

# UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA DE AMBATO

#### FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS HUMANAS Y DE LA EDUCACION

# CARRERA DE PEDAGOGÍA DE LOS IDIOMAS NACIONALES Y EXTRANJEROS

Informe final del trabajo de Titulación previo a la obtención del título de Licenciado/a en Pedagogía del Idioma Inglés.

Theme:

Intuitive-imitative Approach and Pronunciation

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Ambato - Ecuador

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I, Mg Manuel Xavier Sulca Guale, holder of the I.D No.1802447548, in my capacity as supervisor of the Research dissertation on the topic: "Intuitive-imitative approach and pronunciation" investigated by Miss Pamela Elizabeth Casa Molina with I.D No. 0550401798, confirm that this research report meets the technical, scientific and regulatory requirements, so the presentation of it is authorized to the corresponding organism in order to be submitted for evaluation by the Qualifying Commission appointed by the Directors Board.

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I declare this undergraduate dissertation entitled "Intuitive-imitative approach and pronunciation" is the result of the author's investigation and has reached the conclusions and recommendations described in the present study.

Comments expressed in this report are the author's responsibility.

Pamela Elizabeth Casa Molina

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# **DEDICATION**

TO:

My parents for always being my support. To my sibling for always being there when I needed a friend, a confidant, and a source of unwavering support. To my grandparents and uncle for their endless love. To my friends for sharing this journey with me.

Pamela.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I thank my parents and siblings, whose endless support, encouragement, and sacrifices have been the cornerstone of my life. Their belief in my abilities has been a constant source of inspiration. To my grandparents and uncle for their enduring love and encouragement. To my friends, their friendship and support turned this journey into an enriching and fun experience. Finally, I want to thank my tutor and teachers whose expertise and guidance have played a pivotal role in my learning process.

Pamela

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUPERVISOR APPROVAL	ii
DECLARATION PAGE	iii
BOARD OF EXAMINERS APPROVAL PAGE	iv
COPYRIGHT REUSE	v
DEDICATION	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
INDEX OF CHARTS AND GRAPHS	ix
ABSTRACT	X
RESUMEN	xi
CHAPTER I	1
1.1 Research Background	1
Theoretical foundation of the variables	5
Independent Variable	5
Dependent Variable	12
1.2 Objectives	25
CHAPTER II	28
2.1 Materials	28
2.2 Methods	28
CHAPTER III.	34
3.1 Analysis and discussion of the results	34
CHAPTER IV	46
4.1 Conclusions	46
4.2 Recommendations	47
REFERENCES	49
ANNEXES	54
Annex 1	54
Annex 2: Survey	55
Annex 3: Conbrach's Alpha validation	56
Annex 4: Survey validation	57
Annex 5: Turnitin report	60

# INDEX OF CHARTS AND GRAPHS

Table 1: Population	31
Table 2: Intuitive-imitative approach	34
Table 3: Pronunciation teaching approaches	36
Table 4: Students' pronunciation learning strategies.	37
Table 5: Open-ended questions	39

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**THEME:** "Intuitive-imitative approach and pronunciation"

**AUTHOR:** Pamela Elizabeth Casa Molina

**TUTOR:** Lic. Mg. Manuel Xavier Sulca Guale

#### **ABSTRACT**

The current study analyzed students' attitudes and practices on the Intuitive-imitative approach in pronunciation. A total of 83 university students (23 males and 59 females) participated in a descriptive, non-experimental investigation. Data was collected through a survey with 20 items on a Likert scale and 3 open-ended questions. It was validated by Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (0,770) and by three experts, ensuring rigor and reliability in the instrument. In addition, the research was based on three research questions based on the objectives. The results revealed that the intuitive imitative approach is widely applied in the EFL classrooms. The emphasis on activities such as mimicry exercises, repetition of sounds, and efforts to imitate a diverse range of sounds during pronunciation practice suggests a preference for experiential learning, teachers employ a diversified set of approaches in teaching pronunciation. The analytic linguistic approach, indicated by the highest engagement with pronunciation charts and explanations, reflects a substantial adoption of structured methods emphasizing explicit language rules. Simultaneously, the intuitive-imitative approach and the integrative approach demonstrate comparable levels of adoption. EFL learners employe a diverse range of learning strategies making pronunciation learning a multifaceted process. Imitation emerges as a prevalent cognitive strategy, highlighting the significance of modeling after teachers for pronunciation improvement. Metacognitive strategies and memory strategies also play crucial roles, emphasizing the need for learners to monitor their progress and employ memory aids effectively.

Key words: Intuitive Imitative Approach, Pronunciation, EFL classrooms, Learning Strategies.

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#### **RESUMEN**

El presente estudio analizó las actitudes y prácticas de los estudiantes sobre el enfoque Intuitivo-imitativo en la pronunciación. Un total de 83 estudiantes universitarios (24 hombres y 59 mujeres) participaron en una investigación descriptiva no experimental. Los datos se recopilaron a través de una encuesta con 20 ítems en una escala Likert y tres preguntas abiertas. Se validó mediante el coeficiente alfa de Cronbach (0,770) y por tres expertos, garantizando rigor y confiabilidad en el instrumento. Además, la investigación se basó en tres preguntas de investigación derivadas de los objetivos. Los resultados revelaron que el enfoque intuitivo-imitativo se aplica ampliamente en las aulas de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL). El énfasis en actividades como ejercicios de imitación, repetición de sonidos y esfuerzos por imitar una variedad de sonidos durante la práctica de la pronunciación sugiere una preferencia por el aprendizaje experiencial. Los profesores emplean un conjunto diversificado de enfoques en la enseñanza de la pronunciación. El enfoque lingüístico analítico, indicado por la mayor participación en gráficos de pronunciación y explicaciones, refleja una adopción sustancial de métodos estructurados que enfatizan reglas de lenguaje explícitas. Simultáneamente, el enfoque intuitivo-imitativo y el enfoque integrador muestran niveles comparables de adopción. Los estudiantes de EFL emplean una variedad de estrategias de aprendizaje, lo que convierte el aprendizaje de la pronunciación en un proceso multifacético. La imitación emerge como una estrategia cognitiva prevalente, resaltando la importancia de modelar después de los profesores para mejorar la pronunciación.

Palabras clave: Enfoque intuitivo-imitativo, Pronunciación, Aulas de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL), Estrategias de aprendizaje.

#### **CHAPTER I**

#### 1.1 Research Background

To provide a solid basis for this research study, a wide range of scholarly resources was methodically collected from a variety of academic databases. These sources collaboratively contribute to the investigation of the 'Intuitive Imitative Approach' and its significance in pronunciation instruction. The chosen articles, journals, and papers furnish valuable perspectives on the theoretical foundations, teaching methods, and empirical discoveries associated with pronunciation pedagogy.

Tsuraya (2020) conducted a research study that investigated the effectiveness of the Intuitive-Imitative Approach in teaching pronunciation. The research objective was to explore the impact of this approach on the pronunciation skills of second-year students at an Indonesian Vocational High School, comprising a group of 40 participants. The research adopted a pre-experimental methodology, incorporating pre-test and post-test oral assessments as research instruments. The study revealed that post-test scores exhibited a significant improvement compared to the pre-test scores. This improvement was further substantiated by t-test results, which indicated a significant difference. Consequently, it was concluded that the Intuitive-Imitative Approach proved to be effective for teaching pronunciation. By employing this method, teachers are encouraged to infuse creativity into their word selection, employing unique vocabulary to stimulate students, creating an enjoyable and relaxed learning atmosphere while enhancing understanding in the process.

Hashemian and Fadaei (2011) undertook a research study that addressed the prominent roles played by intuitive-imitative approach and analytic-linguistic approach in English language teaching (ELT) and the notable absence of

pronunciation training. The methods used by these approaches differ; the analytic linguistic approach stresses systematic instruction using articulatory descriptions and phonetic charts, whereas the intuitive-imitative approach concentrated on listening to and imitating L2 sounds and rhythms. The research sought to compare how well these two methos taught pure vowels and diphthongs to forty Iranian L2 learners enrolled in two elementary classrooms at a language school in Isfahan. The intuitiveimitative approach was used to instruct one class, whereas the analytic-linguistic approach was used for the other. Teachers who were native speakers graded the participants' audio recordings. The results of the paired samples t-test and mean comparisons showed that the L2 learners taught via the analytic-linguistic approach did better in pure vowels, while L2 learners taught using the intuitive- imitative approach excelled in diphthongs. This study highlights the unique qualities of these two pronunciation instruction methods and provides insightful implications for L2 research and education. It underscores the significance of tailoring pronunciation instruction to specific phonological features and the learners' proficiency level, contributing to a deeper understanding of effective pronunciation pedagogy in the ELT context.

Roohani (2013) carried out a research study exploring the efficacy of two pronunciation teaching approaches, the intuitive-imitative and analytic-linguistic, within the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education in Iran, with a focus on non-Persian sounds. The research, conducted with 50 low-intermediate Iranian EFL learners aged 13-20, used a pretest-posttest design involving a comprehensive pronunciation test. The results, analyzed through paired t-tests, revealed a significant improvement in posttest pronunciation scores, emphasizing the effectiveness of both approaches. However, the analytic-linguistic approach was particularly advantageous for teaching English sounds absent in Persian. The study also highlighted age as a significant factor, with the intuitive-imitative approach being more effective for younger learners (13-16) and the analytic-linguistic approach for older students (17-20).

