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THESIS REPORT:

**ANALYSIS OF COMMON PRONUNCIATION ERRORS IN THE
PAST TENSE OF REGULAR VERBS OF 2nd LEVEL STUDENTS
OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE AT THE PONTIFICAL
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF ECUADOR IN ESMERALDAS**

REPORTE DE TESIS:

**ANÁLISIS DE LOS ERRORES MÁS COMUNES EN EL PASADO
DE LOS VERBOS REGULARES DE LOS ESTUDIANTES DEL
SEGUNDO NIVEL DE INGLÉS COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA
EN LA PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD CÁTOLICA DEL ECUADOR
SEDE EMERALDAS**

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Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation are contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate College. I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement

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STATEMENT BY THE AUTHOR

I, Lilibeth Alejandra Holguín Vera, affirm that the investigation in the present thesis report research is totally unique, authentic, and personal.

The content of this research is a limited legal and academic responsibility of the author and “PUCE” Esmeraldas

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DEDICATION / ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to thank
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ABSTRACT

Currently, English is one of the most spoken languages in the world, so it is essential to have a good pronunciation of this language. With the purpose to analyze the most common pronunciation mistakes in the past tense of regular verbs that English Language second level students have, a descriptive, quantitative investigation was done in the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador Esmeraldas Campus, for which the methods of analysis and synthesis and hermeneutics were used, with the techniques of observation and survey, which were applied to 20 students and 3 English teachers of the second level of General English at the mentioned university. The results revealed that the relationship that a foreign language has with the mother tongue in this case Spanish, is highly challenging, and since both languages have many differences; for example the Spanish language lacks many phonemes that exist in English. This is when the difficulty of learning the pronunciation of the words appears, some teachers just care about accomplishing their planification in class, but they do not pay enough attention to students' learning. It is concluded that teachers need to know that with an appropriate methodology students can learn, using different learning techniques that will help in the development of their language learning, reducing the number of mistakes that students may have.

Key words: regular verbs; past tense; mistakes; pronunciation

RESUMEN

Actualmente, el inglés es uno de los idiomas más hablado en el mundo, debido a esto, es muy esencial tener una buena pronunciación de este idioma. Con el propósito de analizar los errores de pronunciación más comunes en el pasado de los verbos regulares que tienen los estudiantes de segundo nivel de inglés, se realizó una investigación cuantitativa y descriptiva en el campus de Esmeraldas de la Pontificia Universidad Católica de Ecuador, para lo cual se utilizaron los métodos de análisis, síntesis y hermenéutica, con las técnicas de observación y encuesta, que se aplicaron a 20 estudiantes y 3 profesores de inglés del segundo nivel de inglés general en la mencionada universidad. Los resultados revelaron que la relación que una lengua extranjera tiene con la lengua materna en este caso el español es extremadamente complicada, y dado que ambas lenguas tienen muchas diferencias; por ejemplo el idioma español carece de muchos fonemas que existen en inglés. Y ahí es cuando aparece la dificultad de aprender la pronunciación de las palabras, también algunos maestros solo se preocupan por lograr su planificación en clase, pero no prestan suficiente atención al aprendizaje de los alumnos. Se concluye que los maestros deben saber que, con una metodología adecuada, los estudiantes pueden aprender, utilizando diferentes técnicas de aprendizaje que ayudarán en el desarrollo de su aprendizaje del idioma, reduciendo la cantidad de errores que los estudiantes pueden tener.

Palabras clave: verbos regulares; pasado; errores; pronunciación

INTRODUCTION

THEME PRESENTATION

English is a worldwide language that has many advantages, for this reason it crosses borders, join cultures and nationalities. It also gives us the opportunity to communicate and exchange information about development in any area of our countries like social, cultural, political or economic which entails expandability of knowledge. Therefore, it provides better opportunities to travel, study, work, or live in another country. In some cases, the importance of this language goes beyond nowadays. It is not considered as an option or complement in the field of education or a step to make a formative nature requirement to obtain a complete development in many fields of life, such as academic, professional and even personal (Naved, 2015).

When a person decides to learn something new or different, for example: learning a new language, he must be aware of its complexity. Moreover, it is important to mention that the pronunciation is one of the most difficult sub-skills to develop due to the phonological difference between L1 and L2. This happens when studying the regular verbs in the past. The learner mispronounces the /ed/ sounds.

During the professional practice observations, the researcher noticed that students frequently have problems when pronouncing the past tense of regular verbs (/ed/), especially, its inflections. Moreover, teachers and students omit the end of the regular verbs in past tense. Taking into consideration the irregularities mentioned previously, the main research question here is to observe the factors that both students and teachers have with the pronunciation of the regular verbs in past tense.

Problem Statement

This investigation seeks to analyze the pronunciation errors that students have when they are learning English, and to determine what techniques teachers can use in order to help students acquire an accurate pronunciation. Consequently, it contributes to the research of an appropriate development of speaking skills.

