

UNIVERSIDAD DE EL SALVADOR
FACULTAD MULTIDISCIPLINARIA ORIENTAL
DEPARTAMENTO DE CIENCIAS Y HUMANIDADES
SECCIÓN DE IDIOMAS



MODALIDAD DE CURSO O DIPLOMADO:

CURSO DE ESPECIALIZACIÓN LINGÜÍSTICA (PROCESO DE GRADUACIÓN)

TÍTULO DEL ARTÍCULO FINAL:

ORAL PRODUCTION PROBLEMS: ACCURACY, PRONUNCIATION, AND FLUENCY ISSUES IN
THIRD-YEAR MODERN LANGUAGES STUDENTS

PARA OPTAR AL GRADO ACADÉMICO DE:

LICENCIATURA EN LENGUAS MODERNAS: ESPECIALIDAD EN FRANCÉS E INGLÉS

PRESENTADO POR:

CRISTINA MARISOL RAMOS SÁNCHEZ N° CARNÉ RS18022

FÁTIMA MARÍA PARADA RODRÍGUEZ N° CARNÉ PR17028

MARIELA JENNIFER COREAS ROSA N° CARNÉ CR18025

DOCENTE ASESOR:

MTRA. EVELYN YASMIN MARTÍNEZ BONILLA

OCTUBRE 20th, 2025

SAN MIGUEL, EL SALVADOR, CENTROAMÉRICA

UNIVERSIDAD DE EL SALVADOR

AUTORIDADES



M.SC. JUAN ROSA QUINTANILLA

RECTOR

DRA. EVELYN BEATRIZ FARFÁN

VICERRECTORA ACADÉMICA

M.SC. ROGER ARIAS

VICERRECTOR ADMINISTRATIVO

LIC. PEDRO ROSALÍO ESCOBAR CASTANEDA

SECRETARIO GENERAL

LCDA. ANA RUTH AVELAR VALLADARES

DEFENSORA DE LOS DERECHOS UNIVERSITARIOS

LIC. CARLOS AMÍLCAR SERRANO RIVERA

FISCAL GENERAL

UNIVERSIDAD DE EL SALVADOR

AUTORIDADES



M.SC. CARLOS IVÁN HERNÁNDEZ FRANCO

DECANO

DRA. NORMA AZUCENA FLORES RETANA

VICEDECANA

LIC. CARLOS DE JESÚS SÁNCHEZ

SECRETARIO

MTRO. EVER ANTONIO PADILLA LAZO

DIRECTOR GENERAL DE PROCESOS DE GRADO

DRA. ANA CECILIA CAÑAS ZELAYA

DIRECTOR DE LA ESCUELA O JEFE DE DEPARTAMENTO

MTRA. ROXANA JANETH SORTO DE VELIS

COORDINADORA GENERAL DE PROCESOS DE GRADO

Agradecimiento

En este momento tan especial, queremos expresar nuestro más profundo agradecimiento a Dios, quien ha sido nuestra guía y nos ha dado sabiduría, salud y fortaleza para culminar esta etapa de nuestras vidas. Sin su presencia durante todo el proceso este logro no habría sido posible.

Agradecemos también a la universidad por brindarnos la oportunidad de convertirnos en profesionales en lo que tanto nos apasiona, gracias a nuestros queridos docentes, que compartieron su conocimiento y nos fueron instruyendo poco a poco hasta alcanzar nuestro objetivo. Especialmente agradecemos a nuestra asesora Evelyn Yasmin Martínez Bonilla por su guía, paciencia y sugerencias a lo largo de este proceso. Su experiencia y compromiso fueron de gran ayuda para el desarrollo de este trabajo.

Finalmente, a nuestros padres, pilares de nuestro ser, que, con amor incondicional, sacrificios, paciencia y apoyo constante nos acompañaron en cada paso de este largo recorrido. Gracias por enseñarnos que la perseverancia y la fe siempre dan fruto. Este logro no es solo nuestro, sino también de ustedes.

