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Self-Learning activities using Elsa Speak App to improve pronunciation in the second semester of English Major students at UTN University, academic period 2022-2023

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**Autora:** Génesis Lizbeth Cisneros Brusil

**Director:** MSc. Rubén Agapito Congo Maldonado

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<b>DATOS DE CONTACTO</b>			
<b>CÉDULA DE IDENTIDAD:</b>	<b>DE</b>	1005006976	
<b>APELLIDOS Y NOMBRES:</b>	<b>Y</b>	Cisneros Brusil Genesis Lizbeth	
<b>DIRECCIÓN:</b>		Ibarra	
<b>EMAIL:</b>		glcisnerosb@utn.edu.ec	
<b>TELÉFONO FIJO:</b>		<b>TELF. MOVIL</b>	0979955174

<b>DATOS DE LA OBRA</b>	
<b>TÍTULO:</b>	Self-Learning activities using Elsa Speak App to improve pronunciation in the second semester of English Major students at UTN University, academic period 2022-2023
<b>AUTOR (ES):</b>	Génesis Lizbeth Cisneros Brusil
<b>FECHA: DD/MM/AAAA</b>	27/07/2023
SOLO PARA TRABAJOS DE GRADO	
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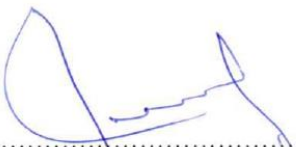
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C.C.: 1001417235

## **DEDICATORY**

First of all, I dedicate this project to my parents whose love, effort and patience have been a fundamental pillar in my training and preparation as a professional. Finally, I owe this effort to myself because with courage I never stopped striving to achieve what I longed for, nor did I give up at times when I simply did not want to continue, but I overcame them.

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## **ABSTRACT**

There are several English terms that are difficult for most Spanish speakers to pronounce since these words do not exist in their language. Many people have trouble pronouncing consonants, as these sounds need complex positions to be produced. The second semester of the English Major at the Universidad Técnica del Norte is the focus of this study's investigation of the Elsa Speak App in conjunction with self-learning, based on pronunciation sub-skills. Based on the previous analysis the objective of this research is to assess the potential drawbacks of self-learning activities using the Elsa Speak App as well as the advantages they may bring to the teaching-learning process, particularly in terms of pronunciation sub-skills, and to analyze various sounds in order to familiarize students with the Elsa Speak App in order to enhance pronunciation. Furthermore, to diagnose the learner's pronunciation based on Elsa Speak App. Finally, designing an academic guide using of Elsa Speak App will improve pronunciation. This research used a mixed approach which means that it uses both qualitative and quantitative data. The researcher applied a survey and an interview to analyze teachers' and students' perceptions of English pronunciation and the use of the Elsa Speak App in the improvement of this sub-skill. In addition, the teacher's view regarding the use of technology is analyzed. Therefore, the academic proposal will be helpful to improve pronunciation, as it contains activities that are based on the difficulties expressed by the students in the survey.

**Keywords:** Elsa Speak, Self-Learning, Speaking Skills, Pronunciation

## **RESUMEN**

Existen varios términos en inglés que les resulta difícil pronunciar a la mayoría del hispano hablantes debido a que este tipo de palabras no existen en el español. Muchas personas han tenido problemas al momento de pronunciar las consonantes, ya que estos sonidos necesitan ciertas ubicaciones que son complejas para poderlas pronunciar. Los estudiantes del Segundo semestre de la Carrera de Idiomas que pertenecen a la Universidad Técnica del Norte son el foco de esta investigación. En donde Elsa Speak combinada con el auto aprendizaje, pueden mejorar la pronunciación. Basado en el análisis previo, el objetivo de esta investigación es evaluar los posibles inconvenientes de las actividades de autoaprendizaje con la aplicación Elsa Speak, así como las ventajas que pueden aportar al proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje, especialmente en lo que respecta a las sub-habilidades de pronunciación, y analizar varios sonidos para familiarizar a los alumnos con la aplicación Elsa Speak con el fin de mejorar la pronunciación. Además, diagnosticar la pronunciación del alumno basándose en Elsa Speak App. Por último, diseñar una guía académica que utilice Elsa Speak App para mejorar la pronunciación. Esta investigación utilizó un enfoque mixto, lo que significa que utiliza datos cualitativos y cuantitativos. El investigador aplicó una encuesta y una entrevista para analizar las percepciones de profesores y alumnos sobre la pronunciación en inglés y el uso de Elsa Speak App en la mejora de esta sub-destreza. Además, se analiza la opinión del profesor respecto al uso de la tecnología. Por lo tanto, la propuesta académica será útil para mejorar la pronunciación, ya que contiene actividades que se basan en las dificultades expresadas por los estudiantes en la encuesta.

**Palabras Clave:** Elsa Speak, Auto aprendizaje, Destreza del habla, Pronunciación



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## INTRODUCTION

Ecuador is considered one of the countries with a low level of English language in Latin America. It ranks 90th out of 112 countries that were evaluated by the English Proficiency Index. According to *cuencahighlife* (2021) among the Ecuadorian cities, Cuenca rated highest in English proficiency followed by Quito and Guayaquil. This does not mean that Ibarra is among the least qualified, but there is still much room for improvement in the level of English language skills in the city. However, the general problem in the country is rooted in the number of hours that have been set by the Ministry of Education and the methodologies that teachers use is often inadequate and ineffective in public schools.

Sempértegui (2022) states that the biggest problem is that public schools have a maximum of 3 hours as apprenticeship while public schools have 10 hours. Similarly, the methodologies used by teachers are not suitable for language teaching as intended. According to Barre & Villafuerte-Holguin (2021), there is a huge difference between the methodologies used by public school teachers and private school teachers. Therefore, support from the Ministry of Education is needed to train teachers and increase the number of hours on this subject.

However, the teaching of English in universities is changing radically as university students demonstrate a high level of English language proficiency. As teachers at universities are always researching and looking for new methodologies, the result is meaningful learning for the university student (Ponce Merino et al., 2019). This is because university students have a high commitment to language learning and certification. They are aware that English is the second most spoken language in the world and will be needed in any job. This is even more so for those who have chosen the degree as a profession, as they are dependent on the degree and have chosen the profession because the language is attractive to them (Faridi & Glasserman, 2017).

Furthermore, teachers are not the only ones in charge of imparting knowledge, students should learn on their own because they are the ones who know their educational needs and how far they want to learn. Also by doing self-learning, the student can learn in a meaningful way instead of memorizing things because they need to associate it with some previous knowledge in order to assimilate the new knowledge obtained (Tekkol & Demirel, 2018). Self-study is also flexible enough to consider students' motivation, as well as their time and resources. This is very useful for younger students, because, in the end, students not only gain new knowledge about this special subject, but the self-delayers themselves help children to develop real-life skills from an early age.

Self-learning is very beneficial for the learner, especially if the learner wants to learn to speak English, as this skill is considered very difficult due to the pronunciation of the language. According to Leong et al. (2017), speaking skill is regarded as one of the most difficult aspects of language learning. Most people learning English find it

difficult to express themselves promptly. In addition, knowledge such as pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension are required, so there are learners who claim to understand English but do not speak it.

Learning speaking skills will not be possible if it is not combined with self-learning, and technology must be used, as nowadays there are several applications that can teach the pronunciation of various words. Also, the use of ICT has made the process of teaching and learning all the more enjoyable (Maslin, 2021). One remarkable app to learn pronunciation is Elsa speak, which allows the student to learn pronunciation in a fun way, making the user improve their pronunciation and gain confidence in speaking (Luc, 2022). Most people who are learning to speak English prefer Elsa because the app gives them immediate feedback as well as allowing them to choose from which level, they want to start learning.

The present investigation arises from the need to study the level of oral expression that the students of second semester of the degree in English that belong to the university UTN have, in order to establish complementary activities to advance in their oral expression skills, were the university students who indicated that they find it difficult certain letters such as consonants because in the native language they do not have them since it is necessary to move the mouth fast to achieve certain sounds.

Since there are not enough studies on self-learning using Elsa speak for teaching at UTN university, the present work is suitable to reinforce the knowledge of using Elsa Speak as an application for teaching speaking. In addition, the research contributes to obtain data on the effectiveness of such an application can improve students' knowledge and analyze the rate of progress in speaking skills. Therefore, this work is methodologically useful. Future research could be carried out with consistent methodologies, so that joint analyses, period comparisons and evaluations of the interventions carried out are possible.

Thanks to this research, teachers will benefit from this strategy as it provides them with a new tool to work with their students. Thus, thanks to Elsa speak, they will get their students to learn in a fun way. As a result, students will find the motivation to continue learning the language, as they will be inspired by the subject matter of the application as it is related to topics, they find interesting. As a result, learners will generate new knowledge unconsciously, as they are not learning specific vocabulary, and will be able to improve their language skills.

All these reasons are the foundations on which the research work is based. The main objective is to evaluate the possible limitations that Self-Learning activities using Elsa Speak App can offer as well as the benefits that it can generate in the teaching-learning process, specifically in pronunciation sub-skills. Furthermore, it is necessary to emphasize that the overall objective is to describe Self-Learning activities using Elsa Speak App to improve pronunciation in second semester of English major students at the UTN university, academic period 2022-2023. This will be divided into three specific objectives, one of which is analyze different phonemes to get students to familiarize

themselves with the Elsa Speak App to improve pronunciation. In addition, diagnose the student's pronunciation based on Elsa Speak App. Finally, design an academic guide using Elsa Speak App to improve pronunciation.

Once the objectives have been stated, it is necessary to focus on speaking skills. Speaking plays a fundamental role in pupils' learning and social development. College students are expected to be engaged speakers with positive speaking habits and a high motivation to speak. However, the development of the digital age poses a challenge for pupils' speaking, as they lack the motivation to learn the pronunciation by itself; technology has changed traditional approaches and content because the students have diverse interests. In addition, digital entertainment occupies learners' attention and energy, which has led to a recent decline in reading.

Hence, this research will be conducted at UTN university in Ibarra, Imbabura-Ecuador. The target population are the 34 students belonging to the second semester of English major. It is essential to mention that in this class, some issues with pronunciation were found. Finally, the present research will be conducted in the 2022-2023 school year.

It is crucial to discuss the following study questions for a clearer understanding:

- Can Elsa Speak Application improve speaking skills?
- What are students' perceptions of using Elsa Speaking Application for speaking skills?

This research work is structured as follows:

The introduction contains the justification, description, and establishes the goals for this research. The theoretical basis for this study is described in Chapter one and includes theories, research papers, and several definitions of variables. The research population, tools, and methodology are all described in Chapter two. While Chapter three summarizes all research findings and analyses all data gathered using the research instruments. A research proposal that addresses the problem that has been found is also included in Chapter four. It contains the Elsa Speak App and the guide for the students. Chapter six compiles a set of recommendations and findings related to this research work.

# CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

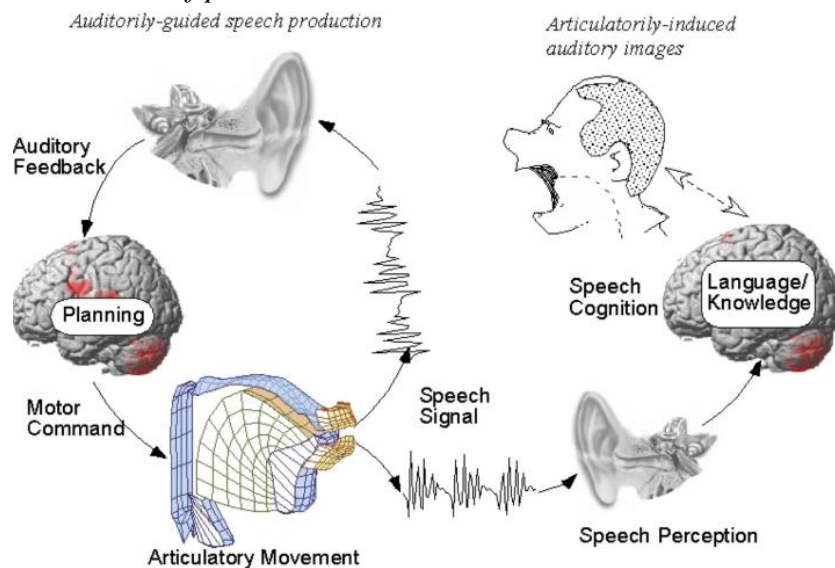
In this section of the project, a theoretical review is carried out, taking into account various points of view, including phonetic concepts and other perspectives, including phonological and phonological ideas framed, establishing specific phonologies, and establishing special characteristics of the sound that is part of this research. The research where the basis of the typical characteristics of the English sound is a typical characteristic of the English sound so that Spanish speakers do not confuse it with the English ones. Spanish speakers with their mother tongue Hoos. In this study where the central axis is phonetic, it is logical and at the same time defines not only the concepts but also defines not only this concept but also phonology and what is related to the relationship between them, because between them, for the subject people, before the requirements can be easily confused.

## 1.1. Phonetics

Phonetics is a segment of linguistics that studies the characteristics of speech sounds and provides methods for their narration, classification, and imitation. The methods of its characteristics deal with the narration of speech sounds. It is a linguistic system that refers to the imitation of sound, these units are called phonemes (Hoque, 2020). Therefore, phonetics is the scientific study of sounds describing, and categorizing human sounds, it can be understanding the creation of sounds by comparing sounds diagonally with speech. Finally, phonetics finds the limitations and restrictions of human speech. In addition, phonetics is believed to be the most important problem in oral communication. Yumisaca et al. (2018) state that Due to pronunciation, accentuation and intonation problems, English learners are often quiet and shy and feel fearful because of their pronunciation errors; as a result, they have low self-esteem and little social interaction. There are three sub-branches of learning phonetics:

**Figure 1**

*Three main branches of phonetics*



Note: Figure taken from (McQueen., 2005)

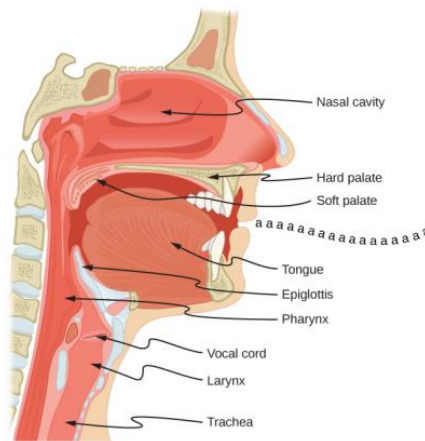
### 1.1.1. Articulatory Phonetics

It is the production of speech sounds. In other words, it is the transformation of aerodynamic energy into acoustic energy (Brittner, 2020). This means that, the energy refers to the airflow through the vocal tract, the potential form is the air pressure.