The most common error in pronunciation resides in the past tense of regular verbs. This may occur for different factors. For instance, students may think that studying English is challenging. This may discourage them from making an effort to learn it, where the achievement of language proficiency turns difficult. In addition, some teachers do not master the target language enough, especially its pronunciation. As a result, they do not have the capacity to correct their students properly. Another very important factor that leads the mispronunciation of the phoneme /-ed/, /t/, /d/, is the differences that English language has with the mother tongue, in this case Spanish; there are phonemes that only exist in the English language.

The problem of this research is: what common pronunciation errors in the past tense of regular verbs do 2nd level of English as a foreign language students have at the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador in Esmeraldas?

Justification

It is generally acknowledged that mispronunciation generates confusion at the moment of communicating ideas. This generates embarrassing as well as problematic situations. Additionally, if this linguistic problem is not corrected promptly, there will be negative consequences in terms of language proficiency. For this reason, it is relevant that students learn the foreign language pronunciation appropriately.

Different problems can be found at the beginning of learning a foreign language. The most common error that can be found is the mispronunciation, specifically in the use of past form of regular verbs.

During the English language learning process, students must be focused on grasping the correct sound structures. Otherwise, the mispronunciation can lessen its accuracy by making structural changes and increasing errors.

Also, teachers should be more interested and concerned about the students' learning process. Moreover, they have to make sure they understand the language by looking for useful resources, not only to catch the students' attention but also to learn accurately. Consequently, the teacher must have the security to work properly. In other words, teachers need to know that students can learn by the use of appropriate methodologies, and techniques that will ease the development of their language learning; and avoid the amount of errors.

Accordingly, this research aims to identify and analyze the main reasons why students have problems at pronouncing the past tense of regular verbs during the learning process of the English language. In this way, solutions can be recommended to overcome this pronunciation problem and strengthen the speaking skills during the English learning process.

Objectives

General Objective

- To analyze the most common pronunciation errors in the past tense of regular verbs that the English Language second level students have at the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador in Esmeraldas.

Specific Objectives

- To describe the different techniques used by teachers when teaching the past tense of regular verbs.
- To establish the level of knowledge about the sounds of the past tense of the regular verbs that students have.
- To describe the most frequent causes of pronunciation errors in the past tense of regular verbs.

CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. Scientific theoretical foundation

1.1.1. Constructivism

Bruner (1915 – 2016) defines constructivism “as a paradigm or worldview posits that learning is an active, constructive process” (p.1). Here learners construct their own information. Human beings actively create their own abstract representations of concrete reality. In addition, new information is connected to prior knowledge, hence mental representations are abstract.

1.1.1.1. Cognitive Constructivist Theory

Piaget (2018), according to the cognitive constructivist theory, states “learning is an active process in which students construct new ideas and concepts based on their past and present language knowledge” (p.2). In terms of learning another language, it can be inferred that one of the reasons why language learners commit errors constantly is because they tend to compare the given input of the target language with their mother tongue structure. This is called language transfer.

1.1.2. Language transfer

In the course of MTTC English as a second language: practice and study guide, Rangelova (2015) mentions:

The replication of rules from our first language (L1) to the second language (L2) is called language transfer. Our knowledge and understanding of L1 impact our understanding of L2. We can transfer grammar, vocabulary, syntax, semantics, spelling, morphology, pronunciation, structure, and culture to the L2 language. This process of language transfer is also known as linguistic interference, cross meaning, and L1 interference. Language transfer explains different accents and what mistakes people make. Also, it can predict how quickly we can acquire a second language, taking into account similarities and differences between the two languages (p.1).

The mother tongue has a high level of influence on learning another language. Therefore, it is inevitable to isolate the process of internalizing the structures, rules, or aspects of the target language without taking into consideration the ones of the L1. This phenomenon not only occurs in second language acquisition but also in the language learning. In Ecuador, where English is taught as a foreign language, it has been noticeable how learners struggle mostly when they write and pronounce the L2.

1.1.2.1. Description of language transfer

The human brain, linguistically speaking, works in function of the language information that it already has (L1). Consequently, human beings rely on what is already set in their brain to figure out how the L2 works (Rangelova, 2015). The typical areas where interference errors take place are (Dam, 2010): articles, gender, number, personal pronouns, relative pronouns, adjectives, prepositions, possessives, question formation, negation, verb tenses, passive voice, word order, and false cognates. On the other hand, Thomason (1981) points out that:

Substratum transfer will be more evident in pronunciation (and also in syntax) than in lexicon since it is the most difficult aspect of a second language to master and the influence of native language phonetics and phonology will be more pervasive than that of other language subsystems (p.2).

1.1.2.2. Type of language transfer

There are two types of language transfer: the positive transfer which eases the language learning whereas the negative does not. When talking about negative transfer, it is established that the more differences between L1 and L2 exists the more problems are encountered at the moment of learning the language (Rangelova, 2015).

