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**Research Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for
Bachelor of Arts Degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

Methodological Strategies to improve pronunciation in the English Learning process as a Foreign Language with ninth grade students at High School Pedro Orozco in Terrabona, during the second semester 2014.

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DEDICATION

God is the most important because he gives us force, knowledge and wisdom which are necessary to carry out all activities in this research project.

To our families who have been our constant source of inspiration. They are our advisors; they have been there in all the moments of our life. Without their love and support this project would not have been possible.

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CHARACTERIZATION OF THE PROBLEM

Research Line: Social

General Problem: Teaching English pronunciation

Problem: The methodological strategies used to learn Pronunciation

Delimited theme: Methodological Strategies to improve pronunciation in the English Learning process as a Foreign Language with ninth grade students at High School Pedro Orozco in Terrabona, during the second semester 2014.

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INTRODUCTION

Learning the English language has become a clear necessity in recent years (Harmer, 2007). This is a fact also in countries like Nicaragua, where the Ministry of Education (MINED) has highlighted several times that students at the secondary level need to acquire English skills, especially when it comes to communication. Due to the need stated by students, it was decided to carry out this research focusing on *pronunciation* as a sub- skill of the *speaking skill*.

This research was developed with ninth grade students at Pedro Orozco High School in Terrabona, during the second semester 2014. According to information collected by Ernestina (2004)¹, “the ways the students process the information determine in big measurement what they learn and keep in their mind”. According to what Ernestina explains, teachers should develop their lessons using a variety of materials which motivate the students to learn more English. Since the English learning process² requires much effort and dedication both from students and teachers, students find themselves in the need of activities that facilitate communication inside and outside the classroom. Therefore, this research is of great importance.

Many students are afraid to study English because learning a new language is not an easy task (Harmer, 2007). The difficulties are many and regarding pronunciation, many of them are afraid to pronounce incorrectly. This is another key point in this research: the need of helping English learners pronounce better and feel more confident when they speak.

¹ Learning Psychology

² Henceforth ELP

ABSTRACT

The title of this study is *Methodological Strategies to Improve Pronunciation in the English Learning process as a Foreign Language with Ninth Grade Students at Pedro Orozco High School in Terrabona, during the Second Semester 2014*. As the title, this research aims at validating strategies to help English learners pronounce better and feel more confident, as noted in the Introduction section.

For purposes of the main objective, five specific objectives were established: To identify difficulties in ELP, to elaborate a didactic plan, apply, evaluate and propose some methodological strategies to achieve the general objective which way to validate some methodological strategies to teach pronunciation at students of ninth grade at Pedro Orozco High School in Terrabona.

The universe selected was 146 students who attended Pedro Orozco High School in Terrabona, where the population consisted of 29 students, and the sample chosen was 15 students who corresponded to the 50% of students.

In order to collect relevant data, three instruments were designed: A survey, an interview and an observation guide. These instruments were designed in order to get information about the validity of the strategies selected and the impact they have on the improvement of the students' pronunciation.

The mains results show that the strategies validated actually helped ninth grade students at Terrabona High School improve their pronunciation, and they are helpful pedagogical tools to help students develop communicative skills in the English language.

III- OBJECTIVES

3.1 General Objective

- ❖ To validate the most appropriate methodological strategies to help ninth grade students at Pedro Orozco High School in Terrabona to improve their pronunciation.

3.2 Specific Objectives

- To identify the causes of the difficulties in English Learning Pronunciation (ELP), especially when it deals with pronunciation.
- To design a didactic plan using appropriate strategies to facilitate the improvement of students' pronunciation, deriving from the diagnostic previously made.
- To apply the methodological strategies in the classroom in order to help the students to improve their pronunciation.
- To evaluate the influence of the methodological strategies applied in the classroom.
- To propose alternative solutions to improve the pronunciation of English High School learners.

I- Theoretical Framework

1.1 The English Learning process in Nicaragua

Before addressing about methodological strategies that can help students improve their English pronunciation, it is pertinent refers to some general difficulties that students face. Those which interrupt the development of the ELP. For several reasons, English Foreign Learning instruction often does not accomplish its objectives and leaves students with a low level of knowledge of English (Mayorga, 2006). A major issue teachers deal with is helping English learners develop communicative skills and pronounce in an acceptable level. This issue is faced also by teachers at Terrabona High School, where students find it challenging to pronounce in English correctly.

According to Nunan (1999), it is widely believed that starting the study of English as a foreign language before 12 or 13 years old-will build more proficient speakers of English. The reality in Nicaragua is that most of high schools students cannot speak English, even though tenth or eleventh grade students are taken into consideration. The situation might be different in schools where students start to learn English when they are eight or nine years old. In such a case, they would know some basic contents such us: greetings, subject pronouns, the English alphabet, cardinal numbers from one to hundred, etc. This knowledge could give them a basis before they continue learning English at a secondary level. Some of the main difficulties Nicaraguan High School students' faces are described in the following paragraphs.

1.1.1- Lack of learning means: One of the factors that helps develop the learning in an appropriate way is the use of the didactic material by the teacher (Harmer, 2007). In many Nicaraguan High schools, educators only have a textbook. As stated before, it is generally known that learners learn better when they are exposed to a variety of teaching means. Among those learning means, a television set can be mentioned. It is useful to present important videos related to the topics students are going to learn about, a tape recording to do different listening exercises, etc. Such learnings mean motivate students to learn the English language, since they find their classes creative and fun.

