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**Topic:**

**The effects of Nicaraguan Spanish Phonemes on the acquisition of English Phonemes**

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## *Dedication*

First of all, I dedicate this achievement to my **God** who is the owner and lord of this mayor, without him this would not be possible. Then to my mother *Xiomara Pineda*, my husband *Luis Hernández* and my brother *Josiel López* who have been my support and have contributed in the motivation that I need not to give up and fulfill this dream.

In addition, I dedicate this research especially to the memory of my **grandparents** *Andrés Pineda* and *Amparo Gonzales* who will always be in my heart.

*Josseling Jarquín*

## ***Dedication***

This has been a long process that I could not have been able to fulfill without the help of God and of the people that surround me. For that reason, I firstly thank my God, for his al mighty power, love and mercy that has always been with me. Secondly, I thank my mother and father, for their economic support and pieces of advice that encouraged me to continue giving my best. Thirdly, I thank my teachers for their dedication and knowledge. Finally, I thank my classmates and friends, for making this process easier and for having shared with me so many wonderful times.

***Irene del Carmen Castellón Rivera***

## ***Dedication***

This is dedicated to my sweet and beloved ***Lord Jesus Christ*** who allowed me the life, health and wisdom to begin, develop and successfully finish this research. To Him be all honor and glory!

To my lovely and strong parents ***Norvin García*** and ***Rebeca Irigoyen*** along with my precious grandparents ***Haydeé Irigoyen*** and ***Julio Irigoyen*** for their endless love, support and constant encouragement. Also to my dear uncle ***Isaac Irigoyen*** who always supports me and he is there at all times. I could never have done this without them. They are all that is right! God Bless them all!

***Urania Rebeca García Irigoyen***

## **ABSTRACT**

This is an explorative research about the effects of L1 phonemes on L2 phonemes acquisition. First, a pronunciation test was made in order to identify the problematic sounds. In addition, an interview was conducted in order to assess the main English teacher her teaching methodology. Finally, both the results of the test and data collected was contrasted. The results suggest that Nicaraguan learners have serious problems with these phonemes sounds since they omit, delete, add and substitute Spanish phonemes into English phonemes sounds.

Furthermore, it is vital to conduct this investigation because the obtained information can help to Nicaraguan English learners to develop pronunciation skill in order to decrease first language interference on the second language at Experimental México Institute since transfer will take place from the first to the second language that might be negative when there is proactive inhibition. Nicaraguan Spanish language does not have pair words, silent sounds and also there are sounds in English language that does not exist in Spanish language. In addition to that, Nicaraguan English learners use to pronounce the words as they are written. Besides, it can provide guidelines for the English teachers and Ministry of Education to start including phonetic symbols and sounds lessons in the English curriculum.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Through the process of learning English we have seen that most of the English learners have difficulties speaking English, not because of accent but because of the pronunciation of certain English phonemes. L2 seems to be influenced by L1 most of the time and as a result of that, we decided to do this research in order to find and analyze the effects of the Spanish phonemes in the acquisition of the English phonemes, specifically taking into account our Nicaraguan context.

This research will present the effects of Nicaraguan phoneme sounds in English phoneme sounds acquisition. We did this research on 9<sup>th</sup> grade students in the morning shift at Experimental Mexico institute during the first semester of two thousand nineteen. We were looking forward to identify errors related to pronunciation of the English phonemes and to see how Spanish phoneme sounds interfere in the English phonemes acquisition among students. Through an interview made to the teacher and a test applied to the students we were able to recognize which English words are pronounced using Nicaraguan Spanish phoneme sounds.

We chose this topic because there are not many studies on this subject. In consequence, we wanted to give an overview of how Nicaraguan phoneme sounds interfere at the time of pronouncing English sounds, as well as to give useful recommendations to improve the pronunciation of English phoneme sounds and to decrease the interference of Nicaraguan phoneme sounds in the target language.



## 1.1 Problem background

The topic of this research is the effects of Nicaraguan Spanish phonemes on the acquisition of English Phonemes, in 9<sup>th</sup> grade students at Experimental México Institute during the first academic semester 2019. There is a wide range of studies about the awareness of phoneme sounds in other countries, but here in Nicaragua we were not able to find any research related to this topic much less on 9<sup>th</sup> grade students at Experimental México Institute. This encouraged us to do a research on this topic since it is something new that will contribute to the English education in Nicaragua.

## 1.2 Previous studies

The following studies aim is to consider previous research works applied and carried out by experts in the educational field. Also, it will give a review of some useful aspects that will allow mentioning:

### First Case Study

In August of 1985, Lundberg, Frost and Petersen began their eight month study in Denmark. The study consisted of 235 preschool children, 101 girls and 134 boys. Of the 235 children, 155 were placed in the control group. Both the control group and the experimental group were pretested with a number of linguistic and metalinguistic tasks. The experimental group received a specific training which consisted of 15-20 minutes of daily metalinguistic exercises and games. The purpose of the training was to stimulate the children's phonological awareness. The control group received the regular preschool program. Neither group received formal reading instruction prior to or during the study. Results of the study indicated an increase in metalinguistic skills. Small, yet important, effects were noted in rhyming task as well as word manipulation. However, the most dramatic effects were observed in phoneme segmentation. The study concluded that phonological awareness training in preschool can have a positive effect on future reading and spelling acquisition which could continue into second grade (Lundberg, Frost, and Peterson, 1988).

### Second Case Study

Anne Gunningharn did a study in the United States with 42 kindergarten and first grade students (1990). There were two experimental groups and one control group. Prior to the study, the kindergarten students received no formal pre reading instruction. The first grade students

received formal reading and spelling instruction using a basal reading series which focused on phonics, word recognition, and comprehension. Each group received 15 to 20 minutes of training time. The training was also directed by an experienced teacher. The first group, known as the skill and drill group, only received instruction in phonemic awareness (segmentation and blending). The lessons had no direct instructions on how to apply their phonemic awareness. The second group, known as the metalevel group, also received instruction in phonemic awareness. However, they were encouraged to think about the usage of phonemic awareness, such as connecting something they had learned in phonemic awareness lesson to a story they had read as a class. The third group, known as the control group, followed the same time schedule for ten weeks. The students heard stories which were then summarized by the teacher. The students were also asked to answer questions for each story. All three groups had to complete three measures: phoneme deletion, phoneme oddity, and Lindamood Auditory Conceptualization. Comparisons between groups, as well as grade level, were made and showed significant improvement in both experimental groups. Therefore, the results of Cunningham's study displayed that training in phonemic awareness increases students' reading ability (1990).

### 1.3 Objectives

**General Objective:**

- To analyze the effects of Nicaraguan Spanish phonemes on the acquisition of English phonemes

**Specific objectives:**

- To identify the effects of Nicaraguan Spanish phonemes that influence the acquisition of English phonemes.
- To show how the effects of Nicaraguan Spanish phonemes interfere in the acquisition process of English phoneme sounds.
- To propose effective teaching and learning strategies to help students develop their communication skills.

## 1.4 Rationale

The phonological processor usually works unconsciously when we listen and speak. It is designed to extract the meaning of what is said, not to notice the speech sounds in the words. It is designed to do its job automatically in the service of efficient communication. But also reading and spelling require a level of metalinguistic speech that is not natural or easily acquired.

On the other hand, phonological skill is not strongly related to intelligence. Some very intelligent people have limitations of linguistic awareness, especially at the phonological level. English uses an alphabetic writing system in which the letters, singly and in combination, represent single speech sounds. People who can take apart words into sounds, recognize their identity, and put them together again have the foundation skill for using the alphabetic principle. Without phoneme awareness, students may be mystified by the print system and how it represents the spoken word.

Learners who lack phoneme awareness may not even know what is meant by the term sound. They can usually hear well and may even name the alphabet letters, but they have little or no idea what letters represent. Phoneme awareness facilitates growth in printed word recognition. Even before a student learns to read, we can predict with a high level of accuracy whether that student will be a good reader or a poor reader by the end of third grade and beyond. Prediction is possible with simple tests that measure awareness of speech sounds in words, knowledge of letter names, knowledge of sound-symbol correspondence, and vocabulary.

Instruction in speech-sound awareness reduces and alleviates reading and spelling difficulties

In Nicaragua, learners do not have any idea about phoneme sounds or do not have awareness about it. That is why when they do not know how a word is pronounced, they try to combine

their Spanish with the English language and it is there where the Spanish interfere in the learning of the language.

The present research wants to open a new and innovative topic that is poorly spoken, especially in our country. Our research called "the effects of Nicaraguan Spanish Phonemes on the Acquisition of the English Phonemes" was initiated in a public school. Carrying out this research is a special contribution to educational English program in Nicaragua which is severely impacted by political, economic, social and cultural factors.

We are confident that this research will be useful for the Educational English System and for those who wants to continue developing this research in the future. This is the beginning of a great and long road.

## 1.5 Research Questions

1. What are the effects of Nicaraguan Spanish phonemes that influence the acquisition of English phonemes?
2. How do the effects of Nicaraguan Spanish phoneme sounds interfere in the acquisition process of English phoneme sounds?
3. What are the effective teaching and learning strategies to help students develop their communication skills?

## **1.6 Problem statement**

The problem consists on that English learners do not have knowledge about English phonemes and for that reason it is difficult for them to pronounce words correctly and communicate in the right way. It is extremely important for students to start learning English phonemes since they are in their first year of high school. In that way they will have full knowledge of English, not only about grammar rules. It is aimed to help students to better their communication skills in a real context. In addition to that, if students learn to pronounce well English phonemes there will not be transfer or interference of Spanish phonemes.



## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The following framework will present the difference between L1 and L2, the hypothesis of second language acquisition and mention segmental and suprasegmental features. This will help us to find and analyze the effects of Nicaraguan Spanish phonemes on the acquisition of English phonemes.

### 2.1 What is L1 and L2?

L1 is the first language, the native language or the mother tongue. Every human is considered a native speaker when their first language (L1) is acquired during childhood or before puberty (Morehouse, 2017). In other words, the language that is used the most by a person is L1 or the most comfortable for a given person.

According to Morehouse, first languages are generally maintained for life, with little overt effort on the part of the speaker. This is because first languages are into the personal and sociocultural identities of the native speaker, and he or she uses the language to think and to interact with family, other members of their cultural or ethnic group (2017). For example: for native speakers is easily to speak their mother tongue because they are using their language in order to communicate their thoughts and ideas all the time.

Furthermore, L1s are learned through a process known as first language acquisition; this is a complex biological process which is still not yet entirely understood by the scientific community.

The most commonly agreed-upon aspects of FLA are as follows:

- First Language Acquisition is the process of gaining the capacity to use human language, where previously no such capacities existed.
- L1s are acquired automatically, without conscious effort.
- L1s are learned before puberty, typically during infancy.
- The appropriate use of idiomatic expressions
- Correctness of language form
- Natural pronunciation
- Cultural context including “response cries”, swear words, and interjections
- Above average sized vocabulary, collocations and other phraseological items
- Metaphors
- Frozen syntax, such as binomials or bi-verbal’s
- Nonverbal cultural features

On the other hand, L2 is a second language, a foreign language, a target language, or a foreign tongue. Someone who has a L2, he or she is a non-native speaker of that language; unlike L1s, not everyone has a L2 (Morehouse, 2017). It means that, someone who has learned or is learning a new language, that language is L2.

The general commonalities aspects of SLA are:

1. Second language acquisition is the process of acquiring language capacity after another language (or languages) have already been learned natively.
2. Learning an L2 requires conscious effort.
3. L2s are not learned during infancy, and most often after puberty.
4. Theoretically, an acquired L2 can only be known at non-native proficiencies. Exactly how proficient a language learner can become in a second language can range widely,

but the general scientific consensus is that an L2 cannot be mastered to the same level as an L1. Highly advanced L2 learners are often called near-native speakers.

## **2.2 Differences and similarities of L1 and L2**

Together L1 and L2 are the major language categories by acquisition. In the large majority of situations, L1 will refer to native language, while L2 will refer to non-native or target languages, regardless of the numbers of each (Morehouse, 2017). They are the main categories of languages, though there are differences and similarities between them.

Scott Thornbury in his book called “How to teach English” establishes that in terms of the mental processing involved there is not much difference at all between L1 and L2 because in both of the languages speakers produce speech through a process of conceptualizing, then formulating, and finally articulating, during which time they are also self-monitoring (2005).

In contrast to what is mentioned before, there are a lot of differences between L1 and L2.

According to J. Joseph Lee’s article the Native Speaker, and achievable model, native speakers have proficiency represented by an “internalized knowledge” of several areas of language, including appropriate use of idiomatic expressions, correctness of language form, natural pronunciation, above average sized vocabulary, there is not foreign accent, etc. On the other hand, we have some of the characteristics that were established by Vivian Cook in her article “The Relationship between First and Second Language Learning Revisited” published in 2010, where she defines that L2 could be naturally or artificially acquired, learners do not achieve perfect mastery and there is previous knowledge. Those are only some of the characteristics that make L1 and L2 different.

## **2.3 The five Hypotheses about Second Language Acquisition**

### **2.3.1 The Acquisition- Learning Distinction**

The acquisition-learning distinction is perhaps the most fundamental of all the hypothesis to be presented here. It states that adults have two distinct and independent ways of developing competence in a second language (Krashen, 1982).

The first way is language acquisition:

As Krashen says, this is a similar process, if not identical, to the way children develop ability in their first language. Language acquisition is a subconscious process where language acquirers are not usually aware of the fact that they are acquiring the language, but they are only aware of the fact that they are using the language for communication (1982). In consequence, language acquisition and acquired competences are also subconscious. We are generally not consciously aware of the rules of the languages we have acquired. Instead, we have a feel for correctness. Grammatical sentences sound "right", or feel "right", and errors feel "wrong", even if we do not consciously know what rules was violated. For example, there is a common sentence that Nicaraguan people says: "Entra para dentro". Everyone knows that it is grammatically and logically wrong, however Nicaraguan people say it because this was acquired and they just have the feel that it could be wrong, but in the end, they do not correct the mistake since it is subconscious and it is hard to take it away.

There are other ways of describing acquisition that include implicit learning, informal learning, and natural learning. In non- technical language, acquisition is "picking up" a language.

The second way to develop competence in a second language is by language learning.

It is common to use the term "learning" henceforth to refer to conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them. In non-technical terms, learning is "knowing about" a language, known to most people as "grammar", or "rules". Some synonyms include formal knowledge of a language, or explicit learning (Krashen, 1982).

On the other hand, some language theorists have assumed that children acquire, while adults can only learn. The acquisition-learning hypothesis claims, however, that adults also acquire, that the ability to "pick up" languages does not disappear at puberty. This does not mean that adults will always be able to achieve native-like levels in a second language, but it means adults can access the same natural "language acquisition device" that children use.

### **2.3.2 The Natural Order Hypothesis**

Krashen (1982) also states that one of the most exciting discoveries in language acquisition research in recent years has been the finding that the acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a predictable order. Acquirers of a given language tend to acquire certain grammatical structures early, and others later. The agreement among individual acquirers is not always 100%, but there are clear, statistically significant similarities. It means that a child or an adult almost always learn in a specific order the grammatical patterns, maybe because there is a certain natural order in the acquisition.

It is said that English is perhaps the most studied English as far as the natural order hypothesis is concerned, and of all structures of English, morphology is the most studied (Krashen, 1982). At the same time, Krashen (as cited in Brown, 1983) claims that children acquiring English as a first

language tend to acquire certain grammatical morphemes, or function words, earlier than others.

