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CONNECTED SPEECH AND USE OF STRESS AT WORD
LEVEL IN TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS OF
ENGLISH

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**CONNECTED SPEECH AND USE OF STRESS AT WORD LEVEL IN
TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS OF ENGLISH**

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To God, to my mother and my younger sister

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ABSTRACT

Teaching-learning process of English language has taken a great importance in our society. Hence, one of the major priorities of Linguistics and Languages Department at Mayor de San Andrés University is the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language. This is the main reason by which this research was developed. This is based on Phonetics and Phonology. Both disciplines play an essential role into teaching-learning process of English language since these are the first step that every student should overcome in order to learn a foreign language.

The main purpose of this research is to identify, analyze and describe the difficulties that undergraduate students of English at Linguistics and Languages Department present regarding to phonological features of connected speech and the use of stress at word level.

This is a descriptive research complemented by the qualitative and quantitative approaches. The units of analysis are represented by students of Linguistics and Languages Department at UMSA, the population includes all students of English taking the last academic year and the sample is compounded by 20 subjects who belong to a non probabilistic sample. The instrument applied consists on 'recording test' which allowed us to collect all the data required, to achieve all the objectives and therefore, to answer the hypotheses.

Basing on the whole analysis, we conclude that most of undergraduate students at Linguistics and Languages Department still present phonological difficulties regarding to phonological features of connected speech which concerns with linking features, elision and assimilation process and also in the adequate use of English stress and its distinctive function at word level.

RESUMEN

El proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del Inglés ha tomado gran importancia en nuestra sociedad. Por esta razón, la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del Inglés como lengua extranjera son mayores prioridades de la Carrera de Lingüística e Idiomas de la UMSA. Ésta es la razón principal por la cual se llevó a cabo la presente investigación que está basada en la Fonética y la Fonología. Ambas disciplinas juegan un rol muy importante dentro del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma Inglés ya que éstas son el primer nivel que todo estudiante debe superar para aprender un idioma extranjero.

El propósito principal de esta investigación es identificar, analizar y describir las dificultades que los estudiantes de último año de la Carrera de Lingüística e Idiomas (área de Inglés) presentan con respecto a las características fonológicas de la cadena hablada y el uso del acento a nivel de palabra..

Esta investigación es descriptiva complementada por los enfoques cualitativo y cuantitativo. Las unidades de análisis las representan los estudiantes de la Carrera de Lingüística e Idiomas de la UMSA, la población incluye a todos los estudiantes del área de Inglés que cursan el último año académico y la muestra está compuesta por 20 estudiantes quienes corresponden a una muestra no probabilística. El instrumento aplicado consiste en la 'prueba de grabación', la cual permitió recolectar todos los datos que se requerían, alcanzar los objetivos planteados y así comprobar las hipótesis planteadas.

Basándonos en todo el análisis, concluimos que la mayoría de los estudiantes de Inglés que cursan el último año académico en la Carrera de Lingüística e Idiomas aún presentan dificultades fonológicas en cuanto a las características de la cadena hablada como las de ligazón, procesos de elisión y asimilación y también en el uso adecuado del acento y su función distintiva a nivel de palabra en el idioma Inglés.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The English language has taken a great importance in our society in different fields like teaching, economics, tourism, medicine, politics, social relationships, etc. and because of this, to learn and have a good knowledge of English language have been turned into a great necessity to carry out different work functions, to interact into the fields previously mentioned and also to use it as a mean of communication with native people of this language.

In view of this necessity, many institutions have developed and applied different methods and approaches in order to teach English as a foreign language and develop proficient professionals in future. However, the subjects that have not been taken into account in teaching-learning process of English are phonetics and phonology because of it is given more importance to vocabulary and grammar. This performance could be erroneous since all learner of a foreign language the first level that should domain and put in practice is the pronunciation which is closely related with phonetics and phonology. Hence, phonetics and phonology have a very important function into teaching-learning process of English to interact in different situations in which the domain of pronunciation is very important.

For instance, in the interaction between a teacher and students, teacher of English besides being an efficient speaker should be a linguistic model before his students showing a good competence of the language and explaining not only about the vocabulary and grammatical rules, but also about the adequate pronunciation which also concerns with word stress and the possible variations that English sounds present in different phonetic contexts at word internal and at word boundary, that is phonological features of connected speech in English spoken language. Another example has to do



with the interaction between an English learner and an English native speaker. In this case if an English learner knows the contexts in which some English sounds vary and the adequate use of stress, the learner could easily understand what the English native speaker is saying apart from showing a good level and fluency of English, and in this way, establish a good communication.

Many students learn English to interact with native speakers of this language and consequently, teaching pronunciation not only must involve the identification of English phonemes, but also it must involve the identification of stress at word level and the variations that some English sounds may have in connected speech in order to improve the fluency and like this to show a good level of English and to carry out a better interaction with an English native speaker. Thus, when we know that we have a good pronunciation of English, we may feel ourselves surer, in fact, we may feel the necessity to interact more with English native speakers because we would know that our level of pronunciation is good. In addition, showing a good proficiency in the pronunciation could do that other people have a positive concept of us besides having more opportunities and advantages in the work field because for example, in a work interview, those who have a good pronunciation could be more required.

Therefore, the present research will concern with all mentioned previously. Through this investigation we will identify, analyze and describe the phonological features of connected speech and the use of the stress at word level in students of English of last semester at Linguistics and Languages Department. This is organized in five chapters:

In the first chapter is the problem statement together with the problem background, then the objectives are presented followed by the justification, the hypotheses and the definition of terms.

The second chapter concerns with the theoretical framework in which it is detailed all the relevant concepts that have to do with the disciplines of phonetics and phonology.



The third chapter concerns with the methodology that is followed in order to carry out this research, specifying the research approach, the research type, the research design, the population, the sample, the techniques and instruments, the procedure and the instrument reliability.

The fourth chapter has to do with the analysis of data obtained through the instrument and the last chapter shows the conclusions about all the final results that have been obtained during the research.

1.1 Problem background

One of the priorities of Linguistics and Languages Department at the UMSA is the teaching-learning process of English as a foreign language because of currently in our social and academic context the English language is more required than other foreign languages in different work fields. Therefore, it is very important to have a good competence in knowledge of English language, not only regarding to its grammatical rules, but also in the correct pronunciation which directly concerns with phonetics and phonology.

Phonetics into teaching-learning process of English language is very essential and a previous question is why? The answer has to do with importance of the spoken language since this is the most appropriate mean that we have at our disposal to show appropriately our knowledge and competence about the foreign language that is learnt. Hence, Linguistics and Languages Department in order to do that students of English area have a good competence in English language pronunciation and to develop future professionals either in teaching, translation or in other fields, includes into its syllabus the subject of phonetics and phonology in the fifth semester once students have passed the first four levels (four semesters).



During the fifth semester, students learn about the phonetic and phonological features of English language. In this respect, phonetics allows students to study and learn about the sounds from the articulatory point of view and phonology allows them to learn about the sounds from the functional point of view, that is, the distinctive function of meaning that English language sounds have. Likewise, students learn about some phonetics variations in connected speech which are very important at the moment to use the English in a fluid way showing so a progress in the competence of this language.

Regarding to stress, students should know that English accentuation rules are very different from Spanish ones because the English stress may change of position. For instance, English derivatives words do not always follow the accentual and phonemic patterns of their roots like in the word com'pare > 'comparable. This and other aspects like types of accent, accentuation of simple words, accentuation of compound words and the distinctive function of accent of English language are also taken into account during the fifth semester.

However, because of English language present a relative difficulty in the accentuation of syllables at word level, in the identification of phonetic features of connected speech and also because of lack of practice, students of English of last year at Linguistics and Languages Department could still present some difficulties regarding to the aspects mentioned. For this reason and for all previously mentioned, the following questions are stated:

1.2 Problem questions

1. What are the phonological difficulties that undergraduate students of English at Linguistics and Languages Department present regarding to connected speech?
2. What are the phonological difficulties that undergraduate students of English at Linguistics and Languages Department present in the use of stress at word level?



1.3 Research objectives

1.3.1 General objective

- To identify the phonological difficulties that undergraduate students of English at Linguistics and Languages Department present regarding to features of connected speech, the use of stress and its distinctive function at word level.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

- To analyze the phonological features of connected speech that undergraduate students of English at Linguistics and Languages Department present regarding to processes of linking, elision and assimilation.

- To describe the phonological features of linking, elision and assimilation in word internal and at word boundary that undergraduate students of English at Linguistics and Languages Department present.

- To analyze the use of stress and its distinctive function at word level in undergraduate students of English at Linguistics and Languages Department

- To describe the use of stress and its distinctive function at word level in undergraduate students of English at Linguistics and Languages Department

1.4 Justification

Currently, the knowledge that a student should have in all phonological characteristics of English language is very important in teaching-learning process. Learning Phonetics and Phonology is the first step that every student should overcome in order to learn and



know the English pronunciation rules not only at the level of phonemes, but also at the level of stress and phonological variations that are presented in spoken language.

This is the reason why there is an interest and a need to carry out this research which is justified in the following way:

First, regarding to the main objective of the present study, this allows us to identify and analyze the phonological features of connected speech and the use of stress and its distinctive function at word level that undergraduate students of English at Linguistics and Languages Department present.

Second, this research tries to give a theoretical contribution to Linguistics and Languages Department, since this will let to know more about the phonological features of connected speech and the use of stress at word level of English language, and through this, to have also a reference about the competence that undergraduate students have in our academic context.

Third, the social value of this research is specially guided to contribute and benefit to teacher and student community of Linguistics and Languages Department with the purpose of regarding in some way, a reflection regarding to teaching-learning process of English language and to reinforce the competence and knowledge of the students on issues that have to do with the pronunciation, phonetics and phonology of this language, that is regarding to the adequate use of stress at word level and phonological features of connected speech that English language presents since these are also very important at the moment to interact with English native speakers in a fluid way.

Fourth, taking into account the practical contribution of the present study, it is important to mention that this is based on phonological theories. Thus, one reason to carry out this research is to provide students of English the main concepts about features of connected



speech and the detailed use of stress in different words and also its distinctive function, making in this way that they could take these in practice when talking with English native speakers. On the other hand, the final results gathered and the information of this investigation are meaningful since these could be used to propose a teaching-learning method of English language regarding to features of connected speech and the use of stress in benefit of students of this language.

Finally, from the methodological point of view, this research will also be used as a framework in order to do other studies that have to do with matters similar to those studied here may be carried out.

1.5 Hypotheses

1. Most of undergraduate students of English at Linguistics and Languages Department present phonological difficulties of linking, elision and assimilation.
2. Most of undergraduate students of English at Linguistics and Languages Department have difficulties in the use of stress and its distinctive function at word level.

1.6 Definition of terms

1.6.1 Phonological features of connected speech

This concept refers to any sounds that may vary in some words that are linked in connected speech, that is in spoken language, some sounds may be influenced by others and suffer phonological processes of linking, elision and assimilation.



1.6.2 Linking

It refers to the phonological process which requires modifications at the beginnings and ends of words in connected speech (Finch and Ortiz, 1982: 76).

1.6.3 Elision

It is a phonetic process which refers to vocalic or consonant sounds that are omitted in determined phonological contexts. This elision of sounds may occur at word internal and at word boundary.

1.6.4 Assimilation

Assimilation is another phonological process which refers to vocalic or consonant sounds that are influenced by other sounds in word internal and at word boundary. In other words, assimilation can be defined as the process by which sounds are influenced by neighbouring sounds and come to share some or all of their phonetic characteristics.

1.6.5 Stress

According to Martha Pennington (1996: 128), “stress is a cover-term for three prosodic features, any of which may result when extra effort is expended in producing a syllable and any of which may give an impression of perceptual prominence. These are duration, or length; intensity, or loudness; and pitch, or fundamental frequency. The constituent sounds of a prominent syllable are often more clearly or forcefully enunciated than those in a less prominent one”.



1.6.6 Stress at word level

This concept refers to the stress which is located into a simple or compound word. According to Finch and Ortiz (1982: 94), simple words are those made up of roots alone or with the addition of affixes and compound words are those made up of two and less frequently three roots, and certain collocations, all of which may or may not be written with a hyphen in the spelling.



1.7 Variables operacionalization

Hypothesis 1

Most of undergraduate students of English at Linguistics and Languages Department present phonological difficulties of linking, elision and assimilation.

VARIABLE	DIMENSIONS	INDICATORS
Difficulties with identifying the phonological processes of linking, elision and assimilation.	Linking features: - Word-final position	/ə/ letter /ʊə/ pure /ɛ:/ refer /ɑ:/ star /ɪə/ hear /ɔ:/ bore /eə/ dare
	- At word boundary	the letter of my friend, refer again, hear everything, Dare I?, pure enjoyment, A star is born, Bore a tunnel
	Elision: - elision of [t, d] in word internal	- postcard, postman, postscript, directly - grandma, grandpa, sandpaper, sandwich
	- elision of [t, d] at word boundary	- first day, Didn't call, next day, biggest car - old man, send two, cold day, caused trouble
	Elision of [ə] with syllabicity of [ŋ] and [l]	- certain, importance, prudent, nonsense, caution, impatience, allusion, occurrence, golden, govern - classical, forgetful, approval, cancel, nasal, essential, normal, oral, verbal, legal
	Elision of [ə] with affrication [-tr] and [-dr]	- secretary, history - secondary, federal



	Double vowel elision with two syllabic consonants	liberal, literal, admiralty
	Elision of [ə] in other cases	Comparable, definitely, temperature, opening, preference, suffering
	<p>Assimilation:</p> <p>- In word internal</p> <p>Optional assimilation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. [tʃ] [tʃ] 2. [dʒ] [dʒ] 3. [ʃ] [sʃ, sɪ] <p>Fixed assimilation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. [tʃ] 2. [dʒ] 3. [ʃ] 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. mature, situation 2. education, individual 3. association, glacial <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. eventually, factual 2. gradual, procedure 3. issue, negotiate
	<p>- At word boundary</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assimilation of [t, d, n] to [p, b, m] influenced by [p, b, m] 2. Assimilation of [t, d] to [tʃ, dʒ] influenced by [j] 3. Assimilation of [s, z] to [ʃ, ʒ] influenced by [ʃ, j] 4. Assimilation of [t, d, n] to [k, g, ŋ] influenced by [k, g] 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. that plan, You'd better, on purpose 2. last year, behind you 3. her voice shook, In case you do, Here's yours, He was shot 4. hot cakes, I should go, his own car, He won't go



Hypothesis 2

Most of undergraduate students of English at Linguistics and Languages Department have difficulties in the use of stress and its distinctive function at word level.

VARIABLE	DIMENSIONS	INDICATORS
Difficulties when using the stress at word level and identifying the distinctive function of stress	Simple words: 1. Two-syllable words 2. Three-syllable words 3. Four-syllable words 4. Five-syllable words 5. Six-syllable words 6. Seven-syllable words	1. teacher, expert, again, donate, unknown 2. fortunate, absolute, important, distribute, scientific, magazine 3. category, operator, obligatory, appreciate, circulation, acceptance 4. capitalism, inevitable, enthusiasm, curiosity, differentiate, classification, consideration, revaluation 5. individualism, discontinuity, familiarity, personification, individualistic 6. impressionability, irresponsibility
	Distinctive function of stress: Noun and verbal function	conflict desert frequent survey object decrease conduct progress subject export



1.8 Delimitation of the study

1.8.1 Thematic delimitation

This study, referred to phonological features of connected speech and the use of stress at word level in teaching-learning process of English, involves directly Phonology which allows us to study the sounds and stress of a language from the functional point of view. However, this also involves Phonetics since this discipline is closely related with Phonology and it helps us to determine articulatory, auditorily and acoustically features of sounds of a determined language and some variations that these sounds may present in connected speech.

Concretely, by means of Phonology in this research we study and take into account specific phenomena based on phonological theories which are: processes of linking [r], elision of vowel and consonant sounds in word internal and at word boundary, assimilation of consonants in word internal and at word boundary, the use of stress at word level from two-syllable words to seven-syllable words and the distinctive function of stress.

1.8.2 Place delimitation

This research will be carried out in Mayor de San Andrés University at Linguistics and Languages Department, English area, because the population in which this research is focused involves undergraduate students of English, that is students who are in their last academic year in the Department of Linguistics (9th and 10th semester).



1.8.3 Temporal delimitation

This study about phonological features of connected speech and the use of stress at word level in teaching-learning process of English was carried out in 2015.



CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Phonetics and Phonology in teaching-learning process of English

All languages have the main function to be used as a mean of communication between people. In the process of communication not only vocabulary grammar and semantics should be taken into account but also phonetics and phonology which are closely related with *pronunciation* (adequate discrimination of sounds), this last concept may be considered as a first step to learn a foreign language like English, its definition will be detailed later.

Phonetics and Phonology play a very important role in teaching-learning process of a language like English since both disciplines allow us to study and analyze the sounds of a language in an isolated form and in connected speech identifying all phonological variations that there are in spoken language. This means that when we are teaching or learning a foreign language, in a first step, sounds of this language may be treated individually identifying the manner and point of articulation and vibration of vocal folds, for instance: /p/ is bilabial, stop and voiceless.

In a second step, sounds may be analyzed according to its function in the word, for instance: /vest/ ≠ /best/, /sm/ ≠ /sn/. In a third step, sounds should be analyzed into the connected speech taking into account phonological process like linking, elision, assimilation, etc. These phonological processes are also considered as a result of the law of economy or economy of articulation¹.

¹ See Brinton, D. *Introduction to connected speech*. p. 5. Soka University of America. Recuperated from: <http://www.dlf.ac.th/uploads/train/125507132015214.pdf> and Finch, D. and Ortiz, H. (1982: 77). *A Course in English Phonetics for Spanish Speakers*. London



In the same way, there is also one more important element to be considered, this is the word stress since this also plays a very relevant role in the phonological structure of the words that is the distinctive function of stress in English words.

2.1.1 Definition of Phonetics

Roca and Johnson (1999: 54) state that “Phonetics describes sounds: articulatorily (positions and movements of the speech organs), acoustically (patterns in the air, detectable with the appropriate technology) and perceptually (impact of the sound on the ear and subsequent transmission of the signal to the brain). Moreover, phonetics will help us to understand the articulatory motivation of these phenomena in terms of “coarticulation”, the term by which phoneticians express essentially what phonologists refer to as “assimilation”.

In another way, Spencer (1998: 3) establishes that “Phonetics is essentially the study of the physical aspects of speech. This means the acoustic bases of speech (linked most closely with speech perception) and the physiological bases of speech (linked most closely with speech production)”.

Comparing both definitions we can conclude that Phonetics mainly allows us to study the physic and concrete form of the sound.

[p] plosive, bilabial, voiceless	[b] plosive, bilabial, voiced
[t] plosive, alveolar, voiceless	[d] plosive, alveolar, voiced
[k] plosive, velar, voiceless	[g] plosive, velar, voiced



2.1.2 Definition of Phonology

Phonology is another discipline by which we can study the function of the sounds when these are combined with others in words.

Lass (1984: 1) expresses that “Phonology, broadly speaking, is that subdiscipline within linguistics concerned with ‘the sounds of language’. More narrowly, phonology proper is concerned with the function, behavior, and organization of sounds as LINGUISTIC items”

In order to understand better to what sounds function refers, Roach, P. (1991: 37)² gives the following examples:

‘pit’	/pɪt/
‘pet’	/pet/
‘pat’	/pæt/
‘putt’	/pʌt/
‘pot’	/pɒt/
‘put’	/pʊt/

In the same way and concretely, Finch and Ortiz (1982: 23) points out that “Phonology studies the selection and organization of phonic substance into a given form or pattern”.

We established earlier that Phonetics and Phonology allow to study the sound, but it is important to know that both disciplines have different approaches and objects of study as we may see in the following comparative chart:

² Roach, P. (1991: 37). *English Phonetics and Phonology*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press. Recuperated from: https://abudira.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/peter-roach_1998_english-phonetics-and-phonology_ebook-free.pdf.



PHONETICS	PHONOLOGY
Approach of study: to establish how the various phonemes are actually realized (realization of sounds).	Approach of study: to establish which sounds produce differences in meaning between words (function of sounds).
Object of study: allophone (concrete form of the sound)	Object of study: phoneme (abstract form of the sound)

Chart of differentiation between Phonetics and Phonology edited from Finch, D. and Ortiz, H. (1982: 23)

2.2 Importance of pronunciation in teaching-learning process of English

Yates and Zielinski³, states the following:

“Pronunciation refers to how we produce the sounds that we use to make meaning when we speak. It includes the particular consonants and vowels of a language (segments), aspects of speech beyond the level of the individual segments, such as stress, timing, rhythm, intonation, phrasing, (suprasegmental aspects), and how the voice is projected (voice quality). Although we often talk about these as if they were separate, they all work together in combination when we speak, so that difficulties in one area may impact on another, and it is the combined result that makes someone’s pronunciation easy or difficult to understand”.

On the other hand, Pennington (1996) takes also into account other important elements closely related with pronunciation:

“It is a primary medium for communication of information about ourselves as individuals and as representatives of different groups. Since it opens the way to a better understanding of how language works and how the different aspects of linguistic and

³ Yates, L. and Zielinski, B. (2009: 11). *Give it a go: teaching pronunciation to adults*. Australia



social meaning are interrelated, an understanding of the phonology of a language is a necessary basis for fully effective teaching of a spoken language”.

