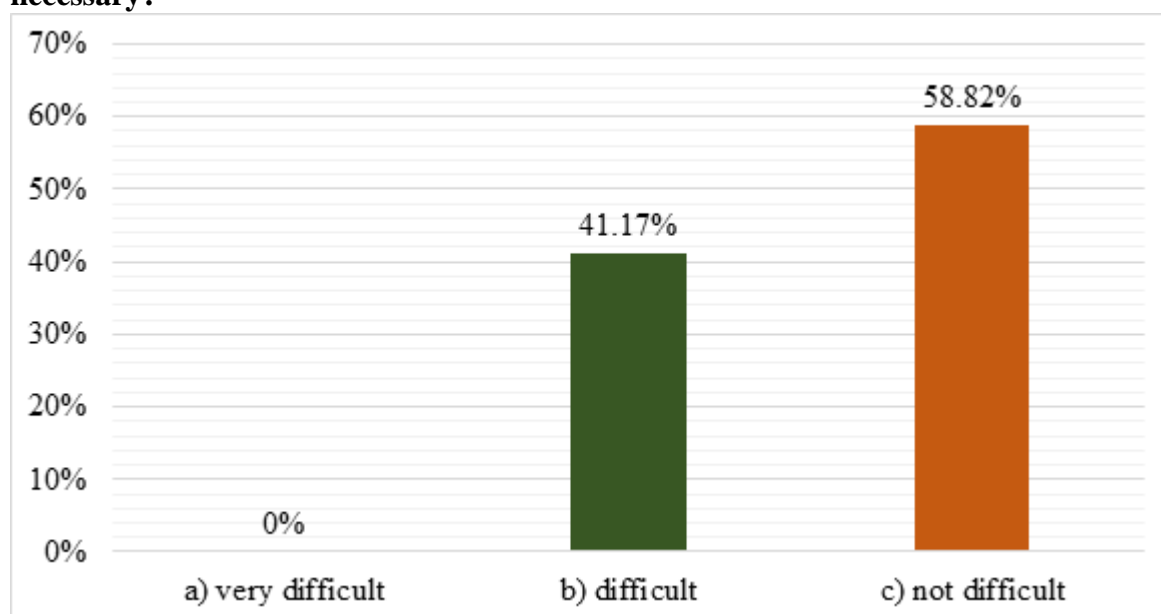


As it is observed, the majority of the participants considered it difficult to speak speedily, the number is considerably high. It is possible that most of the participants considered it difficult to speak quickly because of the lack of domain in the language. Also, the learners do not connect the speed of their speech with their emotions, this is relevant considering what Gross affirms (2012, cited in Yurtbaşı 2015) about why L2 learners desire to speak faster, and it says that most of the foreign language learners pursue to talk speedily rather than accuracy and temporary emotional state impact the rate of speech.

The following question was constructed to determine the level of difficulty that represents Target Language 5 students to pause their speech. It used a difficulty scale, and the

results reflected that 58.82% did not consider challenging to pause their speech, 41.17% affirmed it is difficult for them to use pauses and no one regarded that to pause speech is complicated; this is shown up in Figure 4.10.

Figure 4.10 For you, what level of difficulty is it to pause your speech when it is necessary?

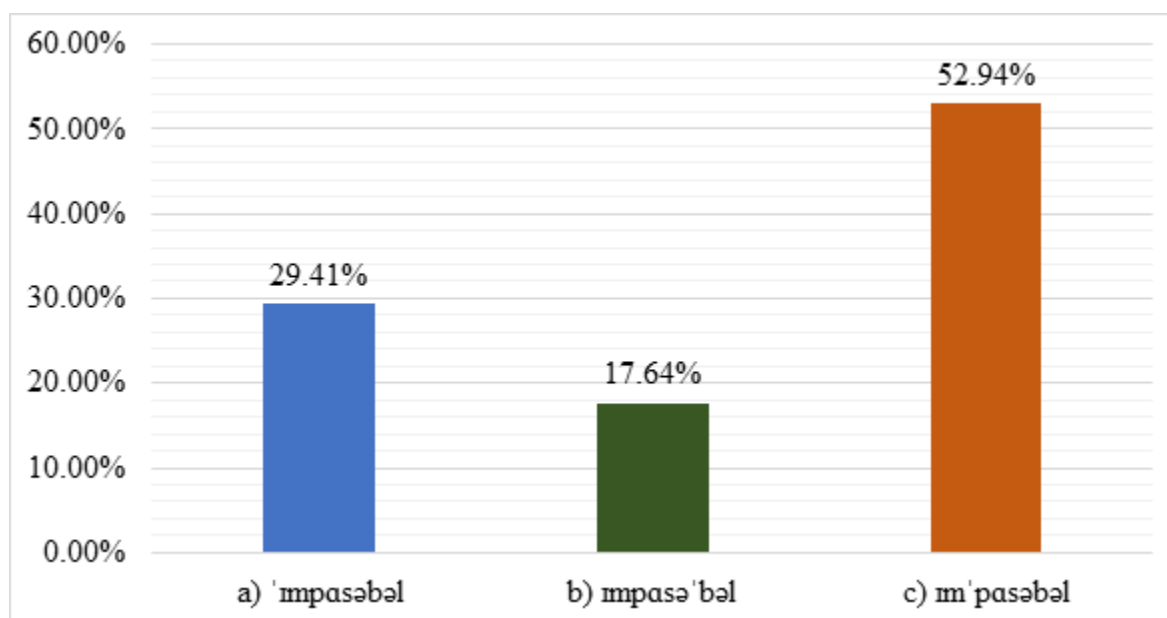


More than the 50% considered not challenging to use pauses during the speech when they are necessary, but almost the other half declared that for them it is difficult to use them. That is to say that unlike what was shown in Figure 4.9, about how difficult they consider speaking speedily, it seems that most of them found it more difficult to speak quickly than using pauses. This fact can be attributed to how fluent they are while they speak; if they are not fluent enough they cannot deal with stops because they are not identified in a non flowing speech. This argument is supported by Skehan (2003) &Tavakoli y Skehan (2005, cited in Kian Pishkar & Ahmad Moinzadeh & Azizallah Dabaghi 2017) who defines as interruption fluency that is about the flow of speech that is measured by the number and the duration of pauses; this is a factor that determines pronunciation fluency.

4.2.3 Stress Placement

The eleventh question was created to the participants to choose the option in which the stress was correctly located. The options in this part were written with phonetic transcription and the same word “impossible”, that is a word with more than two syllables, was used and thus, the range of possibilities is bigger. 52.94% chose the option “c”, 29.41% considered that the option “a” was correct and 17.64% selected the option “b”. These results are specified to be discussed in Figure 4.11.

Figure 4.11 In which one of the following examples is the stress correctly placed?

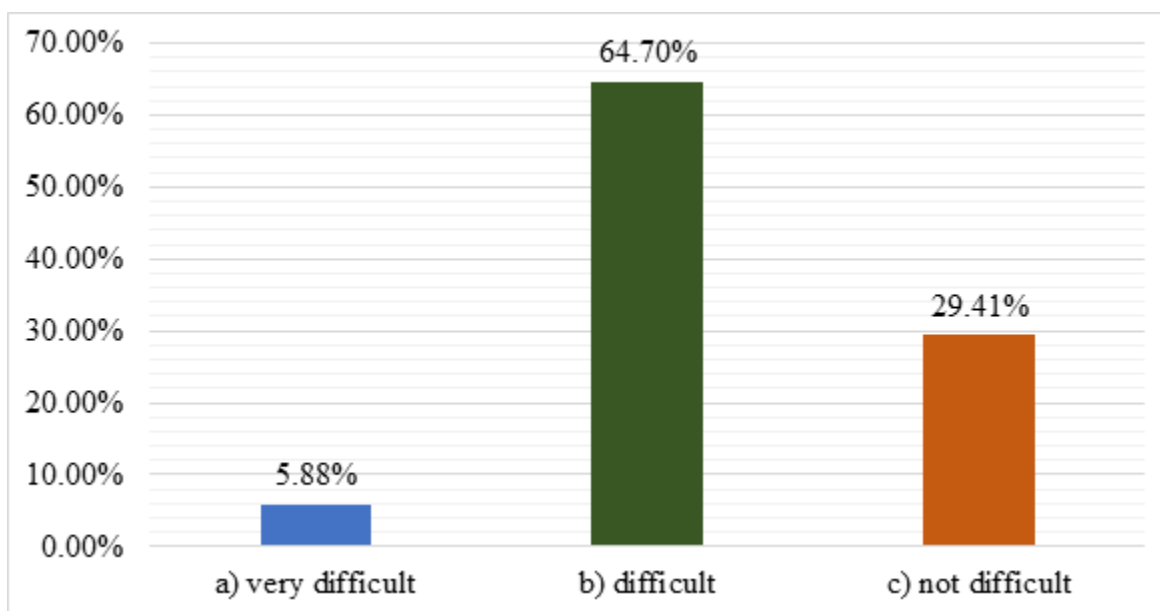


It is observed that little more than half of the people choose the option in which the stress is

