NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF CHIMBORAZO

FACULTY OF HUMAN, TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE EDUCATION

SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES

GRADUATION THESIS WORK BEFORE OBTAINING THE DEGREE OF:
BACHELOR IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION: ENGLISH

SUBJECT:

THE USAGE OF INTERACTIVE VIRTUAL DIALOGUES FOR THE CORRECT PRONUNCIATION OF THE STUDENTS OF FIFTH SEMESTER OF THE LANGUAGE CAREER OF THE FACULTY OF HUMAN, TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE EDUCATION AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF CHIMBORAZO DURING THE ACADEMIC PERIOD OCTOBER 2015-FEBRUARY 2016.

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Los miembros del Tribunal de Graduación, del proyecto de investigación de título "THE USAGE OF INTERACTIVE VIRTUAL DIALOGUES FOR THE CORRECT PRONUNCIATION OF THE STUDENTS OF FIFTH SEMESTER OF THE LANGUAGE CAREER OF THE FACULTY OF HUMAN, TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE EDUCATION AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF CHIMBORAZO DURING THE ACADEMIC PERIOD OCTOBER 2015-FEBRUARY 2016"

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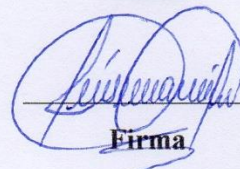
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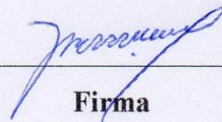
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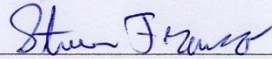

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RESEARCH AUTHORSHIP

The responsibility of content of the Graduation Project, corresponds to: Steven Ross Franco Mera, the author, and of MsC. Magdalena Ullauri, director of the Project; and the intellectual patrimony of the National University of Chimborazo.

Steven Franco

Steven Ross Franco Mera

SPECIAL THANKS

Ye that helped in even the least of ways, have my gratitude for assistance. Ye that proved to be obstacles, have my gratitude for motivation.

DEDICATED TO

To my dear.

GENERAL INDEX

ILLUSTRATION AND CHART INDEX

GRAPH INDEX

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE CHIMBORAZO
FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN
HUMANAS, Y TECNOLOGÍAS

THEME: THE USAGE OF INTERACTIVE VIRTUAL DIALOGUES FOR THE CORRECT PRONUNCIATION OF THE STUDENTS OF FIFTH SEMESTER OF THE LANGUAGE CAREER OF THE FACULTY OF HUMAN, TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE EDUCATION AT THE NATION UNIVERSITY OF CHIMBORAZO DURING THE ACADEMIC PERIOD OCTOBER 2015 – FEBRUARY 2016.

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SUMMARY

The context of learning English for future teachers has to comply with the essential aspects that allow a high grade of competence that can make content learning more efficient. The most important of these competences, due to its characteristics since it's of the communicative type, is pronunciation mastery. It is impossible for an English teacher to speak improperly, being that pronunciation is the aspect which should be perfected as much as possible. The phonetic differences between English and Spanish make it difficult to reach this competence; thus, it is necessary to use alternative methods which allow perfect pronunciation. In this sense, this research presents virtual dialogues as an important tool in order to achieve this objective. Starting off from a pronunciation diagnostic and based on a referential theory framework; the research was structured with a methodological model which allows the efficiency level among the students of Fifth Semester to be evaluated. It based itself on a high level of mistakes in terms of certain vowel and consonant phonemes whose pronunciation is difficult due to being inexistent in Spanish. Once these mistakes were detected, virtual dialogues were created, and finally a second evaluation which had similar characteristic as that of the first one. An improvement was found which was confirmed as important via mean difference. It was therefore concluded that the main pronunciation mistakes were realized with the following vowels: /ə/, /ɪ/, /æ/, /ð/, /z/, and /v/. For its correction, virtual dialogues were operative characteristics and autonomous learning characteristics were done. Significant results were obtained which indicated that pronunciation had improved considerably. In this sense the use of significant activities is recommended in order to remedy pronunciation difficulties. These activities can include virtual dialogues as a didactic tool in curricular planning so that learning processes can be more interactive.

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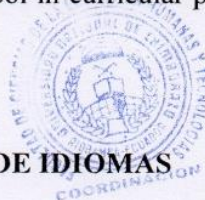
INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, integrated communication processes have adopted English as a universal lingua franca. Therefore, learning English is a necessary tool which must be mastered. Achieving this competence requires not only the comprehension of the written language, but also oral communication skills which must be at a satisfactory level in order to establish appropriate communication.

According to this, teachers are those that share their knowledge of English and must therefore have a high level of vocabulary and, in this case pronunciation. This aspect is difficult to fulfil due to the phonetic differences between English and Spanish.

This research: The Usage of Interactive Virtual Dialogues for the Correct Pronunciation of the Students of Fifth Semester of the Language Career of the Faculty of Human, Technology and Science Education at the National University of Chimborazo During the Academic Period October 2015-February 2016, is for detecting and correcting pronunciation problems which can be found by means of a diagnostic test.

To reach this purpose, the research process was worked on which is detailed in the following thesis report, and integrates the following relevant aspects.

In Chapter I, the Reference Framework is established. In it are the research problem and how the problem comes to be, as well as the directive questions which lead the research process. To give a solution to this problem, a general objective was created which was fulfilled through three specific objectives which make reference to the diagnosis, the required methodological processes, and establish in what way virtual dialogues contribute to the improvement of English pronunciation. At the end of the chapter are the elements that justify the research in terms of relevance, pertinence, viability, and scientific contribution.

Chapter II consists of a Theory Framework which allows the research to be scientifically fundament itself. For this, the most relevant previous research occurrences were looked up. Then, a Theory Fundament was structured which proposes more conceptual elements in regards to the learning of English pronunciation. The main pronunciation problems were established in the second part of the theory fundament as well as digital English teaching assisted by a computer and the applicability of virtual dialogues. To conclude this chapter, the research hypothesis was presented as well as the independent and dependent variables on which the operationalization was worked upon. Lastly, a brief glossary of basic terms was placed for a better understanding of certain terms.

In Chapter III, the Methodological Framework was created. The research design used was Quantitative Diagnostic, and the types of research used were: inductive, documental, and field. The population and sample were defined, as well as techniques and instruments for data collecting, and the form used for data processing and interpretation.

In Chapter IV, the data was analyzed and interpreted which used the information gathered from the initial test. Once the dialogues were applied, the data from the final test were analyzed and interpreted. In order to test the hypothesis, a mean comparison was done with a student "t" factor; this established that a significant level exists among the data which guarantees that the application of virtual dialogues as a learning tool does improve English pronunciation.

In Chapter V, the arrived research conclusions after data analysis were formed as well as recommendations. These were all based on the obtained results.

CHAPTER I

1. REFERENTIAL FRAMEWORK

1.1   THE PROBLEM USED FOR RESEARCH

The Usage of Interactive Virtual Dialogues for the Correct Pronunciation of the Students of Fifth Semester of the Language Career of the Faculty of Human, Technology and Science Education at the National University of Chimborazo During the Academic Period October 2015-February 2016.

1.2.   RESEARCH PROBLEM FORMULATION

English is the globalization communication tool. Its study and learning is a requirement for professional growth considering that 75% of the technical and scientific information in the world is published in this language; whether it's in books or by means of the internet. On the other hand, social and global commercial forces people to communicate in this language which in this present day is spoken by more than a billion people and has become the official mean of communication in the world.

But speaking and understanding English for efficient communication requires certain conditioning; knowing that it is enough to just have a grasp on vocabulary, or grammar. The most relevant aspect is to be able to express one self and be made known in a correct manner. This competence is one of the critical points that the teaching of English has in our medium and halts its teaching. This is due to the phonetic differences between Spanish and English, which has different ways of pronunciation. This is the result of historical process of formation as well as different regional influences of the language. Another factor to consider is the learning of the

English language is the influence of accent, which depends on the region due to the wide expansion of the language in the world.

In this context, and considering the processes of teaching English to the students of the Language career of the National University of Chimborazo, is has been established that there is a low level in the ability of pronunciation. This is a consequence due to insufficient learning, which is generated as an effect of limited speaking practice. Languages that are being learned are practiced in a designated space and time; this develops involuntary mistakes which are then transmitted to students of elementary and baccalaureate levels. According to Freddy Peñafiel, a substitute to the Minister of Eductaion during 2014, mentions that "the evaluation done to 4,512 elementary and baccalaureate level teachers on a national level, only 2% reached the TOEFL B2 requirement to be a teacher. (GAMA TV, 2014)

Another problem for the learning of pronunciation of English is that the opportunities in our environment are rare in order for us to be able to talk to other English speakers, and is thus just restricted to it happening only in the classroom. This makes it difficult to focus on the acquired knowledge and put it to practice. This also complicates the development of obtaining a correct pronunciation.

However, the interest of college students in the most recent generations can be seen in acquiring a correct pronunciation by means of music and videos. However, this methodology should be used as a strengthening mean with the supervision of professors, considering that songs and videos are not scholarly designed as learning tools.

When one listens to a song, the main amount of attention is focused on the melodic and rhythmic aspects, but not on the lyrics. Even less is the amount of attention paid to the pronunciation due to the lyrics interfering with the musical instruments. There

is no clear distinction in the phonemes; this easily causes confusion to non-native English speakers.

When one watches a movie, the main amount of attention is focused on a global context and not in a specific manner, such as how the actors talk. The way in which actors talk can be distorted due to the sound effects in the movie; on the other hand, actors might play the role of someone with a foreign accent or one of someone with a different pronunciation than that of which one is studying or used to. When all these factors of pronouncing English come together, problems arise in a drastic matter since the phonemes of each word can be different from the one that is required.

In this learning context, research on the which are the most common mistakes students have in regards to English pronunciation is proposed. This is of much importance in order to solve these learning problems through means of teaching tool design and application. With this, the teacher or professor can structure them in a specific way in order to confront the problem directly without any generalizations which are found in traditional teaching processes.

1.3. PROBLEM FORMULATION

In What Way Does The Usage of Interactive Virtual Dialogues Contribute Towards the Correct Pronunciation of the Students of Fifth Semester of the Language Career of the Faculty of Human, Technology and Science Education at the National University of Chimborazo During the Academic Period October 2015-February 2016?

1.4. DERIVED DIRECTIVE QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

What is the level of pronunciation of English in the students of Fifth Semester of the Language Career?

How to apply virtual methodologies for a proper English pronunciation?

Up to what point does the usage of virtual dialogues contribute to the improvement of English pronunciation with the students of Fifth Semester of the National University of Chimborazo?

1.5. OBJECTIVES

1.5.1. GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To Improve The Pronunciation of the Students of Fifth Semester of the Language Career of the Faculty of Human, Technology and Science Education at the National University of Chimborazo During the Academic Period October 2015-February 2016 by Means of Virtual Dialogues.

1.5.2. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Determine the level of pronunciation of the students of Fifth Semester of the Language Career.

Define the methodological virtual processes for a correct English pronunciation.

Establish in what way the usage of virtual dialogues contribute to the improvement of English pronunciation among the students of Fifth Semester of the Languages Career in the National University of Chimborazo.

1.6. JUSTIFICATION

English teaching has taken up certain significant relevance. Nowadays, all educational processes for undergraduate education are linked one way or another with the capability of managing English. The reasons for this are very diverse but the main one is in the need to integrate oneself with the rest of the world. Considering that the major part of science, technology, economic and social development on a world scale use English as its main communication tool.

This research project is designed to improve the pronunciation in students of Fifth Semester of the Language Career of the National University of Chimborazo. It proposes a methodological procedure related with new technologies; by means of the usage of virtual and interactive dialogues with permanent availability for professors and students alike.

Improvement of the levels of communication by means of the development of the Speaking skill integrates: the abilities of answering in a coherent way, using adequate words, managing speed and rhythm. This however, is not enough to be made understood in an efficient way; it is convenient to work in a more practical way to improve pronunciation in a complementary way. The student will then be able to establish a fluid conversation with no problem, which will improve his or her future abilities to teach English in an integral and efficient way.

The usage of technological resources is consequent with the development of communication skills in globalization. By bringing students closer to virtual environments, one looks for their inclusion to the education process by means of the

internet.   Projecting the independent acquiring of knowledge will allow the strengthening of language acquisition and teaching with ease. In this sense, virtual dialogues are an efficient mechanism to teach correct pronunciation due to the lack of environment settings where students can increase their knowledge.

CHAPTER II

2. THEORY FRAMEWORK

2.1.   PREVIOUS RESEARCH DONE WITH THE PROBLEM

In the research "The use of internet in the learning of English pronunciation, an experience with engineering students", done by Sanhueza Martinez, (2005), it is proposed that: it was demonstrated that using the internet is an efficient mean for the teaching of English pronunciation, which can perfectly be combined with classic instructional methods. It can be concluded that there are no significant differences in the level of acquiring English pronunciation among students that use the internet as a mean of learning, and among those that do not use it. The obtained results are very similar and clearly demonstrate the benefit of using the internet for teaching.

