



Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua  
Rubén Darío Campus  
Faculty of Education and Languages

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*"Why the students of fifth year of the morning shift at Salomón de la Selva high school in Managua have a low level of proficiency in speaking and pronunciation skills in English as a foreign language"*

**SEMINARIO DE GRADUACIÓN**

*Research submitted as a requirement for a B.A. Degree in teaching English as a foreign language*

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*Why the students of fifth year of the morning shift at Salomón de la Selva high school in Managua have a low level of proficiency in speaking and pronunciation skills in English as a foreign language*



## **DEDICATORY**

It has been a hard task to carry out through all this way to achieve our goals. We needed faith in Jesus Christ and patience to go ahead without surrender in spite of the difficulties we faced and believe that there were people willing to give us their helping hand to fulfill a good work. And finally, we could do it.

For all this and more we want to dedicate this work to:

God, for being always by our side, for being our inspiration and giving us the strength we needed, the patience and confidence to develop and finish this research paper,

To our parents for their unconditional support and love,

To our tutor Pedro Vásquez because our work could not have been possible without his guidance and experience.



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To all the students and teachers from Salomón de la Selva High School who were willing to help us with the information we required, for their disposal and time, *thank you very much indeed.*



## **ABSTRACT**

By having achieved to organize our investigation through collecting facts or evidences, theories and all kind of data, that made possible our research we have found the main factors such as: inadequate teaching methodology and techniques applied in the classroom, lack of didactical materials, students' poor linguistic knowledge, economical and psychological problems that block the success into the foreign language acquisition.

Data collections in this research paper were possible because of the instruments application to students and teachers from fifth year at Salomon de la Selva High school.

After getting all the information we realized most of the students are underage and therefore they do not work, it means that they have enough time to study and practice English but actually they do not do it.

On the other hand, some students are afraid to speak and mispronounce wrongly in the communicative activities because of the poor linguistic competence in English.

All the teachers appreciation toward, this situation was not satisfactory; because they said the current government do not supply with didactical materials to publics school to help them to develop a classes that encourage students to learn English.



## INDEX

DEDICATORY.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	ii
ABSTRACT .....	iii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
PROBLEM.....	3
HYPOTHESIS .....	4
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND .....	5
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....	7
RATIONALE.....	26
GENERAL OBJECTIVE .....	27
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES .....	27
SYSTEM OF VARIABLES.....	28
METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN.....	31
DISCUSSION OF RESULTS .....	33
CONCLUSIONS.....	48
RECOMMENDATIONS .....	50
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	53
APPENDIXES .....	54



## **INTRODUCTION**

Nowadays English language has been one of the most relevant educational factors in Nicaragua and the population is being demanded to acquire it as a second language to exchange our cultural, social, political and economical aspects with foreign countries.

During many years students in high schools have been taking English as a part of the curriculum set by the minister of education and therefore used by the teachers in public schools.

In this research, we intend to find out the reasons that cause a low level of proficiency in speaking and pronunciation skills that students have in the second language acquisition and mostly, we have observed that the students of fifth year at Salomón de la Selva high school have a lot of difficulties in speaking and pronunciation skills through the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

The problem has aroused our interest to look for specific information to help us find a solution.

We focus our attention on the possible factors that lead to the problem of our concern: the materials used in the classroom and the kind of techniques the teacher carries out in class in order to fulfill his objectives.

Our work lets you know about the previous knowledge and the linguistic problems the students have in English. And also how this can negatively affect them during their learning process in their last level of secondary school.



We also provide you information about some general findings by other researchers and the teacher's and students' points of view towards the problem we state in our research.

This information has been gathered through interviews and direct English class observations.

Our findings will be reflected in the detailed analysis of results, and the conclusions of these findings will be followed by some recommendations that, we would appreciate, can be taken as useful suggestions to improve the teaching and learning process of English as a foreign language.

We expect you enjoy this work and hope you become a little interested in this problem and help others to improve their English acquisition, so that they become better, more confident learners of the target language.



## **PROBLEM**

Why the students of fifth year of the morning shift at Salomón de la Selva high school in Managua have a low level of proficiency in speaking and pronunciation skills in English as a foreign language.

## **SUBPROBLEMS**

1. Low proficiency in pronunciation when the students are speaking in the classroom.
2. Unsuitable techniques (poor communicative activities) used in the classroom and a low degree in speaking in the teaching and learning process.
3. Low level of materials used in class and students poor knowledge applied in the foreign language acquisition.





## **HYPOTHESIS**

The students' proficiency of 5<sup>th</sup> year at Salomón de la Selva high school, morning shift is rather low in speaking and pronunciation skills in English, because of linguistics, social, cultural, and methodological factors.



## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Salomón de la Selva high school was founded in 1960 and it was called Colegio Primero de Febrero in honor to Somoza's birthday. It was under the administration of Luis Somoza Garcia. It was built up with the purpose of being a school for high classed family children and children of members of the armed forces: Guardia Nacional (GN), whose children were privileged with scholarships and free transportation. The civilian's children from the high society had to pay for these.

Part of the teacher's salary was paid by the Ministry of Education (MEP) in those times.

The first chairman was the teacher and retired major of GN Elías Monje Hernández who used to teach at the military academy of Nicaragua. Captains and lieutenants were in charge of the discipline of the students.

Teacher Elías Monje was succeeded by James Thomas who took the principalship, until July 17<sup>th</sup> in 1979. In this period, the school was on the top of the success and progress. It had a plenty of new Mercedes Benz and Pegaso buses which were the means of transportation of around 5000 students. It also had a physics and a chemistry lab and a beautiful melodic organ brought from Spain to celebrate cultural events and a lot of equipment for the maintenance of this big school.

All of these good instruments the school had disappeared when Sandinistas seized control of the country in 1979. The principalship of the school was assumed by Ervin de Castilla, B.A. and the name of it was changed, through a decree, to Instituto Nacional Rigoberto López Pérez. From this period on, many teachers assumed the principalship and the school lost little by little its majestic



infrastructure which just remains in the mind who had the opportunity to see it all its magnificence. Now, it is under an imminent oversight.

All the good books in the library were changed and only books with socialist tendency like Marx, Engel, Lenin's collection remained.

In October of 1997 the school was renamed again and this time it was named Colegio Salomón de la Selva, in honour to this distinguished Nicaraguan poet. It was under decree 190 in Managua and ministerial agreement 43-97 which stated that all states school should not have names of political connotations or mean revanchism from a political party over another.

Salomón de la Selva is one of the most beautiful and biggest schools in our capital. But, after many changes through the years it needs more and better maintenance from the government.

Nowadays, this school assists around 2,900 students: secondary form in the morning and primary form in the afternoon.

The principalship is led by Ena Helwing, B.A. and sixty eight teachers in both shifts.

The school needs materials and training programs for teachers and activities that the government must consider important in benefit to the students for they become better and more interested in getting to know something new every single day.



# **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**



## FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Acquiring a language can be a challenge for most of the students in secondary schools. It is one of the most difficult subjects they have to manage to get along with. Teachers have the great task to persuade students to learn, to encourage them to participate actively in class in order to accomplish the objectives set successfully.

Since the problem of bad acquisition of a foreign language is well known by all people that are directly affected or are just passive observers of what is happening.

We decided to do something about this situation. What is happening? What causes this problem? What should be the possible solutions? Teachers must be firmly in their decision to teach English and no matter what the problems are; they have to know that somewhere, somehow there are people who are concerned about it and try to help and make the big problem becomes a little one.

It is a hard task to accomplish. And all together can make it better if we let the other know our difficulties in teaching the language and share our success in order to eradicate, bit by bit, the problem if acquiring the target language. In the book "A practical guide to the teaching of English as a second language", Wilga M. Rivers and Mary S. Temperey (1978, preface pag. 7), stated, "*we can repeat and refine what we have found to be effective in our own circumstances with our own students, we can share successes and explore failures with our colleagues, learning much from each other*". These writers let us know the importance of join efforts and we, as teachers, become better to get as a result: students with a good level of proficiency in speaking and pronouncing.



Getting good results at the end of a course implies to focus first on a good teaching of grammar, phonology and lexicon due to the fact that if we want the students to express their ideas with accuracy and confidence they need to have a good background in writing and reading skills. In spite of, there is a very close relation among the skills; there are some good ways to make the students learn to speak, to use the language orally, even when they have problems in writing and reading.

From the very beginning, the teachers must stimulate the students to express orally in English through short conversations or questions in a simple form of communication. The students must be motivated to answer and keep in mind everything they learn through the practice every time it is possible.

## **PROCEDURES AND TECHNIQUES THAT CONSTRUCT THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

Edward Allen and Rebecca Vallete in their book “Classroom techniques”, pp3, 1997, state: *“the teacher is the key figure in the language course. It is the teacher who sets the tone for the learning activities... the teacher plays a prime role in effecting student progress or lack thereof”*. The teachers have to be creative facilitators of knowledge of the target language. They have to be updated teachers and look for means with what the students can feel more confident and familiar, good methods, techniques and adequate materials. They have to provide the aids required for a good acquisition of the language.

The use of some methods motivate students to acquire the language in a more relaxing environment. Also, it can be an enjoyable learning through the techniques and activities suggested, for e.g., Total Physical Response which objective is the movement and gestures of the body, and other methods such as:

- Suggestopedia
- Communicative approach



- Audio-lingual method
- Grammar translation method

The use of flash cards encourages the students to participate by describing or telling stories. Playing roles can help much indeed. This is a low process but we can make the students get acquainted with the use of the language from simple forms of communications through complex structures in comments, reflections, discussions, etc.

Working this way the expectations will be successful and they will find out that developing the class in a relaxed atmosphere is possible to get the students to speak freely without shyness or fear; they can feel more confident when they express their ideas to others.

Speaking English requires a great ability to know which kind of speech is the adequate to be used in certain situations. This is, the styles of language the students have to use depending on to whom they are going to speak or address. They need to be careful and can distinguish both, an informal or formal language.

Speaking skill includes the way we express our feeling towards different situations and it involves the good use of appropriate intonation when we want to express admiration, likes, dislikes, surprise, etc. We know the important role the intonation plays in this ability.

*“The principal goal of language teaching is to supply comprehensible input in order to facilitate ‘acquisition’”* (krashen, “Instructed second language acquisition”, 1982, page 58). The teachers have to look for some effective solutions to improve the student’s pronunciation, develop interactional activities which can help the students



with this problem. The teachers need to create easier and faster ways to help them to improve in a nice and enjoyable environment.

The use of dialogues is an essential part of the process. Making the students play roles usually has good results. But it has to be a process that involves these activities frequently, so that the students keep using the language every time and it becomes part of the evaluating part in the class. The students have to be stimulated to use the language in class and create a habit formation of foreign language:

- To ask for permission
- To ask questions about the class
- To ask questions about the new word meanings:

Rivers (“Instructed language acquisition”, 1964, page # 27) disputes the ‘mechanical’ part of the assumption, arguing that “a habit is developed only when the learner has a communicative need and is in a relaxed state”.