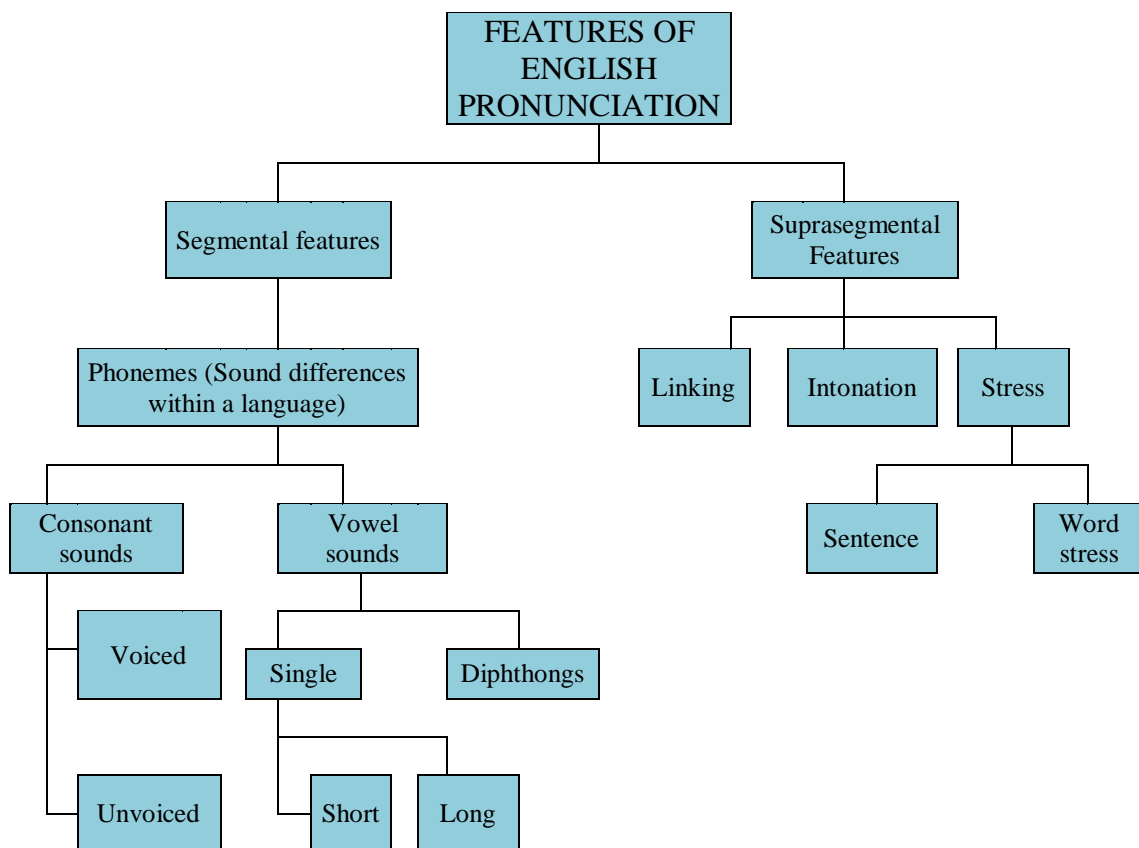
According to both definitions presented we may argue that pronunciation is a very important element into teaching-learning process of any language because it is the mean by which we are able to release and combine the phonic and phonological units in order to interact between teacher and learner or just between people.

Pronunciation should be also considered as an essential tool that must be mastered by language teachers with the purpose of developing a good learning in students. Regarding to this last point, Finch and Ortiz (1982: xi) state the following:

Firstly, the teacher’s English pronunciation must be good enough to serve as a model to students during this important stage of their training. If the teacher’s pronunciation is not RP, he should be thoroughly aware of the points of difference. Secondly, he should have a sound theoretical knowledge of the phonetic and phonological facts of English and Spanish, and a practical knowledge of the handling of phonemic and allophonic transcription. Thirdly, he should be proficient in the diagnosis of pronunciation errors and in the techniques of correction. Lastly, his ear should be finely trained in recognizing subtle distinctions of speech sounds”.

Regarding to learner, Kelly (2002: 11) mentioned by Macháčková⁴ states that “A learner who consistently mispronounces a range of phonemes can be extremely difficult for a speaker from another language community to understand. This can be very frustrating for the learner who may have a good command of grammar and lexis but have difficulty in understanding and being understood by a native speaker”

⁴ Macháčková E. (2012: 15). Diploma Thesis of *Teaching English pronunciation to secondary school students with focus on “th” consonants*. MASARYK UNIVERSITY BRNO, FACULTY OF EDUCATION, Department of English Language and Literature. Recuperated from: http://is.muni.cz/th/183878/pedf_m/the_final:thesis.pdf.



Features of English pronunciation according to Pourhosein, A.⁵

2.2.1 Styles of pronunciation

All people have different ways of speaking, this is expressed by using different styles of pronunciation depending on the situations, that is the choice of certain vocabulary and grammatical structures will depend on the formality or informality of the circumstances.

In this respect, Finch and Ortiz (1982: 82) argue that “We make a series of phonetic adjustments which include a great complexity of features such as *tempo* (or speech of

⁵ Pourhosein, A. (2002: 120). *A Study of Factors Affecting EFL Learners' English Pronunciation Learning and the Strategies for Instruction*. International Journal of Humanities and Social Science. Department of English Language Translation. Iran. Recuperated from: http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_2_No_3_February_2012/17.pdf.



delivery), *rhythm* (or regularity of prominent syllables and words), *continuity* (or place and length of pauses), *muscular tension* (in the form of articulatory precision), *gradation* (weakening of structural words), *compression*, *elision*, and *assimilation*.”

They also propose and describe three styles of pronunciation:⁶

a) Formal

It is characterized by slow tempo, precise articulation, and high frequency of accented words. Its use is limited to very specific occasions, such as formal recitations, church services, etc. The learner should under no circumstances be tempted to adopt it for normal, everyday use, in spite of its extreme clarity.

b) Unhurried Colloquial

Of all the conversational styles, it is that maximally clear, slow one, which makes most use of the ‘ideal’ citations forms, i.e, those appearing in pronouncing dictionaries. The deliberately slow tempo that characterizes this style requires a high frequency of accented words, a minimum number of contextual assimilations and elisions of the type described above, and precise articulation. Depending on the age of the speaker, it may also include word internal elisions and assimilations.

c) Informal Colloquial

It is that conversational style which can be placed at the most informal end of the scale, and generally referred to as ‘rapid’ colloquial. The term ‘rapid’, however, must not imply that this style is simply a quicker version of Unhurried Colloquial, although its tempo is, on the average, faster. Rather it is the result of a series of phonetic simplifications of the ideal citation forms. These simplifications take the form of a maximum number of assimilations, elisions and compressions, lax, slurred articulations, and a reduction of accented words.

⁶ Finch, D. and Ortiz, H. (1982: 83-84). “A Course in English Phonetics for Spanish Speakers”. London



2.3 Connected speech

Some authors like Brown & Hilferty (2006),⁷ consider connected speech as a phenomenon in spoken language that collectively includes phonological processes such as reduction, elision, intrusion, assimilation, and contraction, and a number of research studies have shown that learning connected speech can help learners comprehend authentic natural speech used by native speakers.

According to Clarey and Dixson (1963), this phenomenon results from a simple law of economy, whereby the organs of speech, instead of taking a new position for each sound, tend to draw sounds together with the purpose of saving time and energy.⁸

Therefore, we may argue that connected speech is a phonological phenomenon which commonly refers to reduced speech and into this phenomenon we can find processes of elisions, reduction, assimilation, linking and others which are used by native speakers in their oral speech. It is also stated by some that connected speech features reinforce the regularity of English rhythm and help preserve its stress-timed rhythm.

2.4 Features of connected speech

The features of connected speech to be considered and detailed widely in this section are linking ‘r’, elision (vowels and consonants) and assimilation (word internal and word boundary)

⁷ Authors cited by Yoon Ah Seong. *Evaluating an instrument for assessing connected speech performance using facets analysis*. p. 46. University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Recuperated from: http://www.hawaii.edu/sls/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Seong_Yoonah.pdf

⁸ See on <http://www.dlf.ac.th/uploads/train/125507132015214.pdf>



2.4.1 Linking [r]

According to Finch, and Ortiz (1982: 76) “Sometimes the linking process will require modifications at the beginnings and ends of words in connected speech. Such is the case with the so called *linking* /r/, which consists in pronouncing word-final spelling *r* when the next word begins with a vowel (cf. /ˈleɪtə/ ~ /ˈleɪtər `ɒn/).

As stated in previous, we can assume that ‘Linking r’ is a phonological process of connected speech which refers to pronunciation or elision of the sound [r] depending on its context, that is [r] or [re] in word-final position is normally pronounced when the following word immediately begins with a vowel, but it is elided when the next word begins with a consonant. However, it is also important to indicate that when a pause separates word final spelling *r* from a word initial vowel the link is not made; cf. *What’s more I like it ~ What’s more (pause) I like it.*⁹

Word-final position			
water	/ 'wɔ:tə /		
hear	/ hɪə /		
here	/ hɪə /		
Before a consonant	Before a vowel		
water for	/ 'wɔ:tə fɔ: /	The water is	/ ðə 'wɔ:tər ɪz /
Hear my	/ hɪə maɪ /	Hear everything	/ hɪər 'evriθɪŋ /
here down	/ hɪə daʊn /	Here is	/ hɪər ɪz /

It is important to remember that linking [r] (words ended in [r] or [re] in word-final position or before a following consonant has not taken place in most dialects of American English nor in many varieties of British English.

⁹ Finch, D. and Ortiz H. (1982: 76). “A Course in English Phonetics for Spanish Speakers”. London.



2.4.2 Elision of sounds

Elision is another phonological phenomenon which is also characteristic of connected speech, especially and commonly in rapid, casual conversations. This process is introduced by some authors into *simplification*¹⁰ and others like Lass and Spencer use the term *deletion* instead of elision. However, the most important is that this phenomenon concerns with those sounds (one or more vowel or consonant sounds) that are omitted in certain phonological contexts making a word or a phrase easier for the speaker to pronounce, usually in order to simplify the pronunciation which is also considered as economy of articulation.¹¹

According to Moya (2010: 60) this phenomenon consists on the lost of a vowel or consonant in the context of a word.

In this respect, Spencer (1998: 224) states the following:

“Connected speech frequently has fewer segments in it that one might imagine. Both vowels and consonants are elided (deleted) especially in rapid speech. In very fast and casual speech entire syllables can be lost. This process affects some types of word more than others. In particular, function words, such as the, of, auxiliary verbs and so on, tend to be prone to this kind of simplification. However, these have rather special properties which need to be treated separately.”

As we can see above, vowels, consonants and even syllables may be elided in some words in certain contexts of connected speech.

¹⁰ Tench, P. (2011). *“Transcribing the sound of English”*. Cambridge University Press. Recuperated from: <https://teflabbottabad.files.wordpress.com/2013/08/paul-tench.pdf>.

¹¹ Finch, D. and Ortiz, H. (1982: 77). *“A Course in English Phonetics for Spanish Speakers”*. London.



2.4.2.1 Vowel elision

This is a kind of simplification in connected speech that is characteristic of contracted forms and, as Finch states, mainly affects the weak, centralized one /ə, ɪ, ʊ/ when these are preceded or followed by consonants in unaccented syllables. These vowels may be elided at initial or medial position but not in final position. In order to understand this better it is necessary to explain it in detail:

2.4.2.1.1 Vowel elision in word-initial position

Vowels that may be elided in initial position are /ə/ and /ɪ/. Let us consider first the elision of /ə/.

The sound /ə/ is elided when followed by a continuant and preceded by a word-final consonant. (“Compensation for the loss of /ə/ frequently being made by the syllabicity of the continuant”) Gimson (1977: 297).¹² For instance:

Word	Phonological transcription	Elision
a. not alone	/ nɒt ə'ləʊn /	[nɒt_!ləʊn]
b. get another	/ get ə'nʌðə /	[get_!nʌðə]

On the other hand, when a word initial schwa /ə/ is preceded by a vowel sound, it may coalesce with the preceding vowel.¹³

Word	Phonological transcription	Elision
a. try again	/ traɪ ə'gen /	[traɪ_'gen]
b. go away	/ gəʊ ə'weɪ /	[gəʊ_'weɪ]

¹² Mentioned by AbdAli Nayif Hasan, “A phonological study of elision in standard English and standard arabic”, recuperated from: <http://www.iasj.net/iasj?func=fulltext&aId=54696>

¹³ See on <http://www.iasj.net/iasj?func=fulltext&aId=54696>



In the same way, Rajimwale (2009) indicates that schwa /ə/ in weak syllables is elided as in:

Word	Phonological transcription	Elision
a. about	/ ə'baʊt /	[_'baʊt]
b. along	/ ə'lɒŋ /	[_'lɒŋ]

Otherwise, the vowel /ɪ/ may also be elided in initial position. In this respect, Spencer (1998: 227) considers vowel elision like complete vowel reduction and states the following: “Vowel reduction may not only give rise to the creation of syllabic sonorants, we may also encounter syllabic obstruents. This is particularly common with phrases begin *it’s*”. For instance:

Phrase	Elision	No elision
a. it’s the way	[tsðəweɪ]	([ɪtsðəweɪ])
b. it’s considered	[tskŋsɪdəd]	([ɪtskŋsɪdəd])
c. it’s not	[tsnɒt]	([ɪtsnɒt])
d. photography	[fɪtəgrəfi]	([ɪfətəgrəfi])

Spencer also considers vowel drop from function words in the following phrases:

Phrase	Elision
a. two to three	[tutθri:]
b. to meet	[tmi:t]
c. a week or two ago	[əwi:ktu:gou]
d. over the years	[ouvdəjə:z]

Taken from data collected by Brown (1977: 68)¹⁴

¹⁴ Spencer, A. (1998: 226). *PHONOLOGY*.



According to Lass (1984: 187) this phonological phenomenon, elision in word-initial position, is considered as *aphaeresis* and it consists in an initial deletion. For instance: *I am ~ I'm, I have ~ I've*.¹⁵

2.4.2.1.2 Vowel elision in word-medial position

This is a phonological context of elision which also adopt the name of *syncopation* according to Lass (1985: 187), who states the following: “syncopation is formative-internal deletion: the term is most frequently used for vowel loss, but some writers extend it to consonants as well. We can see the results of syncopations in comparisons of American and British forms of certain words: /sɛkrɪtəri/ vs. /sɛkrɪtri/ ‘secretary’, /dɪkʃənəri/ vs. /dɪkʃnəri/ ‘dictionary’, etc.”.

Vowels that may be elided in word medial position are /ə, ɪ, ʊ/ but it is important to mention that there are more cases of elision of /ə/ than /ɪ, ʊ/ in word medial position as we will see in the following pages.

2.4.2.1.3 Vowel elision with syllabic consonants

Elision of /ə/ in word medial position may cause syllabicity of the consonants /n, l, r/. In this respect, and specifically in the case of syllabic /n/ by elision of /ə/, Finch and Ortiz (1982: 79) give the following examples:

1. /-t̩/	2. /-t̩C/	3. /-d̩C/
certain curtain pattern tartan	importance remittance blatant potent	guidance pedant prudent student

¹⁵ Lass, R. (1985: 187). “*Phonology: An introduction to basic concepts*”. Cambridge University Press.



4. /-sŋC /	5. /-fŋ /	6. /-fŋC /
absence nonsense adjacent absent	caution emotion magician passion	conscience impatience ancient patient
7. /-ʒŋ /	8. /-rŋC /	9. Others
allusion explosion occasion vision	appearance occurrence apparent inherent	golden govern woven medicine

According to Finch and Ortiz, in previous chart, main exceptions in groups 1 to 3 are Latin, and Saturn, and possibly words with an accent on the ante-penultimate syllable, e.g. *competence, confidence, relevance*.

These authors also state that “When any of the nasals precedes the sequences /-dən, -tən/, schwa must not be elided, with the only possible exception of *acquaintance*”

/-ndən, -ntən/	e.g. abandon, London, attendance, correspondence, dependant, redundant, badminton, lantern, sentence, accountant, repentant.
/-ŋdən, -ŋtən/	e.g. Huntingdon, Kingdom, Paddington, Washington.
/-mdən, -mtən/	e.g. Camden, Hampton, Northampton, Southampton.

On the other hand, there is also the syllabic /l/ by elision of /ə, ʊ/ as in the following examples:

1. /-kɫ /	2. /-fɫ /	3. /-vɫ /
classical local medical musical	forgetful graceful peaceful powerful	approval arrival interval rival



4. /-s̩/	5. /-z̩/	6. /-ʃ̩/
cancel consul rehearsal universal	diesel disposal nasal refusal	commercial essential official special
7. /-m̩/	8. /-r̩/	9. Others
animal decimal formal normal	barrel moral oral quarrel	chapel verbal hostel vandal legal lethal

Examples taken and modulated from Finch and Ortiz (1982: 79)

The only exceptions are in group 2, with nouns ending in *-ful*, e.g. *pocketful*, *spoonful* which always have /-fʊl/.

2.4.2.1.4 Double vowel elision with two syllabic consonants

The elision of two vowels may produce the syllabicity of two consonants (combinations of /r, n, l/) in the same word. For instance:

liberal /'lɪbɪr̩l/	admiralty /'ædmɪr̩l̩tɪ/	civilization /sɪvɪlaɪ'zeɪʃn̩/
literal /'lɪt̩r̩l/	ordinarily /'ɔdn̩r̩li/	concentration /kɒnsn̩'treɪʃn̩/
optional /'ɒpʃn̩l/	governmental /gʌv̩n̩'mentl̩/	presentation /prezn̩'teɪʃn̩/

Examples taken and modulated from Finch and Ortiz (1982: 80)

2.4.2.1.5 Vowel elision without syllabicity of consonants

According to Finch and Ortiz (1982: 80), vowel elision in word-medial position does not necessarily produce syllabicity of consonants like in the following words:



aspirin	decorative	generous	original	venerable
comfortable	definitely	literature	reasonable	preference
comparable	father-in-law	moderate	temperature	federal
considerable	generally	opening	vegetable	suffering
				history

2.4.2.1.6 Lexicalized forms with vowel elision

Some words present two forms of pronunciation, one with complete vowel reduction (elision) and another with more careful or unreduced pronunciation. In this respect, Spencer (1996: 225-226) provides some examples and states that the words with complete vowel reduction have become effectively lexicalized making that the full pronunciation be relatively unusual at all speech rates.

word	complete vowel reduction (elision)	careful pronunciation
a. secretary	[sɛkrətɹɪ]	([sɛkrətəɹɪ])
b. promontory	[prɒməntɹɪ]	([prɒməntəɹɪ])
c. veterinary	[vɛtnəɹɪ]	([vɛtəɹɪnəɹɪ])
d. different	[dɪfrɪnt]	([dɪfərənt])

Spencer (1996: 226) gives as well some examples in which vowel drop may also produce a variety of consonant clusters like in the following words:

1.

word	complete vowel reduction (elision)	careful pronunciation
a. correct	[krɛkt]	([kərəkt])
b. belief	[bli:f]	([bɪli:f])
c. police	[pli:s]	([pəli:s])
d. saliva	[slaɪvə]	([səlaɪvə])



2.

word	complete vowel reduction (elision)	careful pronunciation
a. potato	[ptetou]	([pətetou])
b. tomorrow	[tmərou]	([təmərou])
c. malaria	[mlɛ:riə]	([məlɛ:riə])
d. fanatics	[fnætiks]	([fənætiks])

Regarding to previous words, Spencer clarifies that “in examples a, b (in this case chart 2) the initial plosive (/p t/ respectively) remains (slightly) aspirated, an indication of the ‘real’ syllable structure of the words. These clusters also have an alternative, indeed, rather common, pronunciation, in which the reduction of the vowel of the first syllable is compensated for by rendering the following consonant syllabic. Thus, there would be a minimal contrast in the onset of the words such as *police* and *please*: in *police* we would have a pronunciation something like [pʃi:s] as opposed to *please* [pl:iʒ]”.

2.4.2.2 Consonant elision

Consonant sounds may be elided in two contexts: at word internal and at word boundary. There are some consonant sounds like /t, d, k, p, h/¹⁶ which may be elided but the most common consonants elided in connected speech at word internal and at word boundary are /t/ (cluster alveolar voiceless) and /d/ (cluster alveolar voiced) when these are preceded and followed by other consonants.

2.4.2.2.1 Elision of /t, d/ in word internal

According to Finch and Ortiz (1982: 80) “Elision of consonants inside words mainly affects alveolars, especially when preceded and followed by other consonants,

¹⁶ Finch, D. and Ortiz, H., *A Course in English Phonetics for Spanish Speakers*, 1982, pg.



e.g. handsome /'hænsəm/, postpone /pə'spəʊn/, note also asthma /'æsmə/, asked /ɑst/, prohibition /,prəʊ'biʃn/.” For instance:

word	consonant elision	word	consonant elision
grandma	['grænma:]	directly	[dɪ'rekli]
grandpa	['grænpa:]	postcard	['pəʊskɑ:d]
sandpaper	['sænpeɪpə(r)]	postman	['pəʊsmən]
sandwich	['sænwɪtʃ]	postscript	['pəʊskrɪpt]

2.4.2.2.2 Elision of /t, d/ at word boundary

According to Lass (1985: 187), this phonological process also received the name of *apocopation* which consist in the loss of a final element. Lass also establishes that “Apocope of consonants is also quite common: in many varieties of English, for instance; final /t/ deletes before a word beginning with another consonant, as in [læst^ham] ‘last time’; low-stress words may also lose their finals, as in *and, of*”.