1.1.2- Learners lack of dedication to study: In some cases, students do not dedicate enough time to study of the English language. This makes it difficult for them to remember important information and follow a sequence in the ELP.

1.1.3- Students' misbehavior: In many Nicaraguan schools, it is common to find around 40 to 60 students inside the classrooms. In some schools, there are even more attending to the same class. This could result in misbehavior and this problem could difficult the ELP.

1.2- PRONUNCIATION

According to Hewings (2001), pronunciation is the sound of the language, or phonology; stress and rhythm; and intonation and includes the role of individual sounds and segmental and suprasegmental sounds. Pronunciation is an integrated and integral part of foreign language learning since it directly affects learners' communicative competence as well as performance to a substantial extent (In Mayorga, 2006). If students know how to pronounce words in the English language, they can communicate with others even if they do not know how to write them. However, English pronunciation is difficult because there are some sounds that sound alike but if they know the phonology and phonetics can identify each word and they be able to learn the pronunciation correctly.

Wong (1987) points out that even when the non-native speakers' vocabulary and grammar are excellent, if their pronunciation falls, they are unable to communicate efficiently. Pronunciation is not an optional extra for the language learner, any more than grammar, vocabulary or any other aspect of language is, because the most common way to communicate with others is by speaking. For this reason, pronunciation is considered as a very important aspect in the development of students' ELP.

1.3- Why is pronunciation important?

The way people speak immediately conveys something about themselves to the people around them. Learners with correct pronunciation in English are more likely to be understood even if they make mistakes in other areas, whereas learners whose pronunciation is difficult to understand will not be understood, even if their grammar is perfect (Morley 1994; Fraser 2000). People are commonly judged by the way they speak, and so learners with poor pronunciation may be judged as incompetent, uneducated or lacking in knowledge, even though listeners are only reacting to their pronunciation. Yet many adult learners find pronunciation one of the most difficult aspects of English to acquire, and need explicit help from the teacher (Willing 1989). Pronouncing correctly is then a necessity for English learners since this sub- skill is necessary for communication.

1.4- The Areas of English Pronunciation

A broad definition of pronunciation includes both suprasegmental and segmental features. Segmental (e.g.; English consonant and vowel sounds) and suprasegmental (E.g. stress, linking, weak forms, intonation) (Rajadurai, 2001, 25). Parker (2000, p. 25) adds rhythm, reduction, and deletion are included as supra segmental features. Harmer (2002, p. 183) claims that over teaching of suprasegmental areas particularly gives improved comprehension and intelligibly.

Wahba (1998: 32-33) supports this statement by claiming that if learners are aware that there is a stress pattern in English words, and the pitch of the voice can convey the meaning. Both of segmental and suprasegmentals areas of teaching give significant effect in affecting students' pronunciation.

1.4.1- The segmental embodies vowel and consonant sounds, preferably phonemes, as well as syllables. A phoneme is a set of similar sounds showing meaning differences or differentiating between words and a syllable consists of a vowel as a compulsory element and one or more consonants at the onset and/or in the termination as optional elements, which is pronounced with a single contraction of the lungs. The English language has twenty vowel phonemes (twelve monophthongs and eight diphthongs) and twenty four consonant phonemes. While the vowels are articulated without any obstacle in the vocal tract, the consonants are produced with some blockage of the air passage. The treatment of the segmental basically includes sound contrast in words, pronunciation of vowel and consonant phonemes. The phonemes which are not available in the learner's mother tongue and problematic to him/her should receive special treatment in the teaching material and methodology and sufficient room in the learner's practice.

1.4.2- The suprasegmentals are comprised of stress in words and connected speech, rhythm, pitch, loudness, length, quality, tone and intonation that play an essential and natural role in English speech production and perception. As the Bengali speaking learner's mother tongue is syllable timed whereas English is stress timed, he/she inevitably finds mastering EFL pronunciation a very daunting task (Bell, 1996). Hence, the differences in suprasegmentals between the learner's mother tongue and the target language are momentous topics that he/she should not only be aware of but should make a conscious effort to study and focus on (Thompson & Gaddes, 2005).

1.5- GOALS OF PRONUNCIATION LEARNING

Pronunciation is an important element of effective communication, and it is linked to other oral skills. According to Michaud and Reed (2008), pronunciation instruction can lead to improvement in writing by making students more aware of errors that occur in both speaking and writing, like missing word endings.

Pronunciation goals are intelligibility, confidence in speaking and a reduction of accent features that distract the listeners' attention from intelligibility messages (Morley 1990, Gilbert 1980, Celce- Murcia 1996). These goals can help a person understand the meaning of someone who is talking, even when someone cannot pronounce the same stress.

1.5.1- Intelligibility refers to the degree to which a listener can recognize words, phrases, and utterances (Smith and Nelson 1985; Derwing and Munro, 1997). If students are able to understand the meaning of the conversation, then the communication is likely to be effective.

