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Richard Jimenez-Osorio

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Spanish Language Development through Phonological Awareness in the Learning Process for

Non-Native Spanish Speakers

By

Richard David Jimenez-Osorio

A Graduate Field Experience

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of
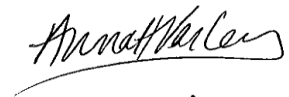
Master of Arts

Literacy and ESL

At Cardinal Stritch University

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

2013-2014

This Graduate Field Experience

For Richard David Jimenez-Osorio

has been approved for Cardinal

Stritch University by

_____
(Advisor)

_____8/27/14_____
(Date)

ABSTRACT:

This study was designed to discover how the awareness of Spanish vowel sounds helps non-native Spanish speaking students develop phonological proficiency to improve their pronunciation, their confidence, and self-esteem when speaking in Spanish. Therefore, this study focus on the process of how students obtain the knowledge about Spanish vowels and vowel combination sounds to help them develop an authentic and articulated Hispanic accent. The purpose of this study was to help a group of 17 10th grade students develop phonological awareness in the process of learning and acquiring Spanish as their second language. The main goal was to encourage this group of students to master phonological skills in pronouncing new words and reading out loud by themselves and in public.

TABLE OF CONTENT

Chapter One

Introduction

It is important for me, as a Hispanic Spanish teacher, to be consistently aware of the role of my students' primary language in the Spanish literacy learning process. Consequently, I concur with Cummins (2006), who considers that a common underlying knowledge about language lies beneath the surface of bilingual skills development. During the fourth quarter of the school year 2012-2013, my students were a group of English speakers who at the same time were non-Spanish speaking teenagers; therefore, I encouraged them to achieve the highest levels of oral accomplishment related to Spanish language mastery not only in school but also in real life. For achieving this professional and curricular goal and bearing in mind that all of my students were fully English proficient, it was necessary for me to encourage them to constantly communicate in Spanish. In order to achieve this goal, I developed and implemented additional curricular lesson plans and phonological awareness inventories that were designed to identify, develop, and promote Spanish phonological awareness (See appendix 2).

Research pertaining to effective language instruction indicates that a successful language program involves explicit and strategic reading instruction, an emphasis on the development of oral communication skills, an inclusion of sociocultural aspects both within the curriculum and within instructional methods, and an awareness of the interaction between social dynamics of the classroom and student participation and motivation (NAEYC, 1998). Having reflected about these essential elements, I realized that it is a truth that our existing foreign language curriculum and traditional way of teaching Spanish in the United States emphasizes the development of reading and writing skills over speaking and listening skills. Therefore, there is a deficit in our existing curriculum and traditional approach to foreign language instruction that neglects the oral literacy development and verbal skills performance of foreign language students, which is possibly the most critical skill for the practical application of Spanish language study in today's society. High school foreign language teachers who

attempt to help their students develop skills in a second language need to be aware of the necessity to extend a full range of language skills, including grammar, reading, writing and content-area knowledge but most importantly, speaking skills. Every high school foreign language program should be designed to meet the verbal communicative needs and interests of students.

There is no doubt that the awareness of sounds within words helps students develop literacy skills as a prerequisite not only to read but also to master the ability to manipulate sounds in words and develop phonological awareness, which will allow students to succeed when pronouncing and sounding out unknown words in both their first and second language (Anthony et al., 2006). Moreover, it is imperative for students and teachers to know that the language taught has components and they are interconnected to each other and structure a perfect whole. Therefore, when students are instructed to learn a second language, teachers must encourage them to recognize that every language is a structured perfect whole that also involves standards in its use; consequently, teachers need to guide their students how to metacognitively understand the process of language acquisition in order for them to use their first language to start developing reading, writing, and speaking abilities through bilingual instruction that supports the linguistic interdependence of language acquisition and the transfer of literacy skills from the primary language into the second language (Mora, 2008).

Research indicates that phonological awareness is a necessary precursor to successful reading acquisition in all alphabetic languages (Adams, 1990; Bradley & Bryant, 1983; Casalis & Louis-Alexandre, 2000; Juel & Minden-Cupp, 2000; Rayner, Foorman, Perfetti, Pesetsky, & Seidemberg, 2001; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Wagner & Torgessen, 1987, cited by Cardenas-Hagan, Carlson, Pollard-Durodola, 2007). The connection between phonology and letter sound correspondence provides the initial foundation on which reading, writing, and spelling develops. Further research supports the fact that phonological awareness plays a critical role in developing listening and speaking skills not only in English but also in many other languages. Phonological awareness is a skill that appears to

transfer from L1 to L2 during the acquisition process (Cardenas-Hagan, Carlson, Pollard-Durodola, 2007). In many school textbooks that I have worked with to teach Spanish there is little information about the Spanish sound system. It is clear to me that in starting to learn a second language, students must be aware of the complexity of its phonetic and phonological components to successfully accomplish their goal to speak Spanish language clearly by articulating Spanish sounds with a Hispanic accent.

According to Odlin, (1989, as cited by Mora, 2008) studies of bilingual literacy development and cross-linguistic transfer of skills indicate that there is a high level of transfer of skills and strategies from the first to the second language in reading out loud or silently. Additionally, he discusses that the greater the similarity in the writing systems of the two languages, the greater the degree of transfer, thus reducing the time and difficulties involved in learning to read, to write, and in speaking the second language by consciously or unconsciously comparing linguistic features these two languages may have in common. In an attempt to determine how I can assist my students to orally communicate successfully, happily, and repeatedly in Spanish, I performed this research that would help students, at any level, identify the process related to how to construct and develop Spanish phonological awareness by recognizing the vowel and consonant systems in the target language and how its phonological elements interact as perfect pieces not only in words but also in entire ideas when orally expressed or heard from someone's voice. This study will introduce some informal strategies to enhance students' verbal skills in Spanish as a second language by developing their awareness in the phonological field as the basic means and a solid starting point to acquire and learn a second language. Therefore, in chapter three these strategies will be presented and further described in detail within chapter four. As a result, chapters three and four will present the procedure of how the Spanish phonological awareness development and English-Spanish phonological bidirectional cross-linguistic transfers affect the learning process of oral skills in Spanish as a second language through sounds and phonics.

This study is designed to discover how the awareness of Spanish vowel sounds helps students develop phonological proficiency in order to improve their pronunciation, their confidence, and self-esteem when speaking or reading out loud in Spanish as second language (SSL). Therefore, this study will focus on the process of how students obtain all the possible knowledge about Spanish vowels and vowel combination sounds to help them develop an authentic Hispanic accent. The purpose of my study was to help my students develop phonological awareness in the process of acquiring Spanish as their second language. My main goal was to encourage students to master phonological skills in pronouncing new words and reading out loud by themselves and in public.

Description of the Focus School and Community

The school selected for this investigation is located on the southwest side of a Midwestern city, belongs to a Public School District, and had an annual enrollment of approximately 518 students as an elementary school during the school year $2011 - 2012$ in grades Pre K through sixth (WINNS, 2012) before joining high school A*[1], which is the focus school for this investigation. School A this year (2013) has a total enrollment of 720 students. It has nearly equal percentages of males and females, with 50.1% females and 49.9% males (see figure 1), (WINNS, 2012).

Student's Population and Sample

Figure 1 defines the student body at School A

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[1] *All names of places and people within this document are pseudonyms.

Student Population at School A
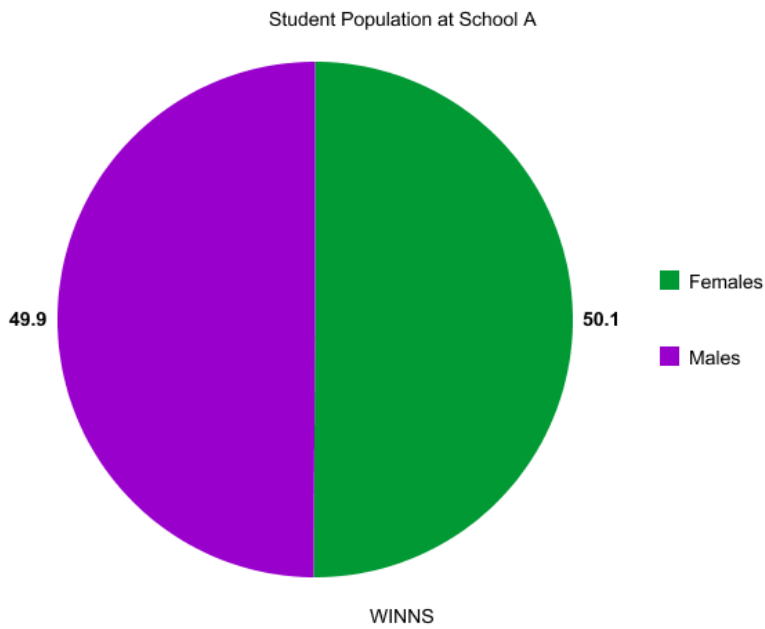
Ethnicity in this high school is represented by a vast majority of students who are Black (77.9%); others are Asian (1.8%), White (12.1%), Hispanic (5.4%), and American Indian (1.3%), two or more races (1.5%), (see figure 2), (WINNS, 2012).

Figure 2 defines the ethnic groups at School A
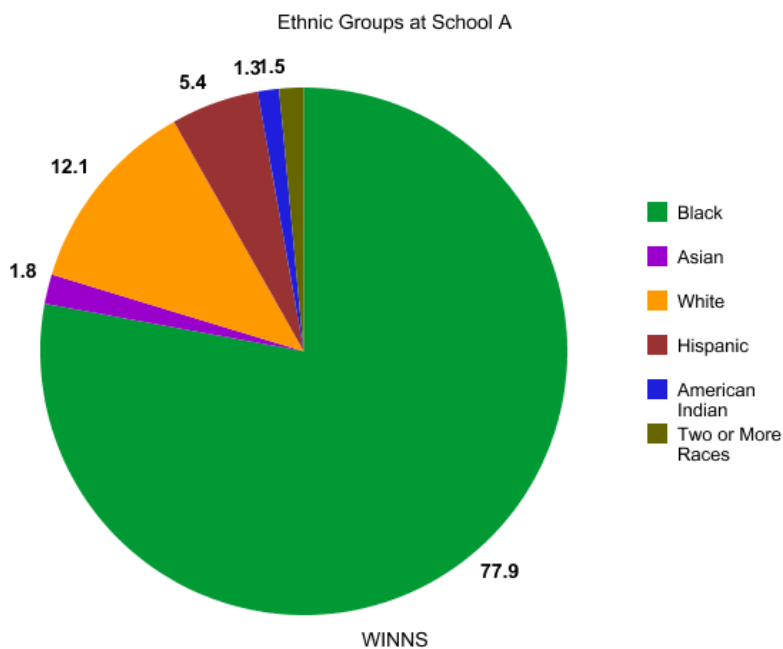
76.2% of the students are categorized as economically disadvantaged status and 23.8% are in

economically advantaged status, which indicates that the majority of the students come from low

income families (see figure 3), (WINNS, 2012).

Figure 3 defines the economic status in School A

Economic Status in School A

WINNS
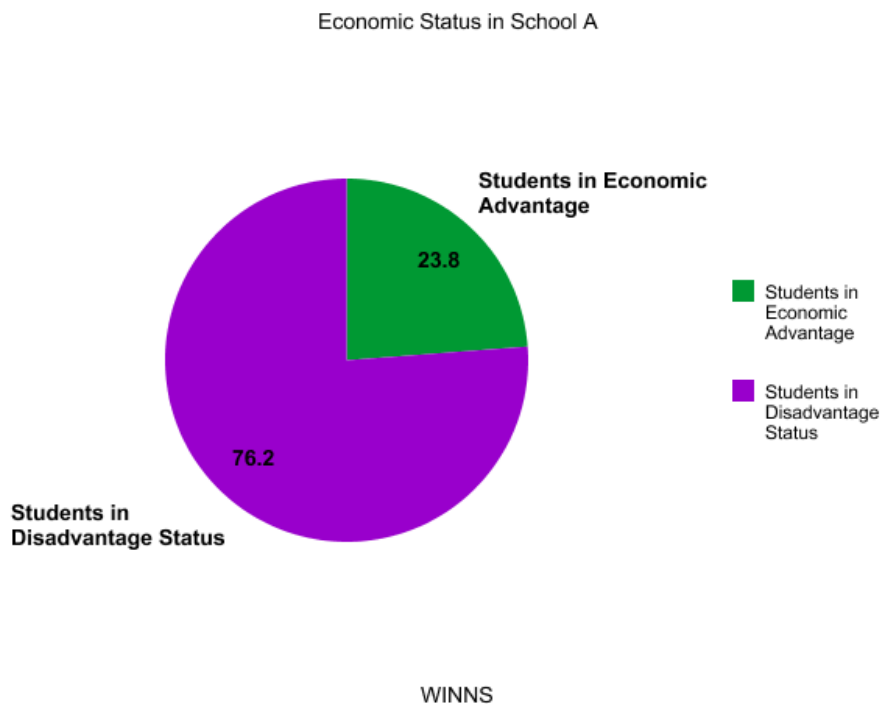
There is only a minimum number of English Language Learners (ELLs) at this school. The vast

majority of the students are proficient in English (99.6%); only 0.4% of students have limited English

proficiency and speak a language other than English; most of these students speak Spanish (0.3%) and

Hmong (0.1%), (see figure 4), (WINNS, 2012). There are no services for ELLs.

Figure 4 defines the English language proficiency and limited English proficiency levels at School A
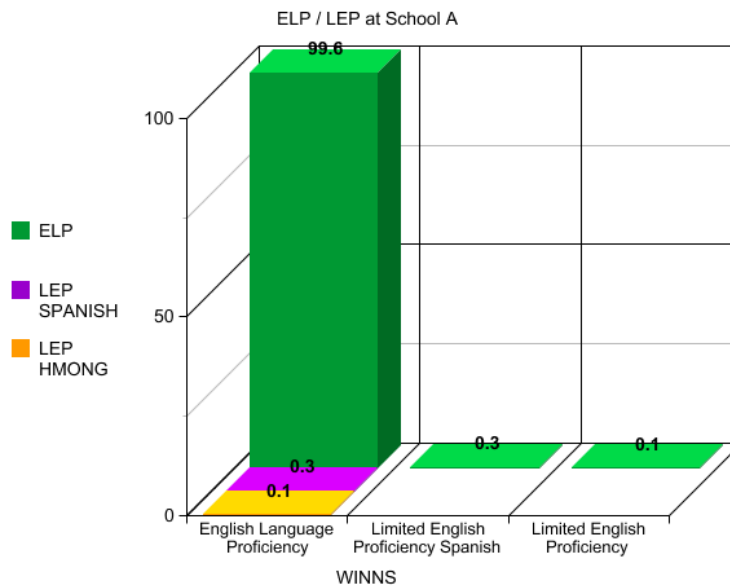
The total population of students (710 = 100%) is distributed per grades as follows: grade Pre-K, 21.3%; grade K, 6.1%; grade 1, 6.3%; and grade 2, 5.1%: grade 3, 7.2%; grade 4, 6.1%; grade 5, 5.1%; grade 6, 5.5%; grade 7, 4.1%; grade 8, 4.5%; grade 9, 8.6%; grade 10, 6.3%; grade 11, 7.0%; and grade 12, 6.9%; (see figure 5) (WINNS, 2012).

Figure 5 defines the population per grade level at School A
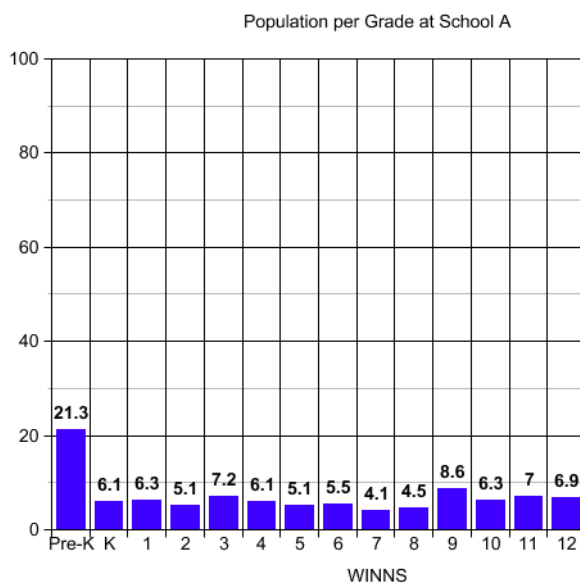
School A has this school year (2012 – 2013) been in a combination process and it has a new administration and a new Principal. It is now a combination of Pre-K and elementary program with high school program (see figures 6 and 7).

Figure 6 defines the district elementary and secondary combined schools percentage related to School A
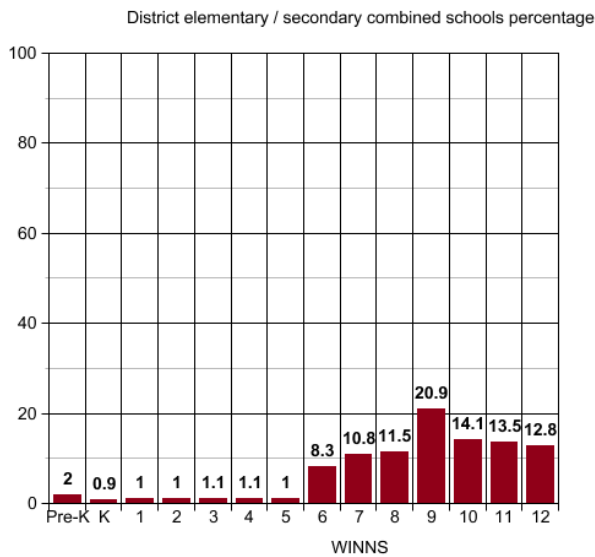
Figure 7 defines the state elementary and secondary combined schools percentage related to School A
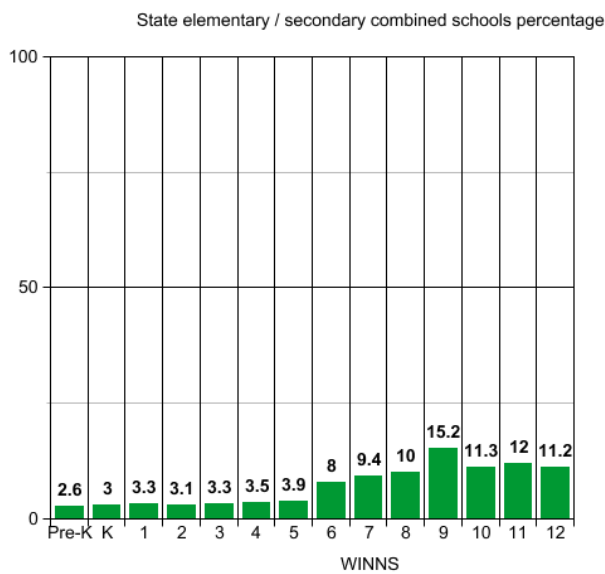
This school system is organized based upon Maria Montessori education programs and provides individual lessons in order to help every child to advance at his or her own pace. School activities are designed to be instructed in five general categories, including practical life, sensorial, language, cultural subjects and mathematics. The lessons foster independence, confidence, self-esteem and self control, by developing a foundation for academic success. In fact, Mora (2008) concurs with the Montessori methodology by stating that the role of the primary language in developing cognitive skills and the value of primary language instruction in strongly building a solid cultural identity and promoting the self-esteem of bilingual students because these aspects are fundamental to the effective implementation of transitional second language acquisition. The Montessori Method is applicable to the development of children all around the world. Teachers can work together across subjects to engage new ways of teaching and can connect students in thorough, high quality and worth learning experiences. (School A handbook, 2012-2013). It is worth mentioning that the Montessori program has a set of features that will accompany the process of this research to accomplish its objectives. The main features that Montessori program intends to reach within the academic instruction are:

- A prepared class environment in which children have freedom to work on their own or in small groups.

- Self-correcting learning materials which help the student develop a well-built basis in reading and mathematics skills.

- Development of self-discipline and independence built around respect for each other and the school in general.

- Parent sessions on the Montessori philosophy and methods represent a strong importance on how parents can maintain the program.

- Belief that learning is a life-long practice.

High School A also offers International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma. The Diploma Program requires a comprehensive two-year international curriculum that consists of six highly integrated subject areas: First Language, Second Language (Spanish), Individuals and Societies, Experimental Sciences, Mathematics and Computer Science, and the Arts. Additionally, it also includes three concepts: Theory of Knowledge, Creativity Action and Service, and the Extended Essay. The International Baccalaureate Organization aims not only to deliver a rigorous curriculum but also to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. Therefore, students are encouraged to become active learners and engaged Citizens, who gain practical experience in being part of an international group of people. The IB Diploma is the result of a demanding pre-university course of study that leads to examinations. It is designed for highly motivated secondary school students who are willing to contribute to a positive change in the world. (School A handbook, 2012-2013).

