UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE CHIMBORAZO
FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACION, HUMANAS Y TECNOLOGIAS
CARRERA DE IDIOMAS

THESIS TITTLE:

"ANALYSIS OF THE USAGE OF MINIMAL PAIRS TECHNIQUE IN TEACHING PRONUNCIATION TO STUDENTS AT EIGHTH YEAR OF EDUCACION GENERAL BASICA "A" IN THE UNIDAD EDUCATIVA "PEDRO VICENTE MALDONADO" IN THE CITY OF RIOBAMBA, CHIMBORAZO PROVINCE, DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2018-2019."

Work presented as requirement for obtaining the Bachelor's Degree of "Licenciada en Ciencias de la Educación, Profesor de Idiomas inglés"

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MsC. Verónica Egas

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UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE CHIMBORAZO

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II

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El presente trabajo titulado: **"ANALYSIS OF THE USAGE OF MINIMAL PAIRS TECHNIQUE IN TEACHING PRONUNCIATION TO STUDENTS AT EIGHTH YEAR OF EDUCACION GENERAL BASICA "A" IN THE UNIDAD EDUCATIVA "PEDRO VICENTE MALDONADO" IN THE CITY OF RIOBAMBA, CHIMBORAZO PROVINCE, DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2018-2019."** de autoría de la señorita Gladys Daniela Patiño Abril ha sido revisado durante todo el proceso de Investigación. El citado trabajo cumple con el 100% de los requisitos metodológicos y demás requerimientos necesarios y esenciales exigidos por las normas generales para la graduación, en tal virtud certifico su presentación y evaluación al respectivo tribunal.

Msc. Verónica Egas

CERTIFICACIÓN

Que, **Patiño Abril Gladys Daniela** con CC: **0604348227**, estudiante de la Carrera de **IDIOMAS**, Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación Humanas Y Tecnologías; ha trabajado bajo mi tutoría el trabajo de investigación titulado "ANALYSIS OF THE USAGE OF MINIMAL PAIRS TECHNIQUE IN TEACHING PRONUNCIATION TO STUDENTS AT EIGHTH YEAR OF EDUCACION GENERAL BASICA "A" IN THE UNIDAD EDUCATIVA "PEDRO VICENTE MALDONADO" IN THE CITY OF RIOBAMBA, CHIMBORAZO PROVINCE, DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2018-2019", que corresponde al dominio científico Desarrollo socioeconómico y educativo para el fortalecimiento de la institucionalidad democrática y ciudadana y alineado a la línea de investigación Educación superior y formación profesional., cumple con el 10%, reportado en el sistema Anti plagio URKUND del sistema, porcentaje aceptado de acuerdo a la reglamentación institucional, por consiguiente autorizo continuar con el proceso.

Riobamba, 10 de Noviembre del 2019

Mgs. Verónica Egas
TUTOR

IV

AUTORSHIP

I, Gladys Daniela Patiño Abril, student of Languages Career, declare to be the only author of this research work named:

"ANALYSIS OF THE USAGE OF MINIMAL PAIRS TECHNIQUE IN TEACHING PRONUNCIATION TO STUDENTS AT EIGHTH YEAR OF EDUCACION GENERAL BASICA "A" IN THE UNIDAD EDUCATIVA "PEDRO VICENTE MALDONADO" IN THE CITY OF RIOBAMBA, CHIMBORAZO PROVINCE, DURING THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2018-2019."

The ideas, commentaries and opinions in this research project are responsibility of the author.

Riobamba, 14 noviembre 2019

Gladys Daniela Patiño Abril

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I thank God for allowing me to reach the goal of my professional life, I appreciate the collaboration of the distinguished teachers that make up the Language Career, Faculty of Education, Human Sciences and Technologies of the National University of Chimborazo. Institution of higher education that has managed to remain among us facilitating our professional and humanistic preparation despite the inconveniences in maintaining the linguistic career that today is so necessary for the development of society.

DEDICATORY

This achievement is mainly dedicated to my husband, who was unconditional support, to my children, who for them my professional development to serve as an example of overcoming despite the difficulties and not spending the necessary time in their first years of life. And to all those who have supported me and encouraged me to improve as a person and professional.

CONTENT

RESUMEN

El presente trabajo tuvo como principal objetivo realizar una investigación detallada de como el uso de la técnica de pares mínimos ayudo a mejorar la pronunciación en ingles de los estudiantes de octavo año de educación General Básica   paralelo: "A" de la Unidad Educativa "Pedro Vicente Maldonado" ubicada en la ciudad de Riobamba, provincia de Chimborazo durante el año lectivo 2018-2019, debido a que los estudiantes al momento de participar en clases no podían pronunciar de manera correcta algunas palabras y la mayoría de veces confundían un sonido con otro. El enfoque de esta investigación fue cualitativo, es decir está basada en comportamientos naturales en los cuales los protagonistas son la docente que fue parte activa junto con sus estudiantes, por tal motivo el diseño de la investigación fuel de tipo etnográfico que es el más adecuado dentro del ámbito educativo. El nivel de la investigación fue exploratorio. El tipo de investigación fue de campo y bibliográfico ya que no respaldamos en investigaciones anteriores, la población con la que se trabajo fue de 41 personas entre ellas los estudiantes y el docente a cargo de la asignatura de Ingles. El instrumento utilizado para recopilar los datos fue la hoja de observación, en la cual se pudo recolectar toda la información proporcionada.   Finalmente se concluyo que la técnica de pares mínimos ayudo a los estudiantes a mejorar de cierta manera la pronunciación en cada ya que de esta manera pudieran reconocer de donde provienen los sonidos y a la vez identificaron la diferencia entre un sonido y otro.
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Palabras clave: pares mínimos, pronunciación, estudiantes

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this work was to carry out a detailed investigation of how the use of the minimal pairs technique helped to improve the English pronunciation of eighth year students of General Basic parallel education: "A" of the "Pedro Vicente" Educational Unit Maldonado "located in the city of Riobamba, province of Chimborazo during the 2018-2019 academic year, because the students at the time of participating in classes could not pronounce some words correctly and most often confused one sound with another. The focus of this research was qualitative, that is, it is based on natural behaviors in which the protagonists are the teacher who was an active part together with their students, for this reason the research design was ethnographic type that is the most appropriate within of the educational field. The level of research was exploratory. The type of research was field and bibliographic since we rely on previous research, the population with which we worked was 41 people including students and the teacher in charge of the English course. The instrument used to collect the data was the observation sheet, in which all the information provided could be collected. Finally, it was concluded that the technique of minimal pairs helped students to improve their pronunciation in a certain way since in this way they could recognize where the sounds came from and at the same time identified the difference between one sound and another.