- **Vocal Organs:** Humans expel air from the lungs through the trachea and then through the mouth or nose to produce most of the sounds of spoken languages.

**Figure 2**

*The vocal organs*



*Note:* Figure taken from OpenStax University Physics, CC BY 4.0

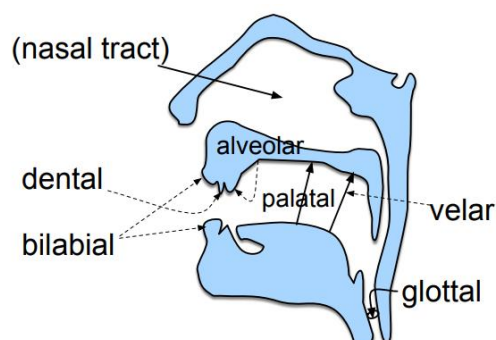
The folds will vibrate with the passage of air if they are close together; if they are far apart, they will not vibrate. Sounds produced when the vocal folds vibrate together are called sonorous. Sounds that are produced without the vibration of the vocal cords are called dull or unsound. The English vowels [b], [d], [g], [v], [z], and others are sounds like [p], [t], [k], [f], and [s] are dull sounds (Stevens & Weismer, 2001). On the other hand, the vocal tract consists of the oral tract and the nasal tract and is located above the trachea. Air can leave the body through the mouth or nose after leaving the trachea. Most sounds are produced when air passes through the mouth. Nasal sounds, such as [m], [n] and [ng], are produced when air passes through the nose and use resonance cavities in both the oral and nasal tracts (Semitic et al., 2019). Phones are divided into two main classes: consonants and vowels.

- **Consonants**

As consonants are made by restricting the air, they can be grouped into classes due to the point of restriction they have and the place of articulation.

**Figure 3**

*Major English places of articulation*



*Note:* Figure taken from (Semitic et al., 2019)



### ❖ **Labial**

Consonants whose main restriction is the union of the two lips have a bilabial place of articulation. This also includes [p], [b], [m]. The labiodental consonants [v], [y], [f] is produced by pressing the lower lip against the upper row of teeth and allowing air to flow through the space between the upper teeth (Yumisaca et al., 2018).

### ❖ **Dental**

Placing the tongue against the teeth produces dental sounds. In English, the words [th] and [dh] are pronounced with the tongue behind the teeth and the tip slightly between the teeth (Belfakir, 1992).

### ❖ **Alveolar**

The part of the roof of the mouth just behind the upper teeth is known as the alveolar ridge. The tip of the tongue against the alveolar ridge is used by most speakers of American English to pronounce the letters [s], [z], [t] and [d]. The word "crown" is often used to describe the dental ridge and the alveolar ridge (Erlinda, 2010).

### ❖ **Palatal**

From the posterior part of the alveolar ridge, the palate rises sharply. The tongue blade presses against the posterior ascending part of the alveolar ridge to produce the palato alveolar sounds [sh], [ch], [zh] and [jh]. The palatal sound is produced by bringing the anterior part of the tongue closer to the roof of the mouth (Goldstein & Fowler, 2011).

### ❖ **Velar**

At the back of the roof of the mouth is a movable muscle flap called the soft palate. It presses the back of the tongue against the soft palate to produce the [k], [g] and [ŋ] sounds.

### ❖ **Glottal**

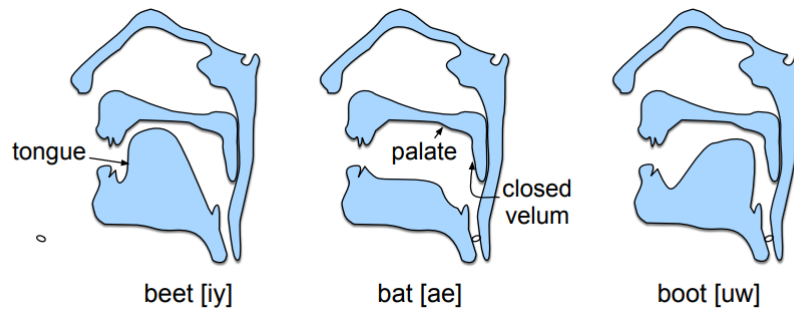
Glottal occlusion [q] is performed by banding the vocal folds to close the glottis.

### • **Vowels**

Vowels, like consonants, can be distinguished by the position of the articulators when they are uttered. The three most important parameters for vowels are what is known as vowel height, which roughly relates to the height of the highest part of the tongue; vowel frontness or vowel backness, which indicates whether this height is towards the front or back of the vocal tract; and whether the shape of the lips is rounded or not.

**Figure 4**

*Tongue positions for English high front, low front, and high back*



*Note: Figure taken from (Semitic et al., 2019)*

Vowels that are raised forwards and backwards are called front and back vowels. High vowels have the highest point on the tongue, while mid or low vowels have the lowest point on the tongue, respectively.

### 1.1.2. Acoustic Phonetics

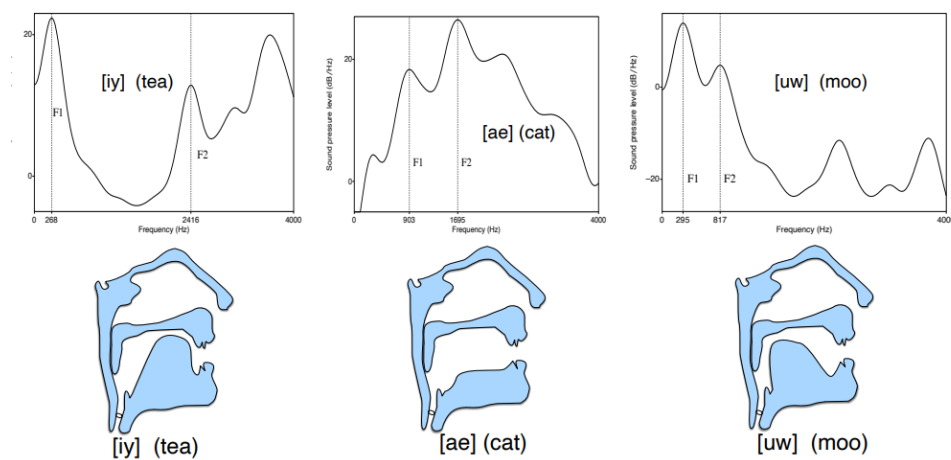
It is the study of the physical production and transmission of speech sounds. Normally it analyses the characteristics of the waves when certain words are pronounced and how they are transmitted between the mouth and the ear.

- **The Source-Filter Model**

Two vowels sound different because of the resonant cavities in the mouth. There is a filter that allows to explain the acoustic sounds and how the pulses produced by the glottis are formed in the vocal tract. The vocal tract acts as a filter or amplifier that causes frequency waves to be amplified and others to be damped. This amplification process is caused by the cavity as we change the shape of the vocal tract resulting in different vowels being pronounced with different sounds (Katz, 1951).

**Figure 5**

*Tract Position as a Filter*



*Note: Figure taken from (Semitic et al., 2019)*

Here is an example where you can see the frequency waves of the different positions of the tongue acting as a filter to pronounce the different words. You can see a clear difference between the frequencies resulting in totally different sounds.

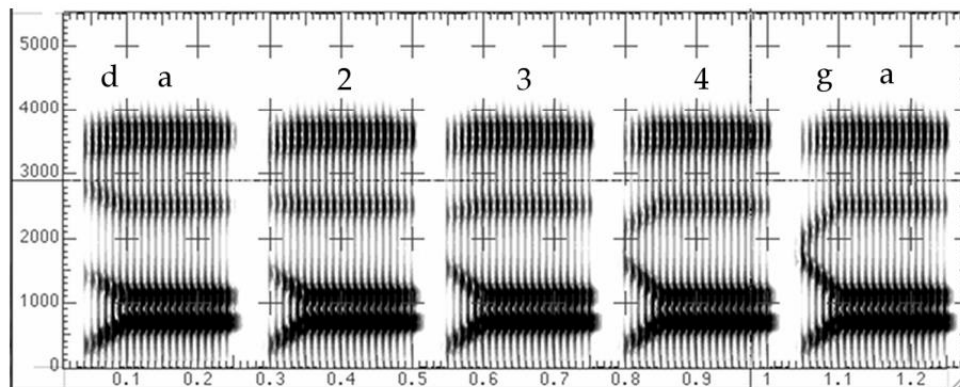
### 1.1.3. Auditory Phonetics

The study of the perception of speech sounds (Diehl, 2008). It contains the study of how the peripheral and central auditory systems, including specific areas of the brain, mediate the relationships between speech stimuli and the listener's responses to them.

The auditory system determines what can and cannot be heard, which cues will be retrievable in particular segmental contexts and how adjacent sounds will influence each other. The auditory system comes into play. The ability of listeners to detect non-simultaneous onset of tones of different frequencies is probably why the most common time limit for voice onset in all languages is about 30 milliseconds. In 1980 Virginia found that there was some confusion between the syllables da and ga and listeners reported ambiguity when pronouncing both syllables, especially when the next preceding syllable is [al] or [ar](McQueen, 2005).

**Figure 6**

*Consonant-vowel syllables ranging from “da” to “ga” in five acoustically equal steps.*



*Note: Figure taken from (McQueen., 2005)*

In the picture you can see that there is a slight change in the wave patterns in the 3000 hertz so that people find it very similar to hear these two sounds as in algae and arda. However, for the human ear this variation is almost imperceptible, so that it interprets that it has the same sound in both words, so that when evaluating the frequencies, it can be demonstrated that this is not the case.

## 1.2. The Importance of Phonetics in the English Language

In universities, phonetics is a subject that is frequently taught. It could be a clear component of the curriculum or an implied component, such when teaching foreign language pronunciation. There are, however, surprisingly few research on phonetics education and retention. Learning phonetics helps students understand the rules of sounds and how sound works in language, and how to produce it. Phonetics has become a science in the production system. According to (Hamka et al., 2020), When learning

phonetics, people are learning the basics of English as most students are required to be able to produce, describe characteristics and differentiate each sound.

For a language learner it is essential to learn phonetics because he/she has to pronounce each word correctly and to know the rules of each word. Moreover, thanks to phonetics, we can identify why certain sounds come out of our mouths softer or louder, as well as understand the communication codes of each language. It also improves pronunciation, the recognition of familiar and unfamiliar sounds and the development of autonomy in the recognition of words and sounds (Saidi, 2017). There is a common adage that improving pronunciation in the mouth improves discrimination in the ear. According to some studies it has been proven that the ear teaches the mouth, which is why you listen before you speak. This can be linked to the changes in the English language.

### 1.2.1. Changes in the English Language

In every language, there are changes, because it is a symbol that a language is alive. Just as there are some words that become obsolete with the passage of time due to their unnecessary presence, there are other words that take their place and represent an appropriate meaning for the former words (Neelam, n.d.). These changes may be due to the fact that people are constantly changing and are always travelling from one continent to another. Also, people from other countries, when they come into contact with people, start to create variations in words because they have different ethnicities and upbringings. Finally, new vocabulary is acquired due to new creations, for example, in the 19th century, what is now known as radio was called wireless. There are four main changes in the history of the English language.

- **Phonological Change**

As stated Robinson Phonological changes are changes in pronunciation patterns. If one compares older words with newer ones, one can observe a fairly large phonological change (2007).

**Figure 7**

*Examples of old English compared with Modern words.*

**EXAMPLES:**

Proto-Germanic English	Old English	Modern
<i>Felthuz</i>	<i>feld</i>	<i>field</i>
<i>Skurtijon</i>	<i>scyrte</i>	<i>shirt</i>
<i>Sandijanan</i>	<i>sendan</i>	<i>send</i>
<i>Tækanan</i>	<i>tacan</i>	<i>take</i>
<i>Leikw</i>	<i>læn</i>	<i>loan</i>
<i>Etanan</i>	<i>etan</i>	<i>eat</i>
<i>Skokhaz</i>	<i>scoh</i>	<i>shoe</i>
<i>Drengkanan</i>	<i>drincan</i>	<i>drink</i>

*Note:* Picture taken from (Neelam, n.d.)

- **Syntactic Change**

Syntax comes from the Greek and refers to the systematic arrangement or assembly. It is the study of how words are arranged to form sentences. Syntax is the science of how sentences are constructed (Redondo, n.d.). It is a type of natural language variation involving changes in the grammar of a language. Both socio-cultural and internal language factors can contribute to or lead to this change.

**Figure 8**

**“Friends, Romans, Countrymen, Lend me your ears”.**  
**(Shakespeare – Julius Caesar)**

"Lend me your ears" in the above line surely does not mean to cut off and give the ears, as lend me money is used as "hear me for my sake and keep quiet". This shows that verbs can change.

- **Semantic Change**

The term "semantic shifts" refers to the study of how the meaning of a language changes over time. This happens when native speakers of another language adopt English expressions and apply them to their own social and cultural environment.

**Figure 9**

*Semantic Shifts*

**EXAMPLE:**

	<b>Old Meaning</b>	<b>New Meaning</b>
1. <b>Accent</b> _	to sing	way of pronouncing way of utterance
2. <b>Aerial</b> _	thin as air	a wire or rod able to send and receive radio waves

*Note: Picture taken from (Neelam, n.d.)*

- **Morphological Change**

Morphology is the science and study of the smallest parts of language grammar. It is the investigation of the forms of words (Closs, 2017). It examines how words are formed, where they come from, their grammatical forms, the functions of prefixes and suffixes in word formation, on what basis the words of each language are formed, how the system of gender, number, etc. works, and how and why their forms change.