Lengkoan and Hampp (2022) implemented a research study to assess the effectiveness of the imitation technique in enhancing English language acquisition. The primary objective was to evaluate the impact of the imitation technique on students' pronunciation and listening skills. For this study, a cohort of 20 thirdsemester students was carefully selected, and three distinct educational videos were utilized as instructional materials. The research was executed in three distinct phases or treatments. The results demonstrated significant improvements in the students' English language abilities. Pronunciation saw a notable enhancement, with a decrease in incorrect word pronunciation from 22.85 to 0.95 instances. Moreover, the students' listening skills improved substantially, with a rise from 28.2 to 78.7 in the assessment. These findings conclusively establish the imitation technique as a highly effective tool in the realm of English language education. Correct pronunciation not only contributed to improved listening skills but also assisted in word recognition. This study highlights the potential of utilizing digital media, such as YouTube videos, as a valuable resource in the teaching and learning process, it undeniably serves as a conduit for knowledge transfer from teacher to student.

Jafari et al. (2021) executed a research study aimed to delve into the beliefs and instructional practices of Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers concerning pronunciation. The study sought to explore these facets within the instructional context. A convenience sampling method was employed, leading to the participation of 74 subjects who completed a comprehensive questionnaire addressing various aspects of pronunciation teaching and learning. Additionally, interviews were conducted with volunteers among the participants to gain in-depth insights.

The results indicated that a substantial 57% of the participating teachers frequently concentrated on teaching suffixes, such as the -ed and -s endings, either always or often, within their classrooms. Word stress emerged as the second most taught feature (54%), closely followed by syllable structure (53%). In terms of teaching strategies, drama and role-play were the most frequently adopted methods,

used by 49% of the teachers either often or always. Interviews with the participating teachers further underscored the prominence of imitation and repetition as the most employed classroom activities. Significantly, although the participants acknowledged the importance of teaching pronunciation, many did not perceive themselves as highly qualified in this domain. These findings unveiled a resounding desire among the teachers for additional pronunciation training in teacher education programs to further enhance their ability to seamlessly integrate pronunciation instruction opportunistically. It was noted that most teachers encountered constraints in providing dedicated pronunciation lessons, mainly due to limitations imposed by the school curriculum, prescribed textbooks, and time constraints.

Alghazo (2021) executed a research study that represents a noteworthy exploration into language learning strategies, focusing on their impact on second language (L2) competence, particularly in L2 pronunciation, within a Middle Eastern EFL context. The study's fundamental objective was to scrutinize the employment of language learning strategies by Jordanian English as a foreign language (EFL) university student as they endeavor to enhance their L2 pronunciation skills. This comprehensive investigation encompassed diverse data collection methods, including classroom observations, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews, engaging a sample of 87 English major university students. Employing Oxford's (1990) framework for data analysis, the study revealed a stratified utilization of pronunciation learning strategies (PLSs) among participants.

Cognitive strategies emerged as the most frequently employed, both inside and outside the classroom, followed by social strategies and, to a lesser extent, metacognitive strategies. Beyond formal instruction, students predominantly sought practice via media and technology, though their focus was primarily on receptive L2 listening and viewing skills, while productive language skills received comparatively less attention. These findings hold valuable implications for educators, emphasizing the necessity of fostering student awareness regarding the benefits of employing learning strategies. Furthermore, the research underscores the importance of

designing activities that enrich students' communicative use of L2 and encourages educators to contemplate the integration of explicit strategy instruction into their pedagogical practices.

#### Theoretical foundation of the variables

# **Independent Variable**

#### **English language teaching Methods**

English language teaching, as described by Harmer (2001), is a pedagogical practice centered on the classroom environment, where the primary objective is to assist learners in comprehending, generating, and manipulating meaning within the English language. This instructional process aims to create a conducive space for learners to effectively utilize the language they are acquiring. Thornbury (2006) further elaborated that English language teaching is a professional endeavor focused on aiding learners in the acquisition and practical application of English, commonly within the structured framework of educational institutions. This encompasses not only the transmission of language knowledge but also the cultivation of language proficiency for effective communication. Therefore, English language teaching is fundamentally concerned with fostering language competence within learners.

The effectiveness of English language teaching lies in the application of language teaching methods. Language teaching methods, as defined by Richards and Rodgers (2001) encompass a set of structured procedures and techniques for teaching a language, systematically designed to present language materials coherently. These methods align with a selected teaching approach, which underscores the importance of effective strategies for language acquisition. Nunan (2003) extended this definition to encompass methods as a set of strategies and techniques grounded in a comprehensive theory of language and language learning. These methods, rooted in overarching theories, guide educators in delivering effective language learning

experiences. The methods are the tools through which the objectives of English language teaching are achieved, facilitating language acquisition and proficiency development.

According to Richards and Rogers, English language teaching methods encompass a wide range of approaches and strategies employed to help learners acquire and master the English language. These methods have evolved over the years, reflecting advancements in linguistics, technology, and pedagogy. From traditional methods like the Grammar-Translation method to modern, communicative approaches such as the Communicative Language Teaching method, each approach offers a unique perspective on how to effectively teach and learn English.

#### Pronunciation language teaching

Pronunciation Language Teaching is a crucial component within the broader spectrum of language instruction, shaped by diverse perspectives and approaches from renowned authors in the field of language education. According to Celce-Murcia et al. (2007), pronunciation teaching is the process of helping learners develop accurate and effective pronunciation skills, including segmental features (consonants and vowels) and suprasegmental features (intonation, stress, and rhythm). They emphasize the importance of intelligibility and communicative competence in pronunciation instruction. Likewise, Pennington (2019) highlighted the connection between pronunciation and comprehensibility. These experts have underscored the multifaceted nature of pronunciation instruction and its critical role in enhancing learners' communicative competence. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the teaching of pronunciation has evolved differently across various language teaching methods.

The grammar translation method dominated the foreign language teaching from the 1840's to the 1940's and it was primary focused on translating written texts,

leaving spoken language, including pronunciation with less emphasis. As stated by Richards and Rodgers, there is no literature that offers a rationale or justification for it or that attempts to relate it to issues in linguistics, psychology, or educational theory.

On the other hand, in the Direct Method, accurate pronunciation is prioritized from the beginning. As stated by Celce-Murcia et al., pronunciation is taught through intuition and imitation therefore learners are expected to develop good pronunciation by listening to and imitating a model that can be the teacher or a recording. Students try their best to approximate to the model using imitation and repetition.

The successors of the Direct Method are called the naturalistic methods that include TPR and Natural Approach. According to Kelly (2004), these methods emphasize the importance of letting the students listen to the target language without pressure them to speak. Therefore, according to Celce-Murcia et al., learners can internalize the target sound system and consequently speak with a supposedly quite good pronunciation without explicit pronunciation instruction.

In the 1890's as part of the Reform Movement, the first analytic contribution to the teaching of pronunciation emerged. The International Phonetic Association in 1886 created the International Phonetical Alphabet. The IPA influenced modern language teaching including pronunciation. In accordance with Celce-Murcia et al., during the reform movement students should be given phonetic training to develop good speech habits. The reform movement played a significant role in the development of the Audiolingual and the Oral approach. Audiolingual and the Oral approach highlight the importance of explicit pronunciation states teaching using imitation and repetition but including information from phonetics and articulatory chart.

Community Language Learning (CLL) is a language teaching approach developed by Charles A. Curran in the late 1960s. Richards and Rodgers pointed out that in CLL, pronunciation is taught through interactive and communicative methods. The teacher, known as a "counselor," models correct pronunciation and intonation during conversations, and learners are encouraged to actively engage in dialogue. This approach creates a supportive and non-threatening learning environment, where learners listen to and imitate the counselor's pronunciation. Corrective feedback is provided without judgment, fostering gradual improvement in pronunciation. CLL emphasizes a learner-centered and collaborative approach to language acquisition, where pronunciation is acquired through natural language use, reflection, and interaction. (Johnson & Morrow, 1981).

#### **Intuitive-imitative approach**

Kelly stated that the pronunciation teaching is classified into two groups: intuitive and analytical. The Intuitive group depends on unaided imitation of models while the analytic group reinforces this natural ability by explaining to the students the phonetic basis of what they must do. For Celcia-Murcia et al. there are three general approaches to teach pronunciation: an Intuitive-imitative approach, an Analytic approach, and the Integrative approach.

#### The Analytic Linguistic approach

Kelly stated that the Analytic Linguistic approach is characterized by explicit instruction that emphasizes understanding how English sounds are produced. It employs tools such as the phonetic alphabet with phonetic symbols, articulatory descriptions, and charts of vocal apparatuses. In this approach, students are guided to analyze sounds thoroughly, including stress patterns, and they learn how to produce them accurately. Techniques such as discrimination, differential analysis, and guided imitation are used to help students develop a clear understanding of English

pronunciation. According to Euler (2014), learners benefit from a structured approach that imparts a clear understanding of the phonetic elements.