Resumen

Dominar la pronunciación es crucial para los estudiantes de lenguas extranjeras, ya que impacta directamente la fluidez y la precisión en el habla. Tener una buena pronunciación es fundamental para comunicarse con eficacia y claridad. Esta investigación tiene como objetivo clasificar los desafíos de la producción oral que enfrentan al hablar inglés los estudiantes de tercer año de la carrera de Lenguas Modernas de la Universidad de El Salvador. Se empleó el método cuantitativo bajo un diseño descriptivo; se seleccionaron 30 estudiantes de tercer año de la licenciatura en Lenguas Modernas y se recolectaron datos mediante una encuesta y una prueba oral. La encuesta consistió en un cuestionario de 15 preguntas cerradas, y la prueba oral requirió que los participantes hablaran de tres a cinco minutos. Se utilizó el muestreo no probabilístico (por conveniencia) para seleccionar a los estudiantes que podrían proporcionar la información necesaria para recopilar, organizar y evaluar los datos. El estudio se centra en problemas frecuentes como la entonación inadecuada, los patrones de articulación, la mala gestión del acento y los errores gramaticales, que dificultan la comunicación efectiva. Según el cuestionario, los resultados revelaron problemas significativos de pronunciación, particularmente relacionados con la entonación, la articulación de los sonidos y el acento, que afectan la capacidad de los estudiantes para comunicarse con precisión en inglés. Además, los resultados de la prueba oral mostraron que los estudiantes tienen problemas de fluidez, lo que impacta la comunicación efectiva y la claridad del discurso.

Palabras clave: producción oral, problemas de pronunciación, habilidades de comunicación, precisión, fluidez.

Abstract

Mastering pronunciation is crucial for foreign language learners, as it directly impacts fluency and accuracy in speech. Strong pronunciation skills are key to effective and clear communication. This research aims to classify the oral production challenges that third-year students majoring in Modern Languages at the University of El Salvador face when speaking English. It was employed a quantitative method with a descriptive design. Thirty third-year students of the Bachelor's Degree in Modern Languages were selected, and data were collected through a survey and an oral test. The survey included a questionnaire with 15 close-ended questions, and the oral test required each student to speak for three to five minutes. It was used non-probabilistic (convenience) sampling to choose students who could provide the necessary information to collect, organize, and evaluate the data. The study focuses on frequent issues such as improper intonation, articulation patterns, poor stress management, and grammatical errors, all of which hinder effective communication. The findings from the questionnaire revealed significant pronunciation problems, particularly related to intonation, sound articulation, and stress, which affect the students' ability to communicate accurately in English. Furthermore, the results of the oral test showed that the students struggle with fluency, which negatively impacts effective communication and speech clarity.

Key words: oral production, pronunciation problems, communication skills, accuracy, fluency.

Introduction

Learning to speak a foreign language, particularly English, poses significant challenges for students, especially when it comes to oral production. Speaking is one of the most important skills in language learning, as it enables effective communication. However, mastering oral skills in a foreign language requires more than just learning vocabulary and grammar—it involves the correct use of pronunciation, intonation, stress, and articulation. For Spanish-speaking students at the University of El Salvador, transitioning into effective oral English production can be a difficult task due to differences between the two languages.

This research focuses on third-year students in the Modern Languages major at the University of El Salvador, identifying the most predominant oral production problems that they face. By understanding these oral production difficulties, this study not only highlights the specific areas where students struggle but also provides insights into improving language teaching and learning practices at the university. (Ur, 1996) emphasizes that, among the four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—speaking is the most important for achieving efficient communication.

To achieve the objectives, a quantitative approach was employed under a descriptive design, according to (Ghanad, 2023), quantitative research aims to quantify the data and generalize findings from a sample of a study from varied perspectives. It requires collecting data, analyzing, and interpreting quantifiable data to prove the hypothesis produced in a specific study. This method allowed for systematic collection and analysis of data to identify patterns and trends related to students' oral production problems. The population of the study included 47 third-year students majoring in Modern Languages at the University of El Salvador. Non-probabilistic (convenience) sampling was used to select students who were available and willing to participate

in the study, ensuring that data could be gathered efficiently within the constraints of time and resources.

