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## **Abstract**

The ability to express oneself and communicate successfully in spoken English is referred to as oral production. It is defined as the process of producing spoken language in daily real-time encounters, such as conversations, presentations, interviews, or other forms of oral communication. This paper research presents an investigation on the difficulties in Oral Production of the students attending the Second Year course of Teaching in English at the University of El Salvador (FMO) Semester II-2023, whose objective is to determine what is causing the difficulties that students are facing day by day, also to find a way to minimize such difficulties and find results that may lead to gather useful data for analysis and further researchers as well as being beneficial for the population under study. In addition to this, throughout this investigation we were using the quantitative method, and the results were presented in the form of percentages and graphics, once given the results, the study showed that the oral production of the students is being affected by four main factors: their level of grammatical knowledge, lexical knowledge, intonation and lack of pronunciation skills. The results of this investigation are going to help improve the quality of spoken English in second year students, as it shows what is causing the current deficiency they have. Another key factor of this research is that some recommendations were given for students and teachers, because it is stated that in the process of improving the competences in the language efforts from both parties are involved and need to be worked together.

**Key words: oral production, problems, lexical knowledge, grammar knowledge, intonation, pronunciation, students, teacher**

## Resumen

A la capacidad de expresarse y comunicarse de manera eficaz en el inglés hablado se le conoce como producción oral. Este se define como el proceso de producir lenguaje hablado en encuentros diarios en tiempo real, como conversaciones, presentaciones, entrevistas u otras formas de comunicación oral. Este artículo presenta una investigación sobre las dificultades en la producción oral de los estudiantes de segundo año de la carrera de Profesorado en Inglés de la Universidad de El Salvador (FMO) en el semestre II-2023, cuyo objetivo es determinar las causas de las dificultades que los estudiantes enfrentan día a día, además de buscar una forma de minimizar dichos problemas como también encontrar resultados que conduzcan a recopilar datos útiles para el análisis y futuras investigaciones, así como beneficiar a la población del estudio. Además, utilizando el método cuantitativo, en forma de porcentajes y gráficas, el estudio mostró que la producción oral de los estudiantes se ve afectada negativamente por su nivel de conocimiento gramatical, conocimiento léxico, entonación y falta de habilidades de pronunciación. Los resultados de esta investigación ayudarán a mejorar la calidad de la producción oral del idioma inglés en los estudiantes de segundo año, ya que muestra qué es lo que está causando la deficiencia actual que tienen. Además, otro factor clave de esta investigación es que algunas recomendaciones se han otorgado tanto para los estudiantes como para los profesores, debido a que se demuestra que en el proceso de mejorar las competencias en el idioma se requiere involucrar los esfuerzos de ambas partes y es necesario trabajar en conjunto.

**Palabras clave: producción oral, problemas, conocimiento léxico, conocimiento gramatical, entonación, pronunciación, estudiantes, profesor**

## Introduction

Oral production is a crucial aspect of language learning, particularly for students pursuing degrees in English teaching. In the context of second-year students at intermediate mid-level, challenges in oral production take place in many different ways, including lexical knowledge, grammar usage, intonation, and pronunciation. These difficulties not only complicate effective communication but also hinder the development of teaching skills essential for future educators. This article investigates the prevalent obstacles encountered by intermediate mid-level English students and proposes strategies to enhance their oral production abilities.

One of the primary challenges faced by second-year English teaching degree students is a deficiency in lexical knowledge, adversely impacting both fluency and accuracy in speech. The limited vocabulary affects their ability to express ideas correctly and engage in meaningful discourse. Additionally, students at the intermediate mid-level exhibit less usage of complex sentence structures, contributing to hesitancy and long pauses in conversation. Furthermore, common difficulties in intonation and pronunciation add more challenges to effective communication in the way of misunderstandings or less attempts to keep the conversation going with the other participant or participants.