Description of Intended Student Population

I conducted my research with a group of 17 students who were in tenth grade and intended to be in IB program during the last two high school years. I focused my research during the last marking period in my Spanish classes during this school year 2012 - 2013. It is worth mentioning that I worked with this group during the first three quarters of that school year. This group was in AP (advanced placement) Spanish classes. It was my first time working with them but they all had been previously instructed in Spanish from the last year when they were in Spanish 1 class with a different teacher. They were by that year in Spanish II class. They were nine female students and eight male students (See figure 8).

Figure 8 defines the Spanish II class gender in the fourth quarter of the school year 2012 – 2013 at School A

Spanish II Class Gender School A

AP Spanish II Class 2012-2013
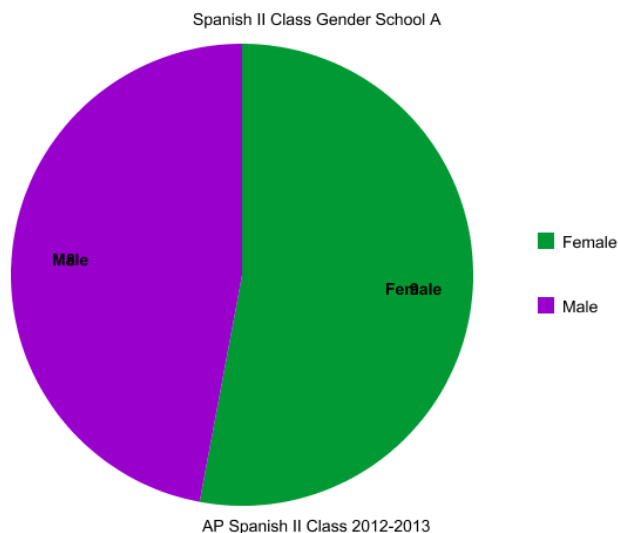
This was a small group where the teaching and learning process was accurate, effective, dynamic, and interactive. They were all students between the ages of 15 and 18 years old; 15 years, 5 students; 16 years, 10 students; 17 years, 1 student; 18 years, 1student (see figure 9).

Figure 9 defines the 17 focus students' ages at School A

AP Spanish II class Students' ages

AP Spanish II Class 2012-2013
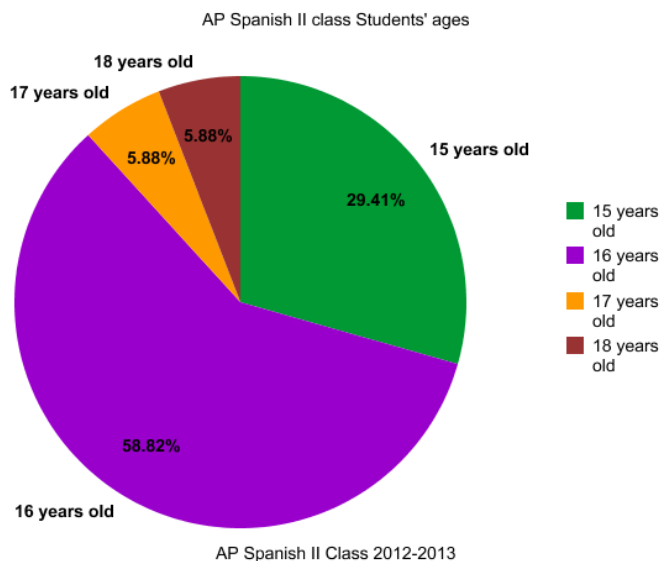
Their ethnic diversity corresponded to Black (9), White (4), Asian (2), and Hispanic (2) (see figure 10). One of the two Hispanic students was a non Spanish speaker, but he was involved in a

family atmosphere where Spanish was spoken. Nevertheless, as it was mentioned before, the entire

group previously took Spanish classes but it was their first time with a Hispanic Spanish teacher.

Figure 10 defines the focus student's ethnicity at School A
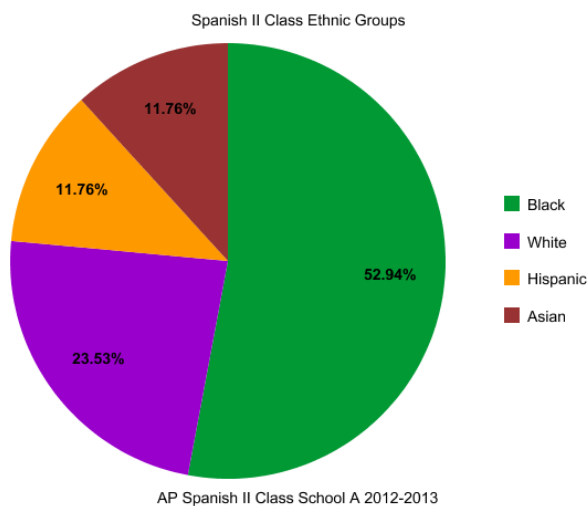
One of my emphases was the Hispanic student to whom my orientation and language

instruction might address her family's expectations and her personal goal to acquire more grammar

knowledge to improve writing and reading skills. This student was involved in home situations where

Spanish was spoken as the home language (especially by her parents) but her primary education was

not bilingual. Therefore, she did not master Spanish as her first language (L1). Additionally, she

recognized that she was not fluent in Spanish as she would have liked to be. Her dialect as a Puerto

Rican Spanish speaker did not correspond to the standard Spanish language that she would like to

master. Therefore, as long as all the other students were non native Spanish speakers, they all received

the same instruction to develop Spanish language literacy skills. It is worth mentioning that one of the

Black students was one of the most advanced students in my Spanish II class because he took three

years of school in a primary Spanish immersion school (see figure 11). He already had developed

Spanish pronunciation and grammar skills, and he enjoyed learning Spanish as a second language. He

was a member of the athletic club and was an enthusiastic basketball player.

Figure 11 defines the focus students' Spanish knowledge background at School A

Spanish Knowledge Background AP Spanish II Class

5.88%

5.88%

5.88%

82.35%

Student 6 Three years of Spanish in Primary School

Student 10 Hispanic Non Spanish Speaker

Student 11 Spanish Speaker

Students 1,2,3,4,5,7, 8,9,12,13,14,15,16, 17, One year of Spanish in HS

AP Spanish II Class 2012-2013
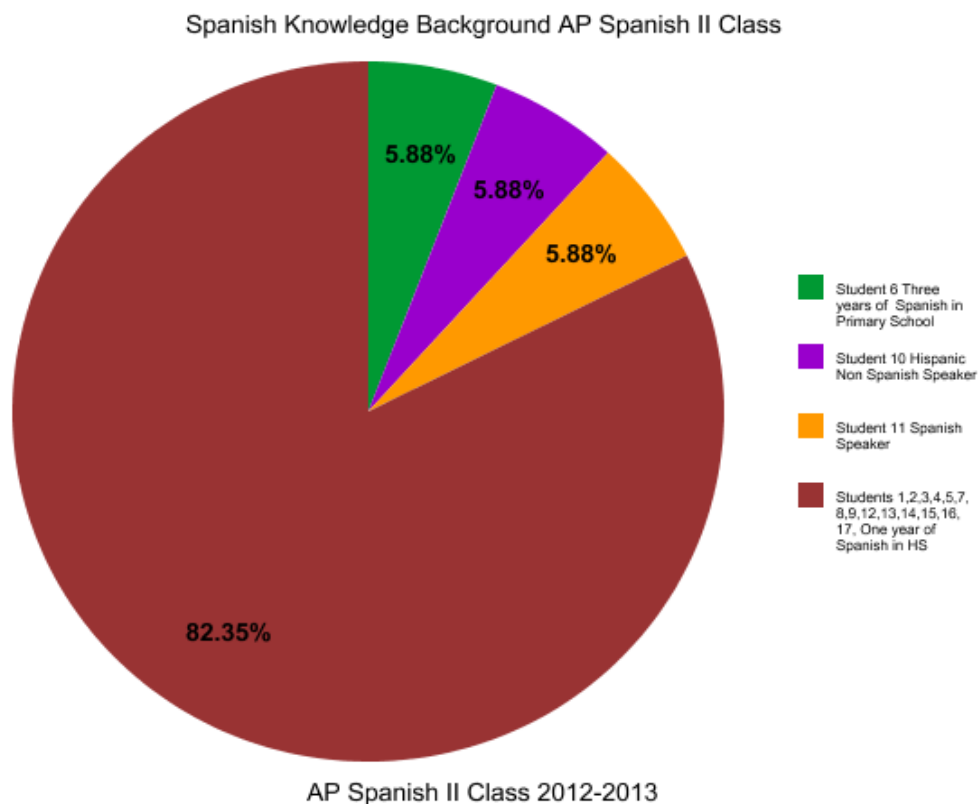
These students studied Spanish because they felt passionate about learning it inside class and outside in school activities. They were enthusiastic when speaking Spanish in class. They also mentioned that as bilingual professionals they might extend their service to the Hispanic population here in this Midwestern city where there is increasingly more and more Spanish spoken. This fact was evidence of their awareness of how the Hispanic community is impacting the modern society nationwide. Moreover, they were planning to take the IB exam to obtain more knowledge about pre-university courses in Spanish. There was no doubt that they were much more motivated by their personal interest and aptitudes for acquiring this foreign language than any other demands to complete a course or to obtain a credit.

Summary of Research on Effective Language Acquisition trough Phonological Awareness

Acquiring a second language depends on some very important factors. All those factors are related to all the components of the language. But most importantly, it depends on the motivation and aptitude of the learner toward the language. The basic language component to consider as a starting point to learn a foreign language is its sound system. Phonological awareness must be the basic field where foreign language teachers and students must express reciprocity. While teachers encourage students to master this component, students must be willing to openly demonstrate how they progress through this language component by constantly pronouncing new words and reading out loud by themselves and in public. Thus, students need to develop verbal skills pronouncing new words regardless of their foreign accent. By developing confidence in this area, students will be able to continue developing more advanced linguistic skills. Research on this topic reveals that phonemic awareness and the transferability of L1 reading skills in bilingual programs demonstrate that phonics instruction is important in laying the foundation of decoding skills for proficient decoding and comprehension in reading a second language (Mora, 2008).

In accordance with Collier (1995), to understand the processes occurring in language acquisition during the school years, it is important to recognize the complex lifelong process that we went through in acquiring our first language and the parallel processes that occur in second language acquisition. According to Berko Gleason (1993, as cited by Collier, 1995) students acquire subtle phonological distinctions, vocabulary, semantics, syntax, formal discourse patterns, and complex characteristics of pragmatics in the spoken system of their first language that help them to increase second language acquisition.

It is well known that language acquisition is strongly connected to reading and writing and at the same time it is in general powerfully shaped by culture. As essential as the belief of individual variation is the principle that human progress and learning occur in and are influenced by social and cultural contexts (NAEYC, 1998).

Collier (1995) presents a conceptual model that takes places while second language acquisition occurs. This model includes four major components: sociocultural, linguistic, academic, and cognitive processes. Within the sociocultural component is the individual student who is the core of the whole process. His / her past, present and future counts enormously in this process. From this factor is derived their self-esteem, anxiety or any other affective features. Their interactional behavior, social environment, and psychological status determine in sum the effective result of this process as a whole.

Language development takes place connected to linguistic factors such as metalinguistic, formal teaching of language in school, and acquisition of the written system of language. This system of written language at the same time also includes all language components such as phonology, vocabulary, morphology and syntax, semantics, pragmatics, paralinguistic, and discourse analysis. Basically, the pronunciation system, the grammar system, meaning, the context of language use, nonverbal and other extralinguistic features, and formal thought patterns are the underlying mechanisms to master all the components of any second language (Collier, 1995).

The third factor is academic development. Academic knowledge and conceptual development transfer from the first language to the second language. Thus, while students develop academic knowledge through their L1 they can use that knowledge to transfer data to the L2 while learning it during effective periods of time through meaningful instruction (Collier, 1995).

Furthermore, cognitive development is considered to be one of the most determinant factors. Effective second language teachers must be aware that all knowledge that students have mastered in their L1 will support what they are able to master in the acquisition of the L2. Therefore, these four components are interdependent. It is relevant that effective teachers provide socioculturally supportive school environments that facilitate natural language, academic, and cognitive development growth at all times in the classroom (Collier, 1995).

For an effective cross-linguistic transfer and a consequent validity of that transfer foreign language teachers need to develop awareness of some skills which first and second language readers must acquire. Some of those requirements according to Lenters (2005) are alphabetical understanding, decoding skills, automaticity of sight vocabulary, overall fluency, development of metacognitive strategies that foster fluency and comprehension, text matched to reading level and interests, and engagement in extensive reading. Additionally, teachers need to be accurate while teaching reading instruction and bear in mind some challenges that second language readers face such as sound/symbol dissimilarities or interferences, oral vocabulary constraints, limitations due to background knowledge, and difficulties with the text structure (Lenters, 2005). Phonological processes involving identification of beginning and ending sounds, recognition of rhyme, and phoneme/syllable deletion in Spanish seem to relate to reading fluency in Spanish, and also to transfer to reading fluency in English (Riccio, C.A., Amado, A., Jiménez, S., Hasbrouck, J.E., and Imhoff, B. 2001).

Lenters (2005), also suggests that reading instructors need to be mindful that reading in the first or second language is founded upon spoken knowledge of the language. She also discusses that one cannot read with comprehension a language one cannot speak and comprehend. Additionally, Cummins and Swain (1986, as cited by Lenters, 2005) support the idea that if a second language learner has reached an acceptable level of conversational ability; it is not valid to assume that the learner is proficient; thus, they suggest giving enhanced attention to building vocabulary. Lenters (2005) recommends that for second language learners it is particularly important to develop their familiarity with and comprehension of oral speech, which at the same time supports vocabulary knowledge for reading development and phonological awareness improvement.

Cummins' (1996), (cited by Cardenas-Hagan, Carlson, Pollard-Durodola, 2007) studies relate to the common underlying proficiencies relative to the cross-linguistic transfer of L1 and L2. According to his findings, students learning to read in L2 benefit from their L1 reading knowledge because skills

in L1 have components that transfer to learning to read in L2. Additionally, he suggests that in the

relationship between L1 abilities and L2 acquisition, the acquisition of L2 is mediated by the level of

L1 proficiency that students have at the time they begin to acquire L2. This developmental

interdependence between L1 and L2 results in a linguistic interdependence that is reflected in both

written and spoken language.

Overview of Research Project

Firstly, it was my goal to focus on the awareness of my Spanish students' knowledge of the

sound structure of the oral Spanish language so that they understood or were aware of phonemes,

which allowed them to learn orthographic and phonologic correspondence while reading and writing.

During the three first quarters all the students demonstrated enthusiasm about Hispanic cultural topics

such as food, dance, music, characters, and Latin American authors. This group of students was new to

me and I was a new teacher to them, therefore, throughout this research I initially focused on their

pronunciation as the first part of this study process. For this goal I reinforced their phonological

awareness of the Spanish vowel sounds.

I implemented strategies to increase students' awareness of Spanish phonemes, pronunciation

proficiency, reading fluency, accuracy and word identification (NAEYC, 2008) through specific

teaching sounds strategies, and vocabulary instruction. This group of students was already literate;

therefore, the instruction started on real reading of words to study their vowel and consonant structure

by identifying beginning sounds, ending sounds, blending sounds, segmenting words in syllables and

rhyming words. At the end, I selected special short passages to read with a variety of interesting,

comprehensive and rhyme materials for their AP Spanish II level, which they were able to orally read

with accuracy while they utilized their L1 previous phonological knowledge and the gained Spanish

phonological awareness. Therefore, since the primary language of my students is English, I built upon

a Language and Literacy component in English instruction to support the learning process of Spanish as a second language by developing phonological awareness.

My purpose with this project was to present data related to measures of phonological awareness in Spanish. I conducted my data collection based upon verbal and written material to evidence my students' progress during a seven-week period. For this, I planned to work on pre-test, post-test, Spanish Phonological Awareness Development (see appendix 1), Spanish vowel general instruction (see appendix 4), Phonological Awareness and Pronunciation Improvement Inventory (see appendix 2) to make my students contextualize words and situations related to the new vocabulary they learned. Thus, I made some voice recordings of these activities after obtaining permission from my participants' parents or legal guardians. As my focus students received advanced reading instruction in their L1 (English). I used their previous information and knowledge background to increase their vision about the different components of the language. Thus, my emphasis to increase their knowledge about the language components in L2 helped them recognize and better understand their language component in L1.

As Mora (2008) suggests, the smallest minimal cue to meaningful reading of a first and second language is the phonological or sound system as it is related to the orthographic or writing system of the language. As a Hispanic Spanish teacher of non native Spanish speakers I support my Spanish teaching process (my L1) with some explanations in English, my second language (L2), which is my students' native language (L1) to help them better understand where to go and what to do with the new knowledge related to the focus vocabulary that belongs to Spanish, their focus L2. In fact, I agree with Cardenas-Hagan, Carlson, and Pollard-Durodola (2007), who concur that the language of instruction must facilitate the development of students' vocabulary, concept knowledge, print awareness, and language in general. This research was developed focusing on diphthongs, triphthongs and words' vowel structure, as sight words. I focused my research on coaching strategies to enhance students'

awareness, mainly of Spanish vowel phonemes and word identification through specific vocabulary instruction. Additionally, my language of instruction was English to support them in reaching even more advanced levels with knowledge in L2 from their L1. I helped them manipulate and identify units of speech such as syllables, phonemes, onsets, and rhymes to perfect their existing knowledge of Spanish sounds and phonemes.

Language and Academic Background

As a Hispanic Spanish as a foreign language teacher I have earned plenty of insight when I teach my native language to non-native Spanish speaker students. I learn from them, they learn from me. During my 22 years of experience as a language teacher there have been multiple moments when I have discovered professional pedagogical resources that allow students to walk through the right pathway to reach their goal to become bilingual by expanding high levels of Spanish phonological awareness through specific vowel sound knowledge. I have studied literacy on Spanish and English language instruction and I have been taught in both languages Spanish and English. I have taught Spanish as a second language to non-native Spanish speaking students ten years ago when I came from my birth place, Cartagena, Colombia, a coastal city located at the northern part of South America. Additionally, I have taught Spanish to Spanish speaker students as their first language. I studied English as a second language before enrolling into a Master's degree in ESL and Literacy program. During each one of my teaching Spanish as a second language years of experience in the Midwestern city, where this action research has taken place, I have developed multiple professional strategies and resources that have successfully placed some of my former students in very good levels of phonological awareness. I implemented these resources with my focus students. Two of them include, The Spanish Phonological Awareness Development Test, and the Spanish Vowel Phonological Awareness and Pronunciation Improvement Inventory (see appendices 1 and 2), which has been widely explained in chapter four.

Based on my professional experience as Spanish as a second language teacher I strongly support the idea of teaching the target language in the same process the native language is acquired. The basis of any language acquisition is its sound system. Once this language domain is mastered then words, phrases, sentences, and ideas might be expressed without difficulty; furthermore, at the appropriate time, the reading and writing process must begin. Regardless of students' literacy level in their L1 they must be precisely instructed within the phonics and phonology fields. For that reason, I focused my research on this first stage of second language acquisition to help my focus students to develop more capabilities to express their ideas in Spanish by themselves with no hesitation at any speaking moment.

Conclusion

This study consists of seven weeks of instruction and assessments. The first week the research activities began with a Spanish Phonological Awareness Development informal pre-test and general instruction about Spanish vowel sounds and some problematic Spanish consonant sounds for English language speakers. In the second week a recording voice activity was conducted based on vowel sound combination. During second and third weeks I addressed some practical writing and listening activities related to vowel combination, vowel sound identification, beginning vowel deletion, vowel deletion in sentences. The fourth week I taught them how to manipulate vowel sound combinations and recognize diphthongs, triphthongs, and hiatus. During this week students recorded their voices one more time in order to measure about their phonological awareness improvement when pronouncing vowel sound combinations. Students worked on word study and vocabulary by playing word games that include diphthongs recognition. The fifth and sixth week students worked on rhyming words. Students were able to recognize rhyming words and read them out loud. During the sixth week the third recording assessment took place. It was based on the Spanish Vowel Phonological Awareness and Pronunciation Improvement Inventory. Within this third recording time students were expected to reach high levels of

phonological awareness by reading out loud the 153 vowel combination patterns designed to help them

succeed speaking Spanish. The seventh week, students practiced short reading passages in small

groups. The readings passages consisted of tongue twisters, proverbs, poems, and rhyming songs (See

appendix 13). Students were finally assessed with a complete Spanish rhyming poem reading and the

Spanish Phonological Awareness Development post-test.