# The integrative approach

According to Goodwin (2014), pronunciation is viewed as an integral component of effective communication, rather than a separate, isolated skill. Instead of isolated drills, pronunciation is integrated into meaningful task-based exercises. Students engage in enjoyable listening activities that specifically target pronunciation improvement. The emphasis is placed on suprasegmental aspects like rhythm, stress, and intonation, which are studied in the context of extended discourse, moving beyond the mere focus on individual phonemes and words. Pronunciation instruction is tailored to meet the unique needs of students. The oral program employs a dual approach: at the micro level, it emphasizes linguistic competence through segmental practices and suprasegmental features, while at the macro level, it addresses broader aspects of communication, including sociolinguistics, discourse, and strategic competence, all in the pursuit of effective language use for communicative purposes.

#### The Intuitive-imitative approach

According to Celce-Murcia et al. the Intuitive-imitative approach assumes that a learner's ability to imitate and absorb the sounds and rhythms of a foreign language will naturally lead to the development of a desirable pronunciation without the need for explicit instructions. This approach makes use of various resources, such as videos, websites, video tapes, and computer-based programs, to support the learning process.

In the Intuitive-imitative approach there are not explanations of explicit pronunciation patterns, there are only sounds, chunks, or sentences that belong to dialogues performed in authentic contexts; learners listen to material of the target language, and they imitate it trying to pronounce words as similar as possible.

For Kelly to ensure the effective execution of spoken language, it is essential that reactions are spontaneous and immediate. Consequently, imitation techniques have consistently formed the foundation of pronunciation instruction. Even with the introduction of analytical methods, such as in the Direct Method, imitative approaches remained prevalent. Notably, an early advocate of the Direct Method, acknowledged the utility of phonetics but suggested that it had no place in the classroom. This perspective persisted into the twentieth century, allowing imitative techniques to thrive despite the emergence of phonetics and phonology-based methods as competitors. Imitation involves two distinct stages: the initial perception of speech followed by the subsequent production.

# **Perception**

Scholars have recognized since the sixteenth century that the skills of perceiving and producing speech are interconnected, emphasizing that listening precedes imitation. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, educators underscored the importance of models and direct exposure to spoken language. In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Bell (1906) questioned prevailing phonetic analyses and emphasized the philosophy of teaching pronunciation through exposure to speech. Celce-Murcia et al. considered necessary for every language learner were highly developed skills in listening to and interpreting the sounds of another language.

# **Mimicry**

According to Celce-Murcia et al. the primary objective of phonetic conditioning within the intuitive-imitative approach is the act of mimicry or

imitation, which is considered an indispensable component, particularly in the instruction of children and is still pervasive in contemporary language teaching methods. Despite potential misconceptions about its obsolescence, the practice of automatic, mechanical repetition, and imitation of speech sounds remains one of the most prevalent techniques for enhancing pronunciation and assumes a fundamental role when learners are introduced to unfamiliar speech sounds. This is exemplified by the requirement for learners to develop new motor habits over time, which eventually evolve into the automatic production of sounds. Proficiency in these skills necessitates regular and consistent practice. However, the efficacy of this technique can be compromised if learners' focus is solely directed toward content without due attention to form, potentially leading to pronunciation difficulties (Rogerson-Revell, 2011). To summarize, the core purpose of automatic repetition and imitation is to facilitate progressive enhancement and precise speech production.

Within this framework, the teacher takes on the role of modeling correct pronunciation, whether by enunciating a word or structure or by audio recordings featuring native speakers. It is evident that repetition and imitation stand as fundamental components of pronunciation practice and constitute an effective pedagogical strategy suitable for learners of all age groups (Lewis & Hill, 1999). Many experts concur that this approach serves as an essential initial step in grasping basic phonetic structures, subsequently establishing a solid foundation for mastering more intricate phonetic elements (Kelly, 2003).

# Activities that include intuitive imitation to improve pronunciation.

Mimicry Exercises: In these exercises, students imitate specific pronunciation patterns, such as vowel sounds or consonant clusters. They practice by repeating phrases or sentences that highlight the targeted sounds. Lewis and Hill (1992) emphasized that mimicry exercises play a fundamental role in pronunciation practice. They explain that students can improve their pronunciation by repetitively mimicking specific speech patterns. Through mimicry exercises, students develop a

deeper understanding of how to produce certain sounds accurately, laying the foundation for more advanced phonetic elements. Likewise, Yates (2003) highlighted that through mimicry, teachers gain a valuable method for instructing students in the initial internalization of suprasegmentals, subsequently allowing for the introduction and analysis of factors such as vowel and syllable stress, along with phrasing. Furthermore, Yates found that the utilization of mimicry not only provides a methodological approach but also establishes a non-threatening environment, effectively reducing anxiety. This non-threatening environment creates a safe space conducive to integrating the pronunciation of the L2 into the student's personality.

Dialogue Repetition: Students listen to a recorded dialogue and repeat it. This helps them practice pronunciation in a real-life context, mimicking the way native speakers naturally talk. Kelly described how learners listen to recorded dialogues and then engage in the repetition of these dialogues. This process allows students to focus on imitating the natural rhythms, intonation, and speech patterns of native speakers. It is a practical way to enhance not only pronunciation but also conversational fluency and listening comprehension.

Recording and Self-Assessment: Students record themselves speaking in the target language, then compare their pronunciation to native speakers. This self-assessment allows them to identify areas for improvement. According to Gardner (2000), "self-assessment is the best way to help learners to monitor their progress and identify their language level" (p. 49). It suggests that learners benefit from recording their speech and then critica "ly assessing their pronunciation, intonation, and fluency. The self-assessment process allows students to become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses, enabling them to focus on areas that require improvement.

# **Dependent Variable**

#### **Productive Language Skills**

The four language skills (reading listening, writing and speaking) are classified by Husain (2015) into two groups: productive skills and receptive skills. Productive language skills which are also known as active skills are based on producing language among them are writing and speaking. Golkova and Hubackova (2014) mentioned that productive skills-also called active skills-mean the transmission of information that a language user produces in oral or written form. Productive skills would not exist without the support of receptive skills. Passive skills – such as listening and reading – symbolize a springboard for the active application of the grammatical structures, passive vocabulary lists, heard and repeated sounds of a foreign language. Therefore, the ability to speak is grounded in sharing ideas and for this the speaker or sender must feel secure and confident that he or she will beable to communicate.

#### **Speaking**

Speaking and writing, two integral components of language skills, belong to the productive category, requiring individuals to create and express language rather than merely receiving it. According to Sprat et al. (2011), speaking is the art of using spoken words to convey meaning effectively to others, underscoring its pivotal role in human communication. Al-Eiadeh et al. (2016) further expound on the significance of speaking skills, emphasizing that their development is crucial for fostering effective and meaningful interactions. These skills are not limited to language learning but extend their influence into various professional and interpersonal contexts. According to Hossain (2015), the ability to speak fluently and accurately is pivotal whether one seeks to inquire, express thoughts, acquire information, or provide clear instructions. In line with these perspectives, Rao (2019) mentioned that speaking proficiency represents the cornerstone for learners aspiring to enhance their careers, excel in business endeavors, boost their confidence, access superior job opportunities, deliver compelling public speeches, excel in interviews,

and actively engage in debates and group discussions. These definitions collectively underline the indispensable role of speaking in effective communication, affirming its status as a fundamental skill transcending the boundaries of language learning.

Speaking is not merely the act of producing words but a multifaceted process that involves various subskills, each playing a unique role in effective communication. According to Lackman (2010), speaking involves ten different subskills: fluency, accuracy with words and pronunciation, using functions, appropriacy, turn taking, relevant length, responding and initiating, repair and repetition, range of words and grammar, and discourse markers.

#### **Pronunciation**

Pronunciation, as defined by experts in the field, is a pivotal component of language learning and effective communication. O'Connor (1980) emphasized pronunciation as the way in which a word or a language is spoken, highlighting its critical role in facilitating clear and accurate speech for effective communication. Building upon this perspective, Gilbert (2005) described pronunciation as the ability to articulate individual speech sounds and to string these sounds together to form coherent and intelligible speech and stress the importance of both segmental (individual sounds) and suprasegmental elements, such as intonation, stress, and rhythm, in the process of pronunciation.

To achieve effective communication in a foreign language, pronunciation is a critical factor if we want our message to be understood, Hornby (1995) defined pronunciation as the way a language is spoken. Likewise, Boyer et al. (2008) considered that for speech pronunciation is a fundamental part including producing the correct sounds of a language, the correct use of intonation, and achieving an understanding of how to indicate stress in the pronunciation of words and sentences.

# **Features of pronunciation**

Kelly classified pronunciation features into segmental features and suprasegmental features.

### **Segmental features**

Gilbert defined segmental features as the individual speech sounds that form the basis of intelligible speech. The segmental features include vowels, diphthongs and consonants.