Martinez assures that there are enough websites for pronunciation, which provide varied quality resources for phonetic practice. The majority of these sites are of academic origin and without commercial goals. If working seriously, with clear educational views in mind, one can put these resources to great use that are available nowadays on the internet. One must remember that this is a highly motivating and comfortable mean of learning for students who are now considered to be "children" of this globalized society.

Mejia Gavilanez (2013), in the research about the usage of virtual classrooms in the development of oral comprehension of English for students of Fourth Level of the Language Center of the Central University of Ecuador during the period 2012-2013, proposes that the process of education is still in a traditional style even though it is supposed to provide written evidence that it is active. There is a limited access of the usage of technological tools; students don't use them in a pertinent form in order to

complete virtual classroom activities such as forums, assignments, questionnaires, and video calls for the process of oral comprehension.

Students don't use linguistic comprehension for the development of oral comprehension of English, given that they do not do it in a relevant manner in terms of coding, decoding, the phonetic chain, sound differentiation, vocabulary, and the identification of grammar structures.

On the other hand, Mejia Gavilanez (2013) recommends that it is necessary to implement podcasts, forums, assignments, and questionnaires among other activities for linguistic comprehension. This is to increase vocabulary which will be done through virtual classrooms for the development of oral comprehension as a didactic process of learning.

In the research done by Rodriguez Peña, Medina Betancourd, and Lorenzo Martin (2013), it is shown that: for a competent English teacher's success from the oral communication and professional pedagogic point of view, the preparation of faculty members for forming and developing the levels of oral communicative competence in English as in a foreign language in different educational levels is a priority. The professional pedagogical focus of this competence must also be treated upon.

The ability of oral expression is the leading communicative skill in the majority of English courses in general, including those designed for future English teachers and professors. Their forming is complex, not only in those that are inherent to the oral system of the English language, but also constitutes in content and form in the direction of the learning - teaching process. This means that applying communicative strategies and linguistic registries that are adequate for the needs and growing possibilities of their students and of their own, which are made up of not only natural linguistic elements, but also and especially, by extraverbal elements.

2.2. THEORY FUNDAMENTS

2.2.1. The English Language and the Learning of Pronunciation

There is no doubt that pronouncing a language properly is important when understanding others and making ourselves understood. In the "English as a Foreign Language" processes of teaching and learning, pronunciation should play a determining role since it's directly related with the developing student communicative competence. This leads to proficiency and comprehensibility of a language.

Spoken communication is not only determined by correct grammar and vast vocabulary, but also on the relation between the segmental and suprasegmental features that make up pronunciation. As Burns, (2003) says, even though there may be small inaccuracies in terms of vocabulary and grammar, students can communicate more effectively when their pronunciation and intonation mastery levels are high. Pourhosein Gilakjani, (2012, p.120), states, despite the emphasis on the importance of meaningful communication and pronunciation, it's not enough to make pronunciation teaching and training limited to certain classes; it's also determining that the very few time that is dedicated to these purposes are planned to make the most of it, which gives students the tools to continue their independent improvement and the voice to express in which ways they learn the best.

2.2.2. Importance of an Adequate Pronunciation

Pronunciation is one of the most important skills of spoken English. Not surprisingly, pronunciation instruction plays an important role when teaching of English as a second language (Jahan, 2011). In view that ESL learners aim to speak English like natives (Derwing, 2003), the importance of teaching pronunciation can't be emphasized too much (Hismanoglu, 2006). Obviously, it is imperative that teachers

help English learners develop communication needs in order to be understood easily (Morley, 1991).

However, many English Language Learners face hardships in learning the pronunciation of English (Gilakjani, 2011). Problems in pronunciation weaken their communicative competence (Hinofotis & Bailey, 1981). Even worse, many of them still don't possess sufficient proficiency in terms of pronunciation even if they did learn English in a previous ESL course. In fact, it is easy to understand that an ESL student using a nonstandard version of English might be affected in a negative way while acquiring the language if they are not familiar with standardized English (Charity H & Mallison, 2011). Specifically, ESL students' pronunciation conventions are different from those of native English speakers (Benjamin, 2002). Accordingly, helping ESL students learn standardized English must begin with understanding pronunciation variations that students may have while learning English.

Needless to say, in order to enhance students' English articulation ability, teachers need to make students develop the awareness towards pronunciation variations (Morley, 1991). More specifically, it is important that teachers develop their awareness on various sound structures; that way, students will further gain insights into pronunciation variations that they are facing now. Teachers who have students from different backgrounds in their class need to have knowledge and understanding on ESL students' English language variations and differences in order to better help them; mainly by simplifying the differences and problems that English articulation may have.

2.2.3. Reasons to Improve Pronunciation

Good pronunciation makes ESL students successful. On the other hand, insufficient English pronunciation proficiency inhibits communicative competence development which is required for bridging the communicative gap between speakers and listeners.

Precisely, great pronunciation competence in English can make others understand easily. On the contrary, English pronunciation which is inferior to a basic level increases misunderstanding and confusion when holding conversations with others (Gilakjani, 2011). It's not necessary to be able to speak English like a native, but "well enough to be understood" (Jesry, 2005). The plus side of a good pronunciation in the process of learning English must be assured and reinforced; this way, students should learn standardized ways of English articulation and pronunciation (Gilakjani, 2011).

In regards to standardized English articulation, how students' language variations affect their future academic years of schools should not be ignored (Charity H & Mallison, 2011). In particular, phonological variation is a language variable which involves certain learning processes (Sinha, Banerjee, & Shastri , 2009). Rather, sound patterns of the learners' mother language are very likely to influence their pronunciation when learning English. Understandably, English-speaking students without a standard pronunciation are afraid of being teased or feeling embarrassed when they try to pronounce English correctly (Nogita, 2010).

It's obvious that mother language phonological systems will hinder rather than promote English pronunciation learning (Huang & Radant, 2009). Teachers must gain insights into pronunciation variations in order to improve students' English pronunciation. This will then provide teachers with ideas for designing different teaching strategies in order to deal with students' problems in regards to English pronunciation. Teachers should be able to help all students learn standardized English by knowing their language variations (Charity H & Mallison, 2011). Verbal assessments shouldn't be based on specific rules, but should take linguistic differences into account.

Knowing some English language variations of students will help teachers prepare to instruct the learners, help students perceive and solve learning problems (Dalle & Young, 2003). Hazen states that "if people had a better understanding of how language works, they would probably be less inclined to be less judgmental about speakers of distinct dialects" (Hazen , 2001). "Language is integral to both culture and identity, and understanding language variation and diversity is essential to multicultural education. We can't teach what we don't know" (Charity H & Mallison, 2011). Therefore, understanding pronunciation variations that ESL students may have will help teachers be aware of dialect diversity among students and understand the challenges in learning standardized English pronunciation.

2.2.4. Main Pronunciation Problems in English Learning

2.2.4.1. Vowels

a) Short and Long Vowel Pairs

The biggest problem for Spanish speakers in regards to pronunciation is that Spanish doesn't distinguish short and long vowels. They stretch all vowel sounds out too much and this makes them confuse pairs of short and long English vowel sounds like "ship" and "sheep" both when it comes to comprehension and speaking. (Case , 1998)

Some relevant pairs include: pull/pool, bit/beat, not/note, etc. As the exampled pairs are all pronounced with different mouth positions and lengths, focusing on that can help students differentiate minimal pairs even if they don't fully get the hang of vowel length.

b) Other Vowels

With most learners who are Spanish speakers, they find the distinction between the very similar sounds in "cat" and "cut"; but they're still difficult to notice and produce. More importantly, they can also have problems with the two closest sounds to an "o" as in "not". An example of this is "boat" and "bought". The unstressed schwa ending "er" sound in the word "computer" does not exist in Spanish. Another example is the closest long sound in "fur" and "her". Spanish speakers find it much more difficult to recognize non rhotic versions of vowel sounds.

2.2.4.2. Consonants

In Spanish, the letters "b" and "v" are pronounced the same, which makes this the most common spelling mistake in Spanish. There may also be some confusion between "jeep" and its unvoiced equivalent in "cheap". (Case , 1998) The "ch" in "cheese" may be confused with the "sh" in "she's". The "sh" in "sheep" may come out sounding like an "s" in "seep". In that case, mouth shape needs to be worked on.

Words in Spanish never start with an "s" sound, and any word that is similar to English tends to have an initial "es" sound, such as escuela/school. It's very common when Spanish speakers pronounce English words, which leads to mispronunciations such "I am from Espain". Native Spanish speakers have no problem making the "s" sound, so the trick is to make them pronounce the word directly after the initial "s" and then gradually reduce the length of the initial "s" down to a short "s".

Unlike English, the "th" sound such as in "thing" and "bathe", don't exist in Spanish. The sound in "bathe" is just a variation on a mid or final "d" for Spanish speakers. Some work in order to understand the distinction between an initial "d" and initial "th" sound is usually needed students can understand and produce it in an initial

position. The issue with "thing" and "sing" is different since there may be a distinction that exists in European variations of Spanish. This means that some students will need to start from zero.

Some speakers pronounce a final "d" as an unvoiced "th". "d" and "t" can be a problem at the end of words; the same applies to "thing"/"think" and even "thing"/"thin" or "ring" and "rim". Spanish consonant sounds vary more by position than those in English.

Although there is a "w" sound in Spanish, it is spelt "gu" and is sometimes pronounced "gw". This makes it difficult to identify if a "g" or "w" is what is meant. The letter z is pronounced as "s" or "th" (which depends on the speaker if they are from Europe or not), but the "z" sound doesn't exist in Spanish. However, because not so much air is used in the Spanish pronunciation of "s", this rarely produces understanding problems.

The Spanish "r" is different from the sound in English; it does not cause that many problems. However, the English "r" tends to seem soft to Spanish speakers and they perceive it as a "w" at times.

The Spanish "j" (which is same as the Scottish "ch" in "loch") and the English "h" such as "hope" rarely cause problems, but some work could be done if students are interested in reducing their accent. In English, the "h" sound is like breathing air onto a dirty mirror or so. Practicing this puff of air helps students understand this sound better.

Spanish doesn't have the soft "zh" sound such as in "television" and "pleasure", but this does not tend to cause problems. (Case , 1998)

2.2.4.3. Number of Syllables

Spanish-speakers may add extra syllables when it comes to final consonant clusters (pronouncing every "ed" ending as a separate syllable such as "advanced") or omitting sounds in case the cluster is too difficult or irregular (such as "fifths" sounding like "fiss"). When there are words that are similar in both Spanish and English, they may try to make the English word match the number of syllables that the word in Spanish has.

2.2.4.4. Word stress

Trying to make Latin-origin words in English match the pronunciation in Spanish also applies to word stress. Spanish has a regular system of word stress which is very different than that of Spanish. (Case , 1998)

2.2.4.5. Sentence Stress

Some describe Spanish as a language that is "syllable-timed". This means that each syllable relatively takes up the same amount of time. The English concept of syllables without stress and weak forms being in between stressed syllables doesn't exist in Spanish. Spanish speakers may find it difficult to pick out and point out the important words in a sentence.

2.2.4.6. Intonation

Spanish speakers can sound flat in English. This may cause problems in formal situations when polite language is needed.

2.2.4.7. Alphabet

The names and pronunciations of some letter in Spanish can cause confusion between these pairs in listening and speaking. Some examples are A/E, A/R, E/I, C/K, G/J (Case , 1998).

2.2.5. The Virtual Teaching of English

The use of technology has seeped into every aspect of our lives, thus becoming more and more indispensable. Learning and teaching are taking new directions, which go from a pre- to post-modern era (Graddol, 2006). Two billion English learners are estimated to exist by 2030 (Graddol, 2006), therefore it is more important than ever to see how useful and accessible technology is for educational purposes (Blake R, 2008)

Garcia-Carbonell, A., (2001) claims to have identified around forty theories which relate to Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Vygotsky (1962, 1978) was focused on the pre-requisite of social interaction. Piaget on the other hand emphasized on problem-solving as a key part of knowledge building. Some theories such as behaviorism (Skinner, 1957), nativism (Chomsky, 1965) and acquisition hypotheses (Krashen, 1985) are now competing with new theories that deal with the important of digital interaction. Situated learning explores the exchange of knowledge between online users and communities (Sefton-Green, 2004), new literacy houses a broader investigation of how users are able to create knowledge from digital stimuli (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001).

Today, the internet is an important part of our lives and is primarily in English. Because of this, learning by means of the internet is a preferable alternative to learn English. Technology and internet connection both provide plenty of new possibilities for the development of educational instruments. Web-based learning is one of the internet's biggest uses. Generally, long-distance education has been possible by

technology such as videoconferences, satellite broadcast, television signals, internet, and others (Cavus, 2007).

In 1996, participation in web-based university courses estimated to have 1 million students and was projected to be 3 million by 2000 (Endelson P, 1998). Current researches that educational institutions are rapidly adapting new technologies and software to teach and instruct. However, recent researches show that there is still a slight challenge between the usage of computers and the learning outcomes.

WWW (World Wide Web) is the most popular of possible Internet tools, and serves increasingly as a communication facilitator. Web-mediated communication is a powerful interaction medium (such as e-mail, group conferencing, internet relay chat, etc.) that enables students to keep in touch with peers, teachers, and experts and conduct collaborative work (Miodusser, Nachmias, Lahav, & Oren, 2000). The web also serves as an instructional delivery medium. Many web pages provide digital educational activities and network based courses for all grade levels in a large number of subjects.