correctly placed, this means that the majority can identify the stress in words of more than two syllables, however almost the 30% chose one of the incorrectly stressed. Most of the participants could select the correct option because they identified the duration of the stress and the unstressed syllables. The proper identification allows them to place the stress in a word, this is based on what Adams suggests (1979, cited in Gut 2009), about some circumstances could affect the correct use of rhythm by L2 learners, these are the insufficient durational difference between unstressed and stressed syllables.

The coming questions were designed to measure the level of difficulty, according to students' perception, about stressing the right syllable in a word. The 64.70% of students answered “difficult”, 29.41 “not difficult” and barely the 5.88% considered “very difficult” to stress the correct syllable in a word. These results are better observed in Figure 4.12.

Figure 4.12 For you, what level of difficulty is it to stress the right syllable in a word?



The previous figure allows observing that most of the people considered difficult to stress syllables correctly, despite more than the half answered correctly in question number 11,

which was about choosing the example rightly stressed, as it is shown in Figure 4.11. This result is a consequence of the stress patterns that are different in their L1 and L2, so the placement of stress in the right place is not easy to foretell in English because of the influence of L1. This is backed by Peperkamp & Dupoux 2002 & Archibald (1997 cited in Abdul Malik Abbasi & Masood Akhter Memon & Mansoor Ahmed Channa & Stephen John, 2018) who claim that previous investigations have found that some stress patterns of L1 interfere with the stress placement in L2 making it more difficult for L2 learners perceive and produce L2 stress patterns.

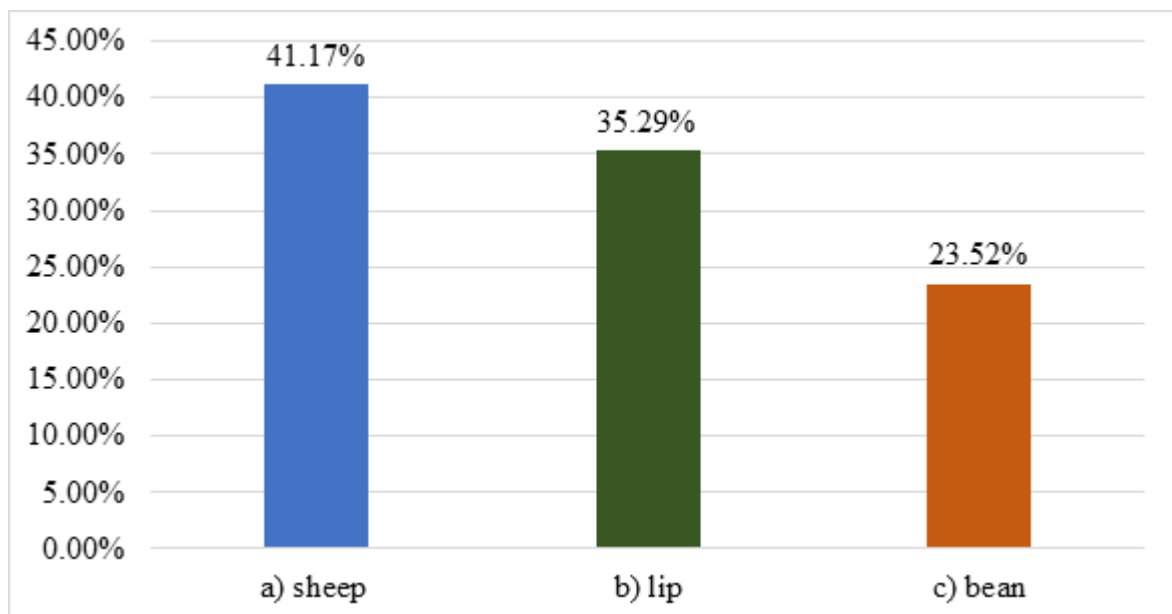
4.3 Stress

In this third section about stress, they were considered as indicators of vowel quality and vowel duration. They were designed for four questions, the number 13 was about the identification of vowel quality and then a question related to the same aspect but designed to determine difficulty level according to participants' perceptions. After that, the fifteenth question was developed to know if they identify the vowel duration in three different words and a question about the level of difficulty was also included at the end of this section.

4.3.1 Vowel Quality

The thirteenth question was developed to students identify the word in which the vowel sound is this /ɪ/, to know if they can differentiate between /i:/ and /ɪ/ among three words with similar sounds but written differently. The results showed that 41.17% of the participants chose the option “sheep”, 35.29% the option “lip” and 23.52% selected the option “bean”; this is exposed in Figure 4.13.

Figure 4.13 In which one of the following words the vowel sound is this /ɪ/?

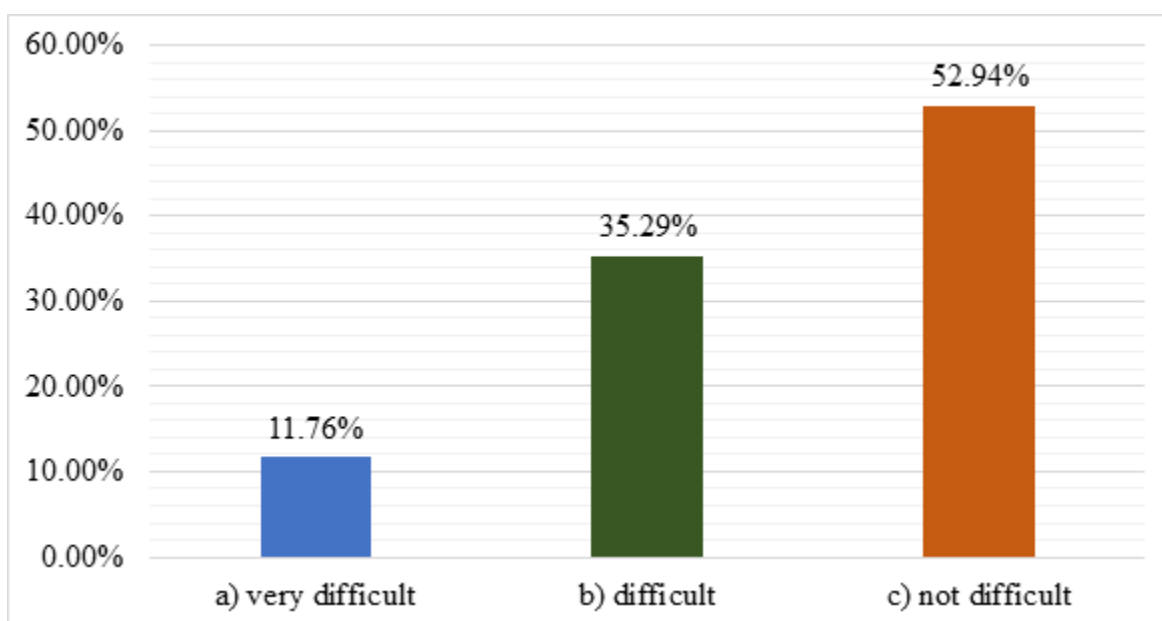


It is evident that more than the half of the students were not able to identify the /ɪ/ sound, to be more specific 64.69% did not do it correctly, just 35.29% chose the option in which this sound was used. This could be caused because they do not know the differences of pronunciation among vowels, which sometimes are pronounced equally despite not being represented in the same way. This matter is observed in the examples sheep and bean, but primarily this is also related to the participants' accent, all of them are native Spanish speakers, so this accent is reflected in their pronunciation and the insufficient contrast between vowel qualities. All this is partially supported by Müller (2007) who affirms that vowel quality also represents and varies according to the accent of the speaker because he mutates the vowel sounds.