In the next chapter I will attempt to link this research to existing literature. Therefore, there will

be some outcomes in general of earlier related studies and what the literature says about how students

develop their phonological awareness while they are learning and acquiring a second language.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter introduces a broad connection between this project to existing literature; additionally, this chapter also introduces a review of the research relative to how students process their phonological abilities when they transfer their L1 knowledge to L2. Therefore, the concept of phonological awareness and the process of acquiring and developing communication skills will be widely presented by several researchers that concur on how the capability to reflect on the sound system of any second language is required to achieve mastery. This chapter includes in three different stages what researchers say about phonological processing and phonological awareness in second language learners; how second language learners develop phonological processing skills; and the type of communicational needs of second language learners (SLLs) to improve their oral skills.

Phonological Processing and Phonological Awareness in Second Language Learners

There are multiple concepts about what phonological awareness relates to and how students develop this skill, however; this research will mainly base this concept on Anthony et al.'s (2011) points of view. Phonological awareness relates to the capability to consciously reflect on the sound system of a particular language, independent from meaning. Therefore, students develop phonological awareness when they are able to evaluate whether words have common sounds, blending sounds together to form words, and deleting sounds from words to create different words (Anthony et al. 2011). Anthony et al. (2011) in their study about *Spanish phonological awareness*, describe the "dimensionality and continuum of Spanish phonological awareness (PA) skills in 3- to 6-year-old children" (p. 858). Additionally, they present "a factorial design crossed word structure of test items (word, syllable, phoneme) with task (blending multiple-choice, blending free-response, elision

multiple-choice, elision free-response) to assess 12 PA skills" (p. 860). They also demonstrate how

"children were able to first detect blending of sound information, then detect elision of sound

information, then blend sounds together to form words, and finally delete sounds from words to form

new words" (p. 870). In synthesis, children were tested individually in relatively specific places

designated for testing. Language selection and phonological awareness testing took 20 to 30 min. All

examiners were fluent in both language Spanish and English. Examiners were previously trained

attending workshops to learn how to perform the assessments. The purpose of the study was to explore

phonological awareness in Spanish; therefore, all testing was conducted in Spanish, including

directions. Additionally, only answers provided in Spanish were acknowledged as correct. Children

were given verbal praise, physical praise (e.g., high fives), and tangible reinforcements (e.g., stickers)

for taking part in the evaluations (Anthony et al. 2011).

In addition, according to Riccio et al. (2001) phonological processing is the capability to

manipulate sounds of words of an alphabetic language. Some research has established that in the

United States there are many Spanish speaking students, and their phonological awareness has been

measured in Spanish to predict their literacy achievement in English (Anthony, Williams, Liang,

Swank, Assel, and Landry, 2011). Conversely, there is not much research about English-speaking

students who have been measured in Spanish to predict their literacy achievement in Spanish as their

second language. Riccio et al (2001) developed a measure of phonological processing in Spanish which

is placed in their study titled *Cross-linguistic transfer of phonological processing: development of a*

measure of phonological processing in Spanish. "The measure was developed based on research that is

available in English and then piloted with children in a bilingual program to examine the reliability and

validity of the scores obtained on this measure" (p. 417).

Furthermore, Anthony (2011) suggests that foreign language teachers must be aware of several

concepts and procedures to assist their students in their transitional language development. This

research reveals how L1 (Spanish) to L2 (English) transfer procedure, according to Anthony (2011), is

bidirectional. Thus, such awareness of concepts and procedures includes:

- relations among phonological processing abilities, phonological awareness, and how
components of literacy change over time

- awareness of sounds within words as a prerequisite not only to the ability to manipulate sound
in words, or phonological processing, but also to learning to read

- ways to assist Spanish-speaking ELLs to succeed through their transition from their native
language toward their English learning process at school and vice versa

- different language components and the way second language learners apply them in both
spoken and written use

- students' abilities to isolate initial sounds in their first language as a predictor of their ability to
isolate initial sounds in a second language

- knowledge transfer to facilitate instruction received in L1 to transition L2 literacy

- letter name and sound identification skills are correlated across languages

- word knowledge involves spelling, pronunciation, morphology, and syntax

- literacy instruction for second language learners

(Anthony et al., 2006; Cardenas-Hagan et al., 2007; Riccio et al., 2001; Leafstedt and Gerber

2005; DaSilva, 2005).

According to Anthony et al., (2011), the L1 to L2 transfer is bidirectional. This concept focuses

on the process when language knowledge in general has been gained from L1 and may be retained to

increase or obtaining knowledge into L2 and vice versa. Therefore, the focus on English Language

Learners' (ELLs) research might be applicable to English speaking students when they are in the

process to learn Spanish as a second language. In consequence, the concept of ELL might be addressed

to Spanish Language Learners (SLL) within the process of developing phonological awareness to

increase their communication oral skills. Anthony et al. (2009) conclude on this concept based on an

intervention that they applied when "assessed the Spanish and English phonological awareness skills of

130 bilingual preschool children in the fall and again in the spring. Results indicated there was

significant cross-linguistic prediction of phonological awareness after controlling for classroom effects

and prior within-language phonological awareness" (p. 859).

Second Language Learners' Phonological Processing Skills

With the general endeavor of examining the validity of phonological awareness, phonological

memory, and phonological access to the lexical storage, in native Spanish-speaking preschool children

Anthony, Williams, Mc Donald, Corbitt-Shindler, Carlson, & Francis (2006) pose their research based

on three different theories. They base these theories upon the facts that first; each of the phonological

processing abilities is distinguishable from general cognitive ability. Second, phonological processing

abilities are distinguishable from each other. Third, phonological processing abilities demonstrate

different relations with emergent literacy skills. The confirmatory factor analysis is a support to the

validity of each of the phonological processing ability. Anthony, et all, (2006) in their studies about

Phonological processing and emergent literacy in Spanish-speaking preschool children, "examined the

convergent, discriminant, and predictive validity of these phonological processing abilities (PPAs) in

147 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old children whose native language was Spanish" (p. 239).

Anthony et al. (2006) evaluate models that collectively test whether or not each phonological

processing skill is distinguishable from general cognitive ability. They also evaluate models that reflect

current conceptualizations of the nature of phonological processing abilities. Finally determine if

lexical storage, phonological awareness, and phonological memory were differentially related to emergent literacy skills. Anthony et al. (2006) and Leafstedt and Gerber (2005) specifically, concur in how important phonological processing abilities are in the early literacy development of native Spanish speaking students. These perspectives are applicable to the fact that developing Spanish phonological awareness is useful to acquire knowledge enough to additionally develop self confident to speak out loud when reading or talking to others. Mora (2008) believes that the role of the primary language plays a very strong role in developing academic skills and the value of primary language instruction in building the cultural identity and self-esteem of students who master two languages is supportive for them to transition to their second language learning process.

Leafstedt and Gerber (2005) support three specific questions about the process of acquiring phonological skills. These questions are: Do phonological process show cross-linguistic transfer? How does the language of instruction influence the connection between phonological processes and translation? Does performance on Spanish and English phonological processing words similarly foretell second language translation?

Additionally, Leafstedt and Gerber (2005) examine phonological processing skills following a theory of phonological processing deficits and postulate three related components; they include: phonological awareness, phonological coding, and phonological recoding. In fact, Leafstedt, and Gerber (2005) demonstrate in their research titled *Crossover of Phonological processing skills: A study of Spanish-speaking students in two instructional settings* that "phonological awareness is the only theoretical phonological processing construct significantly related to all English and Spanish reading tasks" (p. 226).

Leafstedt and Gerber (2005) frame their investigation based on Cummins' (1996) theory of the common underlying proficiencies (CUP) which states that a common underlying knowledge about language lies beneath the surface of bilingual or multilingual performance. In other words, knowledge

about L1 is an available resource for assessing in L2 communicational skills development. Likewise, as my hypothesis has been based on practical experiences as a Spanish teacher for non-Spanish speaking students. I have identified a wide variety of difficulties within students who struggle when trying to pronounce specific words. Such event makes them loose their focus on their ideas in both when reading and spontaneously talking.

In the same way, Anthony, Williams, Mc Donald, Corbitt-Shindler, Carlson, & Francis (2006) recommend that teachers should be aware of the relations among phonological processing abilities and how components of literacy change over students' age. Furthermore, they suggest how important phonological awareness is in acquiring literacy and demonstrate how phonological awareness plays as well an important role in learning to decode text. Additionally, they present facts about how learning to read may influence further development of phonological awareness. They also demonstrate how phonological access to lexical storage may play a later role in moving children from accurate decoding of individual words to fluent communicational skills. Thus, the researchers establish that it is proper that children's phonological awareness competencies are associated with their memory capacities, independent of general cognitive ability. As a result, I strongly believe that the basic language component to consider as a solid initial position to acquire a second language is its sound system by developing phonological awareness.

Moreover, phonological awareness plays an important role in acquiring literacy (Riccio, Amado, Jimenez, Hasbrouck, and Imhoff, 2001). It is also important in order to develop better communicational capabilities and decode L2 words to help students recognize and decode L1 words, especially cognates in contexts (Jia, Kohnert, Collado, and Aquino-Garcia (2006); and Riccio, Amado, Jimenez, Hasbrouck, and Imhoff, 2001). Research about words in context and some strategies make students to succeed while decoding verbs in Spanish as in English using the L1 background knowledge. Moreover, some evidence suggests that Spanish-speaking children master phonological awareness

skills in a sequence similar to that of monolingual English speakers. Additionally, increasing evidence in support of cross-linguistic transfer of phonological awareness, such phonological awareness skills in Spanish predict improved communicational abilities in both Spanish and English indicates that measuring a Spanish-speaking child's phonological awareness in Spanish is important not only to guide Spanish literacy instruction but also to understand children's potential communicational outcomes in English. Therefore, these findings are relevant to both Spanish literacy development and English literacy development among second language learners. (Anthony, Williams, Liang, Swank, Assel, and Landry, 2011).

Similarly, Riccio, Amado, Jiménez, Hasbrouck, and Imhoff (2001) present insights in their research about meaning, morphological structure, and cross-language relationships, especially spelling and pronunciation based on Ball and Blanchman' (1991) theory that phonemic awareness is the ability to recognize that a spoken word consists of a sequence of individual sounds. Riccio, Amado, Jiménez, Hasbrouck, and Imhoff's consider this awareness of sounds within words a prerequisite not only to the ability to manipulate sound in words, or phonological processing, but also to learning to pronounce new words and in fact to properly speak out loud the second language. They focus their study on Phonological awareness in Spanish (Conciencia fonologica en Español, CFE), and concur that as in English, is defined by tasks that involve increasingly more complex levels of awareness of sounds in the focus language and the ability to manipulate those new sounds. They demonstrate how phonological awareness tasks vary depending on the linguistic properties of the words, including word length. In fact, according to Yopp and Stapleton (2008), it should be noted that new sounds will have to be learned by second language learners. For instance, although phonemically aware Spanish-speaking students may bring phonemic insight with them to a second language, some of the sounds in the second language will be new to them. An example is the short /i/ sound we hear in the English word *live*. This sound does not exist in Spanish phonetic alphabet; therefore, it tends to be understood like the word

leave with the long /ɪ/ sound. When individuals learn a new language, part of what they learn is to hear and pronounce new sounds (Yopp and Stapleton (2008). Moreover, certain linguistic properties appear to affect the tasks in Spanish and establish sensitivity to syllables as opposed to single sounds in Spanish that may facilitate the awareness of rhyme within words but obstruct isolation of single sounds. Therefore, differences in the linguistic structure of Spanish may affect difficulty levels of specific tasks as well (Riccio, Amado, Jiménez, Hasbrouck, and Imhoff, 2001).

In the same way, Vokic (2008) suggests that L2 learners have more difficulty with new sounds because the production of a sound requires the establishment of a central phonetic representation that contains information concerning both the perceptual target and a cognitive process that specifies how that target is to be initially achieved in pronunciation. Thus, according to this view, problems in pronunciation and foreign accent relate to both perception and pronunciation difficulties. Moreover, the study of phonological awareness might be explained in two main basic focuses. Firstly, it proposes to transfer distributional patterns of sounds from L1 to L2 or vice versa and how this process could have an effect on how L2 sounds are perceived and, in turn, produced. Secondly, it frames the process how some sounds in some structural positions may be relatively easier to acquire than in other positions (Vokic, 2008). This will be deeply demonstrated in chapter four.

Riccio, Amado, Jiménez, Hasbrouck, and Imhoff (2001) support the area in which Spanish phonological processes predict speaking fluency in Spanish, and recognize the necessity of multiple failure analysis to compute with communicational fluency in Spanish as the dependent variable and the activities of the Conciencia Fonológica en Español (CFE), as the independent variables. Phonological processes involving identification of beginning and ending sounds, recognition of rhyme, and phoneme/syllable deletion in Spanish seem to relate to reading fluency in Spanish, and also to transfer to reading fluency in English. These approaches have multiple applications for identification of at-risk readers as well as early intervention and curricular development. These types of early identification

instructional practices result because of the provision of timely and proactive programming in

phonological process in acquiring Spanish as a second language (Riccio, Amado, Jiménez, Hasbrouck,

and Imhoff, 2001).

Consequently, Cardenas-Hagan, Carlson, and Pollard-Durodol (2007) seek the effects of initial

first and second language proficiencies as well as the language of instruction that students receive and

the relationship between native language ability of students who are second language learners (SLLs)

and their development of early literacy skills in the second language. This fact relates Cardenas-Hagan,

et al. to Riccio, Amado, Jiménez, Hasbrouck, and Imhoff's (2001). Moreover, Riccio et al. (2001) and

Anthony et al. (2006) demonstrate how awareness of sounds within words in both Spanish and English

is believed to be a prerequisite not only to the ability to manipulate sounds in words, or phonological

processing, and clearly pronouncing, but also, speaking out loud, and even more, reading. It is a fact,

according to Archibald (2008), that phonological features are units of mental representation whose

presence is cued by phonetic features; therefore, the input cues to the implementation of a particular

phonological feature may vary crosslinguistically. Archibald, (2008) studies in his research the

Phonological feature re-assembly and the importance of phonetic cues. In this research "it is argued

that new phonological features can be acquired in second languages, but that both feature acquisition

and feature re-assembly feature are affected by the robustness of phonetic cues in the input" (p. 231).

Even a phonological feature as apparently transparent as accent can be implemented in several

different ways, including vocal fold vibration, lengthening of the preceding vowel or a high tone on a

next vowel. The second language learner needs to be able to associate a particular effort related to the

aspect to be acquired. Furthermore, the degree of learning difficulty may also be influenced by the

strength of the indication to the phonological aspect not just by the differences at the phonological level

(Archibald, 2008).

In addition, Cardenas-Hagan, Carlson, and Pollard-Durodol (2007) demonstrate how pedagogical

and didactic decisions for SLLs might not only consider effective instructional literacy strategies but

also recognize the relevance of the language of instruction. In fact, they worked with different groups

of second language learners (SLLs) who exhibited a range of strengths and weaknesses in initial

Spanish and English literacy skills and reflected varying outcomes. However, they discover through

empirical research that transfer is facilitated when a child receives some instruction in L1 and transition

to L2 literacy and instruction. Cardenas-Hagan, et al. (2007), state based on their research with a group

of 1,016 Spanish-speaking students that for children who began the school year with low L2 (English)

letter name and sound identification skills, the level of initial L1 (Spanish) skills affected their letter

name and sound identification skills in English as second language at the end of the year. Specifically,

students who had low initial L2 (English) letter name and sound identification skills performed at

higher levels in English at the end of the year the stronger their Spanish letter name and sound

identification skills were, regardless of the language of instruction. Therefore, when early English letter

name and sound identification skills are low, strong Spanish letter name and sound identification skills

are related to higher later letter name and sound identification skills in English, whether the students

are instructed in Spanish or in English. Thus, it appears that knowledge of Spanish letter name and

sound identification skills is being transferred such that it has a positive impact on later English letter

name and sound identification skills. In my research, my students were all literate according to their

level as tenth graders. Therefore, their letter name and sound identification skills were high; this fact

made them easily recognize a set of new sounds in Spanish. In synthesis, Cardenas-Hagan, E., Carlson,

C. D., and Pollard-Durodol, S.D. (2007) in their study, *The cross-linguistic   transfer of early literacy*

skills: the role of initial L1 and L2 skills and language of instruction, demonstrate by implementing

especially designed activities "the effects of initial first and second language proficiencies as well as

the language of instruction that a student receives on the relationship between native language ability of

students who are English language learners (ELLs) and their development of early literacy skills and the second language" (p. 249).

Similarly, Riccio, Amado, Jiménez, Hasbrouck, and Imhoff (2001) and Cardenas-Hagan, Carlson; Pollard-Durodol (2007), and Anthony et al., (2011) converge on how letter name and sound identification skills are fairly highly positively correlated across languages in the beginning of the focus students' school year. Additionally, phonological awareness skills appear to be the area with the most significant and direct transfer of knowledge and language skills do not appear to be a factor in the development of phonological awareness. Furthermore, they concur that the language of instruction for Spanish-speaking ELLs may produce varying results for different students. In fact, they continue converging, that most of the limited English proficient students are Spanish-speaking students. This reality makes Cardenas-Hagan, Carlson, Pollard-Durodol, Riccio, Amado, and Jimenez point at some means to provide early identification and intervention for Spanish-speaking children to benefit from prevention or intervention. Certainly, as previously described and stated by Anthony et al., (2011), the L1 to L2 transfer is bidirectional, then, the focal point on English Language Learners' (ELLs) researches might be applicable to English speaking students while developing the process to learn Spanish as a second language. In consequence, this concept applies to Spanish Language Learners (SLL) in their process of developing phonological awareness to increase their oral skills.

One of the purposes of Cardenas-Hagan, et al., (2007) was to determine the effects of initial first and second language proficiencies as well as the language of instruction that students received on the relationship between native language abilities of students who are ELLs and their development of early skills in their second language. Likewise, the purpose of my study was to help my students develop phonological awareness in the process of acquiring Spanish as their second language. Thus, this purpose was achieved by encouraging students to master phonological skills by constantly pronouncing new words and reading out loud by themselves and in public. It is true that the awareness of sounds

within words help students develop literacy skills in order for them to manipulate sound in words and

phonological processing (Anthony et al., 2006).

Communicational Needs of Second Language Learners (SLLs)

When second language learners are in the process of acquiring the new language they face

several types of communicational needs in order to better develop oral skills. According to Yopp and

Stapleton (2008), an understanding of the phonemic basis of a spoken language, once developed, can

be applied to any language. During my research I helped the students to develop oral skills by working

on Spanish Vowel Phonological Awareness and Pronunciation Improvement Inventory especially

designed to help Spanish language learners (SLL) develop awareness about Spanish vowel sounds;

therefore, it helped the students increase their listening and speaking Spanish levels. This inventory

consisted of nine columns with the same vowel combination and different beginning consonant and 17

rows of the same beginning consonant with different vowel combinations (see appendix 2).

Additionally, Jia, Kohnert, Collado, and Aquino-Garcia (2006); discuss how to identify potential

patterns of development in relative levels of verb processing efficiency by sequential bilingual students

in L1 and L2, and investigate some factors which are a strong influence on cognitive control of the dual

language system in developing bilinguals. Moreover, Jia et al. (2008), define early sequential bilinguals

like students who learn a single minority language from birth (L1) and begin to learn a second, majority

language (L2) sometime during early childhood. Jia, Kohnert, Collado, and Aquino-Garcia's one

important goal is to identify discernible patterns of lexical development within a relatively

homogeneous group of bilinguals, namely school-age Spanish-English sequential bilinguals living in

the United States. They also study the processing of action verbs in both low-competition (single-

language) and high-competition (mixed-language) processing conditions. As a consequence, Jia,

Kohnert, Collado, and Aquino-Garcia's provide a more comprehensive picture of lexical development

in early sequential Spanish-English bilinguals, and demonstrate three implications. First, basic lexical

skills in verb processing in L1 continue to develop as children rapidly gain proficiency in L2, the majority language of the community and educational system, and the growth of processing skills of basic and high frequency words in Spanish. Second, it discovers how dominant language switch patterns found among early L2 learners at different linguistic levels to verb processing. This change from greater skills in L1 to L2 among early learners and the maintained dominance in L1 among late learners are attributed, at least in part, to the interaction of different language demands of the environment and the varying levels of social and cognitive development of the L2 learners. Third, findings of less proficient verb processing from the nouns cross-study comparison extend the results in English monolingual lexical processing to a developing bilingual population (Jia, Kohnert, Collado, and Aquino-Garcia, (2006).