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Keywords: minimal pair, pronunciation, students

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EXTRANJEROS
DIRECCIÓN

XI

INTRODUCTION

Communication is essential for social life. Human beings are always in constant interaction. It is necessary to speak clearly, loudly and above all to be understood. In this sense, pronunciation is one of the language components in English which is needed to be learned to support the development of language skills.

The ultimate goal of language teaching is to encourage learners to acquire communicative competence. Morley (1991) points out that the students do not need to get a perfect pronunciation but to develop functional intelligibility (ability to make oneself relatively easily understood), and functional communicability (ability to meet one's own communicative needs).

According to Seferoglu (2005), segmental aspects of the sound system include individual vowels and consonants. The minimal pairs technique is typically used to practice segments. It is designed to help students to distinguish between similar and problematic sounds through auditory discrimination and oral practice. Nuraeni (2015) who did research about the effectiveness of minimal pairs toward students' English pronunciation concludes that teaching by minimal pairs technique is effective and helps, the students' ability to achieve pronunciation.

The new English National Curriculum sets the policies and strategies to be followed in order to help students build up their communicative language competence in its linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic components (National Curriculum Guidelines, 2018). These new conceptions are established in all of the components of the Macro, Meso and Micro Curriculum.

The present analysis took place in the eighth year "A" of Basic General Education in the Unit "Pedro Vicente Maldonado", during the academic term 2018-2019, with students of 13 years old. The main objective was to show why students cannot pronounce and understand the meaning of words in English. Therefore, it is important to investigate how the pronunciation technique was applied so that student must be to distinguish between similar and problematic sounds through auditory discrimination and oral practice. An

essential part of the minimal pairs technique is to provide an immediate response and give students who made a mistake the opportunity to hear the words again.

This study has been systematized into five chapters that are consequently exposed:

☐ **Chapter I**: The **Referential Framework** contains: contextualization of the problem, formulation of the problem, delimitation of general and specific objectives, guideline questions or problems arising, justification and importance of the problem; parameters that provide the notions to understand the origin of the problem.

☐ **Chapter II:** The **Theoretical Framework**, theoretical aspects of English teaching-learning process. For which it was necessary to carry out an investigation based on theories of different authors, which scientifically support the research in its multiple facets and dimensions, the importance of the use of the technique of minimal pairs for correct teaching of the pronunciation in the English language.

☐ **Chapter III**: **Methodological framework,** which submits the design and type of the research, population and sample, techniques and instruments for data collection, and the procedure for the analysis and interpretation of results.

☐ **Chapter IV:** Analysis and interpretation of results.

☐ **Chapter V**: Conclusions and recommendations are presented

CHAPTER I

REFERENTIAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Problem: The students of eighth level "A" of Educación General Básica at Unidad Educativa Pedro Vicente Maldonado present difficulties at pronouncing minimal pairs in the target language due to the inappropriate application.

1.2 PROBLEM DEFINITION

Currently studies of English teaching play an important role in the society, since globalization has become an essential part of the daily life of human beings, due to the rapid technological growth and the idea of expanding the proposals business around the world. Added to this, English has positioned itself as the language for those purposes. Therefore, it is essential that all human beings who want to access the globalized world communicate using English as a world language.

In the Ecuadorian context, the importance corresponding to the teaching of speech has not been given, for this reason, it causes students to have problems to learn and understand the technique of minimal pairs, which also affects their ability to speak and communicate meaningfully. The teaching of pronouncing minimal pairs has been much debated, but, on the other hand, it has not been taught properly. Nowadays, the communicative approach to study the language with emphasis on communication seems to pay more attention on technological resources, instead of practicing, so students do not understand enough how to use minimal pairs (Melo, 2017).

Avery and Erlich (2009) "Minimal pair refers to pairs of words which have different meanings and which differ in pronunciation on the basis of one sound only".

In the past, in public schools, in the city of Riobamba, there were no computer labs, so listening and speaking skills could not be practiced since there was not the opportunity to practice minimal pairs. Fortunately, nowadays, it has changed. Currently, some schools have implemented laboratories where teaching and learning could be done effectively. Beside it, of minimal pairs must be improved (Remache, 2018).

According to Savignon (1997), the need for meaningful communicative tasks in the language classroom, including those that focus on pronunciation. It is useful to contrast sounds by presenting minimal pairs, so that the students can hear the difference clearly.

In the eighth level of Basic General Education "A", at Pedro Vicente Maldonado Educational Unit, it is difficult for the students to pronounce minimal pairs words. Consequently, the problem is caused because pronouncing is taught theoretically instead of practically. For this reason, it is needed to reinforce and exercise more to improve pronunciation. Subsequently, the lack of didactic criteria in the field of teaching orality in internal learning, such as readings aloud, exhibitions or oral interaction in the classroom encourage student participation and either cannot differentiate minimal pairs and their pronunciation.

1.3 PROBLEM FORMULATION

How the minimal pairs technique is used when practicing the pronunciation in the target language at Eighth year "A" students of Educación General Básica in the Unidad Educativa Pedro Vicente Maldonado?

1.4 GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. How is the minimal pairs technique used when realizing pronunciation activities?

2. What are the factors that affect pronunciation learning when using the minimal pairs technique n English class?

3. Which are the strategies that are being used to improve the production of sounds effectively?

1.4.1. QUESTION GUIDELINES OPERATIONALIZATION

AREA OF STUDY	QUESTIONS		OBJECTIVES	
	GENERAL	**GUIDING**	**GENERAL**	**SPECIFIC**
Methodology **Phonology** **Phonetics**	How minimal pairs technique is used to practicing pronunciation in the target language at Eighth year "A" students of Educación General Básica in the Unidad Educativa Pedro Vicente Maldonado?	1. How is the minimal pairs technique used when performing pronunciation activities?	To analyze how minimal pair technique helps to improve pronunciation in the target language in the eighth year "A" of Educación general básica at the Unidad Educativa "Pedro Vicente Maldonado"	1. To describe how the minimal pair technique is being used to improve the pronunciation of students in the target language.
		2. What are the factors that affect pronunciation learning when using the minimal pairs technique n English class?		2. To identify what factors affect pronunciation learning when using the minimal pair technique during English class.
		3. Which are the strategies that are being used to improve the production of sounds effectively?		3. To recognize the strategies used to precipitate the production of sounds through the minimal pair technique.