Intelligibility is uncontroversial: Without intelligibility, communication is impossible. There are two types of errors, grammatical errors (Omitting the past tense in a sentence e.g. Last night I go to a movie) and word choice (the choice of an inappropriate word to express something e.g. embarrassed avergonzado, pregnant embarazada) (Gass & Selinker, 2001, p. 266). This two type of errors are very common in the conversation but this not affect the communication, the intelligibility can be effective because the listener can understand what has been said even when they do not the meaning of the all conversation.

1.5.2- Confidence in speaking: Cummings and Dunham (1989) defined it as the degree to which an individual believes him/ herself to be capable, significant, and worth. Coopersmith (1981) added that it is, a set of attitudes, judgments that a person brings with him or herself when facing the world. It includes beliefs as to whether he or she can expect success or failure (as cited in Harris, 2009, p.9). In general, it refers to attitudes and beliefs towards the self. General self-confidence is developed during the age of childhood and emerges from the accumulation of inter and intrapersonal experiences (Harris, 2009; Brown, 1994). Learning a Language is a process, during the time that we are acquiring knowledge we can develop the ability to speak with confidence.

1.5.3- Accent: The term *accent* refers to differences between native and nonnative pronunciations that are noticed by native listeners (Derwing, Munro & Wiebe 1998, p. 396). The degree of accent is associated with segmental, suprasegmental, and voice quality³ features.

Although accented pronunciations do not necessarily interfere with intelligibility, distracting, stigmatized, or stereotyped pronunciations should be addressed by pronunciation teachers. Even fully intelligible pronunciations can be evaluated negatively by native speakers because of accent (Pennington, 1998; Levis 2005, Riney et al.2000). For example the substitution of /d/ for / ð/ in the word them (e .g. Bring dem here), while understandable, is stigmatized (for native English listeners) because it is a dialect feature of nonstandard English. The substitution of /z/ for /ð/ in them e.g., Bring zem here, on the other hand, simply marks the speaker as nonnative.

³ As with Intelligibility assessment when evaluating accent, nonnative listeners may react to features of pronunciation that native listeners do not (Riney et al 2005).

1.6- Classroom Techniques Activities

Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994) suggest that there are certain aspects of the English pronunciation which appear to be easily taught; namely, phonemes, stress while others, such as intonation, are extremely dependent on individual circumstances and thus practically impossible to separate out for direct teaching.

Nine techniques and activities can be useful for learners and teachers (e.g. Morley, 1991; Scarcella & Oxford, 1994; Fraser, 1999; Thompson, Taylor & Gray, 2001).

1.6.1 Utilization of known sounds: In the early stage of learning, the learner, especially the young one can be helped to compare the sounds of the target language with those of his/her mother tongue. This eventually helps the learner produce the EFL sound pattern to a considerable extent.

1.6.2 Explanation: Explanation of how to produce sounds or use pronunciation patterns appropriately should be kept to a minimum through directions about what to do with the vocal organs can help some young and adult EFL learners in some circumstances.

1.6.3 Communication activities: The teacher can design communicative tasks, such as dialogues or mini-conversations for both young and adult EFL learners according to their linguistic level to practice particular sounds, especially those which are not available in their mother tongue.

1.6.4 Written versions of oral presentations: At the more advanced levels, learners can be given strategies for analyzing the written versions of their oral presentations. This helps them detect, identify and correct errors or mistakes committed in their oral presentations.

1.6.5 Modeling and individual correction: In this technique, the teacher reports the results of analyses of learner speech sample individually.

The students' learner gets feedback from the analyses and stop repeating previous errors or mistakes.

1.6.6 Incorporation of novel elements: The instructor can add novel pronunciation elements, such as sounds, stress placement, tones to the old ones with the use of directions. This helps the learner get his/her EFL pronunciation further improved.

1.6.7 Tutorial sessions and self-study: Tutorial sessions commence with a diagnostic analysis of each learner's spoken English, and an individualized programmed is designed for each learner. This technique can be used for every learner.

1.6.8 Self-monitoring and self-correction: Self-monitoring is the conscious action of listening to one's own speech in order to find out errors and mistakes. This action is followed by self-correction standing for the process of fixing one's errors and mistakes after they have occurred by repeating the word or phrase correctly.

1.6.9 Computer-assisted language learning: Computer-assisted language learning or CALL can be an important tool when attempting to help the learner become more autonomous by allowing him/her to hear his/her own errors and mistakes. CALL benefits the learner by letting him/her study at his/her own pace in a semi-private environment as well as allowing him/her to build profiles that enable the teacher to monitor the learner's improvement in EFL pronunciation.

Finally with these nine classroom techniques activities the teacher can correct the learner's errors and mistakes, supplies information, gives models, offers cues, suggestions and constructive feedback about the performance, sets high standards, provides a wide variety of practice opportunities.

1.7- Methodological Techniques

Among the methodological techniques that can help English learners improve their pronunciation, some are listed as follows:

1.7.1 Reading aloud: The learner can be given a piece of spoken text to read out loudly. Here the teacher's job is to identify pronunciation the errors and mistakes made by the learner, and then give feedback that will help the learner improve his/her EFL pronunciation.

1.7.2 Isolation: When working on a specific sound, it may help students to isolate that particular sound from any others. Instead of presenting a certain sound as part of a complete word in English, we can simply pronounce the sound itself repeatedly. When this is done, students can say it along with the teacher repeatedly, focusing on the small nuances in the correct pronunciation and also engraining the sound pattern into their minds.