- ✓ Teacher, may I go to the bathroom?
- ✓ What does “earn a living” mean?
- ✓ How do you spell it?

These are simple forms of using the language, and promote the use of it during all the class. The previous questions mentioned here help the students to feel confident to use English in class in some interactional activities.

There are other ways to make the students use the target language and enjoy what they are learning. Teaching English with videos can be an enjoyable way to make the students feel more interested in acquiring the language. How can a video help students? A video not only can be used for listening purposes, it helps in great way to improve the pronunciation; due to the fact that the students have the opportunity





to listen to native speakers of the language. It helps a lot, and makes the students feel more enthusiastic and seems to be more interesting for them to learn pronunciation from native speakers.

In this kind of activity or technique, the silent viewing is a good activity that keeps the students practicing the target language.

They can perform what they hear previously with sound. Role play situations from videos stimulate students to practice and improve their speaking skill and pronunciation.

Videos encourage students to share comments and suggestions, or discussions about what they hear and see. It is very important in a teaching in a learning process to count with good resources in order to have the students get along with English.

But, is it possible to have a video room in all secondary schools? Maybe that is a great limitation schools have and therefore does not let the teacher help students with their English. The materials and aids that can be the key for a successful class are just absent in the classrooms: the poor situation of state schools do not allow a great lesson with videos. It can be just a dream.

Although, teachers' creativeness and imagination can make great things, the most amazing ones without sources, it is necessary to supply schools with the adequate materials.

## **FREE ORAL PRONUNCIATION**

It is very important that the students can be able to produce naturally the language which has been presented in a classroom. And also the teacher should take in consideration the importance of using visual stimuli: maps, photographs, pictures,



cartoons, even slides and films. It will help the learners to convey information to others. You know communication is essential for the human beings.

Joanne Kenworthy ("Teaching English pronunciation", 1994, page # 1) "*Teachers need to check that their learners are hearing sounds according to the appropriate categories and help them to develop new categories if necessary*". Everything that happens in the classroom involves communication of one kind or another.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING A BETTER PRONUNCIATION**

Maybe the students are familiar with the terms (phonetics and phonology) but they might have problems in the way sounds are produced to convey differences in meaning.

According to Joanne Kenworthy ("Teaching English pronunciation", 1994, page #45) "*the traditional way of helping someone to perceive sounds according to a new set of categories is to give them plenty of opportunities to hear all the members of the new system.*"

The teacher has to help learners perceive sounds according to appropriate categories and help them to develop new categories if necessary. There are some sounds of English that do not occur in other languages and the students have to be able to imitate the new sound, and therefore they have to notice that the teacher their problems in pronunciation. Some learners or speakers are more difficult to listen than others. E.G., if someone doesn't listen carefully what have been spoken might cause misunderstanding so; we can make differences in the terms "hearing" and listening.



According to Joanne Kenworthy (“Teaching English pronunciation”, 1994, page #45) *“The language native is an important factor in learning to pronounce English; this is clearly demonstrated by the fact that a foreign accent has some of the sound characteristics of the learner’s native language. These are often obvious enough to make a person’s origins identifiable by untrained as well as trained people”*. The linkage of sounds occurs when English people speak and they generally do not pause between each word, and the sounds may confuse to the listener, so the teacher have to help students to create different stages to achieve a better understanding within a communicative system. It is important to remember that every language in the world has different varieties and different accents (these may be regional or social class accents). In some languages, there are even different styles of pronunciation for men and women. The way we speak is really a part of our identity.

## **TEACHERS AND CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR**

Anyway the teacher dominates the classroom interaction and they have a high level of proficiency and therefore they presume to know more than students. In addition, teachers master the topic and have the responsibility for managing classroom interaction in an orderly way.

## **ERROR TREATMENT**

Traditionally teachers provide learners with feedback regarding the correctness or appropriateness of their responses. One thing that occurs in the classroom is that teachers do not correct errors of the learners on their items. Even though some students have an autonomous ability to correct themselves.



A basic pattern of the lesson would consist of “warming up activities”, “presentation learning”, and using subsequent schedules.

We may not go far away that exist a variety of techniques that can be used to obtain data such as note taking, interviewing, administering questionnaires, eliciting personal opinions by means of ratings and rankings and analyzing relevant documents (E.G. students' homework and teacher's handouts).

Nevertheless a lot of students behave in a different way because most of them come from a variety of backgrounds and teachers have been varied in experience. E.G.: The teachers ask questions and accept feelings. *“A positive attitude on the part of the teacher is an essential success. The many techniques suggested...will work only if the teacher is personally convinced that the students are capable of learning another language”*. (Allen and Vallete. “Classroom Techniques”, 1977, page # 5).

## **LINGUISTIC STUDIES IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION.**

The language learning is a process of habit formation that may be acquired through stimulus, response associations often linked together in complex chains it consists of the ability to perform a particular linguistic feature (A sound, a word, a grammatical pattern) for instance: when the teacher supplies stimulus, the teacher supplies the response to the learning.

Error was to be avoided because they were believed to have a negative effect on learning. A major source of errors is the learner's mother tongue that interferes with second language acquisition, because the learner tends to transfer the habits of his/her native language into the target language. Error sometimes have to be tolerated by the teacher rather than corrected at the moment of speaking or communicative situation (avoid interferences).



Learners from different language backgrounds display remarkable regularity in the rank of ordering of grammatical morphemes so, it's necessary to correct learners errors indirectly at the end of the class, because it will contribute in one way or another through consciousness rising to learning.

The learners of English as a foreign language have to construct their mental grammar and therefore internalize their knowledge to understand and speak in the right way.

Even though for not every one agrees that language learning according to Chomsky (1965-1986): "*language constitutes a separate mental faculty and is not acquired in the same way as other knowledge system*".

Teachers must be aware about the student previous knowledge before planning a lesson.

The teaching and learning behaviours take place in a classroom. It means the variety of ways that explain the relationship between explicit and implicit knowledge. The teacher must focus on what ways instruction and meaning contribute to second language acquisition.

Anyway the success of the foreign language depends not only on the quality of the basic program but also on the flexibility with which the teacher uses that program. The teacher is the key figure, who sets the tone for the learning activities. According to Edward Allen (Classroom Techniques, pp3, 1977) "*the teacher is an orchestra leader directing a group of apprentices*".

The teacher plays a prime role in effecting student progress or lack thereof.



## Linguistic features that intervene in the classroom language learning

- a) L2 acquisition occurs most efficiently when learners have plentiful opportunities to negotiate meaning whenever there's some kind of communication difficulty.
- b) In the classroom actually is very important the teaching learning as an interaction. It refers to every oral exchange of an authentic communication that occurs between teacher and the whole class and also students to students.
- c) **Teacher talk**, it's concerned to the formal and functional characteristics of ways in which teachers talk to L2 learners.
- d) The different types of classroom discourse.
- e) **Learners language**, the communication strategies which learners use to overcome communication problems in the classroom and the use of code switching.
- f) **Error treatment**, how teachers deal with learners errors.
- g) The type of explanation (instructions) that teacher provides in the interactive process between participants some of the issues dealt with are.
- h) The differences between pedagogue and natural discourse.
- i) The role of meaning focused instruction: it consists of the provision of activities to carry out in class that encourage learners to communicate using whatever resources, linguistic and non linguistic that students have at their disposal.

Learners need opportunity to communicate in order to develop fluency. Through trying to communicate they develop the strategic competence they need to deal with communication problems and at the same time their existing knowledge of the foreign language. Learners are able to acquire new L2 knowledge as a result of taking part in communication. They “pick up” knowledge from the input they are exposed through interaction.



The communication that takes place in the classroom is usually very different from that which takes place outside. Interaction in pairs or small groups contributes to the acquisition of new linguistic knowledge.

According to Long (1983) has argued: *“the importance of negotiation of meaning when there is a communication difficulty this helps to make input which contains new linguistic material comprehensible and so facilitates its acquisition”*.

Other many important aspects are: the classroom methodology, syllabus design and kind of lesson planning that are stretched to language learning. The variety of methods and procedures have to be for oral communication.

## **FOREIGN LANGUAGE IS DIFFERENT FROM FIRST LANGUAGE**

We can point out some differences:

1. L1 learning doesn't face difficulties to communicate and foreign language and foreign language pose them.
2. The learning of one language in childhood is an inevitable process; the learning of second language is a special accomplishment.
3. Errors are the result of L1 interference, L1 interferes with the acquisition of new foreign language habits.

## **THE GOAL OF LANGUAGE TEACHING**

To achieve a coordinate system, preventing students speak in their mother tongue when occurring second language acquisition, L2 learners errors should be predicted by identifying the differences between the target language and the learner's L1 (although errors are inevitable they can be corrected). The



explanation helps learners to recognize and focus on those elements in the pattern that were the goal of the lesson.

C.F. Wardhough ("Instructed second language acquisition", 1970, page # 25) stated that "*All L2 Errors could be predicted by identifying the differences between the target language and the learner's L1*". Sometimes the learners are in charge because the teacher never completely controls what the learners do, more, over the L2 is seen as a problem solver who contributes hugely and actively to the learning process.

A more sensible approach is to design a teaching syllabus compatible with the learner's need. (Syllabus organization to achieve the language acquisition).

To motivate L2 learners because is necessarily weaker than L1 learners, because L1 has innate capacity for learning language and therefore they have a strong motivation for satisfying basic needs. In addition L1 has much more time at disposal and it is something that in classroom L2 learner has very restricted time.

To practice the foreign language in real situations to perform authentic communicational functions. The real goal of language involves a communicative competence and linguistic competence. To show that linguistic/conversational adjustments promote acquisition and comprehension of input.

## **AN OVERVIEW OF THE MONITOR MODEL**

Krashen's theory of L2 acquisition ("Instructed language acquisition", 1985, Page # 57, Rod Ellis and others) stated that "*Acquisition is the subconscious process by which linguistic competence is developed as results of using language for real communication. And the effective filter controls the rate and ultimate level of success of acquisition.*





*Learners with optimal attitudes have a low affective filter. It means they are more receptive”.*

One of the most important goals of language teaching is to supply comprehensible input to facilitate acquisition.

A good teacher must put in practice the previous strategy to a non-native speaker regardless of his her competence in the target language .Optimal input is supplied when the teacher engages the learner in real communication which the learner finds interesting.

The teacher must be ready to prepare the learners to manage real life conversations. And this can be done by teaching “conversational competence.”

Grammar can only contribute to “learning” and never to “acquisition”. Grammar can also be taught as “subject matter”, but we don’t have to confuse with the main goal of language teaching.

Errors should not be corrected when the goal is “acquisition”, but should be corrected when the goal is learning (it helps the learner to “learn” a simple rule)

The term “input” is used to refer to the formal adjustments that teachers make to their speech. In the interaction process (special functional properties of teacher talk).