Web-based learning is important for designing and giving instructions by addressing a variety of learning strategies (Khan & Vega, 2007). The learners in web generally are responsible for their own process of learning and results (Reeves & Reeves, 2007). This allows them to move everywhere all over the world, whenever they want.

Computers have been put in a broad range of language teaching and learning services. Students can easily learn grammar and vocabulary from basic programs; they can access sound and videos on CDs. They can also record their voices and compare it with that of a native speaker to check their pronunciation, as well as use word-processing programs to do writing and editing exercises. These systems do their best to serve learners by interacting with the source at different times. Web-based learning is sometimes referred to as delivery modalities that attempt to reduce the barriers of

time and space when it comes to learning. That way, students can learn at any time and at any place. A Learning Management System is a type of software system that delivers education which is web-based. An LMS provides the platform for the learning environment by enabling the management, delivery, and tracking of learning. LMS are often viewed as the starting point of any program that uses web-based learning.

2.2.6. The Teaching of English Pronunciation Assisted by a Computer

Alessi and Trollip (2001) provided five types of computer-based instruction activities. These can be tutorials, drills, simulations, instructional games, and tests (Boyd & Murphy. 2002. p.36). The computer-assisted software used for teaching pronunciation may also have some of these features included in them. (Boyd & Murphrey, 2002) say: "Computer-based multimedia provides the tools of animation, video, and sound to provide students with models that can show complex concepts. Multimedia simulations provide stimuli to auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learners. It is known that animation can increase interest and motivation in learners, provide mental models, and promote visual stimuli to connection between what is abstract and the concrete" (Boyd & Murphrey, 2002, pág. 37).

Software used for teaching pronunciation helps sounds become concrete if graphics do appear in front of students. The learners learn to pronounce correctly not only by listening, imitating and repeating, but also by means of feedback. Therefore, learners may receive feedback without suffering embarrassment in front of other students (Boyd & Murphrey, 2002)

Boyd & Murphrey, (2002) argued that "one of the impacting uses of multimedia is to help immerse the user in an adequate learning environment". For example, Taiwan is not an country where English is spoken. Outside of the classroom, people speak Mandarin, Hokkien, Hakka or other dialects. Due to this, Taiwanese learners find it

hard to speak English on a regular basis. By using software, learners can then experience simulated environments of different sorts. Nowadays, technology has new potentials with multimedia since students have ample freedom to navigate around the environment". With this potential, students can enhance their English pronunciation. (Liou, 2003)

Pennington (1999) noted that teenagers and adults that are language learners risked "fossilization" at an intermediate stage of learning a new language. The term "fossilization" is described as a moment in language learning in which it is difficult for learners to progress without great effort or motivation. (Celce Murcia & Olshtain, 2000, pág. 21) He notes that "adult learners will hardly improve their productive and receptive competence of any new sound system without specific instruction" (pg. 428). Computer-aided or assisted pronunciation with phonological systems can improve learners' productive and receptive competence in terms of pronunciation.

Martino (2009) discussed the contribution network computers can make when used as a resource for both students and teachers with the purpose of simulating an "environment" for acquiring experience; and as an instrument of equality for TESL. Dunkel (2001) also says that second language (L2) researchers need to engage in more ethno-methodological research that investigates social and cognitive impacts of using computers for L2 learning and teaching. Martino's colleagues reported that only when network technology promotes choice and respect for individual differences is fully understood and exploited, computer use will make a difference in language learning.

2.2.7. Virtual Dialogues

Virtual dialogues are generally understood as conversations in which two people interact by means of technological means. They are designed to stimulate debates,

create the exchanging of ideas and information in regards to different topics which answer to the interests and needs of a determined group of people.

Virtual dialogues can be of two types: online, which uses technological systems in a real-time setting; or differed dialogues, in which the dialogues are previously recorded in order to be later heard and analyzed by the listeners. (Esteve Mon & Gisbert Cervet, 2011)

Relating virtual dialogues with the learning-teaching processes; they turn out to be a very interesting tool that promotes the participation of people that interact in order to acquire new knowledge. In fact, virtual dialogues are a strategy which is used to assess with long-distance classes. (De la Serna & Ariza Rios , 2000)

In terms of virtual dialogues for language learning, important tools are built since they allow an objective interaction; as well as a practical experience of the language. All of this gives way to a better interaction since the student will be able to have enough confidence in order to express him or herself without restrictions. Direct dialogues on the other hand are more informal and there is less fear in regards to making mistakes. (Salinas, Cabrera, & Rios, 2012).

Communication has a greater chance of becoming more efficient since the learning can: improve their pronunciation abilities, and enrich their language skills when virtual dialogues in for language learning. Students can also have the possibility of reprogramming conversation contents in order to be analyzed critically.

Nowadays, virtual dialogues for English learning have become the main mechanism which many people use in order to learn in an autonomous way. There are a great number of free and paid websites that allow to users to establish real-time learning conversations in which a tutor will correct syntactic and semantic structure mistakes.

Even though using dialogues as learning tools for foreign languages is not a new idea, communication technologies have opened an important space for their development. They are thus projected as mechanisms to ease the learning processes in a fast and efficient way, whether they are done individually or in groups.

2.3.   HYPOTHESIS

The Usage of Interactive Virtual Dialogues Eases the Correct Pronunciation of the Students of Fifth Semester of the Language Career of the Faculty of Human, Technology and Science Education at the National University of Chimborazo During the Academic Period October 2015-February 2016.

2.4.   VARIABLES

2.4.1. Independent Variable

Virtual Dialogues

2.4.2. Dependent Variable

Correct English Pronunciation

2.4.3. Variable Operationalization

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	CONCEPT	CATEGORY	INDICATORS	TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS
Virtual Dialogues	Virtual dialogues in English learning are a didactic tool which allows the student to enrich vocabulary and improve communication capacity in an autonomous way.	Vocabulary	Phonemes	Pronunciation test
		Communication	Level of ease in order to convey a message	Tally sheet

DEPENDENT VARIABLE	CONCEPT	CATEGORY	INDICATORS	TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS
English Pronunciation	The capacity of expressing oneself orally in English using phonemes in an adequate way.	Phoneme usage	Pronunciation of: /ə/ /ɪ/ /ɔ/ /ɛ/ /ɑ/ /æ/ /i/ /ʊ/ /ð/ /z/ /v/ /ʤ/ /ʃ/ /θ/	Pronunciation test Tally sheet

2.5. DEFINITIONS OF BASIC TERMS

Achievement test - A test to measure what students have learned or achieved from a study program. It should be part of every language program and should be specific to the goals and objectives of a course.

Audiolingualism - A form of language learning which is based on behaviorist psychology. It focuses on: listening and speaking instead of reading and writing; activities such as dialogues and drills, forming good habits and automatic language use through repetition, and only the target language is spoken in the classroom.

Classroom management - The management of processes such as classroom set up and organized teaching and learning in order to facilitate instruction. It includes classroom procedures, groupings, how instructions are given, and student behavior management.

Communicative Language Teaching – It's an approach to foreign or second language learning which emphasizes on communicative competence. This approach has been developed particularly by British applied linguists in order to get away from grammar-based approaches. Teaching materials used with this approach teach functions such as requesting, describing, expressing likes and dislikes, etc. It also emphasizes the processes of communication such as using appropriate language in different types of situations; to perform different kinds of tasks, and even for social interaction with other people.

Core Vocabulary – These are the most common 2,000 -3,000 English words. They need to be deeply focused on in language teaching. Exotic vocabulary must not be presented until students have mastered basic, high-frequency words. Learners should be tested on core vocabulary lists for passive knowledge, active production and listening comprehension. Learners can't understand or speak at higher levels without these words as a foundation. Students need to spend time practicing these words until they become

automatic to them. Teachers need to present their students with strategies for developing automaticity of core vocabulary outside the classroom.

Interlanguage - The language a learner uses before mastering the target language. It may contain features of the non-standard first language and target language features.

Language learning requirements - Students have certain needs in order to learn a language: be exposed to the language, understand its meaning and structure, and practice it. Teachers should not over-explain or make things too easy. Learning shoud come through discovery.

Language skills - This refers to the way in which language is used. Listening, speaking, reading and writing are the four language skills. Writing and speaking are productive skills; listening and reading are receptive skills. These skills can be divided into sub-skills such as: discriminating sounds in connected speech, or understanding relationships within a sentence.

Learning burden - These are the features of the word that can differ dramatically from word to word. The teacher can to reduce learning burden for example, by reducing the number of definitions and uses presented.

Learning factors – Factors besides aptitude and attitude that affect the rate at which a student learns a second language. These are: student's motivation, the amount of time a student spends in class as well as practicing the outside of class, the approach to teaching, the teacher's style and its effectiveness.

CHAPTER III

3. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1.1. Quantitative Diagnostic

The quantitative diagnosis allows the numeric systemization of data that is found in the problem; this will help determine the aspects which must be corrected. In this case, the quantity of mispronounced phonemes in a designated reading passage.

In order to evaluate the quality of pronunciation, an initial evaluation will be done in which by means of having students read a small passage and recording their voices. Then, each recording will be carefully listened in order to then be tallied in regards to which phoneme of each word is being pronounced incorrectly. After, a series of interactive virtual dialogues will be created in view of which phonemes need work on improving. These dialogues will be applied to students during a specific period of time; once the time has passed, another evaluation will be held and the results will determine if the teaching resource used is effective in improving pronunciation.

3.2. TYPE OF RESEARCH

3.2.1. Inductive

This research is of an inductive characteristic considering that it starts from the pronunciation mistakes each one of the students; then to arrive at a global diagnosis which then allows defining the most adequate tool to correct said mistakes. This is beginning from individual situations until arriving at a general analysis.

3.2.2. Field

The research will be done at the site where the events take place; in the classrooms of the National University of Ecuador.

3.2.3. Documental

Considering that this research is a scientific foundation related to variable analysis in a study, in order to propose solutions though systematic documentation of the problem.

3.3. LEVEL OF RESEARCH

3.3.1. Correlational

The proposed research will attempt to show the relation between two quantitative variables.

3.4. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

3.4.1. Population

The population is made up of eleven students of the School of Languages of Fifth Semester. Four are men, seven are women.

3.4.2. Sample

Since there is such a small amount of students, no sample is needed.

3.5. TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTING

3.5.1. Techniques

Pronunciation test.

3.5.2. Instruments

Tally sheet.

3.6. TECHNIQUES FOR DATA PROCESSING AND INTERPRETATION

The processing and interpretation of data was done by means of using a diagnostic test. It was based on a reading which then was evaluated on the amount of pronunciation errors a student had.

In order to give trustworthiness of the data recording, audio recording with each student was done in order to determine if the pronunciation was correct or incorrect according to a phonetic analysis.

The obtained data was then quantified according to the phoneme. For this, each word was transcribed phonetically; and each mistake that was done on each phoneme was written down on a chart. The results of the phonemes are organized in a descending order to demonstrate which phonemes students had the most difficulty pronouncing.

The data was recorded in general charts and for a greater understanding, they were graphed. This allows others to visualize the mistakes in a better way, and to determine the critical points on which one must find a solution towards.

Later, a similar test was held after the usage of virtual dialogues in identical characteristics as the first time.

Finally, the results were compared and a statistical analysis was done with the obtained results.