#### Vowels

Vowels are a basic class of spoken sounds that are distinguished by certain characteristics. Vowels are normally produced with voicing and need very little touch between the tongue and the roof of the mouth. Vowels are classified mostly by their sound and auditory characteristics, as well as by the height and progress of the tongue. Vowel arrangements can be thought of as a progression, which results in overlaps between various vowel categories in terms of audition, articulation, and acoustics. Vowel duration is also employed differently in different languages, both phonemically and allophonically, and vowels display characteristics like lip rounding and nasality that can change depending on tongue position (Weckwerth, 2021). English has 12 vowel sounds divided into 7 short vowels, 5 long vowels.

# **Diphthongs**

A diphthong is a phenomenon in language when two different vowel sounds mix easily into a single syllable. When a speaker smoothly changes the vowel sound inside a syllable, it is known as a diphthong, also sometimes called gliding vowels. When a diphthong occurs in the English language, the first vowel is usually pronounced longer and louder than the second vowel. This results in a special and pleasing blend of two different vowel characteristics in a single syllable (Kelly).

#### **Consonants**

Proctor (2021) defines consonants as different speech sounds that are produced during speech by means of a full or almost complete obstruction in the vocal tract. The location of articulation, which is crucial in differentiating one consonant from another, provides the basis for a systematic classification of consonants in the languages of the world. Eight further phonetically independent parameters show how consonants differ from one another: airstream, degree of constriction, laryngeal setting, nasality, laterality, length, articulator stiffness, and respiratory strength. It is easiest to think of "complex" consonant features like aspiration, affrication, pre-stopping, secondary articulations, and other traits as complicated patterns of coordination in the underlying motions that give rise to the wide variety of consonant sounds found in human languages.

Plosive consonants: The nasal and oral passages are closed during the articulation of the consonants /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, and /g/, which is why they are referred to as plosives. either by putting the two lips together tightly or by using a portion of the tongue. firmly making contact with a portion of the roof of the mouth. A faint, explosive sound is made as lung air bursts through the mouth when the oral obstruction is abruptly eliminated.

The Affricates: Africates are the English consonants /tʃ/ and /dʒ/. The nasal and oral passages entirely seal during articulation, and the air is subsequently expelled gradually while creating friction. The stop element and the fricative are represented by the first and second letters, respectively, in the sign for an affricate.

The Fricatives: Fricatives are the English consonants /f/, /v/, / $\theta$ /, / $\delta$ /, /s/, /z/, / $\int$ /, /r/, / $\delta$ /, and /h/. The passage becomes so tiny during the articulation of fricatives that there is audible friction when air goes through it.

Nasal Consonants: A nasal consonant is produced by closing the oral cavity and lowering the velum to let air exit the nose. Nasal consonants include /m/, /n/, and /ŋ/. A nasal consonant is one that is produced by closing the oral cavity and lowering the velum to let air to exit the nose. Nasal consonants include /m/, /n/, and /ŋ/.

Lateral Consonants: Lateral sounds, also known as lateral approximants, are a kind of consonant sound that is made by letting air flow around the sides of the tongue as opposed to over the center. There is no frictional sound at the side. In English, there is only one lateral consonant: /l/.

Glide consonants: The English language has just two gliding consonants: /y/ and /w/. They are made up of a fast, fluid, frictionless glide that leads into the next vowel sound.

Retroflex consonants: Retroflex consonants are a class of sounds in which the tongue is curled or bent, and they are produced by bringing the tongue tip back toward the hard palate. In English, retroflex sounds are not as common as in some other languages, but they do exist in certain dialects and accents. In some American English dialects, the sound represented by [1] can be considered a retroflex approximant.

## **Suprasegmental features**

Suprasegmental features, also known as prosodic features, are aspects of speech that extend beyond the level of individual speech sounds (segmental features) and encompass the larger structure of spoken language. These features play a crucial role in the rhythm, melody, and intonation of speech, contributing to the expression of meaning and communication. Key suprasegmental features include stress and intonation. (Kelly)

#### **Stress**

According to (Celce-Murcia et al.), stress corresponds to the emphasis placed on a particular syllable or word when speaking. Stress can change the meaning of a word or an entire sentence, indicating the speaker's intention, attitude, or focus.

Word Stress: Word stress refers to the emphasis placed on a particular syllable within a word. In many languages, including English, certain syllables are pronounced with greater loudness, pitch, and duration than others.

Sentence or Phrase Stress: Sentence or phrase stress involves the emphasis placed on particular words within a sentence or phrase. This type of stress can help convey the intended meaning or emotional tone of an utterance.

#### Intonation

According to Kelly, intonation refers to the patterns of variation in pitch (the highness or lowness of a sound) across an utterance. It plays a fundamental role in the melody and prosody of spoken language.

Here are some common intonation patterns:

Falling Intonation: The pitch decreases toward the end of a phrase or sentence. We use falling intonation at the end of a statement or with a question that uses who, what, when, where, why, or how. Example: "I'll see you later." (Typically used in declarative statements.)

Rising Intonation: The pitch increases toward the end of a phrase or sentence.

Example: "Is he coming?" (Commonly used in yes-no questions and when seeking confirmation.)

Falling-Rising Intonation: fall-rise intonation describes how the voice falls and then rises. We use fall-rise intonation for unfinished thoughts, introductory words, and phrases, with a series of words, and when expressing choices. Example: "You're coming to the party, aren't you?" (Often used in tag questions expressing uncertainty.)

Intonation patterns are used to convey a wide range of communicative functions, including:

Sentence Type: Intonation signals the type of sentence, such as whether it is a statement, question, command, or exclamation. In many languages, questions are characterized by a rising intonation at the end, while statements typically have a falling or level pitch.

Emotion and Attitude: Intonation conveys emotional nuances and attitudes. It can reflect the speaker's mood, enthusiasm, sarcasm, or irony. For example, a rising intonation at the end of a statement can indicate uncertainty or surprise.

Focus and Emphasis: Intonation helps highlight specific words or phrases to indicate their importance or to provide contrast. Changes in pitch can draw attention to the key elements of an utterance.

Turn-Taking and Politeness: In conversations, intonation patterns assist in regulating turn-taking and indicate when it is appropriate for another speaker to respond. Politeness and respect can be conveyed through intonational cues.

List and Enumeration: Intonation can be used to signal the beginning and end of lists or enumerations, helping listeners follow the structure of the spoken message.

Agreement and Confirmation: Rising intonation at the end of a statement can be used to seek agreement or confirmation from the listener.

## **Pronunciation Learning Strategies**

Pawlak and Szyszka (2018) highlighted the concept of pronunciation-learning strategies, which are unique techniques used by language learners to enhance their capacity to create sounds in a given language, with an emphasis on learning English. The students take a methodical way to effectively acquire English strategically. When a student chooses a strategy, they see it as an instrument for deliberate and active learning. The adopted tactics alter as the English language learning process goes on, suggesting that their efficacy is not static but rather adjusts to the dynamic character of the learning process. It's critical to understand that not every strategy works for every situation and that different learning stages require different approaches for optimal results.

Throughout time, pronunciation learning strategies have been classified in many forms. It depends on the author's point of view about the language and its use.

Shi (2017) mentioned one of the most used classifications of PLS made by Oxford (1990). It states that Pronunciation-Learning Strategies are divided into cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, memory strategies, compensatory strategies, and social strategies.

#### **Pronunciation Cognitive Strategies**

Oxford claimed that learners' ability to comprehend and produce language is a function of cognition. Examine grammar rules, make deductions, and justify the usage of conjunctions, articles, prefixes, suffixes, punctuation, and other elements. Or to examine data, such as the reasons for verb modifications or the addition of the suffixes d/ed to specific past tense verbs.

Imitation is an effective method that uses imitation and repetition exercises to practice real sounds in the target language. According to Sweet (1964), listening precedes imitation in pronunciation learning, consequently students learn different pronunciation patterns through imitation without explicit instruction, which is in line with cognitive strategies. According to Brown's (2007), learning pronunciation involves auditory representation and the cognitive approach of recalling related sounds. Likewise, Oxford suggested that formal practice and repetition with sounds improve language structures by helping learners identify and apply new patterns. The intention is to assist students build strong pronunciation schemas by reinforcing the articulation of specific phonemes. For example, learners are supposed to imitate given input in this case the word 'museum' includes all the target sounds, but they are then segmented in parts: mu- se- um (3 syllables). With this exercise students identify and separate sounds that are contained in the word "museum".

# Syllabication Rules

There are several rules, more like patterns with occasional exceptions, that aid in the division of words into syllables. Keep in mind that there are six syllable types, though some words consist of only one syllable. A fundamental principle when dividing words into syllables is ensuring the presence of a vowel sound in each syllable. This characteristic defines every syllable, sometimes requiring the involvement of multiple vowels to achieve the desired effect.

Rule 1: VC/CV: Divide between 2 consonants located between vowels.

When two consecutive consonants appear within a word, the recommendation is to divide between them, adhering to the VC/CV pattern. Noteworthy exceptions include maintaining consonant digraphs (e.g., ch, ph, ck) and consonant blends (e.g., bl, st, fr) together.