1.7.3 Minimal Pairs: This is a great way to focus pronunciation on just one sound. A minimal pair is two words that vary in only one sound. For example, *rat* and *rate* are minimal pairs because only the vowel sound differs between the two words.

Additional minimal pairs are *pin* and *pen*, *dim* and *dime*, and *bat* and *pat*. We can use minimal pairs to help our students with their pronunciation by focusing on one particular sound. In addition to the pronunciation benefits, our students will also expand their vocabularies when we teach minimal pairs.

1.7.4 Record and Replay: At times, students may think they are using correct pronunciation when in fact they are saying something quite different. By using a device to record what students are actually saying, some empirical data is collected in order to play back for each person.

Comparing a recording of a native speaker against his recording of the student could be helpful also. In this way, students will have a more objective understanding of their true pronunciation and be able to take steps to correct it.

1.7.5 Use a mirror: Giving students a chance to view their own physical movements while they are working on their pronunciation can be of great value. Students can always be encouraged to look at our mouth and face as we pronounce certain sounds, but they will also benefit from seeing what movements *they* are making as they speak. Sometimes, becoming aware of the physical movements involved in pronunciation are all your students will need to correct pronunciation issues of which they are unaware.

1.7.6 Phonetics: When students are facing a pronunciation challenge, it could be that spelling is adding to the mystery of the spoken word. Instead of spelling new vocabulary out on the white board, try using phonetic symbols to represent the sounds (rather than the alphabet to represent the spelling). If we were to use phonetic symbols, the word seat would be written /si:t/ and eat would be written /i:t/. We can find a list of the phonetic symbols on several websites or in introductory linguistics books. Once we teach students the International Phonetic Alphabet, symbols can be used any time we introduce new vocabulary to our students.

1.7.7 Sing: Surprisingly enough, singing can be a good way for English language students to practice their vowel pronunciation. Because singing requires a person to maintain vowel sounds over more than just a moment, it can give students a chance to focus in on the target sound and adjust what sound they are making.

1.7.8 Tongue twisters: Even though tongue twisters are probably more popular for practicing consonant pronunciation, they are still a valuable resource for vowel practice. Not only are they a challenge to our students' pronunciation abilities, they add an element of fun to the classroom that can help students relax and therefore free them to be more daring in their attempts at English.

Whether conversation or grammar is being taught, pronunciation will always come into play in any English language class. By using various methods to aid students, their pronunciation will be more accurate and their attitudes will be more positive.

1.8- Four Techniques that were used in the second semester:

1.8.1 Tongue Twisters; This strategy achieve that the students have a funny time in pronunciation because they need to be fast but they can say a wrong word because in the tongue twister the words sound alike.

Example of tongue twister; the worse word in the world is war.

1.8.2- Minimal Pairs; in this case the students pronounce some words that have a particular sound. E.g.; bat, pat.

1.8.3- Isolation; in this strategy the students learn to differentiate a specific sound from any others.

1.8.4- Reading aloud: The learner can be given a piece of spoken text to read out loudly. Here the teacher's job is to identify pronunciation the errors and mistakes made by the learner, and then give feedback that will help the learner improve his/her EFL pronunciation.

II- METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

This research has a social background. It is qualitative because the ninth grade students at Pedro Orozco High School gave their opinions, thoughts and ideas about the strategies implemented to improve their pronunciation. The data collection instrument will be described and the methods of data analysis will be explained.

2.1- Scope of the Study

- **Universe:** 146 students who attended every day sessions of classes at Pedro Orozco high school of Terrabona.
- **Population:** 29 who corresponded to the total amount of ninth grade students
- **Sample:** For this purpose of this research, we took a sample of 15 students who represent the 50% of the population.
- **Type of Research:** The type of research used was Participatory Action Research.



- **Instruments:** some qualitative techniques were used such as: surveys, interview and observation guide.

For this study an in- depth interview to the teacher and a survey of closed answer to the students were administered. Moreover, class observation was carried out also to observe the students' ELP, especially when implementing the strategies to improve pronunciation.

- **Observation guide:** Observation gets a sense of the learning process. This instrument was applied to observe the strategies used by the teacher to motivate students in order to improve English pronunciation in class.
- **Interview:** This is a method to explore the views, experiences, belief and /or motivations of specific matters. This instrument was applied to the teacher for obtain information about his opinions and strategies that he has implemented in his process as a teacher.
- **Survey:** This is an instrument that gives the chance to the researcher to obtain information about specifics topics through specifics questions and then to make conclusions. This method was applied to twenty nine students of Pedro Orozco High School in Terrabona with the objective to obtain information and opinion of the students about interest, and methodology applied in classroom.

2.2- METHODOLOGYCAL ROUTE:

At the beginning of the research a diagnosis was made, to know the main difficulties students faced when they pronouncing in English. The diagnosis would serve as the basis to implement appropriate methodological strategies aimed at helping students improve their pronunciation.

During the first day, it was difficult to teach because it was the first experience where knowledge of the facilitators shared. The students felt afraid to talk because they were accustomed to their teacher, the objective was explained which was to help them improve their pronunciation. The class was interesting because the students expressed their preferences and their opinions about specific topics, such as: sports, meats, famous people, etc.