Done by: Gladys Daniela Patiño Abril

1.5 OBJECTIVES

1.5.1 GENERAL

To analyze how minimal pair technique helps to improve pronunciation in the target language in the eighth year "A" of Educación general básica at the Unidad Educativa "Pedro Vicente Maldonado" in the city of Riobamba, Chimborazo province, during the academic year 2018-2019.

1.5.2 SPECIFIC

1. To describe how the minimal pairs technique is being used to improve the pronunciation of alike words.

2. To identify the factors that affect pronunciation learning when using the minimal pairs technique during English class.

3. To recognize the strategies used to precipitate the production of sounds through the minimal pairs technique.

1.6 JUSTIFICATION

Throughout some observations made in the Eighth year of Educación general Básica at the Unidad Educativa Pedro Vicente Maldonado, it was identified that the students had difficulties when pronouncing similar words. Due to the inadequate application of the technique of minimal pairs, an error in the pronunciation can cause to be misunderstood what is interpreted as incorrect communication.

Teaching pronunciation in the classroom involved many challenges, for instance, about the time. This statement means that in the teaching-learning process of English in Ecuador it still has a limited time, so it did not exist in pronunciation, it is not improved. Another problem is the students' mother tongue, which influences in pronouncing English words. Furthermore, another problem is faced when it is necessary to differentiate the pronunciation of the words that have a similar sound. They also pronounce the English word as is written.

This research work was established with the aim of providing a contribution to the pronunciation by using the technique of minimal pairs based on the correct management of activities. These helped students increase their ability to pronounce similar words in English. Using the minimal pairs technique indicates similar sound from words can be understood easily.

The impact of this work on students is that by implementing elements when using the technique of minimal pairs in the teaching of L2 will improve their pronunciation significantly, so they will feel safe to communicate not only with their teachers or classmates but also with native speakers. In consequence, their academic performance will be improved, positively. The beneficiaries of this research work will be the students, the teachers of the English area in the Unidad Educativa Pedro Vicente Maldonado in general, to the educational community who feel somehow ashamed not to be able to transmit a clear and concise message, and it will be improved with the teaching of pronunciation through the technique of minimal pairs.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION REGARDING TO THE PROBLEM TO BE

Once analyzed the library of **Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación Humanas y Tecnologías of Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo**, it was concluded there were no any related research. It was necessary to look for other researches that have relation with the teaching of the pronunciation by means of the technique of minimal pairs, and when not finding a related research, it was necessary to look for other researches related to the teaching of the pronunciation through the technique of minimal pairs. Due to this, a search was carried out at the international level, found in the repository of the Universidad de Valladolid, in the Facultad de Educación y Trabajo Social the research work entitled:

"LA ENSEÑANZA DE LA PRONUNCIACIÓN EN INGLÉS A TRAVÉS DE PARES MÍNIMOS EN ALUMNOS DE EDUCACIÓN INFANTIL" written by Ana Santos Clemente, in which the authors mentions that: The teaching of phonics through minimal pairs is a method that produces great benefits. It is considered that the pronunciation of English sounds in students of Early Childhood Education is a laborious but effective work since, as it has been detailed in this study, its teaching has revealed great benefits in students. The preparation of these sessions offers great possibilities in the classroom. In addition, the present intervention can be extended to the teaching of other minimum pairs of phonemes as a possible didactic unit applicable in any educational center, not only in the Infant Education stage.

2.2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION.

2.2.1 PRONUNCIATION

According to Harmer (2001 p.281) "Pronunciation refers to the way we use the sounds of a language, when and how we use tone and intonation to express to others what we want to say."

Cook (1996) defines: "pronunciation as the production of sounds in English. The pronunciation is learned by repeating the sounds and correcting them at the moment when it is done improperly". When students usually start learning about pronunciation, they learn new ways to make good use of the language and even overcome the limitations they had in their mother tongue.

Purcell and Suter (1980) indicated that there are some factors that underlie the effective teaching of pronunciation, including native language, aptitude for oral mime, interaction with native speakers and motivation. For most language teachers, as stated by Pennington & Richards (2008) , "pronunciation is identified with the articulation of individual sounds and, to a lesser extent, with stress and intonation".

2.2.2 THE GOALS OF TEACHING PRONUNCIATION

According to Hismanoglu (2006), the respective guide by the teacher is very important for oral communication, since this is an important part of the communicative competence. The role of pronunciation is important in the English language, but somehow, teachers do not pay attention to this important part of communication.

On the other hand, Morley (1994) expressed that variations within a different standard may become confusing so that it suggests that student accents may approach a standard variety. If a speaker has a different accent in English, this could cause confusion even negative judgments against their personality and competence, consequently, the students will not be able to acquire adequate pronunciation leaving aside the effectiveness of the development of communicative competence.

2.2.3. THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION

Harmer (2001) emphasized that the main objective of teaching and learning in any language is to allow students to communicate in the target language and, if this is the case, communication is an important term to explain. Communication means understanding and being understood. Many students think they can talk to their teachers and other students so they can easily communicate in English. But they make a big mistake. There are many reasons for their mistakes.

- First, teachers can understand their students much more easily than the average person because their ears are used to "bad English."

- Secondly, other students speak the same language, have the same pronunciation patterns and make the same mistakes, making it easy for them to understand each other. Third, the classroom is not a real situation and only takes place in school and students do not have the opportunity to speak with native speakers.

Harmer (2001) many teachers are not aware of the importance of pronunciation. Teachers pay enough attention to grammar and vocabulary to learn a foreign language and help students become more skilled at listening and reading. Second, most teachers think that the study of pronunciation is too difficult and monotonous for students.

Harmer (2001) the lack of adequate and high-quality teaching and learning materials, and the lack of time to practice pronunciation are the main reasons why teachers do not pay enough attention to English pronunciation. Teachers think they have a lot to do and the pronunciation instruction just wastes their time. Some teachers believe that their students can learn the correct pronunciation without particular pronunciation instructions.