To sum up, addressing oral production difficulties among intermediate mid-level English teaching students can contribute significantly to a change in the way they are approaching the language and its features. By targeting challenges related to lexical and grammatical knowledge, intonation, and pronunciation, educators can adapt a better learning environment to improve language acquisition. Through systematic intervention and targeted instruction, students can overcome these obstacles, thereby enhancing their speaking and equipping them with the required skills to succeed as future educators of the English language.

## **Methodology**

In this chapter, the method design section specifies the type of method used in this study. In addition, the researchers explain the nature of the study and the study design. Furthermore, the research team determined who the study population is. Finally, this section contains the tools used to collect the data needed to answer the research question, leading to the research objectives.

## **Research Design**

A quantitative approach focuses on developing quantitative research. It describes how the research is conducted and the purpose of it, the role of the researcher, stages of research and also the method that was used to analyze data (Kevin Mauricio, 2023). At the same time, quantitative research uses numerical data to classify the results in the most objective way possible. And also allow researchers to focus on students in the classroom and what causes them to make mistakes when using English.

Quantitative research was chosen for this study because it enables the researchers to objectively classify and analyze the data collected. By using numerical data, the research team can obtain precise measurements and statistical results, allowing for a more rigorous and systematic examination of the research question. This approach provides a clear framework for conducting the study, outlining the role of the researcher, the stages of research, and the method of data analysis. In the case of this study, the focus was on understanding the factors that contribute to students making mistakes in English. By utilizing quantitative research methods and leveraging digital data, the research team was able to gather and analyze a large amount of information efficiently and effectively. This approach ensures that the findings are

reliable, replicable, and generalizable, providing valuable insights into the phenomenon under investigation.

This study was pointed to as descriptive research (involved numerical and non-numerical analysis) for that reason allowed for both quantitative and qualitative analysis. By combining both analyses, the researchers could obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic. They could explore the numerical aspects as well as the subjective experiences and perspectives of the individuals involved. This allowed for a more holistic and nuanced interpretation of the research findings. In addition, observational methods were used in this investigation where researchers did not manipulate the variables. Due to that, this study was not experimental research, because interfering with the variables was not optimal for the research team's goals.

### **Population and sampling**

This study took place at the University of El Salvador in the Multidisciplinary Eastern Faculty (FMO in Spanish) with one group of Intermediate English at the Foreign Languages Section. The whole group was made up of students from the English Teaching Degree, being the career part of the school of Humanities and Sciences. The second-year students of the English Teaching Degree were chosen for development of the research and for the application of the tools created for gathering data.

The voluntary response sampling technique was applied for this investigation. The research team demanded ten available students the day that the survey instrument was applied; additionally, the observation guide applied used students that attended the day of the observations. The target population for this research study was of the entire classroom of Second-year students from the English Teaching Degree program at the University of El Salvador (FMO) who are enrolled in the Semester-II courses of the academic year 2023. So, the

researcher team took a sample of ten students from Intensive High English groups making a Forty-two students' sample as a whole.

### **Instruments to collect data**

In this research study, a combination of survey and observation guide was employed as instruments to collect data from 10 select students. The survey served as a targeted questionnaire administered to participants, aimed to gather quantitative data on their study of the English language. The survey was distributed to the representative sample of participants, expecting a reasonable wide range of perspectives to be covered.

Additionally, an observation guide was utilized to collect qualitative data through the observation of the participants' speaking interactions to evaluate the amount of mistakes made for studying possible difficulties found. The observation guide outlined specific behaviors and aspects of interest, providing a framework for researchers to document and analyze data systematically. This approach allowed for the in-depth exploration of contextual factors, non-verbal cues, and other nuanced aspects that may not be captured through surveys alone.

By employing both a survey and observation guide, this research study aimed to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research topic, capturing a considerable amount of data to proceed with the analysis. At the end, the use of a survey and observation guide as data collection instruments in this research study facilitated a comprehensive exploration of the research topic, allowing for a thorough analysis of participants' perspectives, behaviors, and interactions.