1.1.2.3. Consequences of negative transfer

Odlin (1993) indicates that the negative transfer encompasses four different consequences: underproduction: when learners try not to use structures that L2 has which are not alike to his L1; overproduction: when learners feel more confident using non-frequent structures of L2; production errors: when learners use L1 structures in L2 (*substitution*) and when learners use L2 structures which are similar to the L1 ones (*calques*); and misinterpretation: when learners infer the conveyed message in L2 wrongly due to the L1 influence.

1.1.3. Mistakes and Errors

Greenspan (2013) states that people always are exposed to making mistakes either in their native language or during the learning of a second language, but it must be clear that there is a big difference between these two words. Usually, the mistake happens when students are learning a second language and often mistakes in their pronunciation or writing, but they are aware that there is a mistake and can correct it, because they have the knowledge of the structure, for example a very common mistake among students, when they begin to learn English, they use the phrase "for to apply", but they can't use "for to" together, while they should use "for applying" or "to apply", but the students know what a mistake

is but they continue making it. On the other hand, errors occur when there is a noticeable failure of a native speaker's grammar and the lack of knowledge about the correct rules of their own language.

1.1.4. Pronunciation Errors

Morehouse (2017) clarifies that every natural human language consists of a set of sounds or abstracted phonemes, commonly over a dozen. The combination of these sounds is spoken one after another, though the complex vocal tract movements construct the most basic unit of speech.

Learning a foreign language is usually very difficult for students who want to learn a new language. It is usually easier to read or write with higher accuracy results; however, at the moment of speaking, referring exactly to pronunciation, is where the problems emerge. The main obstacle here is, thus, the interference of the phonological system of the mother tongue that prevents language learners from having a native-like pronunciation or perfect fluency.

Most common mistakes in the English language are made because students don't have the same phonetic features, English or Spanish, like "th" which has two sounds, for example "thing" and "this" and the students pronounce [d] sounds (as in ding) or [t] sounds (as in ting). Another common mistake is the sound "i", when find words like "In" or "Sit" is easy to pronounce but, when the word has two vowels where the sound is "i" as "need" or "each" is the problem, because they do not pronounce the sound "i" and finally it is obtained the sound Schwa - [ə] for example "banana" and "the" because schwa can be represented in writing by any of the six written vowels of English (Morehouse, 2017).

1.1.5. Spanish-Speakers' Mistakes

It is evident that the most common mistake of Spanish-speakers is that they have difficulties with the end of the verbs in regular –ed form /t/ /ed/ /d/ when pronouncing regular verbs in the past tense they most of the time in all verbs add the /ed/, for example, the past tense of the verb wait is waited and if pronounced the -ed; but with the verb play the pronunciation changes and sounds / plait /.

Odlin (1989) also remarks that the L1 will strongly affect the sounds of the target language. Thus, he recommends more attention to phonetic and phonemic differences since that sound system may change one to another.

Teachers can help their students to find the difference that some pronunciation of phonemes have in English and the pronunciation of some phonemes in Spanish. With this the pronunciation can be easier for them and the pronunciation mistakes that the students have in English decrease.

1.1.6. Past Tense of Regular Verbs

The past tense indicates an expression, an action or a condition that occurred during the past, and which does not extend into the present, and one of the common errors of pronunciation in the adolescent, that is a non-native speaker of English is the rule of pronunciation of the past tense spelling of /-ed/ sound (Rusque, 1991).

At the moment of teaching English in its past tense form, more specifically the pronunciation of simple past regular verbs, students must first learn to add /-ed/ at the end of the verb in its base form. This is easy enough when forming, spelling, and writing past tense regular verbs. Students have many errors when they start to learn and they are confused by the pronunciation /-ed/, /t/, /d/, because the teachers do not correct them when they make mistakes, students do not practice enough as they really need.

However, the problem is not only related to the teachers, in many occasions students do not pay attention in classes and obviously they may be confused, for the reason that the sounds are very similar, for example, the word "decided" the ending sound /-ed/ but the students pronounce it as /t/. Deciding when to use the /-ed/, /t/, /d/ sounds is simple, students must remember only to use those for verbs that end in: a /t/ or /d/ sound, as it is reviewed above. The best way that students can learn in a quick and conscious way is practicing many times, listening, because it is the only way in which they can internalize the correct pronunciation.

When students have understood the straightforward rule above, they generally spend any more time on the distinction between /d/ and /t/ pronunciations of /-ed/. For one thing, students will often reproduce this effect naturally as their fluency improves anyway, as it is easier to speak that way. In addition, this distinction very rarely causes comprehension problems. More important than the distinction between /t/ and /d/ is the fact that neither

form increases the number of syllables in the word. This is because in English the number of syllables is the same as the number of vowel sounds and there is no extra vowel sound in /d/ and /t/, leading to one syllable in both “wash” and “washed”, and two syllables in both “increase” and “increased” (Segal, 2014). For this reason, it is not possible to add extra sounds to words cannot change the established pronunciation.

Pupils can learn the different ways the /-ed/ ending is pronounced, even though it is difficult. This ending is used in simple past tense. If it is achieved to learn the proper pronunciation of /-ed/ will be the best case since it is an essential part of speaking accurately.