The second class was somehow different; all the students were very encouraged. The achievement indicator and the topic were aimed at writing and a reviewing about the previous topic. Students were encouraged to talk about sports and they wrote some names of sports on the board and they read aloud.

Some pictures were put on the board and then students wrote the name of each sport. Students worked in pairs and they wrote sentences (two expressing likes and two sentences about dislikes). Furthermore, the teacher asked the students about adjectives (they had knowledge about adjectives before). The use of the comparatives was introduced and students made sentences. To end the class facilitator divided the classroom in two groups and then he explained the activity “Defending preferences” where students expressed why or why not they liked something or someone:

They followed this example:

Players: Neymar vs. Ronaldinho

Group A (I like Neymar because he is more handsome that Ronaldinho)

Group B (I like Ronaldinho because he is more intelligent than Neymar)

Group A (Neymar is better player than Ronaldinho)

Group B (Ronaldinho is taller that Neymar, etc.)

The third class was taught on October 02nd in Pedro Orozco High School. The majority of students were in class. Through the game “Tiny and Giant” students said some verbs. In the development, students were given a song to identify some verbs and practice pronunciation. They were engaged in this activity because they liked singing. To end the class they made sentences with verbs and they told that they enjoy sing and the class was very funny and they learn new verbs.

During the fourth class, a new content was taught. Students played and identified regular and irregular verbs, they were more confident and they answered with more certainty. It is relevant to mention that students were motivated during the whole class. Also the facilitator oriented the students to make sentences following the rules and they wrote one sentence on the board and they read aloud. For the ending activities the teacher gave their students some tongue twisters in order to practice pronunciation and students enjoy the class because it was a pleasant day.

The fifth class was about the simple past of regular verbs. They made a brainstorming about the last topic and then the teacher checked the student’s pronunciation through listening verbs written on the board. Furthermore, the teacher showed the students some pictures of people doing some activities and students made sentences with all verbs. The sentences were read by students and the class ended when the teacher gave their students some verbs in present tense and then they rewrote them to past tense.

In the last day, the students learned the use of “going to”. They identified and marked word and phrases with future meaning in a crossword. Students read some rules about the correct way to make affirmative, negative and interrogative sentences and then they made their own sentences using going to. They practiced their pronunciation because they read aloud all sentences made it. It was achieved that students participated and improved they pronunciation by listening and repeating during the class.

III- RESULTS

3.1- Diagnosis:

The diagnostic stage was carried out during the first semester of year 2014, with twenty one females and eight males of ninth grade at Pedro Orozco High School in Terrabona. This stage gave us the opportunity to identify the difficulties that the students faced at the moment of assimilating some contents of the language and while they interacted with their classmates. The techniques applied were an observation guide and a survey in order to make this diagnosis.

It was found that students had difficulties in English pronunciation because some students did not have motivation; they lacked of interest, lacked of learning means and misbehaved during the classes too.

Some alternatives to help students improve their pronunciation are communication activities, reading aloud, sing a song, crossword, role play, etc.

E.g. the first topic that students learned was “likes and dislikes”. It was an easy content and we implemented the strategies “listen and repeat”. The students read the vocabulary that the teacher wrote on the board (yellow, soup, basketball, seafood, romantic music). By means of this strategy, students pronunciation started to be improved, and we as the researchers could clearly observe this fact.

The class ended when the students put on the board one picture in their favorite place. The students described and made sentences with each picture and then they read aloud in front of the class.

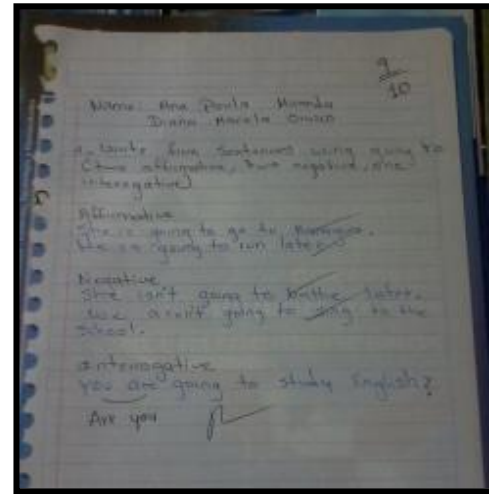


- Didactic plan: It was designed starting from the difficulties found in the students` communicative skill. Through the survey, the students expressed their difficulties and asked strategies to improve their knowledge. Taking into account their opinions we chose appropriate strategies to help them pronounce better in English.

CONTENTS	STRATEGIES
Expressing Likes (Comparatives)	Reading aloud adjectives Students made sentences and they read aloud. The classroom was divided in two groups and students were talking about sports, famous persons and preferences.
Verbs	Reading aloud The students listened, sang a song and then they identified verbs.

3.2- Monitoring Results:

One quiz was applied to evaluate what students learned about specific topic, e.g. how to use “going to”. Some sentences were read aloud before the students wrote their own sentences. In the quiz, most of the students got a high score. This showed the validity of the strategies chosen and implemented.



Students read a tongue twister which was evaluated individually. Most students pronounced very well and the minority pronounced some words incorrectly.