According to Krashen (“Instructed language acquisition”, 1985, Page # 57)”*Acquisition is the result of comprehensible input and not production*”. Krashen



emphasizes that is not necessary to expose the learners to samples of specific grammatical feature.

## THE OUT PUT HYPOTHESIS

It consists of negotiating meaning that is appropriate and encourages the learner to develop grammatical resources. And gives the opportunity if learners work here production as apposed to comprehension may help to force the learner to move from semantic to syntactic processing.

## THE ROLE OF GRAMMAR IN L2

The speaking and pronouncing problems is the result of bad grounding in grammar, when using more complex structures to express ideas, comments, etc. According to Andrew Radford and other Authors (Linguistics an Introduction, 1999) *“this grammar constitutes the native speakers competence in that language, and on this view, the key to understanding what it means to know a language is to understand the nature of such grammar”*.

Grammars provide us with the tools to combine words and form meaningful sentences. Grammar consists of four components: lexicon, syntactic component, phonetic component and the logical form component. The teacher must be a master to teach grammar and provide the knowledge of it to the students who need to have a good ground in speaking which requires the good ground in pronunciation taking into account previous mentioned components, so that pronunciation demands a good performance of phonetic form of words. If there's not a good teaching of the previous elements, then language acquisition will fail and therefore it will cause students poor proficiency in speaking and pronouncing.



The use of a good pronunciation lets us know the level of proficiency the students have: whether they have weaknesses or not at speaking. As children grow up expressing feelings by using simple forms of the language like isolated words: *dadda*, *mamma*; *apple* (when they want an apple), and later on, phrases and complex sentences. The students can grow up in their knowledge of English, too; which has to be acquired step by step until the students show an advanced development in performing the target language.

The more the teachers dedicate to teach grammar properly, the better results the students get at the end of a course. The linguistic problem that may happen during the teaching and learning process can also be related to the lack of motivation of students to participate actively in class.

Maybe the teaching of grammar is the best course the students have ever received, but there would not be benefit if there is a not good technique to put into practice what they have learnt in linguistic.

Students are probably good at answering personal questions or yes/ no questions; questions, that do not cause any interest to discuss or give opinions. The idea is not only that they can understand but also to express, to discuss, to use the language in meaningful sentences with logical forms by speaking and pronouncing appropriately.

Anyway, we can understand what students try to say. They can be good at expressing their ideas, but the problem will lie in bad pronunciation. Although both the teacher and students make efforts to be understood because of new grammar points or mispronouncing at the moment of speaking.



The purpose of this draft is to determine student's weaknesses in pronunciation to find out which sounds need the most immediate attention for a particular class or language group.

## **WEAKNESSES IN PRONUNCIATION**

Often advanced students think they can improve many aspects of the language except their pronunciation. And errors in pronunciation which have been repeated for years are impossible to eradicate but we show you some comments and procedures that may help teachers and students to overcome the previous mentioned.

We need to be familiar with the following elements: vowel, consonants, intonation and stress, falling tune joining words, stress and rhythm, phonetic symbols, spelling, etc. because they are part of the pronunciation uttered through sound's production.

According to Ann Baker (Introducing English Pronunciation, first published, 1982, page nº 15) *"Spanish speakers have a strong tendency to pronounce words as they are spelt"*.

E.G.:

/l/ (ship) Confused with i (sheep)

/ae/ (Man) Confused with /^/ (cup)

/a/ (a camera) pronounced as spelling

/3:/( girl) pronounced as spelling

Meanwhile the students have difficulties with some groups of consonants dropped or not pronounced clearly sometimes some letters are substituted for other final consonants.

E.G.:



V pronounced as “B” at the beginning of a word

Z pronounced as “S”

M confused with “N” in the final position

R strongly trilled pronounced where normally silent

S + consonant difficult at the beginning of a word.

Linking, spelling and pronunciation provides a systematic approach to the teaching spelling, which is needed for beginners. In initial practice of a new sound very often the spellings confuse the students from the right pronunciation rather than helping them.

The difficulties that students have may not overcome with one isolated pronunciation lesson.

Ann Baker (Introducing English Pronunciation, first published, 1982, page nº 103), she suggest some teaching procedures: listening and repetition (chain drill), draw the stress patterns on the board, tick the words that students can hear read by the teacher or recorded on cassettes, guided conversations , minimal pairs of words. In other words the teacher makes sure that students understand how the sound is made. Demonstrate where possible and model sound.

The students may practice the sound in isolation or in group through songs, dialogues (role play) class discussion, lectures, listening and spelling exercises, and so on ...

## **WORDS MEANING IN SPEECH ACT**

All the speakers, listeners, writers and others must be aware about the sense of the words in written papers and conversations. You know the combination of words have a great effect on meaning. According to J.F. (“First language in action”, 1860-



1960, page #14) once said “*you shall know a word by the company it keeps*”. Some linguists use the term “collocation” instead of “company”. The combinations of words have differences in meaning which cause misunderstanding at the moment of speaking.

Sometimes, speakers of English don't know how to use the appropriate words in speech act. It may occur because they don't study functional words and its formation processes. In other hands, a L2 must know the new words recently entered in English and how to use the variety of words that exist in the foreign language. For Example:

In Euphemism and slangs are many ways to express the same meaning in other words. E.g. my father died – My father passed away-my father rest in pace (Euphemism).

Although slangs are informal but they're used in English. E.g.: my father kicked the bucket-My father turned up one's toes.

Jargon is used by high status and it is often associated with professional terminology. Scientific language is often the source of jargon (use of words with Latin and Greek roots).

Other variety of words must be studied to avoid misunderstanding in speakers and listeners and do not feel frustrated when having communication. These words might be such as: Abstract meanings of donation, connotation, hyperbole, antonymy, synonymy, hyponymy, clipping words, derivation of words, metaphore, simil, borrowed words from another language, etc.



Hyponymy: is a sense relation (basically it's a relation of inclusion). E.g. jewelry - earring-ring-necklace, bracelet, etc.

In addition, the L2 should know how to use dictionaries taking into account the variety of words and terms used in different context of the language, so the meaning has to be deduced according to the social context when having a conversation. It is very important because the problems of words definition difficult the speech act.

## **INTELLIGIBILITY**

Intelligibility is the most sensible goal. It consists of being understood by a listener at a given time in a given situation. So, it is the same as "understandability". It means that we can substitute other terms easily to be understood.

Joanne Kenworthy ("Teaching English pronunciation", 1994, page #15)"Foreign speakers need to be intelligible so that they can communicate. Communication involves more than simply sending a set of well-produced sounds into the air at your listener(s)."



## RATIONALE

English language acquisition has become an important part of the professional training of most people and that is why it is included in the curriculum of MINED in order to get the students acquainted with the language.

But there is a big problem with the language acquisition in the classrooms; when the students finish their secondary studies they do not fulfill the main objective of the teaching and learning process: to speak English well and pronounce properly.

Here lies our decision to choose this topic, for it is a problem that concern to all of us as part of the society. We intend to find possible solutions to this problem and we want you to be part of it.

It is aimed at people with a high level of interest; who can take this work seriously and understand that we need to improve our students' English acquisition as a foreign language.

This research will help the teachers to develop their classes meaningfully with a high level of proficiency in speaking and pronunciation skills.

And also, it will facilitate the key of success to provide a better and a high quality of teaching in the learning process that will contribute with all learners of English so that they acquire it as a foreign language easier and faster, with a communicative approach successfully in their field.





## **GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

To find out the reasons that lead to a low level of proficiency in speaking and pronunciation skills on the students of fifth year at Salomón de la Selva high school in Managua.

## **SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

1. To find out the techniques and materials used in the classroom by the teachers during the teaching and learning process.
2. To analyze the linguistics problems in English as a foreign language and also in their mother tongue that causes weaknesses in the language acquisition.
3. To identify the students' background (previous knowledge) in relation to their deficiencies in pronunciation and speaking skills.



## SYSTEM OF VARIABLES

### Students survey

VARIABLES	SUBVARIABLES	INDICATORS
General Information	Sex	Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/>
	Age	15-19____ 20 and over____
	Shift	Morning <input type="checkbox"/> Afternoon <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>
	Marital Status	Single <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Divorced <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>
Economical Situation	Parents Work	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Parents Income	High <input type="checkbox"/> Poor <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>
	Student Working	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	Student Income	High <input type="checkbox"/> Middle <input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/>
	Scholarship	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>  External <input type="checkbox"/> Internal <input type="checkbox"/>



Psychological Situation	Motivation	External <input type="checkbox"/> Internal <input type="checkbox"/>
	Anxiety	Shyness or timidity <input type="checkbox"/> Nervous <input type="checkbox"/> afraid <input type="checkbox"/> Self confident <input type="checkbox"/>
Educational Factor	Pronunciation and Speaking Skills	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Very poor <input type="checkbox"/> Very good <input type="checkbox"/> Bad <input type="checkbox"/> Regular <input type="checkbox"/>
	Background Knowledge	Public School <input type="checkbox"/> Private Class <input type="checkbox"/> Experience with foreign people <input type="checkbox"/>
	Speaking Pronunciation Materials	Pictures___ Flash cards___ Drawings___ Authentic books___ Tape recorder___ All of them___
	Teacher's techniques used in the classroom for improving the oral communication	Pictures___ Pair works___ Drawings___ Group Woks___ Tape recorder___ Games___ Speaking practice___ Interviews___ Story telling___ Role plays___ Warm up___ Activities___ Excercises___ Pronunciation and spelling___ All of them___
	Evaluation rates for speaking	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Regular <input type="checkbox"/> Very good <input type="checkbox"/> Bad <input type="checkbox"/>
	Student's linguistic knowledge	Advanced <input type="checkbox"/> Very poor <input type="checkbox"/> Very good <input type="checkbox"/> Bad <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/>



## Teachers survey

VARIABLES	SUBVARIABLES	INDICATORS
Personal References	Educative	- Reasons about the low level of pronunciation and speaking that students of fifth year, morning shift at Salomón de la Selva have got
	Motivation	- Student's motivation or interest about the language acquisition
	Methodology	- Techniques and procedures used in the classroom.



*Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua  
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Faculty of Education and Languages*

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# METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

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*Why the students of fifth year of the morning shift at Salomón de la Selva high school in Managua have a low level of proficiency in speaking and pronunciation skills in English as a foreign language*



## PROCEDURES AND TECHNIQUES

To carry out our research work we decided to apply questionnaire, interviews to students and survey to teachers according to the system of variables based on subproblems and specific objectives of our research problem.

We gathered all data with the help of English teachers, students from fifth year morning shift and principal authorization at Salomón de la Selva high school in Managua.

After collecting the information from students and teacher's questionnaires, we achieved obtaining the responses according to questionnaire, survey and class observations. Beside this, we analyzed the table of data collection and we focused on represent the information through charts and graphs to make more clearly the results.

## TYPE OF INSTRUMENTS APPLIED IN OUR RESEARCH THEME

### **Questionnaires:**

Basically, some relevant questions were asked to students and teachers, questions related to our topic to collect data that contributed to find out the factors that affect speaking and pronunciation in the foreign language acquisition.