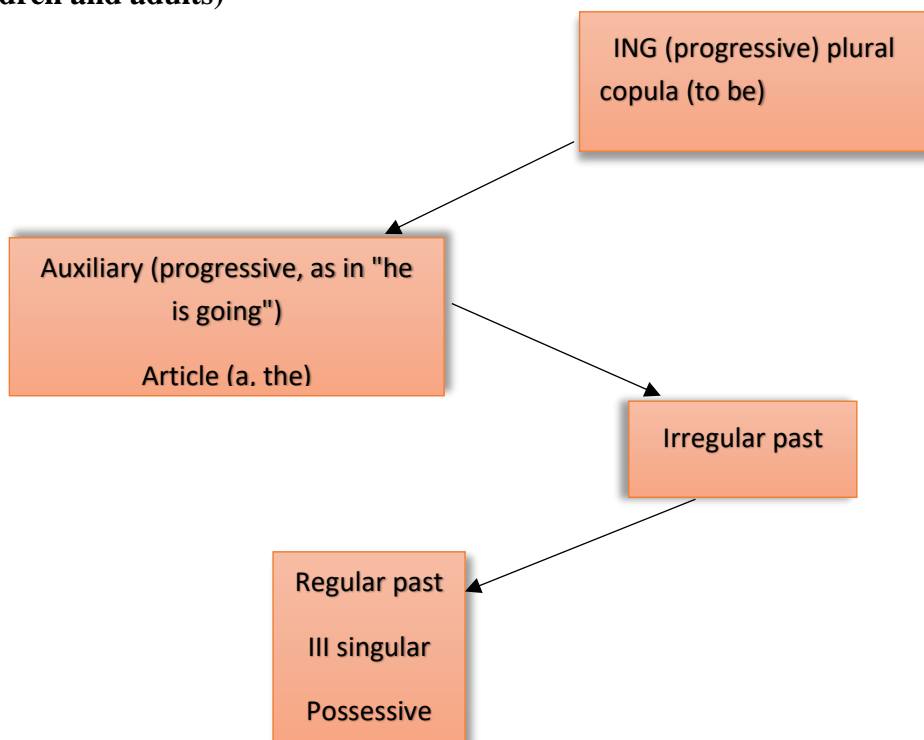
De Villies confirmed Brown's longitudinal result cross-sectionally with the following example:

The progressive markering (as in "He is playing baseball".) and the plural marker /s/ ("two dogs") were among the first morphemes acquired, while the third person singular marker /s/ (as in "He lives in New York") and the possessive /s/ ("John's hat") were typically acquired much later.

Then, for these morphemes studied, the difficulty order was similar to the acquisition order.

On the other hand, Madden and Krashen (1974) according to Dulay and Burt's work reported a natural order for adult subjects, an order quite similar to that seen in child second language acquisition.

**Average order of acquisition of grammatical morphemes for English as a second language (children and adults)**



Many of the relationships posited here also hold for child first language acquisition, but some do not: In general, the bound morphemes have the same relative order for first and second language acquisition (ING, PLURAL, IR. PAST, REG. PAST, III SINGULAR, and POSSESSIVE) while AUXILIARY and COPULA tend to be acquired relatively later in first language acquisition than in second language acquisition.

### **2.3.3 The Monitor Hypothesis**

While the acquisition-learning distinction claim that two separate processes coexist in the adult, it does not state how they are used in second language performance. The monitor hypothesis posits that acquisition and learning are used in very specific ways. Normally, acquisition initiates our utterances in a second language and it is responsible for our fluency and learning has only one function, and that is a monitor, or editor. Learning comes into play only to make changes in the form of our utterance, after it has been produced by the acquired system. This can happen before we speak or write, or after self-correction (Krashen, 1982). This hypothesis basically suggests that it complements the acquisition-learning hypothesis by claiming that the only function of learning within second language acquisition is an editor or monitor for language use produced by the acquired system as well as to produce grammatical forms not yet acquired. The Monitor allows a language user to alter the form of an utterance either prior to production by consciously applying learned rules or after production via self-correction. In other words, the learned system monitors the output of the acquired system.

According to Krashner (1982) this hypothesis also suggests that second language performers can use conscious rules only when three conditions are met: Time, form and rule.

- Time:

In order to think about and use conscious rules effectively, a second language performer needs to have sufficient time. For most people, normal conversation does not allow enough time to think about and use rules. The over use of rules in conversation can lead to trouble, e.g.: a hesitant style of talking and inattention to what the conversational partner is saying.

➤ Focus on form:

Krashner (as cited in Dulay and Burt, 1978) claims that to use the Monitor effectively, time is not enough. The performer must also be focused on form, or thinking about correctness. Even when we have time, we may be so involved in what we are saying that we do not attend to how we are saying it.

➤ Know the rule:

We have been taught by linguistics that the structures of language is extremely complex, and they claim to have described only a fragment of the best known languages. That is why we can bet that students are exposed only to a small part of the total grammar of the language, and we also know that even the best students do not learn every rule they are exposed to.

However, we can say that these three conditions are, as Krashen (1982) asserts, "necessary and not sufficient", meaning that, despite the agreement of all the three conditions, a language user may not utilize the Monitor.



### **2.3.4 The Input hypothesis**

More importantly, the input hypothesis attempts to answer what is the most important question in the field, and gives an answer that has a potential impact on all areas of language teaching (Kreshner, 1982).

But, what is the important question that Kreshner is talking about? The big question is: How do we acquire the language? According to the input hypothesis, second language learners require comprehensible input, represented by  $i+1$ , to move from the current level of acquisition, represented by  $i$ , to the next level of acquisition. It is important to mention that comprehensible input is the input that contains a structure that is a little beyond the current understanding with understanding defined as understanding of meaning rather than understanding of form of the language learner.

On the other hand, there are evidences supporting this hypothesis, and of them is the influence of L1 on L2. For example, the substitution of some L1 rule for some  $i+1$ . We must be aware that this assumption has advantages and disadvantages (Krashner, 1982). One obvious advantages is that the use of an L1 rule allows the performance to outperform his competence to meet a practical need in L2 communication before he has acquired the relevant  $i+1$  rule. When the L1 rule used is identical to a rule in the L2 (positive transfer), the performer seems to have got something for free. Even if the L1 rule is not the same as the L2 rule. But also, there could be a disadvantage to the use of L1 rules in second language performance. Even if the L1 rule is similar to an actual L2 rule, it is not clear that these rules will help the acquirer progress. In other words, it could be wrong if these rules do not take the right place of L2 rules.

Second language acquisition, therefore occurs through exposure to comprehensible input, a hypothesis which negates the need for explicit instruction learning.

### **2.3.5 The Affective Filter hypothesis**

Krashner (1982) argues that affective filter hypothesis states how affective factors relate to the second language acquisition process. This hypothesis captures the relationship between affective variables and the process of second language acquisition by positing that acquirers vary with respect to the strength or level of their affective filters.

Researches have confirmed that a variety of affective variables relate to success in second language acquisition. Most of those can be placed into one of these categories:

- Motivation
- Self- confidence
- Anxiety

According to this hypothesis, this effects acquisition, but not learning, by facilitating or preventing comprehensible input from reaching the language acquisition device. In other words, affective variables such as fear, nervousness, boredom, and resistance to change can affect the acquisition of a second language by preventing information about the second language from reaching the language areas of the mind. Furthermore, when the affective filter blocks comprehensible input, acquisition fails or occurs to a lesser extent.

## **2.4 The importance of speaking skills**

Language is a tool for communication in order to communicate with others, to express our ideas, and to know others' ideas as well; communication takes place, where there is speech. Without

speech we cannot communicate with one another (2007). In other words, it is very important to interact with others to express what we have in our mind. Speaking is part of our natural environment where we are exposed at any time.

The use of language is an activity which takes place within the confines of our community; we use language in a variety of situations. People at their work places, at their houses and at their schools.

Although, various theories are put forward to describe first language (L1) acquisition and second language (L2) acquisition. In order to understand the nature of L1 and L2 language acquisition, various aspects were examined, compared, and contrasted (2006). Besides, Results from these comparisons and contrasts have valuable implications for language teachers which can help them to design their syllabuses, teaching processes and classroom activities. These results also enable the language teacher to understand his/her students' learning processes.

Many characteristics of L2 acquisition were highlighted by studies conducted on the issue of Interlanguage.

Interlanguage is the learner's developing second language knowledge and has some characteristics of the learner's native language, of the second language, and some characteristics which seem to be very general and tend to occur in all or most interlanguages. It is systematic, dynamic and constantly evolving. Interlanguages have some common characteristics with L1 acquisition, because both share similar developmental sequences. Some of the characteristics of L2 acquisition show similarities with L1 acquisition, whereas others show differences (2009). Even, L1 and L2 show differences and similarities it is an evidence that without the ability to communicate it is impossible to learn another language; to have good communication skills in L1

let to develop communicate, fluency and accuracy skills in L2. Besides, speaking skills is important in any areas, situations or time in our life. Without the ability to communicate with other we cannot survive.

## **2.5 Speaking in the foreign language/ developing speaking skills**

Foreign language study is all about learning how to truly communicate and connect with others (Dick, 2018). One way to be able to communicate with others is by speaking which is the one that is used the most. Speaking is one of the four macro skills to be developed as it means effective communication in both first and second language context. (Boonkit, 2010). In the view of Pawlak (2011) a psycholinguist, speaking involves the collaboration of many different processing mechanisms, components and extensions to arrange the words in motion to speak the language fluently.

Moreover, Kang Shumin in his book called “Factors to Consider: Developing adult EFL student’s speaking abilities”, states that learning to speak a foreign language requires more than knowing its grammatical and semantic rules because learners must also acquire the knowledge of how native speakers use the language. (2002). Developing speaking skills in a foreign language is not an easy task since it is not acquired naturally, and there are so many grammatical and semantic rules that the learner must understand to be able to speak, and to make it even a little bit tougher; they also have to know how to use it as a native speaker will do it in their context. In addition to it, the phenomenon of disfluency is likely to reflect an interaction of L2 proficiency and L1 transfer competition, rather than L2 proficiency alone (Bergmann & Schmid, 2015). That means that there is some interference of L1 when trying to speak in L2.

Developing speaking skills in a foreign language involves a lot of factors that is why it is noticeable that a lot of learners lack of fluency in the L2. Some of the factors that can affect fluency in a foreign language are shortage opportunities for practice, lack of confidence, sense of anxiety and lack of knowledge. (Thornbury, 2005).

### **2.5.1 Shortage of opportunities**

“Speaking fluency is developed with increased exposure to second language” (Sibai, 2004).

That is because if learners are involved in the target language they will see the necessity to use it and they will have to do it, and in our context students are not able to be involved in the real-life context, where they will see how the language is really used. But not only that, learners do not have the opportunity to speak not even in the classroom, and a matter of facts children need both, to participate in discourse and to build up knowledge and skills for participation (Cameron, 2001, p.36).

### **2.5.2 Sense of anxiety**

According to Macayan and Quinto in their article called “Influence of language learning anxiety on L2 speaking and writing” published in 2008 by the Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies, feeling anxiety is a prevailing phenomenon in learning a second or foreign language (2008). Anxiety is basically feeling fear to making mistakes and being corrected in front of the rest of the learners, which is something that all learners must have felt at some point in their learning process. This phenomenon as Macayan and Quinto calls it, inhibit students to participate, for instance they do not get to practice the language.

### **2.5.3 Lack of knowledge**

When it is mentioned that lack of knowledge affects the speaking skill development in L2, it has to be taken into account two main aspects which are vocabulary and grammar. Firstly, many researchers indicate that real communication is a result of suitable and adequate vocabulary learning (Cook, 2013). When learners lack of vocabulary, it will be difficult for them to engage in communication with others, because they will have to grasp for words, or they will simply have nothing to say. Secondly, grammar also plays a crucial role in oral communication. Communicative teaching which only focuses on meaning and gives little attention to grammatical rules are not sufficient to prepare the learners to be fluent (Pica, 200). So, there is a relation between vocabulary and grammar, both of them are needed to prepare students to be able to speak, and when any of those skills is missing learners feel afraid of speaking or participating since they do not know what to say or how to say it.

## **2.6 English Language Interference**

It is a popular belief that second language acquisition (SLA) is strongly influenced by the learner's first language (L1). The clearest support for this belief comes from foreign accents in the second language (L2) speech of learners. When a Korean speaks English, his English sounds Korean. The learner's L1 also affects the other language levels-vocabulary and grammar (Ellis, 1985). This is perhaps less immediately evident, but most language learners and teachers would testify it. It is also a popular belief that the role of the L1 in SLA is a negative one. That is, the L1 gets in the way or interfered into the L2 learning process. In fact, the process of SLA is often characterized as that of overcoming the effects of L1, of slowly replacing the features of the L1 that intrude into the L2 with those of the target language and so of approximating ever closer to

native speaker speech. Ellis (as cited in Corder, 1978) has referred to this view of SLA as a restructuring process and it is based on a theory of general learning.

On the other hand, there are some basic theories advanced to describe how language is acquired and taught. One of them is the behaviorist learning theory. This is basically a psychological theory, founded by J.B Watson, is actually a theory of native language learning (Demirezen, 1988). The major principle of the behaviorist theory rests on the analyses of human behavior in observable stimulus- response interaction and the association between them. Then, in order to understand the early importance that was attached to the role of the first language, it is necessary to understand the main tenets of behaviorist learning theory: habits and error.

### **2.6.1 Habits**

Behaviorist psychology set out to explain behavior by observing the responses that took place when particular stimuli were present. Different stimuli produced different responses from a learner. Those responses could be haphazard, in the sense that they could not be predicted, or they could be regular. The association of a particular response with a particular stimulus constituted a habit, and it was this type of regular behavior that specialist want to know and how habits are established (Ellis, 1985). Also, a habit is formed when a particular stimulus became regularly linked with a particular response. In L1 acquisition children were said to master their mother tongue by imitating utterances produced by adults and having their efforts at using language either rewarded or corrected. Imitation and reinforcement are the means by which the learner identify the stimulus response associations that constitute the habits of the L2, Language Learning, first and second, is most successful when the task is broken down a number of stimulus response links, which could be systematically practiced and mastered one at a time (Ellis, 1985). In other words, language learning is a mechanical process leading the learners to

habit formation whose underlying scheme is the conditioned reflex. Thus is definitely true that language is controlled by the consequences of behavior. In addition to offering a general picture of SLA as habit formation, it also explained why the L2 learners make errors.

### **2.6.2 Error**

According to behaviorist learning theory, old habits get in the way of learning new habits (Ellis, 1985). Therefore, the grammatical apparatus programmed into the mind as the first language interferes with the smooth acquisition of the second (Bright and McGregor, 1987).

Interference has a central place in behaviorist accounts in SLA and it is the result of what is called *proactive inhibition*. Here the previous learning prevents or inhibits the learning of new habits (Ellis, 1985). Then, an error is likely to arise in L2 where L1 and L2 share a meaning but expresses it different way. For instance, the learner will transfer the realization device from his first language into the second. For example, a Spanish speaker may express the idea of being cold (common meaning to first and second language) as "I have cold" in L2 English, as a result of the way this meaning is expressed in L1 Spanish, "tengo frío". It means that learning a L2 involves developing new habits wherever the stimulus response links of the L2 differ from those of overcome proactive L1. In order to develop these new habits, the learner has to overcome proactive inhibition.