The following questions were used to know, according to Target Language 5 students' perception, how the level of difficulty represents to differentiate among vowel sounds. 52.94% said that it is not difficult for them to distinguish among vowel sounds, 35.29%

considered challenging to do it and 11.76% declared that for them it is complicated to accomplish. These results are displayed in Figure 4.14 to the discussion.

Figure 4.14 For you, what level of difficulty is it to differentiate among vowel sounds?

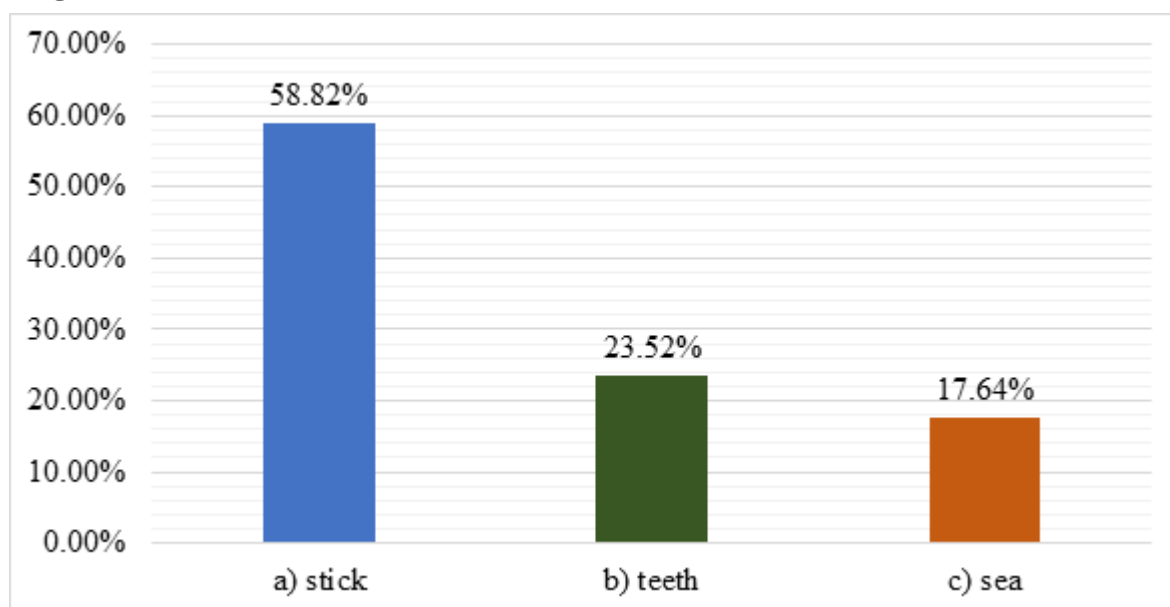


According to the previous figure, most of the people did not consider it difficult to differentiate vowel sounds, however, as was shown in figure 4.13, just 35.29% could identify the vowel sound required, so, they are not aware of the difficulties they face in this ability. It can be interpreted as they do not domain the positions of the organs of speech to produce English vowels and then they do not produce and perceive vowel quality. Also, the lack of practice provokes insufficient dominance, this is confirmed by Baker & Westrup (2003) who points out that pronunciation requires that learners know and practice the sounds of spoken English, stress and the quality vowel to be clear during the speech.

4.3.2 Vowel Duration

The fifteenth question was arranged to know if the participants are able to identify long and short vowel sounds, but they only had to choose the option where the vowel sound was not long. 58.82% affirmed that in the option “stick” the vowel sound is not long, 23.52% selected the option “teeth”, and 17.64% claimed that sea was the word in which the vowel duration is not long. All this evidence is observed in Figure 4.15.

Figure 4.15 In which one of the following words the vowel duration is not long?

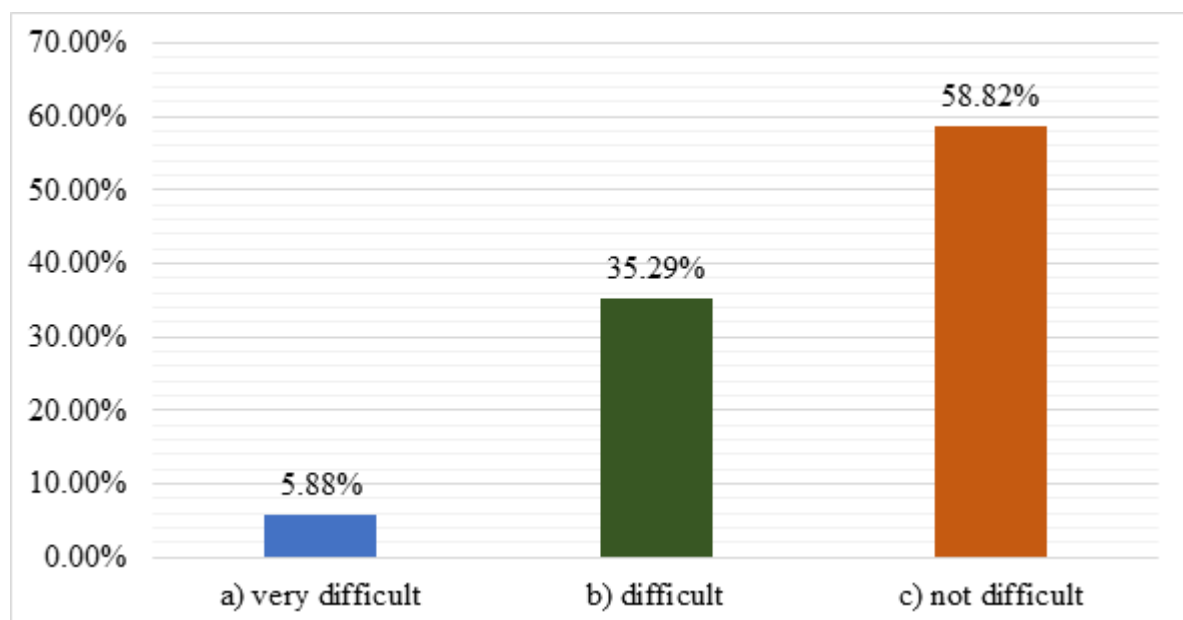


As it was shown, almost 60% of the people selected the correct option. This result is an indicator of, at least most of them, do not have troubles finding the duration of vowels, however, if the percentage of participants who chose the options “teeth” and “sea” are added the result shows that 41.16% of the people do not discern between short and long vowel sounds. This outcome is concerned with the change rate; they do not differentiate between long and short vowels, so they pronounce them in the same way. The result of this phenomena is that there are misunderstandings and incorrect pronunciation. The difference between long

and short vowels can differ among languages, and Peggy P.K. Mok (2011) also determines that the speaker controls speed speech, however, vowel length distinction is determined by the language, what it means that the Spanish speaker has to couple the rate change with the English language.

Question number 16 was added at the end of the third section, and it was related to the range of difficulty according to the participants' perceptions about the identifications of vowel duration sound in a word. It was found that 58.88% did not consider it challenging to do it, 35.29% declared that it is difficult for them and just one person, who represents 5.88% of the total, said that it is complicated to achieve. The data is shown in Figure 4.16.

Figure 4.16 For you, what level of difficulty is it to identify the vowel duration in a word?



Even though 35.29% of people considered challenging to identify vowel duration and one person very difficult, the majority contemplated it as not difficult to accomplish it, most of

the participants selected the correct option, related to long and short duration vowels, in question number 15. This partial facility is described by The Linguistic Desensitization Hypothesis, which claims that “are sensitive to durational cues when perceiving L2 vowels and predicts that vowel duration will be used to differentiate the non-native vowel contrasts. Because vowel duration is easy to access and salient, the hypothesis predicts that L2 learners employ durational information, which is contrastive in the L1”, Perwitasari & Klammer & Witteman & Schiller, O. Niels (2015, p.1. With this argument, it is concluded that there are specific patterns or aspects in L2 that are not challenging for L2 learners.