### **Interviews:**

Through interviews we obtained information that made more clearly the possible reasons that make to difficult the foreign language acquisition on the students even when they finish/leave high school.

### **Class Observation:**

It consisted of taking notes about the teaching techniques and materials used in the classroom, students and teacher's attitude during the teaching and learning process to know in what ways English as foreign language was built.



## POPULATION AND SAMPLE

Salomón de la Selva high school in Managua assists students from fifth year only in the morning shift and there are six classrooms for the last level.

The total student's population of fifth year is 270. Out this, we took a sample of 50 students which represents 27% of the whole population.

## DATA COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

Through the applied instruments, we aimed to process all the information gathered which was facilitated by the teachers who were available to contribute by answering the questionnaires and interviews which help us to achieve our goals. On the other hand, students could answer the questionnaires despite of some difficulties such as: lack of disposal and misunderstanding of the survey's purpose, but we let them know our objective as researchers of our final work at UNAN-Managua.

It is important to mention that we did not have any block with the headmistress of school. She is leading up, because she permitted us to develop our research plan.

### Classroom observation

We decided to observe two periods of classes to find out what methods, techniques and teaching materials, students and teacher's behaviour to know the nature of interaction and the way the teacher manages his English class.

The teacher experience in most teachers has a range from 7 to 20 years. And the teachers are in charge of one subject (English). And several methods and kind of materials are used by the teachers at Salomón de la Selva high school, but we want to clarify that every teacher is in charge of different levels, in this case only one teacher is in charge of all last levels (V year).



# DISCUSSION OF RESULTS





## DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

After gathering and analyzed the applied instruments to students and teachers at Salomón de la Selva High School, we want to specify the following details:

### **Students' questionnaires**

The population sample we took was fifty students from six classrooms of fifth year. From the population sample 50% are female and the other 50% are male (25 students are female and 25 are male). They are between 15 to 19 years old. The majority of the students are single (98%). Only one student is married.

Not all the students have a part time job. Only the 22% of them work and have a low salary. The rest of students (78%) only depend on their parents' incomes. Furthermore, anyone of them does not have scholarship of any type.

When we asked the students if their parents did something to earn a living, we could know that most of the students' parents work or even just one of them. Only one student told us that his parents did not have work. Most of the parents' get middle salary (39%) On the other hand the 10% of the students' parents have a good salary, and finally, only one told us that his parents got a low salary.

About the motivation that some students have or feel to do something, the 52% said that they did something because they decided to do so, but on the other hand 48% told us they made decisions because others encourage them to do it.

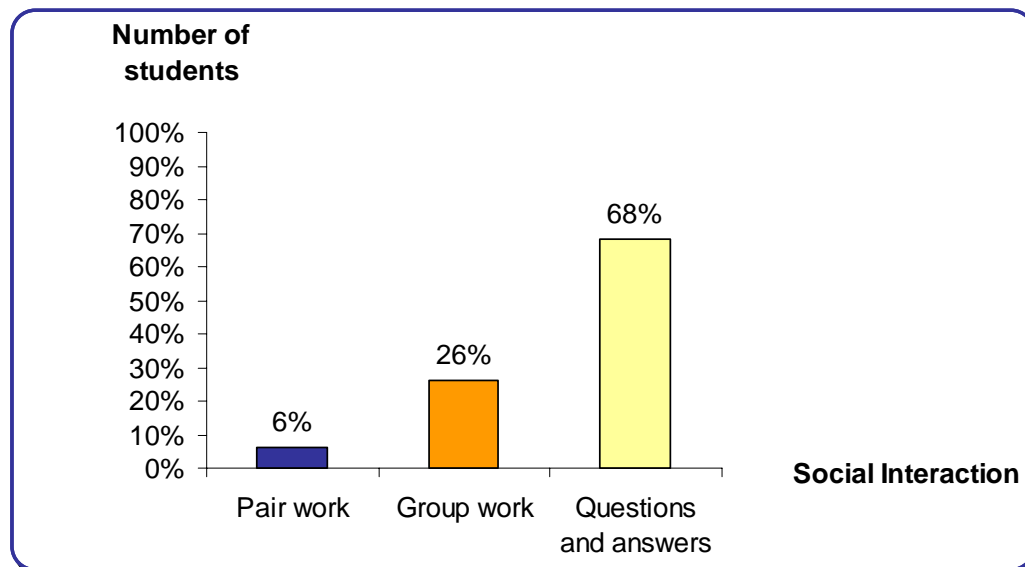
About the students' personality the 23% are self confident, but the rest said they had problems to express themselves because of shyness (26%) nervousness (10%) and also because they are afraid to speak (18%).



## Nature of social interaction the teacher uses in class.

Social interaction	Number of students	Percentage
Others	0	0%
Pair work	3	6%
Group work	13	26%
Questions and answers	34	68%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

In the data collected referred to the nature of social interaction the teacher directs his classes: 13 students answered that the teacher assigns tasks in group work, it makes the 26% of the population sample; 3 students said that the teacher directs classes in pair work (6%). Finally, 34 students replied that the teacher uses questions and answers to develop his class (68%). Only the previous mentioned was selected at the moment of the interview.

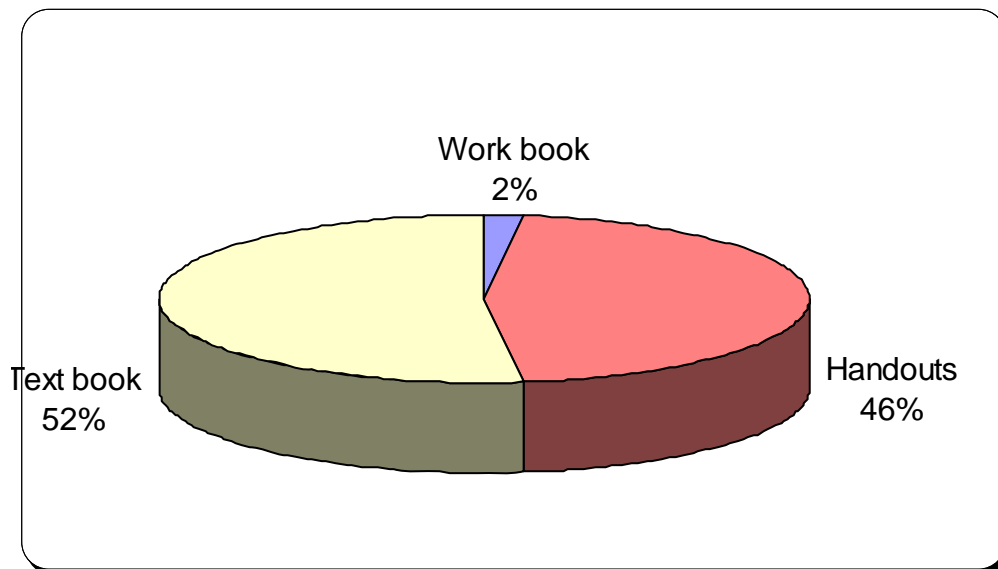




## Materials the teacher uses in class.

Kind of materials	Number of students	Percentage
Work book	1	2%
Handouts	23	46%
Text book	26	52%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to the kind of materials the teacher uses in class, 23 students replied that the teacher uses handouts, it makes the 46% of the taken sample, 26 students answered that he uses text books (52%), and one student said that the teacher uses workbooks. It makes a total of 50 students (100%) of the population sample. Some others options were not selected respect to the teacher materials used in the classroom.

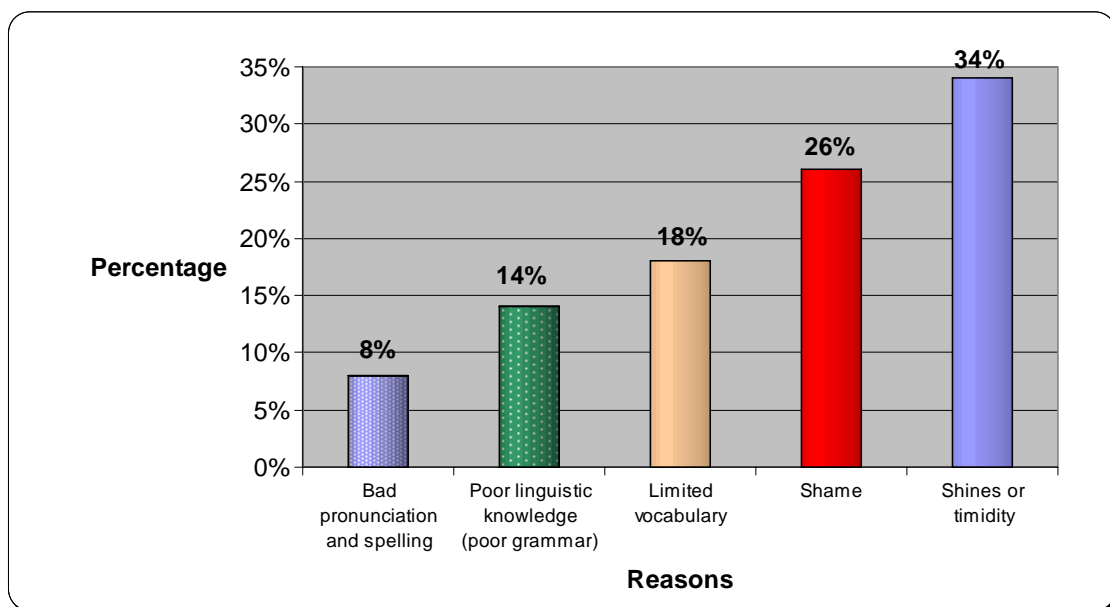




## Reasons that avoid student's participation.

Reasons	Number of students	Percentage
Bad pronunciation and spelling	4	8%
Poor linguistic knowledge (poor grammar)	7	14%
Limited vocabulary	9	18%
Shame	13	26%
Shines or timidity	17	34%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

Part of data collection about the reasons that avoid student's participation, 17 students answered they do not participate because shyness or timidity. It makes a 34% of the population sample. 13 students do not participate because of shame (26%), 9 students have a low participation because of limited vocabulary (18%). 4 students don't participate because they have bad pronunciation and spelling (8%). 7 students have a poor linguistic knowledge (poor grammar). It makes a 14%. All of this makes a total of 100%.