On the other hand, Kenworthy (1987) said that there are some factors for learning acceptable pronunciation by part of students without relying on their teachers. They are students' phonetic skills, integrative motivation and achievement motivation. Only some students who know the value of good pronunciation. It is the teachers' responsibility to persuade their students to study pronunciation severely and help them learn to pronounce sounds in English correctly. Teachers should tell their students that their first English

lesson is pronunciation. If students do not practice good pronunciation at the beginning of their learning process, they may learn poorly. Therefore, the words must be learned with respect to their pronunciation.

2.2.4 FEATURES INVOLVED IN ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION

Pronunciation refers to the production of sounds used to make sense. Pronunciation involves features at the segmental and suprasegmental levels. According to Seferoglu (2005) segmental aspects of the sound system include individual vowels and consonants because segmental phonology is relatively easier to explain and teach than suprasegmental. Segmental characteristics are related to sounds at the micro-level.

2.2.5 SEGMENTAL FEATURES

Segmental characteristics are minimum units of sound defined in phonetic terms. From the traditional perspective, the fundamental components of pronunciation are phonemes; therefore, the acquisition of the phonological system of the target language is considered a domain of phonemic distinctions and of the phonetic variants of phonemes that exist in particular environments within syllables and words.
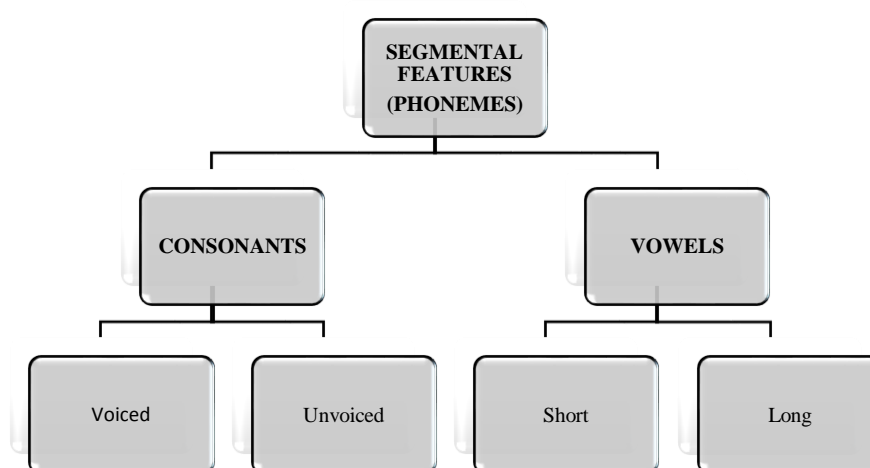
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According to Richard Norquist (2008), in the speech, *suprasegmental* refers to a phonological property of more than one sound segment. Also called *nonsegmental*. As discussed in the examples and observations below, suprasegmental information applies to

11

several different linguistic phenomena (such as pitch, duration, and loudness). Suprasegmentals are often regarded as the "musical" aspects of speech. The term *suprasegmental* (referring to functions that are "over" vowels and consonants) was coined by American structuralists in the 1940s.

2.2.6 MINIMAL PAIRS

The language learner could improve their English pronunciation in many ways. One of the ways or techniques recommended by some linguists is minimal pair drills. Ashby and Maidment (2008) argued, "In order to prove conclusively that a phonetic distinction is contrastive in a particular language it is necessary to find a pair of words in the language that differ in only one segment." It means minimal pair is one of the appropriate techniques to prove that the single phonetic sound in a pair of words is contrasted. In addition, according to Avery and Erlich, "minimal pair refers to pairs of words which have different meanings and which differ in pronunciation on the basis of one sound only.

2.2.7 LONG VOWEL SOUNDS

According to International Phonetic Association (2017) there are different ways to pronounce the vowels in English. In fact, there are 20 different sounds associated with the vowels (12 pure and 8 diphthongs).
Long sounds are pronounced as the respective name of the letter in English and are indicated by a second mute vowel on the same syllable (diphthongs).

Long /eɪ/	Long /iː/	Long /aɪ/	Long /oʊ/	Long /uː/
Cake	see	fine	so	Duke
Pay	scene	line	potato	Statue
Whale	Be	island	boat	Glue

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2.2.8 SHORT VOWEL SOUNDS

Short sounds are more common and are usually found alone and within a syllable. Short vowels are often followed by double consonants. International Phonetic Association, (2017).

Short /æ/	Short /ɛ/	Short /ɪ/	Short /ɒ/	Short /ʌ/
cat	elephant	Insect	cop	bus
cap	men	Kid	god	umbrella
apple	leg	Win	top	sun

Made and source by: Daniela Patiño.

2.2.9 UNFAMILIAR SOUNDS

According to International Phonetic Association (2017) in English there are sounds that are used only in the English pronunciation, in contrast these sounds are not found in the Spanish pronunciation, and here are the sounds which are unfamiliar.

[ŋ]	[θ]	[ʃ]	[ʧ]	[ð]	[ʤ]
sing	think	shower	cheap	Bathe	Bridge
bring	thought	shy	choose	That	general
ring	throw	should	cheese	Therefore	Judge

Made and source by: Daniela Patiño

2.2.10 MINIMAL PAIRS: /æ/ VERSUS /e/

Parkinson (1983) mentions, the difficulties in pronunciation of /æ/ phoneme for Spanish speakers is mainly that Spanish speakers produce /æ/ as Spanish /e/ or Spanish /a/. However, this is a big mistake because it has to be distinguished from /e/, /ʌ/ and /ɑ:/.

/æ/	/e/
Man	Men
Sad	Said
Sat	Set

Made and source by: Daniela Patiño

2.2.11 MINIMAL PAIRS: /ð/ VERSUS /θ/

Parkinson (1983) affirms: the difficulties for Spanish speaker in relation to this minimal pair are: first this sounds do not exist in Spanish. Second for /θ/ Latin-Americans and in general Spanish speakers can imitate the sound of 'ce' and 'ci' pronounced with the Spanish or Castilian accent although it is not the same sound, it is an approximation. The last one, /ð/ phoneme may be acquired easily because this phoneme sounds like Spanish d in the middle of a word (dedo). However, later difficulty can be misunderstood because Spanish 'd' is not always pronounce like /ð/ phoneme.

/ð/	/θ/
thy	thigh
either	ether
withe	With

Made and source by: Daniela Patiño

2.2.12 MINIMAL PAIRS /i:/ VERSUS /I/

Parkinson S. (1983) mentions, there is hardly any difficulty with the phoneme /i:/ because it is similar to Spanish 'i'. However, the phoneme /i/ has some challenges for Spanish speakers because it is often pronounced with the Spanish 'i' Therefore, it can cause misunderstandings and mispronunciation.