Rule 2: C+le: Divide before the consonant when confronted with the -le ending. Words concluding with a consonant and -le should be divided before the consonant, resulting in a final syllable represented as C+le. The silent 'e' in C+le words plays a crucial role in contributing the necessary vowel sound.

Rule 3: V/CV & VC/V: Divide around a consonant between two vowels. In instances where a single consonant intervenes between vowels, the division is recommended after the first vowel (V/CV). If this does not yield a familiar-sounding word, an alternative is to divide after the consonant (VC/V), producing a closed syllable and a short vowel sound. This rule, less predictable than others, is typically introduced after VCCV and C+le.

Rule 4: V/V: Divide between two adjacent vowels not functioning as a pair. When two neighboring vowels are not working together to form a vowel team, the

division is recommended between the vowels (V/V). Each vowel retains its individual sound in this scenario.

Rule 5: VC/CCV & VCC/CV – Divide around the second consonant when three consonants align. When three consonants appear consecutively, dividing after the first consonant (VC/CCV) is suggested. If this does not produce a recognizable word, an alternative is to divide after the second consonant (VCC/CV). The presence of blends and digraphs within these words, exempt from division, aids in determining the appropriate split.

Rule 6: Divide after a prefix and before a suffix. The recommendation is to divide a word immediately following a prefix and just prior to a suffix. Although some suffixes form their own syllable, this becomes evident after the initial word division and pronunciation attempt. It is essential to note an exception to this rule in the case of the suffix -ed, which may not always create an additional vowel sound, as observed in words like "jumped" and "sailed." Nonetheless, pronunciation attempts following the identification of the suffix clarify whether it constitutes a syllable or not.

#### **Pronunciation Metacognitive Strategies**

Oxford defines metacognitive learning as controlled and self-directed. Planning, goal setting, self-evaluation of mistakes made during the learning process. This tactic relates to the learning process' self-management.

Pronunciation and metacognitive techniques go hand in hand. In metacognitive methods, students track their development over time and make decisions to improve their pronunciation patterns. These techniques focus on suprasegmental language elements like rhythm, emphasis, and intonation. According

to Oxford, students who use metacognitive strategies, such as shadowing, talk along with input while concentrating on the intonation and rhythm patterns they hear in videos. They keep an eye out for intonation issues and practice by recording oneself reading aloud to experiment with various intonation patterns, among other things. Conversely, mirroring helps students create a strategy for picking up new pronunciation patterns from native speakers by having them mimic bodily movements. Students can also practice sentence stress by using techniques like questions and matching replies, which require them to highlight particular words in order to show that they understand how stresses are placed in sentences.

#### **Pronunciation Memory Strategies**

Oxford defined memory as the ability to store and retrieve information. Using flashcards, students can record new words and expand their vocabulary. They can add details about the word, such as its meaning, synonyms, antonyms, phonemes, and any other relevant information that they feel is crucial to know or retain. Additionally, students can group terms or utilize the new or challenging phrases in a different context.

Students can store and recall vocabulary as needed with the use of memory methods. One example is using rhyme pairs, which encourages children to recognize and retain words that rhyme by helping them form mental connections between words with similar pronunciations. Another memory technique that helps pupils better organize and store information in working memory is cloze dictations. These techniques aid in proper pronunciation and support pupils in remembering and using phonemes.

# **Pronunciation Compensatory Strategies**

The ability to overcome obstacles in spite of linguistic knowledge gaps is known as compensation. When students struggle with memory or lack vocabulary, compensatory measures are used. For Oxford, employing synonyms or word descriptions facilitates communication. Using preset language patterns or key words, for example, facilitates communication while language learners continue to pick up new vocabulary. Likewise, when faced with language barriers, learners may also turn to gestures or their mother tongue, which could have an impact on communication and learning.

## **Pronunciation Social Strategies**

Oxford claimed that social strategies are related to language acquisition that occurs during interactions. It is the way in which students communicate with classmates or native speakers. asking clarifying questions about greetings, social customs, expressions, and any other aspect of the target language's culture that needs to be understood better.

Social methods place an emphasis on student participation as they work together to develop goals that are advantageous to the group. These tactics are based on scaffolding procedures; the first step is to detect pronunciation issues among groups. In order to address challenges, students generate ideas, and then use several pronunciation strategies to create and implement an action plan, which promotes a collaborative learning environment.

# 1.2 Objectives

## General objective:

To analyze the attitudes and practices of EFL students towards the intuitive imitative approach in pronunciation.

# **Specific objectives:**

- 1. To analyze to what extent the Intuitive Imitative approach is applied in the EFL classroom.
- **2.** To identify what approach is the most used to teach pronunciation in the EFL classroom.
- 3. To identify the different strategies used by EFL students to improve their pronunciation.

#### **Fulfillment of objectives**

All objectives were effectively achieved through the systematic administration of the survey, providing comprehensive insights into the application of the Intuitive Imitative approach in the EFL classroom. To introduce students to this pedagogical approach, the survey included questions aimed at gauging their familiarity with the intuitive imitative method, allowing for the identification of the frequency and depth of its implementation. The questionnaire enabled students to express their opinions and experiences related to the Intuitive Imitative approach and its impact on their pronunciation learning.

In the context of pronunciation instruction, the survey sought to understand the extent to which the intuitive imitative approach is integrated into teaching practices. Questions were strategically designed to explore students' perspectives on mimicry exercises, repetition of sounds, and other elements associated with the approach. This facilitated the analysis of the most employed strategies by students to enhance their pronunciation skills, with a specific focus on the role of the intuitive imitative approach in this process.

Moreover, the survey delved into the strategies used by EFL students to enhance pronunciation, the survey incorporated questions designed to elicit students' opinions and preferences regarding different pronunciation learning strategies, including those aligned with the intuitive imitative approach. The inclusion of openended questions facilitated a deeper exploration of the strategies students find most effective in improving their pronunciation skills.

#### **CHAPTER II**

#### **METHODOLOGY**

#### Resources and materials

# 2.1 Materials

Technological and human resources were essential for the development of this research. To answer the survey, numerous technology tools, including laptops and cell phones, were used. Ultimately, SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) software was used to evaluate the data after it was gathered via Google forms.

#### 2.2 Methods

# Mixed approach

The current research employs a mixed approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods. This mixed approach is essential for obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. As defined by Haven and Grootel (2019), qualitative research involves the exploration of opinions, experiences, beliefs, and behaviors using methods such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, and observation. Qualitative data primarily relies on language, whether written or spoken, as its main data source. In this research, the qualitative aspect was crucial for gathering insights from the public and processing their responses. However, the numerical results obtained from these surveys needed to be quantitatively analyzed to examine the extent and variation of changes, as emphasized by Smith and Hasan (2020). This combination of qualitative and

quantitative approaches ensures a more holistic and informative exploration of the research topic, enabling a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

## **Modality**

The modality chosen for this research was bibliographic, a term often associated with literature reviews and secondary data analysis. As noted by Booth, Sutton, and Papaioannou (2016), bibliographic research involves the systematic collection and analysis of existing scholarly publications and documents. This approach is valuable for synthesizing prior research and theoretical knowledge on a topic, providing a strong foundation for subsequent investigation. In this study, a bibliographic modality was particularly relevant for summarizing existing knowledge related to the research topic.

## **Descriptive**

The research design employed in this study is centered on a descriptive approach, and as Neuman (2014) highlights, the essence of descriptive research is to furnish a clear, accurate, and detailed account of a specific phenomenon or topic. This approach seeks to capture the intricate facets of the subject under investigation without intervening or manipulating the events or conditions. The choice of a descriptive research design for this study was deliberate and well-suited for the research's objectives. By using this approach, the research was able to methodically outline and summarize the characteristics and attributes that define the study's core focus.

Descriptive research not only provides a snapshot of the subject but also aids in a more profound exploration of the research topic. In this study, the descriptive design served as a platform for meticulously documenting the experiences, opinions, and behaviors of the selected population. By adhering to the principles of this design, the research team could gather data that vividly represented the students' perceptions and responses to the survey instrument. It allowed for the investigation of numerous variables and their interplay in the academic context, leading to a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the students' experiences.

This descriptive approach is particularly valuable in academic research because it lays a solid foundation for evidence-based decision-making. By meticulously documenting the conditions and experiences of the students, the research can provide educational institutions with insights to enhance the academic environment, curricula, and support systems. In essence, the descriptive research design was chosen to not only outline the research topic but to provide a deep, rich exploration of it, ensuring that the study contributes meaningfully to the understanding of the subject matter.

#### **Instruments**

This research started with the constructed survey validated by Cronbach's Alpha with a result of 0,770 that was applied to 83 students. The survey was divided into three main sections that correspond to the research questions: To what extent the Intuitive Imitative Approach is applied in the EFL classrooms? Which approach is most used to teach pronunciation in the EFL classrooms? What are the strategies employed by EFL students to enhance their pronunciation in the target language?