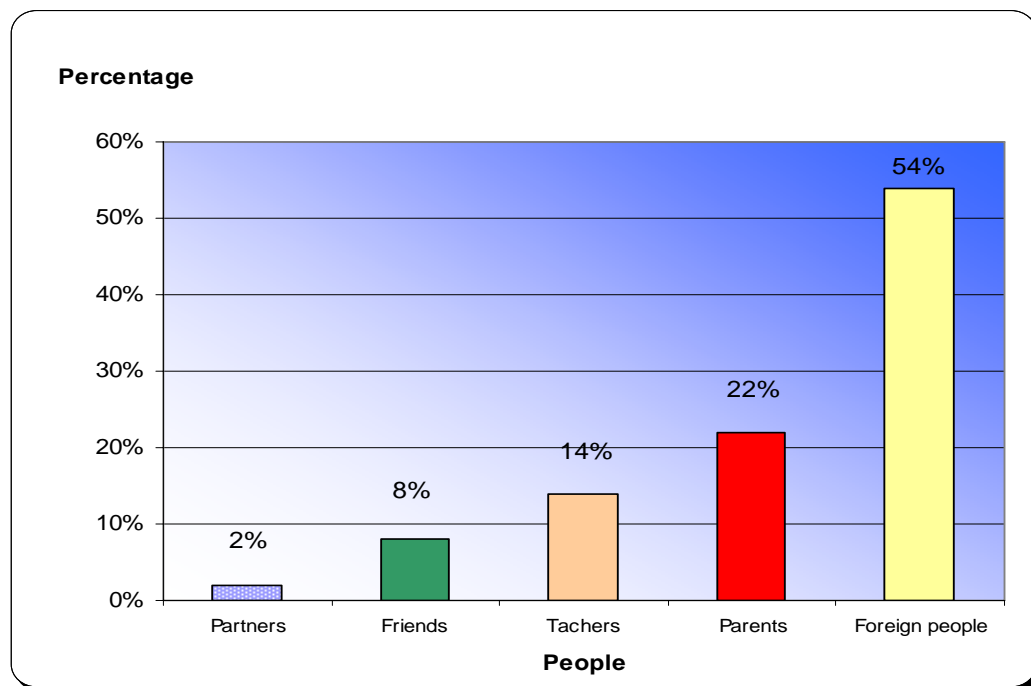




## People who motivate students to study English.

People	Number of students	Percentage
Partners	1	2%
Friends	4	8%
Teachers	7	14%
Parents	11	22%
Foreign people	27	54%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

In the survey related to people who motivate students to study English, the collected data are: 1 student said that partners influence to motivate others study English (2%), 4 students answered that friends motivate them to study English (8%), 7 students replied that the teacher motivates to his students to study English. 11 students answered that their parents motivate them to study English (22%). And finally, 27 students replied that foreign people motivate them to study English (54%).

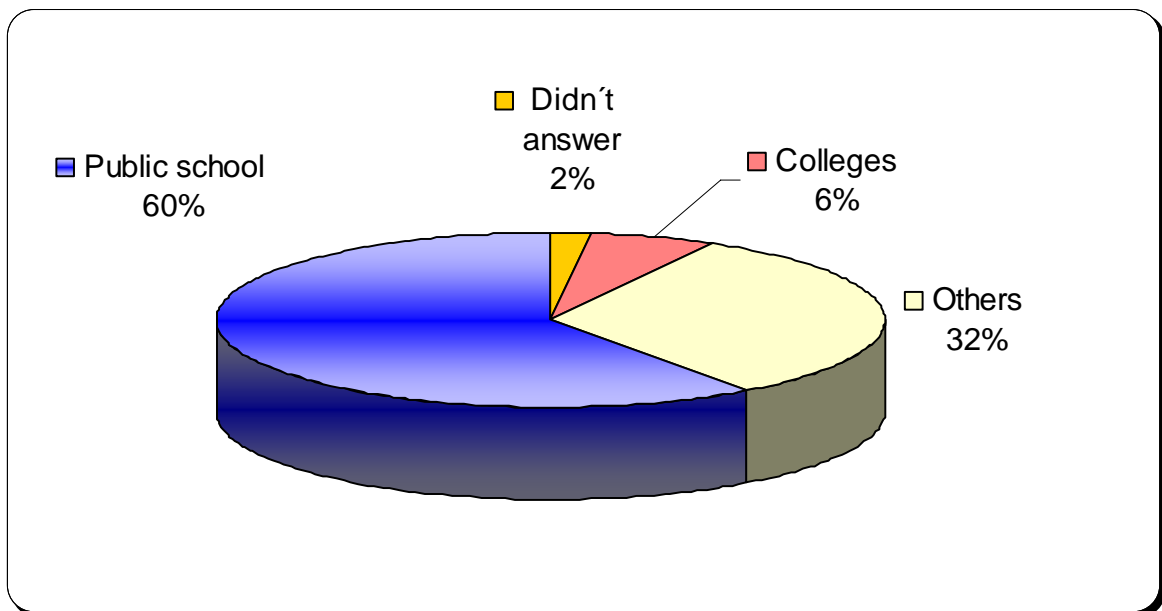




## English learning in other schools.

English learning in other schools	Number of students	Percentage
Did not answer	1	2%
Colleges	3	6%
Others	16	32%
Public school	30	60%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

Students who have studied in other school: 30 students replied they have studied in public school. It makes 60% of the population sample. 3 students took colleges studied (6%). 16 students replied others (Internet, English courses at computers, etc. (32%). 1 students did not answer (2%).

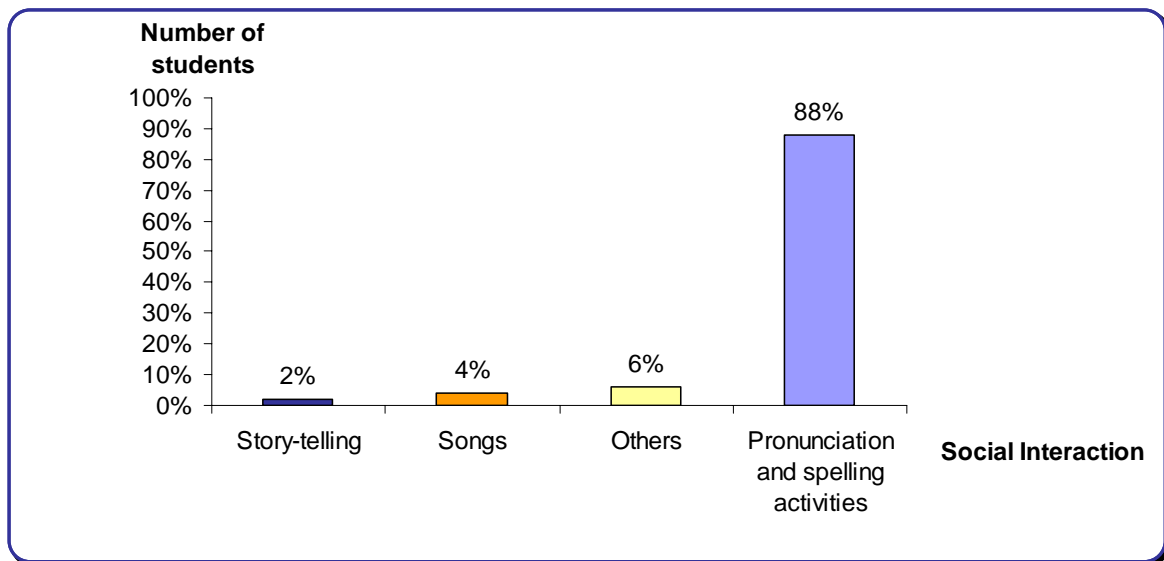




## Techniques the teacher uses for oral communication.

Techniques	Number of students	Percentage
Story telling	1	2%
Songs	2	4%
Others	3	6%
Pronunciation and spelling activities	44	88%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

Concerning the techniques the teacher uses for oral communication: 44 students replied the teacher provide with pronunciation a spelling exercises. It makes 88% of the population sample. 1 student said the teacher seldom directs classes by using story-telling (2%). Two students answered he makes students sing through songs (4%). Three students answered that he uses other kind of activities (6%).

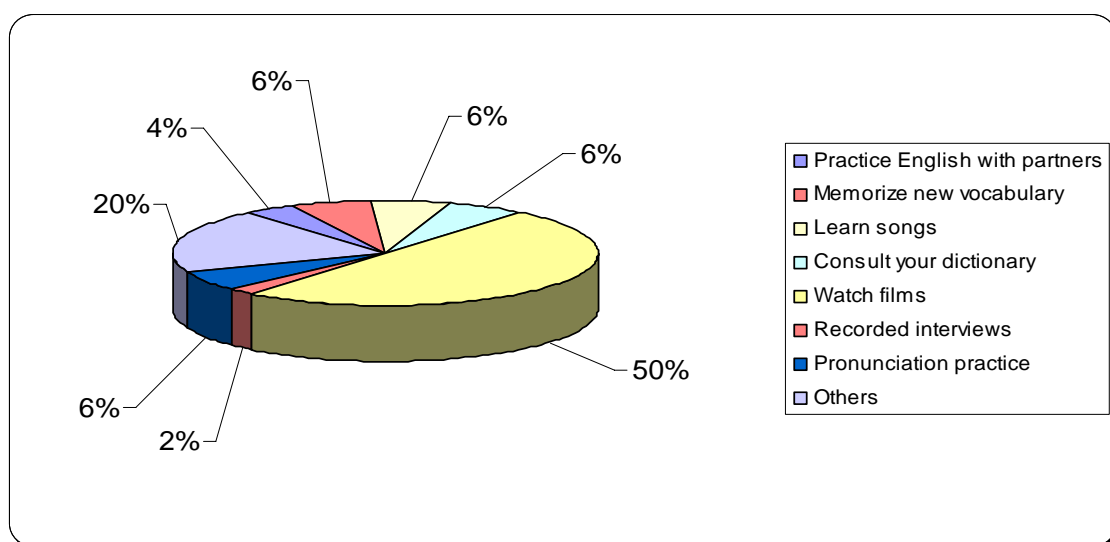




## Activities the students do to improve pronunciation and speaking skill.

Activities	Number of students	Percentage
Practice English with partners	2	4%
Memorize new vocabulary	3	6%
Learn songs	3	6%
Consult your dictionary	3	6%
Watch films	25	50%
Recorded interviews	1	2%
Pronunciation practice	3	6%
Others	10	20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

In the practiced survey concerning to the kind of activities students do to improve their pronunciation and speaking skills: 1 student (2%) listens recorded interviews, 2 students (4%) practice English with partners, 3 students (6%) said they learn songs, 3 students memorize new vocabulary (6%), 3 students consults dictionaries (6%) and 3 more students (6%) practice pronunciation by themselves. The last 10 students (20%) said that they carry out other kind of activities.