Jia, Kohnert, Collado, and Aquino-García, (2006) developed a research titled *Action naming in Spanish and English by sequential bilingual children and adolescents*. This research consisted of an intervention with "verb processing in early sequential Spanish-English bilinguals. Primary study goals were to identify potential patterns of development in relative levels of verb processing efficiency in a 1st (L1) and 2nd (L2) language and to investigate factors influencing cognitive control of the dual-language system in developing bilinguals (p.588).

Furthermore, related bilingual pronunciation strategies including translating, transferring information across languages, and reflecting on words in either Spanish or English, are strategies that provide low-performing or low-literacy bilingual students with unique opportunities for improving their communicational abilities (Jimenez, 1997). One example described by Jimenez (1997) is how a student that was confronted with vocabulary items with which he was unfamiliar, checked to see whether he knew a related word in his other language. If he thought he had located a potential candidate, he quickly tested the item to see if it made sense. It also appeared to be indicator of a fairly well-developed Spanish-English bilingual schema for reading. Additionally, Jimenez (1997) worked

with five students that were aware that Spanish and English languages are more different than they are

similar and that knowledge made them gain competence in both languages. All the students involved

in this project were selected because of the difficulties they were facing with respect to literacy.

Although these students were clearly performing below grade-level expectations, Jimenez claims he

knew little about what they could initially do but at the end they provided numerous slight indications

of potential literacy ability. Jimenez discovers that these students' literacy knowledge and abilities

surface from the data collected during classroom observations, initial think-alouds, and interviews. He

identifies that what students can and cannot do seems a reasonable approach for developing more

accurate representation of students literacy knowledge and potential rather than simply comparing them

to their peers on a rank-ordered basis. Jimenez, (1997) investigated about *The strategic reading*

abilities and potential of five low-literacy Latina/o readers in middle school. "This study was

conceptualized as a qualitative study of the literacy knowledge, abilities, and learning potential of low-

performing or low-literacy Latina/o students. Thus, there was a desire to go beyond the typical

qualitative research foci of observation, interviews, and document analysis. The use of formative

experiments is an option available to qualitative researchers as a component of research design.

Qualitative researchers can use formative experiments to become more actively involved with the

participants and institutions involved in their research" (p. 228).

Jia, Kohnert, Collado, and Aquino-Garcia (2006) and Jimenez (2005) discuss how the students

in their researches demonstrate a shift of language dominance in the aspect of inhibitory control. They

all concur about how easier it is for them to switch from Spanish to English than vice versa. In general

Jimenez, Jia, Kohnert, Collado, and Aquino-Garcia recognize that students involved in both research

demonstrates potential reading strengths. They present all the time the role of Spanish in the literacy

learning of these students. This fact makes Jimenez, Jia, Kohnert, Collado, and Aquino-Garcia be

aware of their student's spirit and linguistic background. Additionally, this research in certain way

agrees with Cisero and Royer (1995, as cited by Anthony, et all. 2011) who determined that English-speaking children as Spanish-speaking children can detect rhyme before they can detect initial or final phonemes which focuses on their capability to read while developing phonological awareness.

In addition, Carlo, August, McLaughlin, Snow et al. (2007) provides some insight about how to close some gaps in oral communicative performance between English and Spanish speaking students and discover that they are associated with gaps in vocabulary knowledge. Carlo, August, McLaughlin, Snow et al. (2007) contribute with resources to enhance fifth graders' academic vocabulary. Carlo, August, McLaughlin, Snow et al. support this inquiry upon the theory of the model of the complexity of word meaning. It means that knowing a word, implies knowing many things about that word: its pronunciation; its phonological structure, its literal meaning; its various connotation; the sort of syntactic, constructions into which it enters; the morphological options it offers; and a rich selection of semantic associates, including synonyms, antonyms, and word with closely contrasting meaning, and its capacity for polysemy. Carlo, August, McLaughlin, Snow et al. (2007) assert about the fact that learning a word requires learning these various aspects of its meaning, and inferring word meaning from context requires being alert to these various aspects. In a few words, Carlo, et al.(2004) in their intervention with students recommend the article: *Closing the gap: Addressing the vocabulary needs of English-language learners in bilingual and mainstream classrooms.* This group of researchers determine different actions to find out that the "gaps in reading performance between Anglo and Latino children are associated with gaps in vocabulary knowledge. The meanings of academically useful words were taught together with strategies for using information from context, from morphology, from knowledge about multiple meanings, and from cognates to infer word meaning. Among the principles underlying the intervention were that new words should be encountered in meaningful text, that native Spanish speakers should have access to the text's meaning through Spanish, that words should be

encountered in varying contexts, and that word knowledge involves spelling, pronunciation, morphology, and syntax as well as depth of meaning" (p. 188).

In this order of ideas, students are provided with general-purpose strategies for developing communicational oral skills through phonological awareness among other factors, while at the same time the analysis teaches specific word meanings. Carlo, August, McLaughlin, Snow et al. (2007) instructs in using context to infer word meaning, in the possibility of polysemy, in performing morphological analysis, and in the use of glossary and cognates, and more importantly, the recognition of phonemes to recognize new words in specific contexts. Carlo et al. (2007) includes the English translation for the meaning used in the texts as well as the Spanish definition. They also alert students to the presence of words with multiple meanings by including all definitions for the word and highlighting the definition used in the text. Their main goal of their analysis is to test the impact of a vocabulary enrichment intervention that combines direct word instruction with instruction in word-learning strategies on outcomes for SLLs. One more goal is to see whether improved vocabulary and word analysis skills are associated with improved communicational skills outcomes; even though, according to Archibald (2008), there is no semantic consequence to whether the voicing distinction in a language is spelled out by a vocal fold vibration sound or a closed or open vowel sound (See appendix 4); nevertheless, it might be considered as a social difference for those individuals who maintain a mark of foreign accent in their L2 pronunciation as a result from how some people pay more attention to the way something is said than on the actual content of the message (Archibald 2008).

Carlo, August, McLaughlin, Snow et al. (2007) discuss how their instructional material enhance reading skills and word knowledge. They demonstrate how teachers report quite a high level of satisfaction with the materials, and how the students enjoy the lessons and display sensitivity to word meanings and increase phonological awareness of Spanish-English relationships.

In other words, according to Yopp and Stapleton (2008), phonological awareness constitutes an insight on the nature of spoken language that contributes to beginner speakers' success in negotiating an alphabetic orthography. In fact, this insight transfers from one language to another. Moreover, second language teacher can support students' phonologic awareness in their native language and encourage family engagement in the target language activities that play with sounds, confident that such efforts are beneficial for their students (Yopp and Stapleton, 2008). In my case, my language instruction is English because I totally agree that students must clearly understand all the new concepts that teachers want them to receive in order to apply them in the target language. Additionally, I play a great role model for my students since English is my second language, therefore, they are permanently encouraged to speak Spanish regardless their American accent.

In addition, According to DaSilva (2005) Second Language Learners share L2 as a common language and it is an efficient way for them to help each other and it gives them a natural common connection. SLLs have fun with each other and seem deliberate in evoking a sense of complicity. This sense of complicity contribute to the development of levels of interdependence, which over time serve to create additional possibilities to maximize their combined linguistic resources, and to gain greater access to the language that comprise the practices of the entire classroom. DaSilva, (2005) establishes in her research titled *Linguistic access and participation: English language learners in an English-dominant community of practice*, a series of findings that "suggest that for ELLs in the English - dominant environment, their linguistic access to classroom activities and their progression toward meaningful participation were in many ways complicated by: (a) unequal participation in the classroom activities, (b) ambiguities in the purposes of instruction, and (c) vagueness in communication by teachers (i.e., lack of clarity when giving directions, poor word choices, and incomplete explanations). Consequentially, the general divide of shared knowledge among members of the class gave way to

subcommunities that were parallel to one another, creating a disconnection between the participants of the classroom community" (p.165).

Furthermore, Vokic (2008) focuses her attention on similarity and dissimilarity of sound systems of first language (L1) and second language (L2) acquisition process. She states that second language (L2) similarities and dissimilarities with native language (L1) in their sound systems play an important role in the process of developing of L2 phonological awareness. Vokic, (2008) determines in her research *The role of structural position in L2 phonological acquisition: evidence from English learners of Spanish as L2.* This research studies "the speech of 12 adult native speakers of English with intermediate to intermediate-high proficiency in Spanish as a second language was analyzed to determine whether L2 learners rely on distributional information in the process of L2 speech learning and if so, if similar or dissimilar distributional patterns of sounds are more easily acquired" (p. 347)

In summary, this chapter compiles concepts for a cross-linguistically body study of a phonological awareness development and the transfer process from one language to another from the smallest language unit which is a phoneme in the direction of social contexts where second language students are exposed to be receiver of Spanish. Its three parts: what researchers say about phonological processing and phonological awareness in second language learners, how second language learners develop phonological processing skills; and the type of communicational needs of second language learners (SLLs) concepts, strategies and procedures that seek to understand more deeply how SLLs develop phonological abilities, in particular Spanish language learners (SLL); their needs related to vocabulary and to their linguistic environment and its effects within the academic context in any classroom where second language learners (SLLs) is found.

Finally, Mora (2008) believes that the role of the primary language plays a positive role in developing cognitive academic skills and the value of primary language instruction in building the cultural identity and self-esteem of bilingual students is fundamental to the effective implementation of

transitional second language learning and acquisition. Additionally, Mora (2001) considers that "the smallest minimal cue to meaningful reading of a first and second language is the phonological or sound system as it is related to the orthographic or writing system of the language. When initial reading instruction is conducted in Spanish, a phonics or analytical approach is commonly used because Spanish is a phonetic language with a very consistent set of phonics rules" (p.65). According to The National Association for Bilingual Education (1995) published some researches that concluded that when a second language is taught by teachers who understand and believe in the important function of primary language in literacy learning, the second language learner students showed higher levels of achievement in school (Mora, 2001).

Therefore, since the primary language of my students is English, I built upon a Language and Literacy component in English instruction to support the learning process of Spanish as a second language by developing phonological awareness.

Undoubtedly, my hypothesis that every Spanish student may master Spanish as second language by developing phonological awareness through vowel sounds is based on many practical experiences. I have discovered that the basic language component to start acquiring any foreign language is its sound system. Therefore, after reflecting about this important language component, I realized that our existing Spanish as foreign language curriculum and traditional way of teaching Spanish in the Midwestern city of the United States, where this research took place, emphasizes the development of reading and writing skills over speaking and listening skills. For that reason, there is a problem that motivated me to conduct this research. The problem is the insufficiency in our existing curriculum and traditional didactic approach to foreign language tutoring that forgets the oral literacy development and verbal skills performance of foreign language students, which is possibly the most critical skill for the practical application of Spanish language study in today's global world social communication. During this project I constantly encouraged and helped my students develop phonological awareness in the

process of acquiring Spanish as their second language in order to help them become bilingual citizens.

This procedure allowed me to manipulate variables related to vowel sounds in particular. Students were

encouraged to wisely manipulate, segment, identify, repeat, and recognize vowel structures of words

before reading out loud in order to help them develop awareness of the Spanish vowel sound system.

Students succeeded with individual vowels in words. Conversely, I observed how students struggled

with some diphthongs in particular those that also exist in English but are not pronounced the same

way. In most of the cases they are only pronounced one vowel sound; which makes students hesitate

when sounding them out in the appropriate way while speaking Spanish. This problem was also noticed

when working with some hiatus and triphthongs. Consequently, In order to identify and evaluate my

student's needs I created, designed and implemented some phonological awareness activities such as

The Spanish Phonological Awareness Development Test (see appendix 1), the Spanish Vowel

Phonological Awareness and Pronunciation Improvement Inventory (see appendix 2). These two

activities and the diphthong inventory helped me, after analyzing data and gathering information from

recording their voices, to identify the difficulties and challenging level that Spanish vowel sounds

represented for my non-Spanish speaker students at their first stage of Spanish as a second language

learning process. These specific cases will be addressed in chapter 4.

Next chapter will introduce, in a deeper way, all the steps used to collect the data along the

research on a Spanish phonological awareness development study in the learning process for 16 non-

native Spanish students and one bilingual Spanish-English student.

Chapter Three

Procedures for the Study

While there has been an increasing support over the last years in the United States for second language study, many people who have studied and even students who are actually studying a foreign language in high school often express dissatisfaction at their oral proficiency of that language while studying, and a greater discontent in the years following graduation. If a high school foreign language program were designed to meet the communicative needs and interests of students in a way that were supported by research, students might experience greater oral proficiency in that foreign language, and an increase in the frequency with which they use the foreign language.

Foreign language teachers must incorporate to the target language curriculum a wide variety of strategies to help students succeed with their second language oral proficiency during the acquisition process. Therefore, foreign language teachers must be aware of their students' needs to develop phonological awareness through the most representative characteristic sounds of the target language. Students who develop high levels of phonological awareness in the second language also develop high levels of confidence and self-esteem when reading out loud or talking to the target language native speakers.

This chapter is focused on the process through which Spanish language development is acquired through phonological awareness among non-native Spanish speakers. In this action study, I designed a curriculum implementing multiple strategies to draw upon students' phonological awareness. I included some strategies such as: onset, vowel deletion, segmenting syllables, final vowel identification, vowel structure recognition, Spanish open and closed vowel concept implementation, diphthongs and triphthongs recognition.

Drawing upon the research of Anthony et all. (2011) in their study about *Spanish phonological awareness*, as cited in chapter two, this chapter describes the procedure about how the focus students received, processed, and manipulated Spanish vowel sounds in words, phrases, and rhymes in order to explore and develop phonological awareness in Spanish.

Sample

This Spanish phonological awareness study was implemented in a K-12 school located at the southwestern side of a Midwestern city of the United States. It belongs to a public district school and provides an academic curriculum following the Montessori academic program. 17 students participated in this study. 16 students were native English speakers. Two students were Hispanic, one of the students was literate only in English and the other student was bilingually literate. All study participants were AP Spanish II tenth graders students.

The entire group of 17 students received formal instruction about Spanish phonological awareness for the first time. Even the Hispanic literate student received this training for the first time. These students were ranged from 15 to 18 years of age. Nine students were female and eight were males. Their ethnic diversity corresponded to nine Black students, four White students, two Asian students, and two Hispanic students. It is worth mentioning that the literate bilingual Hispanic student was born in Puerto Rico and her home language is Spanish. The non Spanish literate Hispanic student's home language is English but Spanish is sometimes spoken as well at home among some of his older family members. He was born in The United States.

Procedure

Similar to researchers Archibald (2008), Cardenas-Hagan, et al., Riccio, Amado, Jiménez, Hasbrouck, Imhoff's (2001), Riccio et al. (2001) and Anthony et al. (2006) I completely agree that developing awareness of sounds within words in both languages Spanish and English is believed to be

a prerequisite not only to the ability to manipulate sounds in words, or phonological processing, but also clearly pronouncing new words while reading and talking.

This study was conducted during seven weeks. The instruction process initially began with a Spanish Phonological Awareness Development activity (see appendix 1) that I created and implemented during the first week as a pre-test. It helped pre-assess all the participants on their Spanish phonological initial register levels. This pre-test consisted of a listening activity which allowed the researcher to measure the students' Spanish vowel phonological awareness level and their capability to transfer their English vowel phonological awareness into the test.

I conducted this pre-test in order to determine students' competences on recognizing, discovering, and identifying isolated vowel sounds, vowel combinations, and vowel structures of a word. Subsequently, this test was repeated each week in order to measure students' progress. The pre-test helped measure the extent to which the phonological awareness development in English might be transferred to Spanish through the Spanish vowel sounds represented by the five letters (a, e, i, o, u). It also helped assess students' Spanish literacy skills applied into their Spanish phonological awareness by identifying specific Spanish vowel sounds in some specific words. Initially, the students were asked to work on the Spanish Phonological Awareness Development pre-test.

This pre-test demonstrated that the students basically misinterpreted three sounds. Two of the students wrote the vowel sound */i/* when the vowel sound */e/* was pronounced. Three of the students wrote the vowel sound */e/* when it was pronounced the vowel sound */i/.* One student, the literate Hispanic student, misunderstood the vowel sound */u/* for */o/.* These answers were obtained during the onset work. Likewise, the same three sounds where misinterpreted during the final Spanish vowel sound identification activity. In the same way, the vowel combination pattern demonstrated that the sounds that represented the highest mistaken word percentage was the */ei/* combination. Five students misinterpreted the */ei/* vowel combination. They listened */ae/, /ie,/ /ae/, /ia/,* and */ae/.* Therefore, the

intervention focused on instruction demonstrating open and closed Spanish vowel sounds contrasts (see appendix 5).

In Spanish there are two sorts of vowels: open and closed vowels. Open vowels are *"A,E,O"*, and closed vowels are *"I, U"*. These two concepts are based on the point of articulation of the sound and it is a pre-requisite to master the process of segmenting words in syllables in Spanish. During the second week students were given six different work sheets with an average of ten pictures each that represented words (some known, some unknown), that began with one of the five Spanish vowels (see appendix 15). Five of the worksheets contained paired vowels (three of them were contrasting open-closed vowels, the other two were open-open vowels) and only one was a triplet. The pairs were: */o/-/i/,* (see appendix 15)*; /o/-/a/,* (see appendix 16); */i/-/a/,* (see appendix 17)*; /e/-/u/; /e/-/a/;* and the triplet */o/-/a/-/i/,*(see appendix 18) which consisted of two open and one closed vowels sounds. The pictures were numbered and students were requested to write down the number of the picture next to one of the top vowel letter according to the initial vowel sound in the mentioned word. These beginning contrasting sounds were taken from the Essential Spanish Word Sorts Clasificación en Español.

The procedure for the study included seven weeks total. During the first week, the students were introduced to the five vowels in Spanish and their pronunciation in multiple words. On the second and third week, the students were introduced to the vowel combinations in Spanish and their pronunciation in multiple words. In the fourth week, the students repeatedly worked on pronouncing out loud some combinations of consonants and vowels. The fifth week, the students worked on recognizing some rhyming words in Spanish, their pronunciation, and their meanings. On the sixth and seventh week the students worked on reading out loud short two verse poems to determine their phonological awareness improvement.

Continuously, students' voices were recorded several times during the second, fourth and sixth week, when reading out loud a vowel combination activity during one-on-one conversations. The

recording assessments consisted of repeatedly reading the same vowel combination preceded by a

different consonant and different vowel combinations preceded by the same consonant sound (see

appendix 2). This activity was based on the Spanish Vowel Phonological Awareness and Pronunciation

Improvement Inventory designed by the researcher to develop awareness about Spanish vowel sounds;

therefore, it helped the students increase their listening and speaking Spanish levels. This inventory

consisted of nine columns with the same vowel combination and different beginning consonant and 17

rows of the same beginning consonant with different vowel combinations (see appendix 2). Students

were requested to read out loud increasing their speed, this way, students developed accuracy when

reading out loud in Spanish. The objective was to help these students, who are non-Spanish speakers,

develop vowel Spanish phonological awareness to the highest level, therefore, they were able to

develop self-esteem and confidence when speaking and reading out loud in Spanish.

Students were able to participate in the project Crossing Frontiers, a virtual language interchange

program designed by the researcher in conjunction with a colleague from the University A in

Barranquilla, Colombia. Through this project, at least once a week, students were able to demonstrate

their improvement in their phonological awareness development. They were able to realize how they

had improved their pronunciation by increasing their participation when talking to Spanish native

speakers from Colombia. I noticed their progress based on their self-esteem, fluency, clearness, and

precision when talking out loud.

The Spanish vowel sounds pronunciation instruction was addressed in the morning during one

hour, three times a week (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday). Students were tested and trained by

reading new words, discovering words by its vowel structure, reading rhyming words and short

rhyming passages. It was necessary for the researcher to personally get involved with some students

who struggled when mispronouncing some specific Spanish vowel combination sounds not only to

record their voices but also to help students succeed with their most challenging sounds. All the

Spanish phonological awareness sessions began with the reading of a two Spanish rhyming verse poem under the title "Poem of the Day" (see appendix 13). I sometimes read the poems, students did so as well individually to have the group to read and repeat out loud. I continuously modeled Spanish vowel sound pronunciation for the students. The poem was daily written on the board and students were encouraged to read it out loud several times.

I instructed the students about the open and closed vowels concept as a pre-requisite to start the process of segmenting words in syllables. Based on this, during the second and third week, I requested the students to identify some pattern vowel structures like open-closed *(o-c)* and closed-open *(c-o)* vowel combination patterns (see appendix 5). Firstly, the students worked with the list of words to identify the open-closed or the closed-open diphthong structures (see appendix 10). Within the second list of words the students worked in order to identify the vowel combination that did not present a diphthong structure because of the stressed vowel or the two open vowel combination structure. The concept of hiatus was taught within the second list of words (see appendix 11). The third list of words was related to triphthongs. I introduced the structure closed-open-closed vowel and the students learned to recognize triphthongs in order to properly segment words in syllables in Spanish (see appendix 12).