At the time students manage to learn most of the rules for pronouncing /-ed/, /d/ and /t/ when using past tense, they will realize all the pronunciation mistakes they have been making. Also, they will understand that most of them have learned the pronunciations /-ed/, /d/ and /t/ “by ear” (Segal, 2014). If the students achieve to know the correct rules, it will be easier to know and to have a correct pronunciation without problems.

If pupils remember the pronunciation of /-ed/ endings naturally, instinctually, without thinking about the rules, it is all right, but on the other hand, it is better to know the rules which English pronunciation follows. In that sense, when the students find a new word, they will have a reference to guide themselves in the correct direction.

Likewise, the pupils will comprehend they have been pronouncing some past tense verbs wrongly. These rules will make them conscious of their mistakes and how to correct them.

Students must know how to differentiate between past tense verbs with a /t/ sound ending and a /d/ sound ending is difficult because the sounds or pronunciation are very similar so many students tend to be confused, and they will think that it is just a matter of memorizing but it is an error, this strategy will work for many verbs, but not always. For that reason, it is important that students have enough knowledge to apply the rules of this form and to correctly pronounce words.

There are different rules about the past tense of regular verbs and how students can apply them in their learning would reduce the mistakes when they speak, so they can get a good pronunciation and an excellent learning of a foreign language.

1.1.7. Factors that affect Pronunciation Learning

As Collazo (2013) emphasizes, language is a vital component of our lives and as it is an imperative element in our regular day to day existence. Without anyone else's input, it is an easy to refute point which have the authorities in language region contending about how it is obtained by individuals, as a first, second or third language.

It must be recalled that the individual is a social creature, kids comprehend that is the way that we pursue to set up social relations with others and it is, as well, understood considering the possibility that we don't utilize language we are sentenced to live disengaged. We can learn since our first years varieties in the sound and purposefulness in our messages sent or got, which give us the adaptability to have a powerful correspondence, having a characteristic motivation to look for social relationships (Dhillon, 2016).

In the process of language learning, it is necessary to have an inspiration, that is the quality what pushes the individual to accomplish an objective. If the student does not have inspiration, the learning procedure is harder and the majority of the occasions can end in a disappointment. Introduction is imperative, in light of the fact that it will assist understudies with having models to be pursued and to make correlations between various English varieties.

English varieties are the structures in which individuals use the English around the globe, this is impacted by the nation and by explicit districts inside a nation, and different components like if the dialect is a second tongue or foreign language and the impacts of the L1 of the speaker (Collazo, 2013).

1.2. Previous Studies

According to Benavides (2014), the applied studies in an investigation similar to this, in El Salvador in 2014 under the title of “The overgeneralization of regular verbs in simple past pronunciation by students taking intensive intermediate intensive English I due to the lack of oral reinforcement at the foreign language department of the university of El Salvador during the year 2014”.

This investigation is similar in the parameters exposed on the most common errors of pronunciation in the past of regular verbs, one of the points that most caught the attention of the researcher and one of the most important is that students do not find the rules of the regular verbs in the past very easily simply because in our mother tongue, that is Spanish, those sounds do not exist and obviously the pronunciation is very difficult.

Other similar factors that explain this is the lack of reinforcement in the classroom on the part of the teacher, that is to teach them the rules about when to use it orally, but teachers often lose importance about the explanation of pronunciation, when they do not reinforce the pronunciation of regular verbs in the past, students simply do not get used to pronouncing the most common sound that is / ed / at the end of the words.

As Davila (2013) states in another research developed in Southern Illinois, the United States, in the year 2013, in his investigation of "Spanish speakers" reading production of English past tense inflectional morpheme -ed" based on one of the linguistic difficulties that Spanish speakers face when learning English as a foreign language is the acquisition of the accurate pronunciation of the three phonological realizations of the inflectional morpheme that marks the past tense of regular verbs in English. In this study it is observed that students have problems due to the absence of certain phonological sounds in such a way that it leads them to learn to pronounce new sounds that do not exist in the Spanish language.

In Esmeraldas, Rúa Castillo (2017), under the title "Influence of Spanish as a first language in the learning process of English as a foreign language" in the School of Hospitality and Tourism at PUCE, describes the enormous impact that the Spanish dialect has on native Spanish speakers in their attempt to learn English by making it more troublesome due to the contrasts between these two dialects. This means that not only interlanguage but also dialect are factors that constrain the proper pronunciation in the target language.

1.3. Legal Basis

The Regulation of Academic Regime, approved by the Council of Higher Education (CES) (2017) establishes that the subjects destined to the learning of the foreign language will guarantee the level of proficiency in the language to meet the requirement of graduation of the third level careers, and must be organized or approved from the beginning of the careers. The sufficiency of the foreign language must be evaluated once the students have completed and approved 60% of the subjects of the course; such proof will be enabled for the continuation of their studies.

This decree that is found in the Constitution of Ecuador of 2008 shows the importance of learning a foreign language, in this case the English language and the requirements that students must meet to obtain a third level degree in this career. Allowing them to know the provisions that this law requires them as students, and to achieve a possible graduation without having any problem following step by step what the law asks to be fulfilled.