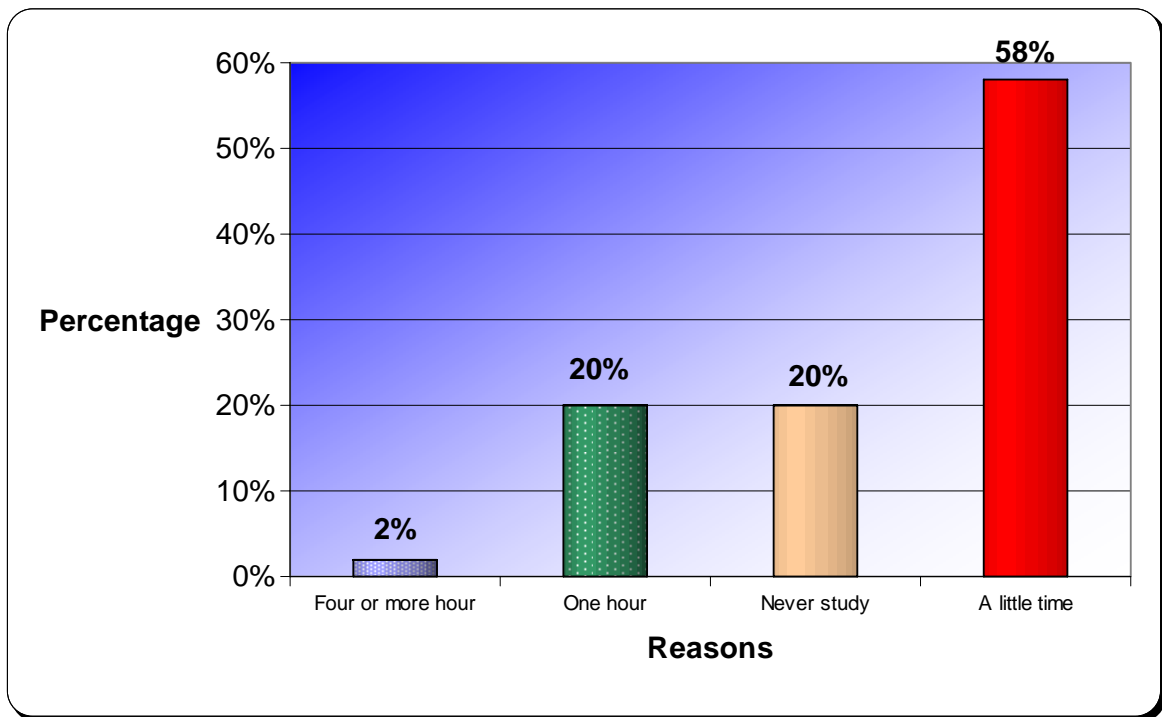




### Time the students dedicate to study English outside the classroom.

Time	Number of students	Percentage
Four or more hour	1	2%
One hour	10	20%
Never study	10	20%
A little time	29	58%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

Taking into account the time the students dedicate to study English: 10 students (20% said they study one hour every day, 1 student (2%) replied he dedicates three or more hours a day, 10 more students (20%) replied they never study the foreign language. Finally, 29 students (58%) dedicate a little time to their studies.



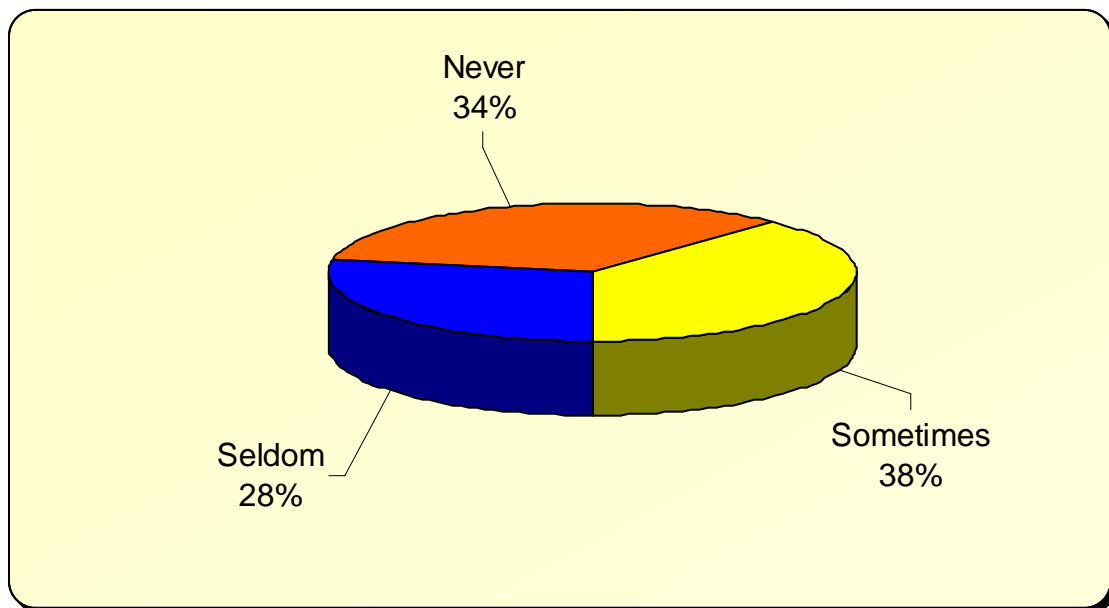
### Frequency the students practice English.

*Why the students of fifth year of the morning shift at Salomón de la Selva high school in Managua have a low level of proficiency in speaking and pronunciation skills in English as a foreign language*



Frequency	Number of students	Percentage
Seldom	14	28%
Never	17	34%
Sometimes	19	38%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to the frequency that students practice the foreign language: 14 students (28%) answered they seldom do it, 19 students (38%) replied they sometimes practice English. 17 students (34%) said they never speak in the classroom.

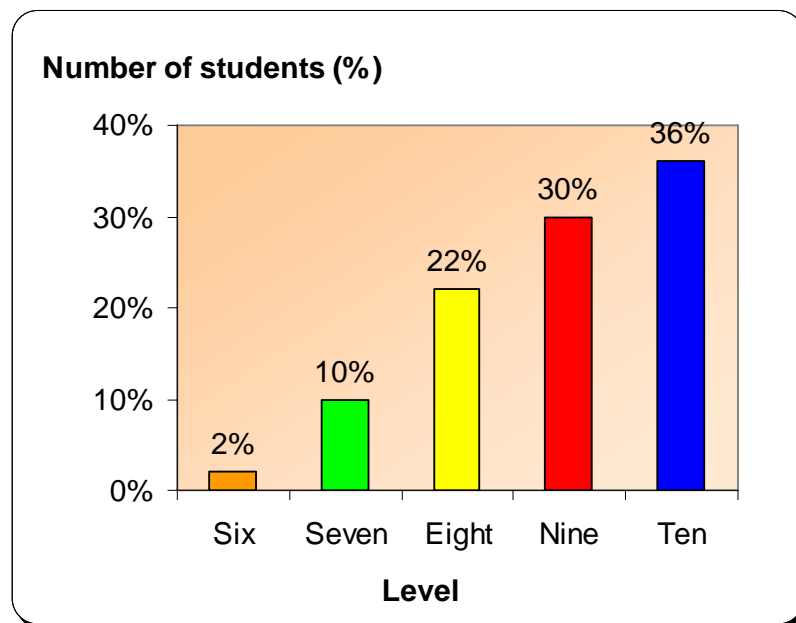


### **Level the teacher masters his class.**



Level	Number of students	Percentage
One	0	0%
Two	0	0%
Three	0	0%
Four	0	0%
Five	0	0%
Six	1	2%
Seven	5	10%
Eight	11	22%
Nine	15	30%
Ten	18	36%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

According to the students criteria about the level the teacher master his class: 1 student (2%) placed the teacher in rank of six, 5 students (10%) placed him in a level of seven, 11 students (22%) gave him a rank of eight, and 15 students (30%) answered the teacher has the category of level nine. And finally, 18 students (36%) agreed that he is in highest level at mastering his subject.

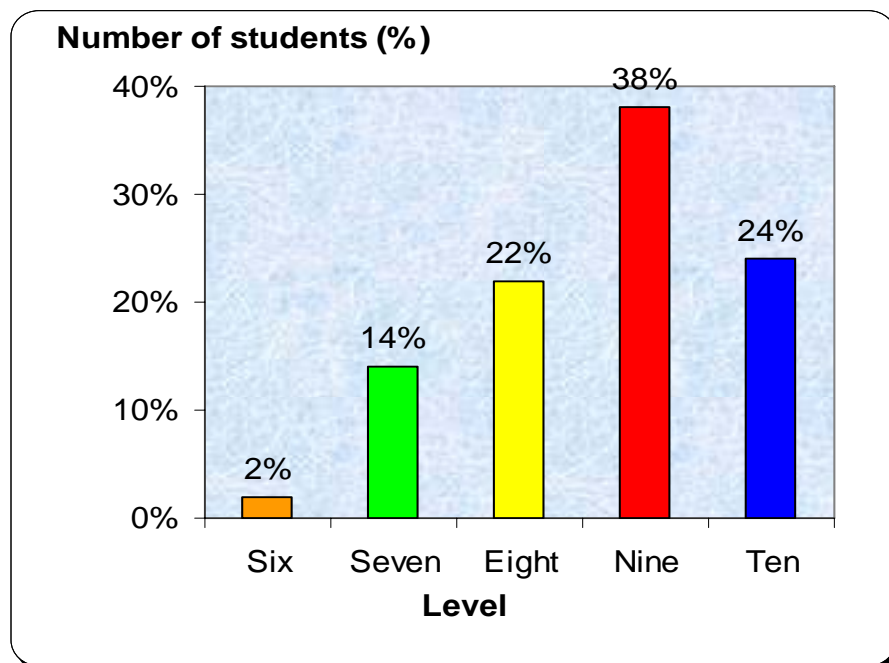


### **Students think the books are authentic for the class.**



Level	Number of students	Percentage
One	0	0%
Two	0	0%
Three	0	0%
Four	0	0%
Five	0	0%
Six	1	2%
Seven	7	14%
Eight	11	22%
Nine	19	38%
Ten	12	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

About the kind of books used in class by the teacher, one students gave him a level of 6, seven students gave him 7, eleven students gave him 8, nineteen students gave him 11 and, finally, twelve students gave him a level of ten.



According to the questionnaire applied to students respect to teacher's techniques and teaching material, we got the following information:



Teacher's techniques and teaching material	Scale 0-100 %							Number of students
	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	
Mastering of the topic	0	0	0	5	11	16	18	50
Interaction (small group, work group)	15	15	5	5	5	3	2	
Motivation to students	0	0	0	7	17	12	14	
Authentic materials	0	0	0	5	15	17	13	
Communicative activities	10	10	8	8	4	8	2	
Provide clear instructions	0	0	0	5	16	18	11	
Provide with feed back	0	0	0	4	16	20	10	
Corrections in class	0	0	1	9	13	17	10	
Speak clear and fluently	0	0	0	9	15	18	8	
Communicative competence	15	10	7	5	4	4	5	
Linguistic competence	0	0	0	2	17	15	16	
Pronunciation	0	0	0	7	14	17	12	
Intonation	0	0	0	10	14	16	10	
Teaching Organization	0	0	0	10	13	15	12	
Class management	0	0	0	5	14	18	13	

Most of the students replied that the teacher's techniques and teaching material have an average between 70 and 100 percent in most all the categories. But there are three categories which the students gave a low percentage. They are about interaction among students in groups during the class, the communicative activities and the communicative competence which are ones that can helps the students to overcome any kind of difficulties. These categories got a low percentage from 40. (See graphs in appendix).