The research team used the type of validation called Concurrent Validity. This type of validity refers to determining whether the new measurement produces similar results to the established measurement. If the results from the two measurements show a strong positive

correlation, it suggests that the new measurement is valid and accurately captures the same underlying construct as the established measurement.

The results obtained from the two instruments addressed to students was essential to help the research team elaborate a workshop which would mainly guide teachers to better students' oral production. Therefore, all the results from the diagnostic study were of great importance in the incorporation of elements that sustained and enriched the development of the proposal.

The research team used two instruments (see Annexes A and B) Since these instruments cover the full range of the phenomenon being studied, the validity used in this study is called: Content validity taking into account the objective is to comprehensively describe a particular aspect of a phenomenon in this case Oral production. The type of reliability is called Inter Rater Reliability which is used to assess the degree to which different observers give different estimates to the same phenomenon. Therefore, It is used when human judgment is involved in data collection. Besides, observers may agree with the responses or the material that demonstrates knowledge of the skill being assessed; in this case, oral production. Even though every member of the research team had a different point of view during the development of a class, the object of study was the same. That is why students were observed since the research team used that information to develop a research study that would help teachers enhance students' oral production according to the theory researchers are based on.

The study aimed to explore the oral production difficulties encountered by second-year students pursuing an English Teaching Degree at the University of El Salvador (FMO) during Semester-II of 2023. This research adopted a quantitative approach and employed a descriptive design to comprehensively assess the identified challenges. The research methodology

combined both quantitative and qualitative elements to provide a holistic understanding of the oral production difficulties faced by intermediate mid English learners. The primary focus was on quantitative analysis, supplemented by qualitative insights.

Two main instruments were utilized to collect data for this study: an observation guide and a survey. The observation guide was designed to facilitate the systematic collection of data during the classes, focusing on observable oral production challenges. The survey employed a Likert scale to quantify the frequency and intensity of specific difficulties faced by the students. The sample size comprised 10 students who are in their second year of the English Teaching Degree program at the University of El Salvador (FMO). The selection of participants was based on a voluntary response sampling method, where students willingly participated in the study. This approach ensured a diverse representation of participants who were willing to share their experiences and challenges in oral production.

A database was created, first developing a table in Microsoft Word for the creation of the observation guide for the annotations of the research group to the students. For the survey, they were reflected in a spreadsheet and a graphic table for better analysis. For the analysis and interpretation of the data, the researchers used a type of research method: the quantitative. On the one hand, for the processing of the data analysis and the interpretation of the rubrics, a statistical procedure was used through graphics and numbers. And, for the observation an analytical process was used, summarizing notes taken during the observation.

The chosen research methodology, encompassing quantitative and qualitative aspects, allowed for a comprehensive exploration of oral production difficulties faced by second-year English Teaching Degree students. The collected data from the observation guide and the Likert-scale survey provided valuable insights into the nature and prevalence of these

difficulties, contributing to a more profound understanding of the challenges encountered by intermediate mid English learners.

### **Data analysis**

This part presents the results of the research applied to the sample; it is about the data gathered among the participants while also providing the final analysis of the information to end up with the conclusions of the study.

### **Results of the survey**

Question 1: Do you usually repeat words in your oral production?

<b>Answers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Never	0	0.00
Rarely	1	10.00
Sometimes	3	30.00
Always	6	60.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	100%

According to the results of the graphic, none of the students answers that they never repeat words in their oral production. This suggests that all students at least occasionally repeat words while speaking. 10% of the students indicate that they rarely repeat words in their oral production. This implies that they avoid using repetition for the most part, but it might still happen occasionally. 30% of the students mention that they sometimes repeat words in their oral production. This suggests that repetition occurs intermittently in their speech, possibly due to natural flow or communication habits. The majority, 60% of the students, state that they always repeat words in their oral production. This indicates that a significant portion of the students consistently uses word repetition as a part of their speaking style.