CHAPTER II

MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Type of Investigation

According to Hernandez, Fernandez Collado, & Baptista Lucio (2010), descriptive studies indicate the properties, attributes and profiles of people, groups, networks, procedures, objects or whatever other phenomenon that is submitted to an examination. That is, they just mean to quantify or gather data autonomously or jointly on the ideas or factors to which they allude.

The qualitative approach utilizes accumulation of information without numerical estimation to find or explore questions during the time spent. Qualitative examinations can likewise create speculations and hypothesis previously during or after the accumulation and investigation of the information. Frequently, these exercises serve, in the first place, to find which the most imperative research questions are.

The research that was carried out is descriptive quantitative because with this method the person knows the weakness that students have in the pronunciation of regular verbs in the past tense. It was developed with the second level students of general English from the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador in Esmeraldas, during the second period in the academic year 2018-2019.

2.2. Population and Sample

In accordance with Surbhi (2016) universe implies the total of all components under investigation having at least one basic normal for people, units, objects and anything that is equipped for being considered, having certain properties, despite what might be expected the term sample, referst to a piece of universe picked aimlessly for interest in the examination.

The sample chosen ought to be with the end goal that it speaks to the universe in the entirety of its qualities, and it ought to be free from predisposition, in order to deliver smaller than usual cross-segment, as the example perceptions are utilized to make speculations about the population.

The population consists of 20 students and 3 teachers of second level of General English from the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador in Esmeraldas. The Sample was selected randomly.

2.3. Operationalization of Variables

The operationalization of variables is in Annex A

2.4. Methods of Investigation

The methods Analysis and Synthesis were used for this study. According to Arnauld (2014) analysis consists fundamentally on focusing on what is known in the issue we need to determine. The whole art is to get from this examination numerous certainties that can lead us to the learning we are looking for. On the other hand, Cosette (2006) mentions that synthesis intends to consolidate various distinctive pieces into a union, it is about briefly condensing and connecting distinctive sources with a specific end goal in order to audit the writing on a theme, make proposals, and associate training to the exploration.

For this research, the methods Analysis and Synthesis allowed the researcher to analyze the bibliography and the most common mistakes in the pronunciation of regular verbs in the past tense, as well as knowing why the students have these errors. They were used to analyze the research results and synthesize the most relevant information.

As Zimmermann (2015) indicates Hermeneutics is simply the craft of comprehension and of making oneself comprehended. Comprehension might be guided by diagnostic standards; however, it can't be diminished to them.

Understanding requires art as opposed to run represented science. Hermeneutics is additionally the name for the philosophical teaching worried about breaking down the conditions for comprehension.

The Hermeneutics method was used for the direct analysis of texts, in this case of the theoretical framework to obtain an explanation of this and a clearer idea about what can be interpreted, besides helping us to analyze the results obtained with the application of the techniques.

Trochim (2006) states that descriptive statistics is utilized to describe the essential features of information in an investigation. It gives basic summaries about the sample and the measures. The two last mentioned along with of basic designs of investigation frame the premise for all intents and purposes of the quantitative examination of information. In short descriptive statistics will help us process the data obtained with the application of the techniques research.

2.5. Techniques of Investigation

The techniques used were according to Dudovskiy (2018) who refers to observation like a method for gathering information through watching. Observation information gathering strategy is named a participatory report, on the grounds that the scientist needs to immerse herself in the setting where her respondents are.

The technique of Observation: It was applied to 20 students of the second level of General English of the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador in Esmeraldas. Observing a class based on regular verbs and using a checklist to identify which the most common mistakes they make during class are.

By means of the observation it could be noticed if the teacher used a good pronunciation of these verbs and the students do not, the teacher would not be the one who would be failing but it can also happen in the opposite direction that the teacher does have a mispronunciation and for this reason the students also has it.

As Ben-Eliyahu (2013) comments a test is an assessment planned to measure or to establish the quality, performance, or reliability of something.

A test might be controlled verbally, on paper, etc., and that requires a test taker to exhibit or play out an arrangement of abilities.

The technique of Test: It was applied to 20 students from the second level of English from the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador in Esmeraldas. Through an oral test in the past tense, where students had to read a text with the regular verbs in the past tense to determine what the direct problem of the mispronunciation of these verbs in the students is whether the problem comes from the students or the teacher.

2.6. Instruments

To collect the data, the instruments designed were according to the different techniques used. For the technique of observation, a guide of observation was used, which contained 7 items to be observed.

For the technique of test, a questionnaire was used, which contained a reading passage that the students had to read aloud.

2.7. Data Processing

The information obtained from the application of the different techniques, was tabulated manually and presented in a descriptive way.

CHAPTER III

3.1. RESULTS OF THE OBSERVATION

Class observation form (checklist) to observe and determine the most common pronunciation errors in the past tense of regular verbs that the students have in the second level of English from the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador in Esmeraldas.