However, not all the patterns or habits of the L1 are different from those of the L2. It is quite possible that the means for expressing a shared meaning are the same in the first and second language. For example, when referring to a needing, Spanish and English employ the same formal devices- *necesito un carro* is analogues with "I need a car". Then, in case such as this is possible to transfer the means used to realize a given meaning in the L1 into the L2. When this



is possible, the only learning that has to take place is the discovery that the realization devices are the same in two languages (Demirezen, 1988). In consequences, the learner does not need to overcome proactive inhibition by mastering a different realization device.

At this point, it is important to highlight that *transfer* will take place from the first to the second language. Transfer will be negative when there is proactive inhibition. In this case errors will result. Transfer will be positive when the first and the second language habits are the same. In this case no errors will occur (Ellis, 1985). In other words, differences between the first and second language create learning difficulty which results in errors, while the similarities between the first and second language facilitate rapid and easy learning. In addition, errors are evidence of non- learning, of the failure to overcome proactive inhibition.

Moreover, in behaviorist accounts of SLA, errors were considerable undesirable. Some language teaching theorists even suggested that errors was a danger of errors becoming habits in their own right if they were tolerated (Ellis, 1985). That is why Brooks (1960) wrote: "Like sin, error is to be avoided and its influence overcome". According to behaviorist theory, errors were the result of non-learning, rather than wrong learning. However, there was total almost agreement that errors should be avoided, and for that reason attempts were made to predict when they would occur. It means that by comparing the learner's native language with the target language, differences could be identified and used to predict areas of potential errors.

## **2.7 Pronunciation**

Pronunciation is one of the most important factors of second language learning which involves in production of correct sound in target language and production of sounds to make meanings. It is the combination of sound segments to express a message in any given language. Pronunciation is one of the most important factors of second language learning, which involves in production of correct sound in target language and production of sounds to make meanings. Besides, it is the combination of sound segments to express a message in any given language; pronunciation is playing a vital role in daily interaction in English language. Moreover, according to Nath Saha language structure, stress, rhythm influence the pronunciation in English language (Nath Saha, 2014). It shows that, L1 pronunciation has a higher influence in how non-native speakers can pronounce the words in L2.

### **2.7.1 Vowel**

Languages differ greatly with respect to the number and types of vowels in their phonemic inventory, and as a result, they provide a wealth of opportunities for researcher in L2 acquisition. In phonological terms, vowels are classified and distinguished in part by the relative position of the tongue in the mouth during articulations; that is, vowels may be classified in terms of tongue in the mouth height ( e.g, high, mid, low) and frontless/ blackness (e.g, front, central, back) (Hansen, & Zampini, 2008).

### **2.7.2 Short and Long Vowel Pairs Problem**

Perhaps the single biggest pronunciation problem for Spanish speakers is that their language does not have a distinction between short and long vowels. They often stretch all vowel sounds out too much and confuse pairs of short and long English vowel sounds like “ship” and “sheep”

both in comprehension and speaking. As in Nicaragua, people who are trying to speak English they make mistake in this kind of sounds since in Spanish do not have long short vowels sounds.

Some samples of main pairs are:

- bit/beat
- not/note and not/nought
- batter/barter
- pull/pool

The previous samples of words are all pronounced with different mouth positions as well as different lengths, focusing on that can help students distinguish between the minimal pairs above even if they do not fully get the hang of vowel length.

### **2.7.3 Other Vowels**

In common with most learners, Spanish speakers find the distinction between the very similar sounds in “cat” and “cut” difficult to notice and produce. Perhaps more importantly, they can also have problems with the two closest sounds to an “o” sound in “not” mentioned above, making “boat” and “bought” difficult to distinguish. The unstressed schwa “er” sound in “computer” does not exist in Spanish, and neither do the closest long sounds in “fur” and “her”. Spanish speakers tend to find it much more difficult to recognize not rhotic versions of vowel sounds.

### **2.7.4 Consonants**

Furthermore, words written with “b” and “v” are mostly pronounced identically, making this perhaps the most common spelling mistake in Spanish (1998). Even Nicaraguan people know the different between these sounds; they make mistake in pronounce English words like “vest” and

“best” because they do not make any difference pronouncing these consonants. On the other hand, there is also no distinction between the first sounds in “yacht” and “jot” in Spanish and which of those two sounds is perceived by English speakers tends to depend on the variety of Spanish spoken (this being one of the easiest ways of spotting an Argentina accent, for example). There may also be some confusion between the first sound in “jeep” and its unvoiced equivalent in “cheap” (a common sound in Spanish).

Moreover, the “ch” in “cheese” may also be confused with the “sh” in “she’s”, as the latter sound does not exist in Spanish. The difference is similar to that between “yacht” and “jot” mentioned above, being between a smooth sound (sh) and a more explosive one (ch), so the distinction can usefully be taught as a more general point. Alternatively, the “sh” in “sheep” may come out sounding more like “s” in “seep”, in which case it is mouth shape that needs to be worked on.

Spanish words never start with an “s” sound, and words which are similar to English tend to have an initial “es” sound instead, as in escuela/school. This is very common in Spanish speakers’ pronunciation of English as well, leading to pronunciations like “I am from Spain”. Spanish speakers have no problem producing a hissing sound, so the secret is to have them make the word directly after that “ssss” and then practice reducing the length of that down to a short initial “s”.

Unlike most languages, the “th” sounds in “thing” and “bathe” do exist in Spanish. The problem with “bathe” is that the sound is just a variation on mid or final “d” for Spanish speakers and so some work on understanding the distinction between initial “d” and initial “th” is usually needed before it can be understood and produced in an initial position – in fact making the amount of work needed not much less than for speakers of languages entirely without this sound. The problem with “thing” and “sing” is different it is a distinction that exists in some varieties of

Spanish and not others, meaning that again for some speakers practice will need to start basically from zero.

Some speakers also pronounce a final “d” similar to an unvoiced “th”. “d” and “t” can also be a problem at the end of words, as can “thing”/“think” and sometimes “thing”/“thin” or even “ring” and “rim”. In general, Spanish consonant sounds vary more by position than English consonants do.

Although a “w” sound exists in Spanish, it is spelt “gu” and can be pronounced “gw”, sometimes making it difficult to work out if a “g” or “w” is what is meant.

As a “z” is pronounced as “s” or “th” (depending on the speaker, as in the two pronunciations of “Barcelona”), a “z” sound does not exist in Spanish. However, perhaps because not so much air is produced in a Spanish “s” I find that this version rarely produces comprehension problems.

Although a Spanish “r” is different from most English ones, it rarely causes comprehension problems. However, the English “r” can seem so soft to Spanish speakers that it is sometimes perceived as “w”.

The Spanish “j” in José (similar to the Scottish “ch” in “loch”) and the English “h” in “hope” rarely if ever cause communication problems, but is perhaps the main thing to work on if students are interested in accent reduction. An English “h” is like breathing air onto your glasses so you can polish them, and students can actually practice doing that to help.

Spanish doesn’t have the soft, French-sounding sound from the middle of “television” and “pleasure”, but this rarely if ever causes comprehension problems (Case, 1998).

### **2.7.5 Syllables**

There has been a lot of researches conducted to examine the influence of syllable structure in L2 acquisition. Consequently, there is evidence of L1 transfer over a preference for the syllable on L2. That evidence comes from the study of the English of native speakers that was shown by an independent work conducted by Carlisle in 1998, in which he examined the production of /esC/ by Spanish speakers like in the word “escuela”. He says that English native speakers will pronounce it with /sk/ like if it were pronounced “Scuela”, however Spanish speakers will insert a vowel before it, and vice versa. For example, Spanish speakers will pronounce words like stay, steel and school like [estay], [estil], and [escul].

Two more studies that were conducted by Broselow, demonstrated the influence of transfer on the structuring of interlanguage phonology. In 1983, he investigated syllabication errors in the English of native speakers of Arabic who spoke two dialects: Iraqi and Egyptian. They were prompted to pronounce the word flow for which Egyptian speakers will pronounce it as [filo] and Iraqi speakers as [iflo], and he was able to find out that both pronunciations could be attributed to underlie on the syllable structures of their dialects. As a result of those, and too many other studies, it is demonstrated that there is strong influence of syllable sounds, of L1 on L2.

### **2.7.6 Stress**

Several factors are implicated in L2 word stress realization. Amanda Post (2016) in her article called “The role of cross-linguistic stress pattern frequency and word similarity on the acquisition of English stress pattern by native speakers of Brazilian Portuguese”, cited some of the most factors, which are the rhythmic differences between languages (Wenk, 1985), frequency

of occurrence of word stress in both languages (Guion, 2001), lexical frequency (Van Leyden & Van Heuven 1996), word similarity rates (Schepens, 2012), and neighborhood density of similar words in L1 (Smits, 2009). The acquisition of stress in a second language is a core part of learners' overall prosodic organization of utterances. First, learners need to establish whether the language they are acquiring has a fixed or variable stress pattern, and if it is variable, they need to know what condition it (Laura et al., nd). As well, speakers must also consider the realization of both stressed and unstressed syllables and the interaction between stress and rhythm.

In the domain of L2 stress contrasts, L1-induced variation among learners has been widely reported in both, perception and production (Altman, 2006). So there is variation in the way learners perceive stress patterns at the time of listening it, and as result of it, there is difference at the time of producing it. Furthermore, in languages in which word stress can be assigned to different syllable positions within a word and stress placement is dependent only on word stress frequency distributions in the input – lexical stress languages, such as English (Guion, 2001).

Another factor that has been shown to influence the acquisition of English stress system, is the analogical extension of the stress patterns of phonologically similar known words. It means that if learners have previous knowledge on how a word is pronounced in the target language, they will transfer that knowledge to new words (Baker & Smith, 1976).

## **2.8 Prosodic features of speech**

Prosodic feature, also called, suprasegmental, in phonetic, a speech feature such as stress, tone or word juncture that accompanies or is added over consonants and vowels. In an article called “theories and models” written by Robert Manell (2007), it is stated that prosody is the study of the tune and rhythm of speech and how these features contribute to meaning. Prosodic can have

the effect of changing the meaning intended by the speaker by indicating his attitude to what is being said.

Larger prosodic domains such as the word, phonological or syntactic phrase, and intonational phrase can also play a role in L2 speech. There is a proposal that says that prosodic information may be transferred from L1 to L2 just like other aspects of the learners L1 phonology, and moreover, that prosodic structure may be more susceptible to transfer because of its abstract nature (Vogel, 1991).

In the suprasegmental or prosodic features we can mention the followings:

1. Tone: Lee Grayson in his article called “Setting the Tone of a speech” establishes that the word tone is used to describe public speaking deals with a complex analysis of the speaker’s attitude and how the audience perceives the overall message (n.d).
2. Intonation: intonation is crucial for communication and it is largely unconscious mechanism, and such complex aspect of pronunciation (Sabaddini, 2018). Intonation t occurs when the voice changes in pitch and tone while speaking (Qamar, 2018).
3. Pitch: Seckin Esen, an English teacher in Turkey, in his article called “Pitch in English” (2018), considers pitch as one of the vital parts of listening and speaking in most languages in the world, and that it matters at the level of individual words and at the level of longer sentences. Pitch is basically the rise and fall of people’s voice when they speak, sometimes called highness or loudness.
4. Word accent: the term accent has various meanings, but in speaking, an accent is an identifiable style of pronunciation, often varying regionally or even socioeconomically (Nordquist, 2018).



## 2.9 Vocabulary

### 2.9.1 Producing Words in a Second Language

It is a well-known fact that people can produce words in their first and more dominant language at a faster rate than in a foreign language (Hermans, Daan et al, 1998). Picture naming studies have shown that the production of a word in a second language requires considerably more time than in a first language (e.g., Chen & Leung, 1989). However, it is still unclear why a speaker needs more time to retrieve words in L2. It is more difficult to produce words in a L2 merely because we do not use them on a daily basis? Or do we need more time because there is interference from L1? We will see now.

By studying the involvement of the L1 during lexical access in a L1, we address one of the most remarkable abilities of bilinguals. During the production of speech, bilinguals are able to produce words only the language in which they intend to express their thoughts. Some bilingual speech production models account for this ability by assuming that elements (rules and representations) that belong to a language system form a subset which can be activated or deactivated in its entirety (De Bot & Schreuder, 1993), for instance, proposes that an external control device called "the Specifier" regulates the activation level of lexical representation in each of a bilingual's languages. When a language is chosen for production, the activation level of lexical representation in that language is increased, while the activation level of lexical representations in a bilingual's other language is decreased.

It is said that words from a L1 are activated during the lexical access in a L2. Some experiments were conducted with Dutch students. One of them was that some participants were instructed to produce the L2 name "mountain" in response to a picture of a mountain. All those experiments

showed that the Dutch name of a picture is activated during the *lemma selection* (It strictly proceeds the process of lexeme retrieval, without feedback) (Dell, 1986) process of its translation equivalent in English as a L2. According to Hermans (1998) lexical representations from L1 and more dominant language cannot be completely deactivated during the production of speech in L2. Therefore, semantically close lemmas from L1 will be activated to some degree during the lemma selection process in L2. In other words, in two- picture word interference tasks, it is possible to demonstrate that the L1 name of a picture is activated during the initial stages of the process of lexical access of its translation equivalent in the L2. Apparently speaker cannot prevent their L1 from interfering with the production of speech in a foreign language. In a task in which the speaker is explicitly discouraged from accessing representations in his or her first and more dominant language, a bilingual speaker will indeed behave like a monolingual during the later stages of the process of lexical access (Hermans, Daan et al, 1998). However, during the Initial stages of the process of lexical access in a L1, a bilingual speaker cannot prevent interference from the L1.

### **III. METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN**

#### **3.1 Type of research**

This is a qualitative research of quasi-experimental inspiration. It means that we applied a test to 16 students that were randomly selected and an interview to the main English teacher. We decided to research on this topic because we were able to see that L1 interferes on L2 in the four English skills (grammar, writing, listening and speaking) but we wanted to focus on the speaking skill specifically in the pronunciation of English phonemes since we consider that it is something important that has not been studied before here in Nicaragua. First, we knew that English learners have problems at the time of pronouncing English phonemes but we wanted to know which the problematic phonemes are so we collected that from the theoretical framework. Secondly, after knowing what the problematic phonemes are, we selected the items from the book called "English Pronunciation Made Simple" that was written by Dale and Poms in 2005. After that, it was submitted to validation in which we got feedback from the experts. Finally, we used the feedback to make the needed corrections and we applied it to students.

As well there was an interview applied to the main English teacher. The questions were gotten from the theoretical framework and we also made use of extra materials. We divided it into two sections which were teaching and pronunciation competences. It was also submitted to validation in which we got feedback from the experts. Finally, we used the feedback to make the needed corrections.

### 3.2 Population and sample

In total, 16 of 45<sup>th</sup> grade students in the morning shift and the English teacher from Experimental Mexico School located in Managua, near to Bello Horizonte, participated in this research. These students at this level have already taken English courses since they were in first year of high school. In addition to that, some of them have taken English courses in different academies and for that reason they were a little bit more capable to pronounce some words in the right way.

**This table shows the age of the students:**

There were ten students that are 13 years old and six students that are 14 years old.

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Accumulated percentage
Valid 13	10	62,5	62,5	62,5
Valid 14	6	37,5	37,5	100,0
Total	16	100,0	100,0	

**This table shows the gender of the students:**

There were four men and twelve women with a total of sixteen students.

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Accumulated percentage
valid Male	4	25,0	25,0	25,0
valid Female	12	75,0	75,0	100,0
Total	16	100,0	100,0	

### 3.3 Data collection techniques

#### 3.3.1 Knowledge Test

We decided to apply this kind of test since we consider would be useful to collect the required information

##### A. Pronunciation Test for Students

- **Test Content**

The English phonemes sounds that are difficult for Spanish learners to pronounce were extracted through the theoretical framework. Even though, these phonemes sounds exist in both languages, they differ in their pronunciation. In consequence, the exercises were selected from the book called English pronunciation made simple (Poms, 2003).