During the fourth week the study continued with the blending consonant and vowel activity (see appendix 6). The students repeatedly pronounced out loud some combinations of consonants and vowels. This way the students developed phonological skills by properly pronouncing some problematic consonant sounds and vowel together. Some of those combinations included: *tra, fra, pra, cra, erre, rio, ria*, among others. Students were able to accurately recognize blending consonants and vowels sounds by listening, speaking and writing unknown and known words. This activity increased the students' skills to read out loud unknown words.

On the fifth week the following step was about the Spanish rhyming words (see appendix 7). The students developed awareness of some rhyming words in Spanish, the way they were pronounced and

their meanings. This activity consisted in repeating groups of words (monosyllables and multi

syllables) with the same kind of rhyme paying close attention to the rhyming syllables. Students

fluently pronounced rhyming words and recognized them by listening, repeating, speaking, and writing

them. Therefore, they increased their skills to read unknown words. I taught some differences between

Spanish and English rhyming words related to the stressed syllable and accent marks. Moreover, they

identified the difference between assonant and consonant rhymes in Spanish. At the end of this activity

students improved their abilities to segment words in phonemes and reading out loud. These sorts

reinforced their concept that changing just the beginning sound of a word can make a new word. When

sorting by endings, students recognized the rhyming pattern and in some cases they added some known

words to the lists. Some of the rhyming words included: pino – fino – chino – vino / mito – frito – grito

– pito, (see appendix 21); lana – sana – rana – gana- hermana / mapa – capa – atrapa – etapa – tapa –

papa.

During the last two weeks, sixth and seventh, the students continued to read out loud short two

verse poems and tongue twisters to determine their phonological awareness improvement. Some of

these words were new to the students but they achieved great skills to read since they were told that

kind of reading was for fun. Therefore, students manipulated sounds in Spanish while reading out loud

rhyming words. Even more, they attempted to create at least one short two verse poem by themselves.

Some of the activities that they had fun with included: alliteration words and completing verses with

rhyming words; for instance: Quien no oye consejo no llega a viejo; Cuchichean que las cucharas del

cucharero tienen muchas cucarachas. Cuando digo Diego, digo digo y cuando digo digo, digo Diego

(see appendix 8). This final part of the study finished with a reading out loud activity. Students read the

poem " El Renacuajo Paseador" by Colombian author: Rafael Pombo (see appendix 8).

In summary, this chapter describes the line related to the five steps methodology to develop

Spanish phonological awareness, which included: vowels, vowel combinations, vowel and consonant

combinations, word segmenting, and rhyming Spanish words. These activities took place during seven weeks on a three times a week basis of instructional time. In the next chapter the assessments and the activities implemented will be presented along with their respective analysis and the data gathered to measure the effectiveness of the study related to Spanish language acquisition through phonological awareness in the learning process for English speakers.

Chapter Four

Presentation and Analysis of the Data

This chapter will introduce the different assessment conducted during the action research and the different activities implemented with their respective analysis. The data was gathered to demonstrate effectiveness related to Spanish language development through phonological awareness in the learning process for non-native Spanish speakers during seven weeks.

This study was structured in four important parts. They were: Spanish vowel phonological awareness development, blending consonant and vowel sounds, Spanish vowel sounds combination and segmenting syllables, and reading and writing rhyming words.

Phonological Awareness of Spanish Vowel Sounds

In this study, I first attempted to discover the Spanish vowel sounds awareness level of a group of 17 AP Spanish II tenth grade students by pre-testing them using the Spanish Phonological Awareness Development Test. This test consisted of identifying first and last vowel sounds of 20 words; identifying the existing vowel combination in five words; and identifying the vowel structure of five words. All the words were read out loud in Spanish twice each (see appendix 1). Sixteen out of seventeen students who participated in this study were Spanish as second language learners. None of the students received previous Spanish phonological awareness instruction. According to the informal pre-test Spanish Phonological Awareness Development the data gathered demonstrated that students were able to identify beginning or final Spanish vowel sounds with accuracy but some of them struggled when identifying vowel combinations or diphthongs. In synthesis, the pre-test demonstrated that some students basically misinterpreted three sounds. Two of the students signaled the vowel sound */i/* when the vowel sound */e/* was told. Three of the students indicated the vowel sound */e/* when the vowel sound */i/* was sound out. One student, who was the literate Hispanic student, misunderstood the

vowel sound */u/* for */o/*. These results were obtained during the onset section. The same three sounds

where misinterpreted during the final section related to Spanish vowel sound identification part.

Likewise, the vowel combination pattern demonstrated that the sounds that represented the highest

percentage of mistakes corresponded to the */ae/* and */ei/* pattern sound combinations. There were five

students that misinterpreted the */ae/* and */ei/* vowel combination. They listened */ei/,/ia/, /eo/, /ae/, /ia/*

when the vowels */ae/* were sound out; and they listened */ae/, /ie,/ /ae/, /ia/,* and */ae/* when the */ei/*

sounds were read . As a result most of the students were not able to well spell or write down unknown

words, which impeded not only their own learning, but also created difficulty keeping up with new

terminology. The following table 1 illustrates the previous information.

Vowels	AE	EO	IA	EI	UA
Student 1					
Student 2					
Student 3	*/ei/*			*/ae/*	
Student 4					
Student 5					
Student 6		*/ae/*			
Student 7					
Student 8	*/ia/*			*/ei/*	
Student 9	*/eo/*			*/ae/*	
Student 10			*ei*		
Student 11					
Student 12		*/ua/*		*/ia/*	
Student 13					
Student 14	*/ae/*			*/ae/*	
Student 15					
Student 16	*/ia/*				
Student 17					

Table 1

I was interested in discovering to what extent the phonological awareness development in

English might be transferred to Spanish through the Spanish vowel sounds as a cross-linguistic transfer

action (Riccio et al (2001). Additionally, I wanted to investigate these students' Spanish literacy skills by

facilitating some new words and pictures that represented a few new terms for the focus group of students. All the words were polysyllable words. Some samples were: *Geógrafo, comunicación, elección,* and *enano* (see appendix 1).

Occasionally, students were requested to work in pairs and in groups. For this interactive action students worked on sociograms to determine baseline information through the specific questions in the Spanish class contexts (see appendix 14). The sociogram is a formal interview used to gather information about the class relationships. It is a kind of group or social interview created by Jacob Moreno (1953) as cited by Hubbard and Power (2003). In general it is a way to understand peer networks and relationship. As a matter of fact, for a language program to be successful, it must also incorporate the sociocultural experiences of the students and promote social interaction in the classroom. In fact, effective teachers must be conscious of the variety of sociocultural backgrounds that students bring with them into the classroom, and actively work to incorporate their students' experiences into their pedagogy. True language study cannot be divorced from the social and cultural contexts in which it occurs (Ajayi, 2008).

Any sociocultural approach to language in today's society must reflect the technological and global changes that are representative of our current social context (Ajayi, 2008), which is increasingly interactive. Indeed, when classroom instruction is framed within social and interactive activities, research shows that students' learning is enhanced (Spence, 2003). Therefore, by encouraging students to work in small groups or with others, they are given genuine opportunities to communicate with meaningful audiences, and benefit from working on structured tasks in mixed-ability groups (Spence, 2003). Students were asked to answer with their classmates' names by giving first, second, and third choices in response to specific questions about themselves such as: Who do you consider is good at pronunciation in Spanish?; Who would you like to do class work with?; Who do you consider is good at reading in Spanish?; Who do you consider is good at writing in Spanish? First choice worth was

three points, second choice worth was two points, and third choice was worth one point. This formal

interview pretended to determine students' awareness of their social relationships in Spanish class, their

pronunciation capabilities and their reading and writing knowledge in Spanish as a second language.

(see appendix 14)

The Spanish Phonological Awareness Development Test (pre and post), the Spanish Vowel

Phonological Awareness and Pronunciation Improvement Inventory were individually conducted three

times during this research. These two assessments besides the diphthong inventory helped me, after

analyzing data and gathering information from recording, to identify the difficulty and challenging

level that Spanish vowel sounds represent for non-Spanish speakers at their first stage of Spanish as a

second language learning process.

Firstly, during the first week, I conducted the instruction about the five Spanish vowel sounds

and some consonant sounds that might be problematic for English speakers (see appendix 4). Secondly,

I conducted the instruction about contrasting open and closed Spanish vowel sounds. It was necessary

to teach that in Spanish there are two sorts of vowels: open and closed vowels as a pre-requisite to

master the process of segmenting words in syllables in Spanish and in consequence, to mark the accent

when grammar rules determine it. (see appendix 5). Students worked with numbered pictures and they

were requested to write down the number of the picture next to one of the two top vowel letters

according to the initial vowel sound *(/o/, /i/),* on the mentioned word. These beginning contrasting

sounds were taken from the Essential Spanish Word Sorts Clasificación en Español (see appendix 15).

During the beginning vowel recognition assessment, students demonstrated their accurate

phonological awareness when contrasting open and closed Spanish vowel sounds. The pictures

assessed matched the words: *(1) oruga, (2) oreja, (3) imán, (4) ocho, (5) óvalo, (6) iguana, (7) igual,*

(8) oso, (9) insecto, and *(10) isla* (see table 1 and appendix 15).

Vowels / Students	O	I
1	✓	✓
2	✓	✓
3	✓	✓
4	✓	✓
5	✓	✓
6	✓	✓
7	✓	✓
8	✓	✓
9	✓	✓
10	✓	✓
11	✓	✓
12	✓	✓
13	✓	✓
14	✓	✓
15	✓	✓
16	✓	✓
17	✓	✓

Table 2

Conversely, some students were not totally accurate when contrasting two open vowels. For this activity the pictures corresponded to the words: *(1) olla, (2) oruga, (3) anillo, (4) aguacate, (5) ojo, (6) ocho, (7) agua, (8) abeja, (9) oso, (9) abrigo,* and *(10) ombligo* (see table 2 and appendix 16)

Five students made a mistake misinterpreting the same beginning sound */a/*. They placed the pictures' numbers 4, 8, and 9 under the letter *"O"* which in Spanish sounds like /oh/. The mistaken words were *'aguacate, 'abeja'* and *'abrigo'*. These three words were new for the students. In English the sound */ɔ/* is one sound that sometimes corresponds to the letter *'a'*. According to this sound */ɔ/* in English, like in *'all' /ɔl/,* that might be the reason for this mistake. Other English words with this sound are *'also'* and *'ball'* transcribed as */ɔlsoʊ/* and */bɔl/* respectively. Since it was the first time the students were listening to the words *'aguacate, 'abeja'* and *'abrigo'*, the five students perhaps confused the sound */a/* at the beginning of the word and thought it was the sound */ɔ/* which is a very approximate

sound to the Spanish sound */o/*. For the students who misinterpreted the sound */o/* in the word *'ocho'* by

misplacing it under the letter *'A'*, it is possible that they have had this misinterpretation based on the

idea of the sound */ɑ/* that corresponds to one of the English sounds for the letter *'o'* as in the word

'optional' */ɑpʃnəl/*. The English sound */ɑ/* is a very similar sound to the sound */a/* in Spanish that

corresponds to the letter *'A'*. It is worth mentioning that all the students had visual contact with me

when I read out loud all the words. Every word was sounded out twice and the students had

considerable time to reflect on the focus sound. At the end of this intervention students were given all

the words to make sure they did right or wrong when identifying the appropriate sounds. Each

assessment took ten minutes length.

Vowels→ Students	O	A
1	✓	✓
2	✓	✓
3	✓	✓
4	✓	✓
5	✓	✓
6	✓	✓
7	✓	X (8)
8	✓	X (6,9)
9	✓	X (6,9)
10	✓	✓
11	✓	✓
12	✓	✓
13	✓	X (8)
14	✓	X (4)
15	✓	✓
16	✓	✓
17	✓	✓

Table 3

The new contrasting pair of sound was */a/* and */i/.* The words represented by the pictures in this assessment were: *(1) iglú, (2) águila, (3) insecto, (4) ala, (5) iguana, (6) apio, (7) almohada, (8) ajo, (9) isla,* and *(10) igual* (see appendix 17). This was one more very representative contrasting Spanish open and closed vowel activity. The study of these two vowels represented the very wide range of awareness that students have when recognizing */i/* and */a/* Spanish vowel sounds. As in the table 1, (see table 1) students demonstrated their high level of phonological awareness when contrasting open − closed Spanish vowel sounds. There were not misinterpreted sounds within this activity.

The new set of contrasting vowels to be identified at the beginning of the words was /a/, /o/, and /i/. This triad may be seen on table 3 where fifteen pictures represented fifteen words. Some of the pictures represented unknown words for the students. These words included: *(1) abrazo, (2) imán, (3) avión, (4) insecto, (5) arena, (6) aguacate, (7) iglú, (8) oreja, (9) igual, (10) olla, (11) ojo, (12) aleta, (13) isla, (14) oso,* and *(15) oruga* (see table 3, and appendix 18).

Students 13 and 17 were the only students who made mistakes within this vowel triad assessment. Only one of these two students (17) is considered one of the star students in Spanish class, not only by the teacher but also for the students in general (see appendix 14) made a mistake. She made a mistake with the word '*aguacate*' which was not a new word for her. She misplaced it under the letter '*O*'. I was surprised with her mistake and I talked to her in order to know the possible reason why she made this mistake. I told her "There is a considerable difference between the sounds */a/* and */i/* in Spanish. So why did you write '*aguacate*' under the letter '*i*'?" She stated: "I wrote it because every other word from the beginning was an '*i*' word. I thought that the coming word was going to be another '*i*' word". This answer clearly explains she was following a sorting listening pattern more than a listening phonological awareness pattern. She is very good not only at speaking but also at writing and reading in Spanish. I understood that this mistake was based on her high self-confidence about her Spanish language skills. The case of student thirteen, who is one of the two Asian students, was quite different. As in assessment 2 (see table 2), this student misinterpreted the word '*abeja*'; its beginning vowel sound is */a/* as in '*avion*' which is the mistaken word in assessment 4 (see table 3). Since it was the first time this student heard the word '*avion*,' she most likely had the same misunderstanding process when listening to the word '*abeja*'. She confused the Spanish sound */a/* at the beginning of the word and thought it was the English sound */ɔ/* which is a very approximate sound to the Spanish vowel sound */o/*. As a coincidence after this initial misinterpreted vowel sound the following consonant sound of these two words is the same, */b/*. None of the students made any mistake by sorting all the words beginning with the */o/* or */i/* Spanish sound.

Vowels → / Students	O	A	I
1	✓	✓	✓
2	✓	✓	✓
3	✓	✓	✓
4	✓	✓	✓
5	✓	✓	✓
6	✓	✓	✓
7	✓	✓	✓
8	✓	✓	✓
9	✓	✓	✓
10	✓	✓	✓
11	✓	✓	✓
12	✓	✓	✓
13	✓	X(3-O)	✓
14	✓	✓	✓
15	✓	✓	✓
16	✓	✓	✓
17	✓	X(6-I)	✓

Table 4

This triad vowel contrasting sound demonstrated, one more time, how this group of non-native Spanish speaker students succeeded when applying the concept of closed Spanish vowel sounds contrasted to open Spanish vowel sounds.

From the beginning vowel deletion recognition the result gathered demonstrated that the Spanish words beginning with closed vowels *i/* and */u/* are the less retained in the mind of AP Spanish II students (see table 4). In general, only 56% of the */i/* sound and 49% of the */u/* sound words were properly written. On the other hand, 58% of words with the sound */a/,* 76% of words with the sound */e/,* and 77% of words with the sound */o/* were properly identified. It is worth mentioning that two words: - _lla and - _la were two samples of how students started manipulating words through sounds. The sounds deleted were /o/ and /a/ respectively, nevertheless, some students wrote the letters '*E*' and '*O*' for other Spanish meaningful words: '*ella* and '*ola*' which means '*she*' and '*wave*'. These two words were not included in the list of words given for the beginning sound identification activity,

consequently, they were not accepted as valid words for the total percentage but they were counted as a

sign of progress in the students' phonological awareness level.

This assessment consisted of 30 words given without the initial vowel letter. Students were

requested to complete all the words by writing down the first letter that corresponded to one of the five

Spanish vowels. All the words were randomly taken from the six previous beginning vowel sound

recognition activity from the days before. Students were previously requested to learn by heart all the

words and be ready for this deletion activity. It is worth mentioning that this assessment was not

supported by pictures. The 30 words given for the deletion assessment were: *(1) ojo, (2) iguana, (3)*

igual, (4) ocho, (5) imán, (6) iglú, (7) oruga, (8) óvalo, (9) insecto, (10) oreja, (11) anillo, (12)

aguacate, (13) abrigo, (14) avión, (15) agua, (16) olla, (17) ala, (18) ajo, (19) apio, (20) aguja (21)

esponja, (22) enfermo, (23) unicornio, (24) esqueleto, (25) elefante, (26) uña, (27)uvas, (28) escorpión,

(29) amigos, and *(30) ave;* and the analysis obtained is as follows in table 5 (see table 5 and appendix

X first vowel deletion chart and meanings).

Vowels →	A	E	I	O	U
1.	5/10	3/5	2/5	3/7	1/3
2.	2/10	4/5	3/5	2/7	3/3
3.	7/10	5/5	3/5	3/7	1/3
4.	1/10	3/5	3/5	4/7	1/3
5.	7/10	5/5	4/5	6/7	2/3
6.	10/10	4/5	3/5	4/7	2/3
7.	5/10	4/5	5/5	5/7	0/3
8.	6/10	3/5	3/5	3/7	0/3
9.	2/10	1/5	0/5	3/7	0/3
10.	10/10	5/5	5/5	7/7	3/3
11.	10/10	5/5	5/5	7/7	3/3
12.	6/10	5/5	2/5	5/7	3/3
13.	7/10	4/5	4/5	7/7	2/3
14.	1/10	2/5	1/5	3/7	1/3
15.	6/10	3/5	3/5	4/7	1/3
16.	8/10	5/5	5/5	5/7	1/3
17.	6/10	4/5	5/5	6/7	1/3

Table 5

The number of words for this deletion assessment comprised: 'A' =10 words; 'E' = 5 words; 'I'= 5 words; 'O'= 7 words and 'U'= 3 words. Students were given the 30 numbered words as shown above (see appendix X first vowel deletion chart), and they were requested to complete all the words by writing the first deleted vowel letter. Words were given in the same numerical order they are shown above. There was not any appearance pattern order and they were randomly selected from the six beginning vowel identification or phonological awareness development activities. Students were encouraged to memorize these words to use them in future informal conversations with native Spanish speakers. This activity took 30 minutes. Additionally, students needed to select five words from the list of 30 words and translate them later they would select two words and write one sentence with each one.

The main focus within this study was to conduct the natural learning process of any language based on the fact that the sounds knowledge helps speakers in their phonological awareness to enhance the capability to increase the lexicon while progressing in the process of word acquisition. For this reason, one of the most important procedures within this study was recording students' voices while reading out loud some vowel combinations and diphthongs. This assessment was based on the Spanish Vowel Phonological Awareness and Pronunciation Improvement Inventory that I designed to develop awareness about Spanish vowel sounds; therefore, it helped the students increase their listening and speaking Spanish phonological awareness levels. This inventory consisted of nine columns with the same vowel combination and different beginning consonant and 17 rows of the same beginning consonant with different vowel combinations (see appendix 2). The first recording allowed me to identify five specific mispronounced vowel combinations. Most of the students struggled when pronouncing the combinations */ae/, /ea/, /eu/, /ei/,* and */ie/* preceded by any consonant sound along the nine columns of the inventory. Table 6 illustrates the previous data as follows.