This phenomenon of elision of /t, d/ is called by Spencer (1998: 224) as a general process of *Cluster Simplification* and he also states that normally the simplification takes places when sounds like /t, d/ are flanked by consonants.

1.

phrase	careful pronunciation	cluster simplification (elision)
first three	[fɜ:stθri:]	[fɜ:sθri:]
last night	[lɑ:stnaɪt]	[lɑ:snait]
the fact that	[ðəfæktðæt]	[ðəfækðæt]
interest of the	[ɪntrestəvðə]	[ɪntresəðə]



2.

phrase	careful pronunciation	cluster simplification (elision)
discharged prisoners	[dɪstʃɑ:dʒdprɪzənəz]	[dɪstʃɑ:dʒprɪzənəz]
hurled twenty (yards)	[hɜ:lɪdtwenti]	[hɜ:lɪtwenti]
nothing stands still	[nʌθɪŋstændzstɪl]	[nʌθɪŋstænstɪl]
World Wild Life Fund	[wɜ:ldwaɪldlaɪffʌnd]	[wɜ:lwaɪlaɪffʌnd]
banned for life	[bændfələɪf]	[bæŋfələɪf]

Examples from the corpus of British English collected by Brown (1977: 61ff) from television newscasters mentioned¹⁷

In chart 2, we may observe cases in which the coronal is elided even being the past/participle morpheme like in the words *discharged* and *hurled*.

In the same way, Finch and Ortiz (1982: 80) mention that “The word final alveolars /t, d/ are generally elided when preceded and followed by a consonant, especially when the following is a stop”. e. g.:

Elision of word final alveolars /t, d/			
next turn [nekstɛ:n]	best thing [besθɪŋ]	cash <u>e</u> d them [kæʃðəm]	served drinks [sɛ:vdrɪŋks]
next stop [neksstɒp]	soft chair [sɒftʃeə(r)]	send two [sentu:]	couldn't she [ˈkʊdnʃi:]
first day [fɛ:sdeɪ]	worst joke [wɜ:sdʒəʊk]	cold day [kəʊldeɪ]	didn't call [dɪdnkɔ:l]
last talk [lɑ:stɔ:k]	soft drink [sɒfdrɪŋk]	caused trouble [kɔ:z'trʌbəl]	rubbed down [rʌbdəʊn]

¹⁷ Spencer, A. (1998: 224). *Phonology*.



2.4.3 Coarticulation

According to Pennington (1985: 26) “Coarticulation means that one sound, rather than being produced entirely distinctly from other sounds with which it occurs, tends to blend imperceptibly into the next”.

2.4.4 Process of assimilation

Roca and Johnson (1999: 34) states that “When we speak, that is in connected speech, a sound can change its manner of articulation, point of articulation and voicing by influence of another sound, this is a phonological process known as assimilation. “Contamination” of a sound by other (usually adjacent) sounds is commonplace in language, and is technically known as the ASSIMILATION”.

The process of assimilation, as Spencer (1996: 58) states, can take place in two directions: right-to-left (regressive, anticipatory assimilation) or left to right (progressive, perseverative assimilation).

Lass (1985: 171) states the following: “Broadly, in **assimilation** one segment becomes more like (or identical to) another (or two become each other)”.

According to previous definitions stated by some authors, and in a concrete way, we may say that process of assimilation refers to those sounds which are influenced by others or each others in connected speech producing a change in manner of articulation, point of articulation and voice of a determined sound.¹⁸

In the following examples we see how a sound may vary by influence of another:

¹⁸ *Sistema fonológico de la lengua Inglesa*. Recuperated from: <http://webs.ono.com/instibaleares/PHONETICS.pdf>



Phrase	Careful pronunciation	Assimilation
a. What you want	[wɒtju:wɒnt]	[wɒtʃu:wɒnt]
b. Would you	[wɒdjʊ:]	[wɒddʒʊ:]
c. In case you	[ɪŋkeɪsjʊ:]	[ɪŋkeɪʃʊ:]
d. Has your...	[hæzjɔ:]	[hæzʒɔ:]

Data in 6.1, based on Gimson (1980: 296)¹⁹

Regarding to previous chart, Spencer clarifies the following:

“The examples in the second transcription represent reasonably careful pronunciation, though not the hyper-careful pronunciation shown in the first column of transcriptions. There are several points to notice here. First, there is a process affecting sequences of coronals, /t d s z/ plus /j/. Second, in each case the coronal sound is turned into an alveopalatal. Third, the /j/ disappears. Fourth, the alveopalatal is long (note that a long affricate will tend to sound rather like a plosive followed by an affricate, as in examples a, b of the chart above).

The core process is again a type of assimilation. The coronal sounds are turned into a type of palatal, hence we can call this process Coronal Palatalization. This is a slight misnomer, since the coronals are turned into alveopalatals, and not genuine palatals. Moreover, the plosives are turned into affricates, not alveopalatal stops. However, this is natural, in that affricates universally tend to behave like a kind of plosive and there is a very strong tendency for palatal or alveopalatal stops to be affricated.”

This process is summarized as:

coronal obstruent → alveopalatal / ____palatal glide

The following chart shows examples in which the sound /n/ is influenced in its point of articulation (alveolar) by other obstruent sounds depending on the phonological context.

¹⁹ Spencer, A. (1998: 201). *Phonology*.



Context	Assimilation	Place of articulation
in pairs	[im]	bilabial
in Brighton	[im]	
in fact	[iŋ]	labiodental
in these	[in]	dental
in turn	[in]	alveolar
in church	[iɹ]	palate-alveolar
in German	[iɹ]	
in shares	[iɹ]	
in York	[iɹ]	palatal
in Kent	[iŋ]	velar

The nasal shares its place of articulation features with the following obstruent²⁰

2.4.4.1 Assimilation of consonants in word internal

The following are examples of words in which the assimilated variant can be considered the normal form for very many speakers. The non-assimilated variant may be regarded as belonging to a more studied, conservative style of speech (Finch and Ortiz 1982: 81).

/tʃ/ ~ /tj/

mature

Christian

accentuate

situation

importunate

/dʒ/ ~ /dj/

education

individual

appreciation

/ʃ/ ~ /sj, sɪ/

association

glacial

²⁰ Spencer, A. (1998: 149). *Phonology*.



In the following cases, the assimilated forms are the only recommendation for the learner to adopt²¹:

/ tʃ /			
Phonological context	Lexical assimilated variant	Phonological context	Lexical assimilated variant
bi/umen	[ˈbɪtʃəmən]	fortune	[ˈfɔ:tʃu:n]
eventually	[ɪˈventʃuəli]	saturation	[ˌsætʃəˈreɪʃn]
factual	[ˈfæktʃuəl]	statue	[ˈstætʃu:]
fatuous	[ˈfætʃuəs]	virtue	[ˈvɜ:tʃu:]

/ dʒ /	
Phonological context	Lexical assimilated variant
gradual	[ˈgrædʒuəl]
graduate (n.)	[ˈgrædʒuət]
procedure	[prəˈsi:dʒə(r)]

/ ʃ /			
Phonological context	Lexical assimilated variant	Phonological context	Lexical assimilated variant
appreciate	[əˈpri:ʃiət]	negotiate	[nɪˈgəʊʃiət]
associate	[əˈsəʊʃiət]	sensual	[ˈsenʃuəl]
depreciation	[dɪˌpri:ʃiˈeɪʃn]	sensuous	[ˈsenʃuəs]
differentiation	[ˌdɪfəˈrenʃiˈeɪʃn]	sexual	[ˈsekʃuəl]
issue	[ˈɪʃu:]	tissue	[ˈtɪʃu:]

²¹ Finch, D. and Ortiz, H. (1982: 81). *A Course in English Phonetics for Spanish Speakers*.



2.4.4.2 Assimilation of consonants at word boundary

When we talk about assimilation of consonants at word boundary we are referring to those sounds in word-final position that change in point of articulation by influence of a following sound in word-initial position. This phonological process, as Roca and Johnson (1999: 37) state, is taking into account within regressive assimilation. For instance:

<i>tha</i> [p] <i>pen</i>	<i>tha</i> [k] <i>can</i>	<i>tha</i> [t] <i>table</i>
<i>tha</i> [p] <i>box</i>	<i>tha</i> [k] <i>gate</i>	<i>tha</i> [t] <i>door</i>
<i>re</i> [b] <i>pen</i>	<i>re</i> [g] <i>can</i>	<i>re</i> [d] <i>table</i>
<i>re</i> [b] <i>box</i>	<i>re</i> [g] <i>gate</i>	<i>re</i> [d] <i>door</i>

Regarding to this process, Finch and Ortiz (1982: 81) states the following: “This type of assimilation is often referred to as juxtapositional or contextual. The English consonant sounds most easily influenced by adjacent sounds in connected speech are the alveolars /t, d, s, z, n/”.

a.

Sound	Assimilated to	Influenced by	Example	
/t/	/p/	/p, b, m/	that plan	/ðæp 'plæn/
/d/	/b/		you'd better	/jub 'betə(r)/
/n/	/m/		on purpose	/ɒm 'pɜ:pəs/

b.

/t/	/tʃ/	/j/	last year	/'lɑ:stʃiə/
/d/	/dʒ/		behind you	/bɪ'hɑ:ndʒu/



c.

/s/	/ʃ/	/ʃ, j/	her voice shook	/hɛ vɔɪʃ 'ʃʊk/
			in case you do	/ɪŋ 'keɪʃ ju du/ /ɪŋ 'keɪʃ ju du/
/z/	/ʒ/		here's yours	/hɪəʒ 'jɔʒ/ /hɪəʒ 'ʒɔʒ/
			he was shot	/hi wəʒ 'ʃɒt/

d.

/t/	/k/	/k, g/	hot cakes	/hɒk 'keɪks/
			He won't go.	/hi wəʊŋk 'gəʊ/
/d/	/g/		I should go.	/aɪ ʃʊd 'gəʊ/
/n/	/ŋ/		his own car	/hɪz əʊŋ 'kɑ/

Examples taken and modulated from Finch and Ortiz (1982: 81)

2.4.5 Blending

Blending is a process that concerns with compounding two lexemes as bases (rarely more). Blends are lexemes formed by means of fusing two already existing lexemes into a new one, where the stems of the initial lexemes have often been shortened. For instance in English language we have the words: *smog* ~ *smoke* → *fog*.²²

According to Fradin (2013: 7), states that “in blending Phonology is not strictly limited to phonological matters (to determine the phonic shape of derived lexemes) since it has a direct bearing on the way the source constituents combine to form the blend.”

Fradin also argues that blends are classified in function of three operations:

²² See Fradin, B. (2013: 1). *Blending*. Recuperated from: http://www.llf.cnrs.fr/sites/llf.cnrs.fr/files/biblio/22.Blending5_0.pdf



a) Truncation can be distributed over the constituents of the blend or limited to just one. Truncation means here that a segment of a source lexeme is without correlate in the blend.

b) Linearization of constituents. The constituents of a blend are linearly ordered when no part of a blend correlated to the first source lexeme needs to be processed after parts belonging to the second source lexeme have been processed (where a part includes at the least one onset).

c) Overlap of constituents. Two phonologically similar segments overlap when both appear in the source lexemes whereas only one remains in the blend. The overlap can be local or global. Although overlap includes contiguous segments in most languages, this is not always so.

On the other, according to Hill, C. & Beebe, L. M. (1980) cited by Brinton, blending refers to any two-word sequences where the word boundary is blurred. Typically, blending consists of contractions and blends.

Contractions are those word boundaries that have a conventionalized written form: *we have* → *we've*, *he is* → *he's*, *I am* → *I'm*.

Blends are typically contracted spoken forms that do not have a conventional written form: *there are* → *there're*, *who will* → *who'll*.²³

2.5 Accentuation

Dubois and others (1979: 8) state the following about accentuation:

²³ See Brinton, D. *Introduction to Connected Speech*. Recuperated from: <http://www.dlf.ac.th/uploads/train/125507132015214.pdf>



“En fonética, la acentuación consiste en destacar una o varias sílabas en el interior de una palabra o grupo de palabras pronunciándolas con una característica fónica que las distingue de otras: mayor fuerza espiratoria (acento de energía) o timbre más agudo (tono*)”.*

In phonetics, the accentuation entails pointing out one or more syllables at word internal or group of words pronouncing these with a phonic characteristic which distinguishes them from others: higher strength in voice (energy accent) and higher pitch (tone).²⁴

When we talk about accentuation it is pertinent to mention that there are four important components to consider, these are pitch, quality, quantity and stress. In this respect, Finch (1982: 87) establishes the following: “When we speak we give more emphasis to some parts of an utterance than to others. We can make a syllable stand out with respect to its neighbouring syllables in a word, and some words stand out with respect to the rest of the words in a longer utterance. Let us consider those elements that produce *prominence* at syllable level: *pitch, quality, quantity* and *stress*”.

Pitch, articulatorily pitch depends mainly on the tension and consequent rate of vibration of the vocal folds. Auditorily, it is that quality of a sound, in terms of which it can be placed on a scale running from high to low, or acute to grave.

Quality, articulatorily, depends on the shape of the resonators, that is it depends on the vibration of the vocal folds. Auditorily, it is that feature in terms of which two sounds, similarly presented and having the same loudness, quantity and pitch, are perceived as dissimilar, e.g. the difference between /s/ and /ʃ/, or /i/ and /e/.

²⁴ Own free literal translation



Quantity, auditorily, it is that property of a sound that enables us, using only our ears, to place it on a scale going from long to short. From the perceptual point of view it is referred to as *length*.

Stress, from the articulatory point of view, it is caused by greater muscular energy and breathe force. Auditorily, it is perceived as *loudness*, and can be defined as that property of a sound which enables us, using only our ears, to place it on a scale going from loud to soft. So the speaker feels this feature in one way – extra energy – and the listener hears it in another way – extra loudness.

2.5.1 Broad definition of stress

Montaño (2006: 54) argues the following:

“In many languages, including Spanish, one syllable or some syllables in the word are relatively more prominent than others. A syllable which is more prominent than the other syllables is called stressed. There are languages, however, in which the place of stress is fixed, and this stress is predictable in the phonetic structure of the word. The stress has also a linguistic function which is called distinctive function, which according to its position in the word makes that the meaning of this changes”. (Own free literal translation)

On the other hand, Quilis and Fernández (1969: 153) states that:

“The stress is a prosodic feature, phonological, whose purpose is to put on relief a sound or group of sounds. To give luster to a syllable or a sound the stress disposes of three elements: 1º) the intensity, 2º) the tone or musical pitch, 3º) duration”.



2.5.2 English stress

Stress in English language is commonly considered by some as a level of prosodic organization larger than the syllable.²⁵

In a broad way, Törkenczy M.²⁶ argues the following:

“Stress is a suprasegmental feature which is not realized on a single segment, but it extends over more than one segment: it is associated with a syllable.

Stress is not an absolute property: it is the relative prominence of syllables. In contrast to features like [voice] or [coronal], whose value is determinable independently of the environment of the segment, it is not possible to tell whether a particular syllable is stressed or unstressed without comparing it to other (neighbouring) syllables”.

In the same way, Trujillo F.²⁷ says:

*“Stress, as a sound phenomenon, can be studied from two points of view: **production** and **perception**. The production of stressed syllables is said to imply a greater **muscular energy** than the production of unstressed syllables. From the perceptive point of view, stressed syllables are **prominent**. Prominence is the sum of different factors such as loudness, length, pitch and quality”.*

²⁵ Roca, I. and Johnson, W. (1999: 294). *A Course in Phonology*.

²⁶ Törkenczy, M. *English Phonological analysis: Word Stress*. p. 2. Recuperated from: <http://seas3.elte.hu/analysis/analysis6.pdf>.

²⁷ Trujillo, F. *English Phonetics and Phonology*. P. 1. Recuperated from: <http://www.ugr.es/~ftsaez/fonetica/stress.pdf>.



2.5.3 Syllable prominence and distinctive function of stress

In English language there are syllables which are more prominent than others and this prominence, as Spencer (1998: 240) is manifested in a number of ways:

“Firstly, a prominent syllable is generally louder than surrounding ones; secondly, it is often longer in duration than similar, non-prominent syllables; thirdly, the constituent sounds of a prominent syllable, especially its onset consonants, are often more clearly or forcefully enunciated than those in a less prominent one. Finally, a prominent syllable is often the locus of pitch movement (accent), characterizing an intonation contour. This means that a stressed syllable will often be one pronounced on a particularly high (or sometimes particularly low) pitch”.

In this respect, and in order to illustrate the prominence of syllable, Roca and Johnson (1999: 295) give the following examples:

INcrease	inCREASE
CONtest	conTEST
CONtrast	contrast

The examples above shows that the distinctive function of stress in English language is the change of meaning that may produce in a word. In other words, stress can be used to establish a distinction in meaning between two words, where the only difference is the place where stress is shown.

2.5.4 Types of stress

In English language we may mention two types of stress. These are called by some author as primary and second stress.



Concerning this, Trujillo F. states:

“There are three possibilities of stress in a word: a primary stress, characterized by prominence and, basically, by a rise-fall tone; a secondary stress, weaker than the primary stress but stronger than that of the unstressed syllables (,photo'graphic); and unstressed syllables, defined by the absence of any prominence, becoming then the background against the prominent stressed syllables appear. Unstressed syllables normally have the short closed vowels /i/ or /u/ and the schwa”.

2.5.4.1 Primary stress

According to Törkenczy, M.²⁸, *primary stress* is marked by an acute accent on top and before a vowel or consonant sound. The phonetic symbol of primary stress is / ' / before the first segment of a syllable in transcription. For instance: the word classify may be transcribed like /'klæsɪfaɪ/.

2.5.4.2 Secondary stress

In the same way, *secondary stress* is marked by a grave accent below and before a vowel or consonant sound. The phonetic symbol of secondary stress is / , / before the first segment of a syllable in transcription, e.g. the first syllable of /,klæsɪfɪ'keɪʃn/

2.6 Accentuation of simple words

This concept refers to the intensity of voice that we give to some syllables within simple words, that is words which have only one root adding to it affixes (prefix and/or suffixes)

²⁸ See on: <http://seas3.elte.hu/analysis/analysis6.pdf>.



In order to have a clearer idea about the last, let us take the definition and examples given by Finch (1982: 90 - 93)

“By simple words we mean those made up of roots alone or with the addition of affixes. It is difficult to establish rules for the accentuation of simple words in English, so students should learn the accentual pattern of each new word just as they must learn its pronunciation”.