In order to identify the effects of Nicaraguan Spanish phonemes that influence the acquisition of English phonemes, the following contents were selected

- /ɪ/ and short /i/
- long /u/ and short /u/
- difference between /ɔ/ and /oʊ/
- / a/ and /ʌ /
- the phoneme /m/
- / S/ and /z/
- / v/ and /b/
- / ʃ / and /tʃ/
- the phoneme /s/
- / θ / and /ð/
- phoneme /r/
- phoneme /h/
- Silent sound / ɪ/
- Silent sound /s/

CATEGORY	QUALIFICATION	INDICATOR
<p><b>COHERENCE</b> The item is logically related to the dimension or indicator you are measuring.</p>	<p>1. Does not meet the criterion 2. Low level 3. Moderate level 4. High level</p>	<p>1. The item has no logical relation to the dimension 2. The item has a tangential relationship with the dimension. 3. The item has a moderate relationship with the dimension it is measuring. 4. The item is completely related to the dimension you are measuring.</p>
<p><b>CLARITY</b> Extent to which the item is written clearly and precisely, making it easier for respondents to understand.</p>	<p>1. Does not meet the criterion 2. Low level 3. Moderate level 4. High level</p>	<p>1. Item is not clear 2. The item requires quite a few modifications or a very large modification in the use of the words according to their meaning or by their order. 3. A very specific modification of some of the terms of the item is required. 4. The item is clear, has semantics and adequate syntax.</p>
<p><b>RELEVANCE</b> The importance that the item has with respect to the contribution that it can provide for a better understanding of the characteristic or situation measured.</p>	<p>1. Does not meet the criterion 2. Low level 3. Moderate level 4. High level</p>	<p>1. Does not meet the criterion. 2. The item can be deleted without affecting the dimension measurement. 3. The item has some relevance, but another item may be including what it measures. 4. 4. The item is essential or important, i.e. it must be included.</p>
<p><b>SUFFICIENCY</b> Items belonging to the same dimension are sufficient to obtain the measurement of this dimension.</p>	<p>1. Does not meet the criterion 2. Low level 3. Moderate level 4. High level</p>	<p>1. The items are not sufficient to measure the dimension 2. Items measure some aspect of the dimension but do not correspond to the overall dimension. 3. Some items must be increased in order to fully assess the dimension. 4. Items are sufficient</p>

- **Test Validation**

To validate this pronunciation test some experts were selected from the English department who are Yelsin Ramírez Cruz M.A in TESOL in Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, USA and Bachelor’s degree in Education with a concentration in English at UNAN-Managua and Roberto Villareal M.A in applied linguistics and TESOL and Bachelor in TEFL at UNAN- Managua.

The experts used the table above as a rubric to validate the test. In that table there are four categories that are coherence, clarity, relevance and sufficiency. Also they had the option to validate each item from one to four in which number one represents the item does not meet the criterion, number two the item has low level, number three the item has a moderate level and number four the item has a high level. In addition to that, it can be seen on the table indicators from one to four for each qualification.

Coherence from 0 to 100%	Clarity From 0 to 100%	Relevance From 0 to 100%	Sufficiency From 0 to 100%
89.5%	91%	84.3%	94.7%

This table shows the total percentage for each category in the validation. We used a simple rule of three.

The test was reviewed and corrected taking into account the experts’ correction and this is the final version.

**Read aloud the following sentences and pair words:**

Listen to the following example:

**It eats meat. It/eat**

1. Please sit in the seat	Feet- fit
2. The fool was full of fun.	Luke- look
3. Mary bought a boat.	Note- dog

4. The color of the collar is White.	Luck- lock
5. I sometimes stay in my room 6. My name is Kim.	Kim- room
7. The object has no use. 8. She has a silver scissors.	Bus- buzz zoo-soup
9. Steven has a blue vest.	Berry-vey Boy-very
10. Sherry likes cherry pie.	Ship- chip teacher- t-shirt
11. María studies at Spain School.	School- Spain scenary-snake spring- street-script-description
12. They think this is a good day.	Think- they Thanks- mother
13. Robert ran around the corner.	Rose- car green- friend-agricultural
14. Hellen has brown hair.	Hugh- hope honor- horror
15. She was walking on the street	almond-talk
16. They went to an island	Island-isle

- **Application**

To apply this pronunciation test sixteen students were selected from 9<sup>th</sup> grade at Experimental Mexico Institute. They were taken to the teacher's lounge and were called one by one to read aloud each item from the test and at the same time they were recorded.



## **B. Interview**

### **Interview to English teachers**

- **Interview content**

The questions were selected in order to find out if the teacher has the knowledge about English phoneme sounds to teach their pronunciation and if she is able to identify and correct pronunciation mistakes. The seven questions were divided into two sections: Teaching and Pronunciation Competences.

- **Validation**

To validate this interview some experts were selected from the English department who are Geraldine Abril López Darce M.A in teaching English methodology in and Bachelor's degree in Education with a concentration in English at UNAN-Managua and Roberto Villareal M.A in applied linguistics and TESOL and Bachelor in TEFL at UNAN- Managua.

The experts used the following table as a rubric to validate the test. In that table there are four categories that are coherence, clarity, relevance and sufficiency. Also they had the option to validate each item from one to four in which number one represents the item does not meet the criterion, number two the item has low level, number three the item has a moderate level and number four the item has a high level. In addition to that, it can be seen on the table indicators from one to four for each qualification.

CATEGORY	QUALIFICATION	INDICATOR
<p><b>COHERENCE</b> The item is logically related to the dimension or indicator you are measuring.</p>	<p>1. Does not meet the criterion 2. Low level 3. Moderate level 4. High level</p>	<p>7. The item has no logical relation to the dimension 8. The item has a tangential relationship with the dimension. 9. The item has a moderate relationship with the dimension it is measuring. 10. The item is completely related to the dimension you are measuring.</p>
<p><b>CLARITY</b> Extent to which the item is written clearly and precisely, making it easier for respondents to understand.</p>	<p>1. Does not meet the criterion 2. Low level 3. Moderate level 4. High level</p>	<p>5. Item is not clear 6. The item requires quite a few modifications or a very large modification in the use of the words according to their meaning or by their order. 7. A very specific modification of some of the terms of the item is required. 8. The item is clear, has semantics and adequate syntax.</p>
<p><b>RELEVANCE</b> The importance that the item has with respect to the contribution that it can provide for a better understanding of the characteristic or situation measured.</p>	<p>1. Does not meet the criterion 2. Low level 3. Moderate level 4. High level</p>	<p>5. Does not meet the criterion. 6. The item can be deleted without affecting the dimension measurement. 7. The item has some relevance, but another item may be including what it measures. 8. 4. The item is essential or important, i.e. it must be included.</p>
<p><b>SUFFICIENCY</b> Items belonging to the same dimension are sufficient to obtain the measurement of this dimension.</p>	<p>1. Does not meet the criterion 2. Low level 3. Moderate level 4. High level</p>	<p>3. The items are not sufficient to measure the dimension 4. Items measure some aspect of the dimension but do not correspond to the overall dimension. 11. 3. Some items must be increased in order to fully assess the dimension. 12. 4. Items are sufficient</p>

Coherence from 0 to 100%	Clarity From 0 to 100%	Relevance From 0 to 100%	Sufficiency From 0 to 100%
66.25%	71.25%	50%	43%

This table shows the total percentage for each category in the validation. We used a simple rule of three.

The test was reviewed and corrected taking into account the experts' correction and this is the final version.

### **Interview**

Listen carefully to the following questions and respond according to your criteria. We ask for your honesty when answering the questions since this will help to obtain reliable information for our research.

- 1) What instructional strategies do you use?
- 2) What strategies or tasks do you use to enhance student's pronunciation?
- 3) What didactic resources do you use to develop speaking skills?
- 4) Can you identify when your students mispronounce a word?
- 5) What are the most common vowel and consonant sounds that students mispronounce?
- 6) What do you do to correct pronunciation mistakes?
- 7) Do you give them feedback about pronunciation immediately or at the end of the class?

This was the result of the first interview validation after being reviewed by the experts and due to the score that was gotten corrections were made.

- **Application**

To apply this interview the English teacher from 9<sup>th</sup> grade at Experimental Mexico Institute was selected. She was requested to answer the questions orally in her classroom.

### 3.4 Data Processing

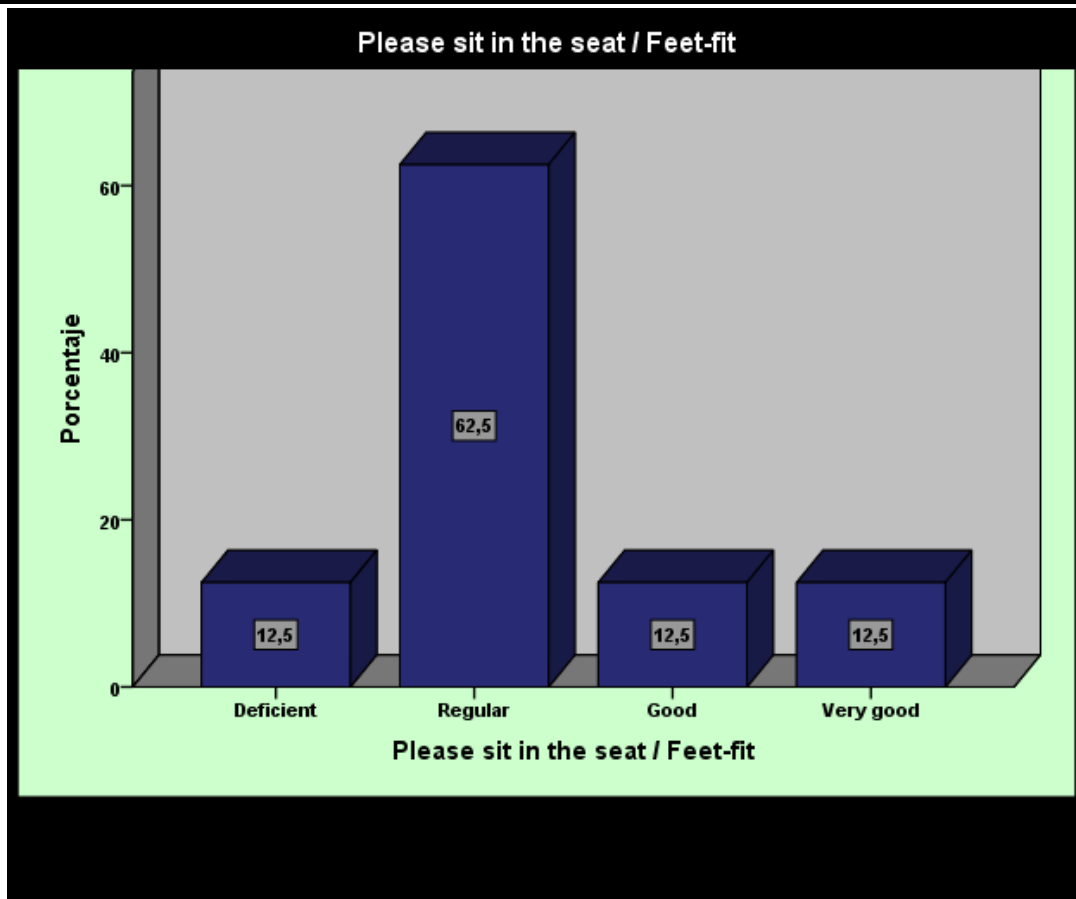
**Table #1**

Sound contrast: /i: / & /I/

The table below shows the result of this section of the test.

**1. Please sit in the seat / Feet-fit**

	frequency	percentage	Valid percentage	Accumulated percentage
valid	Deficient	2	12,5	12,5
	Regular	10	62,5	75,0
	Good	2	12,5	87,5
	Very good	2	12,5	100,0
	Total	16	100,0	100,0



In regards of the pronunciation of short and vowel sounds such as: Long /i:/and short /I/. Students were more likely to pronounce both phonemes similarly. In fact, the test used four categories to evaluate students pronunciation (Deficient, Regular, Good, Very good).

- Out of the sixteen students we tested, two of them mispronounced the words completely which represents 12.5% of them.

- Ten of them pronounced the words regularly which represents 62.5%.

- Two of them pronounced the words in a good way which represents 12.5%.

- Two of them pronounced the words very good which represents 12.5%.

It seems that the phonemes /I/ & /i:/ are indeed problematic for Spanish learners of English. Most of the students do not make the difference between those sounds. This is in agreement with most L2 pronunciation research (Case, 1998).

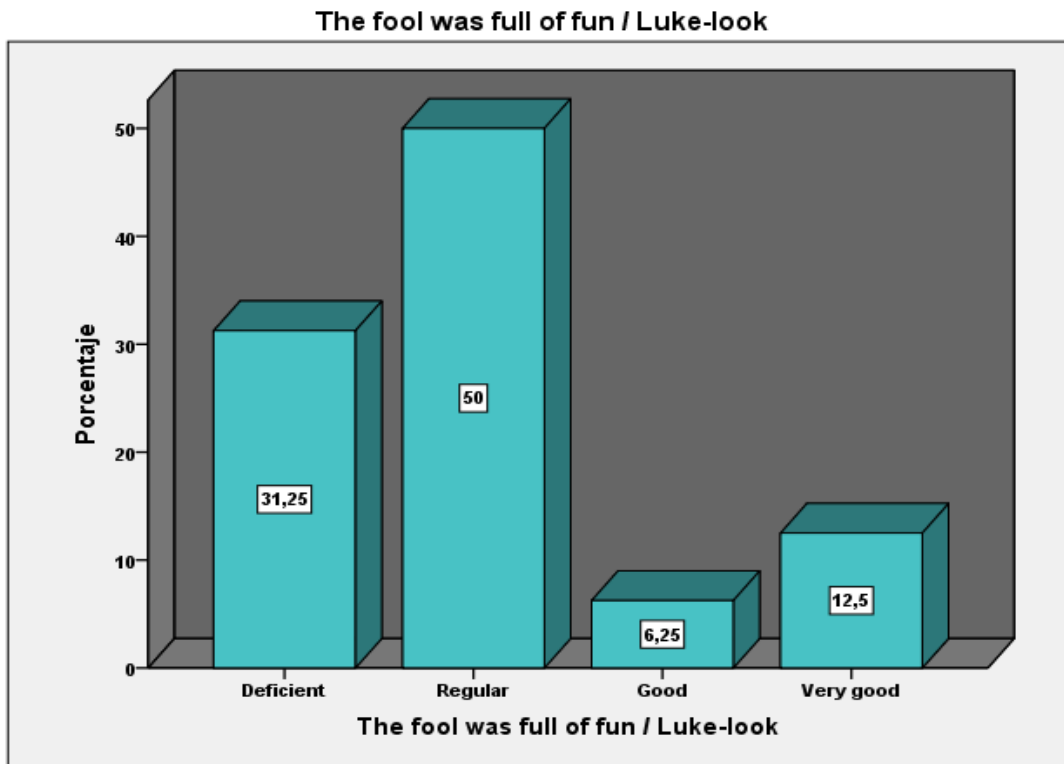
**Table #2**

Sound contrast: /U/ & /u: /

The table below shows the result of this section of the test.