CHAPTER IV

4. RESULTS ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. Initial Pronunciation Test Analysis

Chart 4.1 Initial Vowel Pronunciation Test

Phoneme	/ə/	/ɪ/	/ɔ/	/ɛ/	/ɑ/	/æ/	/i/	/ʊ/	Total
Student 1	42	31	4	6	10	15	1	1	110
Student 2	42	31	4	6	10	15	1	0	109
Student 3	42	31	4	6	10	15	0	1	109
Student 4	41	30	4	6	9	14	1	1	106
Student 5	42	31	4	6	10	15	1	0	109
Student 6	42	31	4	6	10	14	0	1	108
Student 7	42	31	4	6	10	15	0	1	109
Student 8	42	31	4	6	10	15	1	1	110
Student 9	41	30	3	5	10	13	0	1	103
Student 10	42	31	4	6	9	15	1	0	108
Student 11	42	31	4	6	10	15	1	1	110
Total	**460**	**339**	**43**	**65**	**108**	**161**	**7**	**8**	**1191**
Percentage	**38,62%**	**28,38%**	**3,61%**	**5,46%**	**9,07%**	**13,52%**	**0,59%**	**0,67%**	**100%**

Source: Initial Pronunciation Test
Done by: Steven Franco

Graph 4.1 Initial Vowel Pronunciation Test
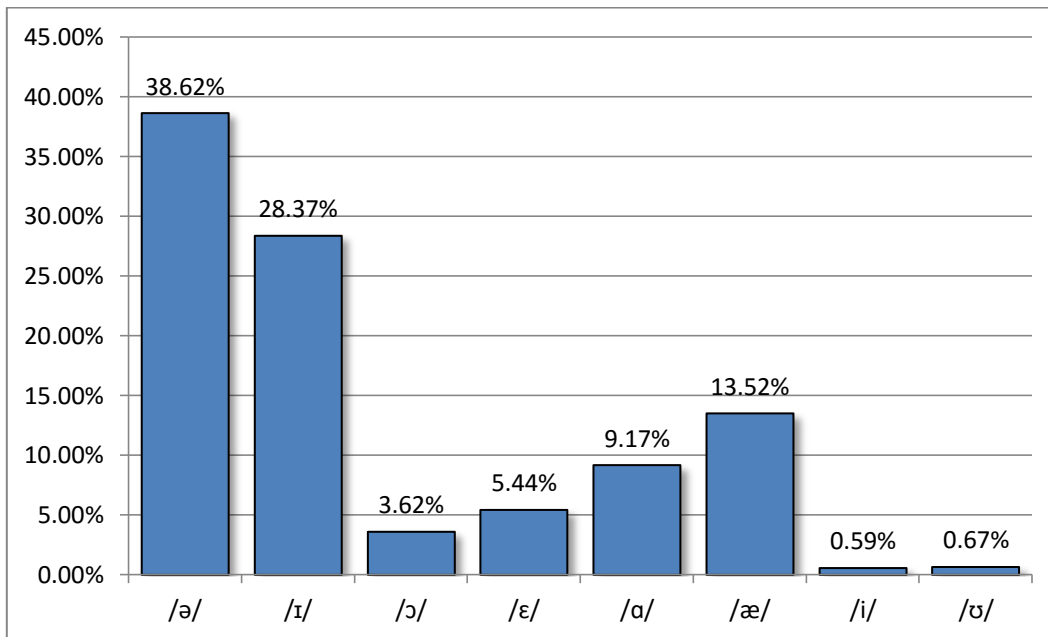
Source: Chart 4.1.
Done by: Steven Franco

Analysis: Of the initial vowel pronunciation test, the following results were obtained. For the phoneme /ə/, 11 analyzed students had 460 pronunciation mistakes, which is 32.68%. For the phoneme /ɪ/, 339 mistakes which is 28.38%. For the phoneme /ɔ/, 43 mistakes which is 3.61%. For the phoneme /ɛ/, 65 mistakes which is 5.46%. For the phoneme /ɑ/, 108 mistakes which is 9.07%. For the phoneme /æ/, 161 mistakes which is 13.52%. For the phoneme /i/, 7 mistakes which is 0.59%. For the phoneme /ʊ/, 8 mistakes which is 0.67%.

Interpretation: As seen in Chart 4.1 and Graph 4.1, students have made the greatest amount of mistakes with the /ə/ and /ɪ/ vowels since these sounds are very common in English but do not exist in Spanish. Then the next most common mistakes are /ɑ/ and /æ/. The first since it is associated with a similar sound in Spanish and the next one since it does not exist in Spanish. The rest of the phonemes, the percentages are smaller and are in relatively acceptable levels for Spanish speakers.

Chart 4.2 Initial Consonant Pronunciation Test

Phoneme	/ð/	/z/	/v/	/dʒ/	/ʃ/	/θ/	Total
Student 1	25	14	4	1	1	1	46
Student 2	25	14	6	2	0	1	48
Student 3	25	14	6	2	1	1	49
Student 4	23	13	5	1	1	2	45
Student 5	25	14	6	3	1	1	50
Student 6	25	14	5	2	0	2	48
Student 7	25	14	6	1	1	1	48
Student 8	25	14	6	2	1	0	48
Student 9	25	13	4	0	0	2	44
Student 10	25	14	5	2	1	0	47
Student 11	25	14	6	2	1	2	50
Total	**273**	**152**	**59**	**18**	**8**	**13**	523
Porcentaje	**52,19%**	**29,06%**	**11,28%**	**3,44%**	**1,53%**	**2,49%**	**100%**

Source: Initial Pronunciation Test
Done by: Steven Franco

Graph 4.2 Initial Consonant Pronunciation Test

Bar chart showing pronunciation mistake percentages by phoneme: /ð/ 52.19%, /z/ 29.06%, /v/ 11.28%, /ʤ/ 3.44%, /ʃ/ 1.53%, /θ/ 2.49%.
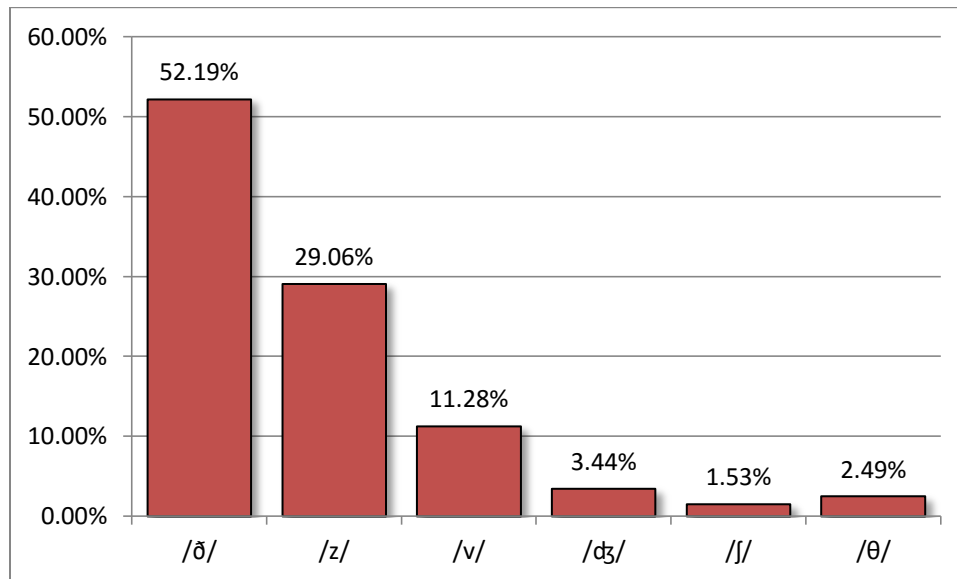
Source: Chart 4.2.
Done by: Steven Franco

Analysis: Of the initial consonant pronunciation test, the following results were obtained. For the phoneme /ð/, 11 analyzed students had 273 pronunciation mistakes, which is 52.19%. For the phoneme /z/, 152 mistakes which is 29.06%. For the phoneme /v/, 59 mistakes which is 11.28%. For the phoneme /ʤ/, 18 mistakes which is 3.44%. For the phoneme /ʃ/, 8 mistakes which is 1.53%. For the phoneme /θ/, 13 mistakes which is 2.49%.

Interpretation: In the cases of consonant phonemes with which students have the greatest difficulty pronouncing, they are /ð/ and /z/ due to their pronunciation characteristics. With the rest of phonemes, the mistakes are less due to their pronunciation which is similar to that of Spanish, which can be seen in Chart 4.2 and Graph 4.2.

Chart 4.3 Initial Test Total Mistake Percentage

Phoneme	Frecuency	Percentage
/ə/	460	26,84%
/ɪ/	339	19,78%
/ɔ/	43	2,51%
/ɛ/	65	3,79%
/ɑ/	108	6,30%
/æ/	161	9,39%
/i/	7	0,41%
/ʊ/	8	0,47%
/ð/	273	15,93%
/z/	152	8,87%
/v/	59	3,44%
/ʤ/	18	1,05%
/ʃ/	8	0,47%
/θ/	13	0,76%
Total	1704	100%

Source: Charts 4.1 and 4.2
Done by: Steven Franco

Graph 4.3 Initial Test Total Mistake Percentage
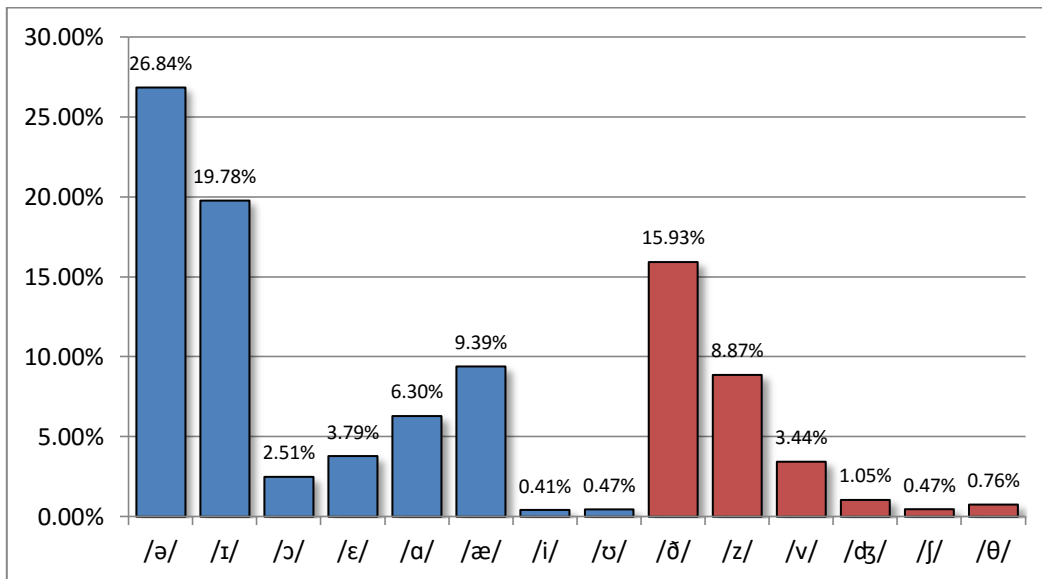
Source: Chart 4.3.
Done by: Steven Franco

Analysis: The total amount of mistakes found in the student evaluation is of 1704. For the phoneme /ə/, 11 analyzed students had 460 pronunciation mistakes, which is 26.54%. For the phoneme /ɪ/, 339 mistakes which is 19.76%. For the phoneme /ð/, 273 mistakes which is 15.93%. For the phoneme /æ/, 161 mistakes which is 9.39%. For the phoneme /z/, 152 mistakes which is 8.8%. For the phoneme /ɑ/, 108 mistakes which is 6.3%. For the phoneme /ɛ/, 65 mistakes which is 3.79%. For the phoneme /v/, 59 mistakes which is 3.44%. For the phoneme /ɔ/, 43 mistakes which is 2.51%. For the phoneme /dʒ/, 18 mistakes which is 1.05%. For the phonemes /θ/, /ʊ/,/ʃ/, /i/; an accumulated total of 36 mistakes which is 2.11%.

Interpretation: Of the analysis results, one can establish that the phonemes which are the most difficult to pronounce are the vowels /ə/, /ɪ/, /æ/; and the consonants/ð/ and /z/. These make up 80.81% of mistakes, which indicates that it is in these phonemes that one must make an effort to improve in order to have a better pronunciation.

4.2. Final Pronunciation Test Analysis

Chart 4.4 Final Vowel Pronunciation Test

Phoneme	/ə/	/ɪ/	/ɔ/	/ɛ/	/ɑ/	/æ/	/i/	/ʊ/	Total
Student 1	38	26	3	5	7	12	0	0	91
Student 2	41	27	4	5	9	12	0	0	98
Student 3	39	27	4	5	9	12	0	0	96
Student 4	39	26	3	4	9	11	1	1	94
Student 5	39	28	3	4	9	12	0	0	95
Student 6	39	27	4	5	8	11	0	1	95
Student 7	39	26	4	5	9	12	0	1	96
Student 8	39	26	4	3	9	12	0	1	94
Student 9	38	26	2	3	7	11	0	1	88
Student 10	38	28	2	5	9	12	0	0	94
Student 11	37	28	2	5	9	13	1	0	95
Total	426	295	35	49	94	130	2	5	**1036**
Percentage	**41,11 %**	**28,47 %**	**3,37 %**	**4,72 %**	**9,07 %**	**12,55 %**	**0,19 %**	**0,48 %**	**100 %**

Source: Final Pronunciation Test
Done by: Steven Franco

Graph 4.4 Final Vowel Pronunciation Test
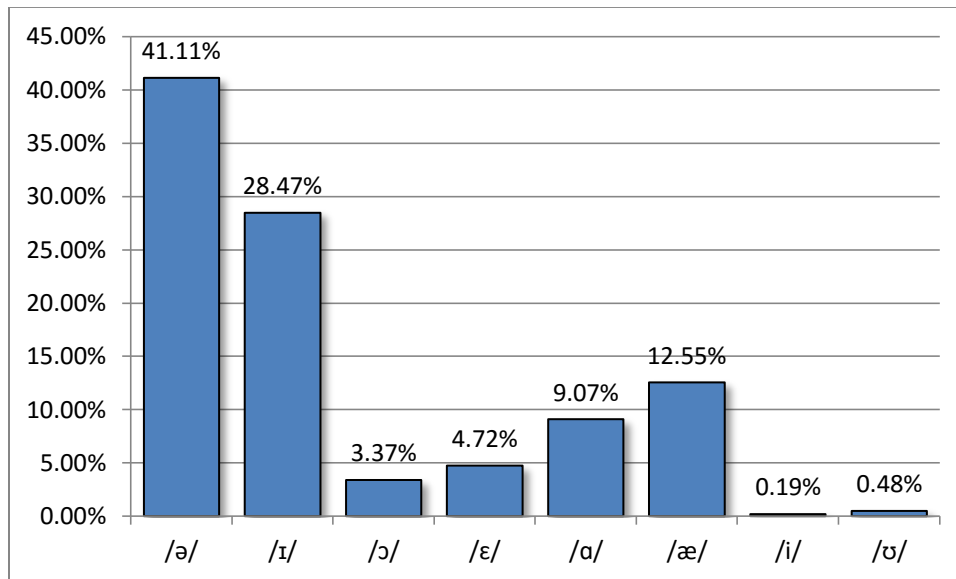
Source: Chart 4.4.
Done by: Steven Franco

Analysis: Of the final vowel pronunciation test, the following results were obtained.