Data were collected using a combination of observation sheet, survey, and oral test. The observation sheets provided insights into the students' general performance during oral production tasks, focusing on their use of pronunciation, articulation, and fluency in spoken English. The survey consisted of 15 close-ended questions designed to gather students' perceptions and self-reported difficulties regarding specific aspects of oral production, such as pronunciation of vowels and consonants, managing stress in words, and fluency during conversations. Additionally, an oral test was administered in which each student was required to speak for three to five minutes on a given topic by recording an audio, allowing the assessment of their pronunciation, coherence, and overall communication skills. In addressing these issues, the research utilizes a detailed theoretical framework that draws on Communicative Competence Theory (Hymes, 1971) and Interlanguage Theory (Selinker, 1972), among others, to explain the observed challenges in pronunciation, accuracy and fluency.

The data collected through these instruments were analyzed using statistical tools, to identify the most common oral production problems faced by the students. This analysis provided a clear picture of the areas where students encountered the most difficulty, revealing significant issues in pronunciation, intonation, stress management, and fluency. By interpreting these results, the study aimed to uncover the root causes of these oral production challenges and offer recommendations for improving teaching strategies and student learning practices.

This study is essential in highlighting the specific areas where students require more support and practice to achieve greater proficiency in oral communication. Ultimately, the

findings aim to inform language teaching methodologies and help students become more confident and effective speakers of English.

Methodology

The present study was aimed at determining what oral production problems affected third-year students' language proficiency performance of English as a foreign language in Modern Language Major at the University of El Salvador. In order to determine these facts, the methodology used for this research was based entirely on the Quantitative Research method since it was essential to collect and analyze the data to answer the research question. The level of research was Descriptive research because it was intended to describe a population, circumstance or phenomenon without manipulating the variable, just observing and measuring it. In addition, the type of research was Cross-sectional study because the data was collected from the same population only once as the variable was measured only once. The design of research was Prospective study because the studies were done in the present and the primary data was obtained.

Population and Sample

The research study involved a population of 47, who were third-year students majoring in Modern Languages in the University of El Salvador. To choose the sample, it was considered that the most appropriate sampling method was non-probability sampling (convenience) because it would allow them to select students able to supply the information needed. According to (Nikolopoulou, 2022), he says: Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method where units are selected for inclusion in the sample because they are the easiest for the researcher to access. This can be due

to geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or willingness to participate in the research. Sometimes called accidental sampling, convenience sampling is a type of non-random sampling. Accordingly, 30 students were included in the sample as they met the criteria for this sort of sample, which included proximity and time availability.

Techniques and Instruments

In the investigation for data collection, three instruments were used to collect and analyze data. Firstly, the observation technique was used as an instrument to identify and determine which were the oral production problems that affected third-year students, which was useful in order to conduct the analysis. Secondly, the survey technique was used to gain more insight into the students through a questionnaire instrument that consisted of 15 close-ended questions in order to obtain data and find out whether accuracy, fluency, and pronunciation categories were areas in which students struggled. Thirdly, an oral test was carried out in which the students had to speak for three to five minutes about a specific topic.

Procedure

First of all, an observation guide was used to evaluate and document the performance of students' language skills in the classroom, such as speaking, listening, writing and reading in which it was necessary to attend twice to observe and take notes during the class. It was determined, based on the notes taken, which was the problem that most affected the students' language performance. As a result, after analyzing the results from the observation sheets the skill that presented more deficiencies was speaking. That was why the research was conducted more on the investigation of the factors that affected the oral production in third-year students.

After that a survey was conducted to a sample of 30 third-year students using a questionnaire of 15 closed-ended questions that were created according to the main points of the

research question. The questions were presented in a way in which it would be easier for the students to self-evaluate their performance in the language.

The last instrument used to collect data was the oral test in which the students had to speak for three to five minutes about a specific topic or create a short story based on a picture scene, along with a rubric to assess oral production problems of the students according to existing knowledge.