2.6.1 Two-syllable words

a) Primary stress + unstressed syllable

'teacher	'apple	'illnes	'senate	'Monday
'husband	'chocolate	'colour	'tittle	'region
'circus	'island	'preface	'mountain	'entrance

b) Primary stress + prominent syllable

'female	'empire	'conduct	'expert	'epoch
'access	'colleague	'climax	'aspect	'forecast
'fortune	'borrow	'contact	'contrast	'proverb

c) Unstressed syllable + primary stress

a'gain	a'long	fa'tigue	ca'reer	a'bove
re'mark	be'lieve	ca'ress	pa'trol	of'fence

d) Prominent syllable + primary stress

can'teen	ar'cade	car'toon	bou'tique
bru'nette	cham'pagne	aug'ment	al'tough
cam'paign	sham'poo	do'nate	tech'nique



e) Secondary stress + primary stress

,un'known	,Chi'nese	,de'code	,non-'stop
,mis'use	,mayon'naise	,fare'well	,eigh'teen
,else'where	,re'write	,re'build	,vio'lin

2.6.2 Three-syllable words

a) Primary stress + two unstressed syllables

'fortunate	'lunatic	'comparable	'generally
'catholic	'literature	'necessary	'decorative
'subsequent	'commentary	'comfortable	'fashionable

b) Primary stress + unstressed syllable + prominent syllable

Primary stress + prominent syllable + unstressed syllable

'corridor	'absolute	'catalogue	'caravan
'handicap	'paragraph	'subtitle	'corpuscle
'pullover	'cucumber	'triangle	'rectangle

c) Unstressed syllable + primary stress + unstressed syllable

im'portant	be'haviour	con'fusion	a'bandon
ja'lopy	sub'stantial	ad'vantage	de'terminate
de'velop	con'sider	ho'rizon	hi'storic

d) Prominent syllable + primary stress + unstressed syllable

Unstressed syllable + primary stress + prominent syllable

am'bitious	fan'tastic	par'tition	au'thentic
op'tician	trans'mission	to'mato	to'bacco
at'taché	di'stribute	fi'ancée	con'tribute



e) Secondary stress + primary stress + unstressed syllable

,sub'standard	,pre'judgement	,re'marry	,non-'fiction
,scien'tific	,non'smoker	,up'country	,sub'conscious

f) Secondary stress + unstressed syllable + primary stress

,garan'tee	,seven'teen	,ciga'rette	,maga'zine
,pictu'resque	,servi'ette	,recom'mend	,under'stand
,oran'geade	,millio'naire	,refu'gee	,volun'teer

2.6.3 Four-syllable words

a) Primary stress + three unstressed syllables

'category	'arbitrary	'delicacy	'eligible
'preferable	'irritable	'memorable	'testimony
'ceremony	'accuracy	'imitative	'matrimony

b) Primary stress + unstressed syllable + prominent syllable + unstressed syllable,

Primary stress + two unstressed syllables + prominent syllable

'centimetre	'commentator	'calculator	'demonstrator
'architecture	'operator	'characterize	'capitalize
'aristocrat	'regularize	'systematize	'automobile

c) Unstressed syllable + primary stress + two unstressed syllables

ge'ography	o'bligatory	com'bustible	ac'companiment
de'monstrative	la'boratory	pre'paratory	cer'tificate
a'rithmetic	ad'vertisement	par'ticular	de'plorable



d) Unstressed syllable + primary stress + unstressed syllable + prominent syllable

Prominent syllable + primary stress + two unstressed syllables

pre'occupied	ap'preciate	en'thusiast	a'pologize
si'militude	e'conomize	or'thography	au'thority
tee'totaller	mor'tality	di'ameter	an'tiquity

e) Secondary stress + unstressed syllable + primary stress + unstressed syllable

,vari'ation	,circu'lation	,expla'nation	,ele'mentary
,demon'stration	,cafe'teria	,idi'otic	,ado'lescence
,conver'sation	,advan'tageous	,inter'ference	,emi'gration

f) Secondary stress + prominent syllable + primary stress + unstressed syllable

,accep'tation	,conur'bation	,expec'tation	,retar'dation
,depart'mental	,relo'cation	,demar'cation	,impor'tation

2.6.4 Five-syllable words

a) Primary stress + four unstressed syllables

'capitalism	'puritanism	'figuratively	'cannibalism
'monosyllable	'radicalism	'qualitatively	'speculatively

b) Unstressed syllable + primary stress + three unstressed syllables

i'nevitable	ca'tholicism	in'adequacy	com'municative
ad'ministrative	me'tabolism	im'practicable	vo'cabulary

c) Unstressed syllable + primary stress + unstressed syllable + prominent syllable + unstressed syllable

ac'celerator	re'frigerator	in'cinerator	so'phisticated
en'thusiasm	ad'ministrator	in'gratiating	a'pologizing



d) Secondary stress + unstressed syllable + primary stress + two unstressed syllables

,curi'osity ,ari'stocracy ,archae'ology ,uni'versity
,peda'gogical ,ide'ology ,capa'bility ,irre'sistible
,possi'bility ,inex'plicable ,incon'siderable ,ambi'guity

e) Secondary stress + unstressed syllable + primary stress + unstressed syllable + prominent syllable

,diffe'rentiate ,under'estimate ,reha'bilitate ,decon'taminate

f) Secondary stress + two unstressed syllables + primary stress + unstressed syllable

,classifi'cation ,characte'ristic ,Mediter'anean ,qualifi'cation

g) Unstressed syllable + secondary stress + unstressed syllable + primary stress + unstressed syllable

con,tinu'ation con,side'ration ap,preci'ation en,thusi'astic
pro,nunci'ation ab,brevi'ation as,soci'ation e,xami'nation

h) Two secondary stresses + unstressed syllable + primary stress + unstressed syllable

,pre,dispo'sition ,pre,occu'pation ,self-,preser'vation
,pre,fabri'cation ,re,valu'ation ,mis,calcu'lation

2.6.5 Six-syllable words

a) Secondary stress + unstressed syllable + primary stress + three unstressed syllables

,unex'ceptionable ,indi'vidualism ,indi'stinguishable
,ille'gitimacy ,unpro'fessionally ,uni'maginative



b) Secondary stress + two unstressed syllables + primary stress + two unstressed syllables

,irrita'bility ,characte'ristically ,etymo'logical
,disconti'nuity ,unsyste'matically ,sentimen'tality

c) Unstressed syllable + secondary stress + unstressed syllable + primary stress + two unstressed syllables

fa,mili'arity a,vaila'bility in,feri'ority re,sponsi'bility

d) Unstressed syllable + secondary stress + two unstressed syllables + primary stress + unstressed syllable

e,lectrifi'cation so,lidifi'cation ex,perimen'tation
per,sonifi'cation ex,emplifi'cation dis,qualifi'cation

e) Secondary stress + unstressed syllable + secondary stress + unstressed syllable + primary stress + unstressed syllable

,differ,renti'ation ,insu,bordi'nation ,indi,vidua'listic
,mispro,nunci'ation ,misap,propri'ation ,reca,pitu'lacion

2. 6. 6 Seven-syllable words

a) Unstressed syllable + secondary stress + two unstressed syllables + primary stress + two unstressed syllables

in,telligi'bility i,nevita'bility in,vulnera'bility
im,practica'bility un,altera'bility im,pressiona'bility

b) Secondary stress + unstressed syllable + secondary stress + unstressed syllable + primary stress + two unstressed syllables

,irre,sponsi'bility ,indi,vidu'ality ,uncon,vention'ality
,super,fici'ality ,income,pati'bility ,unre,lia'bility



CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The methodology is one of the most important stages in a research which implies a group of organized procedures that are followed to achieve a determined objective.

Tintaya, P. (2008: 153) points out that:

*“...the research methodology is a process of search, creation, organization and disposition of techniques and instruments that make the comprehension of the study object possible”.*²⁹

Consequently, the methodology to be followed is the next:

3.1 Research approach

In order to carry out this research, the qualitative and quantitative approaches will be taken into account.

Hernández (2006: 8) states:

*“The **qualitative approach** uses the data gathering without numerical measure in order to discover or fine research questions in the process of investigation...in other words, the qualitative researches are more based in an inductive process (explore and describe, and generate theoretical perspectives). These go from the particular to general. For example, in a typical qualitative study, the researcher interviews to a person, analyze the data that obtained and makes some conclusions; later, interviews to another person, analyze this new information and reviews the results and conclusions; in the same way,*

²⁹ Own free literal translation



makes and analyze more interviews to understand what he searches. That is, he proceeds case by case, datum by datum, until arrive to a more general perspective” (own free literal translation).

The qualitative approach uses the data collection without numerical measure to describe or tune research questions in the process of interpretation. The qualitative researches are supported more in an inductive process (to explore and to describe, and then to generate theoretical perspectives). These go from the particular to general (Hernandez, 2006: 8).

From this, and relating the aim of this research with the previous definition, we may establish that with this approach we analyzed and described the qualities of the phenomenon studied, which in this case refers to phonological features of connected speech and the use of stress that undergraduate students of English present.

In the most of qualitative studies hypotheses are not proven, these are generated during the process and go refining itself according it is collected more data or these are a result of the study (Hernández 2006: 8). (Own free literal translation)

The **quantitative approach** uses the data gathering for proving hypotheses, with base on the numerical measure and the statistic analysis, in order to establish patterns of behavior and prove theories (Hernández 2006: 5). (Own free literal translation)

Through this approach, it was possible to realize a quantification of the phonological features of connected speech and the use of stress that undergraduate students of English presented.

Thus, the application and combination of both approaches are very useful regarding to description and quantification of the phenomenon studied in this research.



3.2 Research type

The present research is descriptive since this type of research allow firstly, to collect data about any phenomenon and secondly, to study and specify the properties or characteristics of the phenomenon to be analyzed.

Regarding to the research type, Hernandez (2006: 102-103) argues that descriptive studies “...measure, evaluate or collect data about several concepts (variables), aspects, dimensions or components of the phenomenon to investigating”. He also states that: “La investigación descriptiva busca especificar propiedades, características y rasgos importantes de cualquier fenómeno que se analice. Describe tendencias de un grupo o población”

In the same way, Mejía R. (2001: 51) says:

*“The descriptive research, tries to describe situations, specify important properties of people, groups, communities or any phenomenon of study. From the scientific point of view, **describe is measure**, then a series of conclusions is selected, each of these are are measured independently and the same are described. This kind of research does not matter for looking for the origin or causes of the situation, it is centered in measuring with the major possible precision the effect that is manifested of the phenomenon object of observation; in this kind of research, the researcher should have capacity of defining what is going to measure and how is going to get it, for which he requires considerable knowledge of the area that is investigated, in order to formulate the specific questions to be answered”* (Own free literal translation).

All above allow to clarify that this research actually did not have the intention to search the origin or causes of the phenomenon studied but rather to describe the properties and characteristics of our phenomenon studied, that is to identify and describe the phonological features of connected speech and the use of stress at word level in undergraduate students of English at Linguistics and Languages Department.



3.3 Research design

The design of the research allows to present the characteristics of this research in a summarized way.

Before to define the design of the present research, it is important to mention what Tintaya, P. (2008: 154-160) says about the research design:

“The design is a strategy, a group of actions (plan), a methodological approach that direct the data collection process...The designs of research are classified according to specific criteria, like the validity of the results, the temporal dimension of the research, the manipulation degree of the variables, the size of the population, the end of the research and the quality of the results”. (Own free literal translation)

From this, the following criteria will be considered:³⁰

1. According to the validity of the results, the research design, as it was mentioned previously, will be descriptive since the properties of the units of analysis will be measured and collected in order to describe the results.
2. According to the temporal dimension, it will be transversal because this will allow us to know the properties of our units of analysis in a specific moment.
4. According to the manipulation of the variables, the research design is non experimental since into this, the phenomena are observed exactly as they arise in their natural context, for after analyzing them (Hernandez, 2006: 205).
5. According to the quality of the results, the data obtained will be achieved through the combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches since through this research, we describe and quantified the studied phenomena.

³⁰ See Tintaya, P. (2008: 160). *Proyecto de Investigación*.



3.4 Population

Before to specify about the population that is taken into account in this research, it is pertinent to clarify about the importance of the units of analysis. In this respect, Mejía, R. (2001:165) states the following:

*“In all initial background of research it is important to establish who the subjects are or objects that are going to be reason of study, which requires to define as a first step, the definition of the **unit of analysis** or denominated units of study or basic statistic units: these are the **elements** which are going to be measured or reason of study or research”.*

(Own free literal translation)

Tintaya (2008: 201) states that “...the units of observation or analysis are the sources of information, the global object of study, and the necessary data are obtained from them to answer the research questions and contrast the hypotheses with the reality. In other words, the units of observation are entities, individuals or groups to whom the research is realized”.

Once defined the units of analysis, it is important to define the population in which the results will be generalized.

Tintaya (2008: 205) also states that “La población de estudio es el universo o conjunto de sujetos en quienes se pretende efectuar el estudio”.

In that sense, our units of analysis were students of Linguistics and Languages Department of Mayor de San Andrés University and the population taken for this research includes all undergraduate students of English (students of last academic year) at Linguistics and Languages Department.



3.5 Sample

The sample as Rodriguez (1984: 109) cited by Tintaya (2008: 205-206) points out, is “the group of elements that is taken from a population to, after its study, reach to valid conclusions about all the population”.

Mejía, R. (2001: 166) also points out that “Sample, it is denominated to total subset which is the population: it is a group that relatively represents in major degree the characteristics of the population elements”.

When we want to take the sample, it is necessary to take the following criteria:

The sample must be defined in a way in which the results allow: a) to generalize to the rest of the population, or b) to particularize in the deep comprehension of the specific subjects. To make this possible, it is important that the sample accomplishes with the conditions of representativeness, reliability and proportionality (Tintaya, P. 2008: 206).

The sample may be theoretic or specific and empiric or representative. This last is subdivided in non probabilistic and probabilistic sample. Into the non probabilistic sample we have: the sample of volunteer subjects, the sample of experts, the sample of subjects standard and the sample by quotas.³¹

Regarding to non probabilistic sample it is important to mention that the definition of this sample depends on researcher’s decision, he is whom determines the number of the participants or elements of the sample (Tintaya 2008: 209).

Therefore, and for all mentioned above, the sample taken in this research has the following characteristics:

The sample is representative because it has the same properties, conditions, qualities and peculiarities of the population; it is non probabilistic taking into account the sample of

³¹ See Tintaya, P. (2008: 206-213). and Hernández Sampieri.



volunteer participants since the number of the sample was defined by the researcher and the choice of these participants did not depend on the probability, and the sample was shaped by participant who voluntarily acceded to participate in this study, that is students of last academic year at Linguistics and Languages Department of Mayor de San Andrés University.

3.6 Research technique and instrument

Tintaya (2008: 233) states that “The techniques and instruments are the concrete resources which allow investigating, identifying, evaluating and gathering the information that is looked for”.

Thus, in order to achieve the research objectives, the techniques to be applied are: firstly, the application of a test which consists in a proof based on pronunciation including into this, all the relevant aspects related with phonological features of connected speech and the use of stress at word level.

Secondly, as this research concerns with the English oral production of students, it was also been necessary to include an indispensable and essential instrument which was the recording.

Thus, according to the previous mentioned, the concrete instrument to be used were the “**recording test**”, since both instruments were used simultaneously.

Regarding to this instrument, Elkhair Muhammad Idriss Hassan (2014: 37)³² points out:

“Many of the researchers in the previous studies have depended on recordings as a tool of collecting their data e.g. (Ma; Lin, 1994) used audio recordings to investigate to what extent adult native speakers of Mandarin Chinese learning English as a second

³² Elkhair Muhammad Idriss Hassan (2014). *Pronunciation Problems: A Case Study of English Language Students at Sudan University of Science and Technology*. Recuperated from <http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ells/article/viewFile/42575/23274>



language could pronounce five front vowels of English and how difficult this was, and which vowels were most difficult. Recordings were used by (Atwel, 2001) in his project ISLE (Interactive Spoken Language Education). The ISLE project collected a sample of audio recordings of German and Italian learners of English reading aloud selected samples of English text and dialogue to train the speech recognition and to correct pronunciation errors”.

All the aspects concerning the research topic have been applied on a structured and organized way in the test and complemented with the recording which allowed us to obtain more reliable data identifying and analyzing the phonological features of connected speech and the use of stress at word level in undergraduate students of English of Linguistics and Languages Department.

3.7 Procedure

The procedure of the research refers to sequence of actions and operations which are realized during the scope work. This involves the activities which are going to be developed during the process of evaluation and data gathering, such as the contact with the beneficiaries or subjects of investigation, the activities of subjects preparation, the activities of observation, interviews, application of test(s), the realization of group dynamics, etc. (Tintaya, P. 2008: 237).

Therefore, in order to obtain all the data that this research is looking for the next procedure will be followed:

1. The application of the test will be carried out in the same environment, that is this test will be managed in one classroom of Linguistics and Languages Department.
2. The instrument will be applied to undergraduate students of English that is students who are in their last academic year at Linguistics Department in an isolated way (one by one).



3. Students will be requested to read a text written in the test in a spontaneous way. This text will contain the phonological features of connected speech and they will be recorded in order to know if they may identify the phonetic variations in English spoken language.

4. Students will be also requested to read simple words in order to know if they pronounce the English stress in a right way.

5. Students will be requested to read a list of words which may vary in meaning by the position change of the stress. This will allow knowing if students may identify the distinctive function of English stress.

3.8 Instrument validity

This is another important concept to be taken into account. According to Hernandez (2006: 277) “The **validity**, in general terms, refers to the degree in which an instrument actually measures the variable that tries to measure”. He also states that this concept may be understood in terms on three types of validity, which are: content validity, criterion validity and construct validity.

Thus, in order to make that our instrument have this important characteristic which is the validity, we will consider the three types of validity: content, criterion and construct validity.

3.8.1 Content validity

Hernandez, 2006: 278) points out that: “The content validity refers to the degree in which an instrument reflects a specific domain of content of what is measured”.

From this, we can argue that the content validity of the instrument applied in this research must include all the aspects or items to be measured.



Hence, taking into account the previous definition, we can determine that the instrument to be applied in this study is valid since this includes all the items that will be applied to subjects of the sample in order to identify and describe later the data gathered referred to phonological features of connected speech and the use of stress at word level which also are based on the whole indicators expressed in the operationalization of variables.

Specifically and concretely, as this research concerns with phonological features of connected speech and the use of stress at word level, then it includes all of these phonological features: linking features, elision and assimilation process and the use of stress at word boundary taking into account the stress from two-syllable to seven-syllable words and its distinctive function.

3.8.2 Criterion validity

“The criterion validity is established to validating a measuring instrument to comparing it with some external criterion that pretends to measure the same” (Hernandez, 2006: 280).

According to this definition, concretely we can say that this kind of validity allows to judge if an instrument is really valid.

Hence, if we want that this research could have a criterion validity we must do that exist a higher relationship between the results of the measurement instrument and the criterion validity.

Therefore, the instrument designed in this study is basically based on the theoretical framework which will not only support this research but also in the same way, it will support the data and all the results gathered through the instrument and consequently the instrument validity.



3.8.3 Construct validity

In order to define this kind of validity, let us see what Hernández (2006: 280) states regarding to the evidence about construct validity: “It must explain the theoretical-empirical model which underlies to the interest variable”.

According to previous, we can argue that this kind of validity involves the consistent relationship between the measurement and other measurements in accordance to hypotheses with theoretical base and related to the concepts to be measured. In this way, we may state that the construct validation process is closely related to the main concepts and theories that support the research.

For this reason, the main purpose of the instrument designed is to measure variables of the hypotheses stated in the first chapter in accordance with theoretical bases of pronunciation in teaching-learning process of English and main concepts regarding to phonological features of connected speech and the use of stress at word level.



CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

In this chapter, all the results gathered through the instrument are analyzed qualitative and quantitatively, that is taking into account numeral data and describing the phonological features of connected speech and the use of stress at word level in undergraduate students of English. The results of each instruction of the sample are represented on statistic charts. These charts show the percentage of the difficulties that undergraduate students of English present regarding to phonological features of connected speech and the use of stress at word level.

It is necessary to specify that in this analysis each instruction of the instrument has different exercises (words and phrases) in order to know if students of English can identify phonological features of connected speech and the use of stress at word level, and at simultaneously identify and describe the difficulties that they present regarding to processes of linking, elision assimilation and use of stress at word level (Phonological features of connected speech). The graphics in the charts show the results of each phonological feature in different colors in order to illustrate better and give a good understanding of the analysis of data.

The analysis consists on identifying the difficulties that 20 undergraduate students of English taken to test present regarding to phonological features of connected speech and the use of stress at word level, that is if these students can recognize the processes of linking [r], elision, assimilation and the adequate use of stress at word level and its distinctive function.



4.1 ANALYSIS OF LINKING [r] PROCESS

Instruction 1

In the instruction 1, the 20 students of the sample were asked to pronounce the list of seven isolated words. Once they read the list of these words, they were asked to read the same words but contextualized in a phrase.

The stated instruction was presented as follows:

1. Please, pronounce correlatively the following words and phrases in the chart.

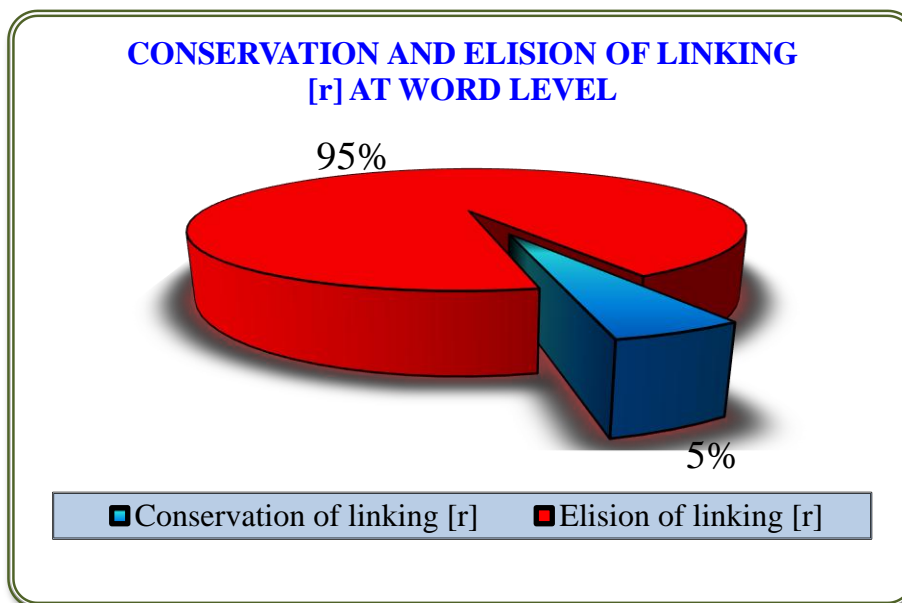
Words	At word boundary
letter	The letter of my friend
refer	Refer again
hear	Hear everything
dare	Dare I?
pure	Pure enjoyment
star	A star is born
bore	Bore a tunnel

This instruction was included to identify what are the difficulties that students of English present when pronouncing and eliding the linking [r] in determined phonological contexts, that is if they can identify the phonological variations of linking [r] in isolated words and at word boundary. In other words and concretely speaking, the list of words in the first column should be pronounced eliding the final sound [r] and in the second column [r] is pronounced because of the context in which it is (between vowels).