### **Teachers' questionnaires**



According to the teachers who answered our questionnaire, all the students have a poor background in English from a previous levels and it is one of the most relevant aspects to overcome, something that really affect the students' language acquisition. The teachers said that when the students are in their last year of secondary school is a big problem when they (teachers) try to say something and the students do not seem to know anything, they do not understand and therefore they have to translate everything they say. But, there were some students who knew a little English and try to speak it, with a bad pronunciation.

The teachers agreed that the possible factor that caused those deficiencies could be the students' lack of practice and interest and also most of them (students) were shy and for that reason they avoided to speak English in class. Another factor was the students' parents. Their parents did not seem to be interested in their sons and daughters' progress or difficulties. They (parents) seldom visited the school to know about the students' situation to try to find a solution together (teachers and parents). The teachers were sure to state that the time they had to teach English is not enough, especially when they were teaching complex structures. The hour of class consists of 45 minutes, three times a week.

*"To teach English well requires more time every week to help the students, so that they do not forget easily what they have learn previously"* the teachers said. Besides, they said sometimes they assigned homework for the students to practice at home new structures and vocabulary in order to put them into practice the next day in small groups in speaking activities. But not all the students do the assignments; most of them forgot to do it or were not interested in doing it.

The aids that were usually used by teachers were: realia, flash cards and post cards. Some of them told us they used the participative methodology to encourage the students to speak in class and others used the communicative approach.



To carry out these methodologies they usually put into practice dictations, role plays, oral practices, reading comprehension, songs that made the students participate actively in class.

One of the most important elements in this process is the didactic material. They told us they were out of good and update materials and they needed them for a good teaching as well as pictures and tape recorders, etc. It seems that there are lots of things to do to overcome all these students' difficulties.

To complete our work, we observed an English class to take notes about all the things that happened during the class. It was a class of forty-five minutes. The teacher got to the classroom on time. There were forty five students and they behaved properly during the whole class.

The teacher used the Grammar Translation Method to develop the topic about the passive voice. He carried out this topic by using a textbook and the lesson plan only. The students did not understand well the explanation; even the teacher had explained many examples, most of the students seemed not to understand how to use the new structure. Then, he wrote an exercise and passed some students to the board to make sentences using the passive voice. The teacher had to help them to make the sentences. But, there was not any activity to make the students speak in class. Just a little of pronunciation exercise.

The students did not feel motivated to participate because the topic was not clear at all for them. The hour of class finished and the topic had to be continued next time, due to the difficulty of the new structures.



# CONCLUSIONS





## CONCLUSIONS

Taking into account all our analysis concerned to data collected from students' proficiency of fifth year at Salomon de la Selva high school morning shift in Managua

We concluded this investigation by saying the following:

Students have a lot of difficulties in speaking and pronunciation because of many reasons that are affecting the teaching and learning process

1. There is a little time dedicated to communicative activities inside and outside the classroom.
2. The students are not always motivated to practice the foreign language.
3. Students are afraid and nervous to speak in English because they sometimes do not understand teacher's instructions very well.
4. Students feel embarrassed to mispronounce at the moment of the speaking activities
5. Lack of authentic materials and teacher's methodology is not adequate to the teaching and learning process.
6. Students have a low level of linguistic knowledge and therefore it avoids to aim the foreign language acquisition successfully.
7. In most cases students have social and economical problems because their parents do not earn enough and for this reason students decide to work on



their own and it does not allow them to dedicate a sufficient time to their studies.

8. Students do not show interest to acquire English as a foreign language because they think just to pass the subject to leave high school.
9. Most of the students are single and they have the chance to study despite of the problems mentioned previously. So far they may overcome any kind of difficulty thanks to their parents supporting at their studies. Although there is no any exception that one student is married also without the omission of the 22% of the students who work to support their studies.



# RECOMMENDATIONS



## RECOMMENDATIONS

We finish our research work by giving some useful recommendations to all people who read this , have the opportunity to improve by taking into account these tips that we expect are helpful to overcome , in someway , the problems that students have in speaking and pronunciation which are too very important aspects when we learn or teach English.

The teachers with the help of the government must provide authentic materials and prepare a good lesson to improve pronunciation in their students, e.g., often the worst pronunciation errors occur when students are using true and false cognates words, we suggest also use poems and tongue twisters to practice pronunciation. As students memorize poems they acquire a feeling for the music of language and most students enjoy tongue twisters and do not mind repeating them several times for practice.

Teachers also must be trained systematically and they should enjoy the time studying everyday to learn new things. Especially in linguistic which has various branches such as: phonetic and phonology that are focused on the ways that speech sounds are articulated through the vocal organs: upper and lower lips, the sounds are produced using air from lungs, the nose and nasal cavity, teeth, uvula, velum, tongue, larynx, hard palate, alveolar ridge, etc. Both teachers and learners have to know how the sounds are produced through the vocal organs and the different manners of articulation all these to avoid mispronouncing.

### **Extra suggested activities to overcome problems with L2:**

-Select articles from the foreign newspaper and discuss table manners, family relations, dating customs, likes and dislikes (culture), etc.



The class may watch a T.V program or film with the teacher motivation and interest by providing a context for real and meaningful communication, the teacher who makes notes on vocabulary and structures that might present problems or pronunciation and speaking.

-The local newspaper is also a good source of teaching and learning which students could compare the American papers with their native countries (sports page, ads, policies, comics, etc)

-Foreign visitors in the classroom (foreign culture seems closer and more real) the teacher has to prepare their students previously about the topic to avoid waste time in class.

-Playing games ( ordering foods in a restaurant, going on shopping, travelling abroad, teacher commands, panel discussions, cooking, acting the host of a show, etc.) These activities can be carried out through role plays so that they practice English through a funny way.

-Free conversations, stories telling, strip stories.

-Motivate systematically to the students to memorize sentences to gain confidence in their speaking skills.

-Oral games and pronunciation and spelling exercise.

-Explain syntax rules through several classes (grouping words and letters)

-Provide with feedback at the end of the class.



-Reinforce learners' difficulties with diphthong.

-Anyway, English must be spoken even though in first level classes, because most of the time little English is used in some classroom.

-The teacher have to smile, praise and joke with students. According to Professor Ramon Bermudez expression (at UCA-2005): *"The learning is more effective when it is fun"*

-Advanced learners should contribute by helping learners and the teacher has to provide individualized instruction.



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12. [www.fp.education.tas.gov.au](http://www.fp.education.tas.gov.au)





# APPENDIXES



**CHRONOGRAM OF ACTIVITIES 2007**

Research work details	Months											
	Aug.											
-Theme, problems and subproblems	Aug.											
-General and specific objectives. -Hypothesis		Aug.										
-Introduction -Justification -Chronogram of activities			Aug.									
-Historical Background				Sep.								
-Theoretical framework theories					Sep.							
-Methodological design -Procedure -Population -Sample						Oct.						
-Discussion of results -Data analysis -Findings results -System of variables							Oct.					
-Conclusions -Recommendations -Bibliography								Nov.				
-Annexes -Dedicatory -Acknowledgment -Index (table of contents)									Nov.			
-Complete monograph -Submission hand in three copies										Dec.		
-Defense of the research work												Jan.



*Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua*  
*Rubén Darío Campus*  
*Faculty of Education and Languages*

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**Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Nicaragua**  
**UNAN-Managua**

**Recinto Universitario Rubén Darío**  
**Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación e idiomas**

Managua, martes 09 de octubre de 2007

Licenciada

**ENA HELWING**

Directora

COLEGIO RIGOBERTO LÓPEZ PÉREZ

Su despacho

Estimada licenciada Helwing:

Reciba nuestros más sinceros saludos, con el respeto que usted merece.

En el presente año estamos en el proceso de elaboración de nuestra tesis como requisito primordial para optar al título de la Licenciatura en la especialidad de inglés. El tema de la misma esta focalizado en el centro que usted dignamente dirige. En vista de esto solicitamos su autorización para realizar entrevistas a los profesores de inglés y alumnos de quinto año.

Agradecemos su atención y colaboración,

Atentamente,

---

**Fernando A. Gutierrez O.**

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**Nestor I. Robleto A.**

Estudiantes del último año de la especialidad de inglés  
UNAN-MANAGUA

Cc.: Archivo

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*Why the students of fifth year of the morning shift at Salomón de la Selva high school in Managua have a low level of proficiency in speaking and pronunciation skills in English as a foreign language*



## INSTRUMENTS

In our research we decided to apply, questionnaires, interviews and survey to teachers and students to gather all the necessary information which helped us to develop this work.

### STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear students, we'd like you to help us to answer this questionnaire in order to gather relevant and real information that will contribute to improve the students' speaking and pronunciation in English. We will be grateful with the answers you provide us.

Circle the option to answer the questions.

**1. What is the nature of social interaction the teacher uses in the classroom?**

- |               |                      |                          |
|---------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Group work | c) Role play         | e) Dramatization         |
| b) Pair work  | d) Debate/discourses | f) Questions and answers |

**2. What kind of materials does the teacher use in class?**

- |              |                   |                        |
|--------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| a) Handouts  | d) Pictures       | g) Videos              |
| b) Text book | e) Chart          | h) Overhead projectors |
| c) Work book | f) Tape recorders | i) Real objects        |
| j) Maps      |                   |                        |

**3. Which reasons do you think that avoid your participation in class?**

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| a) Shyness or timidity | c) Limited vocabulary                       |
| b) Shame               | d) Bad pronunciation and spelling           |
|                        | e) Poor linguistic knowledge (poor grammar) |

**4. Who motivates you to study English as a foreign language?**

- |                |                   |            |
|----------------|-------------------|------------|
| a) Teacher (s) | c) Friends        | e) Parents |
| b) Partners    | d) Foreign people | f) Others  |

**5. Have you studied English in other schools?**

- |                  |                      |           |
|------------------|----------------------|-----------|
| a) Public School | c) English academies | e) Others |
| b) Private Class | d) Colleges          |           |

**6. Does the teacher use several techniques for improving oral communication?**

- |   |                                   |                      |
|---|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| a) Games                                | f) Visual sources (films, videos) | l) Real objects      |
| b) Grammatical rules                    | g) Story-telling                  | m) Flash cards       |
| c) Role plays                           | h) Charts                         | n) Paper wall charts |
| d) Pronunciation and spelling exercises | i) Maps                           | o) Others            |
| e) Warm-up activities                   | j) Tape recorders                 |                      |
|   | k) Songs                          |                      |

**7. What do you do to improve your pronunciation and speaking skills?**

- |                                   |  |                            |
|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| a) Read more                      | c) Practice English with teachers, foreign people, friends | d) Memorize new vocabulary |
| b) Practice English with partners |  | e) Learn songs             |

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- f) Consult your dictionary
- g) Watch films
- h) Recorded interviews
- i) Listening practice
- j) Pronunciation practice
- k) Others

**8. How long do you dedicate to study English everyday?**

- a) One hour
- b) Two hour
- c) Three hour
- d) Four or more hours
- e) Never study
- f) A little time

**9. How often you practice English in class?**

- a) Always
- b) Seldom
- c) Sometimes
- d) Never

**10. From a scale one to ten in what level do you do think the teacher masters his/her classes?**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

**11. In what level do you think the books are authentic for the class?**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

**SURVEY TO STUDENTS**

Dear students, we'd like you to help us to answer this survey in order to gather relevant and real information that will contribute to improve the students' speaking and pronunciation in English. We will be grateful with the answers you provide us.