### **1.3. Phonology**

Phonology is the study of the sounds used in language, their internal structure and how they are composed into syllables, words and phrases (Hannahs, 2015). Computational phonology is the use of formal and computational techniques to represent and process phonological information. It is crucial for language learning because it helps learners understand how the sounds of a language are used and how they are produced. It also helps them to pronounce words correctly. It can help language learners understand how the sounds of a language are produced, how they are used and how they relate to each other (Samantha, 2022). It is therefore crucial for them. Language learners can improve their pronunciation and learn to distinguish between the different sounds of a language by understanding phonology.

Additionally, because English is a stressed language, accentuating specific syllables might modify the meaning of the phrase being said. For instance, the word "record" can be either a noun or a verb depending on the stress. Second, there are a lot of minimal pairings in English, or word pairs that only vary by one sound (Wiese, 2006). For instance, even though the terms "bat" and "bat," which have a similar sound, have very distinct meanings. Students could find this to be highly perplexing, but phonology can make the distinctions easier to comprehend. Last but not least, English contains a large number of irregular words, which implies that a word's pronunciation does not necessarily follow a pattern. For instance, the word "ough" can be pronounced in several ways depending on the term. Phonology can help students understand these irregularities and pronounce the words correctly.

#### **1.3.1. International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)**

The International Phonetic Association published the IPA in 1888. The IPA is a phonetic system that represents the distinctive features of speech, such as intonation, phonemes and the spacing of words and syllables, in order to regulate the sounds of speech. The first version of IPA, based on the Roman alphabet, was created in 1886, which allowed other countries to use it. As Chopp (2019) states, this table works differently because it represents each speech sound with a symbol. It does not combine sounds with letters. Of the 107 symbols representing consonants and vowels, 31 are diacritics or glyphs that are used for particular sounds, and of the 107 symbols, 19 are for stress, intonation, pitch and duration of sound. Because most countries have Latin roots, the symbols are based on the Latin alphabet.

**Figure 10**

*IPA Chart Consonants*

CONSONANTS (PULMONIC)

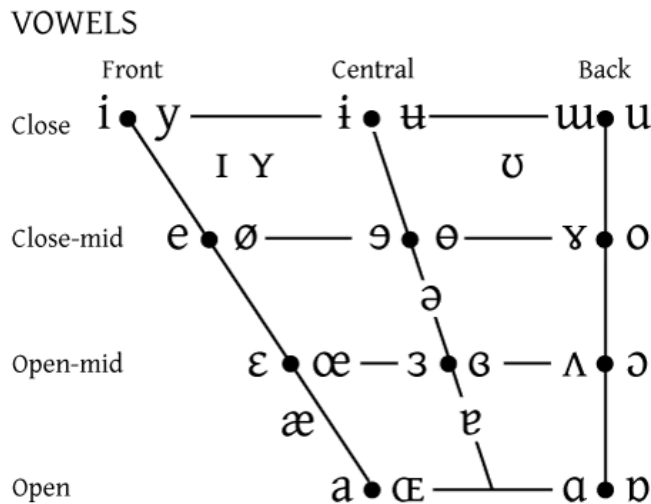
	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Postalveolar	Retroflex	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	p b			t d		ʈ ɖ	c ɟ	k ɡ	q ɢ		ʔ
Nasal	m	ɱ		n		ɳ	ɲ	ŋ	ɴ		
Trill	ʙ			r					ʀ		
Tap or Flap				ɾ		ɽ					
Fricative	ɸ β	f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ	ʂ ʐ	ç ʝ	x ɣ	χ ʁ	ħ ʕ	h ɦ
Lateral fricative				ɬ ɮ							
Approximant		ʋ		ɹ		ɻ	j	ɰ			
Lateral approximant				l		ɭ	ʎ	ʟ			

*Note:* Picture taken from <https://acortar.link/BnxH5Z>

The IPA chart is essential for English language learners because it helps them to understand the pronunciation of words and how they should be pronounced in the mouth. You don't need to know all the symbols; you can start with five or ten words a week and practise until you understand them. Finally, you can learn interactively to make it easier. This kind of learning is absolutely necessary if you are studying English.

**Figure 11**

*IPA chart Vowels*



*Note:* Picture taken from Wikimedia Commons

#### **1.4. Constructivism**

The constructivism learning theory is a theory that places great emphasis on how learners actively construct their own ideas. Rather than simply assimilating information, learners actively reflect on their experiences, create mental images and add new information to their schemas (McLeod, 2023). This fosters deep learning and understanding. It is crucial for educators to comprehend constructivist learning theory. Every student who walks into the classroom brings with them a perspective on life that has been shaped by their own experiences. This will impact education. If students construct new information based on what they already know, as suggested by constructivist theory, then the beginning of their learning journey is crucial. For instructors, learning theories are just as vital as qualifications; it's critical to comprehend how their pupils' learning processes will be impacted.

In order to succeed with this learning paradigm, educators might apply many sorts of constructivism.

- **Cognitive**

The core principle of cognitive constructivism is that learning should be tailored to the cognitive stage of the learner. By making connections between new information and what they already know, these teaching techniques aid students in acquiring new material and help them adapt their innate intellect to new knowledge (Western Governors University, 2020). Jean Piaget's studies on the cognitive growth of children serve as the foundation for cognitive constructivism.

- **Radical**

The constructivist spectrum has cognitive constructivism at one end and radical constructivism at the other (Hemchandracharya North Gujarat University, 2020). This completely accepts the first three epistemological principles, according to which learning is an adaptive process that comes from an experientially based mind rather than a mind that mirrors an objective reality.

- **Social**

Social constructivism emphasizes the four epistemological premises mentioned above. These particular epistemological emphases translate into the establishment of norms that uphold the social character of knowledge and the idea that knowledge is a shared rather than an individual experience, as it results from social interaction and the use of language.

Accurate mental conceptions of reality are emphasized by cognitive constructivists. Radical constructivists place a strong emphasis on creating an integrated experience world. The creation of a shared, socially created world is emphasized by social constructivists.



### **1.4.1. Blended Learning**

Combining traditional classroom instruction with online learning to teach the same students the same material in the same course is known as blended learning. It combines in-person and online learning opportunities (Commonwealth of Learning, 2020). In other words, the phrase "blended learning" refers to the technique of delivering education and learning experiences using a mix of technology and face-to-face interaction. Additionally, hybrid or mixed-mode learning are other names for blended learning. These systems of instructional designs incorporate a variety of teaching and learning techniques, and their implementation varies depending on the instructors, programs, and schools involved.

There are some blended learning models that can help the teacher to create a learning experience according to the students' preferences.

- **Face-to-face**

In order to provide students, the freedom to set their own learning pace, technology is added to the conventional instructor-led learning sessions. Role-playing, coaching, practical training, and feedback are advantages (Solorzano, 2023).

- **Rotation**

Students in this type of blended learning alternate between several stations on a set timetable, either working online or spending time with the teacher in person. In primary schools, the rotating model is more frequently employed (DreamBox Learning, 2020).

- **Flex**

The flex model gives students autonomy over their education. Students or employees can switch between activities according to their needs. Both online and offline activities are possible. Teachers are constantly there to educate and support students as needed (Kolinski, 2022).

Within blended learning there is one particular model which is the focus of this research.

### **1.4.2. M-Learning**

Mobile learning is learning that can take place anywhere and at any time and is assisted by mobile devices that students may utilize to access the information. Mobile learning is made possible by the same technologies that we all carry about in our pockets and bags (Kolinski, 2023). The term "mobile" in the term "mobile learning" refers not just to the gadgets but also to the learners themselves. Over the past few decades, people have grown more mobile, which has an impact on how they need to learn and apply information.

Now that we know what M-learning is, it should be noted that M-learning combined with self-learning makes people more interested in learning in this way, as they are the ones who choose when to study and how far they want to go.

### **1.4.3. Self-Learning Activities**

Self-learning is a method of education in which the learner takes an effort to assess their own knowledge, determine their own learning requirements, and create learning objectives (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). This enables others to evaluate and improve your knowledge via use, with little to no formal evaluation. The five self-learning activities must be established after the strategy has been described.

- **Project-Based Learning**

Students research a subject or driving issue, produce a final product to showcase their understanding, and then present the finished result to a real audience. Project-focused Learning provides a framework focused on practical, social, and genuine experiences. Students investigate ideas or issues from the real world, work together and interact with others from the local community and present their findings.

- **Problem-Based Learning**

Is a fantastic self-directed learning technique where students evaluate challenging, real-world issues, investigate solutions, and create a thorough plan to address the issue. As long as students take control of the experience by making decisions, this can be student-directed. I frequently state a problem and then let the students decide how they will approach it, who they will consult, and what resources they will use.

- **Experimental Inquiry**

Due to the frequent testing of student hypotheses through experimentation, it may be employed as a self-directed learning technique. As they take in their surroundings, students may design the experiment on their own and decide how to gather and evaluate data.

- **Service-Learning**

Is the process of determining the requirements of the community, examining and researching the nature and causes of those needs, and providing services to the community that satisfy those needs. Students are able to pinpoint issues and needs in their local communities. They have a choice in how they learn more about using critical thought and originality in addressing problems.

## **1.5. Physiological Aspects of Speech Production**

Speech occurs in three stages: generation of air pressure, regulation of vibration, and control of resonators. Lung air pressure for speaking is produced by the respiratory system's operations during a protracted exhale phase following a brief inhale. The larynx's vocal cords, which introduce air vibrations to form vocal sounds, are controlled

by a group of laryngeal muscles and the movement of air from the lungs. When the vocal folds vibrate to create brief airflow pulses from expiratory air, a humming sound is created. The confined airways that run down the tract above the larynx are another source of transitory noises; the pressure they exert causes a rushing or turbulent airflow sound. The upper respiratory tract's pharyngeal, oral, and nasal chambers operate as resonators.

As resonance chambers, these cavities transform buzzing or turbulent sounds into language sounds. The primary articulators are the lips, velum, lower jaw, tongue, and lower jaw. As Honda (2008) states, they generate programmed motions that modify the subpharyngeal airway's resonance properties. This chapter combines the most recent theories about the phonatory and articulatory systems, together with brief descriptions of their techniques of observation, to highlight the physiological processes involved in speech production.

### **1.5.1. Common Mistakes in English Pronunciation**

English pronunciation problems also affect students' performance in class activities, midterm and final exams and grades. The aim of this essay is to determine the causes and factors affecting students' English pronunciation problems. Several researchers have attempted to identify the multiple factors that influence students' pronunciation. As stated by (Ha, 2005), the teaching and learning of pronunciation seem to be influenced by several factors, including mother tongue, age, exposure, innate phonetic ability, linguistic identity and ego, as well as motivation and concern for good pronunciation.

- **Local Language**

Learners who speak several languages use the target language in different ways. Sometimes speakers of the target language speak slightly or very differently from native speakers. Furthermore, he stated that the most important factor in explaining learners' pronunciation is their mother tongue, especially foreign accents. According to (Kenworthy, 1987), learners will be able to diagnose their own difficulties if they are familiar with the sound system of their mother tongue. It is important to note that errors of aspiration, intonation, rhythm, and melody in the target language may be caused by interference or negative transfer from the first language.

- **Earlier English Pronunciation Learning**

Students' success with their present attempts may be impacted by their previous experiences learning pronunciation. Pronunciation mistakes that were systematic and frequent may have surfaced among students with a greater degree of proficiency. As Lestari et al. (2020) states, first impressions are quite important. Some students speak some words incorrectly right away. They are more prone to make comprehension mistakes when they speak those words wrongly as they become accustomed to their own pronunciation. Additionally, it's crucial to keep in mind that the words that are most frequently misconstrued are those that are pronounced similarly. horses, sheep, boats, houses, etc.

Therefore, students should make it a habit to start learning the proper pronunciation right away.

- **Phonetic Skill**

Phonetic coding ability is another name for phonetic aptitude. It is generally accepted that certain individuals have superior aural capacity to speak a foreign language than others. For instance, they can imitate sounds better and discriminate between two sounds with more accuracy than others (Schneider, 1973). Shows that awareness of various sounds is necessary for some learning processes. Additionally, students can enhance their pronunciation if they put in more effort and focus on particular sounds.

- **Motivation**

Whether a student will acquire native-like pronunciation depends on his or her passion for studying the language. According to studies, the need and desire to learn native-like pronunciation might be influenced by having a personal or professional objective for learning English. As stated in Ferreira et al. (2011), even natural speakers of second languages can achieve high levels of proficiency if they are motivated. Teachers should also encourage students to speak English outside of the classroom and give them assignments to plan these encounters, rather than just concentrating on pronunciation and accent in class.

- **Instruction**

When teaching a foreign language, the four key areas of growth that are often emphasized are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Foreign language programs often place a strong focus on pronunciation during the first year of study by presenting the alphabet and sound system of the target language. However, this approach of teaching pronunciation is rarely applied at the advanced level (Sowell, 2017). Numerous studies have looked into the benefits of explicit instruction for second-language learners. Finally, it was discovered that comprehension, accent, and intelligibility had all significantly improved over time. It was demonstrated that thirty language learners may alter their pronunciation.

## **1.6. ICT Apps to Enhance an English Learning Process**

Information and communication technology is represented by the abbreviation ICT, which means that it relates to technologies that provide access to information via telecommunication. Several ICTs were implemented to allow students to continue their education virtually as a result of the online work they were required to do. ICTs aid to promote learning since teachers may modify them to their classroom environment to fit individual needs (Ratheeswari, 2018). Consequently, the following apps can aid to improve learning.

- **Speaking Pal**

With the help of this program, students may easily and amusingly develop their oral communication skills. With the use of this program, students may converse with a virtual tutor who provides quick feedback on how they pronounce particular words (Oxford House, 2022). It is advised for students who are at an intermediate level to work on their pronunciation because it cannot provide a true dialogue.

- **Vocabulary Builder**

A lot of people like playing word games on this app. It is simple to download, and it enables you to learn 1,200 words that were chosen by specialists for the app. You may take tests inside the app to assess your pronunciation and understanding of each word (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). If the pupil can show that they have mastered the prior terms, they will be able to access additional ones.