**2. The fool was full of fun / Luke-look**

	frequency	percentage	Valid percentage	Accumulated percentage
valid	Deficient	5	31,3	31,3
	Regular	8	50,0	81,3
	Good	1	6,3	87,5
	Very good	2	12,5	100,0
	Total	16	100,0	100,0



In the pronunciation of short and vowel sounds such as: Long /u:/and short /U/. Students were more likely to pronounce both phonemes similarly. In fact, the test used four categories to evaluate students pronunciation (Deficient, Regular, Good, Very good).

- Out of the sixteen students we tested, five of them mispronounced the words completely which represents 31.3% of them.

- Eight of them pronounced the words regularly which represents 50%.

- One of them pronounced the words in a good way which represents 6.3%.

- Two of them pronounced the words very good which represents 12.5%.

It seems that the phonemes /u:/ & /U/ are indeed problematic for Spanish learners of English since they pronounce those sounds in the same way. This is in agreement with most L2 pronunciation research (Case, 1998).



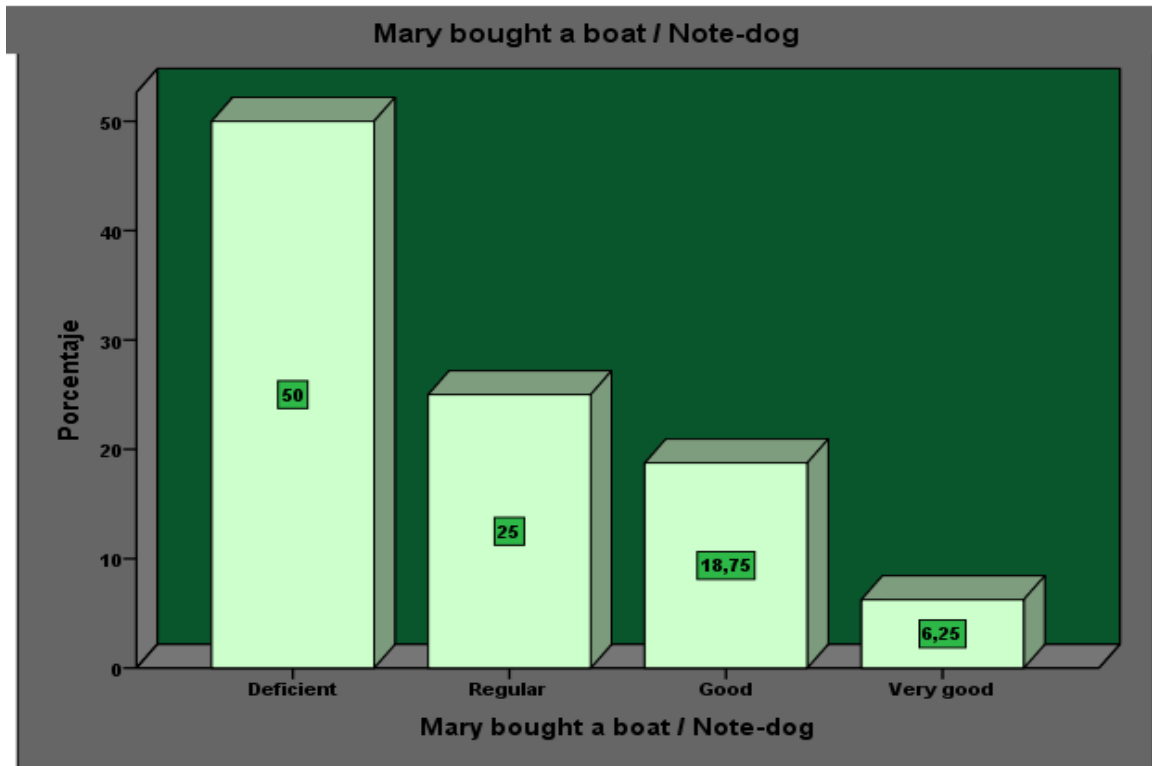
**Table #3**

The table below shows the result of this section of the test.

-Sounds contrast: /ɔ/ and /oʊ/

**3. Mary bought a boat / Note-dog**

	frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Acumulated percentage
valid	Deficient	8	50,0	50,0
	Regular	4	25,0	75,0
	Good	3	18,8	93,8
	Very good	1	6,3	100,0
	Total	16	100,0	100,0



For the pronunciation of short and vowel sounds such as: /ɔ/ and /oʊ/. Students were more likely to pronounce both phonemes similarly. In fact, the test used four categories to evaluate students pronunciation (Deficient, Regular, Good, Very good).

- Out of the sixteen students we tested, eight of them mispronounced the words completely which represents 50% of them.
- Four of them pronounced the words regularly which represents 25%.
- Three of them pronounced the words in a good way which represents 18%.
- One of them pronounced the words very good which represents 6.3%.

It seems that the phonemes /ɔ/ and /oʊ/ are indeed problematic for Spanish learners of English since in Spanish does not exist this phonemes sounds and it is evidence that students do not have any idea how pronounce those words. This is in agreement with most L2 pronunciation research (Case, 1998).

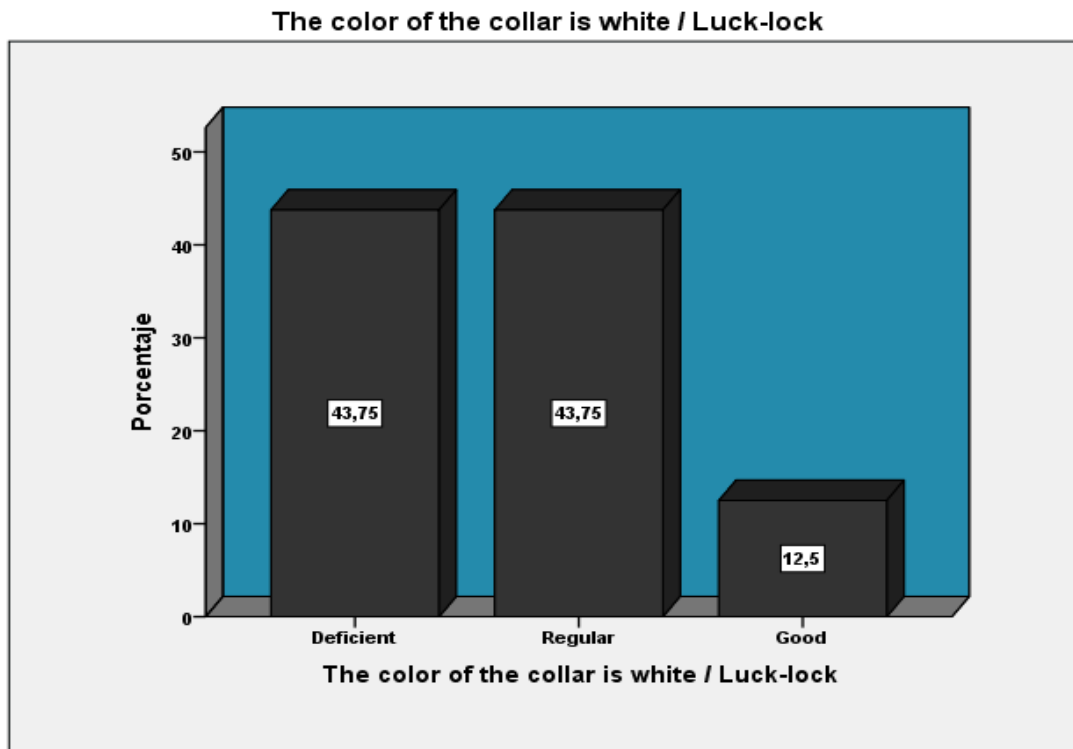
**Table #4**

The table below shows the result of this section of the test.

- Sounds contrast: / a/ and /Λ /

**4. The color of the collar is white / Luck-lock**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Accumulated percentage
valid	Deficient	7	43,8	43,8
	Regular	7	43,8	87,5
	Good	2	12,5	100,0
	Total	16	100,0	100,0



When it comes to the pronunciation of short and vowel sounds such as: / a/ and /ʌ /. Students were more likely to pronounce both phonemes similarly. In fact, the test used four categories to evaluate students pronunciation (Deficient, Regular, Good, Very good).

- Out of the sixteen students we tested, seven of them mispronounced the words completely which represents 43.8% of them.
- Seven of them pronounced the words regularly which represents 43.8%.
- Two of them pronounced the words in a good way which represents 12.5%.
- None of them pronounced the words very good which represents 0%.

It seems that the phonemes / a/ and /ʌ /are indeed problematic for Spanish learners of English since the evidence shows that none of them was able to pronounce any word in the correct way.

This is in agreement with most L2 pronunciation research (Case, 1998).

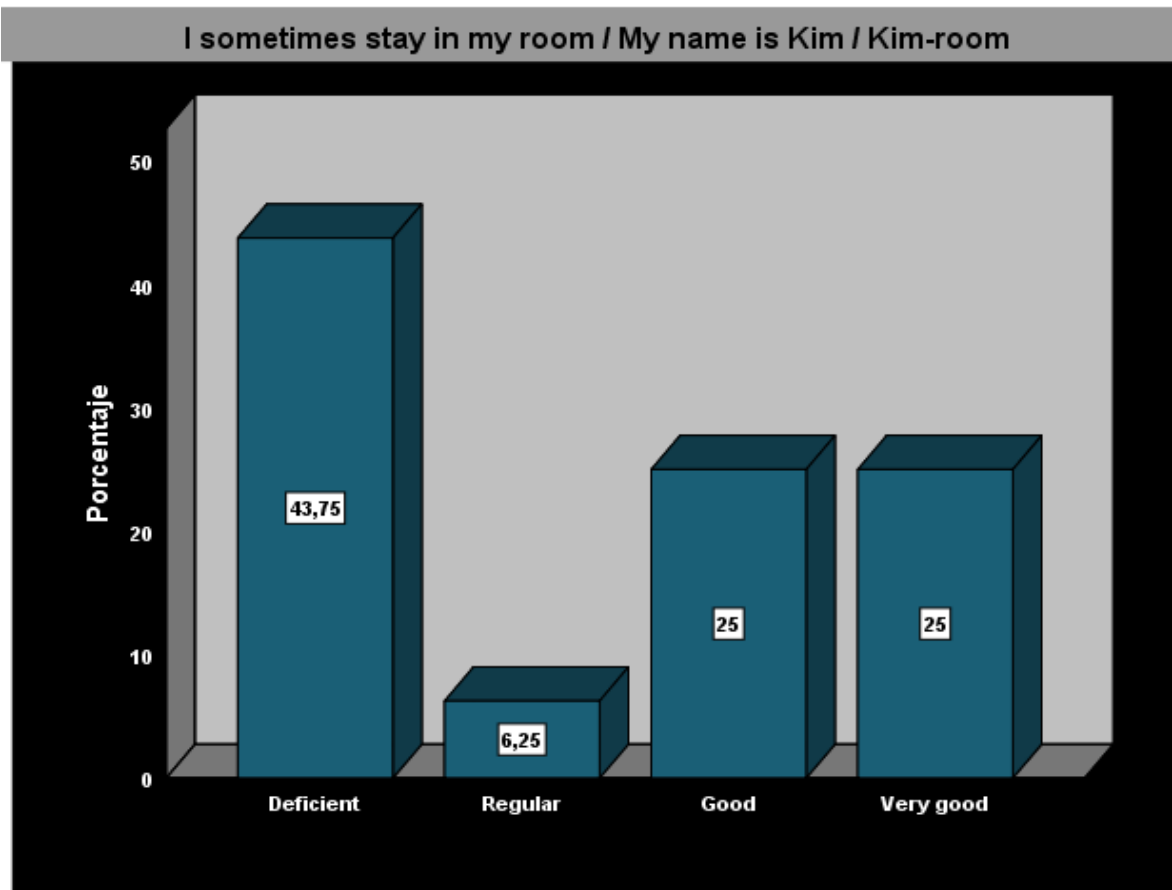
**Table #5**

The table below shows the result of this section of the test.

- Sounds: /m/

**5. I sometimes stay in my room / My name is Kim / Kim-room**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Accumulated percentage
valid	Deficient	7	43,8	43,8
	Regular	1	6,3	50,0
	Good	4	25,0	75,0
	Very good	4	25,0	100,0
	Total	16	100,0	100,0



Concerning to the pronunciation of short and vowel sounds such as: / m/. Students were more likely to pronounce both phonemes similarly. In fact, the test used four categories to evaluate students pronunciation (Deficient, Regular, Good, Very good).

- Out of the sixteen students we tested, seven of them mispronounced the words completely which represents 43.8% of them.
- One of them pronounced the words regularly which represents 6.3%.
- Four of them pronounced the words in a good way which represents 25%.
- Four of them pronounced the words very good which represents 25%.

It seems that the phonemes /m/ are indeed problematic for Spanish learners of English. Even when it is a sound that Nicaraguan speakers have in their language, almost half of the students were not able to pronounce the sound /m/. This is in agreement with most L2 pronunciation research (Case, 1998).

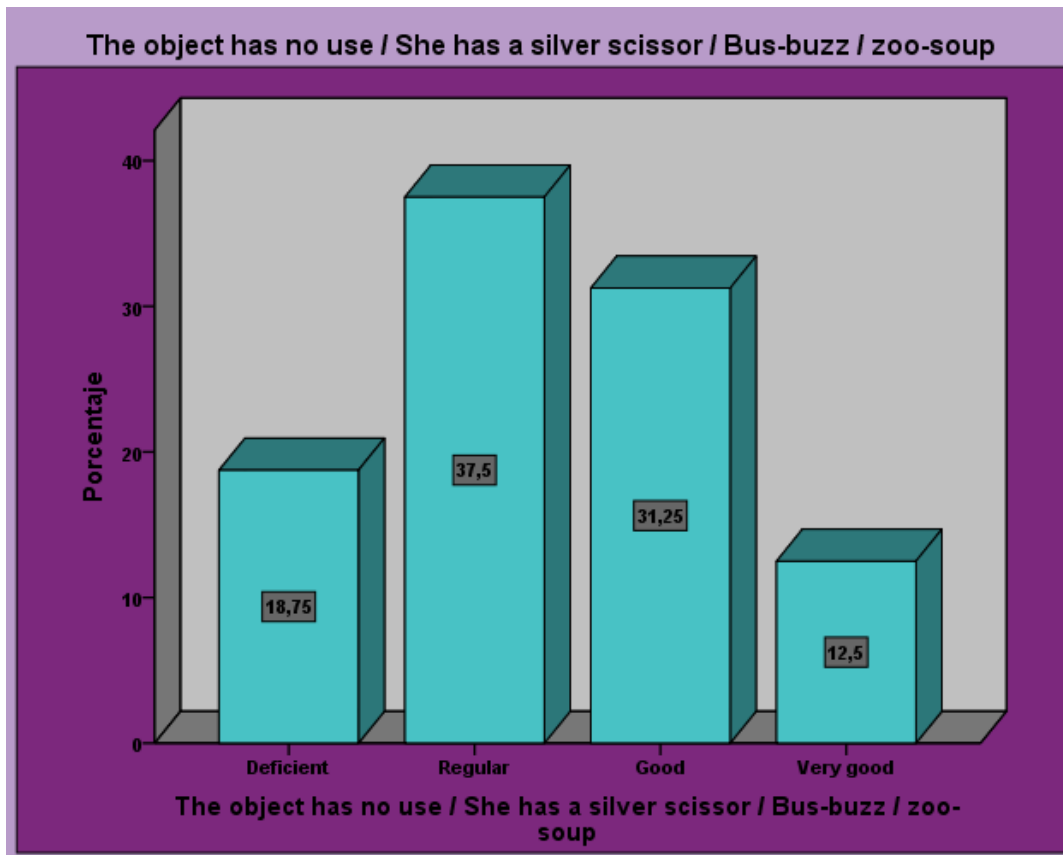
**Table #6**

The table below shows the result of this section of the test.