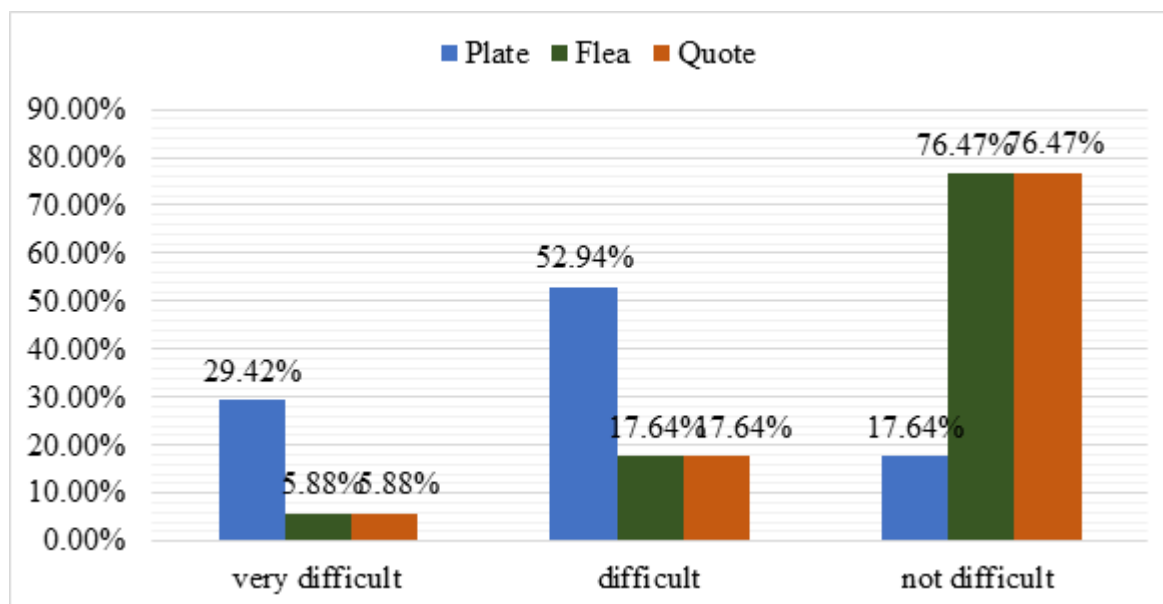
4.4 L1 Pronunciation transfer to L2

This last section was developed to obtain information related to some aspects of L1 pronunciation transfer to L2 by using scales of difficulty about pronouncing vowels and consonants. Besides, the last two questions were designed to determine if the participants can separate syllables in a word and then an item was added to measure the level of difficulty separating syllables based on students’ perceptions.

4.4.1 Consonants and vowels

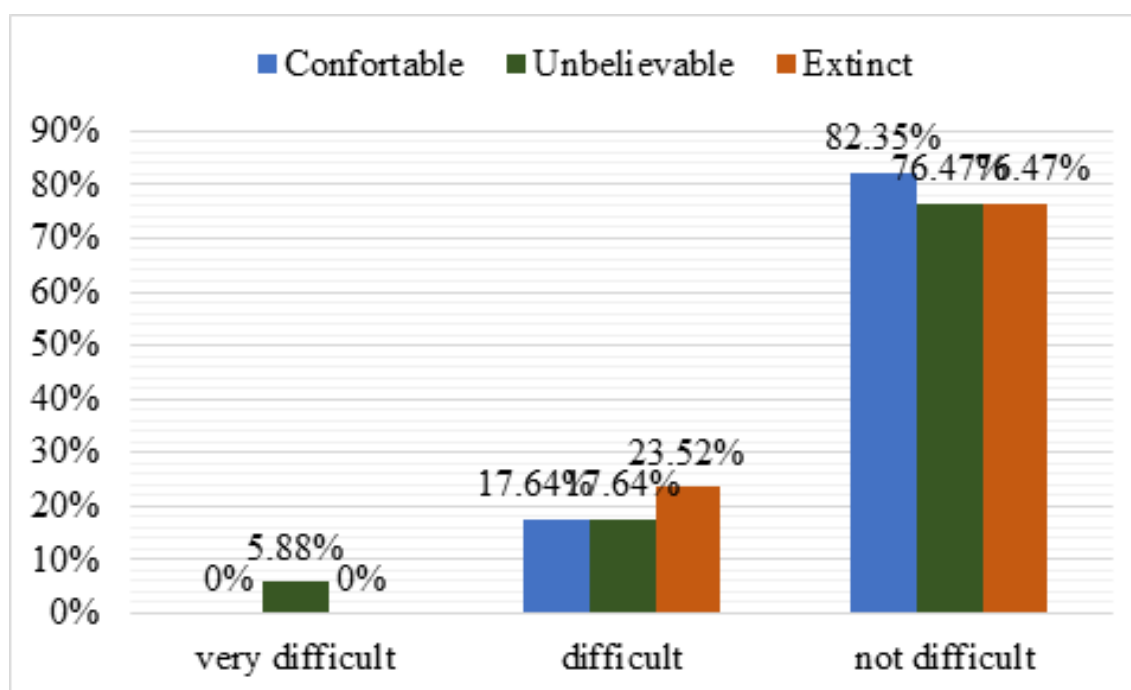
Indeed, there are many aspects involved in L1 pronunciation transfer to L2, but vowel sounds are crucial. This question was created to know the level of difficulty that it represents to pronounce vowels in positions that in Spanish sound completely different. Three words were included, 54.94% considered challenging to pronounce vowels in “plate”, 29.42% complicated and 17.64% not difficult. In relation to the word “flea”, 76.47% deemed not difficult to achieve vowels pronunciation, 17.64% declared they are difficult to pronounce and 5.88% difficult; the last word contemplated was “quote”, 76.47% did not believe that vowels are challenging to pronounce, 17.64% opted for difficult and just 5.88% very difficult. See Figure 4.17.

Figure 4.17 For you, what level of difficulty is it to pronounce the vowels in the following words?



In addition, the question associated with consonants is structured as question number 17, and the purpose was to know how difficult it is for Target language five students' to pronounce consonants in three different words with some unusual formation for Spanish native speakers. The first word was "comfortable" 82.35% did not consider it difficult to pronounce the consonants in that word, 17.64% declared that it is difficult to do it and nobody considered it very difficult to achieve it. About the second word "unbelievable" 76.47% mentioned it is not difficult, 17.64% difficult and 5.88% very difficult; the word "extinct" was chosen by 76.47% as not tricky, 23.52% difficult and 0% of the people declared this consonants word as difficult to pronounce. What was obtained is illustrated in Figure 4.18 to be examined.

Figure 4.18 For you, what level of difficulty is it to pronounce the consonants in the following words?