- **Speak English Fluently**

Students may learn English with this software, which also helps with conversation, listening comprehension, and fluency in spoken English. It teaches you lists of the language's most used terms and expressions (Speak English Fluently, n.d.).

- **Speekoo**

It is a program that pushes you to pick up a new tongue. swiftly and intuitively. Each of the 20 levels in the language the student chooses to study comprises 12 lessons. The fact that this program is updated frequently is good since it benefits the learner (Review, 2021).

- **Sounds**

Students may practice and experiment with pronunciation with this app. This software is all about practice; you may choose to work with a random selection of phrases or choose a specific sound that the learner wishes to concentrate on. More than 650 words in the program may be used to practice both British and American English. It urges the student to repeat it until it is flawless and then compares their pronunciation to that of the app (Sandoval, n.d.).

- **Elsa Speak**

Elsa is a charming and entertaining software that was created with sound data from English speakers with various accents to help with pronunciation. The program can distinguish between native and non-native speakers' pronunciations. Based on their learning, the software offers exams to users, and it adjusts to their requirements as they use it (Ltd, n.d.).

## **1.7. Elsa Speak in the Educational Field**

Elsa Speak is one such platform that complies with Education 4.0. English Pronunciation Assistant is what it stands for. Elsa, one of the top five English pronunciation apps, has the ability to help students communicate more effectively in English. It offers a number of features that can assist students in developing their American accent pronunciation and is accessible on both the AppStore and the Google Play store. They must accurately enunciate a word, phrase, or sentence as part of these activities (Dhivya et al., 2023). The app has the potential to affect the learner's speaking proficiency and score. Previous research has demonstrated that using this app is advantageous for students.

Furthermore, its goal is to assist students in speaking English easily, fluently, and securely. This application is intended to help students pronounce words correctly, including vocalizations, consonants, and accents. The students were given the task of practicing their oral expression using the ELSA Speak Application in order to maintain their English learning at home because in a classroom setting, students were unable to speak directly with the teacher about the topic of oral expression (Darsih et al., 2021).

Teachers should provide their pupils more advanced instruction, practice-focused lessons, and practical resources to put it into practice, such mobile apps to assist them practice speaking. This is due to the difficulty of teaching speaking and the fact that other influences, such as the teacher's position, can also contribute to speech restriction. By using the right technology, mobile learning may also encourage students' independent study. The purpose of the current study is to investigate how students see the usage of the Elsa App in speaking lessons.

### **1.7.1. Background**

Elsa Speak was developed in 2015 because its designers felt they required something further to continue to advance technology (Lee, 2021). Consequently, Elsa was developed by a Vietnamese entrepreneur to enhance interaction in communication. As was already said in the previous sentence, Elsa is a website where you may learn new words. Many students utilize Elsa for self-learning since it is so simple to use. Even though they are aware that it can increase pupils' motivation, few teachers actually use it.

### **1.7.2. Elsa Speak Learning Activities**

Elsa Speak has eight different game categories are available on the Elsa App to aid students in honing their speaking abilities which are:

- **Pronunciation**

Get specific feedback on the student's pronunciation by having them listen to and repeat the words and short sentences.

- **Intonation**

Emphasize the crucial words in a phrase to improve your intonation.

- **Listening**

By practicing with few pairings and learning to recognize sounds between similar words, you may improve your listening abilities.

- **Word Stress**

Pick the appropriate syllables within words to highlight. There are stressed and unstressed syllables in words.

- **Conversation**

Talk to people in real-world situations to practice using all the vocabulary and expressions you have learnt in previous courses.

- **Video Conversation**

Use videos to practice realistic conversations with additional context.

- **Unscrambling words**

The words with the character in the incorrect sequence will be shown to the students. Choose the right term, then speak it out loud. The total score is based on how many responses are accurate.

- **Missing letters**

In this game, the student will practice the vocabulary skills.

They can converse both naturally and on camera since it includes word accents, listening, pronunciation, and intonation. It also features games where you may unscramble words and add missing letters to words. However, few teachers use this application in their classes. They are unaware that users of this program have significantly improved their learning. Thus, it can be concluded that genially is a crucial weapon in the field of education for inspiring kids.

In 2009 Kuningan conducted a research in which he found that ELSA App also aids with word and phrase practice for students. Using this software made it simpler to learn the topic. Students could not feel worn out or bored since they were required to actively engage in the lecture and minimize word pronunciation problems. The attitudes of the students in the experimental class and the control class also shown that most of the students were more mostly favorable signs than negative ones, including cognitive, emotional, and behavioral elements.

In a study conducted by Akhmad & Munawir (2022), was found that when utilizing Elsa Speak, it was discovered that the kids' pronunciation had significantly improved. As a result, it was determined that utilizing Elsa Speak helped students pronounce words more clearly and that they were engaged in and favorable toward the application.

In conclusion, not so numerous studies have been done on the use of genially to design activities. The majority of them demonstrate that it is a fantastic program where

you can build different activities that inspire students since you create and design the activities. The subject of the exercise is dependent on the class's preferences since some professors inquire about the kids' preferences. As a result, it is an excellent and crucial educational tool.

### 1.8. English Language Speaking Skill

Speaking is the capacity to utilize language to convey ideas verbally in a variety of contexts through verbal or nonverbal symbols, and it may be enhanced by learning new languages. It is considered one of the four language abilities, speaking serves primarily as a means of oral communication (Tambunan, 2018). The speaking skill is divided into four sub-skills which are the fluency, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.

**Figure 12**



*Note:* Picture taken from <https://english.binus.ac.id/2018/10/11/the-four-speaking-skills/>

- **Fluency**

As kids progress through school and use and practice speaking skills every day, fluency in spoken language naturally increases. Reading often exposes kids to new vocabulary and strengthens their understanding of spoken language, which is a wonderful method to increase fluency. Fluency is the capacity to instantly comprehend words after hearing them (Haryanto, 2016). They can read aloud and pronounce words correctly if they are written down. You may help your kids acquire this by encouraging them to read passages aloud. Additionally, you may ask your pupils to read aloud in front of the class. They become more self-assured as a result, which also improves their pronunciation.

- **Vocabulary**

Vocabulary is important because it is the foundation of all language, to put it simply. They serve as the foundation upon which we may express our thoughts and ideas, exchange knowledge, comprehend others, and fortify our interpersonal bonds (Khan et al., 2018).



- **Grammar**

The right sentence structure and knowledge of verb tenses are only two examples of how grammar offers essential structure for spoken language. This makes it easier for people to communicate ideas in a style that the audience would know and comprehend (Afna, 2018).

- **Pronunciation**

Pronunciation plays a very important role in the development of speech skills. When starting to learn, a basic level is needed, but the more advanced the learner becomes, the more demanding this sub-skill becomes (British council, 2020).

There are some strategies that belongs to pronunciation which are.

- ❖ **Cognitive Strategies**

They focus intently on pronunciation while listening, speaking aloud to themselves, and engaging in exercises that help them learn the sounds of the target language.

- ❖ **Compensation Strategies**

Use their own codes or phonetic symbols to recall how to say things.

- ❖ **Metacognitive Strategies**

Observe how your mouth moves or how your lips move, and study up on the laws of the target language.

- ❖ **Social Strategies**

Asking someone else to fix your pronunciation will help you maintain your sense of humor about pronunciation errors.

### **1.8.1. Elsa Speak to Enhance Speaking Skill**

Due to the fact that this platform enables learning through a variety of activities, it can be customized to develop skills specific to the English language, such as listening skills students can watch the videos so that the student can repeat them and improve their pronunciation, oral skills the app ask them to repeat certain words, or a combination of these skills to produce meaningful learning. It is important to note that this application is quite comprehensive in terms of oral production once it is realized that this instrument may be utilized to build abilities.

Because it is an application that is not yet known in Ecuador, most of the studies have been carried out in the Middle East and there are very few studies, but in those where Elsa Speak has been tested, it has been proven through pre-test and post-test that this application helps students to significantly improve their pronunciation and oral production level. It also took into account the opinions of the students where they commented that they were happy to learn with the application because it is very interactive and allows them to carry out a number of activities.

## CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

This research was carried out at the Universidad Tecnica del Norte de Ibarra. Within this university, the second semester students corresponding to the Language Pedagogy Career were considered, being a total of thirty undergraduate students who has participated in this research.

### 2.1. Research Approach and Type of Research

The foundation of the current investigation is a mixed approach. Sybing (2023), claims that mixed approach is a new approach that encourages the systematic blending of quantitative and qualitative data across a single investigation or protracted program inquiry. It is vital to define the quantitative research method in order to comprehend better. It is described as compiling and evaluating statistical data by Bhandari (2022). It aids in finding trends and averages and extrapolates findings to bigger groups. Additionally, it is now essential to define what the qualitative research method entails. The qualitative method, in the words of McLeod (2019), is the gathering, analysis, and elucidation of non-numerical facts, such as language, which may be utilized subjectively to understand and make sense of their social reality.

Additionally, this study combines mixed methodologies and a descriptive research methodology. It is vital to define descriptive research in order to comprehend it properly. Descriptive research, according to (Harris, 1991), accurately and carefully characterizes a population, situation, or phenomena. This study has employed experimental research alongside descriptive research and has also used research that emphasizes a one-shot case study methodology. A single group is given treatment under this design; to ascertain if the implementation of the therapy led to a change in the group, observations are contrasted with common expectations of how the situation would have appeared if the treatment hadn't been used. There isn't a control or comparative group.

The methods used by teachers to teach the English language were examined, as well as the efficacy of the suggested learning activities. Elsa Speak was used in this study to give interactive tasks for raising speaking skill. The purpose of the study was to employ Elsa Speak as a way to enhance pronunciation by gathering data using deductive and inductive methodologies. Mallia (2014) establishes that using this approach, the researcher typically examines data patterns, compares results, validates the status quo, and conducts study at various periods.

### 2.2. Techniques and Research Instruments

The important variables are measured using a range of devices. Depending on the interests of the researcher, these techniques can occasionally be combined. These methods can occasionally be blended based on the researcher's preferences. In order to get information from the participants, the author used two instruments for the study and one technique. The author started off by conducting a survey which is a technique. The

need to inquire about the learners' thoughts on their education led to the selection of this instrument. Closed-ended questions on speaking abilities and whether learning through Elsa Speak would help students enhance their communication skills made up the questionnaire for pupils. The pupils were given this test to complete. The poll also included ten questions that were pertinent to the study's subject. On the other hand, the author's technique involved an interview. This technique was chosen since it is important to get the teacher's viewpoint on the students' pronunciation issues. An English instructor from the Universidad Técnica del Norte was given this test. The interview also included four questions. The researcher created the questions in advance, and none were raised during the interview, making it a structured interview.

### **2.3. Research Questions**

The following questions guide the research and are set out for better understanding.

- Can Elsa Speak application improve speaking skills?
- What are students' perceptions of using Elsa speaking application for speaking skills?

### **2.4. Participants**

The Universidad Técnica del Norte, located in Imbabura, has more than 9,000 students, including English, which consists of 8 semesters. However, this research focused on the second semester of this course which consists of 30 students who are at A1-A2 level. This study uses non probabilistic sample. Non-probability suggests that a choice was made based on convenience or other factors rather than at random as (H. Öztaş Ayhan, 2011) stated. It can be argued that the sample was chosen on purpose and for the researcher's convenience since it consists of thirty people who utilize the technology and speak a sufficient level of English for the study.

### **2.5. Investigation Procedure**

In order to create a trustworthy instrument, the process begins with the gathering of theoretical data. To gather both qualitative and quantitative data, instruments were developed. The researcher developed each gadget after having it approved by two professors teaching English at the Universidad Técnica del Norte. In order to determine the applicability of this research, surveys and interviews were done. The interviews with the teachers took place in person and were taped. In the second language, the instructor responded to the four open-ended questions. Finally, once the students responded in their second language to ten questions on the forms created, a link was emailed to them, and they completed it in one day.

## CHAPTER III: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1. Findings from the Teacher Interview

#### Q1. Do you consider Speaking skills as a complex skill to teach? Yes, or no?

- **Teacher A**

Yes, speaking is a complex skill because that is a productive skill in which students have to produce de language and sometimes is produce the language but orally is complex because for students I have realized that sometimes for students it is easier to get ideas in a written way because when you write you can think twice but when you are communicating ideas is a little hard to connect like the ideas in English and also to respect the grammar and to respect the pronunciation, there are many things going on in their minds when they are thinking in this foreign language.

- ❖ **Analysis**

As mentioned by the English teacher, pronunciation is a difficult sub-skill. As stated by Laksana (2016), pronunciation is being a productive skill, and it is complicated to communicate what people want to say, besides the fact that it has many sounds that do not exist in Spanish and it is necessary to take into account many aspects such as grammar. Most of them say that they have problems expressing themselves in English because many of them think in Spanish and have to translate it into English. This caauses the pronunciation to lose quality, as well as other factors such as self-confidence and the fear of being laughed at by their classmates when they express themselves in English (Putera Jaya et al., 2022).

#### Q2. Do you think that the use of technological tools helps to improve the level of English? Why?

- **Teacher A**

Yes, of course basically when I teach listening because we have as a subject listening and speaking I always use technological tools and students love this incorporation because only having the textbook and the audio from the text is boring but incorporating apps is very interactive to use an app, to practice the language, and students feel like using technological tools is useful for professors because we can immerse the students in real English because it is an opportunity for us as professors to provide our students with a native environment because students can listen to a native pronunciation and even expressions.

- ❖ **Analysis**

Technological tools are becoming increasingly important in the field of education. Several studies have shown that ICT is a complementary element and that it works quite well within what is required for learning (Parveen, 2016). In this

case, technological tools to support speaking skills are effective and students have stated that ICT can be used to improve speaking skills not only in the classroom but also as a self-learning tool (Abugohar et al., 2019).

**Q3. Do you think that learning to pronounce English phonemes correctly would help students improve their pronunciation? Why?**

- **Teacher A**

Yes, absolutely if you are referring to English major students is the must, it is a requirement because if you are going to become a teacher you need to know how the phonetic symbols work. When you do not know how to pronounce a word correctly you can use a dictionary or just google a word and see the phonetic symbols and then read them, and even more for English majors I would say than for other students because English majors when you self-study and try to improve the language and study by yourself you need to understand how these symbols work, how these phonemes sound.