- Sounds contrast: / S/ and /z/

**6. The object has no use / She has a silver scissor / Bus-buzz / zoo-soup**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
Deficient	3	18,8	18,8	18,8
Regular	6	37,5	37,5	56,3
Valid Good	5	31,3	31,3	87,5
Very good	2	12,5	12,5	100,0
Total	16	100,0	100,0	



In regards of the pronunciation of short and vowel sounds such as: / S/ and /z/. Students were more likely to pronounce both phonemes similarly. In fact, the test used four categories to evaluate students pronunciation (Deficient, Regular, Good, Very good).

- Out of the sixteen students we tested, three of them mispronounced the words completely which represents 18.8% of them.

- Six of them pronounced the words regularly which represents 37.5%.

- Five of them pronounced the words in a good way which represents 31.3%.

- Two of them pronounced the words very good which represents 12.5%.

It seems that the phonemes / S/ and /z/ are indeed problematic for Spanish learners of English since just two students were able to pronounce correctly the sounds. This is in agreement with most L2 pronunciation research (Case, 1998).



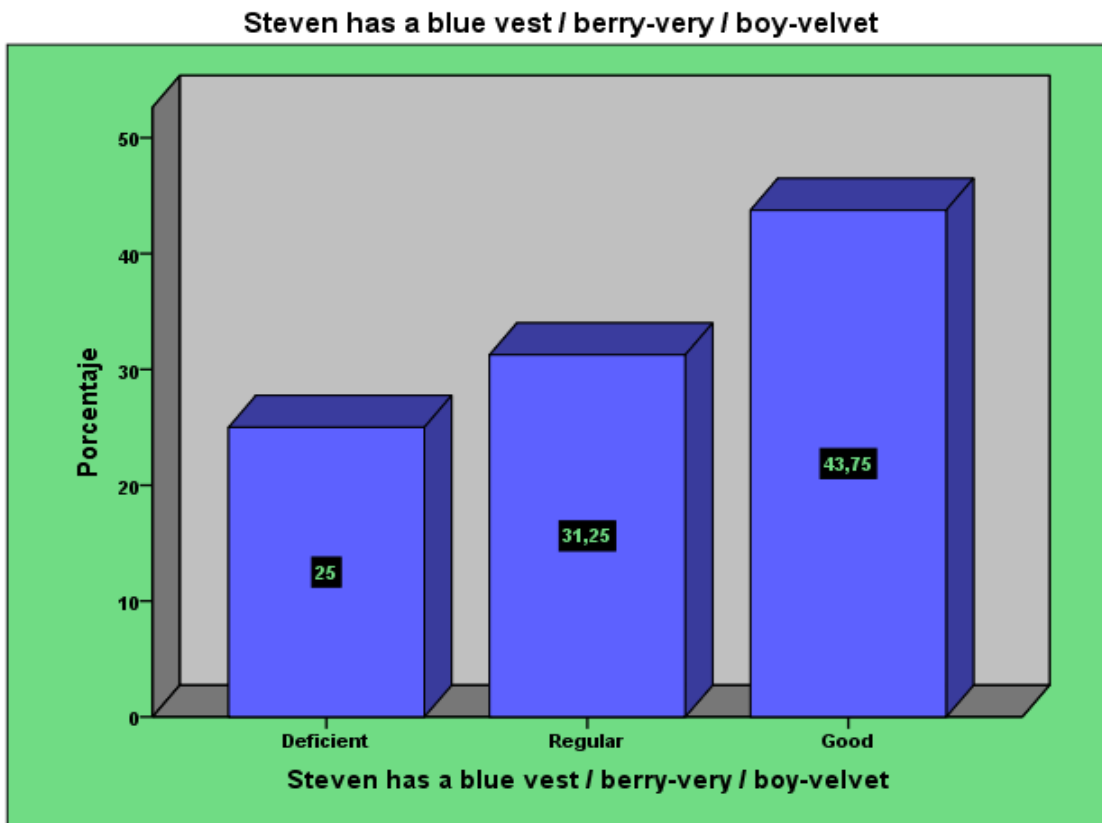
**Table #7**

The table below shows the result of this section of the test.

**Sounds contrast: /v/ & / b/**

**7. Steven has a blue vest / berry-very / boy-velvet**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
Deficient	4	25,0	25,0	25,0
Regular	5	31,3	31,3	56,3
Good	7	43,8	43,8	100,0
Total	16	100,0	100,0	



In the pronunciation of short and vowel sounds such as: /v/ and /b/. Students were more likely to pronounce both phonemes similarly. In fact, the test used four categories to evaluate students pronunciation (Deficient, Regular, Good, Very good).

- Out of the sixteen students we tested, four of them mispronounced the words completely which represents 25% of them.
- Five of them pronounced the words regularly which represents 31.3%.
- Seven of them pronounced the words in a good way which represents 43.8 %.
- None of them pronounced the words very good which represents 0%.

It seems that the phonemes /S/ and /z/ are indeed problematic for Spanish learners of English.

Even though, those sounds exist in Spanish any of them pronounced very good.

This is in agreement with most L2 pronunciation research (Case, 1998).

**Table #8**

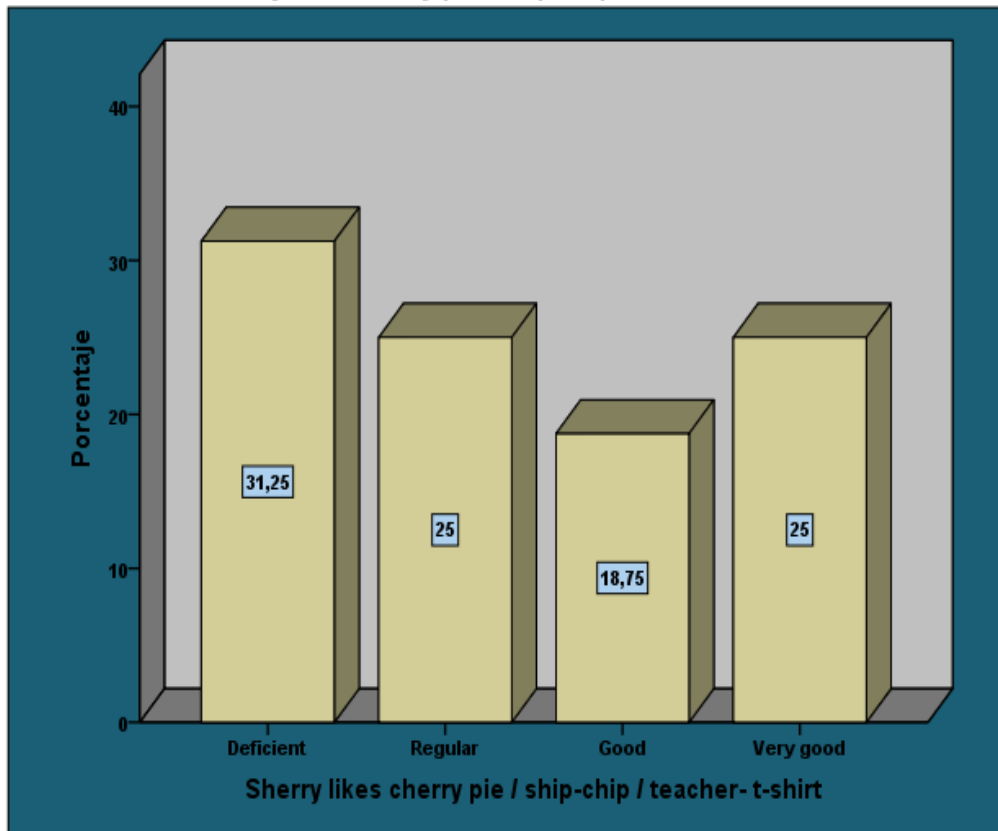
The table below shows the result of this section of the test.

**Sounds contrast: /ʃ/ & /tʃ/**

**Sherry likes cherry pie / ship-chip / teacher- t-shirt**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Accumultaed Percentage
Valid	Deficient	5	31,3	31,3
	Regular	4	25,0	56,3
	Good	3	18,8	75,0
	Very good	4	25,0	100,0
	Total	16	100,0	100,0

**Sherry likes cherry pie / ship-chip / teacher- t-shirt**



In regards of the pronunciation of short and vowel sounds such as: /ʃ/ & /tʃ/ Students were more likely to pronounce both phonemes similarly. In fact, the test used four categories to evaluate students pronunciation (Deficient, Regular, Good, Very good).

- Out of the sixteen students we tested, five of them mispronounced the words completely which represents 31.3% of them.
- Four of them pronounced the words regularly which represents 25%.
- Three of them pronounced the words in a good way which represents 18.8 %.
- Four of them pronounced the words very good which represents 25%.

It seems that the phonemes /ʃ/ and /tʃ/ are not too problematic for Spanish learners of English since most of them were able to pronounced in a good way. This is in disagreement with most L2 pronunciation research (Case, 1998).

**Table #9**

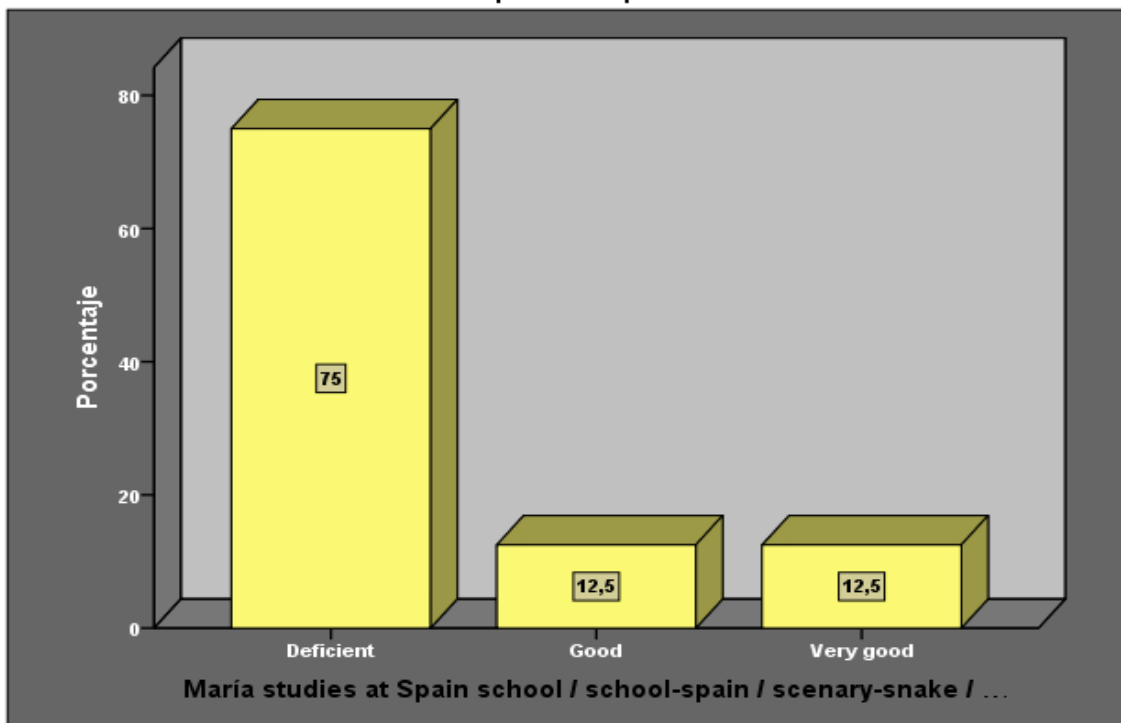
The table below shows the result of this section of the test.

Sound: /S/

**María studies at Spain school / school-Spain / scenary-snake / spring- street-  
script/ description**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
valid	Deficient	12	75,0	75,0
	Good	2	12,5	87,5
	Very good	2	12,5	100,0
	Total	16	100,0	100,0

**María studies at Spain school / school-spain / scenary-snake / spring- street-  
script/ description**



Concerning to the pronunciation of short and vowel sounds such as: /S/ Students were more likely to pronounce both phonemes similarly. In fact, the test used four categories to evaluate students pronunciation (Deficient, Regular, Good, Very good).

- Out of the sixteen students we tested, twelve of them mispronounced the words completely which represents 75% of them.

- None of them pronounced the words regularly which represents 0%.

- Two of them pronounced the words in a good way which represents 12.5%.

- Two of them pronounced the words very good which represents 12.5%.

It seems that the phonemes /s/ are indeed problematic for Spanish learners of English since it is evident that Nicaraguan people pronounce this sounds as Spanish. This is in agreement with most L2 pronunciation research (Case, 1998).

**Table #10**

The table below shows the result of this section of the test.

Sounds contrast: / θ / & /ð/

**10. They think this is a good day / think-they / thanks-mother**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
Deficient	8	50,0	50,0	50,0
Regular	2	12,5	12,5	62,5
Good	2	12,5	12,5	75,0
Very good	4	25,0	25,0	100,0
Total	16	100,0	100,0	



When it comes to the pronunciation of short and vowel sounds such as: / θ / & /ð/. Students were more likely to pronounce both phonemes similarly. In fact, the test used four categories to evaluate students pronunciation (Deficient, Regular, Good, Very good).

- Out of the sixteen students we tested, eight of them mispronounced the words completely which represents 50% of them.
- Two of them pronounced the words regularly which represents 12.5%.
- Two of them pronounced the words in a good way which represents 12.5%.
- Four of them pronounced the words very good which represents 25%.

It seems that the phonemes / θ / & /ð/ are indeed problematic for Spanish learners of English since half of the students mispronounced the sounds. This is in agreement with most L2 pronunciation research (Case, 1998).



**Table #11**

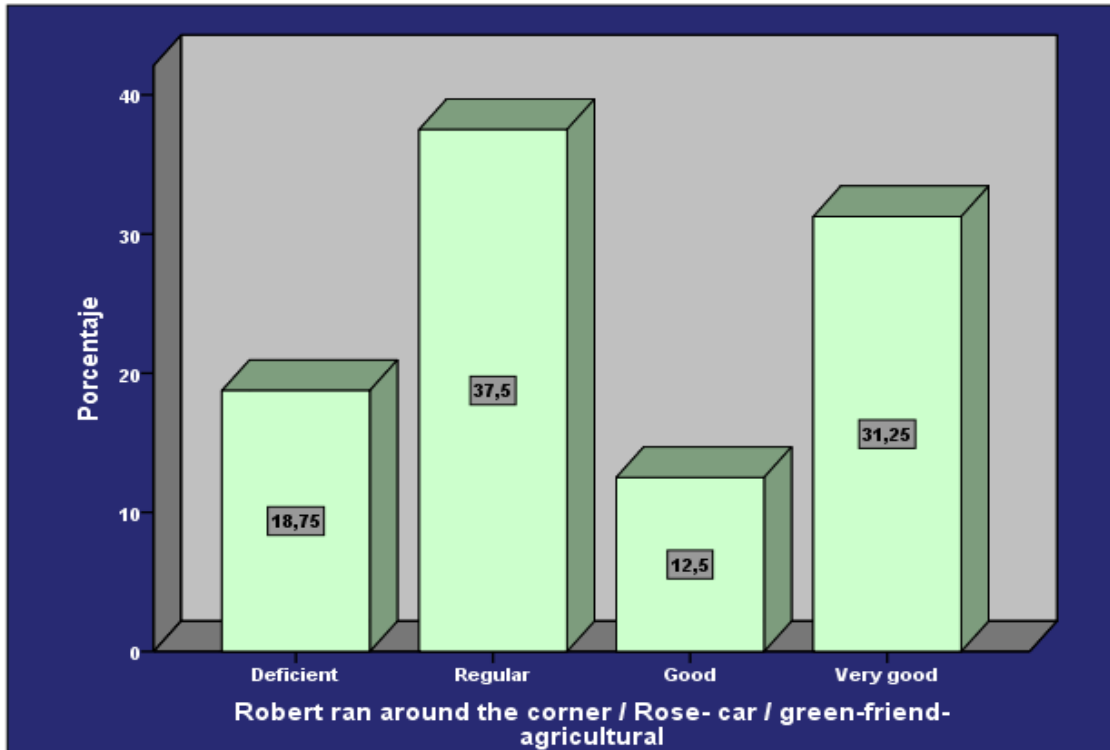
The table below shows the result of this section of the test.