For the phoneme /ə/, 11 analyzed students had 426 pronunciation mistakes, which is 41.11%. For the phoneme /ɪ/, 295 mistakes which is 28.47%. For the phoneme /ɔ/, 35 mistakes which is 3.37%. For the phoneme /ɛ/, 49 mistakes which is 4.72%. For the phoneme /ɑ/, 94 mistakes which is 9.07%. For the phoneme /æ/, 130 mistakes which is 12.55%. For the phoneme /i/, 2 mistakes which is 0.19%. For the phoneme /ʊ/, 5 mistakes which is 0.48%.

Interpretation: From this analysis, it can be seen that vowel pronunciation mistakes decreased from 1191 to 1036. However, the main phoneme mistakes are /ə/ and /ɪ/ due to the considerations that were noted in the initial vowel pronunciation test.

Chart 4.5 Final Consonant Pronunciation Test

Phoneme	/ð/	/z/	/v/	/dʒ/	/ʃ/	/θ/	Total
Student 1	25	14	4	1	0	1	45
Student 2	25	14	6	2	0	1	48
Student 3	25	14	6	2	1	1	49
Student 4	23	13	5	1	0	1	43
Student 5	25	14	6	2	0	1	48
Student 6	25	14	5	2	0	1	47
Student 7	25	14	6	1	1	1	48
Student 8	25	14	6	2	0	0	47
Student 9	25	13	4	0	0	1	43
Student 10	25	14	5	2	0	0	46
Student 11	25	14	6	2	1	1	49
Total	**273**	**152**	**59**	**17**	**3**	**9**	513
Percentage	**53,21%**	**29,64%**	**11,50%**	**3,32%**	**0,58%**	**1,75%**	**100%**

Source: Final Pronunciation Test
Done by: Steven Franco

Graph 4.5 Final Consonant Pronunciation Test
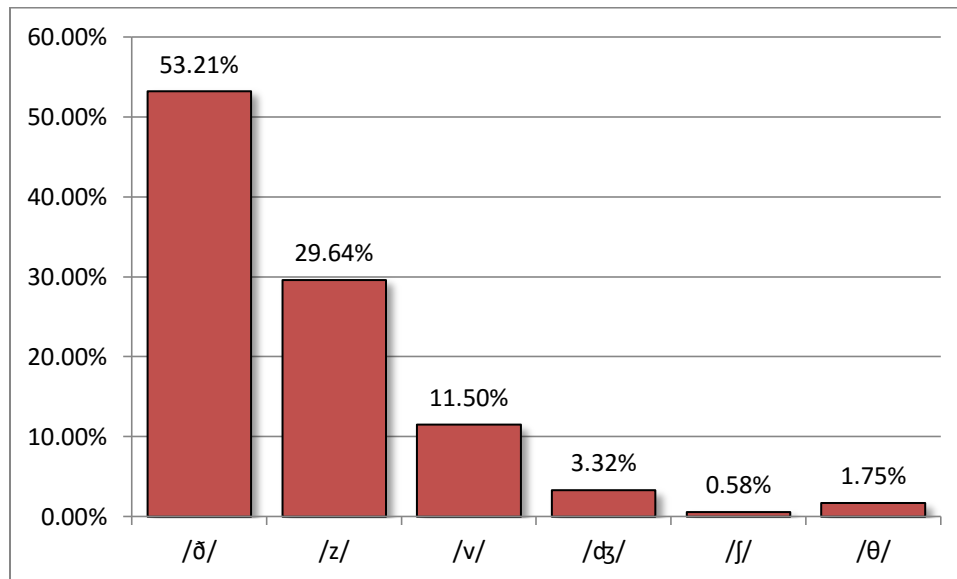
Source: Chart 4.5.
Done by: Steven Franco

Analysis: Of the initial consonant pronunciation test, the following results were obtained. For the phoneme /ð/, 11 analyzed students had 273 pronunciation mistakes, which is 53.21%. For the phoneme /z/, 152 mistakes which is 29.64%. For the phoneme /v/, 59 mistakes which is 11.50%. For the phoneme /ʤ/, 17 mistakes which is 3.32%. For the phoneme /ʃ/, 3 mistakes which is 0.58%. For the phoneme /θ/, 9 mistakes which is 1.75%.

Interpretation: According to analysis results, there is no significant variation between the initial and final test results. There is still a prevalence of pronunciation mistakes, especially of the consonants /ð/ y /z/ as one can see in Chart 4.5 and Graph 4.5.

Chart 4.6 Final Pronunciation Test Total Mistake Percentage

Phoneme	Frecuency	Percentage
/ə/	426	27,50%
/ɪ/	295	19,04%
/ɔ/	35	2,26%
/ɛ/	49	3,16%
/ɑ/	94	6,07%
/æ/	130	8,39%
/i/	2	0,13%
/ʊ/	5	0,32%
/ð/	**273**	17,62%
/z/	**152**	9,81%
/v/	**59**	3,81%
/dʒ/	**17**	1,10%
/ʃ/	**3**	0,19%
/θ/	**9**	0,58%
Total	1549	100%

Source: Final Pronunciation Test
Done by: Steven Franco

Graph 4.6 Initial Evaluation Total Mistake Percentage
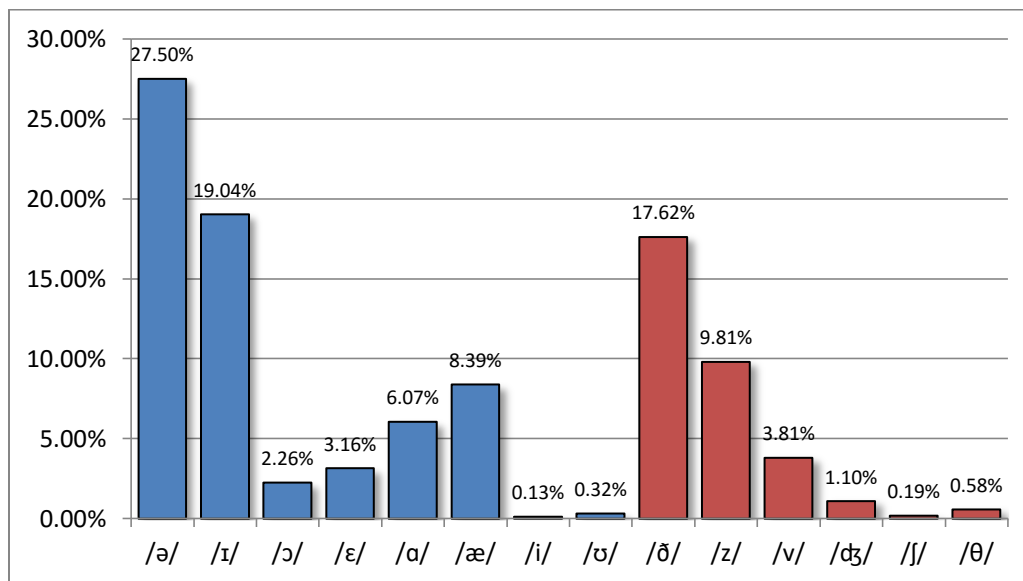
Source: Chart 4.6.
Done by: Steven Franco

Analysis: The total amount of mistakes found in the student evaluation is of 1549. For the phoneme /ə/, 11 analyzed students had 426 pronunciation mistakes, which is 27.50%. For the phoneme /ɪ/, 295 mistakes which is 19.04%. For the phoneme /ð/, 273 mistakes which is 17.62%. For the phoneme /æ/, 130 mistakes which is 8.39%. For the phoneme /z/, 152 mistakes which is 9.81%. For the phoneme /ɑ/, 94 mistakes which is 6.3%. For the phoneme /ɛ/, 49 mistakes which is 3.16%. For the phoneme /v/, 59 mistakes which is 3.81%. For the phoneme /ɔ/, 35 mistakes which is 2.26%. For the phoneme /ʤ/, 17 mistakes which is 1.05%. For the phonemes /θ/, /ʊ/,/ʃ/, /i/; an accumulated total of 19 mistakes which is 1.2%.

Interpretation: According to the final pronunciation test results obtained, one can affirm that there are 155 pronunciation mistakes less. There is still the tendency of pronunciation difficulty which is evident in the vowel phonemes /ə/, /ɪ/, /æ/; and in the consonant phonemes /ð/ y /z/. These vowels make up 82.32% of total mistakes done in the final test.

Chart 4.7 Total Phoneme Mistake Percentage Comparative Evaluation

Phoneme	Initial Test		Final Test	
	Frequency	**Percentage**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
/ə/	460	26,84%	426	27,50%
/ɪ/	339	19,78%	295	19,04%
/ɔ/	43	2,51%	35	2,26%
/ɛ/	65	3,79%	49	3,16%
/ɑ/	108	6,30%	94	6,07%
/æ/	161	9,39%	130	8,39%
/i/	7	0,41%	2	0,13%
/ʊ/	8	0,47%	5	0,32%
/ð/	**273**	15,93%	**273**	17,62%
/z/	**152**	8,87%	**152**	9,81%
/v/	**59**	3,44%	**59**	3,81%
/dʒ/	**18**	1,05%	**17**	1,10%
/ʃ/	**8**	0,47%	**3**	0,19%
/θ/	**13**	0,76%	**9**	0,58%
Total	1704	100%	1549	100%

Done by: Steven Franco

Graph 4.7 Total Phoneme Mistake Percentage Comparative Evaluation
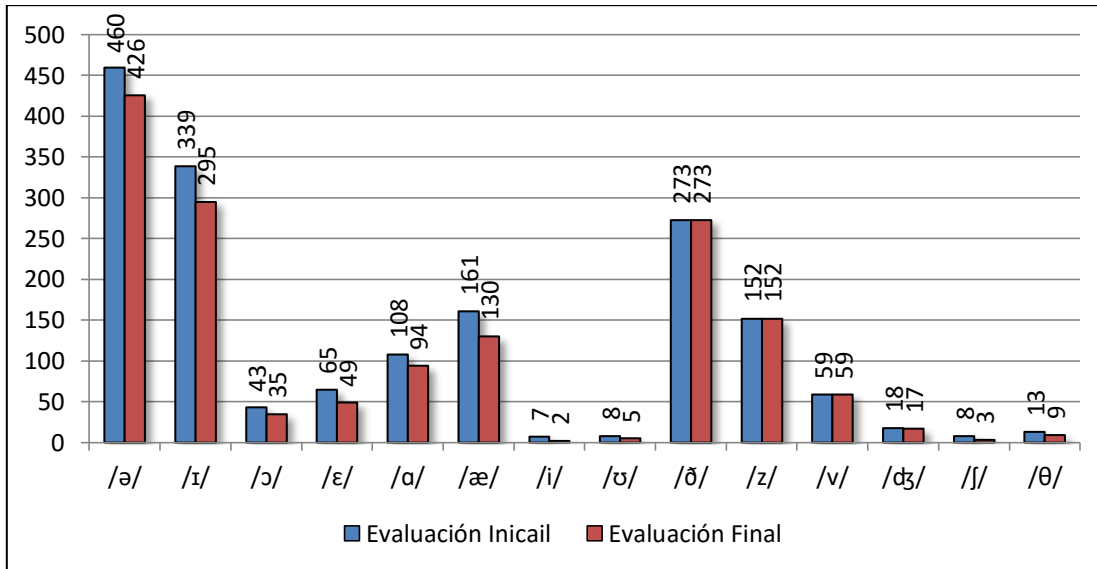
Before proposing this analysis result, it is important to note that the comparative evaluations between the initial and final tests were done in relation to the frequencies. These two percentages were based on the number of mistakes of each test; i.e. the number of mistakes in the first test is 1704 which represents 100% for this test, and 1549 mistakes for the final test.

Analysis: The comparison analysis between the initial and final tests indicates the following. The phoneme /ə/ had 460 mistakes done in the initial test, and 426 errors in the final test. The phoneme /ɪ/ had 339 mistakes done in the initial test, and 295 mistakes done in the final test. The phoneme /ɔ/ had 43 mistakes done in the initial test, and 35 mistakes done in the final test. The phoneme /ɛ/ had 65 mistakes done in the initial test, and 49 mistakes done in the final test. The phoneme /ɑ/ had 108 mistakes done in the initial test, and 94 mistakes done in the final test. The phoneme /æ/ had 161 mistakes done in the initial test, and 130 mistakes done in the final test. The phoneme /i/ had 7 mistakes done in the initial test, and 2 mistakes done in the final test. The phoneme /ʊ/ had 8 mistakes done in the initial test, and 5 mistakes done in the final test. The phoneme /ð/ had 273 mistakes done in the initial test, and the same amount of mistakes done in the final test. The

phoneme /a/ had 152 mistakes done in the initial test, and the same amount of mistakes done in the final test. The phoneme /v/ had 59 mistakes done in the initial test, and the same amount of mistakes done in the final test. The phoneme /ʤ/ had 18 mistakes done in the initial test, and 17 mistakes done in the final test. The phoneme /ʃ/ had 8 mistakes done in the initial test, and 3 mistakes done in the final test. The phoneme /θ/ had 13 mistakes done in the initial test, and 9 mistakes done in the final test.