/i:/	/I/
seat	Sit
meal	Mill
scene	Sin

Made and source by: Daniela Patiño

2.3 FACTORS THAT AFFECT PRONUNCIATION LEARNING

2.3.1 LINGUISTIC VARIABLES

Avery and Ehrlich (1992) state that the sound of the first language in students is usually transferred to the second language and it is possible that on certain occasions they cause different foreign accents. The incorrect statements of words from non-native languages are the ones that really sounds, rules, stress and intonation of their mother tongue.

2.3.2 AGE

According to Avery and Ehrlich (1992), in the different changes that the human being experiences during his physical and mental development, he loses certain abilities accordingly the younger a person is the better ability he will have of a precise and effective perception of the sounds that are manifest when acquiring a second language.

2.3.3 AMOUNT OF EXPOSURE

Marinova-Todd (2000) concluded that when an adult learns a new language, they can become highly competent if they are motivated to do so.

According to the different language learning theories, students acquire the language from the information they receive, because in our environment English is not very common and we are not normally surrounded by English speakers.

2.3.4 ATTITUDE

Elliot (1995) states that students who care more about improving their pronunciation over time improve much more than those who are not. Schumann (1986) mentions that acculturation is the student's acceptance of a culture and the desire he has to be a social part of that culture. These are two basic actions they have to have a good pronunciation.

2.3.5 MOTIVATION

According to Marinova-Todd (2000) and the student's age and motivation, a personal or professional goal, are fundamental factors in learning a new language.

Teachers can encourage their students to control their own pronunciation and practice their speaking skills as much as possible inside and outside the classroom.

2.3.6 AMOUNT AND TYPE OF INSTRUCTIONS

According to Elliot (1995), teachers experienced pronounced pronunciation as one of the least useful language skills when teaching a new language, for that reason and most of the time they did not start spending time when teaching pronunciation within the language classroom and focus on other areas of language.

2.3.7 INSTITUTIONAL VARIABLES

Brinton (1995) mentions that the importance of the resources needed to teach a new language (recorder, laboratory, multimedia room), but certain institutions do not have the necessary resources to give a good presentation and exercise of all the characteristics that are needed to teach pronunciation.

2.3.8 METHODOLOGICAL VARIABLES

Torres (2017) mentions that, lack of coherence in teaching causes students to present different transfer problems. No matter what method the teacher applies, it should always attract the attention of specific students when explaining the segmental and suprasegmental characteristics of the language in a clear, fluent and precise manner.

2.4 STRATEGIES TO ACCURATE PRODUCTION OF SOUNDS

2.4.1 FEEDBACK

According to Grant (2010), Teachers learn when they observe their students while sharing their knowledge in English at the time they communicate with each other. When you look at the places where the communication is interrupted, you can determine which were the causes for which the communication was stopped, and from there be able to diagnose and emphasize which areas are those that should be reinforced for correct pronunciation.

Grant (2010) also mentions that when students make presentations or procedures in pairs or in groups, it should be considered as an important tool to use a checklist to determine when the student makes pronunciation errors, for the teacher to take into account in what part of student learning is due to more difficulties.

2.4.2 BUILDING AWARENESS AND CONCERN

O'Brien (2004); Bailly & Holm (2005) mentions that it is important for students to know and pay attention to the pronunciation of words due to the emphasis on a word or a change in the tone of voice, the message cannot reach its destination properly.
The same author states that it is important that the teacher clearly explains the position of the speech organs when producing different sounds and in turn make comparisons with the native language.

2.4.3 PLANNING A VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES

Savignon (1997) emphasized the need for specific communicative tasks in the classroom as minimal pairs words, especially in which pronunciation is taught, to perform these types of tasks it will be necessary to take into account the learning styles of each student due to that some tasks are better suited to those that others students and in this way enhances their communicative competence.

According to Pitt (2009), students need exposure to the conversations so that they can listen to the different variations in terms of pronunciation, in order to successfully perform the activities of the minimal pairs, it is necessary that the teacher can have audio and videotapes for easy the understand.

2.4.4 HELPING LEARNERS HEAR AND PRODUCE

The teacher can give students some hints to enable them to imitate the new ones and practicing words; especially focusing their attention on those sounds that do not occur in their native language and cause problems in learning English like /sh/ an /ch/ (Kenworthy, 1997).

2.5 DEFINITION OF BASIC TERMS

LISTENING: Listening involves identifying the sounds of speech and processing them into words and sentences.

MINIMAL PAIRS. - A minimal pair is a pair of words that vary by only a single sound, usually are sounds that may confuse English learners, like the /f/ and /v/ in fan and van, or the /e/ and /ɪ/ in desk and disk.

SEGMENTAL FEATURES. - Segments, usually phonological units of the language, such as vowels and consonants, are of very short duration. Utterances are then built of linear sequences of segments.

SUPRASEGMENTAL FEATURES. - Also called Prosodic Feature, in phonetics, a speech feature such as stress, tone, or word juncture that accompanies or is added over consonants and vowels; these features are not limited to single sounds but often extend over syllables, words, or phrases.

PRONUNCIATION. - The act or result of producing the sounds of speech, including articulation, stress, and intonation, often with reference to some standard of correctness or acceptability.

TEACHING. - is the concerted sharing of knowledge and experience, which is usually organized within a discipline and, more generally, the provision of stimulus to the psychological and intellectual growth of a person by another person or artifact.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This research was carried out in the educational field because the researcher identified the problem in the eighth grade "A" in Unidad Educativa. "Pedro Vicente Maldonado", city of Riobamba, province of Chimborazo, during the academic year 2018-2019 ". This was related to the analysis of the technique of minimal pairs for teaching pronunciation in students.

3.2 TYPE OF RESEARCH

Qualitative. - The research is qualitative as the word itself says it is based on qualities of a phenomenon, i.e the observation of natural behaviors that cannot be measured, in this case in a classroom between the teacher and students.

From Field. - It takes place where the events are developed or produced, it has a direct relation with the people that are members of the problem being investigated. In this type of research, direct information was obtained through the use of techniques of data collection (observation sheet) in order to give answers to a problem previously raised.