The applied survey was divided into three sections based on the objectives that are aligned to the research questions. The survey possessed 23 items and three open-ended questions that correspond to the questions that students were surveyed with Likert scale. The first section was related to the intuitive imitative approach. It contained 6 items and one open ended question. The second section included 4 items with one open ended question corresponding to strategies to develop reading comprehension. The last section was about the different strategies learners use to

improve their pronunciation. It involved 10 items and one open-ended question as well. Surveys are widely recognized as a structured data collection method that can efficiently gather information from a sample of participants. Creswell and Creswell (2018) explain that surveys are valuable for obtaining information related to attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.

## **Population**

Students from the higher levels of Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros Program at Universidad Técnica de Ambato were used. The total number of participants was 83. There were 59 females and, 24 males, 79 of them mestizos and 4 of them indigenous (ages ranged 18-27). The participants in the study were selected for their backgrounds as pre-service teachers, having spent considerable time learning English. They were equipped with various technological devices, including laptops and cell phones, and regularly integrated modern advancements in their classrooms to stay current in their approaches to education.

Table 1: Population

Population	Population Participants				
Male	23	28,9			
Female	59	71,1			
Total	83	100			

Note: Pre-service teachers surveyed

#### **Ethical considerations**

This descriptive inquiry required the students' consent. Strict confidentiality was maintained regarding the survey data. According to Haggerty (2004), there are a

multitude of ethical principles that are applicable to both the subjects of the investigation and all professionals. In the process of designing a research project, considerations related to the ethical principles that guide the researcher, participant recruitment practices, participant responsibilities, and the relative vulnerability of individual participants can all be considered within the ethical governance framework of research. Finally, researchers need to protect participants from any undue attention.

#### **Procedure**

The research was meticulously and systematically conducted, employing a detailed procedure to ensure a comprehensive exploration of the subject matter. The initial and pivotal phase involved an extensive review of literature focused on the Intuitive imitative approach and its impact on pronunciation. Diligent efforts were made to compile pertinent information from a variety of sources, encompassing books, articles, and scholarly databases. This thorough literature review extended beyond a single source, encompassing a wide range of libraries and platforms, including Research Gate, Taylor and Francis, E-book, and Google Scholar. This approach aimed to gather diverse perspectives on pronunciation. Following this bibliographic research, the subsequent critical step involved the development of a survey instrument designed to investigate the relationship between the intuitive imitative approach and pronunciation. The specific research objectives were translated into three research questions, each of which necessitated a comprehensive review of the extracted literature to identify key themes, trends, and practical implications.

This process involved a meticulous examination of pertinent theories, methodologies, and empirical findings, which were then skillfully transformed into well-structured survey questions. Additionally, three open-ended questions were integrated to encourage participants to contribute their unique perspectives and insights beyond the existing literature. This iterative survey development process

underwent multiple revisions to ensure the clarity, relevance, and comprehensibility of the questions. Subsequently, a rigorous validation process was implemented to evaluate the survey's reliability and validity. A pilot test was carried out, involving participants from the eighth semester who completed the survey and provided valuable feedback. The responses from the pilot test were carefully reviewed, leading to necessary adjustments to enhance the survey's clarity and effectiveness. The data from the pilot test were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) for validation procedures, employing statistical measures such as Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which indicated a high coefficient value, signifying strong internal consistency and reliability of the survey instrument.

After obtaining a validated survey, the study moved forward to the data collection stage, during which students from third, fourth and eighth semesters were asked to complete the survey. To streamline the survey administration process, the survey link was shared with the course presidents. The survey was thoughtfully organized into sections, encompassing both general demographic data and sections aligned with the research questions. Participants were encouraged to respond candidly and thoughtfully, providing their unique insights and experiences with the intuitive imitative approach in pronunciation. The collected survey data were subjected to rigorous analysis using the SPSS program, with quantitative data analyzed through appropriate statistical techniques, such as mean calculations and data table generation, while qualitative data from open-ended questions underwent manual analysis using thematic analysis techniques to uncover key patterns, themes, and emerging insights. From the processed data, valuable conclusions were drawn, and practical recommendations were formulated. These findings not only added to the existing body of knowledge on mind facts and reading comprehension but also offered actionable insights for educators and researchers. The comprehensive research process, encompassing extensive bibliographic research, meticulous survey development, rigorous validation, data collection, and thorough analysis, ensured the study's rigor, credibility, and value within the academic community.

#### **CHAPTER III.**

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

# 3.1 Analysis and discussion of the results

The current chapter shows the analyzed data with the aim to answer the three questions based on the study objectives and will be presented with the results obtained after the survey. The data was processed through SPSS to obtain the mean and to be able to tabulate the results of the open-ended questions.

- 1. To what extent the Intuitive-imitative approach is applied in the EFL classrooms?
- 2. Which approach is most used to teach pronunciation in the EFL classrooms?
- 3. What are the strategies employed by EFL students to enhance their pronunciation in the target language?

Table 2

Intuitive-imitative approach

Item	Mean
When I practice my pronunciation, I try to mimic different sounds.	4,13
When I pronounce different words, I repeat sounds and rhythms that I	4,07
listen.	
My English teachers use resources like videos, websites, audios in their pronunciation classes.	3,82
I practice pronunciation by repeating recorded conversations to sound like a	3,46

native speaker.	
I mainly focus on copying pronunciation, not paying attention to complex	3,34
pronunciation rules.	
I record my voice to compare my pronunciation to native speakers to see my	2,84
progress.	

Note: The following scales were used to derive the measures: 1. Never, 2. Rarely, 3. Occasionally, 4. Frequently, 5. Always.

## Analysis and interpretation

Research question: To what extent the Intuitive-imitative approach is applied in the EFL classrooms?

The results of the study showed the prevalence of the Intuitive-imitative approach in the EFL classrooms, offering detailed insights into students' engagement with pronunciation practices. Notably, the highest mean scores were observed in mimicry exercises, specifically, practices involving the repetition of sounds and rhythms during pronunciation received a mean of 4,07. This preference is further supported by a mean of 4,13 for efforts to mimic a diverse range of sounds during pronunciation practice. However, a somewhat lower mean of 3,34 indicated that while mimicry is prevalent, some students may prioritize imitation over explicit pronunciation rules. Regarding dialogue repetition, students exhibited positive responses, as reflected in the mean score of 3,82 and 3,46 for statements related to practicing pronunciation through repeated conversations and utilizing external resources. Nevertheless, the lowest mean score of 2,84 for self-assessment through recording suggests a relatively reduced inclination towards this aspect of pronunciation evaluation.

According to the results, the Intuitive-imitative approach is commonly employed in the EFL classrooms. The emphasis on imitating sounds and rhythms

indicates a preference for experiential learning over complex pronunciation rules. Despite this, the lower score on self-assessment through recording suggests a potential area of improvement in fostering students' reflective practices for pronunciation enhancement. The study implies that educators consider the popularity of mimicry exercises and dialogue repetitions and incorporate them effectively in their classes, nonetheless educators should consider the importance of self-assessment strategies to optimize the Intuitive-imitative approach in EFL classrooms.

Table 3

Pronunciation teaching approaches

Item	Mean
My teachers use pronunciation charts and explanations to simulate the	3,47
different sounds in English.	
Teachers encourage students to repeat and mimic English words without	3,46
focusing on written spellings.	
Teachers focus on the rhythm, stress, and melody of English words and sentences	3,43
to help students sound more natural.	
Pronunciation in English is taught with fun activities in tasks in my classes.	3,31

Note: The following scales were used to derive the measures: 1. Never, 2. Rarely, 3. Occasionally, 4. Frequently, 5. Always.

# **Analysis and Interpretation**

Research question: Which approach is most used to teach pronunciation in the EFL classrooms?

The analysis of the data on approaches used to teach pronunciation in EFL classrooms showed varying levels of adoption among instructors. The highest mean score of 3,47 is linked to the use of pronunciation charts and explanations, reflecting an inclination towards an analytic linguistic approach. This suggests that a

substantial number of teachers employ a structured method emphasizing explicit language rules and components to instruct pronunciation. Following closely is the mean score of 3,46 for the intuitive imitative approach, encouraging repetition and mimicry without a focus on complex rules. This indicates a comparable level of adoption and suggests that a significant number of teachers foster experiential learning and imitation in pronunciation practices. The mean score of 3,43 associated with the integrative approach underscores a significant emphasis on prosodic elements in pronunciation instruction. This finding suggests that teachers commonly prioritize teaching the natural cadence and melody of English words and sentences to enhance students' pronunciation skills. Moreover, the mean score of 3,31 for the integrative approach involving fun activities indicates a moderate but notable incorporation of enjoyable tasks in pronunciation instruction. It suggests that teachers recognize the value of integrating entertaining elements into the learning process.

The results suggest a diversified use of approaches in teaching pronunciation in EFL classrooms. While analytic linguistic methods and intuitive imitative strategies are prevalent, there is also a substantial emphasis on prosodic features and an integrative approach. This multifaceted approach highlights the importance of incorporating a range of strategies to address the complexity of pronunciation learning in EFL settings. Educators may find value in integrating elements from different approaches to create a comprehensive and engaging pronunciation curriculum that addresses diverse learning preferences and needs.

Table 4
Students' pronunciation learning strategies.