Interpretation: One can infer from the comparison analysis done between the two tests that the differences found are not that big. However, they are significant enough in order to determine the validity of the application of virtual dialogues. This can be clearly observed in Chart 4.7 and Graph 4.7.

4.3. Hypothesis Testing

Chart 4.8 Initial and Final Pronunciation Test Mistakes

Student	Initial Test Mistakes	Final Test Mistakes	X_1^2	X_2^2
Student 1	158	136	24964	13689
Student 2	159	146	25281	16129
Student 3	159	145	25281	16129
Student 4	153	137	23409	13689
Student 5	161	143	25921	15129
Student 6	157	142	24649	15129
Student 7	157	144	24649	15625
Student 8	160	141	25600	15129
Student 9	147	131	21609	13225
Student 10	156	140	24336	14884
Student 11	161	144	25921	15876
	$\sum X_1 = 1728$	$\sum X_1 = 1549$	$\sum x_1^2 = 271620$	$\sum x_2^2 = 218333$
	$\overline{X_1} = 157{,}09$	$\overline{X_2} = 140{,}81$		
	$\sum x_1^2 =$	$\sum x_2^2 = 229{,}91$		
	$N_1 = 11$	$N_2 = 11$		

Done by: Steven Franco

Step 1: Hypothesis Approach.

H₁ = The usage of virtual dialogues eases correct English pronunciation for the students of Fifth Semester of the Language Career.

H₀ = The usage of virtual dialogues does not ease correct English pronunciation for the students of Fifth Semester of the Language Career.

Step 2: Degrees of Freedom

DF = (N_1 + N_2 - 2)

DF = (11 + 11 − 2)

DF = 20

α = 0.05

t_{chart} = 1.7247

Step 3: The Sum of Squares for each Distribution

Formula:

$$\sum x^2 = \sum X^2 - \frac{(\sum X)^2}{N}$$

For the YES category

$$\sum x^2 = 271620 - \frac{(1728)^2}{11}$$

$$\sum x^2 = 166.91$$

For the NO category

$$\sum x^2 = 218333 - \frac{(1549)^2}{11}$$

$$\sum x^2 = 205.64$$

Step 4: Variance Grouping.

$$S_{D\,\bar{x}} = \sqrt{\frac{\sum x_1^2 + \sum x_2^2}{N(N-1)}}$$

$$S_{D\,\bar{x}} = \sqrt{\frac{166.91 + 205.64}{11(11-1)}}$$

$$S_{D\,\bar{x}} = 20.73$$

Step 5: Student "t" Factor Calculation

$$t = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{S_{D\,\bar{x}}}$$

$$t = \frac{157.09 - 140.81}{3.68}$$

$$t = 4.4239$$

Step 6: Decision Rule.

H$_o$ is rejected if t$_{obs}$ < - 4.4239 o > 4.4239; if not, it is accepted.

Graph 4.8 Student "t" Factor
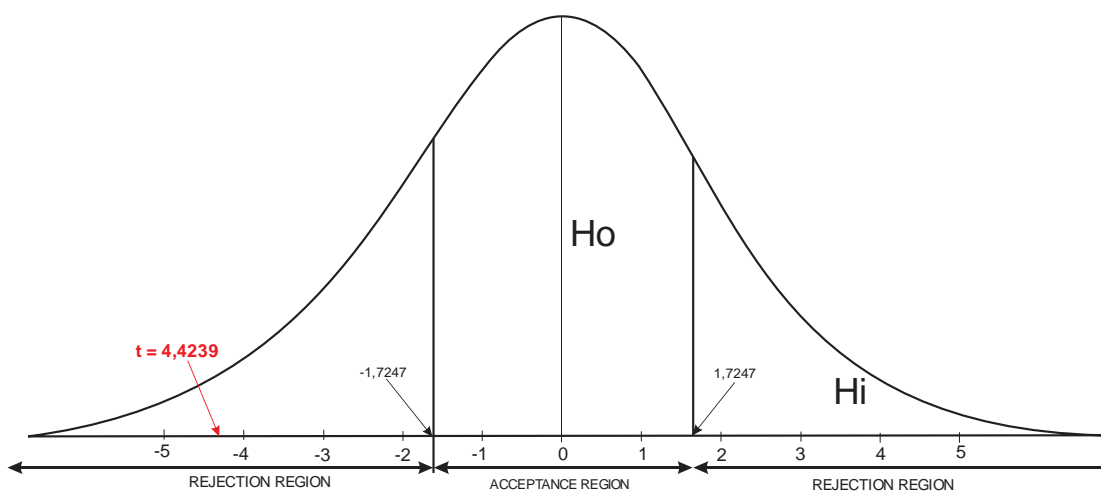
Done by: Steven Franco

Since the calculated value of "t" (4.4239) is greater than the table value 1.247 which is the null hypothesis, H$_o$, the alternative hypothesis H$_i$ is accepted which is: The usage of virtual dialogues eases correct English pronunciation for the students of Fifth Semester of the Language Career.

CHAPTER V

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. CONCLUSIONS

After applying a reading test to establish pronunciation mistakes; it was concluded that the students of Fifth Semester at the Language Career of the National University of Chimborazo show pronunciation problems. These are mainly shown in the vowel phonemes /ə/, /ɪ/, /æ/; and the consonant phonemes /ð/ /z/ /v/ due to the fact that these sounds are common in English but do not exist in Spanish.

After considering the pronunciation mistakes and analyzing diverse existing methodologies for pronunciation teaching; it was concluded that the best alternative were virtual dialogues. It is because of its characteristics that allow a more efficient development through means of listening and vocabulary increasing. Along with this is the fact that one can work alone or in groups.

Once the methodology was applied for correcting pronunciation; it was concluded that even though the difference of the initial and final test results is minor, the achieved goals are sufficiently significant in order to establish that virtual dialogues improve pronunciation among students.

5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Once it was established that the main pronunciation problems among students of Fifth Semester of the Language Career at the National University of Chimborazo are the vowel phonemes /ə/, /ɪ/, /æ/; and the consonant phonemes /ð/, /z/, /v/; it is recommended that students do complimentary activities to overcome this difficulty. Considering eliminating the problem is very complex since it is shown that the sounds that cause the greatest

amount of mistakes are inexistent in Spanish; thus, it turns out to be too complex for students to retain and apply this pronunciation knowledge.

The application of virtual dialogues has demonstrated to be an efficient complimentary methodology in order to improve English pronunciation. It is therefore recommended to use it as a permanent and integrated way as a methodology in curricular planning; it is important to improve and adapt resources that the university had to ease its application.

The incidence of the usage of virtual dialogues among students had been significant in the both the processes of learning and mistake elimination. It is therefore recommended that the learning processes be more interactive, and that relevance is given to dialogue and conversation as English communication operative mechanisms.

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment Nº 1: Tally Sheet.

Phoneme	/ə/	/ɪ/	/ɔ/	/ɛ/	/ɑ/	/æ/	/i/	/ʊ/	/ð/	/z/	/v/	/dʒ/	/ʃ/	/θ/	Total
Student 1															
Student 2															
Student 3															
Student 4															
Student 5															
Student 6															
Student 7															
Student 8															
Student 9															
Student 10															
Student 11															
Total															

Observations:

Attachment Nº 2: Evidence Pictures

Attachment Nº 3: Preproject

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF CHIMBORAZO

FACULTY OF HUMAN, TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE EDUCATION

SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES

RESEARCH WORK TITLE

The Usage of Interactive Virtual Dialogues for the Correct Pronunciation of the Students of Fifth Semester of the Language Career of the Faculty of Human, Technology and Science Education at the National University of Chimborazo During the Academic Period October 2015-February 2016.

AUTHOR
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2015 - 2016

GENERAL ASPECTS:

- **GRADUATION WORK TITLE**

The Usage of Interactive Virtual Dialogues for the Correct Pronunciation of the Students of Fifth Semester of the Language Career of the Faculty of Human, Technology and Science Education at the National University of Chimborazo During the Academic Period October 2015-February 2016.

- **AUTHOR(S)**

Steven Ross Franco Mera

- **TUTOR**

Msc. Magdalena Ullauri

- **PLACE OF STUDY**

National University of Chimborazo

- **ESTIMATED STUDY TIME**

3 months

- **BENEFICIARIES**

Students of Fifth Semester of the Language Career of the Faculty of Human, Technology and Science Education

- **ESTIMATED COST**

$242.00 Two-hundred forty-two dollars.

- **FINANCING**

The study will be financed by the researcher.

CHAPTER I

REFERENTIAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 THE PROBLEM USED FOR RESEARCH

The Usage of Interactive Virtual Dialogues for the Correct Pronunciation of the Students of Fifth Semester of the Language Career of the Faculty of Human, Technology and Science Education at the National University of Chimborazo During the Academic Period October 2015-February 2016.

1.2. RESEARCH PROBLEM FORMULATION

English is the globalization communication tool. Its study and learning is a requirement for professional growth considering that 75% of the technical and scientific information in the world is published in this language; whether it's in books or by means of the internet. On the other hand, social and global commercial forces people to communicate in this language which in this present day is spoken by more than a billion people and has become the official mean of communication in the world.

But speaking and understanding English for efficient communication requires certain conditioning; knowing that it is enough to just have a grasp on vocabulary, or grammar. The most relevant aspect is to be able to express one self and be made known in a correct manner. This competence is one of the critical points that the teaching of English has in our medium and halts its teaching. This is due to the phonetic differences between Spanish and English, which has different ways of pronunciation. This is the result of historical process of formation as well as different regional influences of the language. Another factor to consider is the learning of the English language is the influence of accent, which depends on the region due to the wide expansion of the language in the world.

In this context, and considering the processes of teaching English to the students of the Language career of the National University of Chimborazo, is has been established that

there is a low level in the ability of pronunciation. This is a consequence due to insufficient learning, which is generated as an effect of limited speaking practice. Languages that are being learned are practiced in a designated space and time; this develops involuntary mistakes which are then transmitted to students of elementary and baccalaureate levels. According to Freddy Peñafiel, a substitute to the Minister of Eductaion during 2014, mentions that "the evaluation done to 4,512 elementary and baccalaureate level teachers on a national level, only 2% reached the TOEFL B2 requirement to be a teacher. (GAMA TV, 2014)

Another problem for the learning of pronunciation of English is that the opportunities in our environment are rare in order for us to be able to talk to other English speakers, and is thus just restricted to it happening only in the classroom. This makes it difficult to focus on the acquired knowledge and put it to practice. This also complicates the development of obtaining a correct pronunciation.

However, the interest of college students in the most recent generations can be seen in acquiring a correct pronunciation by means of music and videos. However, this methodology should be used as a strengthening mean with the supervision of professors, considering that songs and videos are not scholarly designed as learning tools.

When one listens to a song, the main amount of attention is focused on the melodic and rhythmic aspects, but not on the lyrics. Even less is the amount of attention paid to the pronunciation due to the lyrics interfering with the musical instruments. There is no clear distinction in the phonemes; this easily causes confusion to non-native English speakers.

When one watches a movie, the main amount of attention is focused on a global context and not in a specific manner, such as how the actors talk. The way in which actors talk can be distorted due to the sound effects in the movie; on the other hand, actors might play the role of someone with a foreign accent or one of someone with a different pronunciation than that of which one is studying or used to. When all these factors of pronouncing

English come together, problems arise in a drastic matter since the phonemes of each word can be different from the one that is required.

In this learning context, research on the which are the most common mistakes students have in regards to English pronunciation is proposed. This is of much importance in order to solve these learning problems through means of teaching tool design and application. With this, the teacher or professor can structure them in a specific way in order to confront the problem directly without any generalizations which are found in traditional teaching processes.

1.3. PROBLEM FORMULATION

In What Way Does The Usage of Interactive Virtual Dialogues Contribute Towards the Correct Pronunciation of the Students of Fifth Semester of the Language Career of the Faculty of Human, Technology and Science Education at the National University of Chimborazo During the Academic Period October 2015-February 2016?

1.4. DERIVED DIRECTIVE QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS

What is the level of pronunciation of English in the students of Fifth Semester of the Language Career?

How to apply virtual methodologies for a proper English pronunciation?

Up to what point does the usage of virtual dialogues contribute to the improvement of English pronunciation with the students of Fifth Semester of the National University of Chimborazo?

1.5. OBJECTIVES

1.5.1. GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To Improve The Pronunciation of the Students of Fifth Semester of the Language Career of the Faculty of Human, Technology and Science Education at the National University of Chimborazo During the Academic Period October 2015-February 2016 by Means of Virtual Dialogues.

1.5.2. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Determine the level of pronunciation of the students of Fifth Semester of the Language Career.