Bibliographic. - The study consisted of compiling data, using appropriate management of books, journals, and results of other researches, interviews, surveys, guides or observation sheets, among others.

3.3 LEVEL OF RESEARCH

Exploratory. - The level of this research is exploratory because the researcher has direct contact with the reality to be investigated and with the people who are related to the place. It collects pertinent information on the feasibility, possibility and favorable conditions for its investigative purposes.

3.4. - METHODS OF RESEARCH

Ethnographic. – It is one of the most relevant methods used in qualitative research, especially within the educational field. It aims to describe and analyze the ideas, beliefs,

meanings, knowledge, and practices of groups. The result is described and analyzed in the pronunciation of the students through the technique of minimal pairs.

3.5. - POPULATION AND SAMPLE

Population. - The entire population or universe is used, in other words, the totality of actors involved in the research problem, are forty students of the eighth year of Educación General Básica and one teacher.

Sample.- A sample wasn't applied because the universe is less than one hundred individuals, the reason why when applying the formula to extract the sample this one will throw a size similar to the one of the universe.

3.6. TECHNIQUE AND INSTRUMENT FOR DATA RECOLLECTION

Since this research is the type exploratory, the instrument used for data collection was the observation sheet or known as a checklist. This sheet was designed to gather evidence about how to teach pronunciation through minimal pairs technique in English classes by the teacher, through indicators that described these activities and the frequency in which they were carried out during the teaching-learning process to improve English pronunciation in students.

3.7 PROCEDURE

This research work has been divided into preparatory, fieldwork, analytical and informative phase.

3.7.1 PREPARATORY PHASE

Pronunciation is a fundamental part of foreign language learning since while it is not developed properly in students it affects the communicative competence and performance. Firstly, the areas of study used for this research will be mentioned, which are Phonology and Phonetics because we focus on the sounds of the segmental features where vowel sounds (long and short) are contained, the consonants especially those that are unknown in the native language, in the organs of speech and how the sound and methodology that the teacher used to share knowledge with students is produced.

The researcher during the pre-professional observation practices could observe that the students of the eighth year Educación General Básica "A" at Unidad Educativa Pedro Vicente Maldonado, presented problems to distinguish one sound from another, especially when pronouncing words that have the Same sound but different meaning. For two weeks the researcher observed how the minimum pair technique was applied to the students for their better understanding. All the information obtained during the observation process was collected, analyzed and contrasted with the theory of different authors, which are presented in the theoretical framework, so that the results obtained show that there were certain inaccuracies that make the student have difficulty to improve your pronunciation.

3.7.2. FIELDWORK PHASE

To develop this study, the researcher had to follow a procedure to obtain the results. First, to obtain information for this research work, it was necessary to obtain the authorization of the Director of the Educational Unit Pedro Vicente Maldonado, after that, the respective authorization of the teacher, who from the beginning showed a lot of attention and collaboration in the classes and activities carried out during the research work. Finally, students with their collaboration and enthusiasm in observation classes. The research was carried out during two weeks in the morning hours in the classroom of eighth year students of Educacion general Basica parallelo "A"

3.7.3. ANALYTICAL AND INFORMATIVE PHASE

During the observation week and based on the observation sheet with the different statements, it was proceeded to collect the data that served to perform the analysis of this research project, and based on that the conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER IV

4. - ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE #1	PEDAGOGICAL ACTIVITIES	ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF COLLECTED INFORMATION	THEORY CONTRAST
To describe how the minimal pair technique is being used to improve the pronunciation of students in the target language.	**The teacher taught the students** Long vowel sounds: /eɪ/-/i:/-/aɪ/-/oʊ/-/u:/ Short vowel sounds: /æ/-/ɛ/-/ɪ/-/ɒ/-/ʌ/	The teacher repeated the sounds of each of the vowels and explained to the students that in English the vowels are divided into long and short sounds, but at the time of performing the pronunciation exercises, some students were confused with the sounds in Spanish. She dedicated herself to emphasize this topic more by having the students work in short groups and in this way they could have a slight advance in the pronunciation of each of the sounds of the long and short vowels.	There are different ways to pronounce the vowels in English. In fact, there are 20 different sounds associated with the vowels (12 pure and 8 diphthongs). Long sounds are pronounced as the respective name of the letter in English and are indicated by a second mute vowel on the same syllable (diphthongs). Short sounds are more common and are usually found alone and within a syllable. Short vowels are often followed by double consonants. International Phonetic Association (2017).
	Unfamiliar sounds: [ŋ]- [ɵ]- [ʃ]- [ʧ]- [ð]- [ʤ]	In this class, the teacher began by explaining that in English there are sounds that do not exist in Spanish. The class was reinforced by giving some examples, these sounds are a bit complicated and during the class the students had a little suspicion, at the time of speaking. In group they repeated everything, but at the time of doing it individually the pronunciation was quite complicated.	In English there are sounds that are used only in the English pronunciation, in contrast these sounds are not found in the Spanish pronunciation, and here are the sounds which are unfamiliar: [ŋ] sing, [Ɵ] think, [ʃ] shop, [ʧ] chicken, [ð] that, [ʤ] general. International Phonetic Association (2017).