This figure 1 illustrates that most of the students can recognize the regular verbs in the past non-verbally; and they repeat and practice the pronunciation correctly in class. Nevertheless, they are not able to pronounce the three different sounds of –ed when they are without the guidance of their teacher.

Another factor that can be seen in figure 1 is that although many of the students react to the repetition activity with the teacher, many of them do not concentrate but rather do it mechanically without paying attention to the correct pronunciation. This means it is not an effective aid for language learning.

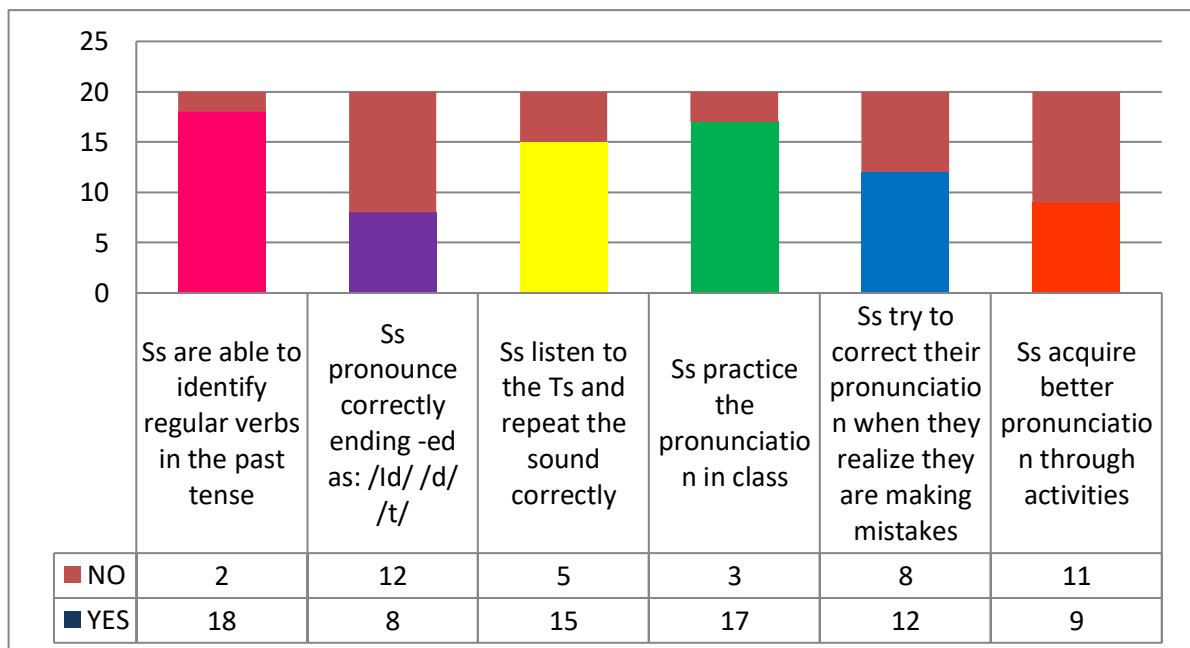


Figure 1: The pronunciation errors in English

Source: Survey Applied

3.2. RESULTS OF THE OBSERVATION

Class observation form aimed to determine the techniques that teachers apply to teach the correct pronunciation of the regular verbs in the past tense.

According to figure 2, it is noticed that teachers do not use enough appropriate techniques to teach the correct pronunciation of the regular verbs in past tense in the English language. They use different but limited techniques namely -to listen and repeat, choral repetitions, and dialogues- to teach their students to learn how to pronounce the past tense of regular verbs.