Data Analysis

A Data Analysis Plan (DAP) is about putting thoughts into a plan of action. Research questions are often framed broadly and need to be clarified and funneled down into testable hypotheses and action steps (Banks, Paige, & Mather, 2013). The data collected was measured through a statistical analysis since the level of research is Descriptive research. In other words, Descriptive analysis was the most appropriate for this type of study. In order to analyze the data, it was processed through statistical software Excel and IBM SPSS since they are very practical systems to analyze data quickly and objectively, which allowed a better understanding of the results of the research. Furthermore, the statistical tools used in this data analysis were frequency tables, and the mode.

Ethical considerations

The present study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles required by the University's ethical regulations, as evidenced by documents such as the written consent form signed by the study population to proceed with data collection.

Results

Table 1

Questionnaire answers are based on difficulties in oral production according to third-year students' criteria.

Survey	Pronunciation	Fluency	Accuracy	%
Yes	96	95	90	62
No	54	55	60	38
Tota (N=450)	150	150	150	100

Source: Table based on the questionnaire.

Description: From the sample the majority of the students answer that they do have issues in English oral productions.

Table 2

Questionnaire answers are based on categories.

Survey	Yes	No	%
Pronunciation	96	54	64
Fluency	95	55	63
Accuracy	90	60	60
Tota (N=450)	281	169	

Source: Table based on the questionnaire.

Description: Students answered that they struggled more in pronunciation than in the other two categories.

Table 3

Oral production level of third-year students according to each category.

Oral test	Pronunciation	Fluency	Accuracy	%
High	28	19	20	25
Medium	37	35	50	45
Low	25	36	20	30
Tota (N=270)	90	90	90	100

Source: Table based on the oral test.

Description: According to the data collected from the sample the students have medium level in English oral productions.

Table 4

Oral production problems according to the categories.

Survey	High	Medium	Low	%
Pronunciation	28	37	25	41
Fluency	19	35	36	40
Accuracy	20	50	20	56
Tota (N=270)	67	122	81	

Source: Table based on the oral test.

Description: The majority of students presented greater difficulty in fluency.

Table 5

Moda results of the questionnaire based on the 15 questions.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS		
N	Answered	30
	Unanswered	0
Moda		7 ^a

^a. There are multiple modes.
The smallest number is displayed.

Source: Table based on the questionnaire.

Description: The most frequent number in the YES and NO questionnaire is 7.

Table 6

Moda results of the test based on the rubric.

ORAL TEST RESULTS		
N	Answered	27
	Unanswered	0
Moda		10

Source: Table based on the oral test.

Description: The most frequent number in the oral test with a scale of low, medium and high is 10.

Analysis of Results

The descriptive results presented two different data results on oral production problems in third-year students and were focused on three categories: pronunciation, fluency and accuracy. These categories were considered for both the survey and oral test. The survey reflected the difficulties students perceived in their own oral production, while the oral test highlighted the errors observed in students' performance based on the analysis criteria.

Data collected from the survey revealed that a total of 30 students were tested, 64% presented predominant problems in pronunciation, 63% in fluency, and 60% in accuracy, taking into account that Table 1 shows that the category with the highest percentage is the "yes" answers which means the majority of the students have issues in English oral production, therefore, the percentages mentioned above are taken from Table 2 focusing on the total "yes" that was obtained by category. These results presented a greater problem in pronunciation, specifically in the areas of articulation of vowels and sounds, intonation and stress. According to the results, pronunciation obtained the highest number of responses with 64% (96 out of 150 "yes" answers), based on the questionnaire, the question that supported the assessment of pronunciation was "*Are there any consonant sounds that you struggle with pronouncing?*". This question is highly relevant for measuring pronunciation because it highlights difficulties in producing certain sounds or using proper pronunciation patterns.

Based on the results obtained from the oral test, in Table 3 students showed greater difficulty in fluency with 40%, followed by pronunciation 41% and accuracy with 56%. It indicates that the students were at a medium level in pronunciation and accuracy, but a low level in fluency. Additionally, as shown in Table 4, students scored 36 out of 90 points in fluency, 37 out of 90 in pronunciation, and 50 out of 90 in accuracy. The item that most effectively

supported fluency was “*The student applies the stress accurately and naturally, emphasizing the correct syllables and words to communicate meaning clearly and effectively. The speaker shows full control of stress in different contexts*”. Specifically, fluency problems in oral production refer to difficulties that affect the smoothness and coherence of spoken language.