Item	Mean			
I try to pronounce different words and phrases like my teacher.	4,01			
When I watch a movie, I repeat some sentences to master my pronunciation.				
I pay attention to how words are stressed in sentences. For example:	3,67			

CRItical geoLOGical	
I connect sounds to images to help me remember pronunciation, like associating	3,55
'barking' with a picture of a dog.	
I avoid talking about topics I do not feel confident to avoid pronunciation	3,53
problems.	
I find it useful to remember pronunciation patterns by rhyming similar	3,43
words, like 'tree' and 'bee', or 'cat' and 'hat'.	
If I have trouble pronouncing something, I switch to my native language to	3,40
make it clearer.	
My classmates and I work together to improve our pronunciation of challenging	3,37
words.	
I break complex words down into smaller sounds as a practice technique. For	3,12
example, I broke down "celebrate" into "ce-le-brate."	
I ask my classmates for feedback on my pronunciation. For example, after	3,10
giving a class presentation I ask my classmates for their opinions.	
Note: The following scales were used to derive the measures: 1 Never 2	Rarely 3

Note: The following scales were used to derive the measures: 1. Never, 2. Rarely, 3. Occasionally, 4. Frequently, 5. Always.

## **Analysis and Interpretation**

Research question: What are the strategies employed by EFL students to enhance their pronunciation in the target language?

The analysis of the data showed that the cognitive strategy with the highest mean score of 4,01 underscores students' prevalent use of imitation, emphasizing the significance of modeling after their teachers as a primary approach for pronunciation improvement. Following closely is the metacognitive strategy, with a substantial mean score of 3,92, indicating a keen adoption of self-awareness and monitoring techniques in pronunciation practice. The attention to word stress as a metacognitive strategy also demonstrates noteworthy utilization, earning a mean score of 3,67 and highlighting its role in fostering natural pronunciation. Memory strategies, involving rhyming with a mean score of 3,43 and connecting sounds to images with a mean

score of 3,55. Compensatory strategies, such as switching to the native language when facing difficulties with a mean score of 3,40 and avoiding certain topics with mean score of 3,53, showcase a moderate level of adoption for coping with pronunciation challenges. Social strategies, particularly seeking feedback from classmates after a class presentation, demonstrate the lowest mean score of 3,10, suggesting a comparatively lower reliance on peer interactions for pronunciation improvement.

The findings suggest a diverse range of strategies employed by EFL students to enhance their pronunciation. While there is a strong inclination towards imitating teachers, students also utilize metacognitive, memory, compensatory, and social strategies to varying degrees. The diversity in strategy adoption emphasizes the multifaceted nature of pronunciation learning and underscores the importance of addressing individual preferences and needs in EFL instruction. Educators can leverage this understanding to tailor instructional approaches that encompass a variety of strategies to effectively support students in improving their pronunciation skills.

Table 5

Open-ended questions

Question 1	Answers	Total
	Drillings (individual drillings and coral	26
	drillings)	
	Repetitions	18
	Roleplays	11
	Speaking practices (dialogues)	6
What other activities does your	Activities using multimedia resources (videos,	6
teacher use the most to teach	audiobooks, self-recordings, karaoke)	
pronunciation?	Presentations	5
	Handouts (multiple choice questions, gap	5
	filling activities)	

	Other answers (transcriptions, shadowing	6				
	activities)					
	Total	83				
Question 2	Answers					
	Intuitive imitative approach	28				
What type of methodology	Analytic linguistic approach	39				
does your teacher use the most	Integrative approach	16				
to teach pronunciation?	Total					
Question 3	Answers	Total				
	Memory strategies	33				
What strategies do you use the	Cognitive strategies	15				
most to improve your	Social Strategies	11				

Metacognitive strategies

Compensatory strategies

20 4

83

Note: Qualitative findings derived from the open-ended questions.

Total

# **Analysis and Interpretation**

pronunciation?

Table 5 presents the results of the open-ended questions used to reinforce the research questions:

The first open-ended question, "What other activities does your teacher use the most to teach pronunciation?" reveals a diverse range of instructional activities employed by teachers. The most frequently cited activity is individual and choral drills, with 26 students highlighting its prominence in pronunciation instruction. Repetitions and roleplays follow closely, with 18 and 11 students respectively acknowledging their prevalence. Speaking practices, multimedia resources, presentations, and handouts also make notable appearances in the students' responses. Moreover, 6 students mention engaging in other activities such as

transcriptions and shadowing exercises. This diversity in responses suggests a multifaceted approach to pronunciation teaching, incorporating various strategies to cater to different learning preferences. It can be assumed that traditional activities like repetitions and drills are still applied in the EFL classrooms and combined with contemporary techniques such as roleplays, Teachers create a dynamic and diverse instructional environment.

The second open-ended question, "What type of methodology does your teacher use the most to teach pronunciation?" reveals that the analytic linguistic approach is the most employed, as indicated by 39 students. The analytic linguistic approach is characterized by a focus on the analysis of language components, explicit explanations of pronunciation rules, and engagement with pronunciation charts. The intuitive imitative approach is mentioned by 28 students, and the integrative approach is mentioned by 16 students. This distribution suggests a predominant reliance on analytical linguistic methods, emphasizing a structured linguistic approach in pronunciation teaching. The findings suggest that teachers may prioritize explicit language rules and components in their pronunciation instruction. This preference for the analytic linguistic approach is driven by its structured nature, offering a clear framework for understanding and applying pronunciation rules. The systematic breakdown of pronunciation elements, coupled with explicit explanations, contributes to a sense of clarity and comprehension for learners. Therefore, teachers find this approach valuable in fostering a deeper understanding of pronunciation among students.

The third open-ended question, "What strategies do you use the most to improve your pronunciation?" demonstrates a prevalence of memory strategies, with 33 students favoring this approach. This inclination towards memory strategies could be attributed to their effectiveness in facilitating the retention and retrieval of pronunciation patterns. Memory-related techniques, including repetition, association, and visualization, play a crucial role in reinforcing correct pronunciation over time. Metacognitive strategies are employed by 20 students, cognitive strategies by 15

students, social strategies by 11 students, and compensatory strategies by 4 students. The choice of these strategies reflects the diverse approaches students take to improve their pronunciation. Metacognitive strategies, involving awareness and selfregulation, may appeal to students who recognize the importance of monitoring and reflecting on their pronunciation performance. Cognitive strategies, which encompass mental processes such as repetition and categorization, might attract students who prefer systematic and analytical approaches to learning pronunciation. Social strategies, emphasizing interaction and communication, could be favored by students who believe in the collaborative aspects of language improvement. Meanwhile, compensatory strategies, used to manage communication breakdowns, may be selected by students who prioritize effective communication over precise pronunciation. The prominence of memory strategies suggests a strong reliance on memorization devices and repetition for pronunciation improvement. This inclination towards memory-based approaches may stem from students' belief in the effectiveness of rote learning and the memorization of sounds and patterns. The varied distribution across other strategy types indicates a diverse range of approaches employed by students to enhance their pronunciation skills, showcasing the multifaceted nature of pronunciation improvement. This diversity implies that students recognize the complexity of pronunciation and adopt a combination of strategies tailored to their individual learning preferences and needs.

#### **Discussion**

The three research questions presented below were designed to explore students' perspective on the intuitive imitative approach, specifically, its impact on pronunciation.

Question 1: To what extent is the Intuitive Imitative Approach applied in EFL classrooms?

The study results reveal a significant prevalence of the Intuitive-imitative approach in EFL classrooms, showcasing that students widely engage with pronunciation practices through intuitive imitation, particularly by mimicry exercises and dialogue repetition. In this sense, Kelly (1969) pointed out that the Intuitive-Imitative Approach emphasizes the learner's ability to imitate and absorb the sounds and rhythms of the foreign language for natural pronunciation development. Kelly advocated for the foundational role of imitation techniques, even in the face of emerging analytical methods, suggesting that automatic repetition and imitation remain prevalent and effective in enhancing pronunciation skills. In a study by Shabani and Ghasemian (2016), it was found out that listen and imitate and reading aloud were used most frequently techniques the language teachers preferred to use in teaching pronunciation. Likewise, Yates (2003) found that mimicry provides a non-threatening environment that reduces anxiety and creates a safe environment to integrate the pronunciation of the L2 into the student's personality.

Moreover, the survey data indicates positive regarding to dialogue repetition, with students expressing engagement in practicing pronunciation through repeated conversations and utilizing external resources. This echoes the principles of Community Language Learning (CLL) as highlighted by Richards and Rodgers (2001). In CLL, pronunciation is taught through interactive and communicative methods, where the teacher models correct pronunciation during conversations, and learners actively engage in dialogue.

Question 2: Which approach is most used to teach pronunciation in the EFL classrooms?