		The teacher says some sentences and students have to repeat them after the teacher. (the sentences are written on board too): • He drank till he was completely drunk. • I can't have fun in the sun without my fan.	The difficulty in pronunciation of /æ/ phoneme for Spanish speakers is mainly that Spanish speakers produce /æ/ as Spanish /e/ or Spanish /a/. However, this is a big mistake because it has to be distinguished from /e/, /ʌ/ and /ɑ:/ Parkinson (1983).
	Minimal pairs: /æ/ versus /e/		
	Minimal pairs: /ð/ versus /θ/	The teacher used some tongue twisters as a strategy to improve the pronunciation in her students, made the movements of the mouth to demonstrate to her students how to perform the exercises for a correct pronunciation, then asked the students to repeat each tongue twister doing the exercises with the mouth, then the teacher asked six students who did the same in front of their classmates.	The difficulties for Spanish speaker in relation to this minimal pair are: first this sounds do not exist in Spanish. Second for /θ/ Latin-Americans and in general Spanish speakers can imitate the sound of 'ce' and 'ci' pronounced with the Spanish or C astilian accent although it is not the same sound, it is an approximation. The last one, /ð/ phoneme may be acquired easily because this phoneme sounds like Spanish d in the middle of a word (dedo). However, later difficulty can be misunderstood because Spanish'd' is not always pronounce like /ð/ phoneme. Parkinson (1983).
	Minimal pairs /i:/ vs /I/	The teacher often reinforced this sound during the explanation. It was the easiest sound for the students because they are similar sounds in Spanish.	There is hardly any difficulty with the phoneme /i:/ because it is similar to Spanish 'i'. However, the phoneme /i/ has some challenges for Spanish speakers because it is often pronounced with the Spanish 'i'. Therefore, it can cause misunderstandings and mispronunciation. Parkinson (1983).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE #2	FACTORS	ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF COLLECTED INFORMATION	THEORY CONTRAST
To identify what factors affect pronunciation learning when using the minimal pair technique during English class.	**Linguistic variables** Teacher prioritized the prosodic characteristics of a language.	During the class, the teacher often explained to the students that the sounds of the consonants are similar in both English and Spanish, but in terms of the vowels it is very different in regards to rhythm and intonation.	Avery and Ehrlich (1992) state that the sound of the first language in students is usually transferred to the second language and it is possible that on certain occasions they cause different foreign accents. The incorrect statements of words from non-native languages are the ones that really sounds, rules, stress and intonation of their mother tongue.
	Age Teacher was aware of the changes that occur in the brain of students due to biological changes when teaching a new language.	The teacher rarely cares about this aspect of the class, despite the fact that there are repetitive students of the year who have a little more complicated pronunciation.	According to Avery and Ehrlich (1992) in the different changes that the human being experiences during his physical and mental development, he loses certain abilities accordingly the younger a person is, the better ability he will have of a precise and effective perception of the sounds that are manifest when acquiring a second language.

	Amount of exposure Students acquired the target language according to the information provided by the teacher	The teacher often motivated students to practice the words of the minimal pair they learned during the school week.	Marinova (2000) concluded that when an adult learns a new language, they can become highly competent if they are motivated to do so. According to the different language learning theories, students acquire the language of the information they receive, because in our environment English is not very common and we are not normally surrounded by English speakers.
	Attitude Teacher carried out activities in which the student shows positive attitudes about learning a new language.	During this activity, the teacher asked the students to work in pairs for students that make it easier pronunciation can help others who cannot pronounce using the flashcards as a strategy to improve the understanding of the words that have the same sound, but a different meaning.	Elliot (1995) states that students who care more about improving their pronunciation over time improve much more than those who are not. Schumann (1986) mentions that acculturation is the student's acceptance of a culture and the desire he has to be a social part of that culture. These are two basic actions they have to have a good pronunciation.
	Motivation How did the teacher motivate his students to learn a new language?	For motivate their students at the end of the week as an extraclass activity, the teacher maked games that included minimal pairs in which she pronounce the word and the students had to identify what word was, as a reward for their effort they had extra points.	According to Marinova (2000) and the student's age and motivation, a personal or professional goal, are fundamental factors in learning a new language. Teachers can urge their students to

			control their own pronunciation and practice their speaking skills as much as possible inside and outside the classroom.
	Amount and type of instructions Teacher used the right tools and materials so that students can produce accurate sounds.	The teacher often used markers of different colors to emphasize the pronunciation of some words, especially to differentiate one sound from another.	According to Elliot (1995) teachers experienced pronounced pronunciation as one of the least useful language skills when teaching a new language, for that reason and most of the time they did not start spending time when teaching pronunciation within the language classroom and focus on other areas of language.
	Institutional variables Teacher used different resources such as recorder, laboratory, and multimedia room to enhance the pronunciation of her students.	During the classes the only resource that the teacher used to teach students the different sounds of words was her cell phone, because the Institution is public and they have neither English laboratories nor multimedia rooms	Brinton (1995) mentions that, the importance of the resources needed to teach a new language (recorder, laboratory, multimedia room), but certain institutions do not have the resources necessary to present a good presentation and exercise of all the characteristics that are needed to teach pronunciation.

	Methodological variables	The teacher rarely explained to students about the difficulty that is presented in the native language at the time of learning a new language, it is for this reason that the students presented problems at the time of communicating since when they confused one sound with another, they could not express themselves clearly and fluently.	Torres (2017) mentions that, lack of coherence in teaching causes students to present different transfer problems. No matter what method the teacher applies, it should always attract the attention of specific students when explaining the segmental and suprasegmental characteristics of language in a clear, fluent and precise manner.
	Teacher focused the attention of the students on the segmental characteristics of the language to be able to communicate clearly, fluently and accurately		
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE #3	**STRATEGIES**	**ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF COLLECTED INFORMATION**	**THEORY CONTRAST**
To recognize the strategies used to precipitate the production of sounds through the minimal pair technique.	**Feedback** Teacher obtained information about the progress, difficulties, and needs regarding the pronunciation of his students	During the week, the teacher gave her classes following her planning, and at the end of the week, she made feedback and asked the students what class they had found more difficult to understand, at that time the teacher reinforced the students' knowledge by performing pronunciation using the words of the minimal pairs.	According to Grant (2010) teachers learn when they observe their students while sharing their knowledge in English at the time they communicate with each other. When you look at the places where the communication is interrupted, you can determine which were the causes for which the communication was stopped, and from there be able to diagnose and emphasize which areas are those that should be reinforced for a correct pronunciation.
	The teacher used a checklist when students worked in pairs and make	The teacher usually did not carry a verification sheet to observe the progress	Grant (2010) also mentions that when students make presentations or procedures in pairs or in groups, it

the same mistake in pronunciation during the class.	of each of his students, but rather reinforced what she considered to be missing in each class.	should be considered as an important tool to use a checklist to determine when the student makes pronunciation errors, for the teacher to take into account In what part of student learning is due more difficulties.
Building awareness and concern Teacher performed activities in which the students differentiate one sound from another, emphasizing the tone of voice.	The teacher conducted activities which emphasized slightly raising his voice when varied sounds using the technique of pairs minimal, also wrote on the blackboard using markers of different colors in the vowel or consonant with the aim that students can notice the difference	O'Brien (2004); Bailly & Holm (2005) mentions that it is important for students to know and pay attention to the pronunciation of words due to the emphasis on a word or a change in the tone of voice, the message cannot reach its destination properly.
Teacher described the position of the speech organs to produce the sounds	When performing pronunciation exercises using speech organs, the teacher carried images in which she taught students the different ways in which sounds were produced in our articulatory speech system, especially in certain vowels and consonants.	O'Brien, (2004); Bailly & Holm (2005) states that it is important that the teacher clearly explain the position of the speech organs when producing the different sounds and in turn make comparisons with the native language.
Planning a variety of Activities Teacher did activities and pronunciation exercises in the language laboratory.	The teacher was never able to carry out activities within the classroom laboratory, because this Institution does not have a language laboratory.	Savignon (1997) emphasized the need for specific communicative tasks in the classroom, especially in which pronunciation is taught, to perform these types of tasks it will be necessary to take into account the learning styles of each student due to that some tasks are better suited to those than others and in this way increase their communicative competence.