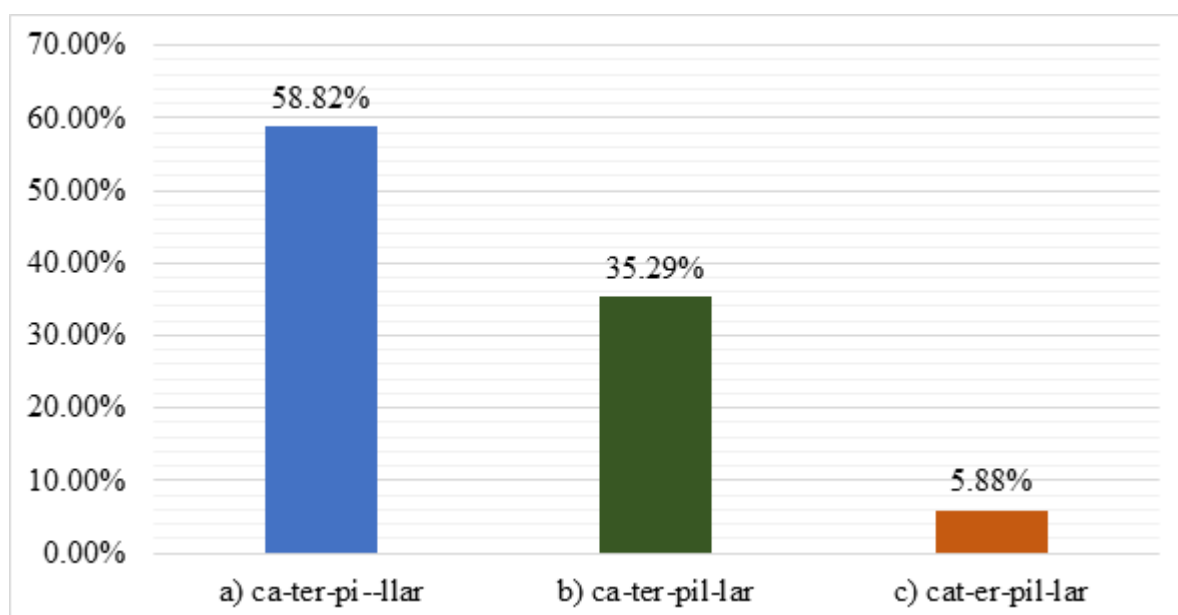
Figures 4.17 and 4.18 allow perceiving that most of the people do not believe in having problems pronouncing vowels and consonants in words whose structure is distinct to L2 patterns. This perception provides evidence that there are stages in second language acquisition in which some aspects represent more difficulties but some others not, it is essential to remember that the instrument was applied to the highest level of target language subject at LEI, so there are features of L2 that are partially domain. The previous argument becomes more substantial based on Hansen (2006 p. 153, cited in Sewell 2016), who mentioned four stages and target language five is around at the third stage. At this stage, marked consonants emerge and transfer phenomenon reduces; however, according to previous questions results they are not yet at the fourth stage where it is supposed that learners almost achieve native speaker-like phonology. Nevertheless, in the question about vowel

sounds, represented in figure 4.17, just 17.64% did not consider challenging to accomplish the pronunciation of vowels, what constitutes a little number. This point of view is explained through the fact that English and Spanish phonological vowels system are entirely different and this represents an enormous challenge, Lin (1994, cited in Ching-Ying Lin 2014) suggests that when in L1 and L2 exist different linguistic systems avoids to learners perform correctly in L2.

4.4.2 Syllable structure

The purpose of this question was to determine if participants are able to separate correctly by syllables one word, “caterpillar”, that was chosen because of its similarity to Spanish patterns and the data obtained showed that 58.88% separate the word as “ca-ter-pi-llar”, 35.29% selected the option “ca-ter-pil-lar, and just one person (5.88%) chose “cat-er-pil-lar” as the correct syllabic separation. All that was previously mentioned is shown in Figure 4.19.

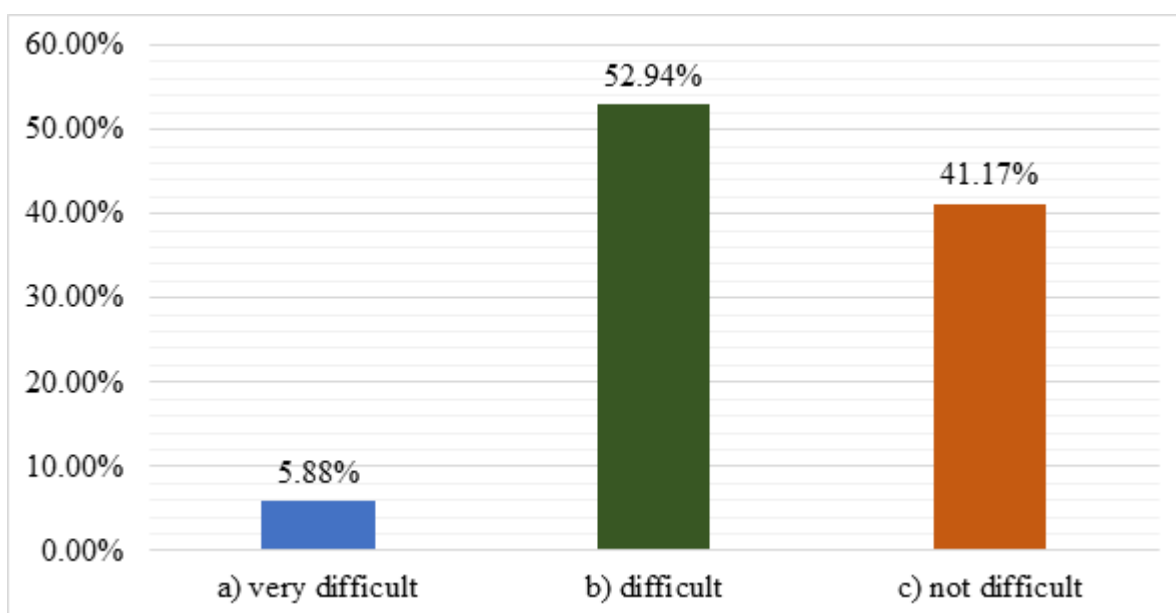
Figure 4.19 Which one of the following options is the correct syllable separation of the word “caterpillar”?



As possible answers they were included two wrong options and just one correct, (the option “c”) and just one person (5.88%) chose the correct one; if the percentages of the two wrong answers are added, the result obtained shows that 94.11% did not separate the syllables correctly in the word. The influence of L1 represents an enormous challenge to L2 learners because the option chosen was the one equal to Spanish syllable separation system and this is due to phonotactics. This argument is supported by what Weinreich asserts (1953, cited in Sewell, A. 2016, p. 55) “the syllable structure of the L1 affects the pronunciation of L2 syllables” that is why the participants failed in this syllable separation item.

Finally, the last question is related to syllable separation too but focused on the people’s perception about the level of difficulty while doing this task. 52.94% considered this is difficult to do, 41.17% declared that this does not represent an obstacle and just 5.88% perceived this activity as very difficult. All these are displayed in Figure 4.20.

Figure 4.20 For you, what level of difficulty is it to separate English words by syllables?



In this question it is essential to take into consideration the results shown in Figure 4.19, where only 5.88%, that is to say, only one person was able to separate the word correctly. This result means that despite the fact, 41.17% did not consider difficult the English syllables separation, the addition of the percentage of “difficult” and “very difficult” it is obtained 58.82% that is bigger than the percentage of “not difficult”. To accomplish the correct division of words by syllables is concerned with the insufficient control over the interference of L2 that as Weinberger suggests (1997, cited in Qian Liu, 2011) negative transfer also includes syllable structures and not only affects individual phonemes.

CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter was included a short version of the context of this research; as well as conclusions of the findings previously presented, in order to answer the research questions which were given in Chapter I. The implications and limitations that were faced during the process of this investigation are also presented. Additionally, some considerations for future purposes are pointed out based on the barriers.

5.1 Context

This research is concerned with the English pronunciation challenges faced by Target Language 5 students at LEI in Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP). In an international aspect this research is related with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) about this institution Council of Europe (2001) explains that it is the basis of the development of syllabus, evaluation and the material used in the process of teaching and learning a second language; CEFR evaluates accuracy in listening, speaking, reading and writing. About the educational aspect, UNESCO (2003, p. 17) points out that "the way languages are taught changes constantly and vary from one country to another and even within the same country because of the different concepts of language paradigms, teaching and the conception of the language that is taught". Economic issues are closely related with education, and because of this purpose among Canada, the USA and Mexico exist a formal arrangement called North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) which is beneficial for languages learners because the economic redistribution implies an educational change to have equality in relations with the United States and promotes

academic mobility.

Referring to a national field, “ El Nuevo Modelo Educativo” (2017) claims that students, since elementary levels of education; develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skills to graduate from upper middle school as bilingual professionals and SEP aspires that teachers also become bilingual. Additionally, some universities as BUAP are enrolled in ANUIES that according to ANUIES (2017) some of its purposes are the study of the general problems of higher education in the Republic.