In Table 5, mode is presented, and the most frequent number in the YES and NO questionnaire is 7 and it is multimodal. Finally, in Table 6 presented the most frequent number in the oral test with a scale of low, medium and high is 10.

Discussion

Based on the data collected from the two instruments, the results of the study showed that the main issue third-year students face in oral production is pronunciation, followed by fluency and accuracy. Moreover, the results determined that students have a medium level in both pronunciation and accuracy, but a low level in fluency. Although students may face difficulties in other areas, fluency and pronunciation are the most prominent problems, generating and bringing with them other speech production problems. Hence, it is clear that if someone struggles with fluency, they are likely to also have difficulties with accuracy, since these aspects are related. Even if these difficulties do not occur at the same level, they are still present.

Pronunciation in Effective Articulation of Sounds

Pronunciation is one of the three components of language that support language skills. Intelligibility is essential when speaking a language; the speaker must be understandable so that the listener can grasp the intended message. When the speaker demonstrates good pronunciation, effective communication is established between speaker and listener (Haryani, Dewi, & Sari, 2016). If a student does not have a good level of pronunciation effective communication will be affected.

Accuracy problems in oral English production.

Accuracy is “the extent to which the language produced in performing a task conforms to target language norms” (Ellis R. , 2018). (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005) define accuracy as “how well the target language is produced in relation to the rule system of the target language”. If the students do not have accuracy at the moment of speaking the message can be misunderstood, since the students tend to mix ideas, this is related to the result obtained and also the one that it

was noticed during the oral test production, the students were not able to provide an accurate message.

Fluency in Effective Communication.

Fluency problems in oral production refer to difficulties that affect the smoothness and coherence of spoken language. Different authors agree that fluency is the ability to keep a natural conversation known as speech rate, without many filled or unfilled pauses, and using a small number of fillers, and use of formulaic language (Housen & Kuiken, 2009) with this it was understood that if the students have fluency in oral productions will have an effective communication, since has the ability to use the language without any fillers or pauses, this is the main issue researcher encountered in the students, they were not able to keep a conversation without using fillers or even talk for 5 minutes that was the target time for the oral test.

Through this study, it was identified the deficiencies students have in oral production are significant and mainly related to their English proficiency level. The issues with fluency and pronunciation indicated that students had not practiced the language enough to fully develop effective oral communication skills. Therefore, students would benefit from more effective programs or activities designed to improve pronunciation, fluency and accuracy. Such activities could be implemented in the classroom through speaking-focused tasks, including guided pronunciation drills, spontaneous conversation practice, and integrated reading activities. This approach may help students strengthen their oral skills.

In addition to the insights gained from this study, it is important to acknowledge several limitations that may have influenced the interpretation and scope of the results. First, the study was conducted with a relatively small sample of 30 students, which limits the generalizability of the findings, as this group may not accurately represent the broader student population at the

university. Secondly, the time limit for a single oral test (three to five minutes) is also another influencing factor, as it may not reflect all of the students' oral skills or their improvement over time. Furthermore, relying on only two instruments—the survey and the oral test—may have been insufficient to capture the full complexity of oral production skills. Finally, the study was conducted using a cross-sectional design, collecting data at a specific point in time. This approach does not reflect the possible progress or changes in students' oral production over time.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study addressed the research question, which investigated what are the oral production problems that students present when speaking English, specifically pronunciation, fluency and accuracy, affect language proficiency performance among the third-year students.

Through an oral test and a questionnaire, the results revealed that a significant percentage of students experience challenges across the categories mentioned above. In the questionnaire, according to the results, pronunciation obtained the highest number of responses at 64% (96 out of 150 “yes” answers), making it the most impactful category. This indicates that based on their responses, many students struggle to articulate English sounds clearly. The oral test results further demonstrated that the majority of the students had greater difficulty in fluency with 40%.