	Week 2	Week 4	Wee6	Improvement
/ai/	6	4	2	66,7%
/oi/	1	1	0	100,0%
/ei/	9	7	4	55,6%
/ui/	5	3	2	60,0%
/ia/	5	4	2	60,0%
/io/	4	4	2	50,0%
/ie/	9	8	4	55,6%
/iu/	2	2	2	0,0%
/ae/	12	8	3	75,0%
/ea/	9	4	3	66,7%
/eu/	8	6	5	37,5%
/oe/	6	4	3	50,0%
/ua/	4	4	2	50,0%
/uo/	4	4	3	25,0%
/ou/	6	4	2	66,7%
/ao/	5	5	3	40,0%
/ue/	5	5	3	40,0%

Table 6

Table 6 demonstrates the 52% improvement during the six first weeks of Spanish phonological awareness during the three recording activities by using the Spanish Vowel Phonological Awareness and Pronunciation Improvement Inventory

Somehow, the common mistake sound was related to the /e/ sound. In general, they succeeded when repeatedly pronouncing the same vowel combination preceded by different consonant sounds along the 17 rows of the inventory. It is worth mentioning that some of the students initially struggled when reading some vowel combination in Spanish that constitute real English words like *tea, pea, toe, pie, tie,* and *sea.*

The second and third recording demonstrated a significant progress in students' phonological awareness development. Five out of seventeen students struggled within the vowel combination /eu/ as

final results; four students also struggled within the */ei/* and */ie/* vowel sound combinations during the third recording intervention. See next figure 12, which illustrates the progress during the six first weeks of this study and figure 13 as contrasting evidence of the focus group of students' first and third recording during the second and sixth weeks.
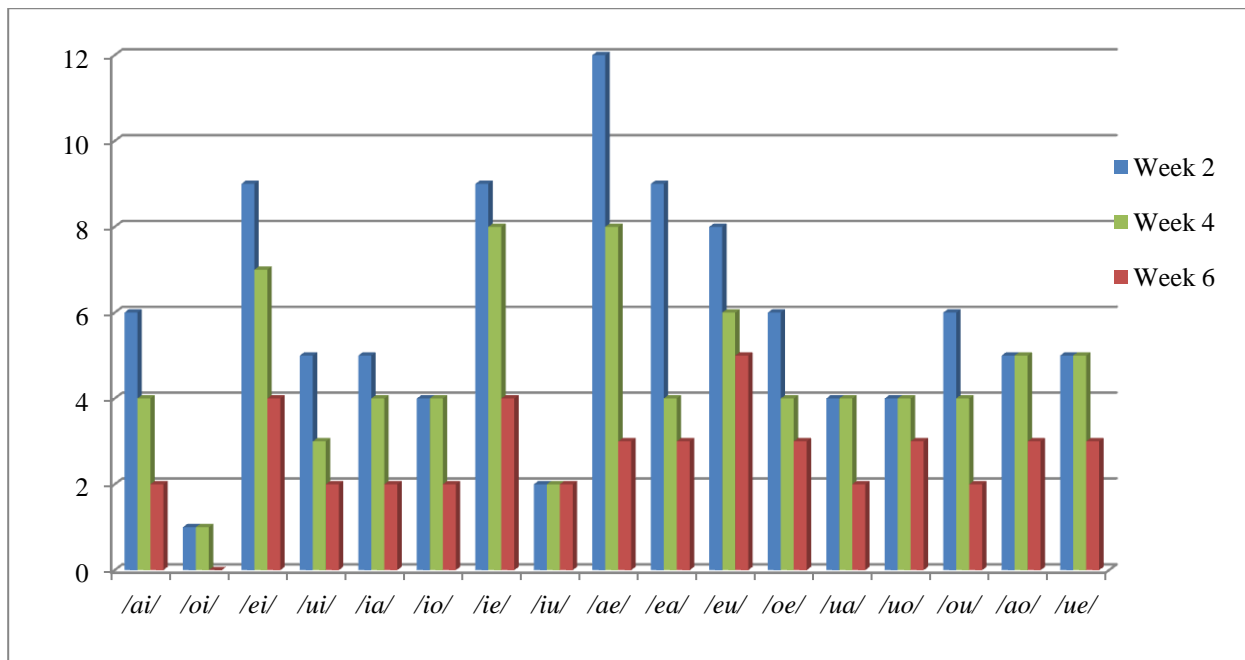

Figure 12 demonstrates the progressive levels of students among week 2, week 4, and week 6.
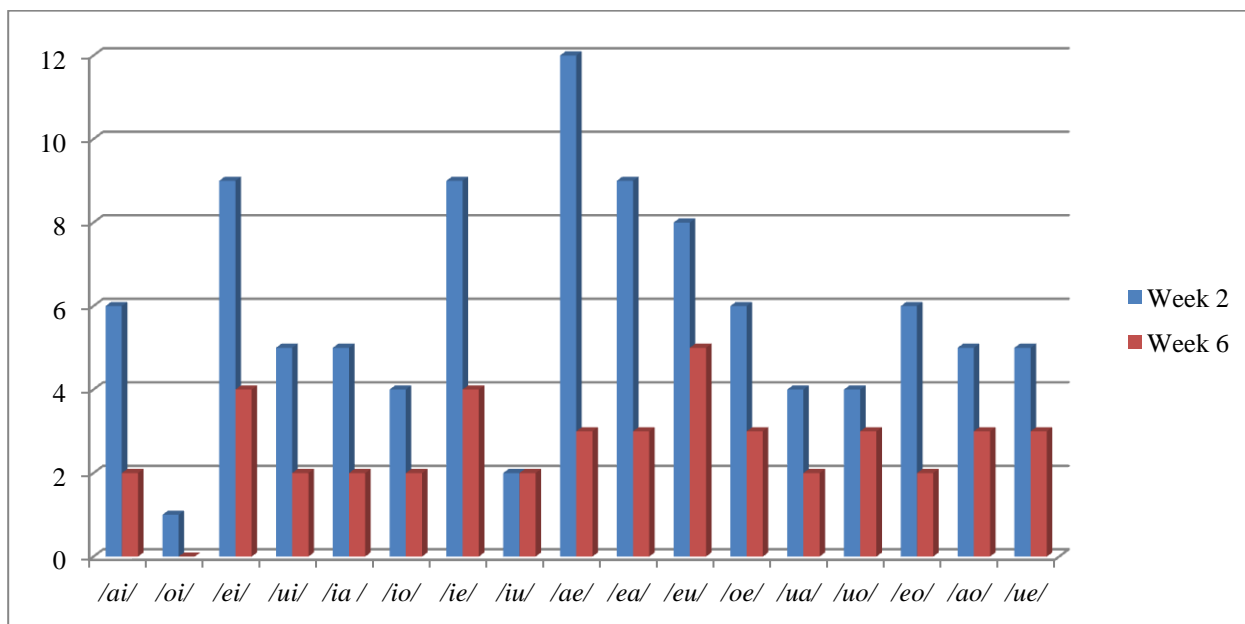

Figure 13 defines a comparative level of progress between first and third week's recordings.

The research continued every other day requesting students to keep on working on vowel deletion in sentences in real contexts. Students were asked to work on completing sentences with no vowels at all. Their task was to put down the right vowel where needed. Students needed to be aware not only of the missing vowel letter but also of the meaning of the words in the context provided by the sentence as a whole. All the words were known words. Some of them were related to the real date and coming dates. Students had previously worked in class with these words, therefore; they were familiar with all the words used in these sentences (see appendix 9).

Even though students were familiar with this vocabulary, some of them made mistakes. Some of them wrote *madras* instead of *madres*. This was understood based on the fact that they were following the previous definite article *las* and they recognized the gender and number agreement following the ending –as. One more common mistake was *seite* instead of *siete* which means seven. In general, I noticed that articles, pronouns, and prepositions were correctly spelled. This assessment demonstrated how students are aware of right spelling when putting down known words in context. There were not many mistakes within this assessment, which represented the high level of phonological awareness of all the students because they had worked with all this vocabulary and the increased level of Spanish vowel sound combination awareness.

Identifying beginning consonant sounds

The study also allowed me to work with beginning consonant sounds recognition with pictures. Within this assessment students were very precise recognizing the target consonants. Students began to work with three consonant sounds (*L, C,* and *V*). Students were asked to write and at the same time to sort the mentioned words under the right letter according to the beginning consonant (see appendix X; LCV word sort chart and pictures). Additionally, students were given a work sheet with twelve different pictures; this way they could compare the word and the picture, so they knew what the words meant. Most of the pictures corresponded to new words. The twelve words represented by the pictures

were: *(1) lentes, (2) caracol, (3) cuatro,(4) volcán, (5) violín, (6) lengua, (7) culebra, (8) lámpara,(9)*

cuchara, (10) cuchillo, (11) corbata, and *(12) labios* (see appendix 20 consonant sound identification

with pictures). This assessment had six additional two-syllable words for them to write them down

under the appropriate beginning consonant letter grid. The six additional words were not read out loud.

In general, all students recognized each word's first consonant sound. They were precise and accurate

with this sorting intervention. In fact, it is worth mentioning that most of the new words were

misspelled. These words were: *lenga / languy/ lengo* -instead of *lengua; lovios/ lobeos/ lavous –*

instead of *labios; corbato / corpate* - instead of *corbata; curlabre / cobra / culabra (2)/ colabra* -

instead of *culebra; valcon (2) / volcon* - instead of *volcán; veolin (2)* - instead of *violín; lites* - instead

of *lentes; caracal / cadacole* - instead of *caracol.* One more time, students revealed their need to

increase their Spanish vowel phonological awareness. In general, they accurately wrote the consonant

letters conversely, they struggled writing vowel letter especially vowel combinations. Only the word

lámpara as a new word was correctly spelled (accent marks did not count). Each word was read out

loud twice; students were recommended to have visual contact with me when words were pronounced.

All the words were sounded out slowly therefore, students were able to write them down the best they

could. There are some possible reasons why these mistakes occurred. It firstly was because these were

unknown words and students were not familiarized with them. Secondly, some of them have

diphthongs. Additionally, all the words were isolated. Words like *lengua, labios*, and *violín,*

represented the students' need to work on Spanish phonological awareness related to diphthongs

nevertheless, the instruction continued working on consonant blends and vowel, created words, and

words with accent marks (see appendix 6).

Recognizing Diphthongs, Triphthongs, and Hiatus

Students were instructed about how to classify the vowels in Spanish (see appendix 5). The

concept of open and closed vowels in Spanish was necessary as a pre-requisite to recognize diphthongs

and triphthongs. Students started the process of segmenting words in syllables. Students learned how to identify diphthongs, thus, they were requested to identify some pattern vowel structures to determine if the combination was a diphthong (open-closed or closed-open vowels). The first list of words given was for the students to identify the open-closed or the closed-open diphthong structures (see appendix 10). The second list of words was given to identify the vowel combination that does not structure a diphthong because of the stressed vowel or the two open vowel combination structure (open-open and stressed closed and open vowels). The concept of hiatus was taught within the second list of words (see appendix 11). The third list of words allowed them to learn the concept of triphthongs. The closed-open-closed vowels structure was introduced to recognize triphthongs in order to properly segment words in syllables in Spanish (see appendix 12). Students were extremely attentive during this instruction. They surprised me with questions like: What determines that a word needs an accent mark in Spanish? How do you know where to put down an accent mark in the right vowel? Why two closed vowels form diphthongs and two open closed vowels do not? Why these Spanish grammar rules do not work in English? Do all Hispanic high school students know these rules when they graduate? Do all Hispanic students easily identify diphthongs, hiatus, and triphthongs? Some of the questions were accordingly answered; others will be part of coming instructions to enhance their Spanish language grammar knowledge. At this point, there was no doubt about these students' engagement to their phonological awareness level in both languages English and Spanish and how they were at a grammar knowledge level when they analyzed one language's aspects getting support from the other one.

Students understood the structures they needed in order to start segmenting Spanish words during the third week and kept doing it along fourth and fifth weeks as well. According to the segmenting words emphasis students learned how to accurately identify diphthongs based on the concept of open and closed vowel combinations. They were requested to work in pairs and read the words out loud and segmented them in syllables. At the same time they precisely recognized if the

combination was *o-c* or *c-o* open – closed or closed – open vowel structures (see appendix 10).

Students demonstrated progress along this stage during this intervention. Students played a game word

called Racetrack Game Board (La Gran Carrera) in small groups. They manipulated vowel sound

combinations and determined if they were diphthongs or not. Students were ready to count syllables in

verses to determine not only the rhyming ending part of the words but also de rhythm of the verses as

well.

Rhyming sounds

After exploring vowel sounds, vowel combinations, blending consonant and vowel sound

pronunciation, and segmenting syllables through word building and some phonological awareness

activities, students were ready to do the rhyming word sorts. These sorts reinforced the concept that

changing just the beginning sound of a word can make a new word. Therefore, when students sorted by

endings, they recognized the rhyming pattern. For instance: pasa, casa, masa, tasa. Students read and

compared many words that could be broken after an initial syllable. These sorts did not have pictures,

only written words. At the beginning, students needed extra practice with hearing the sound pattern and

drew picture cards that reflected the sound patterns like for example: -ana, -asa, -ama, -apa. This

activity tremendously increased the students' vocabulary. They had the chance to manipulate not only

rhyming sounds but also to learn new vocabulary and contextualize it. Students created their own

rhyming ending flip books which consisted of writing rhyming endings such as –ato on a strip of paper

(see appendix X rhyming ending words); additionally they wrote consonants on small paper squares,

choosing consonants or blends that make a word with the rhyming ending. Therefore, to make words

with the ending –ato, students wrote g, p, pl, and tr. Students stapled the squares to the rhyming ending

making it remain visible. Then, they practiced making new rhyming words by flipping up the letters to

reveal different beginning sounds. They were encouraged to create their own particular rhyming ending

flip books with all the rhyming endings they learned. Students also manipulated rhyming words by

playing the game rhyming word concentration. This game involved little preparation and it was played by using matching spelling pattern pairs like beginning consonant sounds, beginning vowel sounds, etc. This game was played in groups of three or four students. Pairs of word sort cards in matching pairs were, among others, masa, casa; gata, trata; loma, goma; suma, puma; sala, mala; pata, lata, semana, banana. Thus, the cards were mixed up and placed face down in rows. Then, player one turned over two cards, read the words aloud, and determined if they rhymed. If they had rhyming endings, the player kept playing until he/she got a no rhyming word pair. Therefore, the card was turned over again facing down in the same spot. Then, player two was ready to take turn and so on. The game continued until all the pairs were found and the winner was the player with the most pairs (see appendix 21 Pairs of words sort cards). The students continued to read out loud in Spanish with a fun purpose. They read tongue twisters, short poems, verses, proverbs, sayings and rhyming children songs (see appendix 13). Some of these reading had multiple new words that students did not recognize but the main goal about developing phonological awareness through pronouncing rhyming words was achieved.

Finally, as a final test, students were encouraged and challenged to read at least three paragraphs of the rhyming short story "El Renacuajo Paseador" "The Wandering Tadpole" (see appendix 13). I measured students' improvement of their phonological awareness progress by paying close attention to the pronunciation of the rhyming ending words. It was evident that students increased their phonological awareness levels. It is worth mentioning that most of the students followed the instruction to read with no pauses and applying rhythm as if it was a song.

In synthesis, this study took place in seven weeks by pursuing a five lesson plan guide as follows: first week, the five Spanish vowels as individual sounds. The students were introduced to the five single vowels in Spanish and their pronunciation in multiple words. During the second and third weeks, students worked on the vowel in Spanish part II. The students were introduced to the vowel combinations in Spanish and their pronunciation in multiple words. The next stage was during week

number four when students learned about blending consonants and vowels by repeatedly pronouncing out loud some combinations of consonants and vowels. During the fifth week students worked on Spanish rhyming words and learned how to recognize some rhyming words in Spanish, their pronunciation, and their meanings. Finally, during the weeks sixth and seventh students read out loud rhyming poems, verses tongue twister, short poems, verses, proverbs and sayings, and children songs in Spanish in order to gain knowledge and determine their phonological awareness improvement.

In other words, in the last stage within sixth and seventh weeks, students undoubtedly increased their levels of Spanish phonological awareness. Moreover, they evolved their basic pronunciation skills to a more advanced level of Spanish language proficiency. The journey from single vowel sounds through syllables, words, phrases, sentences, verses, proverbs, paragraphs and poems allowed students to master a higher level of proficiency, pronunciation, reading, listening, and Spanish sound awareness. As a matter of fact, students developed confidence when talking to Spanish native-speakers. This confidence was widely confirmed when students had the chance to face real and life conversations with Modern Languages students from University A, in Barranquilla, Colombia, South America throughout the Crossing Frontiers Project, a virtual language interchange program created by the researcher to expand language and cultural values abroad. This virtual project will be better explained in chapter five as a positive result within the conclusion of this research.

Chapter Five

Conclusions

Teaching a second language effectively is a multi-faceted endeavor that must include the four domains of literacy: reading, writing, speaking, and listening.   While Spanish instruction in the focus school described in this study is best identified as a foreign language rather than a second language, the design of such instruction should include certain components of successful second-language programs. I agree with Anthony (2011), who suggests that foreign language teachers must be aware of several concepts to assist their students in their process to access a considerable language development level. His research, as this study, also shows that effective language teachers employ explicit and strategic reading instruction, incorporate sociocultural aspects, promote social interaction, develop awareness of the relationship between the social dynamics of their classroom and student motivation and participation, but most importantly, work to help their students develop oral literacy. While I developed this study I realized that previous studies were explored and assessed. These studies gave me some pedagogical resources in order to help my students develop significant levels of Spanish phonological awareness.

In accordance with Wisconsin State Standards for language arts many second language learners have a primary language and literacy skills that enhance their acquisition of the focus second language; additionally, they use this background knowledge of their language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. In fact, these concepts were established when the focus students were evaluated in order to determine their Spanish literacy skills and I confirmed how they struggled throughout the study within some of the Spanish vowel sounds, which pronunciation is similar to the English pronunciation (e.g., the Spanish sounds /e/ and /i/) . Language Standard L.4.6 for 10-12 grade levels proposes that students gain and use correctly general knowledge about words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the university level; when they express

independence in meeting vocabulary knowledge and/or when considering a significant word or phrase

to understand or express. Consequently, I posit that students learn a second language more effectively

if they are given instruction that is explicit, structured, content-based, and that reflects the ways in

which the language is naturally used in both written and spoken forms. Therefore, my objective, which

I accomplished through this study was to help the focus students, who were non-Spanish speaker,

develop vowel Spanish phonological awareness to the highest level, thus, they gain knowledge enough

to be able to transition college studies and develop self-esteem and confidence when speaking and

reading out loud in Spanish.

In order for a language program to be successful, it must also incorporate the sociocultural

experiences of the students and promote social interaction in the classroom. In fact, Collier (1995)

presents a conceptual model that takes place while second language acquisition occurs. This model

includes four major components: sociocultural, linguistic, academic, and cognitive processes. Within

the sociocultural component is the individual student who is the core of the whole process. Therefore, I

felt the need to be conscious of the variety of sociocultural backgrounds that my students brought with

them into the classroom and actively worked to incorporate all my students' experiences into my

practical pedagogy. I thoroughly worked with my students to make them be aware of their ethnic

particularities as Hispanic, Asian, Caucasian, and African American students. Any sociocultural

approach to language in today's society must reflect the technological and global changes that are

representative of our current social context which is increasingly interactive. For that, my interventions

were effective by providing my students socioculturally supportive school environments that facilitated

them natural language, academic, and cognitive development growth at all times in the classroom

(Collier, 1995).

In fact, I enrolled my students in the virtual interchange project named: *Crossing Frontiers*.

Through this project my students were engaged and actively connected, at least once a week every

Wednesday, to a Hispanic group of Spanish native speakers in their academic environment from

Universidad A, Barranquilla, Colombia, South America. This *Virtual Language Interchange Program,*

Crossing Frontiers 2012 - 2013, was a virtual conversational program with academic purposes, initially

designed for the Senior class 2013 and the AP Spanish groups at the High school A located in the

Southwest side of a Midwestern city in the United States and for the students of the Undergraduate

Foreign Languages program from the Universidad A in Barranquilla Colombia. The main objective of

this *Virtual Language Interchange Program* was to promote the learning and acquisition of a foreign

language by reinforcing phonological awareness development while interacting with native language

speakers.

As I discovered my students' passion to have life conversation with native Spanish speakers I

encouraged them to increase their phonological awareness levels by permanently practicing on their

own by recording and repeating out loud the Pronunciation Improvement Inventory in front of a mirror.

This way, they were able to monitor themselves their own pronunciation.

During the ten years that I have been a Spanish teacher in the USA at the high school level, I

noticed that most students ultimately want to gain oral proficiency in Spanish, due to their future and

immediate plans to use the language. However, our existing curriculum and traditional way of foreign

language instruction emphasizes the development of reading and writing skills over speaking and

listening skills. For this reason, by dedicating so much instructional time only to the development of

reading and writing skills, we disfavor our students by instructing in a way that does not prepare them

satisfactorily for the ways in which they will most probably use the language outside of our classrooms,

which is the verbal form. This realistic divergence urged me to question the design and emphasis of

the Spanish curriculum and my approach to its implementation through phonological awareness

development to support oral skills at the same level of listening, reading, and writing. I decided to

implement a set of practical strategies to enhance my students' oral literacy skills therefore; I added

some phonological development intervention to the curriculum; i.e., Spanish Vowel Phonological

Awareness and Pronunciation Improvement Inventory. These two particular interventions related to

Spanish phonological awareness and development provided me some academic tools and gave me

insights to effectively fulfill my professional goal and helped my students develop oral literacy

independence, self esteem and enough knowledge to continue the process to become bilingually literate

citizens in both English and Spanish languages at their own pace.