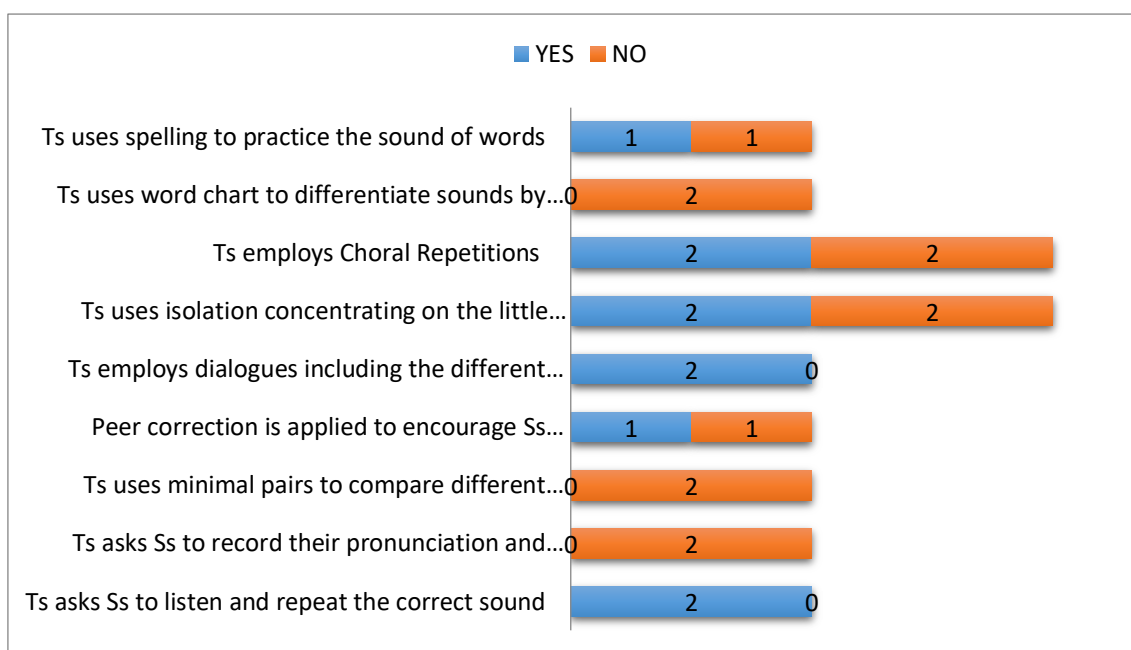


Figure 2: The teachers use techniques.

Source: Survey Applied

3.3. RESULTS OF THE ORAL TEST

Oral test form has as a purpose to establish the level of knowledge about the sounds of past tense of the regular verbs that the students have in the second level of English from the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador in Esmeraldas.

This figure 3 shows that students have mostly problems at pronouncing the /t/ and /d/ sounds of the past tense of regular verbs likewise when verbs end with consonants. However, most of them are clearer about how to pronounce the past form of regular verbs when these end with the consonants “t” such as “visit” and “chat”. This might happen due to the fossilization of such phonemes.

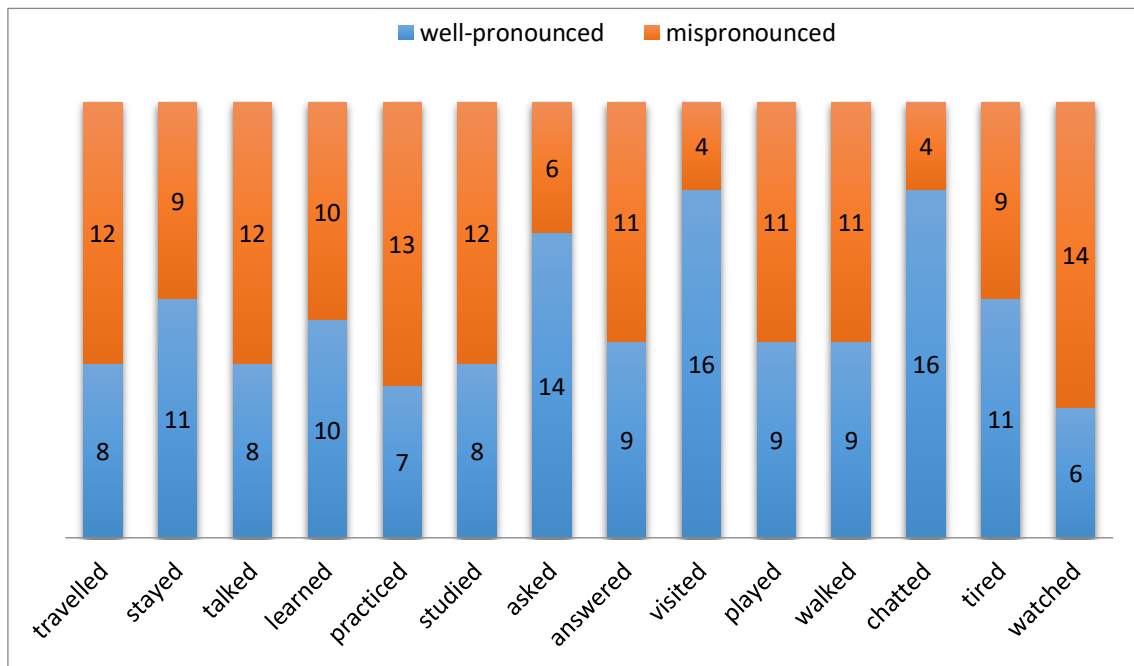


Figure 3: ED errors in regular verbs
Source: Survey Applied

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

The objectives of the present research were achieved thoroughly because the most common pronunciation errors in the past tense of regular verbs in English as foreign language students at Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador have been determined through the observation forms mentioned before. Besides, the literature review was made about factors that affect the pronunciation of certain phonemes. It was also useful to understand why mispronunciation of the /-ed/ sound in English happens.

Some results have been obtained by this investigation that coincided with the ones provided by other authors, such as Davila who observed that students have problems due to the absence of certain phonological sounds in such a way that it leads us to learn to pronounce new sounds that do not exist in the Spanish language.

On the other hand, Benavides (2014) in his research agrees that many of the professors do not pay due attention when using the appropriate methodology for the learning of a foreign language. It is where teachers must apply the most appropriate technique and that way students can have a correct and cleaner pronunciation and out of the margin of errors when speaking, but there is a high percentage range between these investigations, which all come to one of the most important factors that determine the errors in the pronunciation, and it is the interference that exists between the mother tongue and the foreign language.