With these results it can be demonstrated that if students do not have fluency, it will also affect their pronunciation and accuracy. Fluency is the ability to speak a language smoothly and effortlessly, without relying on fillers. Pronunciation, on the other hand, involves the production of sounds, whether through intonation, stress and articulation of consonants and vowels. Effective pronunciation ensures that the message is clear and comprehensible to the listener, which is essential for successful communication.

The overall objective was achieved because, based on the answers, it was possible to classify the categories according to their level of difficulty. According to the questionnaire, in first place is pronunciation, as indicated by the highest score of 64%, followed by fluency with 63% and at least accuracy with 60%. On the other hand, according to the Oral Test results, the students presented more difficulty in fluency with a low percentage of 40%, followed by pronunciation with 41% and accuracy with 56%. Difficulties in oral production of English are

mainly linked to problems with fluency, pronunciation, and accuracy, which are influenced by a lack of practice of the oral skills outside the classroom.

Therefore, the hypothesis proposed at the beginning of the study was confirmed:

Difficulties in students' oral production of English are mainly linked to problems with fluency, pronunciation, and accuracy, which are influenced by a lack of practice of oral skills outside the classroom. The findings clearly reflect that insufficient practice contributes significantly to the oral production problems. In the end, this article was very helpful in identifying and classifying the problems that students face in oral production when learning to speak English.

References

- Banks, E., Paige, E., & Mather, T. (2013). *"Developing a Quantitative Data Analysis Plan"*. Canberra, Australia: National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health (NCEPH). Retrieved from https://nceph.anu.edu.au/files/Data_Analysis_Plan_Guide_20131125_0.pdf
- Ellis, R. (2018). Reflections on Task-Based Language Teaching. In R. Ellis, *The Psycholinguistic Approach* (p. 139). Bristol, Uk: Multilingual Matters. Retrieved from https://ebin.pub/reflections-on-task-based-language-teaching-9781788920148.html?utm_source=
- Ellis, R., & Barkhuizen, G. (2005). Analysing Accuracy, Complexity and Fluency. In *Analysing Learner Language* (p. 39). Retrieved from https://www.scribd.com/document/810088651/Ellis-Barkhuizen-2005-Analysing-Learner-Language?utm_source=
- Ghanad, A. (2023, 08 24). An Overview of Quantitative Research Methods. *INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS*, 6, 3794. Retrieved from <https://www.ijmra.in/v6i8/Doc/52.pdf>
- Haryani, H., Dewi, R. K., & Sari, N. P. (2016). The analysis of students' errors in stress placement in English. *CORE (Repositorio académico)*, 2. Retrieved from <https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/244220-the-analysis-of-students-errors-in-stres-a7d26667.pdf>
- Housen, A., & Kuiken, F. (2009). Oral fluency and discourse organization: An exploratory study of fluency measures in the assessment of oral proficiency. *Applied Linguistics*, 4.

Retrieved from

https://pure.uva.nl/ws/files/806510/74786_AL_SI_Housen_Kuiken.pdf?utm_source=

Hymes, D. H. (1971). Sociolinguistics. In J. Holmes, & P. J. B., *On Communicative competences* (pp. 269-285). Penguin Books. Retrieved from

https://ia804509.us.archive.org/0/items/in.ernet.dli.2015.118785/2015.118785.Sociolinguistics.pdf?utm_source=

Nikolopoulou, K. (2022, August). *What Is Convenience Sampling? | Definition & Examples.*

Retrieved from Scribbr: <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/convenience-sampling/>

Selinker, L. (1972). International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language. In *Interlanguage* (pp. 209-231). Berlin, Germany: Mouton Publishers.

Ur, P. (1996). A course in Language Teaching: Practice and Theory. In P. Ur, *Chapter 9*

"Teaching Speaking" (p. 120). Cambridge, Uk: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from <https://sacunslc.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/penny-ur-a-course-in-language-teaching-practice-of-theory-cambridge-teacher-training-and-development-1996.pdf>