- ❖ **Analysis**

Since speech is so necessary for communication, correct pronunciation would improve communication between people. Especially a language learner needs correct pronunciation to be able to teach his or her students, otherwise he or she will make pronunciation mistakes which will make the students not learn correctly (Darcy, 2018). Therefore, it is very necessary to learn how to pronounce correctly.

**Q4. What are the most difficult sounds to pronounce in oral activities? Vowel or consonant sounds.**

- **Teacher A**

I would say that all the vowel sounds that are not part of the Spanish alphabet. I would say that for example in Spanish remember we have only five sounds like “a, e, i, o, u” but in English, we have a variation. We have “a” and then “ʌ” you have “e” like in eat for example like sounds like similar to the Spanish “i” and then you have like eat is my problem so that is the relax “i” is “ɛ” also schwa is a problem because we do not have those sounds, all the sounds that are not part of the Spanish language, all those vowels and particularly talking about vowels but talking about consonants for Spanish speakers I always share this with my students I say you will become teachers so always pay attention to the pronunciation of “r” first of all for Spanish for any Spanish speaker pronouncing “r” is hard because of the position of the tongue they usually pronounced as you do it in Spanish so in Spanish the position is different in Spanish you say for example “rojo” there is a vibration so in English the position of the tongue is different and you say “red” and my students feel tempted to say “red” so “r” and “t” and “d” students have the tendency of mispronouncing or sometimes confusing those sounds when they come at the

end because we do not have those sounds at the end in Spanish words so is not pretty common. So “t” and “d” are problematic and also the plosive “p” they say “pay” instead of “paid” so those are the consonants that I think that cause trouble for the Spanish speaker’s “t”, “d”, “r”, “k”, “z”.

#### ❖ **Analysis**

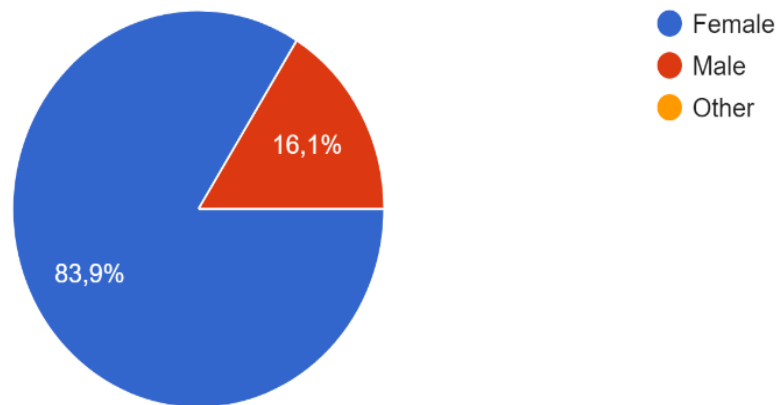
Many studies have concluded that Spanish speakers have difficulty pronouncing all vowels. A study by Wulansari (2020), investigated three different semesters and found that the most difficult vowel for them is [æ], which they pronounce in words such as "cat, cab, gag". However, this may vary depending on the students surveyed. So, it can be considered that almost all vowels are complicated. However, in Ecuador, the shwa sound is considered difficult for most of the students. On the other hand, considering consonants, the most difficult sound to produce has been considered in several studies to be the [th] sound, as indicated by (Hew, 2020). However, in student surveys, students have indicated that they find consonants more difficult than vowels, as in Ecuador one sound that is difficult to produce is the "r" sound.

### 3.2. Results of Students' surveys Informative Questions

#### 3.2.1. Gender of the Interviewed Participants Among the Pupils.

**Figure 13**

*Students Gender*

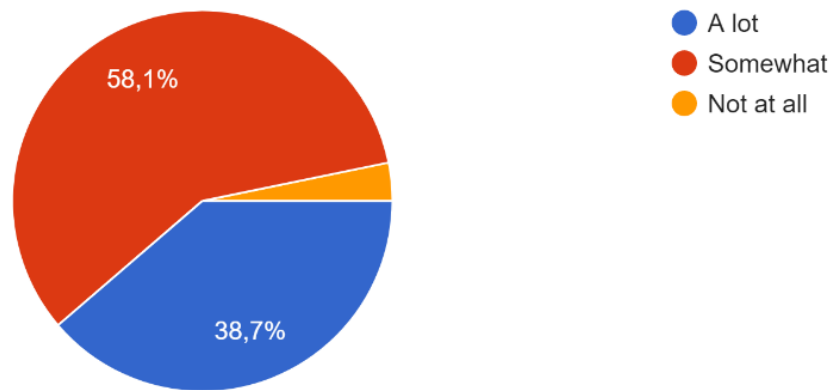


The gender range of the applicants varies, with more women than men. Several studies have shown that women speak better English. In 2020 a study was conducted in 72 countries and showed a not so unequal score between men and women. While women scored 53.97% in the EPI ranking, men scored 52.38%. The study showed that the people with the best command of the English language are between 18 and 25 years old (Economiahoy, 2020).

### 3.2.2. Interpretation of how Students Consider their Speaking Classes

**Figure 14**

*Enjoying English Classes*

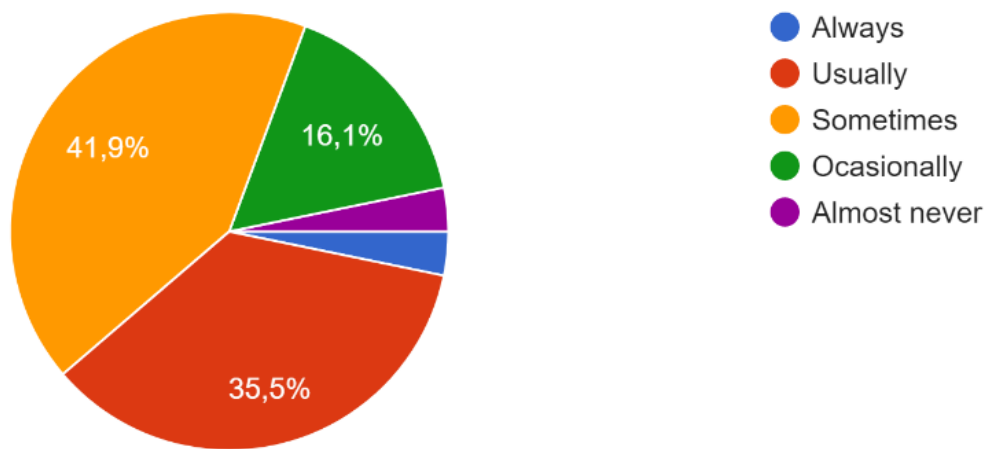


Most of the pupils concluded that they found the speaking lessons interesting and that the necessary complementary activities were used to motivate the pupils. Motivation is an important factor, at least as far as speaking is concerned, as many are afraid to speak. Several studies have concluded that the use of various factors, such as apps or humor, can help learners to want to improve their speaking. A study by Syafiq (2012), concluded that good use of materials can lead to high performance in study, of course students must be interested in learning for this to work properly.



**Figure 15**

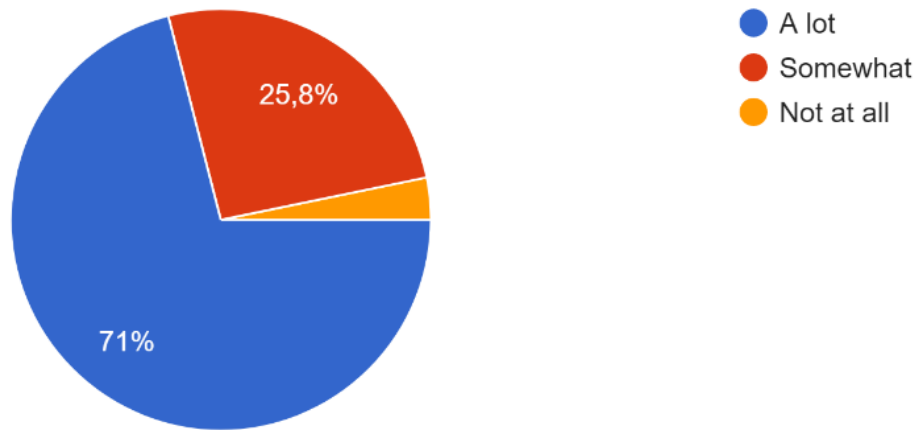
*Practicing pronunciation outside the classroom*



As it can be seen, most of the students answered that they practise their pronunciation outside of class sometimes. Studies have shown that self-study is a perfect complement if you need to improve your pronunciation. In a study by Al-snani (2021), it was found that students agreed with self-study, but that they should not do all the work themselves, but that it should be supplemented with guidance from the teacher. It also showed that students can set themselves a goal and do not feel self-conscious or judged on their pronunciation.

**Figure 16**

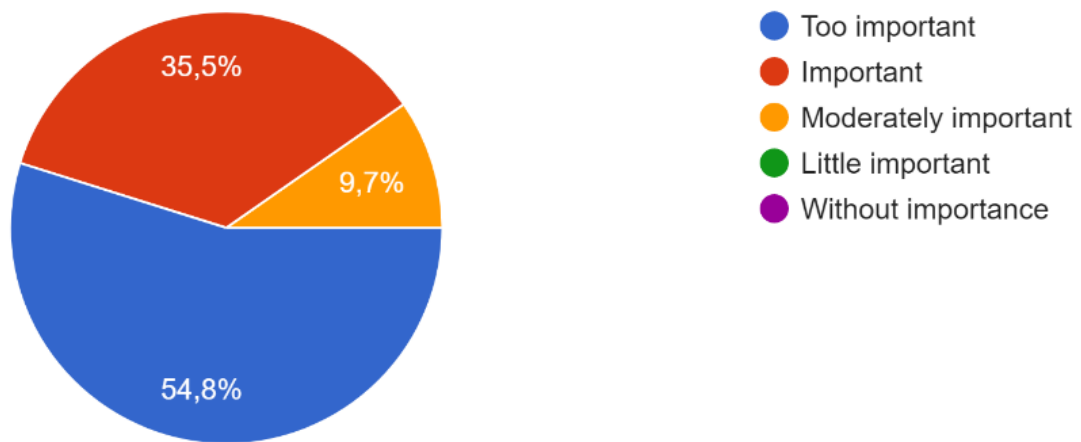
*Practicing English every day improves pronunciation.*



Most of the students consider that practicing English every day improves their pronunciation. However, although they know that they can improve by doing so, in the previous question they answered that they sometimes practice outside class. As a result, they may not have the motivation to make further progress, or none of the applications they have used to practice their pronunciation may satisfy them. Some studies have concluded that practicing pronunciation every day can yield positive results through learners' perseverance (Dandee & Pornwiriyaakit, 2022).

**Figure 17**

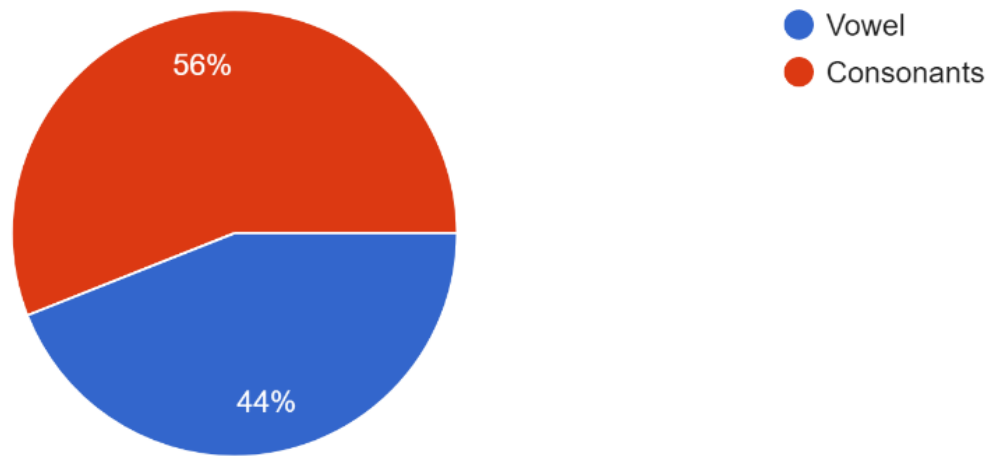
*Correct pronunciation helps to improve your oral production.*



As can be seen in the pie chart, most of the students consider that it is very important to have correct pronunciation in order to have a good level in oral production. However, they do not give 100% in wanting to improve in these aspects by using self-study. A study by Hidalgo (2023) concluded that the use of self-study allows learners to analyze their abilities and deficiencies. Once the deficiencies are known, the learner needs to start improving them. Furthermore, the study concluded that self-learning increases the self-esteem of learners, as it promotes autonomy and metacognition (Andrade et al., 2021). Therefore, it can be concluded that correct pronunciation can lead to a high level of oral production.

**Figure 18**

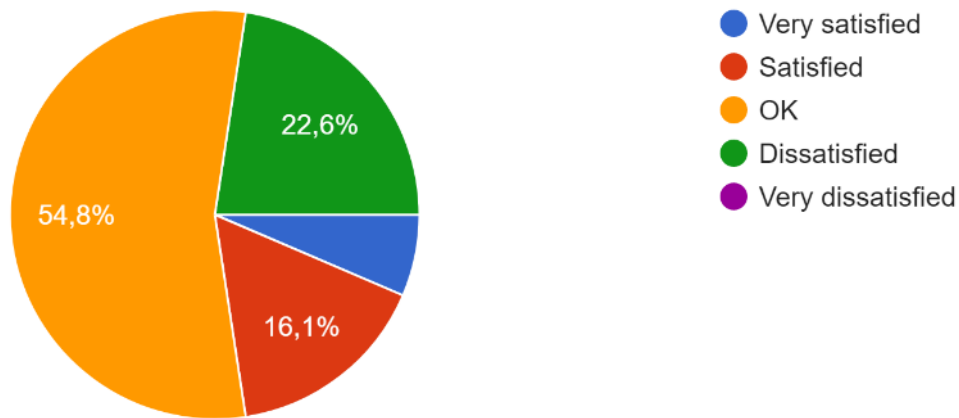
*Difficulties for the students to vocalize.*



As can be seen, most of the respondents answered that they find it difficult to pronounce consonants. If we look at the conversation teacher's survey, she confirms that there are certain consonant letters that they may find difficult, but that most struggle with the vowels, as there are too many vowels in the English language, whereas in Spanish there are only five (Mantilla & Andrade, 2020). Experts confirm what the teacher said in the interview, Spanish speakers find it harder to pronounce vowels than consonants, especially shwa, as there can be up to 12 vowel sounds for each vowel (Garita Sánchez et al., 2019).