Define the methodological virtual processes for a correct English pronunciation.

Establish in what way the usage of virtual dialogues contribute to the improvement of English pronunciation among the students of Fifth Semester of the Languages Career in the National University of Chimborazo.

1.6. JUSTIFICATION

English teaching has taken up certain significant relevance. Nowadays, all educational processes for undergraduate education are linked one way or another with the capability of managing English. The reasons for this are very diverse but the main one is in the need to integrate oneself with the rest of the world. Considering that the major part of science, technology, economic and social development on a world scale use English as its main communication tool.

This research project is designed to improve the pronunciation in students of Fifth Semester of the Language Career of the National University of Chimborazo. It proposes a

methodological procedure related with new technologies; by means of the usage of virtual and interactive dialogues with permanent availability for professors and students alike.

Improvement of the levels of communication by means of the development of the Speaking skill integrates: the abilities of answering in a coherent way, using adequate words, managing speed and rhythm. This however, is not enough to be made understood in an efficient way; it is convenient to work in a more practical way to improve pronunciation in a complementary way. The student will then be able to establish a fluid conversation with no problem, which will improve his or her future abilities to teach English in an integral and efficient way.

The usage of technological resources is consequent with the development of communication skills in globalization. By bringing students closer to virtual environments, one looks for their inclusion to the education process by means of the internet. Projecting the independent acquiring of knowledge will allow the strengthening of language acquisition and teaching with ease. In this sense, virtual dialogues are an efficient mechanism to teach correct pronunciation due to the lack of environment settings where students can increase their knowledge.

CHAPTER II

THEORY FRAMEWORK

2.1. PREVIOUS RESEARCH DONE WITH THE PROBLEM

In the research "The use of internet in the learning of English pronunciation, an experience with engineering students", done by Sanhueza Martinez, (2005), it is proposed that: it was demonstrated that using the internet is an efficient mean for the teaching of English pronunciation, which can perfectly be combined with classic instructional methods. It can be concluded that there are no significant differences in the level of acquiring English pronunciation among students that use the internet as a mean of learning, and among those that do not use it. The obtained results are very similar and clearly demonstrate the benefit of using the internet for teaching.

Martinez assures that there are enough websites for pronunciation, which provide varied quality resources for phonetic practice. The majority of these sites are of academic origin and without commercial goals. If working seriously, with clear educational views in mind, one can put these resources to great use that are available nowadays on the internet. One must remember that this is a highly motivating and comfortable mean of learning for students who are now considered to be "children" of this globalized society.

Mejia Gavilanez (2013), in the research about the usage of virtual classrooms in the development of oral comprehension of English for students of Fourth Level of the Language Center of the Central University of Ecuador during the period 2012-2013, proposes that the process of education is still in a traditional style even though it is supposed to provide written evidence that it is active. There is a limited access of the usage of technological tools; students don't use them in a pertinent form in order to complete virtual classroom activities such as forums, assignments, questionnaires, and video calls for the process of oral comprehension.

Students don't use linguistic comprehension for the development of oral comprehension of English, given that they do not do it in a relevant manner in terms of coding, decoding, the phonetic chain, sound differentiation, vocabulary, and the identification of grammar structures.

On the other hand, Mejia Gavilanez (2013) recommends that it is necessary to implement podcasts, forums, assignments, and questionnaires among other activities for linguistic comprehension. This is to increase vocabulary which will be done through virtual classrooms for the development of oral comprehension as a didactic process of learning.

In the research done by Rodriguez Peña, Medina Betancourd, and Lorenzo Martin (2013), it is shown that: for a competent English teacher's success from the oral communication and professional pedagogic point of view, the preparation of faculty members for forming and developing the levels of oral communicative competence in English as in a foreign language in different educational levels is a priority. The professional pedagogical focus of this competence must also be treated upon.

The ability of oral expression is the leading communicative skill in the majority of English courses in general, including those designed for future English teachers and professors. Their forming is complex, not only in those that are inherent to the oral system of the English language, but also constitutes in content and form in the direction of the learning - teaching process. This means that applying communicative strategies and linguistic registries that are adequate for the needs and growing possibilities of their students and of their own, which are made up of not only natural linguistic elements, but also and especially, by extraverbal elements.

2.2.   THEORY FUNDAMENTS

2.2.1. The English Language and the Learning of Pronunciation

It is beyond doubt that pronouncing a language properly is a key aspect when understanding and making ourselves understood. In the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching and learning process pronunciation should play a determining role since it is directly related with the development of students' communicative competence and thus to language proficiency and comprehensibility.

Spoken communication is grounded on the communicability not only determined by correct grammar and profuse vocabulary but also on the correct interplay between the segmental and suprasegmental features making up pronunciation. As Burns, (2003) concedes, despite minor inaccuracies in vocabulary and grammar, learners are more likely to communicate effectively when they have good pronunciation and intonation. Nowadays, as Pourhosein Gilakjani, (2012, p.120), states, despite the "emphasis on the importance of meaningful communication and intelligible pronunciation, it is not enough to leave pronunciation teaching and training to pronunciation classes only"; it is determining that the relatively few hours devoted to this purpose in the curriculum are planned and devised to make the most of them, giving students the tools to continue improving on their own and the voice to express in which ways they learn the best.

2.2.2. Importance of an Adequate Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the most important skill of spoken English. Not surprisingly, pronunciation instruction plays a significant role in the teaching of English as a second language (ESL) (Jahan, 2011). Given that the majority of ESL learners seek to speak native-like English (Derwing, 2003), the importance of teaching pronunciation cannot be emphasized too much (Hismanoglu, 2006). Obviously, it is imperative that teachers help

learners of English develop the ability for the communication needs and the ability for being understood easily (Morley, 1991)

However, many of English Language Learners (ELLs) confront difficulties in learning English pronunciation (Gilakjani, 2011). Problems in pronunciation weaken their communicative competence (Hinofotis & Bailey, 1981). More severely, many of them still lack sufficient proficiency in pronunciation even if they have learned English in an ESL course. In fact, it is understandable that an ESL student using a nonstandard variety of English might be negatively affected while acquiring English language if they are not familiar with standardized English (Charity H & Mallison, 2011). Specifically, ESL students' "pronunciation conventions differ from those of English speakers" (Benjamin, 2002). Accordingly, helping ESL students learn standardized English should begin with understanding pronunciation variations that ESL students possess while acquiring English.

Needless to say, to enhance ESL students' ability in English articulation, teachers should develop the awareness towards pronunciation variations while working with them (Morley, 1991). More precisely, it is necessary that teachers develop their awareness on diverse sound structures, further gaining insights into pronunciation variations that ESL students are facing now. In particular, teachers who work with students from diverse backgrounds need to have informative knowledge on ESL students' English language variation in order to better serve those students; unfolding the differences and problems of English articulation.

2.2.3. Reasons to Improve Pronunciation

Good pronunciation brings success to ESL students. On the contrary, insufficient proficiency of English pronunciation influences the development of communicative competence that is required for building up the communicative bridge between speakers and listeners.

Precisely speaking, great pronunciation competence in English is able to make others understand easily; whereas, English pronunciation inferior to basic level increases the misunderstanding among conversations with others (Gilakjani, 2011). It is not necessary to speak English like a native speaker but "well enough to be understood" (Jesry, 2005). Clearly, the positive effect of good pronunciation in the process of learning English is assured and reinforced; thus, ESL students should be taught standardized ways of English articulation (Gilakjani, 2011).

Talking of the standardized English articulation, the fact that students' language variations affect how they perform in academic years of schools should not be neglected (Charity H & Mallison, 2011). In particular, phonological variation is one of language variables involving learning processes (Sinha, Banerjee, & Shastri , 2009). Rather, sound patterns of learners' first language are likely to influence their pronunciation in target languages. Understandably, nonstandardized English-speaking students are therefore afraid of being teased or feel embarrassed when they try to pronounce English accurately (Nogita, 2010).

It is obvious that differences in phonological system of mother languages will hinder rather than promote English pronunciation learning (Huang & Radant, 2009). To improve ESL students' English pronunciation, teachers thus must gain insights into their pronunciation variations, which will provide teachers with ideas of designing differentiated teaching strategies for dealing with those students' problems in learning English pronunciation. In fact, teachers are able to help all students learn standardized English without diminishing their linguistic backgrounds through knowing their language variations (Charity H & Mallison, 2011). Accordingly, verbal assessment should not be based on specific norms, but take linguistic differences into account and value students' voices.

Needless to say, knowing English language variation of ESL students will eventually help teachers prepare to instruct their students, perceive the learning problems, and help students solve the problems (Dalle & Young, 2003). Hazen stated that "if people had a better understanding of how language works, they would probably be less inclined to make negative judgments about speakers of different dialects" (Hazen , 2001). Indeed, "language

is integral to both culture and identity, an understanding of language variation and language diversity is critical to multicultural education" (Charity H & Mallison, 2011). "We can't teach what we don't know" (as cited in Charity & Mallinson, 2011). Therefore, understanding pronunciation variations facing ESL students can help teachers be aware of students' dialect diversity and challenges in learning standardized English articulation.

2.2.4. Main Pronunciation Problems in English Learning

2.2.4.1. Vowels

a) Short and Long Vowel Pairs

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. (Case , 1998)

Relevant pairs include: bit/beat, not/note, batter/barter, pull/pool, etc. As the pairs above 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 don't fully get the hang of vowel length.

b) 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.

2.2.4.2. Consonants

Words written with "b" and "v" are mostly pronounced identically, making this perhaps the most common spelling mistake in Spanish. 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 Argentinean 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). (Case , 1998)

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 Espain". Spanish speakers have no problem producing a hissing sound, so the secret is to have them make the word directly after that "s" 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 as 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)

2.2.4.3. Number of Syllables

Particularly when it comes to final consonant clusters in English, Spanish-speakers can suffer both from adding extra syllables (e.g. three syllables for "advanced" with the final

"e" pronounced) and swallowing sounds to make it match the desired number of syllables (e.g. "fifths" sounding like "fiss"). With words that are similar in Spanish and English, they can also often try to make the English word match the Spanish number of syllables.

2.2.4.4. Word stress

Trying to make Latinate words in English match Spanish pronunciation is also true for word stress. There is also a more general problem that Spanish, unlike English, has a pretty regular system of word stress. (Case , 1998)

2.2.4.5. Sentence Stress

Spanish is sometimes described as a "syllable-timed" language, basically meaning that each syllable takes up about the same amount of time. This means that the English idea of unstressed syllables and weak forms being squashed in between stressed syllables doesn't really exist in Spanish. This can make it difficult for Spanish speakers to pick out and point out the important words in a sentence.
Intonation

Spanish speakers, especially males, can sound quite flat in English, and this can cause problems in formal situations and other times when polite language is needed (especially as Spanish speakers also have other problems with polite language such as over-use of the verb "give").

2.2.4.6. Alphabet

The names and pronunciations of the letters of the alphabet in Spanish can cause confusions between these pairs in both listening and speaking, e.g. (Case , 1998), A/E, A/R, E/I, C/K, G/J.

2.2.5. The Virtual Teaching of English

Technology use has infiltrated itself into every aspect of our lives becoming ever more pervasive and indispensable. At the same time learning and teaching are faltering and seeking new directions, precipitated by a movement from a pre- to post-modern era (Graddol, 2006). With the global march in education and an estimated two billion simultaneous learners of English by 2030 (Graddol, 2006), it is more imperative than ever to test the affordances of technology for educational purposes (Blake R, 2008)

Larsen - Freeman (1990), cited in Garcia-Carbonell, A., (2001). claims to have identified more than forty theories relating to Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Vygotsky (1962, 1978) focused on the pre-requisite of social interaction while Piaget, in the 1940-50's, emphasized the problem-solving essence of knowledge building. Hugely influential theories such as Behaviourism (Skinner, 1957), Nativism (Chomsky, 1965) and Acquisition Hypotheses (Krashen, 1985) must now compete with new theories inspired by the ubiquity of digital interaction; Situated Learning explores knowledge exchange between online communities (Lave and Wenger, 1991, cited in Sefton-Green, 2004). New Literacy encompasses a broader investigation of how users create knowledge from digital stimulus (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001).

Today, internet is an important part of our lives as English. For this reason, it can be said that learning via internet is an alternative way to learn English. Web-based technologies and powerful internet connections provide various new possibilities for the development of educational technology. Web-based learning is currently one of the major applications of the internet. Generally distance education has been delivered by the technology such as videoconferencing, videotape, satellite broadcast, TV broadcast, internet, and so on (Cavus, 2007)

In 1996, participation in web-based higher education courses was estimated to be 1 million students and projected to be 3 million by 2000 (Endelson P, 1998). Current researches show us that educational institutions are increasingly embracing new technologies and software to aid instruction. The use of IICTs has often good reasons in terms of the positive

impact of those technologies on learning. But recent research show that there is still challenge between computer use and learning outcomes.

WWW (World Wide Web) is a new technology which is the most popular and used Internet tools, serves increasingly as a communication facilitator. Web-mediated communication is a powerful interaction medium. (e.g., e-mail, group conferencing, internet relay chat) that enables students to communicate with peers, teachers, and experts and conduct collaborative work (Miodusser, Nachmias, Lahav, & Oren, 2000). The web also serves as an instructional delivery medium. Numerous web sites provide digital educational activities and network based courses for all grade levels in a large number of subjects.