The CHART N° 1 shows us the results obtained regarding to linking [r] elided in word-final position and this allows us to appreciate that the 95% (19 subjects) of the students taken to test did not elide the sound [r] in word-final position.

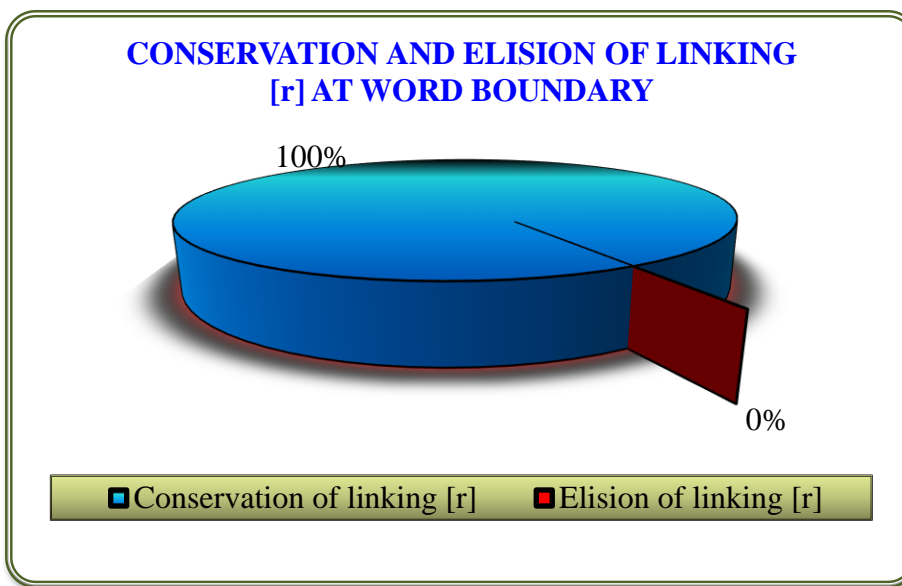


CHART N° 1



The CHART N° 2 shows that percentage of students that conserved the sound [r] between vowels represents to 100%.

CHART N° 2





4.2 ANALYSIS OF CONSONANT ELISION PROCESS

Instruction 2

The instruction 2 consists in the following:

2. *In the following words and phrases there are sounds which are elided. Please, pronounce the following words and phrases in the charts taking into account the process of consonant elision.*

4.2.1 Elision of [t], [d] in word internal

Firstly, in this section we analyze the elision of the sounds [t], [d] in word internal.

In the same way as in the first instruction, the 20 students of the sample were asked to pronounce two lists of words. In the first list there are 4 words from which students should identify the elision of the consonant [t] and equally, in the second column they should identify the elision of [d].

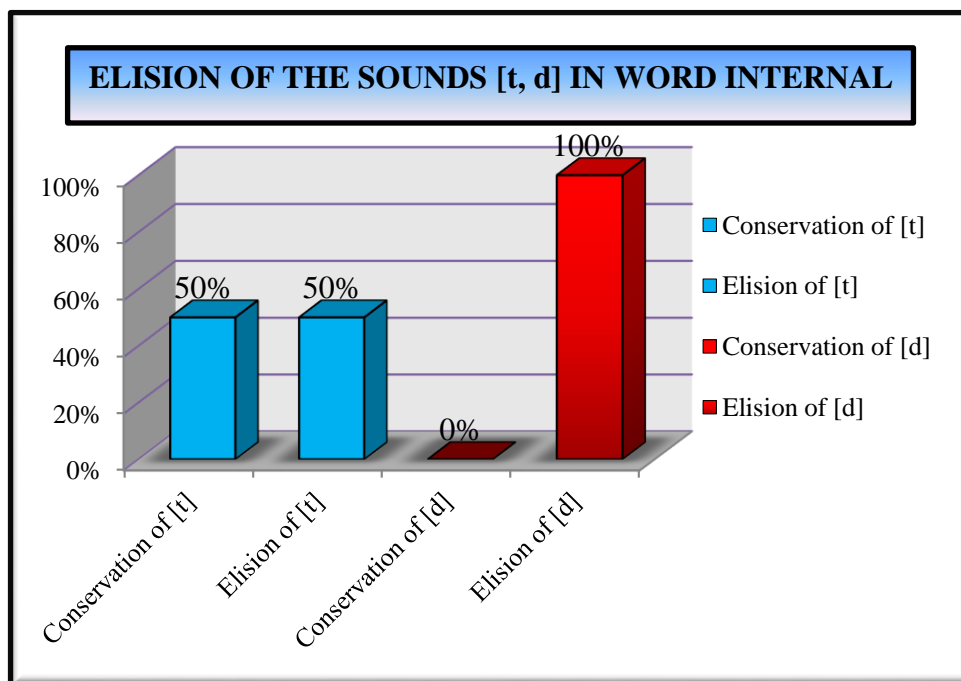
Pronunciation with elision of [t]	Pronunciation with elision of [d]
Postcard	Grandma
Postman	Grandpa
Postscript	Sandpaper
Directly	Sandwich

On the one hand, regarding to elision of [t], in CHART N° 3 we may observe that the 50% of the 20 students identified the elision of this sound.

On the other hand, with regard to elision of [d] the 100% of the students could identify the elided sound [d]. let us see it in the following chart:



CHART N° 3



4.2.2 Elision of [t], [d] at word boundary

Secondly, taking into account the elision of [t] and [d] at word boundary, we have the next list of phrases (phonological contexts).

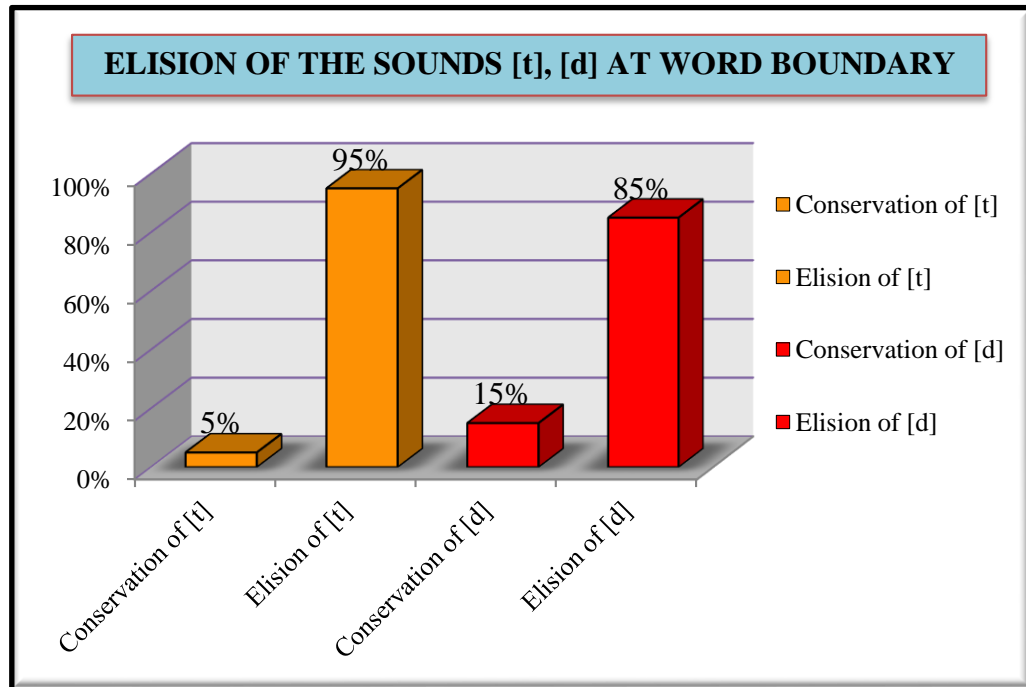
Pronunciation with elision [t]	Pronunciation with elision of [d]
First day	Old man
Didn't call	Send two
Next day	Cold day
Biggest car	Caused trouble

The results shown in CHART N° 4 give us to understand that the 95% of students tested could identify the elision of [t, d] at word boundary.

As well as, the 85% identified the elided sound [d] at word boundary.



CHART N° 4



4.3 ANALYSIS OF VOWEL ELISION PROCESS

Instruction 3

The stated instruction was:

3. Please, pronounce the following words in the charts taking into account the process of elision of vowels.

This instruction is compound by 5 charts in which are different lists of words in order to identify the elision of [ə] in different phonological contexts. To specify, the first list of words concerns with the elision of [ə] producing syllabicity of [ŋ], the second list refers to elision of [ə] producing syllabicity of [l], the third list to elision of [ə] producing affrications of [-tr], [-dr], in the fourth list we have words that present elision of [ə]



producing two syllabic consonants and in the fifth list there is a list of words which concerns with the elision of [ə] in other phonological cases. Firstly, let us consider the following case:

4.3.1 Elision of [ə] with syllabicity of [ŋ], [l]

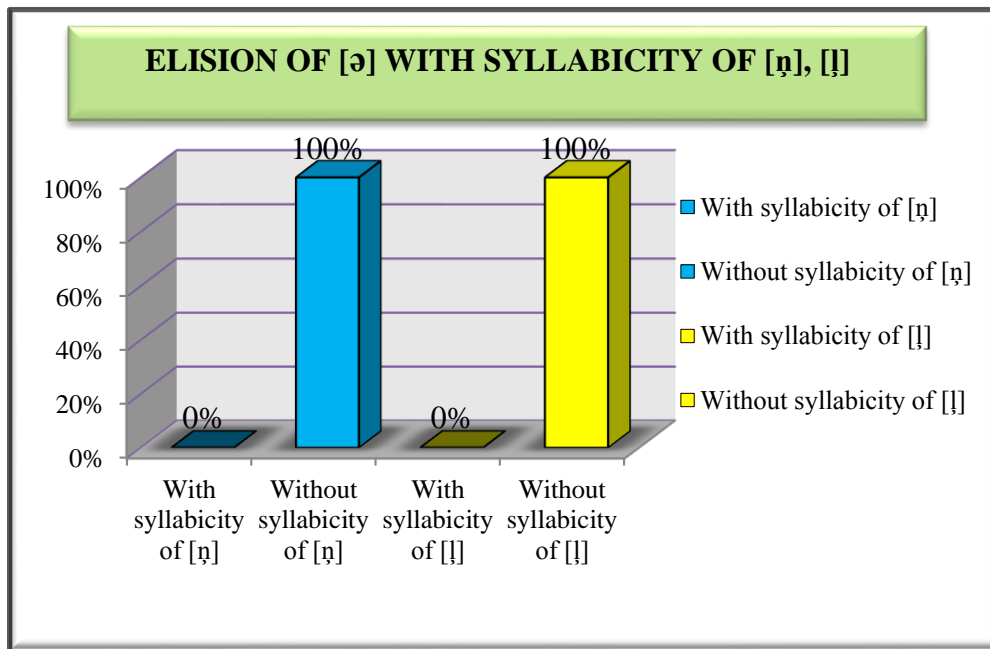
The 20 students of the sample were asked to pronounce two lists of words identifying the elision of [ə] with syllabicity of the consonants [ŋ], [l], as we can see in the next charts:

Syllabicity	Word	Syllabicity	Word
[-tŋ]	Certain	[-k]	Classical
[-tŋC]	Importance	[-f]	Forgetful
[-dŋC]	Prudent	[-v]	Approval
[-sŋC]	Nonsense	[-s]	Cancel
[-ʃŋ]	Caution	[-z]	Nasal
[-ʃŋC]	Impatience	[-ʃ]	Essential
[-zŋ]	Allusion	[-m]	Normal
[-rŋC]	Occurrence	[-r]	Oral
others	Golden, govern	others	Verbal, legal

The CHART N° 5 obviously shows that the 0% did not pronounce or identify the elision of [ə] with syllabicity of the consonants [ŋ] and [l].



CHART N° 5



4.3.2 Elision of [ə] with affrication of [-tr], [-dr]

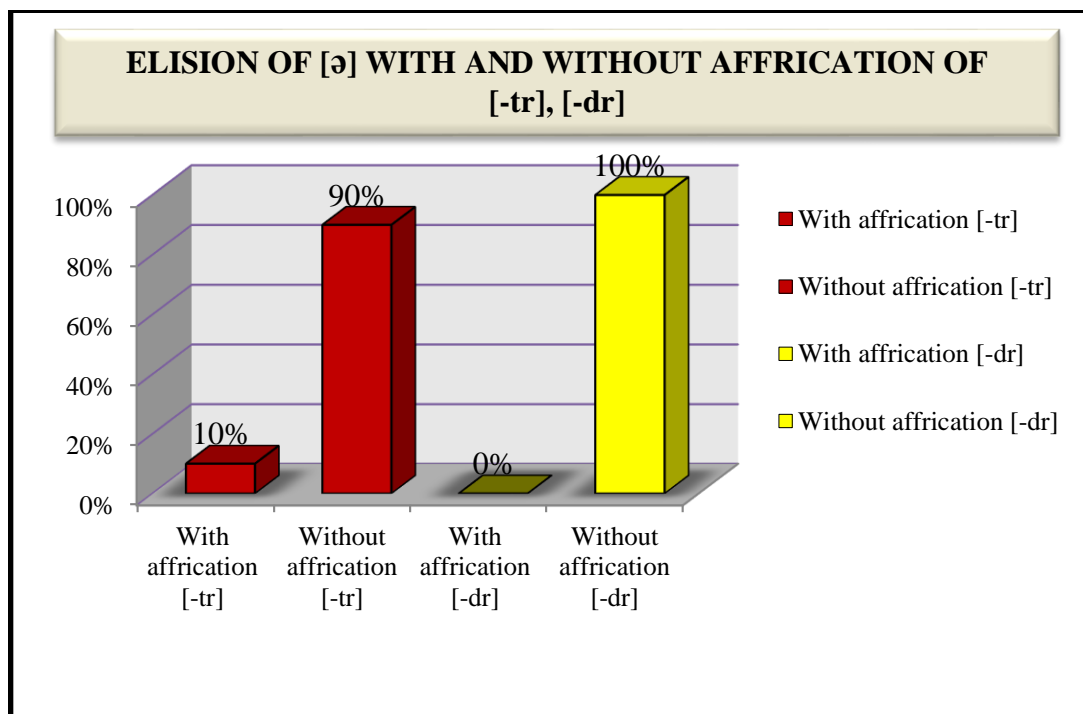
In this case, students had to pronounce and identify the elided [ə] producing the affrication of [-tr] and [-dr]. The list of words was the following:

Affrication	Word
[-tr]	Secretary History
[-dr]	Secondary Federal

The data in the CHART N° 6 demonstrate that almost every students showed difficulties in pronouncing and identifying the affrication of [-tr] and [-dr] through elision of [ə]. In the first case, regarding to affricate [-tr] only one student (equivalent to 5%) could identify it. In the second case, with affrication of [-dr] the 100% of the sample could not identify this phonological process. Let us see the results in the following chart:



CHART N° 6



4.3.3 Double vowel elision of [ə] with two syllabic consonants and in other cases

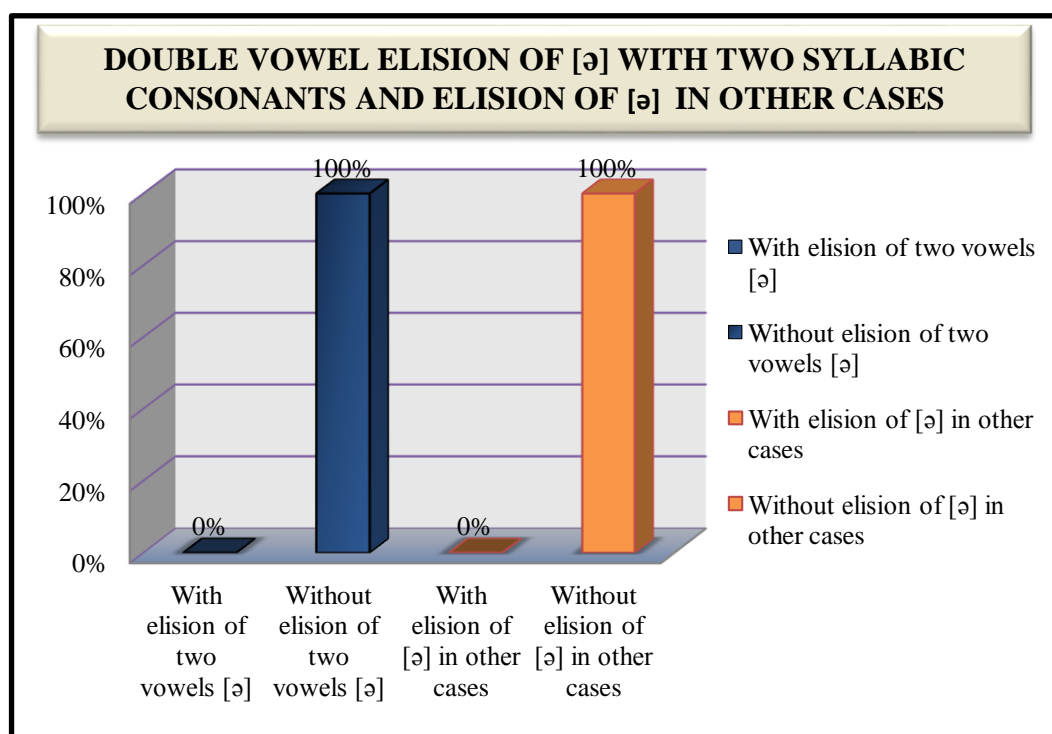
In this case we analyze two phonological contexts in which the sound [ə] may be elided. In the first list of words in the chart below we can see cases in which there are two sounds [ə] are elided and in the second column there are other different cases in which [ə] may also be elided.

Words	Words
Liberal	Comparable
Literal	Definitely
Admiralty	Temperature
	Opening
	Preference
	Suffering



The CHART N° 7, first, shows a negative percentage regarding to the pronunciation and identification of the two vowels [ə] elided. That is, neither of the students tested (0%) could identify these two vowels elided. Second, in the same way, there is a negative result; all students (100%) pronounce these words without identifying the elision of [ə] in other phonological contexts.

CHART N° 7



4.4 ANALYSIS OF ASSIMILATION PROCESS

Instruction 4

This instruction was stated as follows:

3. Please, pronounce the following words in the charts taking into account the process of elision of vowels.



In this instruction it was included two charts in which there are lists of words that present two kind of assimilation: one is simple or optional and the other is considered fixed or established assimilation.³³ Let us analyze the first case:

4.4.1 Assimilation in word internal

In the following list of words into the chart, students were asked to pronounce six words which contain assimilated sounds and students of the sample had to identify them.

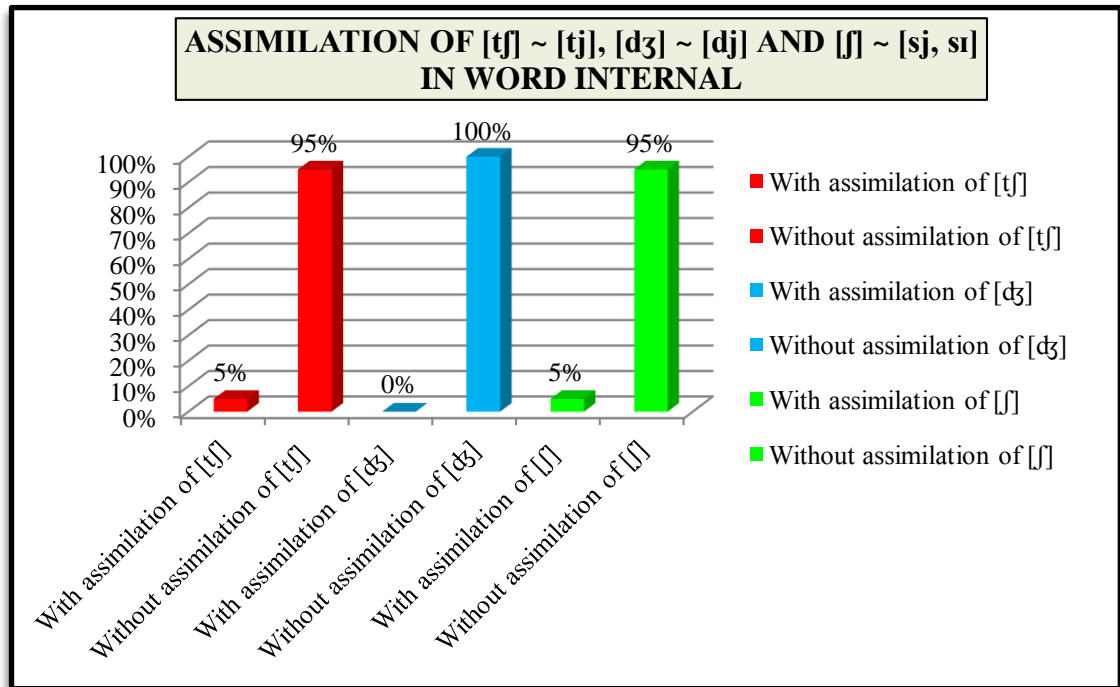
Assimilation	Word
[tʃ] ~ [tj]	Mature Situation
[dʒ] ~ [dj]	Education Individual
[ʃ] ~ [sj, sɪ]	Association Glacial

The results in the CHART N° 8 revealed poor knowledge regarding to assimilation process in word internal because in the case of assimilated sounds [tʃ] - [tj], only one subject (5%) could identify this phonological process. In the case of [dʒ] - [dj], we can see negative results since the 100% of the subjects could not identify the assimilated sounds. In the last case of [ʃ] - [sj, sɪ] the greater part of the subjects (95%) in the same way, had difficulties in identifying the assimilated sounds.