The students on the board read and marked a phrase with future meaning and then they made sentences using “going to”.

3.3- Evaluation

3.3.1- Achievement

- ❖ The students improved their pronunciation through the methodological strategies implemented.
- ❖ Students felt safe, overcoming their shyness.
- ❖ They felt encouraged to participate and interact with their classmates.
- ❖ The students were able to talk without inhibition using the learning aids used, for example pictures, and were motivating for them.
- ❖ Students respected the schedule, because they were engaged in the class.

3.3.2- Difficulties

- ❖ At the beginning some students were shy and they did not want to participate.
- ❖ The students' misbehavior did not allow them to engage in the class appropriately.
- ❖ Students did not pay attention because they were talking while the topic was being explained.
- ❖ The classroom next to the ninth grade did not have good walls and the noise from that room did not facilitate concentration.
- ❖ Not all students had the same level of knowledge.

3.3.3- Lessons

- ❖ It was clear that is necessary to use a well-designed lesson plan in order to teach in the best way (showing the didactic materials, games) and show that the teacher does not improvise during the class.
- ❖ It is important to recognize that students are not objects to fill with knowledge. It is necessary to teach values and how to be better people because it is an important part of our development as teachers too.
- ❖ It was a very valuable experience to share and meet students of English for the first time.
- ❖ A great effort was made in order to help students learn more English, especially when it dealt with pronunciation.

3.4- VALIDATE OF THE STRATEGIES

It was observed that the use of appropriate strategies can encourage students to learn and improve their pronunciation. This was the case of the four strategies which were implemented during the second semester. It is important to mention that these strategies were very useful during the students' ELP.

3.4.1- Reading aloud: The learner can be given a piece of spoken text to read out loudly. Here the teacher's job is to identify pronunciation the errors and mistakes made by the learner, and then give feedback that will help the learner improve their EFL pronunciation.

3.4.2- Tongue Twister is a fun strategy because the students tend to make mistakes but their try to pronounce the word in the correct way. When a student makes a mistakes other students tease but it is the opportunity the teacher correct the student`s mistakes and get a good learning.

3.4.3- Minimal Pairs shows a pairs of words or phrases which differ in only one phonological element, e.g. pin- bin, rot-lot, hat-had. Using this strategy, pronunciation can be improved because it allows students to differentiate one vowel or consonant. This strategy helped students learn how to pronounce minimal pairs correctly.

3.4.4- Isolation: With this strategy students are able to discriminate one sound from any others.

IV- DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This chapter discusses what students expressed about the methodological strategies used during the second semester. A survey was applied in order to know the effectiveness of the strategies used.

According to the data gathered, we found the following results:

Questions	Excellent	Very Good	Good
1- What do you think about the strategies used during the classes?	9	4	2
2- What strategy did you like the most?	Read aloud	Tongue T. Minimal Pair Isolation	
	10	5	
3- Did you improve pronunciation during the class?	YES	NO	
	13	2	
4- Did you feel motivate to participate in class?	15	0	

1- Most Students expressed that all the strategies used during the class were excellent. A little percent expressed that this strategies were very good, the minority of the students expressed that this strategies were good.

2- Most students expressed that reading aloud is the best strategy but students mentioned that tongue twister, minimal pair and isolation were good also.

3- Most Students stated that their pronunciation was improved through the use of these strategies and, on the other hand, the minority told that they could not improve their pronunciation.

4- All the students mentioned that they felt motivated to participate in class because they were interacting in different activities.

V- RECOMMENDATIONS

- ❖ Teachers should speak as much in English as possible during the class.
- ❖ Motivate students constantly to practice English.
- ❖ Plan activities that encourage your students to participate.
- ❖ Be friendly and keep a self confidence environment it generates students` interaction.
- ❖ Give students positive feedback in all they do, helping then correct their mistakes.
- ❖ Incorporate visual aids to enrich their pronunciation.
- ❖ Assign activities in where students practice pronunciation (games, reading a text aloud, singing a song, listening).

