The Use of Mobile Phones through Audio and Voice Recordings to Improve English Pronunciation and Intonation

Dennys Tenelanda[1], Mónica Castelo[2]

Abstract

The paper entitled "The use of mobile phones through audio and voice recordings to improve English pronunciation and intonation" aimed to contribute to develop appropriately two of the speaking sub skills such as: pronunciation and intonation. The population was 25 students of the first level of the Dentistry School of the Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo during the academic term October 2015-February 2016. The study was experimental and the proposal was carried out as a complement for the class activities considering the syllabus of the English subject. The strategy was applied for 10 English lessons working inside and outside classroom. A pre-test, intermediate test and post-test were applied in order to obtain results of the application of the strategy. The results showed that students felt more confident working by themselves and at their own pace by the means of listening audios in English and recording them as many times as necessary with their own voices imitating pronunciation and intonation of the original audio. It was evidenced that students had a meaning progress of 25% comparing the three test mentioned above. In short, it may be said that the proposed strategy is useful and easy to be used by any teacher.

Communication

In Ecuador, students have few opportunities to practice a foreign language in the real environment; English is not part of the credits of their majors, teachers are studying postgraduate programs and it is not easy to find English teachers for both private and public institutions at different levels such as: elementary, secondary and higher education schools, so it is evident there is much work to be done.

Only a few students achieve the four language skills correctly, most of them are able to read and write but they show difficulties in listening and speaking, especially in regards to good pronunciation and intonation. So it is very important to look for alternatives to develop these languages skill appropriately. Especially the productive skill of speaking and its subskills of pronunciation and intonation, then students will be prepared to apply for scholarships and take standardized tests which have as a fundamental requirement mastering English as a Foreign Language.

This research project was carried out with 200 students who took the placement test at the Languages Center of Universidad Nacional de Chimborazo in September 2015. The placement test included four sections: reading, listening, writing, and speaking. Only 51students (25,5%) passed to the second percententile or higher, which meant that 149 students (74,5%) got grades lower than 7/10 and showed to use the language at only the basic level, especially in the speaking and listening section.

Based on what was mentioned above, a first level classroom was chosen as the population to test the interactive strategy from "The use of mobile phones through audio and voice recordings to improve English pronunciation and intonation", this group of students took a pre-test in order to diagnose the pronunciation and intonation level, the results obtained indicated that most of the students had limitations with those indicators listed above. A survey was also applied to teachers in order to determine the strategies that they usually used for teaching speaking including pronunciation and intonation.

The teaching of English as a foreign language has experienced changes throughout history linked with generations and current needs that society has developed related to technological advances. That means that educators must consider different strategies *including* technology such as mobile phones, smart boards, audio and visual aids and a host of others in an English as a Foreign Language classroom which will contribute to the practice of the four languages skills and their subskills correctly.

The following methodology used was: the type of research was experimental and applied based on a quanti-qualitative approach. Twenty five students of the first level "C" were chosen at random as part of the population due to the fact that they were starting their studies and were able to have a good basis for the subsequent studies in English. Surveys were applied to students and teachers, as well as a pre-test, intermediate and post-test in order to obtain results.

---

[1] Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo, (Ecuador)
[2] Escuela Superior Politécnica de Chimborazo, (Ecuador)

In the problem statement, it was evidenced that students from the first level "C" had little practice in pronunciation and intonation from their previous studies and most of the teachers did not include technology in their classes. So, it meant that this problem needed to be solved and educators needed to strive to develop these subskills in a more effective manner.

The chapter of the proposal included the interactive strategy to develop pronunciation and intonation correctly taking into account students' needs and likes. Students had to use the recording application of the mobile phone to record an audio of real native speakers' conversations assigned by the teacher, then in pairs they had to listen as many times as necessary in order to record the same conversation with this device imitating the original pronunciation and intonation. The proposal was applied for 10 class periods and its feasibility was tested as the students worked well and became motivated throughout the project.

In the chapter of impacts, the results of the application of the proposal were analyzed considering the average grades of the pre-test, intermediate test and post-test. The general results showed that the application of the proposal generated a positive educative result.

Finally, some of the most important conclusions were that: 31,3% of students bettered their pronunciation and intonation level after applying the strategy proposed. The students felt motivated when performing activities which included mobile phones. Indeed, the strategy designed may easily be used by any English teacher.

References

[1] McCarthy, M. y F. O´Dell (1999): *English Vocabulary in Use*. Editorial de Cambridge, Cambrigde.
[2] McCArthy, M. y J. McCarten (2005): *Touchstone Teacher´s Edition*. Editorial de Cambridge, Hong Kong.
[3] Menken, K. (2001): *An Overview of the Preparation and Certification of Teachers Working with Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students*. Editorial George Washington University, Washington.
[4] Posso Yepéz, M.A. (2009): *Metodología para el trabajo de grado*. Editorial NINA comunicaciones, Quito.
[5] Richards, J. y T. Rodgers (2012): *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching.* Editorial Cambridge University Press, New York.
[6] Richards, J. y T. Rodgers (2006): *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching.* Editorial Cambridge University Press, New York.
[7] Seligson, P. y E. Hodgson (2013): *English ID 1 teacher´s guide*. Editorial Santillana Educación, México D.F.
[8] Romero, G. (2009): "La Utilización de estrategias didácticas en clase", en *innovación y experiencias educativas*, pp. 1-8.
[9] García, J. (2014): "Entrenamiento en estrategias de aprendizaje de Inglés como lengua extranjera en un contexto de aprendizaje combinado", en *Revista Lingüística Neibrija*, pp. 1-12.
[10] Anastasia, D. (2013): "College students' cell phone use, beliefs, and effects on their learning"*, en *College Student Journal*, pp. 585-592.