In summary, the results show that the majority of students (60%) tend to repeat words always in their oral production. A notable portion (30%) uses word repetition sometimes, while a smaller percentage (10%) does so rarely. The findings underscore that word repetition is a common aspect of oral communication among students.

Question 2: How often do you use complex sentences while speaking?

<b>Answers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Never	0	0.00
Rarely	1	10.00
Sometimes	8	80.00
Always	1	10.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	100%

The results show that the majority, 80% of the students, indicate that they sometimes use complex sentences while speaking. This suggests that using complex sentences is a regular practice for a significant portion of them, but it might not be their default way of speaking. 10% say that they always use complex sentences, but this implies that a small portion of students consistently incorporates complex sentence structures into their speech, and the other 10% mention that they rarely use them. This could imply that they occasionally incorporate complex sentences, but it's not a common occurrence for them. None of the students indicate that they never use complex sentences while speaking. This suggests that all respondents have some degree of experience with using complex sentence structures in their discourse.

In summary, the results indicate that a large majority of students (80%) use complex sentences sometimes when speaking. A smaller percentage uses complex sentences rarely or always, and none of them report never using complex sentences. This suggests that using complex sentences is a common aspect of their spoken communication.

Question 3: How much can you say that Spanish is interfering with the mispronunciation of some words?

<b>Answers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Few	3	30.00
Barely	2	20.00
Much	2	20.00
Too Much	3	30.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	100%

According to the results presented on the graphic above, 30% say that they believe Spanish has few influences on their mispronunciation of some words. This suggests that while there might be some interference, it's not a significant factor in their mispronunciation. Another 20% of them indicate that Spanish has a minimal impact on their mispronunciation of words. This implies that Spanish plays a minor role, almost to the point of being negligible. Similarly, 20% state that Spanish has much effect on their mispronunciation of words. That indicates that they believe their knowledge of Spanish significantly contributes to the way they mispronounce certain words. The remaining 30% of the students express that Spanish has a significant and possibly excessive influence. This suggests that they perceive Spanish as a key factor causing them to mispronounce words.

In summary, the results demonstrate that opinions are divided among the students regarding the extent to which Spanish affects their mispronunciation of words. While a significant portion feels that Spanish has either a substantial or excessive influence, a smaller portion believes the influence is minor or barely noticeable. This suggests that the relationship between their Spanish knowledge and mispronunciation varies among the students.

Question 4: How often do you ask questions to have a clearer idea of the topic?

<b>Answers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Never	0	0.00
Rarely	1	10.00
Sometimes	7	70.00
Always	2	20.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	100%

As the results show, none of the students indicate that they never ask questions to clarify the topic. This suggests that all the students in the survey engage in asking questions at least occasionally to gain a clearer idea of a subject. 10% of the students mention that they rarely ask questions for clarification. This implies that while they don't frequently ask questions, there are instances where they seek further understanding through inquiries. The majority, 70% of the students, state that they sometimes ask questions to obtain a clearer idea of the topic. This suggests that asking questions is a common practice for a significant portion of the students, indicating an active effort to enhance their understanding. 20% of the students report that they always ask questions to gain a clearer idea of the topic. This indicates that a smaller but notable group consistently seeks clarification through questioning.

In summary, the results indicate that the majority of students (70%) frequently ask questions to have a clearer idea of the topic. Another significant portion sometimes engages in this behavior, while a smaller percentage either rarely or always asks questions for clarification. This suggests that active engagement through questioning is common among students and plays a role in their learning process.

Question 5: Do you usually have intonation problems while you speak?