**Figure 19**

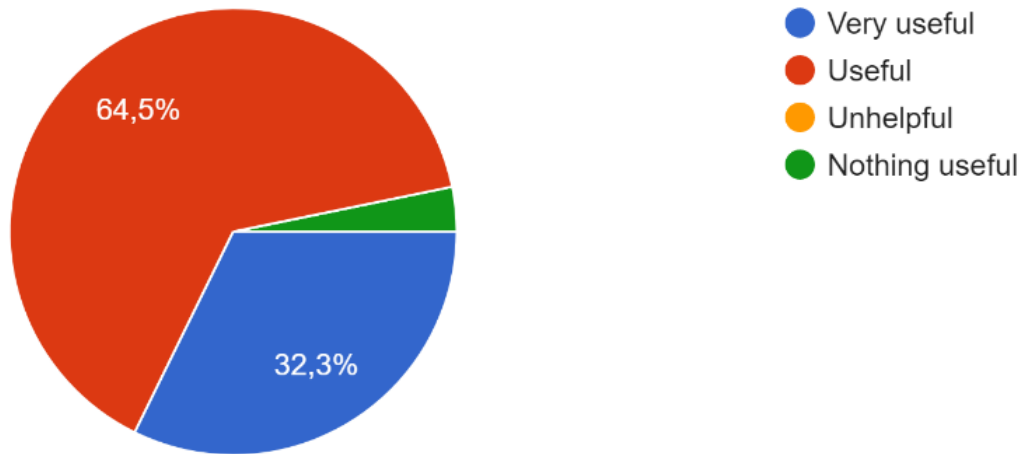
*Satisfaction about English pronunciation*



The majority of respondents confirmed that they are more or less in agreement with their English pronunciation. Therefore, using Elsa Speak will make them improve their pronunciation if they are consistent in using it (Darsih et al., 2021). Studies have shown that the app can greatly increase oral production because it gives immediate feedback and has several games to further practice not only pronunciation, but also intonation and vocabulary, which is very necessary to be able to hold a conversation in English with another person (Guevara Betancourt, 2015).

**Figure 20**

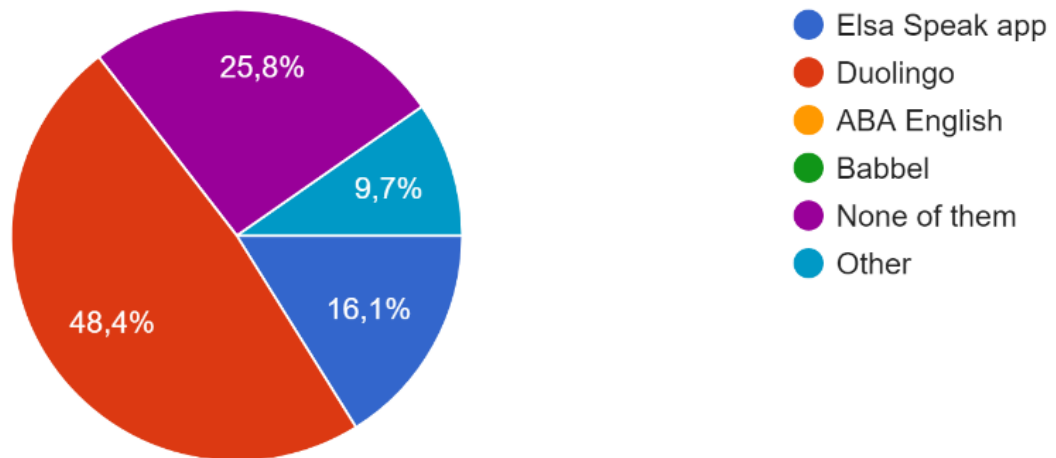
*Technological tools to improve pronunciation.*



Respondents consider ICT to be useful for improving their pronunciation. In the interview with the speaking teacher, she stated that ICT is a good resource and that she uses it to motivate learners as well as to create a pleasant atmosphere during class. Studies have shown that ICT is a good complement to improve learners' pronunciation, as technology has become an important factor in learners' lives and is now available to everyone (Sosas, 2021). So, it is very easy to resort to the use of apps to improve pronunciation.

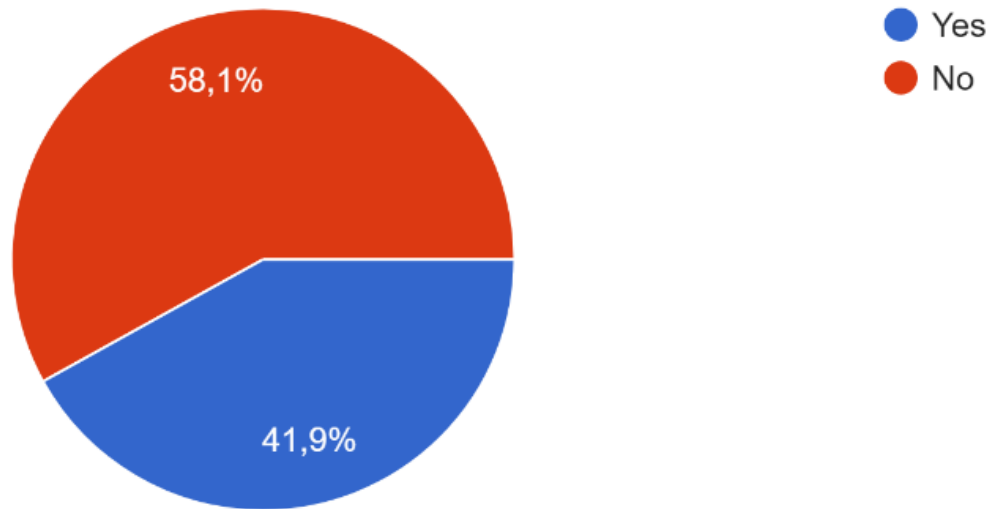
**Figure 21**

*Apps used by students.*



Students showed their preference for the Duolingo app, which is the most common app worldwide. Studies have shown that this app can improve students' production levels with constant practice through fun games (B et al., 2023). However, the academic proposal is aimed at Elsa Speak which is not a very well-known app in Ecuador, however it has potential as there is research that corroborates that they have been able to learn using Elsa (Kuningan, 2009). Therefore, it can be concluded that it is quite good to introduce a new application to learn English as it has almost the same games as Duolingo, but this one is different in that Elsa can recognize every sound that is mispronounced.

**Figure 22**  
*Knowing Elsa Speak*



The survey shows that the majority of students are not aware of the app. This may be because the app is best known in the Middle East, and is popular in Arabia, India, among other countries. However, now with the academic proposal, students will have the opportunity to learn about the various activities offered by Elsa. According to Forbes, it is one of the 4 best apps for learning to speak (Hynes, 2016).



### **3.3. Discussion**

The results of the teacher interview and the pupil survey coincide in certain aspects. Among them, it can be highlighted that both perspectives consider ICT to be very important for a good command of the English language, especially when it comes to speaking (Obando et al., 2017). Another aspect that can be highlighted is that students find it difficult to pronounce consonants and the teacher gave some examples of which consonants they find most difficult to pronounce. Therefore, it is considered that implementing Elsa Speak in the English course would be a good option as the pupils could be motivated to learn.

One aspect that is somewhat contradictory is that in the interview the teacher indicated that she implemented the use of ICT to make the class more interactive as she did not only work with the book and the audios, however the pupils do not find the speaking classes attractive, perhaps by doing conversation classes and implementing them little by little due to the lack of confidence the pupils have in their pronunciation (Evolution, 2022).

In addition, self-learning combined with the Elsa Speak App has flourished because learners can play the various activities and get immediate feedback. A study conducted by Bonilla, Sonia & De la Rosa (2023), indicates that the application is a great tool to work on days when you don't go to class as it allows you to work from home and be able to do self-learning. Thus, if you have the guidance of a teacher, you can learn in a very effective way. The more research that is done on the subject, the better known this application will become, as it has a lot to offer students.

To conclude, the academic proposal called "Improving pronunciation skills based on Self-Learning approach using Elsa Speak App" is a manual for instructors that will assist them in inspiring their pupils to speak English by enhancing the pronunciation. The academical proposal includes the pronunciation strategies that will help students in addition to vocabulary instruction, with the certificate that Elsa Speak offers when the student finished the lesson will keep them engaged in learning what other kinds of rewards they will receive if they maintain making progress. The academic method is crucial because it combines approaches and strategies to provide a positive learning environment.

## CHAPTER IV: PROPOSAL

### Improving Pronunciation by Implementing Self-Learning Approach using Elsa Speak App

#### 4.1. Rationale

This proposal was developed with the purpose of offering inspiring English learning activities to demonstrate that learning English as a foreign language is not as boring as it sounds. Applying the self-learning approach is important since the majority of learners are digital natives and are familiar with using a computer or a smartphone. This makes it simpler for teachers to conduct engaging and inspiring lessons because the approach includes incentives that will encourage students to want to keep studying.

In addition, as there are not enough studies on this application in Ecuador, it is necessary to make known an application that is effective in improving the pronunciation level of students who want to learn English and who may not have enough resources to attend paid courses. They can use Elsa Speak following the proposed guide to learn little by little.

Self-Learning is a significant approach that has increasingly gained popularity since many professors utilize it to supplement regular sessions. Therefore, self-study paired with the Elsa Speak App helps increase speaking abilities, as the researcher concluded that Elsa Speak App produces positive outcomes. According to a study by Timpau (2015), self-learning significantly improves students' speaking abilities. The study found that most students used the most efficient platform to improve their speaking abilities, increase their vocabulary, and comprehend conversations better.

To sum up, it should be noted that this proposal was created to give teachers access to tried-and-true pronunciation strategies on the Elsa Speak App, where students can select their character and proceed as planned with a system of rewards and challenges as they advance.

#### 4.2. Theoretical Foundation

Mobile learning is learning that can take place anywhere and at any time and is assisted by mobile devices that students may utilize to access the information. Mobile learning is made possible by the same technologies that we all carry about in our pockets and bags (Kolinski, 2023). The term "mobile" in the term "mobile learning" refers not just to the gadgets but also to the learners themselves. Over the past few decades, people have grown more mobile, which has an impact on how they need to learn and apply information.

Now that we know what M-learning is, it should be noted that M-learning combined with self-learning makes people more interested in learning in this way, as they are the ones who choose when to study and how far they want to go.

Self-learning is a method of education in which the learner takes an effort to assess their own knowledge, determine their own learning requirements, and create learning

objectives (Indeed Editorial Team, 2022). This enables others to evaluate and improve your knowledge via use, with little to no formal evaluation.

Pronunciation plays a very important role in the development of speech skills. When starting to learn, a basic level is needed, but the more advanced the learner becomes, the more demanding this sub-skill becomes (British Council, 2020).

There are some strategies that belong to pronunciation which are.

❖ **Cognitive Strategies**

They focus intently on pronunciation while listening, speaking aloud to themselves, and engaging in exercises that help them learn the sounds of the target language.

❖ **Compensation Strategies**

Use their own codes or phonetic symbols to recall how to say things.

❖ **Metacognitive Strategies**

Observe how your mouth moves or how your lips move, and study up on the laws of the target language.

❖ **Social Strategies**

Asking someone else to fix your pronunciation will help you maintain your sense of humor about pronunciation errors.

Teachers should provide their pupils more advanced instruction, practice-focused lessons, and practical resources to put it into practice, such as mobile apps to assist them practice speaking. This is due to the difficulty of teaching speaking and the fact that other influences, such as the teacher's position, can also contribute to speech restriction. By using the right technology, mobile learning may also encourage students' independent study. The purpose of the current study is to investigate how students see the usage of the ELSA App in speaking lessons.

Elsa Speak has eight different game categories available on the Elsa App to aid students in honing their speaking abilities. They can converse both naturally and on camera since it includes word accents, listening, pronunciation, and intonation. It also features games where you may unscramble words and add missing letters to words. However, few teachers use this application in their classes. They are unaware that users of this program have significantly improved their learning. Thus, it can be concluded that genially is a crucial weapon in the field of education for inspiring kids.

The goal of applying this technique is to get schoolchildren's speaking skill up to the CEF's B2 level recommendation for speaking and writing English as a foreign language. Teachers must adhere to the Ministry of Education's curriculum in order for students to meet the standards required of English language learners. This requires using groundbreaking methods that streamline the achievement process and simplify the achievement

process itself. The suggested exercises are thus based on the English modules that the Ministry of Education developed so that they may be utilized internationally.

### 4.3. Objectives

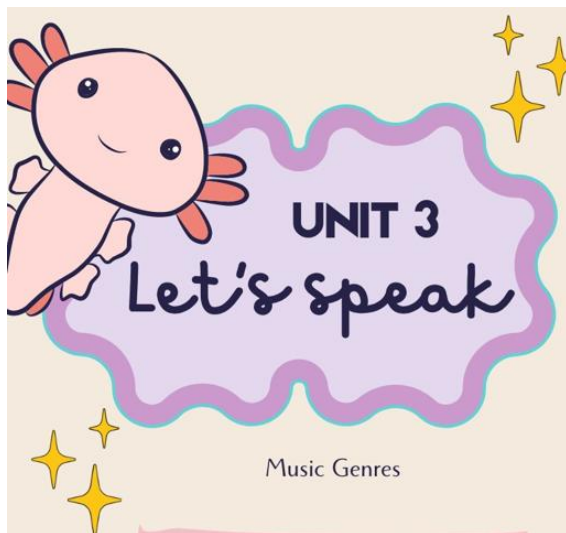
#### General Objective

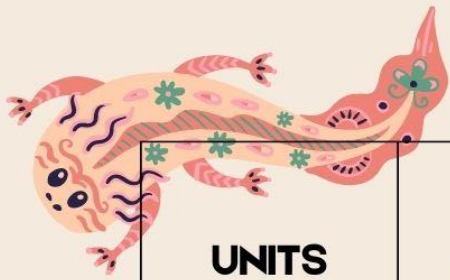
- Improve pronunciation sub-skills by implementing Self-Learning using Elsa Speak App in English classes.