There is a deficit in our existing curriculum and traditional approach to foreign language

instruction that neglects the oral literacy development of students, which in my professional opinion as

a Hispanic Spanish (as a second language) teacher, it is the most essential skill for the practical

application of Spanish language study in today's and future society. In fact, researchers agree that this

oral component is an integral piece within the phonological development awareness (Collier, 1995;

Anthony et al. 2006; and Leafstedt and Gerber ,2005).

In an effort to determine how I might best assist my students to verbally communicate

effectively, comfortably, and frequently in the target language, I conducted research that helped me

identify the components of a foreign language program that explicitly work to develop students'

speaking skills in Spanish. According to the research of DaSilva, (2005) the knowledge transfer is

facilitated when a child receives some instruction in L1 and transition to L2 literacy instruction shows

that basic literacy skills are the foundation on which language development is built, and for this reason

are the primary emphases in most foreign language programs. I followed this data findings and I

instructed my students using their first language, English in order to collect data for my research by

administering a pre-test, post-test, vowel sound combination inventory, practical oral activities, and

specific rhyming words reading out loud activities to assess their background knowledge, progress and

outcomes. Even though throughout the year, I explicitly instructed my students to develop those skills

along with the existing curriculum my emphasis during the seven weeks of research with the focus

group of students was directly targeting their verbal Spanish skills. I recorded their voices in order to observe the frequency with which students used those verbal strategies in class and in order to monitor any changes. I hope that my findings will reveal that explicit instruction and highlighting placed on oral literacy skills can increase all students' oral language proficiency in Spanish.

I realized how students succeeded with individual Spanish vowel sounds; nevertheless, some of them struggled when they tried to pronounce some specific Spanish diphthong sounds. This fact in particular made some of my students hesitate when pronouncing or reading out loud in Spanish. For this reason I strongly believe in the same way Mora (2008) believes that the smallest minimal cue to start mastering any second language is the phonological or sound system as it is related to the orthographic or writing system of the language. I feel that when initial instruction is conducted to Spanish language learners, phonics or a phonological analytical approach must be used because Spanish is a phonetic language with a very consistent set of phonics rules. As a result I conducted the Phonological Awareness and Pronunciation Improvement Inventory to develop awareness of diphthong sounds pronunciation in Spanish (see appendix 2) and consequentially, I consider that if any second language training begins with a solid phonological instruction within the most representative sounds of that language, it would be extremely helpful for the target language learners to succeed within the mastery process.

Explanation of Results

Undoubtedly, I conducted a very precise intervention that helped my students to develop

diphthong sounds pronunciation. As a general rule, my students learned that they needed to pronounce

both vowels individually in diphthongs, except the letter *u* without umlaut *(ü)* after the consonants *g* or

q and preceding the vowel sounds */e/* or */i/*. For instance: queso, */**keh**-soh/,* cheese; quien, /**kee-ehn**/,

who; guitarra, */gee-**tah**-rrah/,* guitar; pagué, */pah-**geh**/,* I paid. In general, most of the students

approximated their pronunciation to the precise diphthong vowel sound pronunciation but for those

who failed on properly pronouncing I encouraged them to think as Archibald (2008) who believes that

there is no semantic consequence to whether the voicing distinction in a language is spelled out by a

vocal fold vibration sound or a closed or open vowel sound; however, it might be considered as a social

difference for those persons who maintain a foreign accent in their L2 pronunciation as a result from

how some people pay more attention to the way they pronounce words.

Anthony et al. (2011) worked with children that "were able to first detect blending of sound

information, then detect elision of sound information, then blend sounds together to form words, and

finally delete sounds from words to form new words" (p. 870). Similarly, I did by firstly reading out

loud some individual words for the students to work on identifying initial and final vowel sounds; other

group of words for the students to identify existing vowel combinations, which constituted Spanish

diphthongs; and other words to identify their vowel structure. Likewise, students were given pictures

that represented known and unknown words that began with one of the five Spanish vowels. There

were six contrasting vowel tests. Five of these contrasting vowel tests were paired and one was a

triplet. During this intervention students learned the concept of open and closed vowels in Spanish.

Students were requested to identify the initial vowel sound by putting down the picture's number next

to one of the two or three top letters which were the initial letters of the mentioned words. Additionally,

Anthony et al. (2011) had the purpose to explore phonological awareness in Spanish; therefore, all

testing was conducted in Spanish, including directions. Moreover, only answers provided in Spanish were acknowledged as correct. Conversely, my purpose was to develop phonological awareness in Spanish and even though all testing was conducted in Spanish, directions were in English to make sure that my non-Spanish speaker students properly understood.

Even though, some researchers have established that in the United States there are many Spanish speaking students, and their phonological awareness has been measured in Spanish to predict their literacy achievement in English (Anthony, Williams, Liang, Swank, Assel, and Landry, 2011); I challenged myself to measure my Spanish students' phonological awareness development to predict their oral literacy achievements in Spanish because, I concur with Riccio et al (2001) who consider that there is not much research about English-speaking students who have been measured in Spanish to predict their literacy achievement in Spanish as their second language. This fact makes this study a very valuable insight for coming researches. It will be necessary to address some research to determine why high school English speaker students who are non-Spanish speakers struggle with the Spanish vowel sounds */e/, /i/,* and */u/* in particular.

After implementing my phonological awareness development strategies the focus students not only learned the concepts of closed and open vowels in Spanish. They also learned about segmenting words in syllables once they learned and applied the rules that determine a real diphthong or triphthongs. My results demonstrated that my students not only were able to pronounce clearer but were also more capable to articulate words, phrases and sentences out loud with confidence. This intervention was recorded to establish their progress through oral literacy. Therefore, their participation in class improved and their interest to talk in Spanish substantially increased. As a consequence, they began reading rhyming words to start manipulating sounds; this made them feel interest in discovering new words by themselves; sometimes they created non-existing words to make them rhyme with known words. As a result, I considered that their final stage on this study might be a challenging test.

They were asked to read out loud a complete poem which contains thirteen paragraphs and 54 rhyming verses besides the post-test which was the same pre-test in order to measure their progress in their phonological awareness development.

Conclusion

The goal of this study was to demonstrate how non-native Spanish speaker high school students progressively increased their knowledge in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in the Spanish language through the mastery of the set of five vowel sounds in Spanish by developing awareness on specific phonological aspects of the Spanish language because according to Leafstedt, and Gerber (2005) the phonological awareness development is the most important phonological aspect significantly related to bridge the gap between English and Spanish literacy construct.

The way I incorporated my phonological awareness strategies especially designed to help students develop knowledge about Spanish vowel sounds is a way to assist English-speaking Spanish language learners to succeed through their transition from their native language toward their Spanish learning process at schools (Anthony et al., 2006; Cardenas-Hagan et al., 2007; Riccio et al., 2001; Leafstedt and Gerber 2005; DaSilva, 2005).

The real meaning of this study was to help foreign language teachers and students develop understanding about the connection between phonology and letter sounds. This correspondence provides the initial foundation on which reading, writing, and spelling develops. Further research might deeply establish the fact that phonological awareness plays a critical role in developing listening and speaking skills not only in Spanish but also in any other alphabetical language because according to Cardenas-Hagan, Carlson, Pollard-Durodola (2007) phonological awareness is a skill that appears to transfer from L1 to L2 during the acquisition process.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Spanish Phonological Awareness Development Pre-test / Post -test

Name_____ Date_____

The following activity is to develop your listening skills. You must listen closely. Words are going to be pronounced twice. You will have 30 seconds to answer each question.

I Part   Identify the **first vowel** sound in the mentioned word. Fill in the box that corresponds to the appropriate sound

Sample: **A**rmando

| A |

1 A   E   I   O   U

| | | | | |

2 A   E   I   O   U

| | | | | |

3 A   E   I   O   U

| | | | | |

4 A   E   I   O   U

| | | | | |

5 A   E   I   O   U

| | | | | |

6 A   E   I   O   U

| | | | | |

7A   E   I   O   U

8A   E   I   O   U

9 A   E   I   O   U

10 A   E   I   O   U

II Part   Identify the **last vowel** sound in the mentioned word. Fill in the box that corresponds to the appropriate sound

Sample: Nombr**e**

E

1 A   E   I   O   U

2 A   E   I   O   U

3 A   E   I   O   U

4 A   E   I   O   U

5 A   E   I   O   U

6 A   E   I   O   U

7 A   E   I   O   U

8 A   E   I   O   U

9 A   E   I   O   U

10.A   E   I   O   U

III Part   Identify the **vowel sound combination** pronounced. Write only the vowel combination letters in the same order you listen to them.

Sample: M**ié**rcoles

ie

1.   AE   EO   IA   EI   UA

2.   AE   EO   IA   EI   UA

3.   AE   EO   IA   EI   UA

4.   AE   EO   IA   EI   UA

5. AE   EO   IA   EI   UA

IV Part   Identify the **vowel sequence** of the mentioned words. Write in the box the number of the word according to the order they are mentioned.

Sample: Institución = I I U IO

   1.AAA   2.AEA   3.EUEA   4.OUIAIO   5.EEIO

Appendix 2

Phonological Awareness Development and Pronunciation Improvement Inventory

Cai	mai	sai	bai	nai	rai	pai	tai	fai
Coi	moi	soi	boi	noi	roi	poi	toi	foi
Cei	mei	sei	bei	nei	rei	pei	tei	fei
Cui	mui	sui	bui	nui	rui	pui	tui	fui
Cia	mia	sia	bia	nia	ria	pia	tia	fia
Cio	mio	sio	bio	nio	rio	pio	tio	fio
Cie	mie	sie	bie	nie	rie	pie	tie	fie
Ciu	miu	siu	biu	niu	riu	piu	tiu	fiu
Cae	mae	sae	bae	nae	rae	pae	tae	fae
Cea	mea	sea	bea	nea	rea	pea	tea	fea
Ceu	meu	seu	beu	neu	reu	peu	teu	feu
Coe	moe	soe	boe	noe	roe	poe	toe	foe
Cua	mua	sua	bua	nua	rua	pua	tua	fua
Cuo	muo	suo	buo	nuo	ruo	puo	tuo	fuo
Ceo	meo	seo	beo	neo	reo	peo	teo	feo
Cao	mao	sao	bao	nao	rao	pao	tao	fao
Cue	mue	sue	bue	nue	rue	pue	tue	fue

Appendix 3

Blending Consonant-Vowel Combinations Inventory

- Rai rei roi rui   ruido
- Ria rie rio riu   sonrío
- Rea reo rei reu   realidad
- Rua rue ruo rui   rueda
- Roe roa roi rou   roer

- Ara are ari aro aru   para
- Era ere eri ero eru   pero
- Ira ire iri iro iru   papiro
- Ora ore ori oro oru   coro
- Ura ure uri uro uru   Euro

- Bar ber bir bor bur   barbero
- Sar ser sir sor sur   sorpresa
- Nar ner nir nor nur   Noruega
- Gar guer guir gor gur   garganta
- Tar ter tir tor tur   tortuga

- Dar der dir dor dur   derecha
- Dra dre dri dro dru   piedra
- Rada reda rida roda ruda   herida
- Jar jer jir jor jur   crujir

Appendix 4

School A   April 29, 2013

Spanish II, Lesson Plan   Vowels in Spanish

Richard David Jimenez-Osorio

Grade Level: 10.   Subject: Foreign Language/ Spanish

Overview: The students will be introduced to the five vowels in Spanish and their pronunciation in multiple words.

Goal: The students will develop their skills about how to properly pronounce the five vowels in Spanish.

Objective(s) The students will:

1.   Recognize the different vowel sounds in Spanish.
2.   Recognize vowel combination by listening and writing.
3.   Know how to pronounce isolated vowel sounds and in words.
4.   Read out loud known and unknown words.
5.   Discover differences and similarities between Spanish/English vowel sounds within words in different languages.

Pronunciación

LAS VOCALES (vowels)

| a | **papá** | /*pah - pah*/ | father | It's like saying "ah" at the dentist. |

| e | **bebé** | /*beh - beh*/ | baby | It's like the *middle* sound in "hey". |

| i | **sí** | /*see*/ | yes | It's like the English 'ee' in teeth. |

| o | **coco** | /*koh - koh*/ | coconut | It's like the *first* part of the "o" in cold (freeze "oh" inside mouth). |

| u | **tú** | /*too*/ | you | It's like the English 'oo' in hoot. |

These five vowel sounds are going to be the <u>same</u> sounds, wherever they are.

In Spanish they **don't** have "long" or "short" vowel sounds… they are always the same.

COMBINACIONES de VOCALES

ae	maestro	/mah ehs troh/	teacher
ai	aire	/ah ee reh/	air
ao	caoba	/kah oh bah/	mahogany
au	pausa	/pah oo sah/	pause
ea	pelea	/peh leh ah/	fight
ei	veinte	/beh een teh/	twenty
eo	feo	/pheh oh/	ugly
eu	Europa	/eh oo roh pah/	Europe
ia	familia	/phah mee lee ah/	family
ie	diez	/dee ehs/	ten
io	biología	/bee oh loh hee ah/	Biology
iu	ciudad	/see oo dahd/	city
oa	toalla	/toh ah yah/	towel
oe	poema	/poh eh mah/	poem
oi	soy	/soh ee/	am (I am)
ou	estadounidense	/ehs tah doh oo nee dehn seh/	"American"
ua	agua	/ah goo ah/	water
ue	abuelo	/ah boo eh loh/	grandfather
ui	cuidado	/koo ee dah doh/	care (the noun)
uo	afectuoso	/ah phehk too oh soh/	affectionate

UNAS CONSONANTES PROBLEMÁTICAS

-B and V are pronounced *exactly alike*.

     Most times they sound like the English /b/ - which is a "hard b" sound.

     Occasionally they have a "soft b" sound, which is kind of a mixture of /u/, /v/, and /m/ sounds.

     Vengo de Buenos Aires   */behn goh deh boo eh nohs ah ee rehs/*   I come from Buenos Aires

     Voy a bailar   */boh ee ah bah ee lahr/*   I'm going to dance.

     Before a, o, u : The letter c sounds like the "c" in "coat." (a "hard c" sound = /k/)

	a	casa	*/kah sah/*	house
-C	o	cosa	*/koh sah/*	thing
	u	cuatro	*/koo ah troh/*	tour

     Before e, i : The letter c sounds like the English "c" in "cent." (a "soft c" sound = /s/)

	e	centavo	*/sehn tah boh/*	cent
-C				
	i	cien	*/see ehn/*	hundred

     Usually it sounds like the "d" in "dog," except that your tongue goes right behind your top teeth.

-D   (a "hard d" sound = /d/)

     Occasionally *it has a "soft d" sound, which mixes the English "d" and "th" sounds.*

     Before a, o, u : The letter g sounds like the "g" in "gate." (a "hard g" sound = /g/)

	a	gato	/*gah* toh/	cat
-G	o	gota	/*goh* tah/	drop
	u	gusta	/*goos* tah/	like

Before e, i : The letter g sounds *similar* to the "h" in "how" but with more spit. (a "soft g" sound = /g/)

(Think angry cat)

	e	gente	/*hen* teh/	people
-**G**				
	i	gigante	/hee *gahn* teh/	giant

Before ue, ui : The u is <u>silent</u> and the g makes a "hard g" sound (/g/). **Don't add a /w/ sound!**

	ue	guerra	/*geh* rrah/	war
-G				
	ui	guitarra	/geeh *tah* rrah/	guitar

Before üe, üi : **Now** the u sounds like the English "u" <u>and</u> the g makes the hard "g" sound (like "gw")

	üe	vergüenza	/behr goo *ehn* sah/	shame
-**G**				
	üi	pingüino	/peen goo *ee* noh/	penguin

-H   is *always* <u>silent</u>.

	hijo		/*ee* hoh/	son

hombre	/*ohm* breh/	man
hambre	/*ahm* breh/	hunger
hoy	/*oh* ee/	today

-J   is pronounced like "h" in "ham."

jamás	/*hah mahs*/	never

-Ll and Y are pronounced *exactly alike*.

As an <u>initial sound</u>, they are similar to the English "y" in "yacht," although you may hear some vibration.

Ya llegué	/*yah yeh geh*/	I already arrived.
Yo llevo las llaves	/*yoh yeh boh lahs yah behs*/	I take the keys.

If the letter y is <u>alone</u> or at the <u>end of a word</u>, then it sounds like the English "ee" in "teeth."

Ya voy	/*yah boh ee*/	I'm coming.
Ana y María son amigas	/*ah nah ee mah ree ah sohn ah mee gahs*/	Ana and Maria are friends

---

-Ñ   is pronounced like the "ny" in "canyon." *(Think of having peanut butter stuck on the roof of your mouth)*

piñata	/*pee nyah tah*/	piñata
señor	/*seh nyohr*/	mister / sir
señora	/*seh nyoh rah*/	missus / ma'am
niño	/*nee nyo*/	child

-Q   sounds like the "k" in "kilo." It is *always* followed by *ue* or *ui* , but <u>the u is silent</u> - **NEVER** a /w/ sound!

u**e**	queso	*/<u>keh</u> soh/*	cheese
	que	*/keh/*	what
u**i**	quiero	*/kee <u>eh</u> roh/*	I want
	quien	*/kee <u>ehn</u>/*	who

-R   When there is <u>only one r</u> and it <u>IS **NOT** the **first** letter</u> of a word, it makes a "flipped r" sound.

A "flipped r" is *exactly* the *same* sound as the "d" in "Adam" or the "tt" in "butter." (Almost like /d/)

pero	/*<u>peh</u> roh*/	but
caro	/*<u>kah</u> roh*/	expensive

-RR   When you have a <u>double r</u> or <u>initial single r,</u> it is strongly "trilled / rolled."

A "trilled r" sounds like a purring cat… almost like repeatedly saying "duh-ri" super fast.

perro	/*<u>peh</u> rroh*/	dog
carro	/*<u>kah</u> rroh*/	car
burrito	/*boo <u>rree</u> toh*/	burrito (Mexican food)

-X   When it is **before a vowel,** it is pronounced like the "x" in "tax."

examen	/*ehk <u>sah</u> mehn*/	examination
éxito	/*<u>ehk</u> see toh*/	success

-X   When it is **before a consonant,** it is pronounced like the "s" in sit.

extranjero	/*ehs trahn <u>heh</u> roh*/	foreigner
extremo	/*ehs <u>treh</u> moh*/	extreme

-X   In **some Mexican words**, it sounds like the "j" or "h" in English.

For example: México */meh hee koh/*

-Z   is always pronounced like the "c" in "cent" or the "s" in "sit."

zapatos   */sah <u>pah</u> tohs/*   shoes

En español... Z = S = CE = CI = **/s/**

Appendix 5

School   A   May 6, 2013

Spanish II, Lesson Plan   Vowels in Spanish Part II

Richard David Jimenez-Osorio

Grade Level: 10.   Subject: Foreign Language/ Spanish

Overview: The students will be introduced to the vowel combinations in Spanish and their pronunciation in multiple words.

Goal: The students will develop their skills about how to properly pronounce the vowel combination in Spanish.

Objective(s) The students will:

6.   Identify when vowels are open and closed.
7.   Recognize diphthongs, triphthongs, and hiatus.
8.   Manipulate vowels in words by using note cards.
9.   Segment words in syllables
10.   Learn the process of writing down accent mark by using the function 'Insert' on the computer.

Theme: Vowels in Spanish

Objective: Students will be able to understand the concept of closed and open in Spanish vowels by manipulating the five vowel sounds individually, in words, and in sentences in order to identify diphthongs, hiatus, and triphthongs.

Activities:

- Students will identify from a list of words given the vowel structure of each word.

- Students will recognize vowel combinations and determine if the vowels are closed or open.

- Students will manipulate vowel combinations by putting them together using note cards.

- Students will identify if the vowel combinations correspond to the structure open- close or close open vowels (o-c / c-o).

- Students will identify if the vowel combinations correspond to the structure open-open or close-close vowels (o-o / c-c).

- Students will identify if the vowel combinations correspond to the structure closed-stressed closed (o-sc)

- Students will identify if the vowel combinations correspond to the structure stressed closed – open vowels (sc-o).

- Students will identify when three vowels coincide in the same syllable to form triphthongs according to the structure closed-open-closed (c-o-c).

- Students will identify when three vowels coincide as a vowel combination but they do not form triphthongs because of the structure open-closed-open (o-c-o).

- Students will learn about how technology helps Spanish writing to mark accents over the vowels when they are needed by using the symbol function.

- Students will learn that diphthongs or triphthongs are part of a syllable but not a hiatus.

- Students will start segmenting words in syllables by using key sounds like clapping their hands.