<b>Answers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Never	0	0.00
Rarely	2	20.00
Sometimes	7	70.00
Always	1	10.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	100%

According to what the description above shows, none of the students answers that they never have intonation problems while speaking. This suggests that there is no one who consistently maintains perfect intonation without any issues. 20% of the students mention that they rarely experience intonation problems while speaking. This implies that while it's not a common occurrence, there are instances where they struggle with maintaining the correct intonation. The majority, 70% of the students, say that they sometimes have intonation problems while speaking. This shows that intonation issues are a common challenge for a significant portion of the students, potentially affecting their spoken communication at times. 10% of the students report that they always have intonation problems while speaking. This indicates that a smaller group consistently encounters difficulties with intonation when communicating orally.

In summary, the results suggest that a significant majority of students (70%) face intonation problems at least sometimes when speaking. While a smaller portion rarely experiences such issues, an even smaller portion consistently encounters intonation problems. This highlights the common nature of intonation challenges among students and their varying degrees of impact on spoken communication.

Question 6: Do you think that stressing a wrong syllable in a word can alter its meaning?

<b>Answers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Few	0	00.00
Barely	2	20.00
Much	5	50.00
Too Much	3	30.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	100%

The data show that the majority, 50% of the students, believe that stressing the wrong syllable can alter the meaning of a word to a considerable degree. This indicates that a portion of the students recognizes that syllable stress plays a substantial role in word meaning. 30% of the students express that they believe stressing the wrong syllable can overly alter the meaning of a word. This suggests that they perceive syllable stress as having a strong impact on word meaning, possibly more than they think is warranted. 20% of the students mention that they think stressing the wrong syllable barely alters the meaning of a word. This implies that while they acknowledge some effect, they don't consider it to be a significant factor in meaning alteration. None of the respondents indicate that they believe stressing the wrong syllable has only a minor impact on altering the word's meaning. This suggests that the students in the survey generally consider syllable stress to have a noticeable influence on word meaning.

In summary, the results indicate that a considerable majority of students (50%) believe that stressing the wrong syllable in a word can significantly alter its meaning. A smaller portion of students believes that the impact is either minimal or excessive, and none of the respondents believe that syllable stress has only a minor effect on word meaning. This underscores the importance that these students place on proper syllable stress for conveying accurate meanings.

Question 7: When you speak, are you aware that you are conveying the right message?

<b>Answers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Few	0	00.00
Barely	4	40.00
Much	6	60.00
Too Much	0	00.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	100%

The majority, 60% of the students, indicate that they are generally aware that they are conveying the right message when they speak. This suggests that these students feel confident in their ability to communicate effectively and accurately. 40% of the students mention that they are somewhat aware but not entirely certain that they are conveying the right message when they speak. This implies that these students have some level of doubt or uncertainty about the accuracy of their communication. None of the respondents indicate that they have very limited awareness of conveying the right message when they speak. This suggests that none of the students feel that they rarely or almost never convey the correct message when speaking. None of the students think that they have an excessive awareness of conveying the right message when they speak. This suggests that none of the students feel that they overly focus on ensuring message accuracy to an unnecessary extent.

In summary, the results indicate that a majority of students (60%) are confident in their ability to convey the right message while speaking. A significant portion (40%) has some level of doubt or uncertainty, while none of the respondents feel that they have very limited or excessive awareness of their communication accuracy. This showcases the varying degrees of confidence that students have in their spoken communication skills.

Question 8: When you want to use a more formal vocabulary, do you find it difficult to pronounce it?

<b>Answers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Few	1	10.00
Barely	2	20.00
Much	6	60.00
Too Much	1	10.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	100%

Based on the relative frequency of the results, the majority, 60% of the students, indicate that they often find it difficult to pronounce more formal vocabulary. This suggests that these students commonly encounter challenges when attempting to pronounce formal words. 20% of the students mention that they barely find it difficult to pronounce more formal vocabulary. This implies that while they might occasionally face difficulties, it's not a significant obstacle for them. 10% of the students' state that they only experience a few difficulties in pronouncing more formal vocabulary. This suggests that they encounter occasional challenges but not to a considerable extent. Another 10% of the students feel that they experience excessive difficulty in pronouncing more formal vocabulary. This indicates that they perceive the challenge to be more pronounced than they would consider normal.