#### Specific Objectives

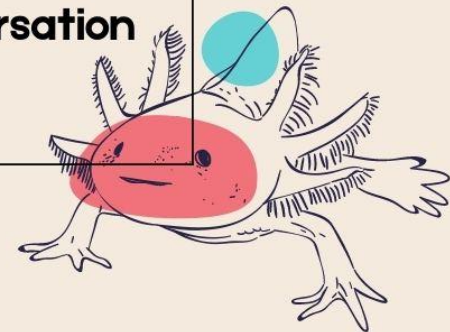
- Choose the appropriate strategies to execute on Elsa Speak App to improve the speaking level.
- Design interactive activities based on Elsa Speak App using Self- Learning to improve pronunciation sub-skills.

### 4.4. Guide and Activities





<b>UNITS</b>	<b>LESSONS</b>	<b>STRATEGIES</b>	<b>PRONUNCIATION</b>	<b>CATEGORIES</b>
<b>UNIT 1</b>	<b>Discovering</b>	<b>Compensation</b>	<i>/s/, /ʃ/, /z/</i>	<b>Word Stress</b>
<b>UNIT 2</b>	<b>Learning</b>	<b>Metacognitive</b>	<i>/m/, /n/, /ŋ/</i>	<b>Pronunciation</b>
<b>UNIT 3</b>	<b>Let's Speak</b>	<b>Cognitive</b>	<i>/w/, /v/, /b/</i>	<b>Intonation</b>
<b>UNIT 4</b>	<b>Fix Pronunciation</b>	<b>Social</b>	<i>/æ/, /ʌ/, /ɑ/</i>	<b>Video Conversation</b>





# UNIT 1

# Discovering

Holiday Activities and Places

## LEAD IN

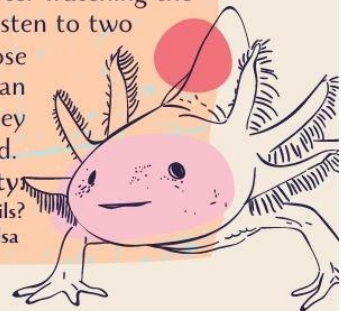
Can you hear the difference?

**Procedure:** The student has to go to Elsa Speak App and choose the game /s/, /ʃ/, /z/.

There the students will learn how to pronounce the sounds above and the correct movement of their mouth. After watching the videos the pupil is going to listen to two words and they have to choose the correct answer. They can repeat the audio the times they need.

**Link to the activity:**

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=us.nobarriers.elsa>



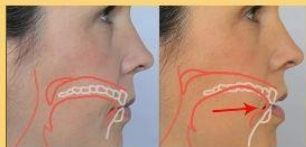
## PRESENTATION

[s], [ʃ], [z]

Alveolar and Post Alveolar

**How to make the sound [s]**

- To pronounce this sound the lips part and the corners pull back a little while the teeth themselves likely touch. Secondly, with the tip of the tongue down, lightly touching the back of the bottom front teeth.



## PRESENTATION

**How to make the sound [ʃ]**

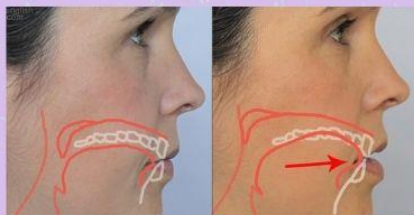
- To pronounce this sound the teeth come together, the corners of the lips come in, and the lips flare. The tongue lifts so the front, middle part of the tongue is very close to the roof of the mouth but not touching it. The tongue tip points forward but doesn't touch anything.



## PRESENTATION

**How to make the sound [z]**

- To pronounce this sound the lips part and the corners pull back a little while the teeth themselves likely touch. The tongue tip point up before the teeth close, and up.



## PRACTICE

### Word Stress

**Procedure:** The students are going to listen to some words and they have to repeat the words with the sound [s].

**Link to the activity:**

[https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb2~channel=recent\\_contact](https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb2~channel=recent_contact)





# Objective

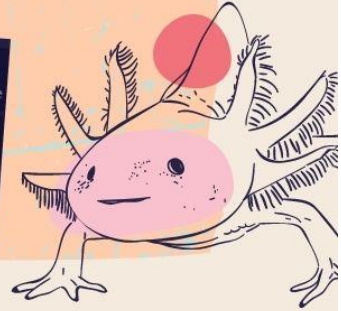
Learn the pronunciation of the alveolar and post- alveolar sounds

Strategy: Compensation

## PRACTICE Word Stress

**Procedure:** The students are going to listen to some words and they have to repeat the words with the sound [ʃ].

**Link to the activity:**  
[https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb?~channel=recent\\_contact](https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb?~channel=recent_contact)



## PRACTICE Word Stress

**Procedure:** The students are going to listen to some words and they have to repeat the words with the sound [z].

**Link to the activity:**  
[https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb?~channel=recent\\_contact](https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb?~channel=recent_contact)



## PRODUCTION

**Procedure:** The students are going to record a video in which they have to pronounce different tongue twisters using the three sounds that they learn in this lesson.  
[s], [ʃ], [z].

**Tongue Twister with [s]**

- Six silly sisters sitting sadly sawing six silk sacks.
- Six socks sit in a sink, soaking in soapsuds
- Sam said she is jealous because she has no salad.



## PRODUCTION

**Procedure:** The students are going to record a video in which they have to pronounce different tongue twisters using the three sounds that they learn in this lesson.

[s], [ʃ], [z]

**Tongue Twister with [ʃ]**

- She is a thistle-sifter. She has a sieve of unsifted thistles and a sieve of sifted thistles and the sieve of unsifted thistles she sifts into the sieve of sifted thistles because she is a thistle-sifter.
- She sifted thistles through her thistle-sifter.
- Shelter for six sick scenic sightseers.



## PRODUCTION

**Procedure:** The students are going to record a video in which they have to pronounce different tongue twisters using the three sounds that they learn in this lesson.

[s], [ʃ], [z]

**Tongue Twister with [z]**

- She is a thistle-sifter. She has a sieve of unsifted thistles and a sieve of sifted thistles and the sieve of unsifted thistles she sifts into the sieve of sifted thistles because she is a thistle-sifter.
- She sifted thistles through her thistle-sifter.
- Shelter for six sick scenic sightseers.



# UNIT 2 Learning!

Hobbies & Free Time



## LEAD IN

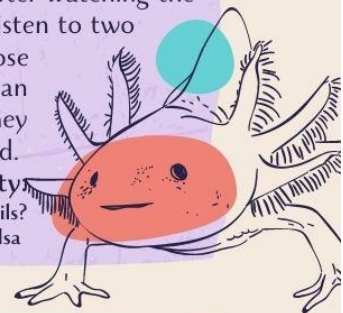
Can you hear the difference?

**Procedure:** The student has to go to Elsa Speak App and choose the game /m/, /n/, /ŋ/.

There the students will learn how to pronounce the sounds above and the correct movement of their mouth. After watching the videos the pupil is going to listen to two words and they have to choose the correct answer. They can repeat the audio the times they need.

**Link to the activity:**

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=us.nobarriers.elsa>



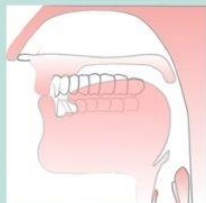
## PRESENTATION

[m], [n], [ŋ]

Bilabial, Alveolar and Velar

**How to make the sound [m]**

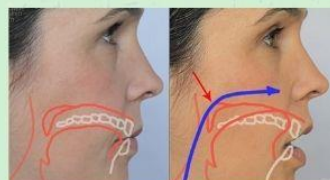
- To pronounce this sound you have to close your mouth and lips. Press the lips together and make a sound blowing air out of the nose.



## PRESENTATION

**How to make the sound [n]**

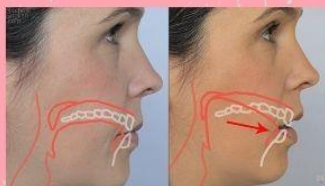
- To pronounce this sound the front flap part of the tongue goes to the roof of the mouth. Make sure you keep your tongue wide as you do that. The soft palate is lowered. Air comes up through the nasal passages.



## PRESENTATION

**How to make the sound [ŋ]**

- To pronounce this sound the jaw drops a little bit. The lips part and the back part of the tongue stretches all the way up to the soft palate. The tongue tip is forward. As the soft palate is lowered, the air comes up through the nasal passage.



## PRACTICE

### Pronunciation

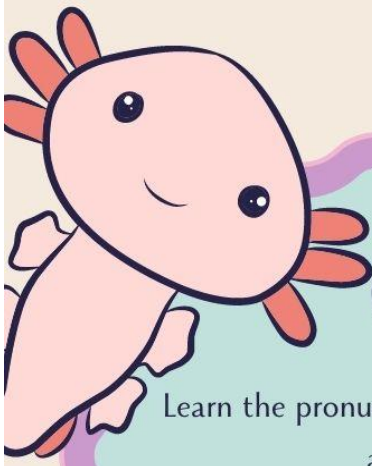
**Procedure:** The students are going to listen to some words and they have to repeat the words with the sound [m].

**Link to the activity:**

[https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb2~channel=recent\\_contact](https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb2~channel=recent_contact)







# Objective

Learn the pronunciation of the bilabial, alveolar and velar sounds

Strategy: Metacognitive

## PRACTICE Pronunciation

**Procedure:** The students are going to listen to some words and they have to repeat the words with the sound [n].

**Link to the activity:**  
[https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb?~channel=recent\\_contact](https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb?~channel=recent_contact)



## PRACTICE Pronunciation

**Procedure:** The students are going to listen to some words and they have to repeat the words with the sound [ŋ].

**Link to the activity:**  
[https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb?~channel=recent\\_contact](https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb?~channel=recent_contact)



## PRODUCTION

**Procedure:** The students will plan a hike in which they have to speak the schedule they have established combining the three sounds learned during this lesson. [m], [n], [ŋ]



## PRODUCTION

**Procedure:** The students are going to record a video in which they have to stress three different words using the sounds learned during this lesson. [m], [n], [ŋ]

Words to be stressed

canoeing, regional, mountaineering

**Links to listen to the correct intonation:**

- <https://youtu.be/yopmPrNd-bU>
- <https://youtu.be/Eeof1wdmJWE>
- <https://youtu.be/1sZ2wAo8ARs>



## PRODUCTION

**Procedure:** The students are going to record a video in which they have to stress three sentences related to routine, using the sounds learned during this lesson. [m], [n], [ŋ]

- I was swimming yesterday morning because I love this sport.
- The ship sank quickly while the sun was shining.
- A hungry man, not an angry man.





# UNIT 3

# Let's speak

Music Genres

## LEAD IN

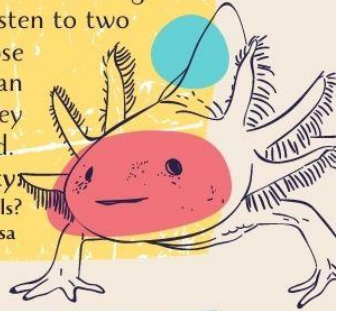
Can you hear the difference?

Procedure: The student has to go to Elsa Speak App and choose the game /w/, /v/, /b/.

There the students will learn how to pronounce the sounds above and the correct movement of their mouth. After watching the videos the pupil is going to listen to two words and they have to choose the correct answer. They can repeat the audio the times they need.

Link to the activity:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=us.nobarriers.elsa>



## PRESENTATION

[w], [v], [b]

labial-velar, labio-dental and bi-labial

How to make the sound [w]

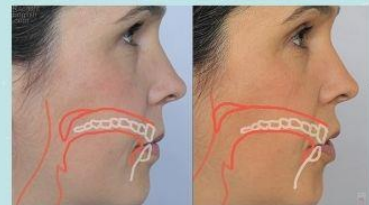
- To pronounce this sound the lips form a tight circle. The back part of the tongue stretches up towards the soft palate. While the front part of the tongue lightly touches the back of the bottom front teeth.



## PRESENTATION

How to make the sound [v]

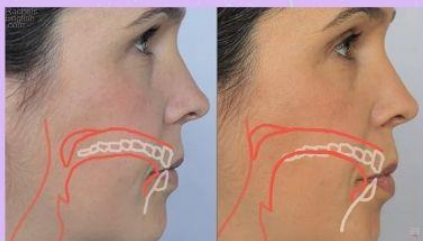
- To pronounce this sound the bottom lip lifts and touches the very bottom of the top front teeth. The top lip lifts a little bit to get out of the way of the bottom lip. The tongue should stay relaxed so the air can easily push through, causing a vibration



## PRESENTATION

How to make the sound [b]

- To pronounce this sound the lips stay together while the teeth part a little. The tongue position doesn't matter for this consonant. [b] is a voiced sound



## PRACTICE Intonation

Procedure: The students are going to listen to some words and they have to repeat the words with the sound [w].

Link to the activity:

[https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb?~channel=recent\\_contact](https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb?~channel=recent_contact)





# Objective

Learn the pronunciation of the labial-velar,  
labio-dental and bi-labial

Strategy: Cognitive

## PRACTICE Intonation

Procedure: The students are going to listen to some words and they have to repeat the words with the sound [v].

Link to the activity:  
[https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb?~channel=recent\\_contact](https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb?~channel=recent_contact)



## PRACTICE Intonation

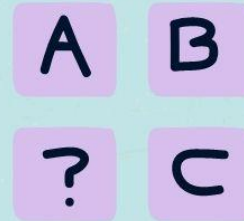
Procedure: The students are going to listen to some words and they have to repeat the words with the sound [b].