Materials: photocopied material, note cards, markers

Notes: Open and Closed vowels concept, Diphthongs, Hiatus, and Tripthongs

- Open vowels: A, E, O

- Closed vowels: I, U

- Diphthong structures: open – closed vowels: (A-I), (A-U), (E-I), (E-U), (O-I), (O-U)

- ai: caiman; au: pausa, causa; ei: veinte; eu: Europa; oi: soy, hoy, voy; ou: Estadounidense (not many words)

- Diphthongs structures: closed – open vowels: (I-A), (I-E), (I-U), (U-A), (U-E), (U-I)

- ia: Cecilia; ie: siempre; iu: ciudad; ua: agua; ue: abuelo; ui: ruido

- Hiatus: open-open vowels: (A-A), (A-E), (A-O), (E-A), (E-E), (E-I), (O-A), (O-E), (O-O)

- aa: Aaron; ae: maestro; ao: Paola, ea: lea; ee: leer; ei: rey, ley; oa: Koala, oe: roer; oo: zoológico

- Hiatus: open – stressed closed vowels: (A-Í), (A-Ú), (E-Í), (E-Ú), (O-Í), (O-Ú)

- aí: caí; aú: baúl; eí: reí; eú: transeúnte; oí: oí;

- Tripthongs: closed – open – closed vowels: (I-A-U), (U-E-I), (U-A-U), (U-A-I)

- iau: miau; uei: buey; uau: guau; uai: Paraguay

Appendix 6

School   A   May 17, 2013

Spanish II, Lesson Plan   Blending consonants and vowels

Richard David Jimenez-Osorio

Grade Level: 10.   Subject: Foreign Language/ Spanish

Overview: The students will repeatedly pronounce out loud some combinations of consonants and vowels.

Goal: The students will develop phonological skills by properly pronouncing some problematic consonant sounds and vowels together.

Objective(s) The students will:

1. Recognize consonant sounds in Spanish.
2. Recognize blending consonants and vowels sounds by listening, speaking and writing.
3. Read words with blending consonants and vowel with accuracy.
4. Read out loud unknown words.

Activities: Reading consonant blending and vowel combinations like:

Fra fre fri fro fru

Tra tre tri tro tru

Pra pre pri pro pru

Out loud reading words with some consonant blending and vowel combinations like:

Frase, frío, frotar, fruta, trabajar, tremendo, triste, tropa, preparar, presentar, primero, prometer, prudente.

Identifying words with blending consonant and vowel combinations

Writing words with consonant blending and vowels combinations.

- Rai rei roi rui   ruido
- Ria rie rio riu   sonrío
- Rea reo rei reu   realidad
- Rua rue ruo rui   rueda
- Roe roa roi rou   roer

    _____

- Ara are ari aro aru   para
- Era ere eri ero eru   pero
- Ira ire iri iro iru   papiro
- Ora ore ori oro oru   coro
- Ura ure uri uro uru   Euro

- Bar ber bir bor bur   barbero
- Sar ser sir sor sur   sorpresa
- Nar ner nir nor nur   Noruega
- Gar guer guir gor gur   garganta
- Tar ter tir tor tur   tortuga

- Dar der dir dor dur   derecha
- Dra dre dri dro dru   piedra
- Rada reda rida roda ruda   herida
- Jar jer jir jor jur   crujir

- Sanar saner sanir sanor sanur   sanar
- Dan den din don dun   donde
- Naca neca nica noca nuca   caneca
- Tala tela tila tola tula   tela
- Mara mera mira mora mura   mira
- Pala pela pila pola pula   popular
- Bama bema bima boma buma   Obama
- Maña meña miña moña muña   mañana
- Masa mesa misa mosa musa   mesa
- Lana lena lina lona luna   luna
- Lama lema lima loma luma   loma
-

WORDS WITH ACCENT MARK

- Tarará tereré tirirí tororó tururú
- Parará pereré pirirí pororó pururú
- Matará meteré mitirí motoró muturú
- Camará comoró cumurú

- Tarára terére tiríri toróro turúru
- Parára perére piríri poróru purúru
- Matára metére mitíri motóro mutúru
- Camára   comóro   cumúru

- Tárara térere tíriri tóroro túruru
- Párara pérere píriri póroro púruru
- Mátara métere mítiri mótoro múturu

- Cámara   cómoro   cúmuru

- Tras tres tris tros trus
- Bra bre bri bro bru
- Cra cre cri cro cru

- Fra fre fri fro fru
- Tra tre tri tro tru
- Pra pre pri pro pru

- Bla ble bli blo blu
- Cla cle cli clo clu
- pla ple pli plo plu

- Dra dre dri dro dru
- Fra fre fri fro fru
- Gra gre gri gro gru

- Mar mer mir mor mur
- Sar ser sir sor sur
- Tar ter tir tor tur

- Tras tres tris tros trus

- Bra bre bri bro bru

- Bla ble bli blo blu

- Tra tre tri tro tru

- Pra pre pri pro pru

- Sar ser sir sor sur

- Fra fre fri fro fru

- Gla gle gli glo glu

- Cra cre cri cro cru

- Ar er ir or ur

- Fra fre fri fro fru

Appendix 7

School   A   May 24, 2013

Spanish II, Lesson Plan   Spanish Rhyming words

Richard David Jimenez-Osorio

Grade Level: 10.   Subject: Foreign Language/ Spanish

Overview: The students will recognize some rhyming words in Spanish, their pronunciation, and their meanings.

Goal: The students will develop phonological skills by properly pronouncing rhyming words in Spanish.

Objective(s)   The students will:

1. Recognize rhyming sounds in Spanish.
2. Recognize rhyming words by listening, speaking and writing.
3. Read rhyming words with fluency.
4. Read out loud known and unknown rhyming words.
5. Discover some differences between Spanish/English rhyming words related to the stressed syllable and accent marks
6. Develop phonological awareness by repeating rhyming words, developing fluency by working on phoneme segmentation and reading out loud.
7. Recognize the difference between assonant and consonant rhymes in Spanish.

After exploring letter substitution trough word building and other phonemic awareness activities, students are now ready to do the rhyming ending word sorts. These sorts reinforce the concept that changing just the beginning sound of a word can make a new word. When sorting by endings, students recognize the rhyming pattern. Students will be able to recognize rhyming words by identifying the stressed syllable of the words in Spanish. Students will introduce to the concepts of assonant and consonant rhymes.

Some sample of rhyming words in Spanish are:

Lana – sana – rana – gana- hermana –

Mapa – capa – atrapa – etapa – tapa – papa –

Pasa – casa – masa – tasa – taza – atrasa –

Fama – pijama – drama – escama – llama – cama

Gramo – amo – derramo – llamo – ramo (préstamo)

Appendix 8

School   A   June 3, 2013

Spanish II, Lesson Plan   Spanish Reading

Grade Level: 10.   Subject: Foreign Language/ Spanish

Instructor: Richard David Jimenez-Osorio

Overview: The students will read out loud short two verse poems to determine their phonological awareness improvement.

Goal: The students will develop more skills about how to properly read Spanish rhyming words for fun.

Objective(s) The students will:

11.   Recognize rhyming words within the content of the poems.
12.   Be able to develop fluency when reading out loud.
13.   Manipulate sounds in Spanish while reading out loud rhyming words.
14.   Attempt to create at least one short two verse poems by themselves.

Activities:

1. Reading in Spanish with a purpose (tongue twister, short poems, verses, proverbs and sayings, and children songs)
2. Word games: Rhyming words, completing verses with rhyming words, rhyming ending flip books, rhyming word concentration.

Samples:

1. Cuchichean que las cucharas del cucharero tienen muchas cucarachas.

2. Cuando digo Diego, digo digo y cuando digo digo, digo Diego.

3. Fama de fumador tiene el que fuma, quien fuma es famoso por fumar, pero el que ni fuma ni tiene fama, ¿para que quiere fama de fumar?

4. Jaque mate, mate al rey, jaque mate con la jaca, mata jaca con el jaque, mate jaque, jaque al rey.

5. Ya ves que la llave no abre, ya ves que la llave abría, ¿Dónde habría tanta lave, si ninguna llave abría?

6. Erre con erre cigarro, erre con erre carril. Rápido corren los carros cargados de azucar al ferrocarril.

7. La hormiga tiene barriga de tanto que traga y traga, pero esa hormiga es mi amiga aunque es una hormiga pesada.

8. El perro de San Roque no tiene rabo porque Ramón Rodríguez se lo ha robado.

9. Quien silva como Silvia, es porque Silvia le enseñó a silbar, ya que Silvia silba sin igual.

10. Si seis sierras sierran seis tubos rotos, seiscientas seis sierras sierran seiscientos seis tubos rotos.

11. Parra tenia una perra y Guerra tenia una jarra; la perra de Parra rompió la jarra de Guerra y Guerra le pego con la porra a la perra de Parra. Oiga usted Guerra ¿Por qué le ha pegado con la porra a la perra de Parra? Porque si la perra de Parra no hubiera roto la jarra de Guerra, Guerra no le hubiera pegado con la porra a la perra de Parra.

Appendix 9

Vowel deletion in words and sentences in contexts

1. F_l_z c_nc_ d_ m_y_.

2. F_l_z d_ _ d_ l_s m_dr_s.

3. H_y _s m_rt_s c_t_rc_ d_ m_y_.

4. M_ _nc_nt_ b_b_r j_g_ d_ n_r_nj_.

5. Y_ n_nc_ c_m_ p_sc_d_ _n _l d_s_y_n_.

6. M_ h_rm_n_ s_ ll_m_ C_rl_t_s.

7. M_ m_m_ s_ ll_m_ M_r_ _.

8. Y_ t_ng_ d_s h_rm_n_s.

9. M_ g_st_ _sc_ch_ar m_s_c_.

10. M_ g_st_ c_m_r p_p_s fr_t_s.

The completion of the sentences and their respective translation is as follows:

1. Feliz cinco de mayo.   Happy fifth of May.

2. Feliz día de las madres.   Happy mothers' day.

3. Hoy es martes catorce de mayo.   Today is Tuesday, May fourteenth.

4. Me encanta beber jugo de naranja.   I love to drink orange juice.

5. Yo nunca como pescado en el desayuno. I never eat fish for breakfast.

6. Mi hermano se llama Carlitos.   My brother's name is Carlitos.

7. Mi mamá se llama María.   My mother's name is Maria

8. Yo tengo dos hermanos.   I have two brothers.

9. Me gusta escuchar música.   I like to listen to music.

Appendix 10

Vowel combination that form a diphthong

Following the sample (number 1) identify the vowel combination of the word and describe the two vowels if they are open or closed. Look at the board to remember what sort of vowel it is. All the words are around in the classroom. All this words has a diphthong. Explain why.

1. puerta   ue   closed- open   door

2. abierta

3. puedo

4. naipe

5. nueve

6. hielo

7. peine

8. incendio

9. emergencia

10. ciencias

11. viernes

12. junio

13. julio

14. maestro

15. noviembre

EXPLAIN WHY ALL THESE VOWEL COMBINATIONS ARE DIPHTHONGS

Appendix 11

Hiatus

Following the sample (number 1) identify the vowel combination of the word and describe the two vowels if they are open or closed. Indicate if they are stressed. Look at the board to remember what sort of vowel it is

1. aéreo   a e   open stressed-open

2. zoològico

3. arqueòlogo

4. caoba

5. teatro

6. deseo

7. héroe

8. línea

9. diarrea   e a

10. cacao

11. río

12. baúl

13. Raúl

14. maíz

15. país

EXPLANATION: This vowel combination does not form a diphthong. This is called:

Appendix 12

Triphthongs

In Spanish the vowel structure for the triphthongs is closed-open-closed vowels (c-o-c).

According to this structure, determine if the following words have triphthongs.

1.	Uruguay	uai	closed-open-closed	Uruguay
2.	Paraguay	uai	closed-open-closed	Paraguay
3.	miau	iau	closed-open-closed	meow
4.	guau	uau	closed-open-closed	woof
5.	buey	uei	closed-open-closed	ox
6.	Camagüey	uei	closed-open-closed	Camaguey
7.	semiautomático	iau	closed-open-closed	semiautomatic
8.	Isaías	aia	open-stressed closed-open	Isaiah
9.	negociáis	iai	closed-stressed open-closed	you negotiate
10.	asociáis	iai	closed-stressed open-closed	you associate

Note: There are not many words with triphthongs in Spanish. Number 8 and 9 are two samples of the conjugated verbs in the old fashioned Spanish from 15th, 16th century or the actually Spanish spoken in Spain. This conjugation corresponds to the 'vos' and 'vosotros' form which is 'you' and 'you all' forms respectively.

Appendix 13

Pronunciation / Reading   Developing Phonological Awareness in Spanish

The Poem of the day.   English translation:

1. Es misterioso el corazón del hombre   It's mysterious the heart of a man
    Como una losa sepulcral sin nombre   like a nameless tombstone

2. sin los puntales de la fe, algún día   Without the props of faith, someday,
    la bóveda del cielo se caería   the vault of the sky would fall

3   vino, sentimiento, guitarra y poesía   Wine, feeling, guitar and poestry

    hacen los cantares de la patria mía   make the songs of my homeland

4   me ha salido un pareado   I have left a couplet
    sin habérmelo pensado   without having thought about it

5   de este mundo sacaras   From this world you shall bring with
    lo que metas, nada mas   you what you brought to it, no more

6   la jefa de la banda   The leader of the band
    mueve el pelo cuando anda   the hair moves when walking

7   aunque la mona se vista de seda   Although the monkey is in silk,
    mona se queda   monkey stays

8   la primavera ha venido   Spring has come
    nadie sabe como se ha ido   nobody knows how it's gone

9   los pollitos dicen pío pío pío   Chicks say peep peep
    cuando tienen hambre cuando tienen frío   when they are hungry and cold

10 los ojos tengo en llanto noche y día   I have my eyes in tears night and day
    y en fuego el corazón y el alma mía   and there's fire in my heart and soul

11 bravo león, mi corazón,   Brave lion is my heart
    tiene apetitos, no razón.   It has appetites, not reason

12 la miel es dulce la miel provoca   Honey is sweet, honey invites
    pero es mas dulce besar tu boca.   But is sweeter to kiss your mouth

13 cada oveja con su pareja   Birds of a feather flock together

14 ni mesa sin pan   Neither table without bread
    ni ejercito sin capitán.   Or army without captain

Popular Sayings:

1. A boda ni bautizado,   To a wedding or baptism,
   no vayas sin ser llamado.   do not go without being called.

2. A Dios rogando   Praying to God
   Y con el mazo dando   and strongly hammering

3. A las diez, en la cama estes   At ten in the bed you are
   Y si es antes, mejor que después   and if earlier, rather than later

4. A lo hecho, pecho   What you have done, face it.

5. Quien no oye consejo   Whoever hears no advice
   no llega a Viejo   will not get old

6. Quien se fue a Sevilla   Who went to Sevilla
   Perdió su silla   lost his chair

7. Primero son mis dientes   My teeth come first
   Que mis parientes   than my relatives

8. Por el interes   Of interest,
   Lo mas feo hermoso es   the ugliest beautiful it is

9. Perro ladrador, poco mordedor   A barking dog never bites.

10. Menea la cola el can   The dog's tail is wagging
    No por ti sino por el pan   not for you but for the bread

11. Agua que no has de beber   Water not to drink
    Dejala correr   let it run

12. Gato maullador, nunca buen cazador   Screaming cat, never a good hunter

13. Del dicho al hecho   From saying to doing,
    Hay mucho trecho   there's a long distance

14. Lo poco agrada   The little pleases
    Lo mucho enfada   the much disturbs.

EL RENACUAJO PASEADOR -- The Wandering Tadpole

By Rafael Pombo

El hijo de rana, Rinrín renacuajo

Salió esta mañana muy tieso y muy majo

Con pantalón corto, corbata a la moda

Sombrero encintado y chupa de boda.

-¡Muchacho, no salgas¡- le grita mamá

Pero él hace un gesto y orondo se va.

Halló en el camino, a un ratón vecino

Y le dijo: -¡amigo!- venga usted conmigo,

Visitemos juntos a doña ratona

Y habrá francachela y habrá comilona.

A poco llegaron, y avanza ratón,

Estírase el cuello, coge el aldabón,

Da dos o tres golpes, preguntan: ¿quién es?

-Yo doña ratona, beso a usted los pies

¿Está usted en casa? -Sí señor sí estoy,

y celebro mucho ver a ustedes hoy;

estaba en mi oficio, hilando algodón,

pero eso no importa; bienvenidos son.

Se hicieron la venia, se dieron la mano,

Y dice Ratico, que es más veterano:

Mi amigo el de verde rabia de calor,

Démele cerveza, hágame el favor.

Y en tanto que el pillo consume la jarra

Mandó la señora traer la guitarra

Y a renacuajo le pide que cante

Versitos alegres, tonada elegante.-

¡Ay! de mil amores lo hiciera, señora,

pero es imposible darle gusto ahora,

que tengo el gaznate más seco que estopa

y me aprieta mucho esta nueva ropa.

-Lo siento infinito, responde tía rata,

aflójese un poco chaleco y corbata,

y yo mientras tanto les voy a cantar

una cancioncita muy particular.

Mas estando en esta brillante función

De baile y cerveza, guitarra y canción,

La gata y sus gatos salvan el umbral,

Y vuélvese aquello el juicio final

Doña gata vieja trinchó por la oreja

Al niño Ratico maullándole: ¡Hola!

Y los niños gatos a la vieja rata

Uno por la pata y otro por la cola

Don Renacuajito mirando este asalto

Tomó su sombrero, dio un tremendo salto

Y abriendo la puerta con mano y narices,

Se fue dando a todos noches muy felices

Y siguió saltando tan alto y aprisa,

Que perdió el sombrero, rasgó la camisa,

se coló en la boca de un pato tragón

y éste se lo embucha de un solo estirón

Y así concluyeron, uno, dos y tres

Ratón y Ratona, y el Rana después;

Los gatos comieron y el pato cenó,

¡y mamá Ranita solita quedó!

Appendix 14

Sociograma Structure

Nombre_____Fecha_____

Instructions:

Answer with your classmates names.

I want you to give me first, second, and third choices in response to this questions:

1. Who do you consider is good at pronunciation in Spanish?

    a.

    b.

    c.

2. Whom would you like to do class work with?

    a.

    b.

    c.

3. Who do you consider is good at reading in Spanish?

    a.

    b.

    c.

4. Who do you consider is good at writing in Spanish?

    a.

    b.

    c.

5. Whom would you choose to work with on a Spanish project?

    a.

     b.

     c.

6. From whom would you like to get support on developing Spanish pronunciation skills?

     a.
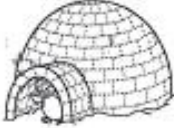
     b.

     c.

Appendix 15
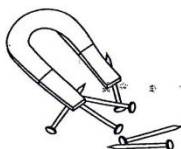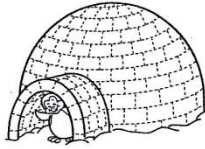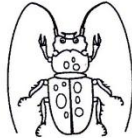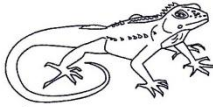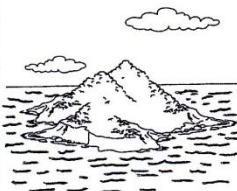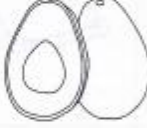
Appendix 16

Appendix 17

Appendix 18

Appendix 19

First Vowel Sound Deletion

Developing Phonological Awareness

Name_____

Part I

Decide either "O", "I", "E", "U", or "A", is the right letter to begin the next thirty words: (5 minutes)

1. ____ jo	11. ___ nillo	21.___sponja
2. ____ guana	12. ___ guacate	22.___nfermo
3. ____gual	13. ___ brigo	23. ___nicornio
4. ____cho	14. ___ vión	24. ___squeleto
5. ____ mán	15. ___ gua	25. ___lefante
6. ____glu	16. ___ lla	26. ___ña
7. ____ ruga	17. ___ la	27. ___vas
8. ____ valo	18. ___ jo (different from 1)	28. ___scorpión
9. ____nsecto	19. ___ pio	29.____migos
10. ____reja	20. ___ guja	30. ____ve

Part II

Select five words and translate into English.

ANSWERS:

1. A - O	2. I	3. I
4. O	5. I	6. I
7. O	8. O	9. I
10. O	11. A	12. A
13. A	14. A	15. A
16. O	17. O	18. A - O
19. A	20. A	21. E
22. E	23. U	24. E
25. E	26. U	27. U
28. E	29. A	30. A

Appendix 20

Appendix 21

ino	ano
ito	ato

pino	fino	mito
grito	sano	chino
barato	pito	frito
lino	grano	chiquito
llano	aparato	olfato
vino	plano	vano
súbito	sobrino	dato
gato	mano	trato