Sounds contrast: /r/

**11. Robert ran around the corner / Rose- car / green-friend-agricultural**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
Valid	Deficient	3	18,8	18,8
	Regular	6	37,5	56,3
	Good	2	12,5	68,8
	Very good	5	31,3	100,0
	Total	16	100,0	100,0

**Robert ran around the corner / Rose- car / green-friend-agricultural**



Referring to the pronunciation of short and vowel sounds such as: / r/. Students were more likely to pronounce both phonemes similarly. In fact, the test used four categories to evaluate students pronunciation (Deficient, Regular, Good, Very good).

- Out of the sixteen students we tested, three of them mispronounced the words completely which represents 18% of them.

- Six of them pronounced the words regularly which represents 37.5%.

- Two of them pronounced the words in a good way which represents 12.5%.

- Five of them pronounced the words very good which represents 31.3%.

It seems that the phonemes / r/ are indeed problematic for Spanish learners of English. It is evident that Nicaraguan people pronounce this sound as Spanish since students were not able to pronounce in a good way. This is in agreement with most L2 pronunciation research (Case, 1998).

**Table #12**

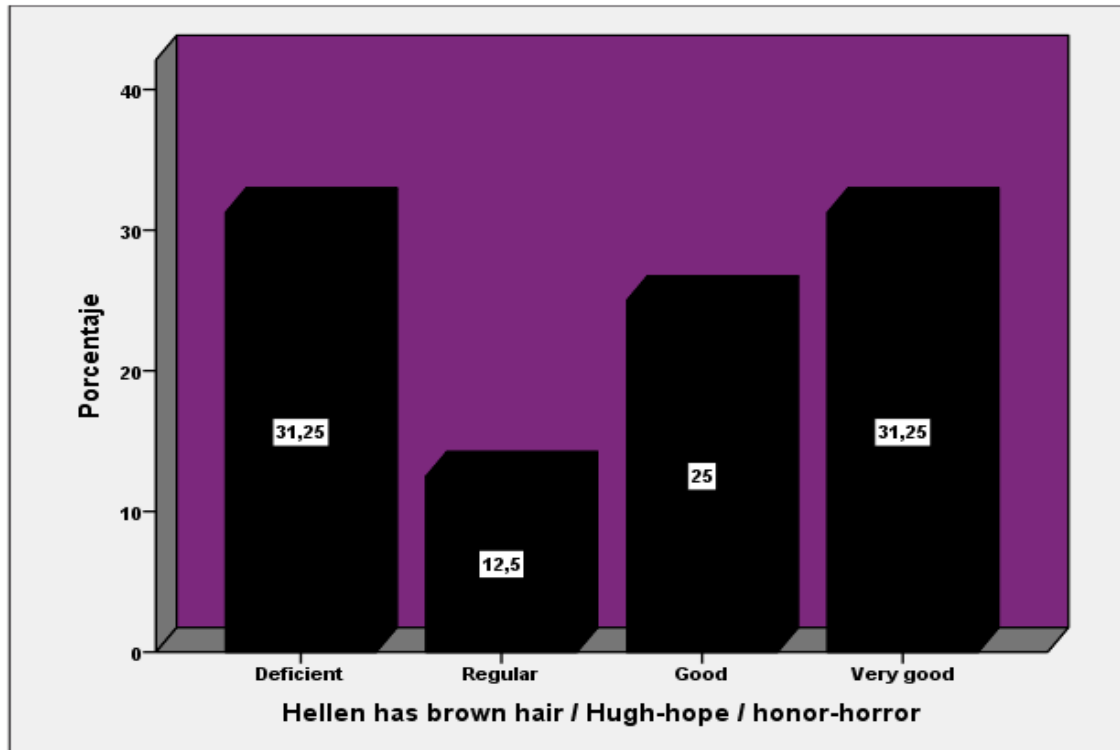
The table below shows the result of this section of the test.

Sounds contrast: /h/

**12. Hellen has brown hair / Hugh-hope / honor-horror**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
Valid	Deficient	5	31,3	31,3
	Regular	2	12,5	43,8
	Good	4	25,0	68,8
	Very good	5	31,3	100,0
	Total	16	100,0	100,0

**Hellen has brown hair / Hugh-hope / honor-horror**



Relating to to the pronunciation of short and vowel sounds such as: /h/. Students were more likely to pronounce both phonemes similarly. In fact, the test used four categories to evaluate students pronunciation (Deficient, Regular, Good, Very good).

- Out of the sixteen students we tested, five of them mispronounced the words completely which represents 31.3% of them.
- Two of them pronounced the words regularly which represents 12.5%.
- Four of them pronounced the words in a good way which represents 25%.
- Five of them pronounced the words very good which represents 31.3%.

It seems that the phonemes / h/ is not that problematic sounds for Spanish learners of English since most of students pronounce it correctly. This is in agreement with most L2 pronunciation research (Case, 1998).

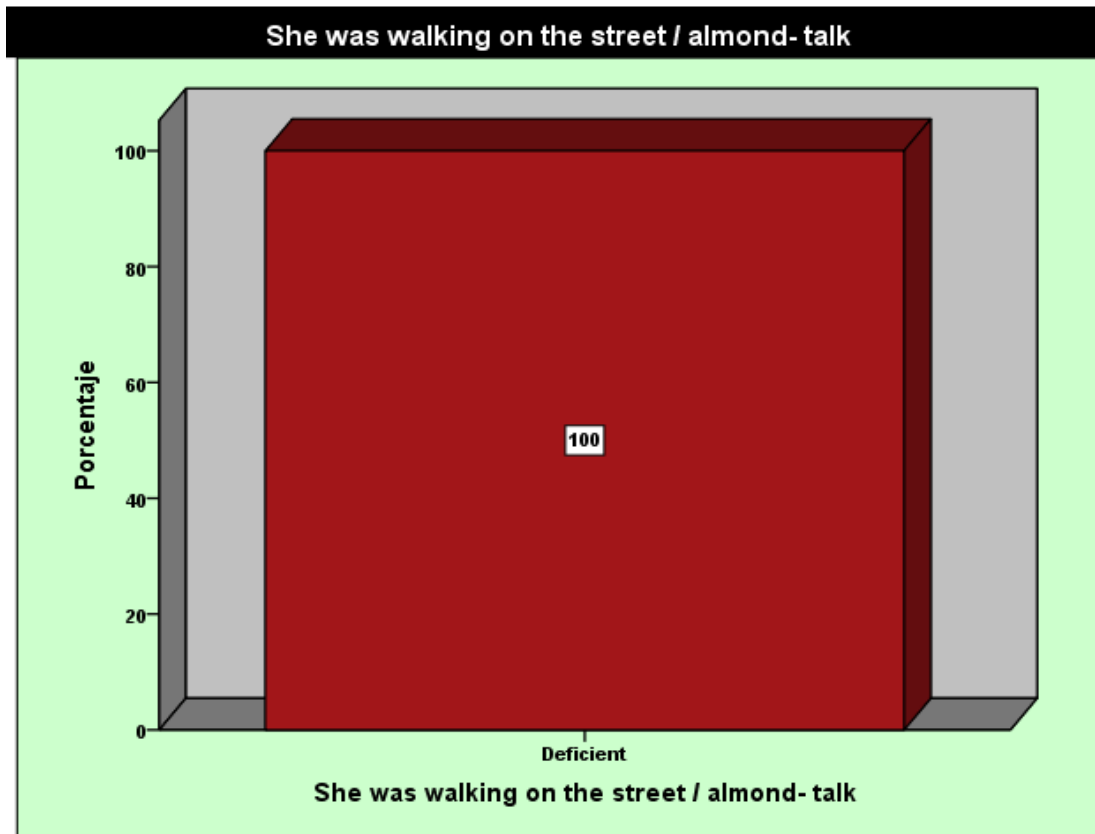
**Table #13**

The table below shows the result of this section of the test.

Silent sound: /L/

**13. She was walking on the street / almond- talk**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
Valid Deficient	16	100,0	100,0	100,0



In relation to the pronunciation of short and vowel sounds such as: /L/. Students were more likely to pronounce both phonemes similarly. In fact, the test used four categories to evaluate students pronunciation (Deficient, Regular, Good, Very good).

- Out of the sixteen students we tested, sixteen of them mispronounced the words completely which represents 100% of them.

It seems that the phonemes / L/ is one of the most problematic silent sounds for Spanish learners of English since Nicaraguan people do not omit the sound /L/ in Spanish. This is in agreement with most L2 pronunciation research (Case, 1998).

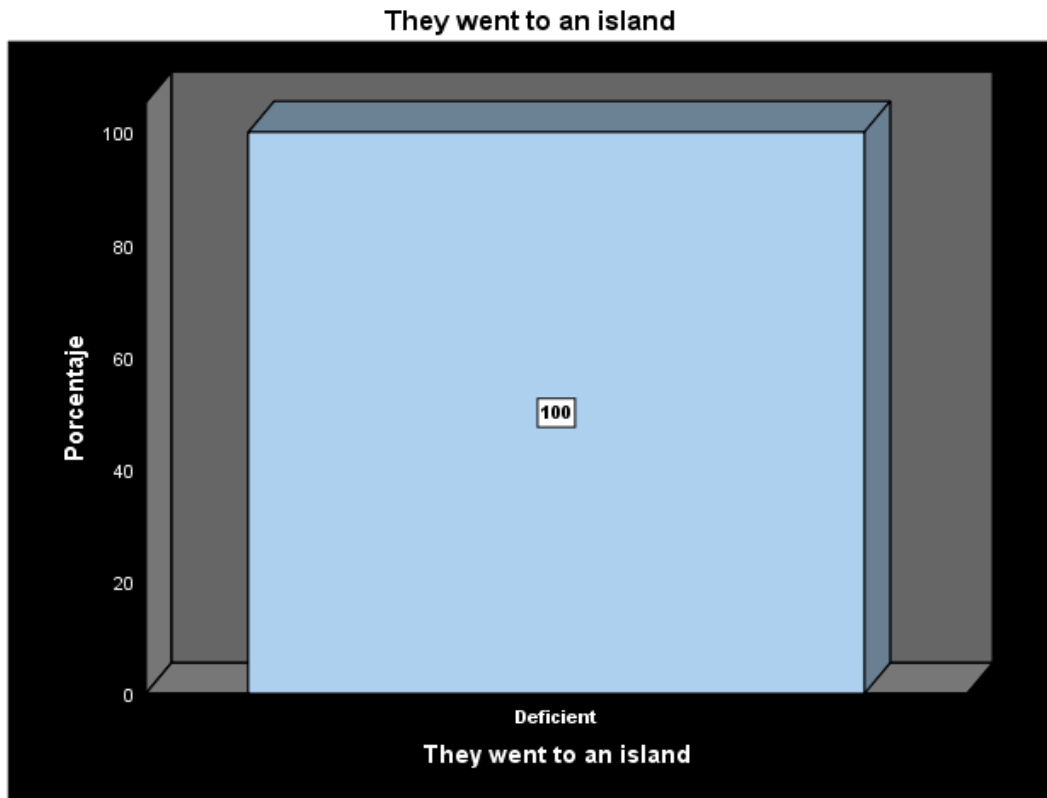
**Table #14**

The table below shows the result of this section of the test.

Silent sounds: /s/

**14. They went to an island**

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Accumulated Percentage
Valid Deficient	16	100,0	100,0	100,0



Concerning to the pronunciation of short and vowel sounds such as: /L/. Students were more likely to pronounce both phonemes similarly. In fact, the test used four categories to evaluate students pronunciation (Deficient, Regular, Good, Very good).

- Out of the sixteen students we tested, sixteen of them mispronounced the words completely which represents 100% of them.

It seems that the phonemes / L/ is one of the most problematic sounds for Spanish learners of English since Nicaraguan people do not omit the sound. This is in agreement with most L2 pronunciation research (Case, 1998).



### **Teacher's interview Analysis**

The teacher was asked to answer the following questions:

**1. What instructional strategies do you use?**

*-Pair work, group work and individual work.*

**2. What strategies or tasks do you use to enhance students' pronunciation?**

*-Oral practices and dialogues.*

**3. What didactic resources do you use to develop speaking skills?**

*-Tablet, data show and book.*

**4. Can you identify when your students mispronounce a word?**

*-Sometimes.*

**5. What are the most common vowel and consonant sounds that students mispronounce?**

*-e and a.*

**6. What do you do to correct pronunciation mistakes?**

*-Repeat again.*

**7. Do you give them feedback about pronunciation immediately or at the end of the class?**

*-Immediately.*

That is what we could get from the teacher. The instructional strategies that teacher uses are pair group and individual work. Also, the strategies she uses to enhance students' pronunciation are oral practice and dialogues, as well she makes use of different didactic resources like tablets, data show and books to develop speaking skills. During the interview she stated that sometimes she is able to identify pronunciation mistakes and that the most common pronunciation mistakes she is able to identify are "e" and "a" sounds. In addition to that she mentioned that the strategy she uses to correct those pronunciation mistakes are repeat again and she provides feedback immediately.

It was seen that the teacher does not know phonetic symbols and she did not give us enough information regarding the words that the students do not pronounce well. The teacher uses one strategy to correct their pronunciation mistakes but that is not enough.

## IV. CONCLUSION

Supported on the information obtained in the analysis ‘result on the pronunciation test and taking into account the objectives of this work it can be concluded the following:

- a) The analysis of the effects of Nicaraguan Spanish phonemes on the acquisition of the English phonemes indicates that there is still no phonetic awareness in students neither in the teacher since they do not have knowledge about phonetic symbols.
- b) Students are not able to distinguish among the sounds when they read, spell or speak that is why they do not have any idea about English phoneme sounds which make them substitute and delete them.
- c) Some students were able to pronounce a lot of words due to the fact that they were studying English before or are currently taking an English course.
- d) When the teacher and students have access to the lab where they have the facility to use computers, tablets and data show, the teacher does not use those technological resources and does not include in the lesson plan activities to make students practice the pronunciation of phoneme sounds.
- e) The only strategy that teacher uses is repetition which is not enough since students need visualization and oral practice of the phonetic symbols.

## V. RECOMMENDATION

After finishing the research the following is recommended:

### **The ministry of Education**

-Should include ten more minutes for the English class so that the teacher can dedicate that time to teach phonetic symbols.

### **English Teacher**

-Must be able to help students understand phonetic symbols.

-Must be able to enhance their students' ability to read by using the following strategies: say-it-and-move-it, sound boxes, word boxes, and beginning-middle-end.

-Should correct her students immediately.

-Should dedicate at least ten minutes of the class to identify the phonetic pronunciation mistakes and the practice them in the right way.