	Teacher did reading activities where the student read aloud different words of similar pronunciation.	The teacher rarely did readings that included the different minimal pairs that were taught during the class. Sometime the teacher wanted to do this activity, because of the low participation in order to avoid students to commit mistakes the teacher did not take reading frequently.	According to Pitt (2009), students need exposure to the conversations so that they can listen to the different variations in terms of pronunciation, in order to successfully perform these activities, it is necessary that the teacher can have audio and video tapes.
	Helping learners hear and produce Teacher focused on those sounds that did not occur in their native language and cause problems in learning. English like / sh / an / ch /	The teacher often reinforced these sounds by using images that contain these sounds in which students had to guess the sound and in which the different sounds were used.	Furthermore, they can give students some hints to enable them to imitate the new ones and practicing words; specially focusing their attention on those sounds that do not occur in their native language and cause problems in learning English like /sh/ an /ch/ Kenworthy (1997).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

➤ The methodology used in the teaching of minimal pairs as a technique to improve pronunciation in students was quite limited because not all students improved their pronunciation due to the lack of different activities that help to develop it correctly, the instructions sometimes they were not clear, so some students did not pay attention.

➤ Different factors such as; the lack of a laboratory, the attitude, the motivation and the lack of collaboration in different activities by the students made some students not interested in learning a correct pronunciation because some made a different mistake and for this reason they felt shame and shyness when participating in classes.

➤ The different strategies that should be used for the pronunciation of sounds through the technique of minimal pairs were not completely carried out because on many occasions due to the lack of time within the classroom, not all were taught, but simply the sounds in which the students were considered more difficult to develop correct pronunciation.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

➤ The teacher must present motivational activities since it plays an important role in the students, and in the development of the teaching and learning process that will effectively make the students more participatory.

➤ The teacher must a checklist in which he can clearly demonstrate the progress in each of his students and thus motivate all those who still do not do it correctly and in this way the student can be more participatory without fear of being wrong.

- The teacher must be aware of the limited time he has for his classes and try to plan his classes based on the need of each of his students, in which it would be important to include all the sounds to properly use the technique of minimal pairs.

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ATTACHMENTS

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE CHIMBORAZO
FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACION, HUMANAS Y TECNOLOGÍAS
CARRERA DE IDIOMAS
OBSERVATION SHEET # 1

Source: 40 students from 8th of Educacion General Basica of Unidad Educativa "Pedro Vicente Maldonado"
Date:
Objective # 1
❑ To describe how the minimal pair technique is being used to improve the pronunciation of students in the target language.

N°	ACTIVITIES	ATTAINMENT					REMARK
	The teacher taught the students:	**Always**	**Usually**	**Often**	**Rarely**	**Never**	
1	Long vowel sounds: /eɪ/-/i:/-/aɪ/-/oʊ/-/u:/			X			
2	Short vowel sounds: /æ/-/ɛ/-/ɪ/-/ɒ/-/ʌ/			X			
3	Unfamiliar sounds: [ŋ]- [ɵ]- [ʃ]- [ʧ]- [ð]- [ʤ]		X				
4	Minimal pairs: /æ/ versus /e/			X			
5	Minimal pairs: /t/ versus /θ/		X	X			
6	Minimal pairs: /i:/ versus /ɪ/			X			

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OBSERVATION SHEET # 2

Source: 40 students from 8th of Educacion General Basica of Unidad Educativa "Pedro Vicente Maldonado"
Date:
Objective # 2
- ❑ To identify what factors affect pronunciation learning when using the minimal pair technique during English class

FACTORS	ATTAINMENT					REMARK
LINGUISTIC VARIABLES	**Always**	**Usually**	**Often**	**Rarely**	**Never**	
Teacher prioritized the prosodic characteristics of a language			X			
AGE FACTOR						
Teacher was aware of the changes that occur in the brain of students due to biological changes when teaching a new language.				X		
AMOUNT OF EXPOSURE						
Students acquired the target language according to the information provided by the teacher			X			
ATTITUDE						
Teacher carried out activities in which the student shows positive attitudes about learning a new language.		X				
MOTIVATION						
Teacher used motivational activities conducted in their students for learning a new language		X				
AMOUNT AND TYPE OF INSTRUCTIONS						
Teacher used the right tools and materials so that students can produce accurate sounds.						

INSTITUTIONAL VARIABLES					
Teacher used different resources such as recorder, laboratory, multimedia room to enhance the pronunciation of her students.			**X**		
METHODOLOGICAL VARIABLES					
Teacher, focused the attention of the students on the segmental characteristics of the language to be able to communicate clearly, fluently and accurately.			**X**		

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CARRERA DE IDIOMAS
OBSERVATION SHEET # 3

Source: 40 students from 8th of Educacion General Basica of Unidad Educativa "Pedro Vicente Maldonado"
Date:
Objective # 3
- ❏ To recognize the strategies used to precipitate the production of sounds through the minimal pair technique.

N°	ACTIVITIES	ATTAINMENT					REMARK
	Feedback	**Always**	**Usually**	**Often**	**Rarely**	**Never**	
1	Teacher obtained information about the progress, difficulties, and needs regarding the pronunciation of his students.			X			
2	Teacher used checklist when students work in pairs when students make the same mistake in pronunciation during the class.			X			
	Building awareness and concern.						
1	Teacher performs activities in which he differentiates one sound from another, emphasizing the tone of voice.		X				
2	Teacher described the position of the speech organs to produce the sounds.		X				
	Planning variety of Activities						
1	Teacher did activities and pronunciation exercises in the language laboratory.					X	
2	Teacher did reading activities where the student read aloud different words of similar				X		

	pronunciation.					
	Helping learners hear and produce					
1	Teacher focused on those sounds that do not occur in their native language and cause problems in learning. English like / sh / an / ch /			**X**		

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