³³ See Finch and Ortiz (1982: 81). *A Course in English Phonetics for Spanish Speakers*.



CHART N° 8



4.4.2 Fixed assimilation in word internal

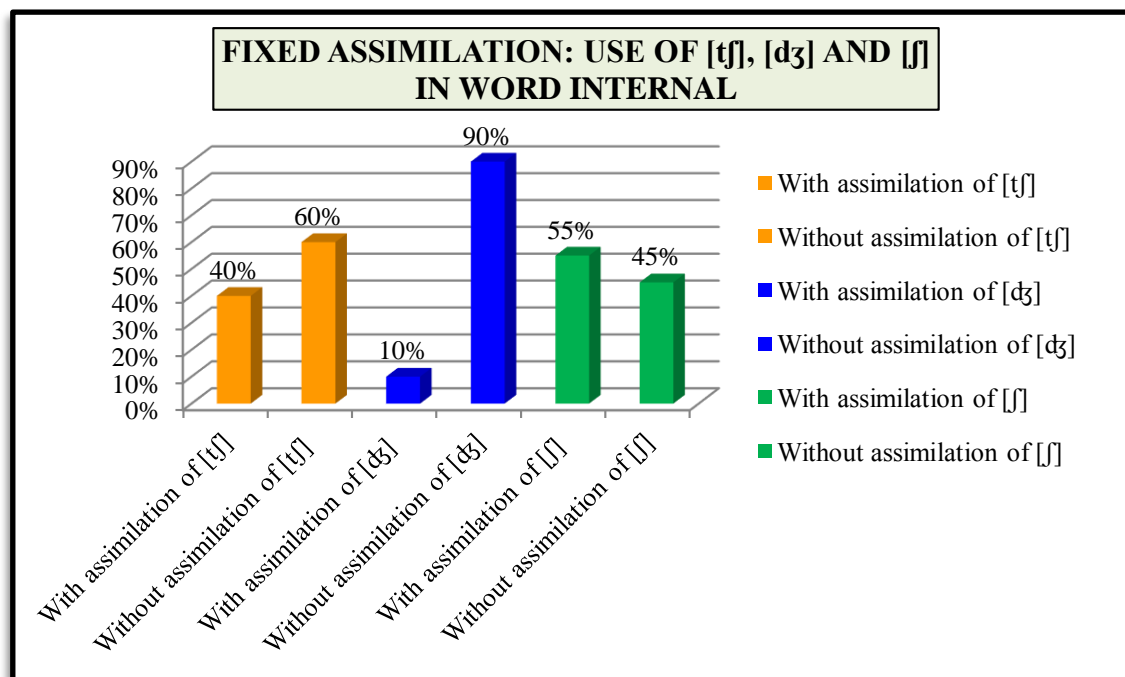
In the following list of words there are sounds which have been assimilated in a fixed manner. This means that the sounds [t] + [u] are assimilated to an affricate sound [tʃ], sounds like [d] + [u] are assimilated to [dʒ] and [s, t] + [u] to [ʃ] in internal word. Thus, in this case we analyze if the 20 students (subjects of the sample) have difficulties in identifying these processes of assimilation in word internal.

Fixed assimilation	Word
[tʃ]	Eventually Factual
[dʒ]	Gradual Procedure
[ʃ]	Issue, Negotiate



The following chart shows positive results because a good percentage of the subjects had not difficulties at the moment to identify the fixed assimilated sounds. To specify, firstly, the 40% of the subjects identified the sounds [t] + [u] assimilated to affricate sound [tʃ]. Secondly, regarding to sounds [d] + [u] assimilated to [dʒ], we have negative results because just the 10% (2 subjects) could identify this phonological process. Finally, with regard to sounds [s, t] + [ʃ] the greater part of the subjects (55%) had not difficulties in identifying the assimilation process. All of these results are expressed in the following chart:

CHART N° 9





4.4.3 Assimilation at word boundary

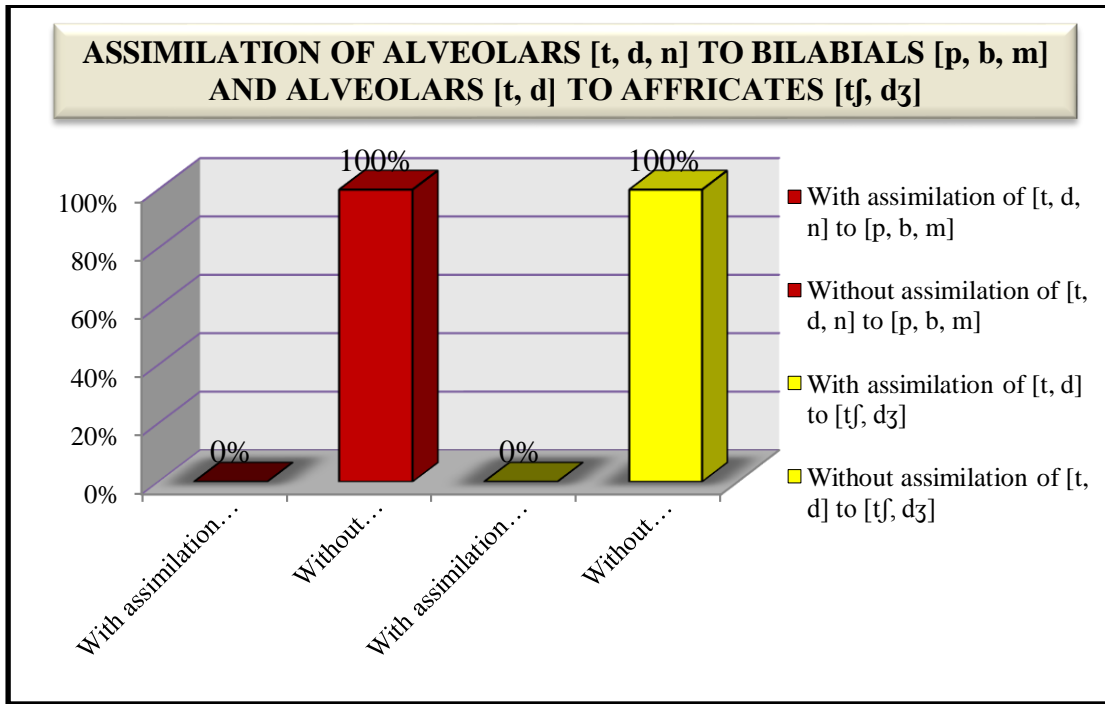
In English language there are sounds which may be influenced by others. In this case we analyze four cases of assimilation which allow us to identify and describe if the subjects of the sample have difficulties in identifying them. a) This concerns with the alveolar sounds like [t, d, n] that may be assimilated to [p, b, m] influenced by the bilabial sounds [p, b, m]. b) We analyze in the same way, the alveolars [t, d] assimilated to [tʃ, dʒ] influenced by [j]. c) Alveolar sounds [s, z] are assimilated to [ʃ, ʒ] by influence of [ʃ, j]. d) We analyze the sounds [t, d, n] assimilated to [k, g, ŋ] influenced by [k, g]. In order to give the results in a clearer way, let us analyze the two first cases:

Assimilation	Phrases
a) /t, d, n/ assimilated to /p, b, m/ influenced by bilabials /p, b, m/	that plan you'd better on purpose
b) /t, d/ assimilated to /tʃ, dʒ/ influenced by /j/	last year behind you

What the 20 subjects of the sample had to do in this proof was to identify the assimilated sounds influenced by others at word boundary. And as it is illustrated in CHART N° 10, the results obtained from the test in this case, show that all subjects showed difficulties when identifying the assimilation process in a) and b). Let us observe it in the following chart:



CHART N° 10



The following phonological contexts at word boundary assigned to 20 subjects of the sample in order to identify the assimilated sounds are the following:

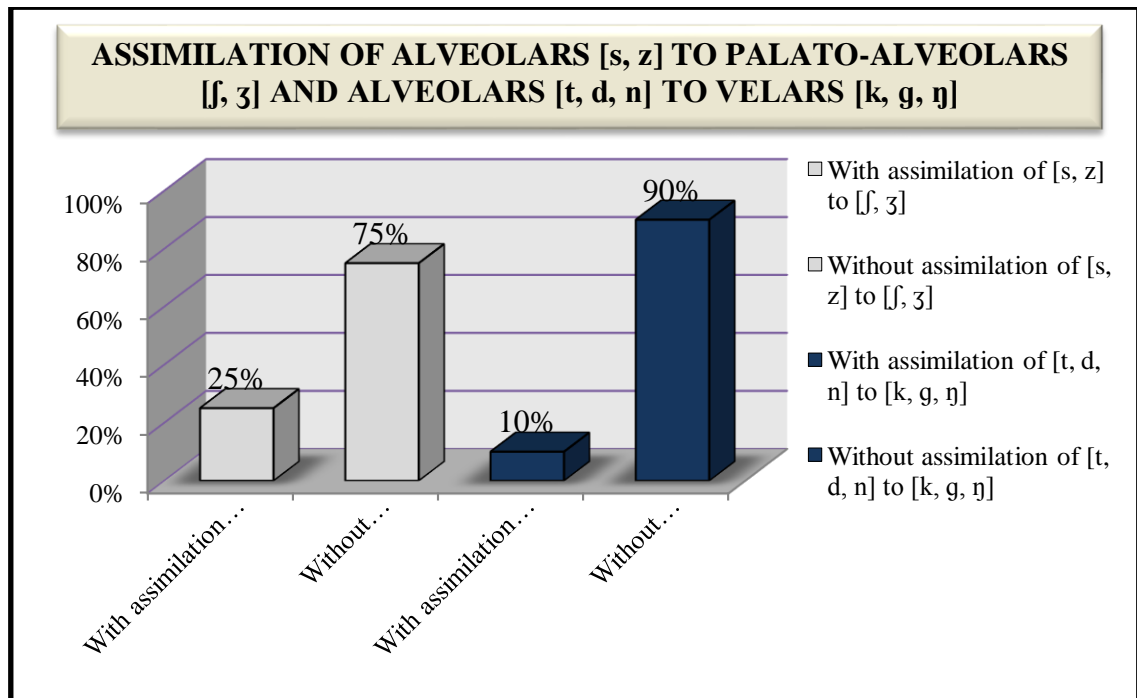
Assimilation	Phrases
c) /s, z/ assimilated to /ʃ, ʒ/ influenced by /ʃ, j/	her voice shook in case you do here's yours he was shot
d) /t, d, n/ assimilated to /k, g, ŋ/ influenced by /k, g/	hot cakes I should go His own car He won't go

Regarding to the assimilation in cases c) and d) the results in CHART N° 11 exhibit, in first place, that the 75% of the subjects have had difficulties in identifying the assimilated sounds in c), and in second place, in the case of d) there is a negative result



because just the 10% of the sample could identify de process of assimilation of the sounds in the proof. Let us see:

CHART N° 11



4.5 ANALYSIS OF USE OF STRESS AT WORD LEVEL

Instruction 5

This instruction was stated as follows:

3. Please, read the following words emphasizing on stress.

In this instruction it will be concretely analyzed the adequate and inadequate use of stress at word level and likewise, the distinctive function of stress.³⁴

³⁴ See Finch and Ortiz (1982: 97). *A Course in English Phonetics for Spanish Speakers*.



Specifically, this suprasegmental phenomenon³⁵ will be analyzed in three statistic graphics: in the first graphic (CHART N° 12) we will analyze the adequate and inadequate use of stress in two-syllable, three-syllable and four-syllable words and in the second graphic (CHART N° 13) the five-syllable, six-syllable and seven-syllable words. Let us consider the first case:

4.5.1 Use of stress in two-syllable, three-syllable and four-syllable words

In order to identify the difficulties that all subjects of the sample present regarding to the adequate and inadequate use of stress at word level in two-syllable, three-syllable and four-syllable words, it is presented the following list of words:

Two-syllable words	Three-syllable words	Four-syllable words
1) teacher	1) fortunate	1) category
2) expert	2) absolute	2) operator
3) again	3) important	3) obligatory
4) donate	4) distribute	4) appreciate
5) unknown	5) scientific	5) circulation
	6) magazine	6) acceptance

Regarding to the first case, that is in use of stress in two-syllable words, a good percentage of the subjects demonstrated to be phonologically accurate, this means that the 45% of tested students could identify the adequate use of stress. However the 55% still present difficulties in identify the stress in two-syllable words.

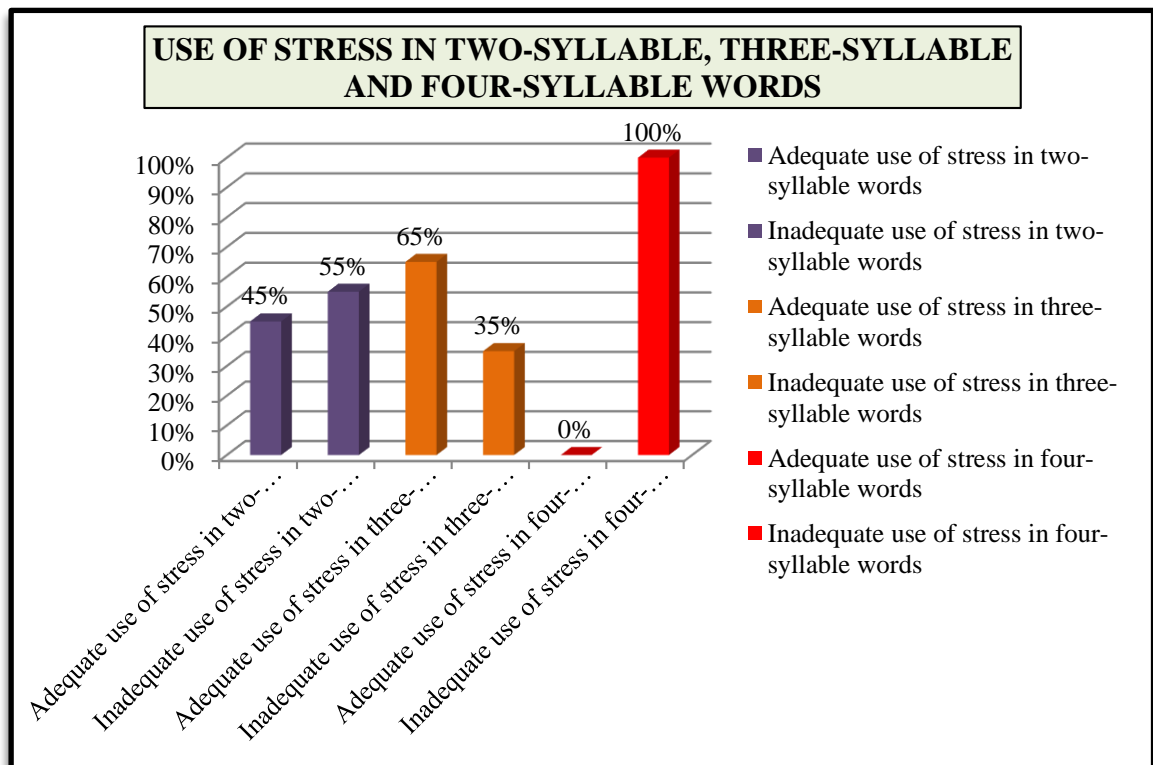
In the second case, we can see a better result because the 65% did not have difficulties in the use of stress in three-syllable words, but a contrary result shows that the 35% still presents difficulties.

³⁵ See Montaña, O. (2006: 54). *Curso Teórico de Fonética General*.



In the third case, as it is illustrated in the chart below, the results obtained from the test demonstrate that all subjects of the sample (100%) have difficulties in the use of stress in four-syllable words.

CHART N° 12



4.5.2 Use of stress in five-syllable, six-syllable and seven-syllable words

In the same way as in 4.5.1, the 20 subjects were asked to pronounce three lists of words in order to identify the adequate or inadequate use the stress at word level. In the first list the subjects had to emphasize the stress in five-syllable words, then the stress in six-syllable words and finally the stress in seven-syllable words. The lists of words are the next.



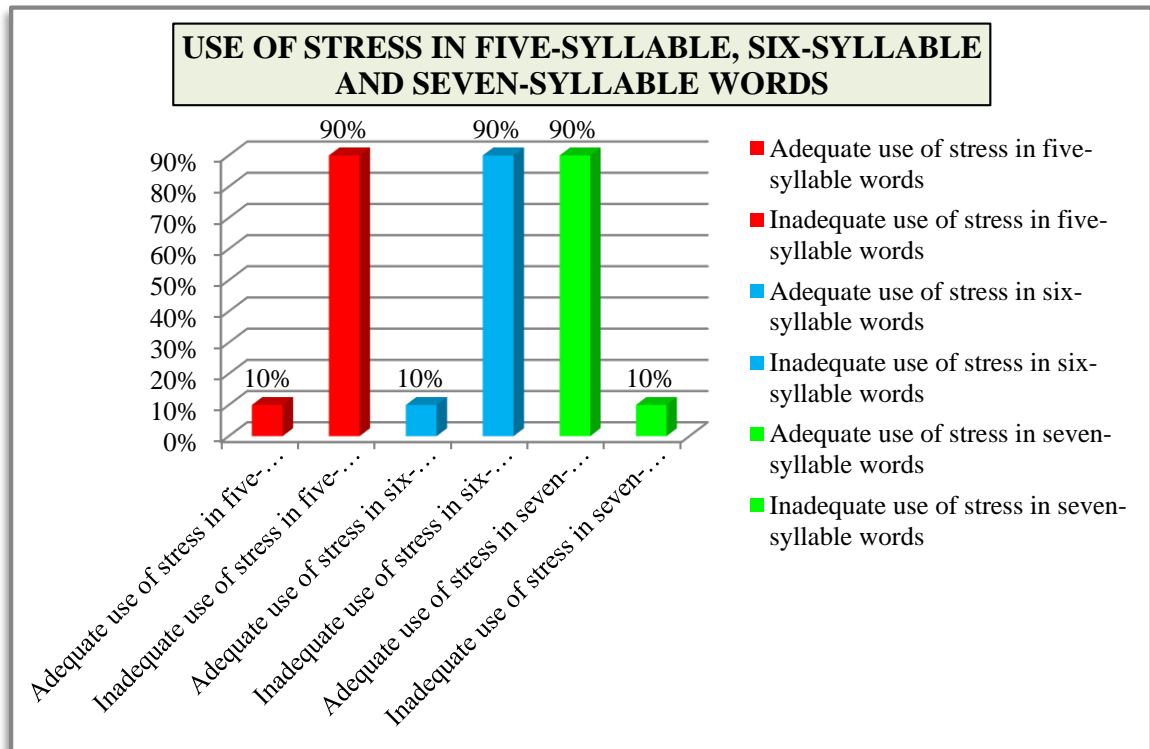
Five-syllable words	Six-syllable words	Seven-syllable words
1) capitalism 2) inevitable 3) enthusiasm 4) curiosity 5) differentiate 6) classification 7) consideration 8) revaluation	1) individualism 2) discontinuity 3) familiarity 4) personification 5) individualistic	1) impressionability 2) irresponsibility

The data expressed in CHART N° 13 demonstrate a negative result in the adequate use of stress in the two first cases while in the third and last case there is a positive result. From the grammatical point of view, most of the subjects demonstrated accuracy answering to this third task.

In order to detail these results, firstly, in the use of stress at word level in five-syllable words a low percentage of 10% of the subjects located the stress adequately. Secondly, regarding to the use of stress in six-syllable words we see the same results, that is the 10% of the subjects emphasize the stress adequately while the 90% did it inadequately. Finally, we can observe that there is a positive result since a great percentage (90%) of the sample located the stress adequately.