-Should use more technological resources to help students to learn phonetic sounds and practice them.

### **Students**

-Should dedicate time to confirm if the pronunciation of words given for the teacher is the correct one.

-Should use applications to practice pronunciation of words such as; duolingo and Google traductor.

-Should make a list of unknown words and practice their pronunciation.

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**VII. ANNEXES**

**Annexes**



**National Autonomous University of Nicaragua**

**UNAN-Managua**

“Rubén Darío” Campus

Education and Language Faculty

English Department



**Research Topic:**

The effects of Nicaraguan Spanish phonemes on the acquisition of English phonemes.

Validation of Questionnaire on the level of linguistic and teaching competencies of English teacher at Experimental México School.

**Authors:** Urania García

Josseling Jarquín

Irene Castellón

**Expert Judgment**

Dear Judge:

You have been selected to evaluate the Instrument "*Questionnaire to estimate the level of linguistic and teaching competencies of English teacher at Experimental México School*" which is part of the research: "**The effects of Nicaraguan Spanish phonemes on the acquisition of English phonemes**".

The evaluation of the instruments is of great relevance to ensure that they are valid and that the results obtained from them are used efficiently.

We thank you for your valuable collaboration.

**NAMES AND LASTNAMES OF THE JUDGE:**

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**ACADEMIC BACKGROUND:**

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**AREAS OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

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**TIME** \_\_\_\_\_

**EMPLOYMENT**

**STATUS** \_\_\_\_\_

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**INSTITUTION** \_\_\_\_\_

**Research objective:**

To analyze the effects of Nicaraguan Spanish phonemes on the acquisition of English phonemes.

**Objective of expert judgment:**

To validate the contents of the interview.

**Objectives of the interview:**

To estimate the level of linguistic and teaching competencies of English teachers at Experimental México School.

CATEGORY	QUALIFICATION	INDICATOR
<p><b>COHERENCE</b></p> <p>The item is logically related to the dimension or indicator you are measuring.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does not meet the criterion</li> <li>2. Low level</li> <li>3. Moderate level</li> <li>4. High level</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The item has no logical relation to the dimension</li> <li>2. The item has a tangential relationship with the dimension.</li> <li>3. The item has a moderate relationship with the dimension it is measuring.</li> <li>4. The item is completely related to the dimension you are measuring.</li> </ol>
<p><b>CLARITY</b></p> <p>Extent to which the item is written clearly and precisely, making it easier for respondents to understand.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does not meet the criterion</li> <li>2. Low level</li> <li>3. Moderate level</li> <li>4. High level</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Item is not clear</li> <li>2. The item requires quite a few modifications or a very large modification in the use of the words according to their meaning or by their order.</li> <li>3. A very specific modification of some of the terms of the item is required.</li> <li>4. The item is clear, has semantics and adequate syntax.</li> </ol>
<p><b>RELEVANCE</b></p> <p>The importance that the item has with respect to the contribution that it can provide for a better understanding of the characteristic or situation measured.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does not meet the criterion</li> <li>2. Low level</li> <li>3. Moderate level</li> <li>4. High level</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does not meet the criterion.</li> <li>2. The item can be deleted without affecting the dimension measurement.</li> <li>3. The item has some relevance, but another item may be including what it measures.</li> <li>4. The item is essential or important, i.e. it must be included.</li> </ol>
<p><b>SUFFICIENCY</b></p> <p>Items belonging to the same dimension are sufficient to obtain the measurement of this dimension.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Does not meet the criterion</li> <li>2. Low level</li> <li>3. Moderate level</li> <li>4. High level</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The items are not sufficient to measure the dimension</li> <li>2. Items measure some aspect of the dimension but do not correspond to the overall dimension.</li> <li>3. Some items must be increased in order to fully assess the dimension.</li> <li>4. Items are sufficient</li> </ol>

According to the following indicators, rate each of the items as appropriate.

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Ítems</b>	<b>Coherence (from 1 to 4)</b>	<b>Clarity (From 1 to 4)</b>	<b>Relevance (From 1 to 4)</b>	<b>Sufficiency (From 1 to 4)</b>
<b>Teaching competences</b>	Council of Ministers of Education, Canada. 2013.	To set goals and expectations effectively	1. What instructional strategies do you use?				
	Arbain, A. & Nur, D. 2017	To encourage students in learning classroom	2. What strategies or tasks do you use to enhance student's pronunciation?				
	Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences. 2015.	To use didactic resources to develop speaking skills	3. What didactic resources do you use to develop pronunciation?				

RUNNING HEAD: EFFECTS OF SPANISH PHONEMES ON THE ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH PHONEMES <b>Dimension</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Ítems</b>	<b>Coherence</b> (From 1 to 4)	<b>Clarity</b> (From 1 to 4)	<b>Relevance</b> (From 1 to 4)	<b>Sufficiency</b> (From 1 to 4)
<b>pronunciation Competences</b>	Kalaldehy, R. 2016	To identify pronunciation mistakes.	4. Can you identify when your students mispronounce a word?				
	Elkhair, M. 2014	To identify phoneme sounds that are mispronounced.	5. What are the most common vowel and consonant sounds that students mispronounce?				
	Tlazalo & Bazurto 2014	To give correct pronunciation mistakes.	6. What do you do to correct pronunciation mistakes?				
	Gurler, I. 2015.	To improve your student`s pronunciation	7. Do you give them feedback about pronunciation immediately or at the end of the class?				
			<b>Comment/Alternate formulation</b>				



UNIVERSIDAD  
NACIONAL  
AUTÓNOMA DE  
NICARAGUA,  
MANAGUA  
UNAN - MANAGUA

### **Questionnaire for the teacher**

Dear professor Hazell, we ask for your contribution to answer the following questions of this interview in order to obtain information for our final research (Graduation Seminar) of the English major. We guarantee the discretion of your answers. Thank you in advance for your help.

#### **Research objective:**

To analyze the effects of Nicaraguan Spanish phonemes on the acquisition of English phonemes.

#### **Objectives of the interview:**

To estimate the level of linguistic and teaching competencies of English teachers at Experimental México School.

#### **Instructions:**

Listen carefully to the following questions and respond according to your criteria. We ask for your honesty when answering the questions since this will help to obtain reliable information for our research.

1. What instructional strategies do you use?
2. What strategies or tasks do you use to enhance student's pronunciation?
3. What didactic resources do you use to develop speaking skills?
4. Can you identify when your students mispronounce a word?
5. What are the most common vowel and consonant sounds that students mispronounce?

6. What do you do to correct pronunciation mistakes?
  
7. Do you give them feedback about pronunciation immediately or at the end of the class?



**National Autonomous University of Nicaragua**

**UNAN-Managua**

“Rubén Darío” Campus

Education and Language Faculty

English Department

**Research Topic:**

The effects of Nicaraguan Spanish phonemes on the acquisition of English phonemes.

Validation of Questionnaire on the identification of the problems of Nicaraguan Spanish phonemes of students at Experimental Mexico School.

**Authors:** Urania García

Irene Castellón

Josseling Jarquín



### Expert Judgement

Dear Judge:

You have been selected to evaluate the Instrument "*Test to identify the problems of Nicaraguan Spanish phonemes of students at Experimental Mexico School*" which is part of the research: "**The effects of Nicaraguan Spanish phonemes on the acquisition of English phonemes**".

The evaluation of the instruments is of great relevance to ensure that they are valid and that the results obtained from them are used efficiently.

We thank you for your valuable collaboration.

#### **NAMES AND LASTNAMES OF THE JUDGE:**

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#### **ACADEMIC BACKGROUND:**

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#### **AREAS OF PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

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**TIME** \_\_\_\_\_

**EMPLOYMENT**

**STATUS** \_\_\_\_\_

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**INSTITUTION** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Research objective:**

To analyze the effects of Nicaraguan Spanish phonemes on the acquisition of English phonemes.

#### **Objective of expert judgment:**

To validate the contents of the test.

#### **Objectives of the test:**

To identify the problems of Nicaraguan Spanish phonemes of students at Experimental México School.

CATEGORY	QUALIFICATION	INDICATOR
<p><b>COHERENCE</b> The item is logically related to the dimension or indicator you are measuring.</p>	<p>1. Does not meet the criterion 2. Low level 3. Moderate level 4. High level</p>	<p>13. The item has no logical relation to the dimension 14. The item has a tangential relationship with the dimension. 15. The item has a moderate relationship with the dimension it is measuring. 16. The item is completely related to the dimension you are measuring.</p>
<p><b>CLARITY</b> Extent to which the item is written clearly and precisely, making it easier for respondents to understand.</p>	<p>1. Does not meet the criterion 2. Low level 3. Moderate level 4. High level</p>	<p>9. Item is not clear 10. The item requires quite a few modifications or a very large modification in the use of the words according to their meaning or by their order. 11. A very specific modification of some of the terms of the item is required. 12. The item is clear, has semantics and adequate syntax.</p>
<p><b>RELEVANCE</b> The importance that the item has with respect to the contribution that it can provide for a better understanding of the characteristic or situation measured.</p>	<p>1. Does not meet the criterion 2. Low level 3. Moderate level 4. High level</p>	<p>9. Does not meet the criterion. 10. The item can be deleted without affecting the dimension measurement. 11. The item has some relevance, but another item may be including what it measures. 12. 4. The item is essential or important, i.e. it must be included.</p>
<p><b>SUFFICIENCY</b> Items belonging to the same dimension are sufficient to obtain the measurement of this dimension.</p>	<p>1. Does not meet the criterion 2. Low level 3. Moderate level 4. High level</p>	<p>5. The items are not sufficient to measure the dimension 6. I tems measure some aspect of the dimension but do not correspond to the overall dimension. 17. 3. Some items must be increased in order to fully assess the dimension. 18. 4. Items are sufficient</p>

According to the following indicators, rate each of the items as appropriate.

Di Mension	Resources	Description	Ítems	Coherence (from 1 to 4)	Clarity (from 1 to 4)	Relevance (from 1 to 4)	Sufficiency (from 1 to 4)
Short and Long vowels	Dale,P & Poms,L.(2005). English Pronunciation Made Simple: <i>Longman</i>	To identify if students can pronounce long /I/and short /i/	(1) Please sit in the seat  Feet- fit				
		To identify if students can pronounce long /u/ and short /u/	(2) The fool was full of fun  Luke- look				
		To identify if students make the difference between / ə/ and /oʊ/	(3) Mary bought a boat  Note- dog				
		To identify if students make the difference between / a/ and /ʌ /	(4) The color of the collar is White. Luck- lock				
		<b>Comment/Alternate formulation</b>					

<b>Dimension</b> <small>RUNNING HEAD: EFFECTS OF SPANISH PHONEMES ON THE ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH PHONEMES</small>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>items</b>	<b>Coherence</b> <small>(from 1 to 4)</small>	<b>Clarity</b> <small>(from 1 to 4)</small>	<b>Relevance</b> <small>from 1 to 4)</small>	<b>Sufficiency</b> <small>(from 1 to 4)</small>
<b>Consonants</b>	Dale,P & Poms,L.(2005). English Pronunciation Made Simple: <i>Longman</i>	To identify if students are able to pronounce the phoneme /m/	(1) I sometimes stay in my room. (2) My name is Kim. Kim- room				
		To identify if students make the difference between / S/ and /z/	(3) The object has no use. (4) She has a silver scissors. Bus- buzz zoo-soup				
		To identify if students make the difference between / v/ and /b/	(5) Steven has a blue vest. Berry-vey Boy-very				
		To identify if students make the difference between / ʃ / and /tʃ/	(6) Sherry likes cherry pie. Ship- chip teacher- t-shirt				
		To identify if students are able to pronounce the phoneme /s/	(7) María studies at Spain School. School- spain scenary-snake spring- street-script- description				

		To identify if students make the difference between / θ / and /ð/	(8) They think this is a good day. Think- they Thanks- mother				
		To identify if students are able to pronounce the phoneme /r/	(9) Robert ran around the corner. Rose- car green- friend-agricultural				
		To identify if students are able to pronounce the phoneme /h/	10) Hellen has brown hair. Hugh- hope honor- horror				
		To identify if students are able to omit silent sounds /l/	11) She was walking on the street. almond-talk				
		To identify if students are able to omit silent sounds /s/	12) They went to an island. Island-isle				
			<b>Comment/Alternate formulation</b>				



### Students Instrument Rubric

#### Research objective:

To analyze the effects of Nicaraguan Spanish phonemes on the acquisition of English phonemes.

#### Objective of the rubric:

To measure qualitatively the results of the students instrument.

#### Patterns to measure:

*Deficient: 1    regular: 2    Good: 3    Very good: 4*

#### Vowels sounds

**1) Please sit in the seat / feet- fit**

- a. Very good
- b. Good
- c. Regular
- d. Deficient

**2) The fool was full of fun / Luke- look**

- a. Very good
- b. Good
- c. Regular
- d. Deficient

**3) Mary bought a boat / Note- dog**

- a. Very good
- b. Good
- c. Regular
- d. Deficient

**4) The color of the collar is White / Luck- lock**

- a. Very good
- b. Good

- c. Regular
- d. Deficient

**Consonant sounds**

**5) I sometimes stay in my room / My name is Kim / Kim- room**

- a. Very good
- b. Good
- c. Regular
- d. Deficient

**6) The object has no use / She has a silver scissors / Bus- buzz / zoo-soup**

- a. Very good
- b. Good
- c. Regular
- d. Deficient

**7) Steven has a blue vest / Berry-vey / Boy-very**

- a. Very good
- b. Good
- c. Regular
- d. Deficient

**8) Sherry likes cherry pie / Ship- chip / teacher- t-shirt**

- a. Very good
- b. Good
- c. Regular
- d. Deficient

**9) María studies at Spain School / School- Spain / scenary-snake / spring- street-script / description**

- a. Very good
- b. Good
- c. Regular
- d. Deficient

**10) They think this is a good day / Think- they / Thanks- mother**

- a. Very good

- b. Good
- c. Regular
- d. Deficient

**11) Robert ran around the corner / Rose- car / green- friend-agricultural**

- a. Very good
- b. Good
- c. Regular
- d. Deficient

**12) Hellen has brown hair / Hugh- hope / honor- horror**

- a. Very good
- b. Good
- c. Regular
- d. Deficient

**13) She was walking on the street / almond-talk**

- a. Very good
- b. Good
- e. Regular
- f. Deficient

**14) They went to an island / Island-isle**

- a. Very good
- b. Good
- g. Regular
- h. Deficient



**Read aloud the following sentences and pair words:**

Listen to the following example:

**It eats meat. It/eat**

17. Please sit in the seat	Feet- fit
18. The fool was full of fun.	Luke- look
19. Mary bought a boat.	Note- dog
20. The color of the collar is White.	Luck- lock
21. I sometimes stay in my room 22. My name is Kim.	Kim- room
23. The object has no use. 24. She has a silver scissors.	Bus- buzz zoo-soup
25. Steven has a blue vest.	Berry-vey Boy-very
26. Sherry likes cherry pie.	Ship- chip teacher- t-shirt
27. María studies at Spain School.	School- Spain scenary-snake spring- street-script-description
28. They think this is a good day.	Think- they Thanks- mother
29. Robert ran around the corner.	Rose- car green- friend-agricultural
30. Hellen has brown hair.	Hugh- hope honor- horror
31. She was walking on the street	almond-talk
32. They went to an island	Island-isle

Auditorium and field of the Experimental México Institute



RUNNING HEAD: EFFECTS OF SPANISH PHONEMES ON THE ACQUISITION OF ENGLISH PHONEMES

Main gate and classrooms of the Experimental México Institute