The survey data reveals that In EFL classrooms, the approach most used to teach pronunciation appears to be a combination of analytic linguistic methods, intuitive imitative strategies, and integrative approaches. According to Euler (2014), learners benefit from a structured approach that imparts a clear understanding of the phonetic elements, supporting the notion that pronunciation charts and explanations

play a vital role in achieving this goal. Aligning with the inclination towards the analytic linguistic approach as evidenced by the survey results. On the other hand, the substantial use of mimicry exercises, emblematic of the intuitive-imitative approach, resonates with Brown's (2007) assertion that imitation and repetition are fundamental strategies for pronunciation learning. Brown highlights that learner, especially in the early stages, naturally acquire pronunciation skills through mimicking native speakers. In a study Selami and Serhat (2017) found out that the Intuitve-imitative approach is the most used by teachers to teach pronunciation to young learners, the second approach is the analytic-linguistic approach, beneficial for teaching vowels to older learners; and the integrative approach, favored by some teachers for its holistic view of pronunciation in communication.

Incorporating fun activities related to rhythm, stress, and melody, indicative of an integrative approach, aligns with Thornbury's (2005) emphasis on the communicative aspect of pronunciation teaching, argued that pronunciation should not be isolated but integrated into meaningful communication. The survey's indication of enjoyable tasks in pronunciation instruction aligns with Thornbury's view, suggesting that educators recognize the value of blending pronunciation practice with engaging communicative activities.

Question 3: What are the strategies employed by EFL students to enhance their pronunciation in the target language?

Upon analysis, it was found that EFL students employed a variety of strategies to enhance their pronunciation, encompassing cognitive, metacognitive and memory strategies as the most popular ones.

The cognitive strategy highlights the predominant use of imitation. This resonates with Kelly's (2004) assertion that imitation techniques form the bedrock of pronunciation instruction, emphasizing the historical and persistent significance of

this approach. The emphasis on perceptual skills and immediate mimicry aligns with the long-standing recognition that listening precedes imitation in pronunciation learning (Sweet, 1964). In a study Akyol (2013), it was found out that memory, cognitive and metacognitive strategies were the most used by EFL learners.

Metacognitive strategies, as demonstrated by a substantial mean score, underscore students' keen adoption of self-awareness and monitoring techniques in pronunciation practice. The attention to word stress as a metacognitive strategy aligns with the broader understanding that metacognitive techniques contribute to improved pronunciation habits (Oxford, 1990). The emphasis on monitoring intonation problems through activities like shadowing resonates with the interactive and communicative methods. The substantial use of metacognitive strategies, indicative of self-awareness and monitoring during pronunciation practice, aligns with O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) framework, where metacognition is considered a key element in successful language learning.

#### CHAPTER IV.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 4.1 Conclusions

After the survey results were analyzed and processed, the following conclusions were reached:

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the Intuitive-Imitative Approach is widely applied in EFL classrooms. The emphasis on activities such as mimicry exercises, repetition of sounds, and efforts to imitate a diverse range of sounds during pronunciation practice suggests a preference for experiential learning over complex pronunciation rules. However, the relatively lower inclination towards self-assessment through recording highlights an area for potential improvement in fostering students' reflective practices for pronunciation enhancement. The prevalence of mimicry exercises and dialogue repetitions suggests that educators should consider incorporating these effective strategies while also emphasizing the importance of self-assessment for optimizing the Intuitive-Imitative Approach in EFL classrooms.

Drawing from the analysis, it can be concluded that EFL teachers employ a diversified set of approaches in teaching pronunciation. The analytic linguistic approach, indicated by the highest engagement with pronunciation charts and explanations, reflects a substantial adoption of structured methods emphasizing explicit language rules. Simultaneously, the intuitive-imitative approach and the integrative approach demonstrate comparable levels of adoption, suggesting a balanced incorporation of experiential learning and a focus on prosodic elements.

This multifaceted approach underscores the importance of integrating various strategies to address the complexity of pronunciation learning in EFL settings. Educators may find value in creating a comprehensive and engaging pronunciation curriculum that caters to diverse learning preferences and needs.

Considering the diverse range of strategies employed by EFL students, it can be concluded that pronunciation learning is a multifaceted process. Imitation emerges as a prevalent cognitive strategy, highlighting the significance of modeling after teachers for pronunciation improvement. Metacognitive strategies and memory strategies also play crucial roles, emphasizing the need for learners to monitor their progress and employ memory aids effectively. The diversity in strategy adoption underscores the importance of addressing individual preferences and needs in EFL instruction. Educators can leverage this understanding to tailor instructional approaches that encompass a variety of strategies, supporting students in improving their pronunciation skills.

#### 4.2 Recommendations

Educators are encouraged to take advantage of the prevalent use of the Intuitive-Imitative Approach in EFL classrooms. Given the popularity of mimicry exercises and dialogue repetitions, teachers should incorporate these activities effectively into their classes. However, recognizing the potential area of improvement in self-assessment through recording, it is recommended that educators design and implement strategies to encourage students to reflect on their pronunciation independently. Creating a balanced approach that combines effective mimicry exercises, dialogue repetitions, and self-assessment strategies can optimize the Intuitive-Imitative Approach in EFL classrooms.

Considering the diversified use of approaches in teaching pronunciation, educators are advised to adopt a comprehensive and engaging curriculum that integrates elements from different approaches. While the analytic linguistic approach

is prevalent, the balanced adoption of intuitive-imitative strategies and an emphasis on prosodic features in the integrative approach highlight the importance of a multifaceted instructional approach. By incorporating various strategies, teachers can address the complexity of pronunciation learning in EFL settings and cater to diverse learning preferences. This inclusive approach ensures that students receive a well-rounded pronunciation education.

Based on the diverse range of strategies employed by EFL students, educators are recommended to acknowledge and support the multifaceted nature of pronunciation learning. Since imitation emerges as a strong cognitive strategy, teachers can emphasize modeling after instructors for pronunciation improvement. Encouraging metacognitive strategies, such as self-monitoring, and leveraging memory strategies effectively are also crucial. To address individual preferences, educators should tailor instructional approaches that encompass a variety of strategies, fostering a supportive environment for students to enhance their pronunciation skills.

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#### **ANNEXES**

#### Annex 1

#### ANEXO 3 FORMATO DE LA CARTA DE COMPROMISO.

#### **CARTA DE COMPROMISO**

Ambato, 07 de Septiembre 2023

Doctor Marcelo Nuñez Presidente Unidad de titulación Facultad de Ciencias Humanas y de la Educación

Yo, Mg. Sarah Iza, en mi calidad de Coordinadora de la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros, me permito poner en su conocimiento la aceptación y respaldo para el desarrollo del Trabajo de Titulación bajo el Tema: "Intuitive-imitative approach and pronunciation" propuesto por el/la estudiante Casa Molina Pamela Elizabeth, portador/a de la Cédula de Ciudadanía, 055040179-8 estudiante de la Carrera de Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros Facultad de Ciencias Humanas y de la Educación de la Universidad Técnica de Ambato.

A nombre de la Institución a la cual represento, me comprometo a apoyar en el desarrollo del proyecto.

Particular que comunico a usted para los fines pertinentes.

Atentamente.

Lcda. Sarah Jacqueline Iza Pazmiño, Mg.

Coordinadora de la Carrera

0501741060

0984060528

sj.iza@uta.edu.ec



# **Annex 2: Survey**

Survey available upon request

# Annex 3: Conbrach's Alpha validation

# **Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
,770	20

Note: Reliability statistics with Cronbach's Alfa of the 20 questions with Likert scale

# **Annex 4: Survey validation**

# A. CHECKLIST VALIDATION

		Observations									
ITEM	Clarity in writing		g Internal Coherence		Induction to the answer (Bias)		Language		state objectiv	ures what it ed in the es/research estions	
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8	1		/			/	/		/		
9	/		/		-	1	/		1		
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11	/		1		-	/	1		-		
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13			4		-	/	/		/		
14			1		-	/	/		/		
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17		-	1		-	/	1		-	-	
18	-/-	-	1		-	1	/		-		
19	-/-		1		+	0	7		/		
20		-	1		-	-	/		1		
21	-/-	-	1		-	1	/		/		
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# A. CHECKLIST VALIDATION

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3	V		V		1	V	1		1		
4	V		1			V	V		V		
5	V		V		1	V	1		1		
6	1		V			V	V		1		
7	0	1	V		1	V	V		1		
8	1		V			V	V		V		
9	1		V			V	0		1		
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17	1		/			1	V		1		
18	0		/			V			V		
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# A. CHECKLIST VALIDATION

	CRITERIA TO EVALUATE									CRITERIA TO EVALUATE					
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20	1		7		1	1	1		1	-					
21	1	-	1	-	+	1	1	-	1						
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		General	Aspe	cts			-		Yes	No	*******				
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# **Annex 5: Turnitin report**



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#### CHAPTER I

L1 Research Budgeroum
To provide a solid basis for this research study, a wide range of scholarly resources was
methodically collected from a variety of academic dustantees. These sources
collaboratively contribute to the investigation of the limitative Institutive Approach' and

collaboratively contribute to the investigation of the finatitive linitarive Approach' and its significance in prosunciation instruction. The chosen utricles, journals, and papers family valuable perspectives on the theoretical foundations, teaching methods, and empirical discoveries associated with prosunciation pedagogy.

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Hosherian and Fudaci (2011) undersork a research study that addressed the prominent roles played by intuitive-imitative approach and analytic-linguistic approach in English language teaching (ELT) and the restable above of promunication training. The

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