CHART N° 13



4.6 ANALYSIS OF DISTINCTIVE FUNCTION OF STRESS

Instruction 6

This was the last instruction which was intended to measure if students can use adequate or inadequately the stress at word level regarding to the distinctive function of stress. This consisted in the following:

3. Please, read the following sentences locating the stress adequately in marked words.

In order to identify this phenomenon, it was selected a list of 10 words which have two grammatical function, that is words that may function as a noun and as a verb depending on the location of stress. To know if students of the sample have difficulties in



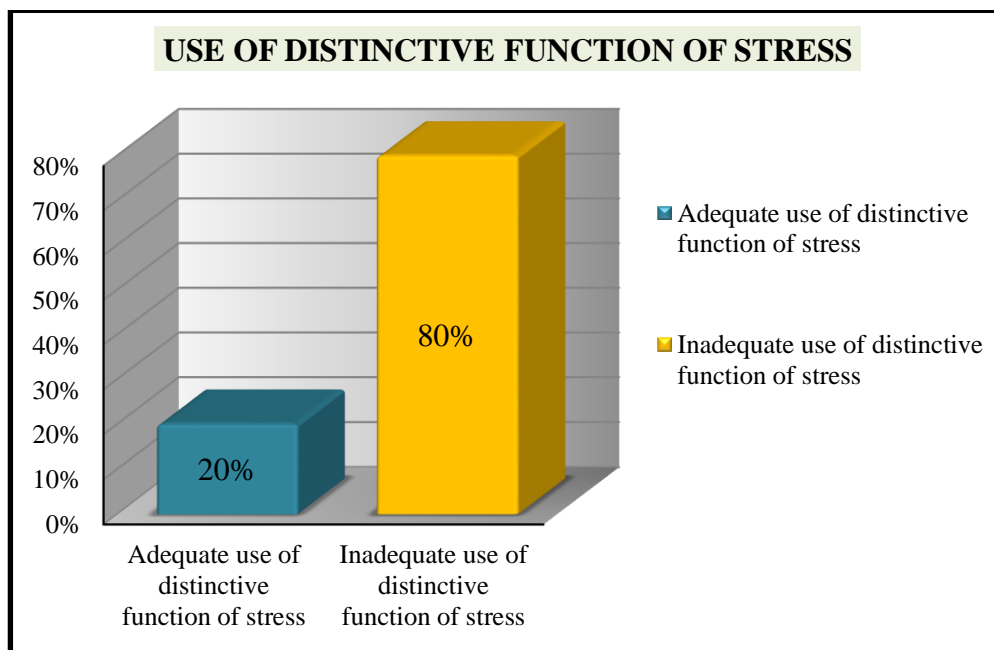
identifying the distinctive function of stress, the words taken to identify these difficulties were not presented in an isolated way, but this words were contextualized in different sentences in which these words can function as a noun or as a verb. These are the next:

N°	SENTENCE
1.	- Yesterday, there was a conflict . noun ['kɒnflɪkt] - It is not necessary to conflict . verb [kɒn'flɪkt]
2.	- It seems a desert . noun ['dezət] - Don't desert . verb [dr'zɛ:t]
3.	- You should be more frequent . adjective ['fri:wənt] - You have to frequent gym. verb [fri'kwent]
4.	- We need to make a survey . noun ['sɜ:veɪ] - I will survey the results. verb [sə'veɪ]
5.	- You have to know the object of the study. noun ['ɒbdʒɪkt] - If you do not agree, you may object . verb [əb'dʒekt]
6.	- There is a decrease of the resources. noun ['di:kri:s] - It is necessary to decrease the importation. verb [dɪ'kri:s]
7.	- He had a bad conduct . noun ['kɒndʌkt] - We should conduct them. verb [kɒn'dʌkt]
8.	- There must be a progress in our economy. noun ['prɒgres] - The country must progress . verb [prə'gres]
9.	- Our teacher gave us a good subject . noun ['sʌbdʒɪkt] - To subject them is a negative intention. verb [səb'dʒekt]
10.	- The export has been reduced. noun ['eksɜ:t] - The country needs to export . verb [ɪk'spɜ:t]

Therefore, based on the proof presented above, in the last statistic graphic of all the analysis (CHART N° 14), it is observed that the greater part of the subjects still present difficulties in identifying the distinctive function of stress at word level. The results demonstrate that just the 20% of the sample could use adequately the distinctive function of stress while the rest (80%) have still difficulties as we can se in the following chart:



CHART N° 14



4.7 FINAL RESULTS OF SUBJECTS TESTED

4.7.1 Final results of process of linking [r] in word-final position and at word boundary

Linking [r]	With distinction	Without distinction	Total of subjects
/ə/ letter [ðə 'letər əf]	1	19	20
/ɛ:/ refer [rɪ'fɛr ə'gen]			
/ɪə/ hear [hɪər 'evriθɪŋ]			
/eə/ dare [deər aɪ]			
/ʊə/ pure [pjʊər mɪ'dʒɔɪmənt]			
/ɑ:/ star [ə stɑr ɪz bɔ:n]			
/ɔ:/ bore [bɔr ə 'tɔnl]			
TOTAL IN %	5%	95%	100%
TOTAL OF SUBJECTS	1	19	20



4.7.2 Final results of processes of consonant elision in word internal and at word boundary and vowel elision

Process of consonant and vowel elision	Subjects who identified elided sounds	Subjects who do not identified elided sounds	Total of subjects
Elision of /t/ in word internal	10	10	20
Elision of /d/ in word internal	20	0	20
Elision of /t/ at word boundary	19	1	20
Elision of /d/ at word boundary	17	3	20
Elision of /ə/ with syllabicity of /ŋ/	0	20	20
Elision of /ə/ with syllabicity of /l/	0	20	20
Elision of /ə/ with affrication /-tr/	2	18	20
Elision of /ə/ with affrication /-dr/	0	20	20
Double vowel elision with two syllabic consonants	0	20	20
Elision of /ə/ in other cases	0	20	20
TOTAL IN %	35%	65%	100%
TOTAL OF SUBJECTS	7	13	20



4.7.3 Final results of process of assimilation in word internal and at word boundary

Process of assimilation in word internal and at word boundary	Subjects who identified assimilated sounds	Subjects who identified assimilated sounds	Total of subjects
Assimilation of [tʃ] - [tj]	1	19	20
Assimilation of [dʒ] - [dj]	0	20	20
Assimilation of [ʃ] - [sj, sɪ]	1	19	20
Fixed assimilation of [tʃ]	8	12	20
Fixed assimilation of [dʒ]	2	18	20
Fixed assimilation of [ʃ]	11	9	20
Assimilation of [t, d, n] to [p, b, m] influenced by bilabials [p, b, m]	0	20	20
Assimilation of [t, d] assimilated to [tʃ, dʒ] influenced by [j]	0	20	20
Assimilation of [s, z] assimilated to [ʃ, ʒ] influenced by [j]	5	15	20
Assimilation of [t, d, n] assimilated to [k, g, ŋ] influenced by [k, g]	2	18	20
TOTAL IN %	15%	85%	100%
TOTAL OF SUBJECTS	3	17	20



4.7.4 Final results of the use of stress from two-syllable to seven-syllable words and its distinctive function at word level

Use of stress from two-syllable to seven-syllable words	Adequate use	Inadequate use	Frequency
Use of stress in two-syllable words	9	11	20
Use of stress in three-syllable words	13	7	20
Use of stress in four-syllable words	0	20	20
Use of stress in five-syllable words	2	18	20
Use of stress in six-syllable words	2	18	20
Use of stress in seven-syllable words	18	2	20
Use of distinctive function of stress	4	16	20
TOTAL IN %	35%	65%	100%
TOTAL OF SUBJECTS	7	13	20



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is relevant to clarify that the conclusions presented in this research are objectively based on all the results gathered through the application of the instrument which were presented on the analysis developed in chapter IV.

5.1 Conclusions

In order to do that this chapter be easily understood, the conclusions will be presented in a narrow and very concrete way. However, it is important to remember that this is a research focused mainly in identifying the difficulties that undergraduate students of English at Linguistics and Languages Department present regarding to phonological features of connected speech and the use of stress at word level.

Through all the essential concepts defined in the theoretical framework about pronunciation in teaching-learning process of English, phonological features of connected speech, the stress at word level, the methodology followed, the evaluation and the application of the instrument, we have achieved relevant conclusions which are closely related with the hypotheses and research objectives.

On the one hand, the first hypothesis to be answered was the following:

1. Most of undergraduate students of English at Linguistics and Languages Department present phonological difficulties of linking, elision and assimilation.



According to the results gathered during the process of data analysis, we can conclude that the first hypothesis stated has been proved because a considerable number of the subjects taken to test demonstrated that still have difficulties in identifying the phonological features of connected speech which concerns with processes of linking [r], consonant elision in word internal and at word boundary, vowel elision of [ə] in word internal, assimilation of consonants in word internal and at word boundary.

Specifically, concerning first to phonological features of connected speech, the final results shows that first, talking about the process of linking [r], just the 5% of the subjects tested (1 from 20 students) made the distinction of the phonological contexts of linking [r] and a higher percentage of 95% (19 from 20 students) could not identified the phonological context distinction.

Regarding to process of elision, the lower percentage corresponds to subjects who could identified the elided sounds, this is 35% (7 from 20 students) and a higher percentage of 65% (13 from 20 students) have still difficulties in the process of elision

Lastly, in the case of process of assimilation there is also a low result of 15% (3 from 20 students) corresponding to subjects who have identified the assimilated sounds and the high percentage of 85% (17 from 20 students) corresponding to subjects who present still difficulties in this phonological process.

All of this let us to understand that most of students who are in their last academic year of study in the Linguistics Department do not take much interest in these phonological features.

On the other hand, the second hypothesis to be proved was stated as follows:



2. Most of undergraduate students of English at Linguistics and Languages Department have difficulties in the use of stress and its distinctive function at word level.

All the results obtained through the instrument application demonstrate that a high percentage of undergraduate students still have difficulties in the use of stress at word level and specially in the use of distinctive function of stress. That is, in the use of stress from two-syllable words to seven syllable words the 65% of the subjects (13 from 20 students) still present difficulties and only the 35% (7 from 20 students) uses the stress adequately.

Regarding to the use of distinctive function of stress there is also a lower result because only the 20% of the subjects (4 from 20 students) uses adequately the distinctive function of stress and the 80% (16 from 20 students) have problems.

Therefore, we can arrive to the conclusion of saying that the second hypothesis has also been proved.

It is also important to mention that in order to obtain the proposed results, to answer our stated hypotheses and achieve the main objective in this research, which consisted on to identify the phonological difficulties that undergraduate students of English at Linguistics and Languages Department present regarding to features of connected speech and the use of stress at word level, we followed four determined objectives, two are referred to phonological features of connected speech and the other two are referred to the use of stress at word level. These are the following:

The **first specific objective** consisted on:



To analyze the phonological features of connected speech that undergraduate students of English at Linguistics and Languages Department present regarding to processes of linking, elision and assimilation.

In order to achieve this objective, it was designed an instrument which allowed us to collect and gather all the data that was required during the development of this research. This instrument consisted in recording test which means that the all subjects of the sample, with the test they had to read and pronounce all the instructions referred to list of words which contained phonological processes of linking, elision and assimilation. This test required essentially the recording, this is the reason by which the subjects was also simultaneously recorded and in this way to gather all the necessary data.

The **second specific objective** was:

To describe the phonological features of linking, elision and assimilation in word internal and at word boundary that undergraduate students of English at Linguistics and Languages Department present.

This objective was achieved through the transcription of data. This means that in order to identify and know if undergraduate students presented difficulties in phonological features of connected speech, specifically in processes of linking, elision and assimilation, it was described all of the phonological units intended to be analyzed, these concerned with linking [r], elision of vowel sound [ə], elision of consonant sounds [t, d], assimilation of consonant sounds [t, d, n, s, z, tʃ, dʒ] in different phonological contexts.

The **third specific objective** focused on the use of stress at word level was stated as:

To analyze the use of stress and its distinctive function at word level in undergraduate students of English at Linguistics and Languages Department



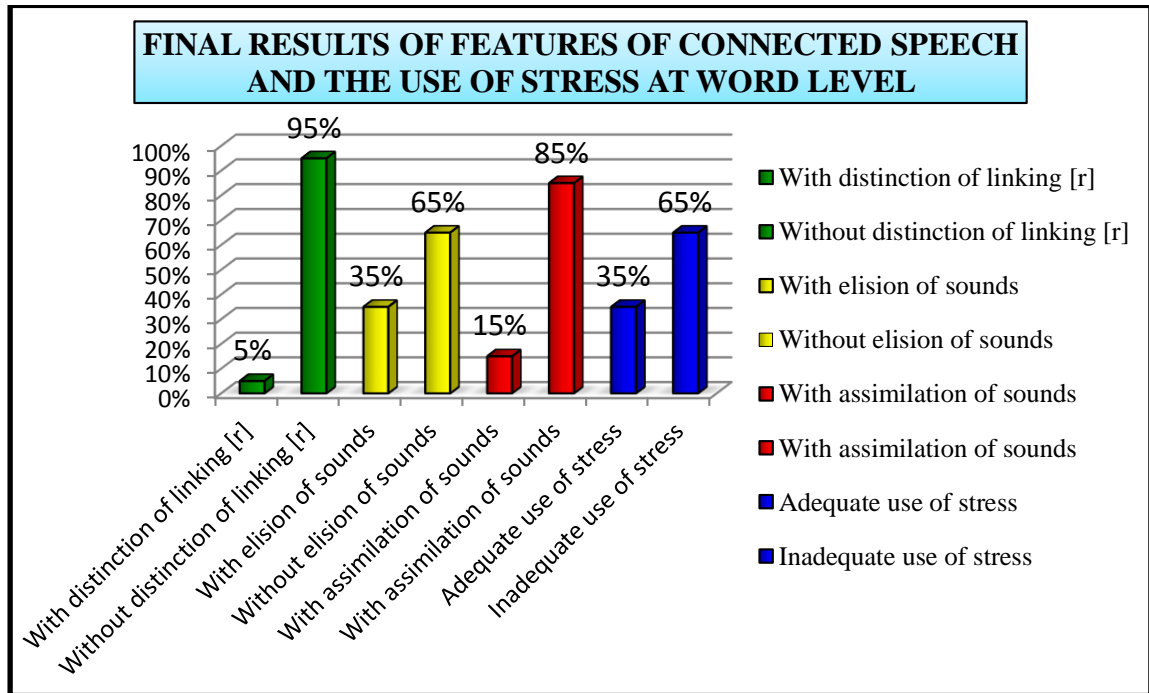
In the same way as in the first specific objective, to arrive to this objective, it was analyzed all the data concerned with the adequate use of stress at word boundary through the instrument previously designed. Both combined instruments “recording test” were essential since these allowed us to collect very reliable data which gave us to know that many students of last academic year still present difficulties in the adequate use of English language stress.

The **fourth and last specific objective** consisted on:

To describe the use of stress and its distinctive function at word level in undergraduate students of English at Linguistics and Languages Department

The instrument application helped us to collect all the data required and this made possible to achieve this last specific objective that concerns with description of the use of stress at word level in students of English who are taking the last academic year in the Department of Linguistics. This description of all data collected not only allowed us to achieve this objective but also to find out that a great percentage of undergraduate students cannot still use distinctively the English stress, that is its distinctive function.

In sum, and basing on the whole analysis and on all stated above, we can conclude that **students of English of last academic year still present difficulties regarding to phonological features of linking [r], elision and assimilation process in connected speech and also in the adequate use of English stress and its distinctive function at word level.** This asseveration is validated with the following final chart:



In order to confirm and support all data gathered in the analysis, the hypotheses and the conclusion, charts of total frequencies of subjects' tests are presented in a more detailed way at the end of this chapter, and the instrument applied to subjects of the sample is provided in the appendix.

5.2 Recommendations

This research was developed not only to identify, analyze and describe the difficulties that students of English present regarding to phonological features of connected speech and the use of stress at word level, but also to contribute specially to students and teachers in teaching-learning process of English at Linguistics and Languages Department.



Hence, based on the findings of this study we would like to make that the following recommendations are guided not only to students but also to English teachers. These are stated through the following questions combined with those stated by Finch and Ortiz:

On the one hand, for English learners one question would be:

How could English learners in the Department of Linguistics overcome these phonological difficulties in connected speech?

According to the results gathered, most of undergraduate students seem not to be aware of phonological features of connected speech and as a result they show some difficulties when trying to speak English language in a fluid way without taking into account that there are some rules and exceptions they can consider when using this language in connected speech and achieve a better understanding of the language when interacting with English native speakers.

Thus, as Finch and Ortiz suggest, an English learner can only begin to tackle the problems of linking words together in connected speech once he has mastered the pronunciation concerning processes of linking, elision, assimilation, adequate use of stress, and acquired an easy command of spoken English. The more proficient he becomes in the use of the language, the more naturally will features of connected speech come to him.

How many of the simplification phonological features of connected speech should the learners aim at using spontaneously?

The answer concerns directly with the domain of Unhurried Colloquial style of pronunciation (this is detailed in chapter II), that is do not obviate the basic elisions and assimilations since the lack of domain in this phonological features would make the



speaker sound unnatural. By domain of the basic simplification we mean the systematic and consistent use of the more common elisions and assimilations as those studied in this research. This will be very helpful for students to improve their English pronunciation and reduce their phonological difficulties when putting on practice this language with English people.

At what level of language learning will the English learners be able to adopt these articulatory simplifications?

This will probably be difficult during the first two or three years of their language course. For this reason, it would be very helpful and convenient for students of English in Linguistics Department to add one more subject following to Phonology (Fonología L2), that is a subject which may be “Fonología II L2”. In this subject students could learn more about phonological features like processes of linking features, elision and assimilation including many other variations which English spoken language present. In this course students may also learn more about the use of stress not only at simple word level but also at level of compound words and sentences which concern directly with intonation.

How could English learners improve the adequate use of stress and its distinctive function at word level?

Students must remember that the accentual phonemic patterns are very different in English language from Spanish. That is, in many simple and derivatives words of English the stress in three- and four-syllable words is located on the first syllable and this produce that English learners have errors in locating and pronouncing the stress because Spanish speakers are not used to accentuating three- and four-syllable words on their first syllables as we can see in the words: '*confortable* ~ *confor'table*, '*capitalism* ~ *capita'lismo*, etc.



In this respect Finch and Ortiz also suggest English learners to remember the accentual tendencies produced by the addition of certain suffixes, since some of them attract the accent towards themselves, while others reject it to preceding syllables. Thus, the following exceptions suggested by these authors might be taken into account:

1. The suffixes *-ee* and *-ette* attract the accent towards them. Main exceptions: *com'mittee*; *'etiquette*, *'omelette*.
2. The endings *-ic* and *-ible* reject the accent to the immediately preceding syllable. Main exceptions: *'Arabic*, *a'rithmetic*, *'catholic*, *'lunatic*, *'politic*, *'rhetoric*; *'eligible*, *in'telligible*, *'negligible*.
3. The suffix *-ute* rejects the accent to the antepenultimate syllable. Exceptions: *at'tribute* (v.), *con'tribute*, *di'stribute*.
4. Some derivatives follow the pattern of the word from which they are derived, e.g. adjectives ending in *-able*. Main exceptions: *'admirable*, *'comparable*, *'preferable*, *'reputable*.

The following clues give some indication as to the placing of secondary accents:

5. In words of three or more syllables, primary accents are generally separated from secondary ones by one, two, and exceptionally three syllables, e.g. *ˌengi'neer*, *i,den'tifi'cation*, *ˌnationali'zation*.
6. When the prefixes *re-* and *de-* mean 'to do again' and 'to undo' respectively, they carry a secondary accent, cf. *ˌre-'form* ~ *re'form*; *ˌde'code*, etc.



On the other hand, for English teachers one recommendation would be stated through the following question:

How could English teachers help to reduce students' difficulties in the use of stress and its distinctive function at word level?

It is essential that English teachers and learners recognize that the inadequate use of stress at word level would be harmful for students' language oral production. Therefore, teachers should assist their students to improve the adequate use of stress in order to reduce these difficulties providing them a list of all the words that present exceptions in accentuation as it is presented above, and also taking into account the distinctive function of stress. So, English learners would improve their oral production but this will much depend on their interest.

What innovative tool could be design and applied in order to help students in overcoming the difficulties in features of connected speech and the use of stress at word level in teaching learning process of English?

Nowadays, technology plays a very important role, it has also covered all scopes in our society and we should not be indifferent to this. Thus, combining teaching-learning process of English with technology would be very helpful for students of English in the Department of Linguistics. This would consist on creating an innovative instrument which let students to improve their pronunciation and overcome their difficulties in connected speech when using English language with fluency. That is, English teachers specialized in the area of phonology would create a dictionary which contain all the rules of phonological variations as processes of linking, elision, assimilation of English language including those which are considered optional. Then, all of these features would be digitalized and create a very useful application which could be very practical for students of English since most of students or almost every students count with a



mobile phone which at the same time must be used as a resource to support to teaching-learning process of English.

To finish, regarding to present study, it is also convenient to suggest that this work not only be the one in the study of phonological features of connected speech and use of stress at word level, but also this be an initiative to carry out more and different researches as action researches or applied researches related to these phonological matters.