The adoption of proposals and recommendations that improve their services, as well as, promote knowledge specialization in research and more top education centres that are taught according to regional characteristics. BUAP is associated with different organizations, but it is an autonomous university and has developed its model called Modelo Universitario Minerva (MUM), which considers, in one of its axis about foreign languages, three dimensions: Communication, Production (speaking and writing), and Comprehension (listening and reading) BUAP in Programa de Integración MUM (2009, p. 52). Languages Faculty, specifically Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés (LEI) at BUAP also finds quality in education through the association with different international, national and local organizations; it is in charged to form English teachers who can meet the current demands of society on the teaching and learning of second languages. At LEI, the responsibility of acquiring a clear pronunciation is more significant since the future teacher should be a model or guide for students and mainly because in the relationship teacher-student should not have a misunderstanding to not confuse students. This research determines the main difficulties in pronunciation development through this question: What are the pronunciation challenges in English faced by TL 5 students at LEI?

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings shown in chapter IV it can be said that less than 50% of the participants identified the rising intonation at the end of the sentence “Is Jensen your name?” what is the most common pattern, because it is a declarative statement. Moreover, as it was mentioned previously in chapter II, Gimson (1970 & 2010, cited in Delongová 2010) declares that rising intonation located at the end of the sentence is related to Yes/No questions, like the example used in this item. However, 29.41% of people said that the rising intonation is located at the beginning and the same percentage said in the middle, despite most of them choosing the more appropriate answer. The difference among the correct option and the rest of them was just of two participants, this allows to perceive that almost half of the total can locate the rising intonation in a simple declarative sentence. But, more than half of people could not place the rising intonation, which can be interpreted as the students are not able to locate the rising tone because they are worried about delivering the message not paying attention to the intonation. This phenomenon provokes misunderstandings at the moment to hold a conversation, because to achieve communicative competence it is necessary reciprocal intelligibility, this is supported by Baker & Westrup (2003) who states that pronunciation requires that learners know and practice the sounds of spoken English and acquire abilities like intonation to understand and be understood.

It was found that the majority of the participants located the rising intonation at the end of the statement; however, in affirmative sentences, the most appropriate pattern is to establish the rising tone at the beginning. According to Gimson (1970 & 2010, cited in Delongová 2010), rising intonation is not placed at the end of a positive statement.

However, almost half of the students set the rising tone at the end of the sentence, but 35% located it at the beginning. The difference between the most chosen option and the most appropriate option is minimum. Nevertheless, this means that around a third part of the total are capable of placing rises in affirmative statements, and this usually occurs when the attitudinal character of the sentence is not taken into account. Namely, the phrase used in this item is used to give information, and with this purpose, there are no emotions involved which might affect or modify the intonation. This argument is backed by Vassiere (2004, cited in Gokgoz & Medin & Tessarolo 2014), who declares that tone provides to the listener important information that makes easier the understanding of the speaker's speech, the data presented could be informational, attitudinal or emotional.

It was meaningful to know how the learners feel about the location of intonation, especially after doing the exercises when they had to locate rises in two different types of sentences. The results suggest that most of the people considered challenging to find rising intonation and a minimum percentage considered not challenging to locate it. This reaction could be caused by the number of syllables, even though the sentences were short they consisted of more than two syllables. This claim is supported by Su Zibo & Hu Die's research (2011, cited in Wenkai Chen 2013) that found that there are more difficulties finding the rising intonation in long words and the same happens with sentences in which are implied more than two syllables. In short, it is necessary that learners practice enough to control the change of intonation and link it with their emotions and character of the sentence.

The results demonstrate that almost 50% of the participants located the falling intonation at the end of the statement, however as the rising intonation is situated at the end of the

example, the falling tone cannot be at the same place. In addition to this, the same percentage chose the options “at the beginning” and “in the middle” which avoids contrasting those options. It is also important to mention that the results obtained in the item related the location of rising intonation were precisely the same to the ones obtained in this item about fallings, what can be understood as the students confuse falling tone with rising intonation, so they could not identify it in this sentence. Moreover, being this a falling-rising sentence might represent a more significant challenge than rising location, this is backed by a Zhang Jing’s study (2012, cited in Wenkai Chen 2013) which determines that most of the learners commit more mistakes identifying the falling-rising intonation than just the falling tone.

In an affirmative sentence in which the falling intonation is located at the end, just 29.41% of the participants found it correctly. Most of the people who took part in the instrument identified the falling intonation in the middle, despite the fact the difference was just of three people, it is relevant to say that students have more difficulties finding the falling tone than rising ones. The example used was a positive statement that provides information, what it means that it does not involve emotions that affect the intonation, but the participants did not locate appropriately the falling intonation because they did not identify the character of the sentence. According to Cruttenden, (1986, cited in Fleur 2013 p. 5) attitudinal meaning can be given by the changes in pitch and intonation, so if speaker perceives and produces intonation correctly he becomes more communicative competent, and English is a language in which the tone could change the meaning of the speech.

The results confirmed that most of the participants considered difficult to locate falling intonation, nevertheless, in comparison with the findings of the difficulty of placing

rising intonation, the percentage of people who thought difficult to locate rises is higher than in this item. These results are a consequence of learners being very careful about pronunciation and sound well, but they do not pay attention to transmit the purpose of the sentence. It is likely that the participants imitate accent, but they are not communicative competent, for this reason, it is essential to teach and practice intonation, this idea is supported by Fleur (2013) who suggests that teaching intonation is critical to learners develop communicative skill not only is about pronunciation training.

Additionally, in the instrument were included items about linking sounds, the results showed that almost all the participants chose the option “get going →gogoin”, which is actually correctly linked, this is because when certain sounds are connected, in this case, /t/ and /g/, the sound /t/ is not pronounced. The fact that almost the whole participants chose an option correctly linked when they had to choose one wrong link suggests that they have difficulties with this ability because they do not know rules of how to connect certain sounds as native speakers do or because they pronounce words in a sentence as they sound individual. This argument becomes more solid taking into account what Yurtbaşı (2016, p. 2) states, “...native speakers rather connect their words and change the sounds of their words accordingly” and changing sounds are also related to omitting some of them. The results of the questions of difficulty scale are interpreted as almost half of the participants considered challenging to link sounds, but nearly the other half declared that they do not have problems with it. However, contrasting the data it is assumed that they deal with troubles connecting sounds, and this means that they are not aware of the difficulties they face. The participants considered it difficult to connect the speech because they are not used to listening and producing sounds together. Some L2 speakers pronounce the words

as they sound individual and this creates confusion when someone else tries to understand what is saying. Additionally, to say words with no changing the pronunciation according to linking sounds might create difficulties for the speakers, this is supported by Yurtbaşı (2016) who says that when sounds are connected the meaning is distinguishable because they possess specific characteristics that allow it.

The range of rate is also a determining factor in speech rhythm; it was observed that the majority of the participants considered difficulty to speak speedily; the number is considerably high. It is possible that most of the participants acknowledge difficulty to talk speedily because of the lack of domain in the language. In addition, they do not connect the speed of their speech with their emotions, this is relevant considering what Gross affirms (2012, cited in Yurtbaşı 2015) about why L2 learners desire to speak faster, he says that most of the foreign language learners pursue to express speedily rather than accuracy and temporary emotional state impact the rate of speech. In addition to this, pauses were also taken into consideration, from the whole participants more than the 50% considered not challenging to use breaks during the speech when they are necessary, but almost the other half declared that for them it is difficult to use. That is to say, that unlike the results about how difficult they consider speaking speedily, it seems that most of them found it more challenging to talk quickly than use pauses; this fact can be awarded to how fluent they are while they speak. If speakers are not fluent enough they cannot deal with breaks because they are not identified in a not fluent speech. This argument is supported by Skehan (2003) & Tavakoli y Skehan (2005, cited in Kian Pishkar & Ahmad Moinzadeh & Azizallah Dabaghi 2017) who states interruption fluency and affirms that is about the flow of speech that is measured by the number and the duration of pauses, this is a factor that determines pronunciation fluency.