Web-based learning is an important medium for designing and delivering instruction by addressing a variety of learning strategies (Khan & Vega, 2007). The learners in web generally are responsible for their own process of learning and results (Reeves & Reeves, 2007). This gives them the freedom of moving everywhere all over the world whenever they want.

The range of uses to which computers have been put in the service of language teaching and learning is remarkable. Students can learn grammar and vocabulary from basic keyboard-input programs; they can access sound and video on CD-ROM; they can record their voices and compare their pronunciation with that of a native speaker; they can use word-processing programs such to do writing and editing exercises, or presentation programs dictionaries, thesauri, encyclopedias and the resources of the Web to help them. Many such systems attempt to serve learners interacting with the learning source at different chronological times. Web-based learning, then, is often referred to as those delivery modalities that seek to reduce the barriers of time and space to learning, thus the frequently used phrase 'anytime, anywhere learning'. A Learning Management System (LMS) is a software system to deliver web-based education. An LMS provides the platform for the web-based learning environment by enabling the management, delivery, and tracking of learning. LMS are often viewed as being the starting point of any web-based learning program.

2.2.6. The Teaching of English Pronunciation Assisted by a Computer

Alessi and Trollip (2001) provided five types of compuler-based instruction activities. these being tutorials, drills, simulations, instructional games, and tests (Boyd & Murphy. 2002. p.36). The computer-assisted software used for teaching pronunciation also provides some of these features. (Boyd & Murphrey, 2002) stated that: "Computer-based multimedia provides instructional designers the tools of animation, video, and sound to provide learners with working models that convey complex concepts. Specifically, multimedia simulations provide stimuli to auditor)', visual, and kinesthetic learners. It is known that animation can increase learner interest and motivation, provide metacognitive scaffolding and mental models, and promote visual stimuli to establish connections between the abstract and the concrete" (Boyd & Murphrey, 2002, pág. 37).

Software used for teaching pronunciation makes the invisible sound become visible and concrete graphics appear in front of the foreign language learners. The learners learn to pronounce the sound not only by listening, imitating and repeating, but also through receiving feedback. Therefore, learners may receive feedback without suffering embarrassment in front of other students (Boyd & Murphrey, 2002)

Boyd & Murphrey, (2002) has argued that "one of the most powerful uses of multimedia is to immerse the user in a learning environment". Taiwan is not an English speaking country, and outside of the English classroom, people speak Mandarin, Hokkien, Hakka or other dialects. As a result, Taiwanese learners find it difficult to speak English in their daily lives. By using the software, which teaches learning pronunciation, learners can experience a simulated environment of English. Moreover, in the environment of CALL (Liou, 2003), indicated "Nowadays, technology has new potentials in multimedia or hypermedia - type courseware where students have considerable freedom to navigate in the environment". With this potential, students can have enhanced contact with English pronunciation.

Pennington (1999) noted that adolescent and adult language learners both risked "fossilization" or "diminishing returns" at a very early (intermediate) stage of learning a new language. The term fossilization is described as "a plateau in language learning beyond which it is difficult for learners to progress without exceptional effort or motivation". (Celce Murcia & Olshtain, 2000, pág. 21) "Diminishing returns" in language learning means that at an advanced level there is less discernible progress for the time allocated. He pointed out that "most adult learners will hardly be able to improve their productive and receptive competence of a new sound system without explicit instruction" (pg. 428). Computer-aided or assisted pronunciation with phonological systems can improve adolescent and adult language learners" productive and receptive competence in pronunciation of a target language. The subjects in this research were about the ages of 18-23. In view of the points made above, they were at an ideal age to be exposed to learning English pronunciation through computer software.

Martino (2009) discussed the contribution network computers can make when used as a resource for both students and teachers within the classroom as an "environment" for the acquisition of experience and know-how; and as an instrument of equality in TESL. Dunkel (2001) also stated that the need is now for second language (L2) researchers to engage in more ethno-methodological research that investigates the social as well as the cognitive impact of using computers for L2 learning and teaching. In Martino's research, his colleagues have reported that only when the potential of network technology and its peculiarity of promoting choice and respect for individual differences are fully understood and exploited, will computer use make a difference in education and. in particular, in language learning. It is hoped that this study will contribute to this growth of understanding.

2.3. HYPOTHESIS

The Usage of Interactive Virtual Dialogues Eases the Correct Pronunciation of the Students of Fifth Semester of the Language Career of the Faculty of Human, Technology and

Science Education at the National University of Chimborazo During the Academic Period October 2015-February 2016.

2.4. VARIABLES

2.4.1. Independent Variable

Virtual Dialogues

2.4.2. Dependent Variable

Correct English Pronunciation

2.5. DEFINITIONS OF BASIC TERMS

Achievement test - A test to measure what students have learned or achieved from a program of study; should be part of every language program and be specific to the goals and objectives of a specific language course. These tests must be flexible to respond to the particular goals and needs of the students in a language program.

Audiolingualism - A form of language learning based on behaviorist psychology. It stresses the following: listening and speaking before reading and writing; activities such as dialogues and drills, formation of good habits and automatic language use through much repetition; use of target language only in the classroom.

Classroom management - The management of classroom processes such as how the teacher sets up the classroom and organizes teaching and learning to facilitate instruction. Includes classroom procedures, groupings, how instructions for activities are given, and management of student behavior.

Communicative Language Teaching - Communicative language teaching (CLT) is an approach to foreign or second language learning which emphasizes that the goal of language learning is communicative competence. The communicative approach has been developed particularly by British applied linguists as a reaction away from grammar-based approaches such as the aural-oral (audio-lingual) approach. Teaching materials used with a communicative approach teach the language needed to express and understand different kinds of functions, such as requesting, describing, expressing likes and dislikes, etc. Also, they emphasize the processes of communication, such as using language appropriately in different types of situations; using language to perform different kinds of tasks, e.g. to solve puzzles, to get information, etc.; using language for social interaction with other people.

Interlanguage - The language a learner uses before mastering the foreign language; it may contain features of the first language and the target language as well as non-standard features.

Language learning requirements - To learn language, students have four needs: They must be exposed to the language. They must understand its meaning and structure. And they must practice it. Teachers should hold their students as able. They should not over-explain or make things too easy. Learning comes through discovery.

Language skills - In language teaching, this refers to the mode or manner in which language is used. Listening, speaking, reading and writing are generally called the four language skills. Speaking and writing are the productive skills, while reading and listening are the receptive skills. Often the skills are divided into sub-skills, such as discriminating sounds in connected speech, or understanding relationships within a sentence.

Learning burden - These are the features of the word that the teacher actually needs to be taught, and can differ dramatically from word to word. Especially in lexis, the teacher needs to reduce learning burden by, for example, reducing the number of definitions and uses presented.

Learning factors - For EFL teachers, four factors outside aptitude and attitude affect the rate at which a student learns a second language. These are (1) the student's motivation, including whether it is instrumental or integrative; (2) the amount of time the student spends in class and practicing the language outside class; (3) the teacher's approach to teaching; and (4) the teacher's effectiveness and teaching style. The most important of these motivators are the first two, which are also the two the teacher has least control over. See also "aptitude", "attitude" and "TEFL vs. TEFL".

Vocabulary - Core vocabulary (the most common 2,000 -3,000 English words) needs to be heavily stressed in language teaching. There is no point in presenting exotic vocabulary until students have mastered basic, high-frequency words. Learners should be tested on high-frequency word lists for passive knowledge, active production and listening comprehension. Learners cannot comprehend or speak at a high level without these words as a foundation. Learners need to spend time practicing these words until they are automatic; this is known as building automaticity. Since there is often not enough class time for much word practice, teachers need to present their students with strategies for developing automaticity outside the classroom.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1.1. Quantitative Diagnostic

The quantitative diagnosis allows the numeric systemization of data that is found in the problem; this will help determine the aspects which must be corrected. In this case, the quantity of mispronounced phonemes in a designated reading passage.

In order to evaluate the quality of pronunciation, an initial evaluation will be done in which by means of having students read a small passage and recording their voices. Then, each recording will be carefully listened in order to then be tallied in regards to which phoneme of each word is being pronounced incorrectly. After, a series of interactive virtual dialogues will be created in view of which phonemes need work on improving. These dialogues will be applied to students during a specific period of time; once the time has passed, another evaluation will be held and the results will determine if the teaching resource used is effective in improving pronunciation.

3.2. TYPE OF RESEARCH

3.2.1. Inductive

This research is of an inductive characteristic considering that it starts from the pronunciation mistakes each one of the students; then to arrive at a global diagnosis which then allows defining the most adequate tool to correct said mistakes. This is beginning from individual situations until arriving at a general analysis.

3.2.2. Field

The research will be done at the site where the events take place; in the classrooms of the National University of Ecuador.

3.2.3. Documental

Considering that this research is a scientific foundation related to variable analysis in a study, in order to propose solutions though systematic documentation of the problem.

3.3. LEVEL OF RESEARCH

3.3.1. Correlational

The proposed research will attempt to show the relation between two quantitative variables.

3.4. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

3.4.1. Population

The population is made up of all the students in the school of languages, of which only the students of Fifth Semester are being worked with.

Chart 3.1 Population

Eleven students of the School of Languages of Fifth Semester. Four are men, seven are women.

3.4.2. Sample

Since there is such a small amount of students, no sample is needed.

3.5. TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTING

3.5.1. Techniques

Pronunciation test.

3.5.2. Instruments

Tally sheet.

3.6. TECHNIQUES FOR DATA PROCESSING AND INTERPRETATION

The processing and interpretation of data will be done be means of using a diagnostic test. This will be based on a reading which will be evaluated on the amount of pronunciation errors a student has.

In order to give trustworthiness of the data recording, audio recording with each student will be realized in order to determine if the pronunciation is correct or incorrect according to a phonetic analysis.

The obtained data will be quantified according to the phoneme. For this, each word will be transcribed phonetically; and each mistake that is done on each phoneme will be written down on a chart. The results of the phonemes will be in a descending order to demonstrate which phonemes students have the most difficulty pronouncing.

The data will be recorded in general charts and for a greater understanding, they will be graphed. This will allow others to visualize in a better way the mistakes and determine the critical points on which one must find a solution towards.

Later, a similar test will be done after the usage of virtual dialogues in identical characteristics as the previous time.

Finally, the results will be compared and a statistical analysis will be done with the obtained results.

CHAPTER IV

ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

4.1. HUMAN RESOURCES

- Thesis director
- Researcher
- Students

4.2. MATERIAL RESOURCES

- Sheets of paper
- Pens
- Pencils
- Markers
- Copies
- Hard cover books

4.3. TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES

- Computers
- Internet
- Sound recorder
- Camera

4.4. COST ESTIMATION (ESTIMATED BUDGET)

UNIT DETAIL	TOTAL COST
Bond Paper	$20.00
Office Supplies	$20.00
Spiral Modules	$20.00
Internet	$20.00
Color Printing	$20.00
Hard cover binding	$60.00
Pen drive	$10.00
Printed sheets	$50.00
Subtotal	$220.00
Unexpected events 10%	$22.00
Grand Total	$242.00

4.4.1. INCOME

The research will be financed entirely by the researcher.

4.4.2. EXPENSES

The expenses of the research are of $1041.70, which the researcher will assume responsibility of.

4.5. ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

PROJECT ACTIVITY	First month				Second month				Third month				Forth month				Fifth month				Sixth month			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
1. Project design		■	■	■	■	■																		
2. Presentation and approval							■																	
3. 1ˢᵗ tutor meeting								■																
4. Chapter 1 writing									■	■														
5. 2ⁿᵈ tutor meeting											■													
6. Data collecting tool creation													■											
7. Data collecting tool application														■										
8. 3ʳᵈ tutor meeting															■									
9. Data processing																	■							
10. 4ᵗʰ tutor meeting																		■						
11. Chapter 3 Writing																		■	■					
12. Rough draft writing																				■				
13. 5ᵗʰ tutor meeting																				■				
14. Final corrections																						■		
15. Dissertation																								■

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4.7.   ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Diagnostic reading

The Visayan Warty Pig

This is a Visayan Warty Pig, a rare species of pig from the Visayan Islands in the Philippines. Like all pigs, they have a round, robust appearance. When they fear danger to their young, they can be vigorous in their attack on the intruder. However, because of habitat loss, food shortages, and over-hunting, they are a critically endangered species. While they used to be found on six islands, they are now found on only two.

The Visayan Warty Pig is named for three fleshy warts that are on its face. Scientists believe that these warts protect the pigs from the tusks of their fellows. They also have short, spikey hair which protects their bodies. They have long, narrow snouts, and, like most pigs, have a good sense of smell. In the wild, they live in groups of four to six and eat fruits and roots.

Attachment 2 – Detailed graded chart

List of students	Error Frequency Phonemes																												
	/ə/		/ɪ/		/ɔ/		/ɛ/		/ɑ/		/æ/		/i/		/ʊ/		/ð/		/z/		/v/		/ʤ/		/ʃ/		/θ/	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%

Observations :