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ANNEXES

1. Annex: WORKING CHRONOGRAM

No	Activity	Date	Hour	Place	Participants	Hours
1	Designing the research protocol.	Tuesday, April 01 st	02:00 pm	Sherry's house	Group	8
2	Asking for permission for the classes	Tuesday, April 08th	02:00 pm	Pedro Orozco High School	Group	1
3	Choosing the topic to the action research.	Thursday, April 10th	01:00 pm	Sherry's house	Group	4
4	Designing the observation guides.	Monday, April 11st	02:00 pm	Sherry's house	Group	4
5	Applying the observation guides at college.	Tuesday, April 28th	01:00 pm	Pedro Orozco High School	Group	4
6	Designing the interviews and survey questionnaire.	Monday, April 29 th	01:00 pm	Sherry's house	Group	9
7	Apply interviews and surveys to students	Tuesday, May 06th	01:00 pm	Pedro Orozco High School	Group	5
8	Researching about the topic.	Monday May 12 th to Friday Monday 8 th	01:00 pm	Sherry's house	Group	20
9	Writing the summary	Thursday May 08th, 13th, and 15th	01:00 pm	Sherry's house	Group	12
10	Writing the first draft for the research paper.	Monday, May 19th to Friday, May 23 rd	01:00 pm	Sherry's house	Group	12
11	Revising the first draft with the teacher	Saturday, June 21st	01:00 pm	FAREM – Estelí	Group	5
12	Writing the final document for the research project.	Saturday, June 21 st	01:00 pm	Sherry's house	Group	16
13	Creating the presentation and printing documents.	Saturday July 05 th	01:00 pm	FAREM-Estelí	Group	20
14	Correcting General and Specific Objective	Friday August 8 th	01.00 pm	FAREM-Estelí	Group	3
15	Identifying the High School	Friday August 15 th	09.00 am	Terrabona	Group	8
16	Checking Theoretical Framework	Friday September 5 th	10.00 a.m	FAREM-Estelí	Group	5
17	Identifying students group which we worked	Friday September 12 th	09.00 a.m	Terrabona	group	8
18	First day applying methodological strategies	Wednesday September 24 th	02.00 pm	Pedro Orozco High School	group	90´
19	Second day applying methodological strategies	Tuesday September 30 th	02.00 p.m	Pedro Orozco High School	group	90´
20	Third day applying methodological strategies	Thursday October 2th	02.00 p.m	Pedro Orozco High School	group	45´
21	Fourth day applying methodological strategies	Tuesday October 7 th	02.00 p.m	Pedro Orozco High School	group	90´
22	Fifth day applying methodological strategies	Friday October 10 th	03.45 p.m	Pedro Orozco High School	group	45´
23	Sixth day applying methodological strategies	Tuesday October 14 th	02.00 p.m	Pedro Orozco High School	group	90´
24	We applied an interview to write a final report about all strategies applied to the students	Wednesday October 15 th	02.00 p.m	Pedro Orozco High School	group	1
25	Checking and correcting the documents	Saturday October 18th, 25th, 31th. Friday November 01th, 3th, 7th, 10th and 11th.	09.00 a.m	FAREM-Estelí	group	45

**2. Annex: UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL AUTONOMA DE NICARAGUA
UNAN MANAGUA- FAREM ESTELI**

INTERVIEW FOR TEACHERS

Dear teacher, the students of the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua are carrying out research about the methodological strategies with **the objective to improve the pronunciation skills**. The information you give us, is necessary to achieve this goal.

I General Data:

Name: _____ Date: _____ Section: _____
Institute: _____ Academic Level: _____
Level: _____

II Development:

Put an x where is appropriate according to your answers, and justify the answer when required.

1. Do you do a review about the last topic developed?
2. Do you explain very well the strategies that you use in the class?
3. What kind of didactic material do you use to teach?
4. Do your students talk in English during the class?
5. Do you ever use the English language in class? Why?
6. Do you talk with a simple vocabulary? Why?
7. When you are teaching, do your students have self-confidence to ask? Why?
8. Do you put your students to speak in groups or pairs?
9. Do you explain once more if your students do not pronounce very well?
10. What kind of methodological strategies do you use to practice Pronunciation? Why?
11. When you apply all these strategies do your students get a good learning? Why?

**3. Annex: UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL AUTONOMA DE NICARAGUA
UNAN MANAGUA- FAREM ESTELI**

SURVEY FOR STUDENTS

Dear students, the students of the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua, are carrying out a research about the methodological strategies with the objective to improve the pronunciation skills. The information you give us, is necessary to achieve this goal.

I General Data:

Name: _____ Date: _____
 Institute: _____ Section: _____
 Level: _____

II Development:

Put an x where appropriate according to your answers:

No	Questions	Yes	sometimes	No
1	At the beginning of the class the teacher ask you about the last topic.			
2	The teacher explains very well the orientations strategies before to use during the class.			
3	In addition of the book, he uses other kind of material to teach.			
4	He gives you the opportunity to participate in class.			
5	He uses a simple vocabulary.			
6	You work in groups and pairs.			
7	You feel self-confidence at the moment you are in English class.			
8	He explains you once more if you don't understand the first time.			
9	The teacher uses tongue twisters in the class.			
10	You practice pronunciation singing a song.			
11	The teacher teaches you pronunciation using listening.			
12	You practice pronunciation using minimal pairs.			
13	The teacher uses other strategies.			

**4. Annex: UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL AUTONOMA DE NICARAGUA
UNAN MANAGUA-FAREM ESTELI**

OBSERVATION GUIDE FOR TEACHER

Dear teacher, the students of the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua are carrying out a research about the methodological strategies with the objective to improve the pronunciation skills. The information you give us, is necessary to achieve this goal.

I General Data:

Name: _____ Date: _____
 Institute: _____ Level: _____
 Section: _____

II Development:

-Organization of the classroom.

*At the moment of the class it was observed the following aspects.

No	ASPECTS	Yes	Partially	No
1	At the beginning of the class he takes a good control of his students.			
2	He looks over the last content, after he introduces the new topic.			
3	The teacher explains very well the strategies, before to use during the class.			
4	In addition of the book he uses other didactic material (such us: wallpaper, images, flash cards, dictionaries)			
5	He gives to the students the opportunity to participate in class.			
6	The teacher uses a simple vocabulary.			
7	The students work in groups and pairs.			
8	The teacher has self-confidence at the moment of explaining and answering about the class.			
9	He explains once more if the students don't understand the first time.			
10	The teacher teaches pronunciation by listening.			