Link to the activity:  
[https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb?~channel=recent\\_contact](https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb?~channel=recent_contact)



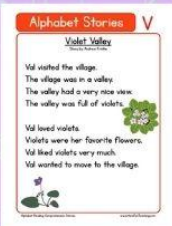
## PRODUCTION

Procedure: The students will create sentence pairs, after they create them, they have to read them aloud and record an audio that must be sent to the teacher. The sentence pair have to use the sounds learned during this lesson [w], [v], [b]



## PRODUCTION

Procedure: The students will read aloud three stories using the sounds [w], [v], [b]



## PRODUCTION

Procedure: The students will create a new Music genre. They have to make a post in which they are going to give a concert with 5 songs. They have to present the event as if they were a TV presenter.





# UNIT 4

# Fix Pronunciation

Art

## LEAD IN

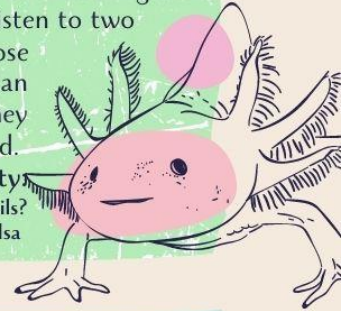
Can you hear the difference?

Procedure: The student has to go to Elsa Speak App and choose the game /æ/, /ʌ/, /a/.

There the students will learn how to pronounce the sounds above and the correct movement of their mouth. After watching the videos the pupil is going to listen to two words and they have to choose the correct answer. They can repeat the audio the times they need.

Link to the activity:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=us.nobarriers.elsa>



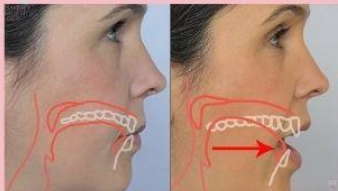
## PRESENTATION

[æ], [ʌ], [a]

Open, Open-mid

How to make the sound [æ]

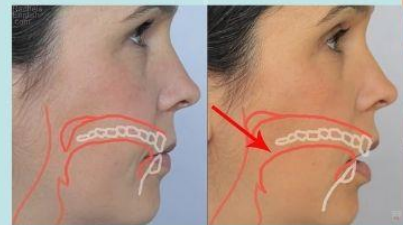
- To pronounce this sound the tip of the tongue stays forward; it is touching the back of the bottom front teeth. The back part of the tongue stretches up.



## PRESENTATION

How to make the sound [ʌ]

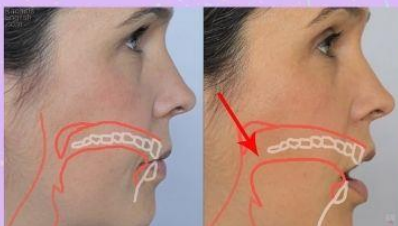
- To pronounce this sound the tongue is relaxed; the back presses down just a little bit, and the tip is forward. Your face has to be relaxed.



## PRESENTATION

How to make the sound [a]

- To pronounce this sound the tongue tip lightly touches behind the bottom front teeth, and the back part of the tongue presses down a little bit.



## PRACTICE

Procedure: The students are going to listen to some words and they have to repeat the words with the sound [æ].

Link to the activity:

[https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb?~channel=recent\\_contact](https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb?~channel=recent_contact)





# Objective

Learn the pronunciation of the open and mid-open vowels

Strategy: Social

## PRACTICE

Can you hear the difference?

**Procedure:** The students are going to listen to some words and they have to repeat the words with the sound [v].

**Link to the activity:**  
[https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb?~channel-recent\\_contact](https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb?~channel-recent_contact)



## PRACTICE

**Procedure:** The students are going to listen to some words and they have to repeat the words with the sound [b].

**Link to the activity:**  
[https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb?~channel-recent\\_contact](https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb?~channel-recent_contact)



## PRODUCTION

**Procedure:** The students will paint a picture. After they paint they have to record a video in which they have to report their feelings while they were painting. Try to use vowel sounds in your report [æ], [ʌ], [a]



## PRODUCTION

**Procedure:** The students will describe an object using the vowel sounds learned during the lesson [æ], [ʌ], [a]



## PRODUCTION

### Video Conversation

**Procedure:** The students will create a story about art using the vocabulary learned during this lesson using Elsa Speak [æ], [ʌ], [a]. They have to read aloud.



## CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations from the previously developed chapters.

### 5.1. Conclusions

Self-learning is a powerful tool for improving speaking skills as it allows individuals to personalize their learning experience according to their specific needs and pace. By utilizing online resources, language learning apps, and interactive platforms, individuals can access a wide range of materials, practice speaking exercises, and receive instant feedback. This flexibility empowers learners to focus on their areas of weakness and repeatedly practice speaking in a comfortable and non-judgmental environment. Through self-learning, individuals can gradually build confidence, enhance pronunciation, and develop fluency, ultimately leading to significant improvements in their speaking skills.

Self-learning, when combined with consistent practice and deliberate effort, can significantly enhance speaking skills. By leveraging various self-learning methods such as watching movies or TV shows, listening to podcasts, engaging in language exchange programs, or even recording and analyzing their own speech, learners can actively immerse themselves in the target language. This immersive approach fosters natural language acquisition, helping individuals to internalize vocabulary, sentence structures, and intonation patterns. Furthermore, self-learning enables learners to take ownership of their progress, allowing them to set goals, track their development, and adapt their learning strategies accordingly. By actively engaging in self-learning, individuals can achieve remarkable improvements in their speaking skills over time.

The use of the Elsa Speak App is a highly effective method for enhancing speaking skills. With its advanced speech recognition technology and interactive exercises, the app provides learners with a convenient and personalized platform to practice pronunciation and improve their overall speaking abilities. By providing real-time feedback, identifying pronunciation errors, and offering targeted exercises, the Elsa Speak App enables learners to identify and address their specific areas of improvement. Moreover, the app's gamified approach and engaging interface make the learning experience enjoyable and motivating, encouraging learners to practice consistently. Through regular use of the Elsa Speak App, individuals can gain confidence, develop accurate pronunciation, and ultimately enhance their overall speaking skills in a convenient and accessible manner.

## **5.2. Recommendations**

Utilize online language learning platforms and resources: Take advantage of the numerous online platforms and resources available for self-learning to enhance speaking skills. Websites, mobile apps, and online communities offer a wealth of language learning materials, interactive exercises, and speaking practice opportunities. Explore platforms like Elsa Speak, and Duolingo which provide structured lessons and speaking exercises. Additionally, join online language exchange communities or discussion forums to engage in conversations with native speakers and practice speaking in a supportive environment. By incorporating these resources into your self-learning routine, you can access a wide range of materials and gain exposure to authentic language usage, accelerating your speaking skills development.

Record and analyze your own speech: Another effective technique for self-learning is to record yourself speaking and then analyze your own speech. Use a voice recording app or software to record your conversations, monologues, or practice sessions. Afterward, critically analyze your recordings, paying attention to pronunciation, intonation, fluency, and grammar. Identify areas where you need improvement and compare your recordings to native speakers' models or audio resources to identify discrepancies. By actively listening to and analyzing your own speech, you can identify patterns of error, work on specific pronunciation challenges, and refine your speaking skills over time. This self-reflective approach allows for targeted practice and self-correction, leading to continuous improvement in your speaking abilities.

Incorporate regular practice with the Elsa Speak App into your language learning routine to enhance your speaking skills. The Elsa Speak App offers a user-friendly platform with advanced speech recognition technology, making it an excellent tool for improving pronunciation and fluency. Set aside dedicated time each day or week to engage with the app's interactive exercises and speaking challenges. Follow the app's personalized feedback and recommendations to target specific areas for improvement. By consistently practicing with the Elsa Speak App, you can develop accurate pronunciation, increase your speaking confidence, and reinforce your language skills. Make it a habit to use the app regularly and track your progress over time to stay motivated and see tangible improvements in your speaking abilities.

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# APPENDIX



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DEL NORTE  
FACULTAD DE CIENCIA Y TECNOLOGÍA FECYT  
PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y  
EXTRANJEROS – INGLÉS



**Theme:** Self-Learning activities using Elsa Speak app to improve pronunciation in the second semester of English Major students at UTN University, academic period 2022-2023

**Objective:** Collect data about the importance of pronunciation and its impact on English language learners.

**SURVEY FOR STUDENTS**

**1. Please, indicate your gender**

Female \_\_\_\_\_  
Male \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_

**2. How much do you enjoy your English-speaking classes?**

A lot \_\_\_\_\_  
Somewhat \_\_\_\_\_  
Not at all \_\_\_\_\_

**3. How often do you practice your English pronunciation outside of the classroom?**

Always \_\_\_\_\_  
Usually \_\_\_\_\_  
Sometimes \_\_\_\_\_  
Occasionally \_\_\_\_\_  
Almost never \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Based on your daily classes, do you consider that practicing English every day improves your pronunciation skills?**

A lot \_\_\_\_\_  
Somewhat \_\_\_\_\_  
Not at all \_\_\_\_\_

**5. In your opinion, how important do you consider that the correct pronunciation helps to improve your oral production?**

Too important \_\_\_\_\_  
Important \_\_\_\_\_  
Moderately important \_\_\_\_\_  
Little important \_\_\_\_\_  
Without importance \_\_\_\_\_



6. How satisfied do you feel about your English pronunciation?

Very satisfied \_\_\_\_\_

Satisfied \_\_\_\_\_

OK \_\_\_\_\_

Dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_

Very dissatisfied \_\_\_\_\_

7. Based on your experience, at the moment of pronouncing different words, it is difficult for you to vocalize

Vowels \_\_\_\_\_

Consonants \_\_\_\_\_

8. How useful do you consider the use of technological tools help you to improve your pronunciation?

Very useful \_\_\_\_\_

Useful \_\_\_\_\_

Unhelpful \_\_\_\_\_

Nothing useful \_\_\_\_\_

9. Have you used any of this apps that helps you to improve your pronunciation?

Elsa Speak app \_\_\_\_\_

Duolingo \_\_\_\_\_

ABA English \_\_\_\_\_

Babbel \_\_\_\_\_

None of them \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

10. Have you heard about Elsa Speak app?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_



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**Theme:** Self-Learning activities using Elsa Speak app to improve pronunciation in the second semester of English Major students at UTN University, academic period 2022-2023

**Objective:** Collect data on possible problems affecting the correct pronunciation of the English language in second semester students.

**INTERVIEW FOR TEACHERS**

1. Do you consider Speaking skill as a complex skill to teach? Why?

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2. Do you think that the use of technological tools helps to improve the level of English? Why?

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3. Do you think that learning to pronounce English phonemes correctly would help students improve their pronunciation? Explain.

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4. What are the most difficult sounds for students to pronounce in oral activities? activities? Vowel or consonant sounds.

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Ibarra, 15 de diciembre de 2022

Magister

Fernando Flores

DOCENTE UTN

De mis consideraciones:

Mediante el presente, solicito muy comedidamente se digne validar las entrevistas y encuestas de Investigación del Proyecto "Self-Learning activities using Elsa Speak app to improve pronunciation in the second semester of English Major students at UTN University, academic period 2022-2023". Previo a la obtención del título de Licenciatura en Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros Mención Inglés. Para lo cual, se dignará encontrar adjunto el instrumento de validación.

Por la atención que se sirva dar al presente, le anticipo mis debidos agradecimientos.

Atentamente,

Cisneros Brusil Génesis Lizbeth

C.C.: 1005006976




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A continuación, marque con una X en el criterio de evaluación según el análisis de cada pregunta que conforma el cuestionario, las cuales se encuentran representadas en el siguiente instrumento de evaluación como Ítem. De ser necesario realice la observación en el casillero correspondiente.

INSTRUMENTO DE EVALUACIÓN CUANTITATIVO				
CRITERIOS DE EVALUACIÓN				OBSERVACIONES
Ítem	Dejar	Modificar	Eliminar	
1	/			
2	/			
3	/			
4	/			
5	/			
6	/			
7	/			
8	/			
9	/			
10	/			

  
Firma del Evaluador  
C.C.: 100218847-0

Apellidos y nombres completos	Flores Albuja Darwin Fernando
Título académico	Magister en Lingüística
Institución de Educación Superior	UTN
Correo electrónico	dfflores@utn.edu.ec
Teléfono	0986357931
Fecha de envío para la evaluación del experto:	15-12-2022
Fecha de revisión del experto:	15-12-2022



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En la siguiente matriz marque con una X el criterio de evaluación según corresponda en cada ítem. De ser necesario realice la observación en el apartado correspondiente.

INSTRUMENTO DE EVALUACIÓN CUALITATIVO			
ITEMS	CRITERIOS DE EVALUACIÓN		
	MUCHO	POCO	NADA
Instrucción breve, clara y completa.	/		
Formulación clara de cada pregunta.	/		
Comprensión de cada pregunta.	/		
Coherencia de las preguntas en relación con el objetivo.	/		
Relevancia del contenido	/		
Orden y secuencia de las preguntas	/		
Número de preguntas óptimo	/		

Observaciones:

.....  
.....  
.....

Firma del Evaluador  
C.C.: 100218847-0

Apellidos y nombres completos	Flores Albuja Darwin Fernando
Título académico	Magister en Lingüística
Institución de Educación Superior	UTN
Correo electrónico	dflores@utn.edu.ec
Teléfono	0986357931

Fecha de envío para la evaluación del experto:	15-12-2022
Fecha de revisión del experto:	15-12-2022

Nombre	Apellido	Categoría	Fecha de Evaluación

## Some other links for the academical proposal

**Link to unit One practice part:**

**[https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb?~channel=recent\\_contact](https://share.elsanow.io/gTT3UTMjdBb?~channel=recent_contact)**

**Link to unit Two practice part:**

**[https://share.elsanow.io/gl8JZiEcJBb?~channel=recent\\_contact](https://share.elsanow.io/gl8JZiEcJBb?~channel=recent_contact)**

**Link to unit Three practice part:**

**[https://share.elsanow.io/7tzMWBKcJBb?~channel=recent\\_contact](https://share.elsanow.io/7tzMWBKcJBb?~channel=recent_contact)**

**Link to unit Four practice part:**

**[https://share.elsanow.io/2gWMA1VcJBb?~channel=recent\\_contact](https://share.elsanow.io/2gWMA1VcJBb?~channel=recent_contact)**