In summary, the results indicate that a significant majority of students (60%) often find it difficult to pronounce more formal vocabulary. A smaller portion (20%) either barely or excessively experiences difficulties, while 10% of the respondents encounter only a few challenges. This highlights the common challenges that students face when trying to articulate more formal words.

Question 9: When communicating can you hold a long conversation without hesitation?

<b>Answers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Few	0	0.00
Barely	8	80.00
Much	2	20.00
Too Much	0	0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	100%

Analyzing the information collected by question N° 9, it is evident that the majority, 80% of the students, struggle to hold a long conversation without hesitation. This reflects that these students face difficulties in maintaining smooth and uninterrupted conversations for an extended period. 20% of the students mention that they are fairly confident in holding long conversations without hesitation. This implies that while they have some level of comfort in extended conversations, there might still be moments of hesitation. None of them indicate that they have a very limited ability to hold long conversations without hesitation. This suggests that none of the students believe that they rarely or almost never can maintain extended conversations smoothly. 0% of the students think that they have excessive confidence in holding long conversations without hesitation. This suggests that none of the students feel that they overly focus on this skill to an unnecessary extent.

In summary, the results indicate that a significant majority of students (80%) struggle to hold long conversations without hesitation. A smaller portion (20%) is fairly confident in their ability to do so, while none of the respondents feel that they have very limited or excessive confidence in this skill. This highlights the challenges that a majority of students face in maintaining extended conversations smoothly.

Question 10: Do you think that your level of vocabulary can influence your oral production

<b>Answers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Few	0	0.00
Barely	2	20.00
Much	6	60.00
Too Much	2	20.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	10	100%

Analyzing the information from question N° 10, 60% of the students believe that their level of vocabulary significantly influences their oral production. This suggests that these students acknowledge a strong connection between their vocabulary skills and their ability to effectively communicate orally. 20% of the students mention that their level of vocabulary only has a minor influence on their oral production. This implies that while they recognize some impact, they don't see vocabulary as a dominant factor in their spoken communication. Another 20% of the students feel that their vocabulary proficiency excessively influences their oral production. This indicates that they perceive their vocabulary skills to have a stronger effect than they might consider necessary. None of them believe that their level of vocabulary has a very limited influence on their oral production. This suggests that none of the students feel that their vocabulary skills play an insignificant role in their spoken communication.

In summary, the results indicate that a majority of students (60%) believe that their level of vocabulary significantly affects their oral production. A notable portion (20%) considers the influence to be either minor or excessive, while none of the respondents feel that vocabulary has a very limited impact on their spoken communication. This highlights

the importance that many students place on their vocabulary skills in relation to their spoken language abilities.

## **Findings**

The findings reveal several challenges in oral production among students:

Lexical Knowledge: Lack of vocabulary affects fluency and accuracy.

Grammar Knowledge: Limited usage of complex sentences and hesitation in conversation.

Intonation: Common problems with tone and stress affecting communication.

Pronunciation: Difficulties in articulating formal vocabulary and specific sounds.

The research underscores persistent obstacles in students' oral communication skills, necessitating targeted pedagogical interventions.

Comparison with Previous Studies:

Comparative analysis with prior research highlights consistent challenges across studies, emphasizing the ongoing need for innovative teaching strategies to address oral production difficulties effectively.

The study that finds similar results to the research team of the University of El Salvador was the University of Muhammadiyah Purworejo, (2016) by Fika Megawati and Vidya Mandarani, finding that students are facing low vocabulary mastery, low grammatical knowledge, and lack of confidence.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study identifies enduring challenges in oral production faced by English Teaching degree students, including lexical, grammatical, intonational, and phonetic aspects. This research contributes to understanding and addressing these hurdles, emphasizing the importance of innovative pedagogy in enhancing oral communication skills for English learners.

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