This investigation indicated that most of the students are able to recognize the past tense of regular verbs morphologically rather than phonologically. In other words, they can read a text silently and know that verbs are in past; nonetheless, when they have to read aloud, they mispronounce mostly two of the different inflections of –ed sound: /t/ and /d/. This is because these two phonemes are not common as an ending sound combined with other consonants in their mother tongue.

On the other hand, the sound /Id/ was pronounced correctly by most of them due to the similarity of the combination of consonant-vowel-consonant sound, which is usual in their L1.

It can be also said that the rules of pronunciation are less complex for the past tense of regular verbs that end in -t and -d (e.g.: chat, visit) rather than the ones that end in other consonants or vowels where the -ed ending sound depends on whether the last letter of the regular verbs is voiced or voiceless (e.g.: ask, watch, play).

Even though students commit errors of pronunciation, we have found certain teaching practice limitations in terms of language didactics. They constantly use techniques namely *listen and repeat*, *choral repetition*, and dialogues to teach their students how to pronounce the past tense of regular verbs. Although there are other more resourceful techniques to overcome this matter, teachers do not take them into consideration.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

The most common errors in the past tense of regular verbs in English as foreign language students at the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador in Esmeraldas are mainly in two of the three inflections of –ed ending sound which are /t/ and /d/ due to the non-existence of such ending sounds combined with other consonants in their L1.

The students previously indicated have a low level of the knowledge about the sounds of past tense of regular verbs because they are not able to identify them when they pronounce them.

This investigation shows one of the most important causes of pronunciation errors in past tense of regular verbs: first, the L1 interference also known as language transfer which Dulay et al (1982) define interference as the automatic transfer, due to habit, of the surface structure of the first language into the surface of the target language.

Teachers are not aware of the diverse techniques they can use in order to teach their students how to avoid the mispronunciation of the different inflections of –ed ending.

Students are often not motivated by learning a foreign language so their interest in learning a language is very low and they simply do not pay attention, also some teachers do not have an adequate level of foreign language, and when that happens, it is very difficult to transmit good teaching.

CHAPTER VI

RECOMMENDATIONS

To English Teachers, to teach and practice pronunciation of the three inflections of Ed ending sounds of the regular verbs in the past tense systematically.

To researchers, to continue this investigation with the design of an upgrading course about pronunciation, in which the three different Ed ending sounds of the regular verbs in past tense is included.

To researchers, to design didactic strategies to practice the three different Ed ending sounds of the regular verbs in past tense in the English class.

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B: Class Observation

Teacher's Name:

University:

Topic:

Date:

Grade:

Objective: To observe and determine the most common pronunciation errors in the past tense of regular verbs that the students have in the second level of English from the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador in Esmeraldas.

Check List

ITEMS	YES	NO
Students are able to identify regular verbs in the past tense.		
Students pronounce correctly ending "ed" as: "ɪd" "d" "t"		
The students listen to the teacher and repeat the sound correctly.		
Students practice the pronunciation in class.		

Students try to correct their pronunciation when they realize they are making mistakes.		
Students acquire better pronunciation through activities.		

C: Class Observation Guide

Teacher's Name:

University:

Topic:

Date:

Grade:

Objective: To determine the techniques that teachers apply to teach the correct pronunciation of the regular verbs in the past tense.

Check List

ITEMS	YES	NO	REMARKS
The teacher asks students to listen and repeat the correct sound.			
The teacher asks students to record their pronunciation and replay it to correct any mistake.			
The teacher uses minimal pairs to compare different sounds from similar words.			
Peer correction is applied to encourage students improve the pronunciation.			
Teacher employs dialogues including the different ways “ed” sounds at the end of regular verbs in past.			
The teacher uses isolation concentrating on the little tone in the			

correct pronunciation at the end of the verb.			
Teacher employs Choral Repetitions to practice the use of that sound.			
Teacher uses Word Chart to differentiate sounds by means of codes or colors.			
The Teacher uses Spelling to practice the sounds of words.			

D: Oral Test

Teacher's Name:

University:

Topic:

Date:

Grade:

Objective: To establish the level of knowledge about the sounds of past tense of the regular verbs that the students have in the second level of English from the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador in Esmeraldas

READING

Last summer, Joel and Sara travelled to England for two weeks. They travelled in August and stayed in a college with other students in Brighton, the South of England. It was really fantastic because they talked to a lot of students of different nationalities and learned a lot about other cultures and customs. Of course, they learned a lot of English too because they practiced it every day. In the morning they studied a little, they asked the teacher to speak slowly when necessary and answered her questions. In the afternoon they visited different places or played different sports at the college. It was so much fun. They often walked down to the beach with their new friends and played or chatted. In the evening they were tired so they sometimes watched videos or played board games.

Check List

WORDS	“id”	“d”	“t”
travelled			
stayed			
talked			
learned			
practiced			
studied			
asked			
answered			
visited			
played			
walked			
chatted			
tired			
watched			