CHARTS OF TOTAL FREQUENCIES OF SUBJECTS' TESTS

Linking [r] in word-final position and at word boundary

Phonological context			Distinction	No distinction	Frequency
/ə/	letter	[ˈletə]	1	19	20
		[ðə ˈletər əf]			
/ɛː/	refer	[rɪˈfɛː]	0	20	20
		[rɪˈfɛr əˈɡen]			
/ɪə/	hear	[hɪə]	1	19	20
		[hɪər ˈevrɪθɪŋ]			
/eə/	dare	[deə]	1	19	20
		[deər aɪ]			
/ʊə/	pure	[pjʊə]	0	20	20
		[pjʊər ɪnˈdʒɔɪmənt]			
/ɑː/	star	[stɑː]	0	20	20
		[ə stɑr ɪz bɔːn]			
/ɔː/	bore	[bɔː]	0	20	20
		[bɔr ə ˈtʌnl]			
Total of frequencies			3	137	140
TOTAL IN %			2%	98%	100%



CONSONANT ELISION

Elision of /t/ in word internal

Phonological context		With elision	Without elision	Frequency
postcard	['pəʊskɑ:d]	9	11	20
	['pəʊstkɑ:d]			
postman	['pəʊsmən]	10	10	20
	['pəʊstmən]			
postscript	['pəʊskrɪpt]	7	13	20
	['pəʊstskrɪpt]			
directly	[dɪ'rekɫɪ]	4	16	20
	[dɪ'rekɫɪ]			
Total of frequencies		30	50	80
TOTAL IN %		37%	63%	100%

Elision of /d/ in word internal

Phonological context		With elision	Without elision	Frequency
grandma	['grænma:]	17	3	20
	['grændma:]			
grandpa	['grænpɑ:]	20	0	20
	['grændpɑ:]			
sandpaper	['sænpeɪpə]	15	5	20
	['sændpeɪpə]			
sandwich	['sænwɪdʒ]	1	19	20
	['sændwɪdʒ]			
Total of frequencies		53	27	80
TOTAL IN %		66%	34%	100%



Elision of /t/ at word boundary

Phonological context		With elision	Without elision	Frequency
first day	[fɛ:s deɪ]	14	6	20
	[fɛ:st deɪ]			
Didn't call	['dɪdən kɔ:l]	19	1	20
	['dɪdənt kɔ:l]			
next day	[neks deɪ]	20	0	20
	[nekst deɪ]			
biggest car	['bɪgəs kɑ:]	4	16	20
	['bɪgəst kɑ:]			
Total of frequencies		57	23	80
TOTAL IN %		71%	29%	100%

Elision of /d/ at word boundary

Phonological context		With elision	Without elision	Frequency
old man	[əʊl mæn]	12	8	20
	[əʊld mæn]			
send two	[sen tu:]	16	4	20
	[send tu:]			
cold day	[kəʊl deɪ]	17	3	20
	[kəʊld deɪ]			
caused trouble	[kɔ:z 'trʌb]	12	8	20
	[kɔ:zd 'trʌb]			
Total of frequencies		57	23	80
TOTAL IN %		71%	29%	100%



VOWEL ELISION

Elision of /ə/ with syllabicity of /ŋ/

Phonological context			With elision	Without elision	Frequency
[-tŋ]	certain	['sɛ:tŋ]	0	20	20
		['sɛ:tən]			
[-tŋC]	importance	[ɪm'pɔ:tŋs]	0	20	20
		[ɪm'pɔ:təns]			
[-dŋC]	prudent	['pru:dŋt]	0	20	20
		['pru:dənt]			
[-sŋC]	nonsense	['nɒnsŋs]	0	20	20
		['nɒnsəns]			
[-ʃŋ]	caution	['kɔ:ʃŋ]	0	20	20
		['kɔ:ʃən]			
[-ʃŋC]	impatience	[ɪm'peɪʃŋs]	0	20	20
		[ɪm'peɪʃəns]			
[-ʒŋ]	allusion	[ə'lu:ʒŋ]	0	20	20
		[ə'lu:ʒən]			
[-rŋC]	occurrence	[ə'kʌrŋs]	0	20	20
		[ə'kʌrəns]			
others	golden	['gəʊldŋ]	0	20	20
		['gəʊldən]			
	govern	['gʌvŋ]	0	20	20
		['gʌvən]			
Total of frequencies			0	200	200
TOTAL IN %			0%	100%	100%



Elision of /ə/ with syllabicity of /l/

Phonological context			With elision	Without elision	Frequency
[-k]	classical	['klæsɪk]	0	20	20
		['klæsɪkəl]			
[-f]	forgetful	[fə'getf]	0	20	20
		[fə'getfəl]			
[-v]	approval	[ə'pru:v]	0	20	20
		[ə'pru:vəl]			
[-s]	cancel	['kæns]	0	20	20
		['kænsəl]			
[-z]	nasal	['neɪz]	0	20	20
		['neɪzəl]			
[-ʃ]	essential	[ɪ'senʃ]	0	20	20
		[ɪ'senʃəl]			
[-m]	normal	['nɔ:m]	0	20	20
		['nɔ:məl]			
[-r]	oral	['ɔ:r]	0	20	20
		['ɔ:rəl]			
others	verbal	['vɛ:b]	0	20	20
		['vɛ:bəl]			
	legal	['li:g]	0	20	20
		['li:gəl]			
Total of frequencies			0	200	200
TOTAL IN %			0%	100%	100%



Elision of /ə/ with affrication /-tr/ and /-dr/

Affrication	Phonological context		With elision	Without elision	Frequency
[-tr]	secretary	['sekrətəri]	4	16	20
		['sekrətəri]			
	history	['hɪstri]	2	18	20
		['hɪstəri]			
[-dr]	secondary	['sekəndri]	3	17	20
		['sekəndəri]			
	federal	['fedrəl]	0	20	20
		['fedərəl]			
Total of frequencies			9	71	80
TOTAL IN %			11%	89%	100%

Double vowel elision with two syllabic consonants

Phonological context		With elision	Without elision	Frequency
liberal	['lɪbɹl]	1	19	20
	['lɪbərəl]			
literal	['lɪtɹl]	0	20	20
	['lɪtərəl]			
admiralty	['ædmɹl̩ti]	0	20	20
	['ædmərəl̩ti]			
Total of frequencies		1	59	60
TOTAL IN %		2%	98%	100%



Elision of /ə/ in other cases

Phonological context		With elision	Without elision	Frequency
comparable	['kɒmprəbəl]	0	20	20
	['kɒmpərəbəl]			
definitely	['defɪnətli]	0	20	20
	['defɪnətli]			
temperature	['tempərətʃə]	2	18	20
	['tempərətʃə]			
opening	['əʊpɪŋ]	2	18	20
	['əʊpənɪŋ]			
preference	['prefrəns]	4	16	20
	['prefərəns]			
suffering	['sʌfrɪŋ]	1	19	20
	['sʌfərɪŋ]			
Total of frequencies		9	111	120
TOTAL IN %		8%	92%	100%



ASSIMILATION

Assimilation in word internal

Assimilated sounds	Phonological context		With assimilation	Without assimilation	Frequency
[tʃ] ~ [tj]	mature	[mə'tʃə(r)]	8	12	20
		[mə'tjʊə(r)]			
	situation	[,sɪtʃu'eɪʃn]	1	19	20
		[,sɪtju'eɪʃn]			
[dʒ] ~ [dj]	education	[,edʒu'keɪʃn]	0	20	20
		[,edju'keɪʃn]			
	individual	[,ɪndɪ'vɪdʒuəl]	3	17	20
		[,ɪndɪ'vɪdjuəl]			
[ʃ] ~ [sj, sɪ]	association	[ə,səʊʃi'eɪʃn]	1	19	20
		[ə,səʊsj'eɪʃn]			
	glacial	['gleɪʃəl]	11	9	20
		['gleɪsɪəl]			
Total of frequencies			24	96	120
TOTAL IN %			20%	80%	100%



Fixed assimilation in word internal

Fixed assimilation	Phonological context		With assimilation	Without assimilation	Frequency
[tʃ]	eventually	[ɪ'ventʃuəli]	8	12	20
		[ɪ'ventuəli]			
	factual	['fæktʃuəl]	9	11	20
		['fæktuəl]			
[dʒ]	gradual	['grædʒuəl]	2	18	20
		['græduəl]			
	procedure	[prə'si:dʒə(r)]	7	13	20
		[prə'si:dʒuə(r)]			
[ʃ]	issue	['ɪʃu:]	17	3	20
		['ɪʃju:]			
	negotiate	[nɪ'gəʊʃiət]	12	8	20
		[nɪ'gəʊsiət]			
Total of frequencies			55	65	120
TOTAL IN %			46%	54%	100%



Assimilation at word boundary

Assimilated sounds	Phonological context		With assimilation	Without assimilation	Frequency
a) [t, d, n] assimilated to [p, b, m] influenced by bilabials [p, b, m]	that plan	[ðæp plæn]	3	17	20
		[ðæt plæn]			
	You'd better	[ju:b betə(r)]	0	20	20
		[ju:d betə(r)]			
on purpose	[ɒm 'pɛ:pəs]	12	8	20	
	[ɒn 'pɛ:pəs]				
b) [t, d] assimilated to [tʃ, dʒ] influenced by [j]	last year	[lɑ:stʃɪə(r)]	0	20	20
		[lɑ:st jɪə(r)]			
	behind you	[bɪ'hɑɪndʒu:]	1	19	20
		[bɪ'hɑɪnd ju:]			
c) [s, z] assimilated to [ʃ, ʒ] influenced by [j, j]	her voice shook	[hɛ:(r) vɔɪʃʊk]	9	11	20
		[hɛ:(r) vɔɪs ʃʊk]			
	In case you do	[ɪŋ keɪʒu: du:]	2	18	20
		[ɪŋ keɪs ju: du:]			
	Here's yours	[hɪə(s)ʒɔ:z]	1	19	20
		[hɪə(s) jɔ:z]			
He was shot	[hi: wəʃɒt]	16	4	20	
	[hi: wəs ʃɒt]				
d) [t, d, n] assimilated to [k, g, ŋ] influenced by [k, g]	hot cakes	[hɒk keɪks]	0	20	20
		[hɒt keɪks]			
	I should go	[aɪ ʃʊg gəʊ]	2	18	20
		[aɪ ʃʊd gəʊ]			
	his own car	[hɪz əʊŋ kɑ:(r)]	15	5	20
		[hɪz əʊn kɑ:(r)]			
	He won't go	[hi: wəʊŋg gəʊ]	6	14	20
		[hi: wəʊnt gəʊ]			
Total of frequencies			67	193	260
TOTAL IN %			26%	74%	100%



STRESS

Use of stress in two-syllable words

Stress in two-syllable words	Adequate use	Inadequate use	Frequency
teacher ['ti:tʃə(r)]	20	0	20
expert ['ekspɜ:t]	9	11	20
again [ə'geɪn]	20	0	20
donate [dəʊ'neɪt]	20	0	20
unknown [,ʌn'nəʊn]	19	1	20
Total of frequencies	88	12	100
TOTAL IN %	88%	12%	100%

Use of stress in three-syllable words

Stress in three-syllable words	Adequate use	Inadequate use	Frequency
fortunate ['fɔ:tʃənət]	18	2	20
absolute ['æbsəlu:t]	16	4	20
important [ɪm'pɔ:tnt]	17	3	20
distribute [dɪ'strɪbjʊ:t]	0	20	20
scientific [ˌsaɪən'tɪfɪk]	18	2	20
magazine [ˌmæɡə'zi:n] USA ['mæɡəzi:n]	20	0	20
Total of frequencies	89	31	120
TOTAL IN %	74%	26%	100%



Use of stress in four-syllable words

Stress in four-syllable words	Adequate use	Inadequate use	Frequency
category ['kætəgəri]	1	19	20
operator ['bɒpəreɪtə(r)]	3	17	20
obligatory [ə'blɪgətəri] USA [ə'blɪgətɔ:ri]	8	12	20
appreciate [ə'pri:ʃieɪʃn]	1	19	20
circulation [ˌsɜ:kjə'leɪʃn]	19	1	20
acceptation [ˌæksəp'teɪʃn]	20	0	20
Total of frequencies	52	68	120
TOTAL IN %	43%	57%	100%

Use of stress in five-syllable words

Stress in five-syllable words	Adequate use	Inadequate use	Frequency
capitalism ['kæpɪtəlɪzəm]	2	18	20
inevitable [ɪn'evɪtəbəl]	9	11	20
enthusiasm [ɪn'θju:ziæzəm]	2	18	20
curiosity [ˌkjʊəri'ɒsəti]	20	0	20
differentiate [ˌdɪfə'renʃiət]	0	20	20
classification [ˌklæsɪfɪ'keɪʃn]	19	1	20
consideration [kən,sɪdə'reɪʃn]	20	0	20
reevaluation [ˌri:ˌvælju:'eɪʃn]	19	1	20
Total of frequencies	91	69	160
TOTAL IN %	57%	43%	100%



Use of stress in six-syllable words

Stress in six-syllable words	Adequate use	Inadequate use	Frequency
individualism [ˌɪndɪˈvɪdʒʊəlɪzəm]	1	19	20
discontinuity [ˌdɪskənˈtɪnjuːɪti]	1	19	20
familiarity [fəˌmɪliˈærəti]	19	1	20
personification [pəˌsɒnɪfɪˈkeɪʃn]	20	0	20
individualistic [ˌɪndɪˈvɪdʒʊəlɪstɪk]	19	1	20
Total of frequencies	60	40	100
TOTAL IN %	60%	40%	100%

Use of stress in seven-syllable words

Stress in seven-syllable words	Adequate use	Inadequate use	Frequency
impressionability [ɪmˌpreʃənəˈbɪləti]	18	2	20
irresponsibility [ˌɪrɪˌspɒnsəˈbɪləti]	18	2	20
Total of frequencies	36	4	40
TOTAL IN %	90%	10%	100%



Distinctive function of stress

Phonological context	Adequate use	Inadequate use	Frequency
conflict (noun) ['kɒnflɪkt] conflict (verb) [kən'flɪkt]	11	9	20
desert (noun) ['dezət] desert (verb) [dɪ'zɛ:t]	4	16	20
frequent (adj.) ['fri:kwənt] frequent (verb) [fri'kwent]	9	11	20
survey (noun) ['sɛ:vərɪ] survey (verb) [sə'veɪ]	6	14	20
object (noun) ['ɒbdʒɪkt] object (verb) [əb'dʒekt]	12	8	20
decrease (noun) ['di:kri:s] decrease (verb) [dɪ'kri:s]	0	20	20
conduct (noun) ['kɒndʌkt] conduct (verb) [kən'dʌkt]	9	11	20
progress (noun) ['prɒʊgres] progress (verb) [prə'gres]	13	7	20
subject (noun) ['sʌbdʒɪkt] subject (verb) [səb'dʒekt]	8	12	20
export (noun) ['ekspɔ:t] export (verb) [ɪk'spɔ:t]	3	17	20
Total of frequencies	75	125	200
TOTAL IN %	37%	63%	100%



TOTAL FREQUENCIES OF CONSONANT ELISION IN WORD INTERNAL AND AT WORD BOUNDARY AND VOWEL ELISION PROCESS

Process of consonant and vowel elision	With elision	Without elision	Frequency
Elision of /t/ in word internal	30	50	80
Elision of /d/ in word internal	53	27	80
Elision of /t/ at word boundary	57	23	80
Elision of /d/ at word boundary	57	23	80
Elision of /ə/ with syllabicity of /ŋ/	0	200	200
Elision of /ə/ with syllabicity of /l/	0	200	200
Elision of /ə/ with affrication /-tr/ and /-dr/	9	71	80
Double vowel elision with two syllabic consonants	1	59	60
Elision of /ə/ in other cases	9	111	120
Total of frequencies	216	764	980
TOTAL IN %	22%	78%	100%



TOTAL FREQUENCIES OF ASSIMILATION PROCESS IN WORD INTERNAL AND AT WORD BOUNDARY

Process of assimilation	With assimilation	Without assimilation	Frequency
Assimilation process in word internal	24	96	120
Fixed assimilation	55	65	120
Assimilation process at word boundary	67	193	260
Total of frequencies	146	354	500
TOTAL IN %	29%	71%	100%

TOTAL FREQUENCIES OF THE USE OF STRESS FROM TWO-SYLLABLE TO SEVEN-SYLLABLE WORDS AND ITS DISTINCTIVE FUNCTION AT WORD LEVEL

Use of stress from two-syllable to seven-syllable words	Adequate use	Inadequate use	Frequency
Use of stress in two-syllable words	88	12	100
Use of stress in three-syllable words	89	31	120
Use of stress in four-syllable words	52	68	120
Use of stress in five-syllable words	91	69	160
Use of stress in six-syllable words	60	40	100
Use of stress in seven-syllable words	36	4	40
Use of distinctive function of stress	75	125	200
Total of frequencies	491	349	840
TOTAL IN %	58%	42%	100%



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APPENDIX



Gender: F M

Semester:.....

Self-evaluation of English language pronunciation from 1 to 10:.....

Do you think that it is necessary to learn more about the stress and the phonological processes in connected speech in order to improve the English language pronunciation level?.....

CONNECTED SPEECH AND USE OF STRESS AT WORD LEVEL IN TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS OF ENGLISH

Phonetic processes of linking, elision and assimilation in connected speech and the use of stress at word level

LINKING FEATURES

Linking [r]

1. Please, pronounce correlatively the following words and phrases in the chart.

Sounds	Words	Transcription	At word boundary	Transcription
[ə]	letter		The letter of my friend	
[ɛː]	refer		Refer again	
[ɪə]	hear		Hear everything	
[eə]	dare		Dare I?	
[ʊə]	pure		Pure enjoyment	
[ɑː]	star		A star is born	
[ɔː]	bore		Bore a tunnel	

ELISION

Elision of consonants

2. In the following words and phrases there are sounds which are elided. Please, pronounce the following words and phrases in the charts taking into account the process of consonant elision.

Word internal

Pronunciation with elision	Transcription with elision	Pronunciation with elision	Transcription with elision
Postcard		Grandma	
Postman		Grandpa	
Postscript		Sandpaper	
Directly		Sandwich	

At word boundary

Pronunciation with elision	Transcription with elision	Pronunciation with elision	Transcription with elision
First day		Old man	
Didn't call		Send two	
Next day		Cold day	
Biggest car		Caused trouble	

Elision of [ə] with syllabicity of [ŋ]

3. Please, pronounce the following words in the charts taking into account the process of elision of vowels.

Syllabicity	Word	Transcription
[-tŋ]	Certain	
[-tŋC]	Importance	
[-dŋC]	Prudent	
[-sŋC]	Nonsense	
[-ʃŋ]	Caution	
[-ʃŋC]	Impatience	
[-ʒŋ]	Allusion	
[-rŋC]	Occurrence	
others	Golden Govern	

Elision of [ə] with syllabicity of [l]

Syllabicity	Word	Transcription
[-kɫ]	Classical	
[-fɫ]	Forgetful	
[-vɫ]	Approval	
[-sɫ]	Cancel	
[-zɫ]	Nasal	
[-ʃɫ]	Essential	
[-mɫ]	Normal	
[-rɫ]	Oral	
others	Verbal legal	

Elision of [ə] with affrication [-tr] and [-dr]

Affrication	Word	Transcription
[-tr]	Secretary History	
[-dr]	Secondary Federal	

Double vowel elision with two syllabic consonants

Word	Transcription
Liberal	
Literal	
Admiralty	

Elision of [ə] in other cases

Word	Transcription
Comparable	
Definitely	
Temperature	
Opening	
Preference	
Suffering	

ASSIMILATION

4. Please, pronounce the following words and phrases in the charts taking into account the assimilated sounds.

Word internal

Assimilation	Word	Transcription
[tʃ] - [tj]	Mature Situation	
[dʒ] - [dj]	Education Individual	
[ʃ] - [sj, sɪ]	Association Glacial	

Fixed assimilation	Word	Transcription
[tʃ]	Eventually Factual	
[dʒ]	Gradual Procedure	
[ʃ]	Issue Negotiate	

At word boundary

Assimilation	Phrases	Transcription
a) [t, d, n] assimilated to [p, b, m] influenced by bilabials [p, b, m]	that plan you'd better on purpose	
b) [t, d] assimilated to [tʃ, dʒ] influenced by [j]	last year behind you	
c) [s, z] assimilated to [ʃ, ʒ] influenced by [ʃ, j]	her voice shook in case you do here's yours he was shot	
d) [t, d, n] assimilated to [k, g, ŋ] influenced by [k, g]	hot cakes I should go His own car He won't go	

STRESS

5. Please, read de following words emphasizing on stress.

Two-syllable words	Three-syllable words	Four-syllable words
1) teacher 2) expert 3) again 4) donate 5) unknown	1) fortunate 2) absolute 3) important 4) distribute 5) scientific 6) magazine	1) category 2) operator 3) obligatory 4) appreciate 5) circulation 6) acceptation
Five-syllable words	Six-syllable words	Seven-syllable words
1) capitalism 2) inevitable 3) enthusiasm 4) curiosity 5) differentiate 6) classification 7) consideration 8) revaluation	1) individualism 2) discontinuity 3) familiarity 4) personification 5) individualistic	1) impressionability 2) irresponsibility

SPECIFICATION FOR THE ACCENTUATION

1.	Primary accent + unaccented syllable
2.	Primary accent + prominent syllable
3.	Unaccented syllable + primary accent
4.	Prominent syllable + primary accent
5.	Secondary accent + primary accent

The distinctive function of stress

6. Please, read the following sentences locating the stress adequately.

SENTENCE	TRANSCRIPTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yesterday, there was a <i>conflict</i>. - It is not necessary to <i>conflict</i>. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It seems a <i>desert</i>. - Don't <i>desert</i>. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You should be more <i>frequent</i>. - You have to <i>frequent</i> gym. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We need to make a <i>survey</i>. - I will <i>survey</i> the results. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - You have to know the <i>object</i> of the study. - If you do not agree, you may <i>object</i>. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a <i>decrease</i> of the resources. - It is necessary to <i>decrease</i> the importation. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - He had a bad <i>conduct</i>. - We should <i>conduct</i> them. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There must be a <i>progress</i> in our economy. - The country must <i>progress</i>. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our teacher gave us a good <i>subject</i>. - To <i>subject</i> them is a negative intention. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The <i>export</i> has been reduced. - The country needs to <i>export</i>. 	