Furthermore, it was considered as the last indicator of speech rhythm the stress placement, it was observed that little more than half of the people chose the option in which the stress is correctly placed, this means that the majority can identify the stress in words of more than two syllables; however, almost the 30% chose one of the incorrectly stressed. Most of the participants could select the correct option because they identified the duration of the stress and the unstressed syllables which allows to they place the stress in a word, this is based on what Adams suggests (1979, cited in Gut, U. 2009), about some circumstances could affect the correct use of rhythm by L2 learners. These circumstances are the insufficient durational difference between unstressed and stressed syllables. Moreover, the corresponding item concerned with the level of difficulty of stress placement suggested that most of the people considered difficult to stress syllables correctly, despite more than the half answered correctly the question about choosing the example rightly stressed. This phenomenon could be generated by the stress patterns that are different in their L1 and L2, so the placement of stress in the right place is not easy to foretell in English because of the influence of L1. This argument is backed by Peperkamp & Dupoux 2002 & Archibald (1997 cited in Abdul Malik Abbasi & Masood Akhter Memon & Mansoor Ahmed Channa & Stephen John, 2018) who claim that previous investigations have found that some stress patterns of L1 interfere with the stress placement in L2 making it more difficult for L2 learners perceive and produce L2 stress patterns. It is common to pronounce cognates as in Spanish because of the similarity of both word construction, but this makes the speech less natural.

Also, it was designed to be a question associated with an indicator of stress speech. This indicator was vowel quality. It was evident that more than the half of the students were not able to identify the /ɪ/ sound, to be more specific 64.69% did not do it correctly,

just 35.29% chose the option in which these sounds were used. This result could be caused because they do not know the differences of pronunciation among vowels, which sometimes are pronounced equally despite to not be represented in the same way, as in the examples “sheep” and “bean”. But primarily this outcome is also related to the participants’ accent, all of them are Spanish native speakers, so this accent is reflected in their pronunciation and the insufficient contrast between vowel qualities. All this is partially supported by Müller (2007) who affirms that vowel quality also represents and varies according to the accent of the speaker because he mutates the vowel sounds. However, the majority of participants did not consider difficult to differentiate vowel sounds, but as was shown in figure 4.13, just 35.29% could identify the vowel sound required, so they are not aware of the difficulties they face in this ability. It can be interpreted as they do not domain the positions of the organs of speech to produce English vowels and then they do not create and perceive vowel quality. The lack of practice provokes insufficient dominance, this is confirmed by Baker & Westrup (2003) who points out that pronunciation requires that learners know and practice the sounds of spoken English, stress and the quality vowel to be clear during the speech.

The study contributed to knowing that almost 60% of the people selected the correct option in a question where they had to choose the word with not long vowel duration, at least most of them do not have troubles finding the length of vowels. However, if the percentage of participants who chose the options “teeth” and “sea” are added, the result shows that 41.16% of the people do not discern between short and long vowel sounds. This result might be concerned with the change rate, they do not differentiate between long and short vowels, so they pronounce them in the same way, and as a result, there are misunderstandings and incorrect pronunciation. The difference between long and short

vowels can differ among languages, Peggy P.K. Mok (2011) determines that the speaker controls speed speech. Vowel length distinction is determined by the language, what it means that the Spanish speaker has to couple the rate change with the English language. Even though 35.29% of people considered it difficult to identify vowel duration and one person opted for “very difficult”. The majority contemplated as not difficult to accomplish it, most of the participants selected the correct option, related to long and short duration vowels. This partial facility is described by The Linguistic Desensitization Hypothesis, which claims that “are sensitive to durational cues when perceiving L2 vowels and predicts that vowel duration will be used to differentiate the non-native vowel contrasts because vowel duration is easy to access and salient, the hypothesis predicts that L2 learners employ durational information, which is contrastive in the L1” Perwitasari, A. & Klammer & Witteman & Schiller, O. Niels (2015, p.1.). With this argument, it is concluded that there are specific patterns or aspects in L2 that are not challenging for L2 learners.

In the aspect of L1 transfer to L2, it was perceived that most of the people do not believe in having problems pronouncing vowels and consonants in words whose structure is distinct to L2 patterns. This item provides evidence that there are stages in second language acquisition in which some aspects represent more difficulties but some others not. It is important to remember that the instrument was applied to the students from the highest level of target language subject at LEI, so there are features of L2 that are partially domain. This argument becomes more substantial based on Hansen (2006 p. 153, cited in Sewell 2016), who mentioned four stages and the subject Target Language five is around the third stage where marked consonants emerge and transfer phenomenon reduces. Nevertheless, according to previous questions results, the participants are not yet at the fourth stage where it is supposed that learners almost achieve native speaker-like

phonology. However, in the question about vowel sounds difficulty level, just 17.64% did not consider challenging to accomplish the pronunciation of vowels. This percentage represents a deficient number, this is explained through the fact English and Spanish phonological vowels system are entirely different and this poses an enormous challenge, Lin (1994, cited in Ching-Ying Lin 2014) suggests that the fact of different linguistic systems in L1 and L2 it is challenging for learners to perform correctly in L2.

The syllabic separation was the last indicator in the instrument; three possible answers were included two wrong options and just one correct (cat-er-pil-lar). Only one person (5.88%) chose the correct one; if the percentages of the two incorrect answers are added, the result obtained shows that 94.11% did not separate the syllables correctly in the word. The influence of L1 represents an enormous challenge to L2 learners because the option more chosen was the one equal to Spanish syllable separation system and this is due to phonotactics. This claim is supported by what Weinreich asserts (1953, cited in Sewell 2016, p. 55) “the syllable structure of the L1 affects the pronunciation of L2 syllables” this explained why participants failed in this syllable separation item.

Despite the fact 41.17% of participants did not consider difficult the English syllables separation 5.88%, that is to say, just one person was able to separate the word correctly, what it means that the addition of the percentage of “difficult” and “very difficult” it is 58.82% that is bigger than the percentage of “not difficult”. To accomplish the correct division of words by syllables is concerned with the insufficient control over the interference of L2 that as Weinberger suggests (1997, cited in Qian Liu, 2011) negative transfer also includes syllable structures and individual phonemes not only affects individual phonemes. In short, as almost the total of the participants were not able to

achieve syllabic separation because of Spanish patterns interference. It is relevant to say that this is one of the most evident challenges that Target Language 5 students face to develop English pronunciation.

5.3 Research Questions

At the beginning of this work, three research questions were proposed, and they are answered below.

What are TL 5 students' perceptions of their pronunciation development?

The majority of the participants declared they had studied English during three years which allows us to infer that their experience with the language is similar. Additionally, fourteen questions were developed to know the level of difficulty that students perceive in different possible challenges. In most of these items, the results showed that they did not consider challenging to reach the abilities exposed, such as, to locate rising and falling intonation, linking sounds, speed and pauses in the speech, stress placement, vowel/consonant sounds, vowel duration and syllabic separation.

Despite the fact most of the results showed that people considered not difficult to achieve certain aspects of pronunciations, the majority of the items of difficulty range that were regarded as not difficult, were designed without a previous exercise of recognition, so this can be understood as Target Language 5 students did not reflect about these issues. Besides, in the last item about syllabic separation, just one person chose the right option,

but only 52.94% declared it “difficult” to do it and one participant perceived it as “very difficult” to achieve English syllable separation. In brief, at least most of the half of TL 5 students are not aware of the difficulties they face because they do not reflect deeply.

What are the factors involved in the development of pronunciation?

In this research, four categories were considered which were proposed as the factors involved in the development of English pronunciation. These factors were intonation, speech rhythm, speech stress, and L1 pronunciation transfer to L2. They were taken into account because English is a language in which the range of tone may affect the meaning of the speech and through this aspect can be transmitted speaker’s emotions and character, and intonation, speech rhythm and stress are interrelated, so they are essential elements to be considered in the communicative competence. Also, L1 pronunciation transfer to L2 is very evident in elementary levels of English courses; however, at intermediate levels, this also occurs.

What are the main factors that affect the development of English pronunciation in L2 learners?

As was developed in Chapter II, they were taking into consideration rising and falling intonation, linking sounds, tempo (speed and pauses), stress placement, vowel quality, vowel duration, consonants/vowels and syllable structure, as the main factors that affect the development of English pronunciation. They are considered the main challenges based on the participants’ first language.