5. Annex:

LESSON PLAN 1

Discipline: English

Grade: Ninth

Date: September -24th 2014

Time: 90'

School: Pedro Orozco

UNIT V: Recreation

Achievement Indicator: The students use appropriate vocabulary to express preferences

Content: Expressing Likes and Dislikes

INITIAL ACTIVITIES

Greetings

Organize the classroom

Check attendance

Make a review about the last topic

Through the game “**Cabbage**” students are going to answer questions and complete sentences expressing likes and dislikes.

VOCABULARY

Yellow

Soup

Basketball

Football

Blue

Red

Seafood

Baseball

Romantic Music

Country

Rock and Roll

Meat

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

- Work in pair and write two sentences expressing your favorite hobbies, and read in front of your classmates

Example: I like playing football

I hate eating watermelon

- Read the tongue twister with your partner and write the word that your classmates read wrong.

Example: The worse word in the world is war

ENDING ACTIVITIES

Put the picture in your favorite place and explain to classmates about your like or dislike.

LIKES



DISLIKES



EVALUATION

Ask to students if they enjoy the class

HOMEWORK:

Make a paragraph about the place that would you like to visit.

6. Annex:

LESSON PLAN 2

Discipline: English

Grade: Ninth

Date: October-2nd, 2014

Time: 45'

School: Pedro Orozco

UNIT V: Recreation

Achievement Indicator: The Students are able to make sentences with verbs in present tense.

Content: Verbs

INITIAL ACTIVITIES

Greetings

Organize the classroom

Check attendance

Review the last topic

Through the dynamic tiny and giant students are going to say some verbs

VOCABULARY

Can	run	sing	write
Swim	read	dance	listen
Eat	work		

DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Give to students a song in order to identify some verbs

The students sing a song with the teacher and they pronounced words correctly.

ENDING ACTIVITIES

The students are going to make sentences with the verbs identified

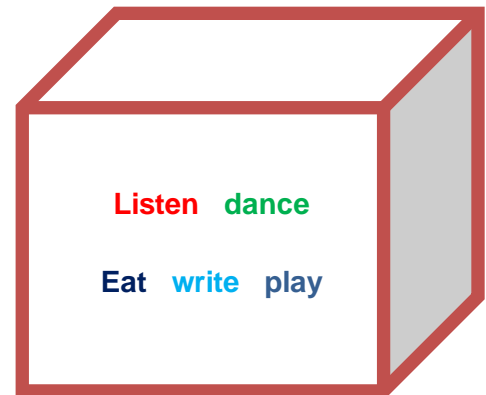
EVALUATION

Through questions verify if students learned new verbs

HOMEWORK:

Fill in the blank with the verbs in the box.

1. I _____ Football
2. Luisa _____ a poem
3. We _____ hamburger
4. Paula _____ Romantic music
5. They _____ in Cigars zone club



7. Annex: Survey to students

Objective:

To validate methodological strategies applied in the classroom

- **What do you think about the strategies used during the classes?
(Tongue twister, listen and repeat, isolation, minimal pair).**

- **What strategy did you like the most?**

- **Did you improve pronunciation during the class?**

- **Did you feel motivated to participate in class?**

8. Annex:

Preparing the class



Students are working on the board



Students are working in pairs



9. Annex:

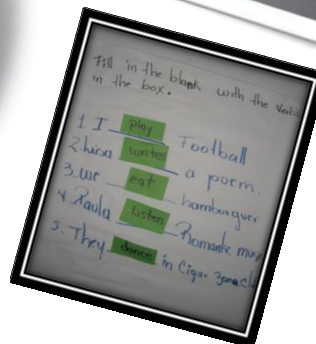
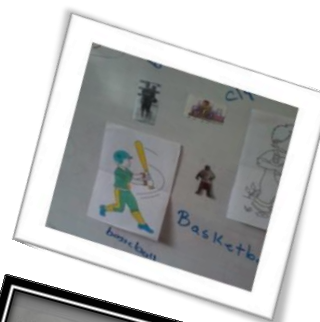
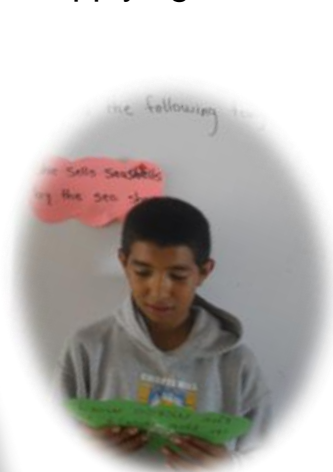
Developing the class



Population



Sample applying some strategies



10. Annex:

Some commentaries of students

Me gusto mucho porque hicimos bastantes dinamica, Fue muy didáctica y aprendimos cosas que no sabíamos nos dieron participación a todos.



Me gusta la clase, porque es muy divertida además, aprendi muchas cosas, la clase la dio dinamica, y nos recreamos, ya que hubo mucha participación por parte de los estudiantes y la disciplina estuvo bastante controlada,

La clase de hoy me gusto mucho por que hablamos de las cosas que nos gusta y las cosas que no nos gusta hablamos cosas muy importantes; tambien por que asi aprendemos a hablar en ingles.