Educational factors

In the following factors, what is the percentage that you can give?

Teacher's techniques and teaching material	Scale 0-100 %	Number of students
Mastering of the topic		50
Interaction (small group, work group)		
Motivation to students		
Authentic materials		
Communicative activities		
Provide clear instructions		
Provide with feed back		
Corrections in class		
Speak clear and fluently		
Communicative competence		
Linguistic competence		
Pronunciation		
Intonation		
Teaching Organization		
Class management		

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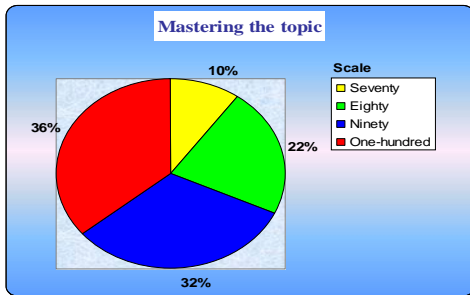
11. What methodology do you usually use to achieve your goals?
12. Make a list of the techniques you use to put into practice that methodology.
13. From your own point of view, how should it be?
  - Materials:
  - Students' attitude toward English:
  - Parents' role:
  - Workshop:

### CLASS OBSERVATION

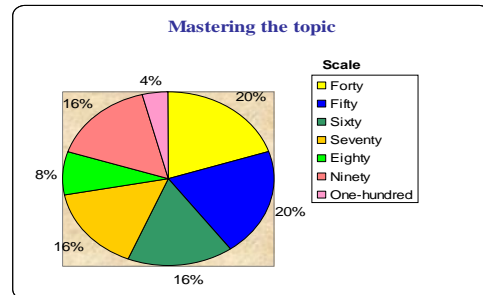
1. What techniques does the teacher use in class?
2. What kind of activities does he develop to put into practice in speaking?
3. What level of proficiency does the teacher have at speaking English?
4. Does he develop communicative activities?
5. Do the students feel motivated by the activities developed in class?
6. kind of materials the teacher use to develop the class:  
Flashcards\_\_\_\_  
Workbook\_\_\_\_  
Tape recorder\_\_\_\_  
Realia\_\_\_\_  
Others\_\_\_\_  
Specify: \_\_\_\_\_
7. Does the teacher accomplish his goal in the time I should be?
8. Do the students participate actively in class
9. Does the teacher make the students speak English?
10. Are the students willing to participate in the activities to improve their speaking and pronunciation?



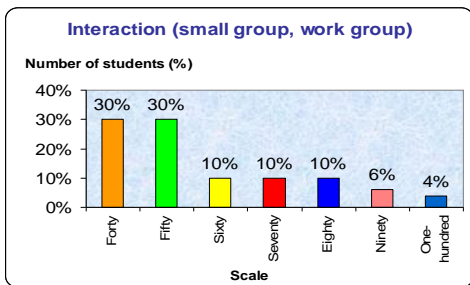
Graph 1



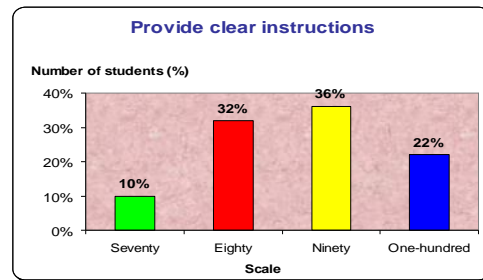
Graph 5



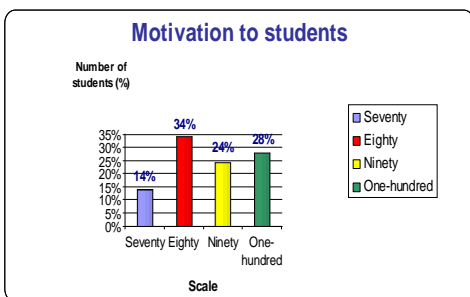
Graph 2



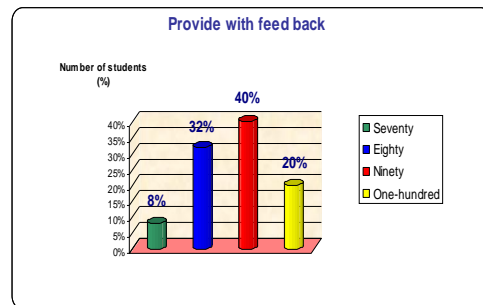
Graph 6



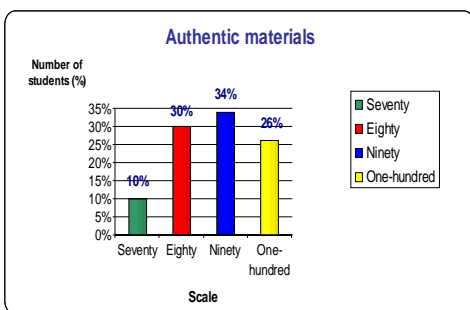
Graph 3



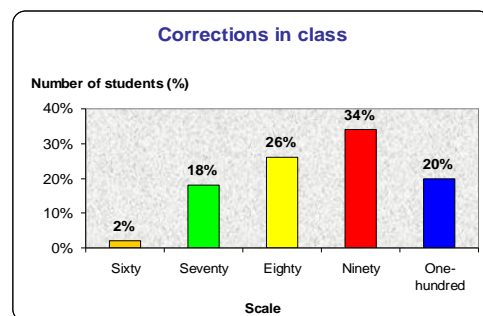
Graph 7



Graph 4



Graph 8

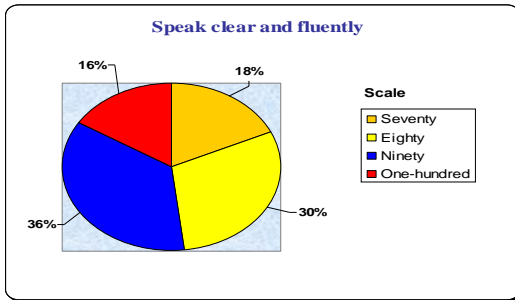


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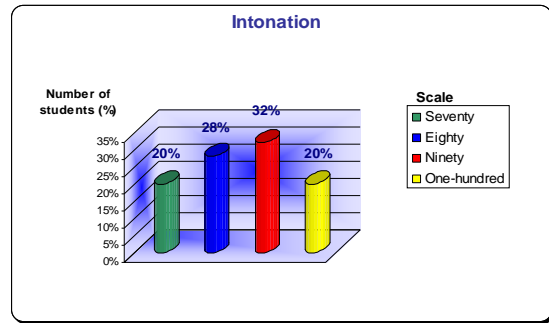




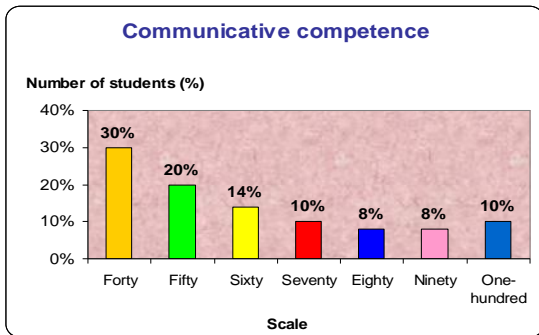
Graph 9



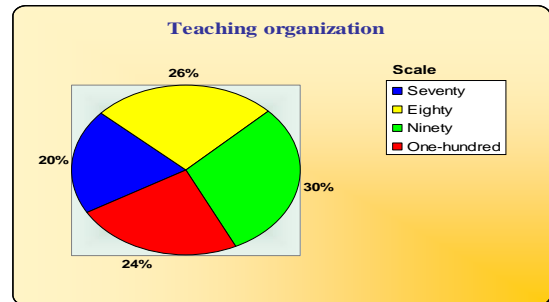
Graph 13



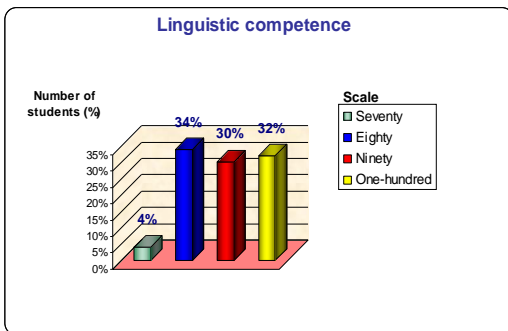
Graph 10



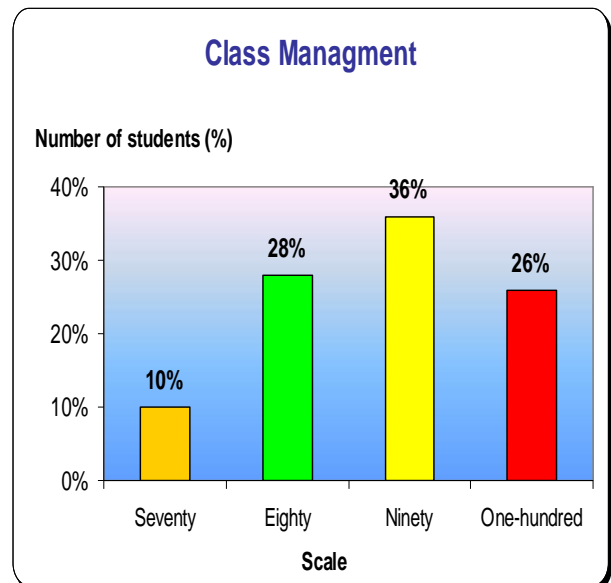
Graph 14



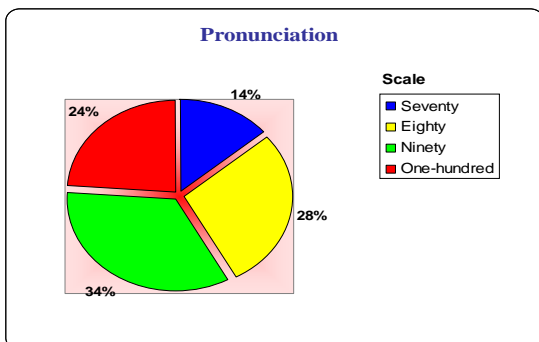
Graph 11



Graph 15



Graph 12



Why the students of fifth year of the morning shift at Salomón de la Selva high school in Managua have a low level of proficiency in speaking and pronunciation skills in English as a foreign language



Main entrance at Salomón de la Selva high school



Students of fifth year with their English teacher

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English teachers staff and the headmistress



Students filling out the questionnaires

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Students filling out the questionnaires



Teaching and learning process

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