Afterwards, analyzing the results obtained from the instrument and the methodology, it can be deduced that the challenges which represented more difficulties for participants were falling intonation. This is supported by the results in the item about locating the falling tone in a yes/no question and a positive statement; the difficulty level of finding falls in a sentence is also considered, in which 70.58% declared this is difficult for them. Besides, linking sounds represents a challenge for Target language five students. Namely, the majority of the participants did not choose, and on the scale of difficulty, they decided that it is difficult to do it. This previous factor is also concerned with the speed that also represented a challenge for students, in the item related to this issue showed that 76.47% considered it difficult to speak speedily when it is necessary.

Moreover, even though more than half of participants declared that it is not challenging to differentiate among vowel sounds, in the item about recognizing a specific sound, most of them failed; so it is evident it represents a challenge in the pronunciation development. Finally, the most obvious problem faced by the participants is the syllable separation, this is based on the conclusions from the item designed to students select the option where the word “caterpillar” was correctly separated by syllables and almost the whole people did not recognize the word rightly divided.

5.4 Implications

This research has allowed us to define the factors involved in the development of English pronunciation, and from these, the main challenges faced specifically by Target Language 5 (TL5) students at Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés (LEI) were determined. This

work was completed through theoretical investigation and the application of an instrument which was a questionnaire. The results obtained will be useful for L2 English learners and teachers to reflect and predict possible challenges that they could face because of these issues concerning teachers and learners involved in the English Second Language Acquisition field.

5.5 Limitations

The results would have had a more excellent range of contrast if it would have been applied in a different period where the number of students taking Target Language 5 classes was more prominent. However, this work was carried out in the summer period at Languages Faculty when just there were two groups of this subject and only seventeen students participated. In this period, also the time of classes was lower which indicates that students and teachers had limited time which made it more complicated to grant permission to apply the instrument. The instrument can be used for further investigations and also can be a part of complex studies.

5.6 Directions for Further Research

This research paper focused on Target Language 5 student's pronunciation difficulties during summer 2018, and two groups from different shifts at LEI participated in answering the questionnaire. It is necessary to apply the instrument to a more significant population in a regular school period to have a bigger sample; this can make generalizations about the problem. Also, teachers in charge in Target Language classes must be considered to have

a different point of view about this problem and thus to contrast the information.

The instrument was designed following a quantitative approach so it is necessary to focus on qualitative analysis to understand and explain the phenomenon from another perspective. Besides, it must be essential to apply the instrument since elementary levels of Target Language 5, not only at the most advanced to analyse the process of pronunciation development. Finally, it could be considered an in-depth study about the problematic of women and men to realize if they face the same challenges.

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Appendix I



Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla



Facultad de Lenguas

The results of this questionnaire will be used only for academic purposes, specifically for the development of a thesis work.

Objective of the Instrument: The objective of this questionnaire is to collect data about the experience and the challenges that Target Language V students face in order to develop pronunciation in the English language.

Age: _____ Years studying English: _____ Did you already take the subject phonetics and phonology? Yes / No

Choose the appropriate option according to your experience.

INTONATION

1. In the following sentence, where do you locate the rising intonation? “Your name is Jensen?”

- a) At the beginning b) in the middle c) at the end

2. In the following sentence, where do you locate the falling intonation?

”Your name is Jensen”

- a) At the beginning b) in the middle c) at the end

3. How difficult is it for you to locate the rises in a sentence?

- a) Not difficult b) difficult c) very difficult

4. How difficult is it for you to locate the falls in a sentence?

- a) Not difficult b) difficult c) very difficult

SPEECH RHYTHM

1. Choose the option in which the sounds are correctly linked.

- a) big grape → bigrape b) very old → veryold c) both of them

2. How difficult is it for you to link sounds in English?

- a) Not difficult b) difficult c) very difficult

3. How difficult is it for you to speak English speedily when it is necessary?

- a) Not difficult b) difficult c) very difficult

4. How difficult is it for you to pause your speech when it is necessary?

- a) Not difficult b) difficult c) very difficult

5. In which of the following examples is the stress correctly placed?

- a) 'ɪmpasəbəl b) ɪmpasə'bəl c) ɪm'pasəbəl

6. How difficult is it for you to stress the right syllable in a word?

- a) Not difficult b) difficult c) very difficult

STRESS

1. In which one of the following words the vowel sound is this /ɪ/?
a) Sheep b) lip c) bee

2. How difficult is it for you to differentiate between those types of sounds?
a) Not difficult b) difficult c) very difficult

3. In which one of the following words the duration of the vowel is longer?
a) Stick b) sun c) you

4. How difficult is it for you to identify the vowel duration in a word?
a) Not difficult b) difficult c) very difficult

L1 PRONUNCIATION INFLUENCE (TRANSFER)

5. How difficult is it for you to pronounce the vowels in the following words?
“plate, flea, quote”
a) Not difficult b) difficult c) very difficult

6. How difficult is it for you to pronounce the consonants in the following words?
“comfortable, hijack, extinct ”
a) Not difficult b) difficult c) very difficult

7. Which one of the following options is the correct syllabic separation of “caterpillar”?
a) Ca-ter-pi-llar b) ca-ter-pil-lar c) cat- er-pil-lar

8 How difficult is it for you to separate English words by syllables?

- a) Not difficult b) difficult c) very difficult

Appendix II



Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla



Facultad de Lenguas

Objective of the Instrument: The objective of this questionnaire is to collect data about the experience and the challenges that Target Language V students face in order to develop pronunciation in the English language.

The results of this questionnaire will be used only for academic purposes, specifically for the development of a research paper.

Age: _____ Total of years studying English: _____ Gender: M / F

Have you already taken the subject phonetics and phonology? Yes / No

Choose and underline the appropriate option according to your perceptions.

SECTION I

1. In the following sentence, where do you locate the **rising** intonation?

“Is Jensen your name?”

b) at the beginning b) in the middle c) at the end

2. In the following sentence, where do you locate the **falling** intonation?

“Is Jensen your name?”

a) at the beginning b) in the middle c) at the end

3. In the following sentence, where do you locate the **rising** intonation? "Your name is Jensen"

- b) at the beginning b) in the middle c) at the end

4. In the following sentence, where do you locate the **falling** intonation?

"Your name is Jensen"

- a) at the beginning b) in the middle c) at the end

5. For you, what level of difficulty is it to locate the rises in a sentence?

- b) very difficult b) difficult c) not difficult

6. For you, what level of difficulty is it to locate the falls in a sentence?

- a) very difficult b) difficult c) not difficult

SECTION II

7. Choose the option in which the sounds are not correctly linked.

- b) big grape bigrape b) very old veryold c) get going geggoing

8. For you, what level of difficulty is it to link sounds in English?

- a) very difficult b) difficult c) not difficult

9. For you, what level of difficulty is it to speak English speedily when it is necessary?

- a) very difficult b) difficult c) not difficult

10. For you, what level of difficulty is it to pause your speech when it is necessary?

- a) very difficult b) difficult c) not difficult

11. In which of the following examples is the stress correctly placed?

- b) 'impasəbəl b) impasə'bəl c) ɪm'pasəbəl

12. For you, what level of difficulty is it to stress the right syllable in a word?

- a) very difficult b) difficult c) not difficult

SECTION III

13. In which one of the following words the vowel sound is this /ɪ/?

- b) sheep b) lip c) bean

14. For you, what level of difficulty is it to differentiate among vowel sounds?

- a) very difficult b) difficult c) not difficult

15. In which one of the following words the vowel duration is not long?

- b) stick b) teeth c) sea

16. For you, what level of difficulty is it to identify the vowel duration in a word?

- a) very difficult b) difficult c) not difficult

SECTION IV. According to your perceptions, choose one option and write one “X” in the corresponding square.

17. For you, what level of difficulty is it to pronounce the vowels in the following words?

	very difficult	difficult	not difficult
Plate			
Flea			
Quote			

18. For you, what level of difficulty is it to pronounce the consonants in the following words?

	very difficult	difficult	not difficult
Comfortable			
Unbelievable			
Extinct			

19. Which one of the following options is the correct syllabic separation of the word “caterpillar”?

- b) ca-ter-pi-llar b) ca-ter-pil-lar c) cat- er-pil-lar

20. For you, what level of difficulty is it to separate English words by syllables?

- a) very difficult b) difficult c) not difficult

THANKS FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!