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Escuela de Lenguas Moderna

Final Graduation Project to Obtain the Licenciatura Degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language.

The Use of English Songs on Pronunciation Acquisition of English as a Foreign Language, Applied to Students from Bachelor Degrees at Universidad de Costa Rica to Correct Their Most Common Mistakes as Spanish Speakers.

El Uso de Canciones en Inglés para la Adquisición de Pronunciación del Inglés como Lengua Extranjera, Aplicado a Estudiantes de Bachillerato de la Universidad de Costa Rica para Corregir sus Errores más Comunes como Hispanohablantes.

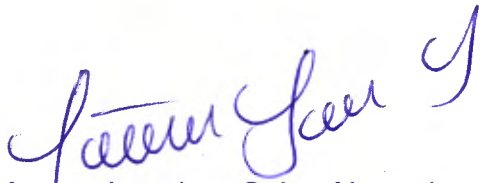Students:

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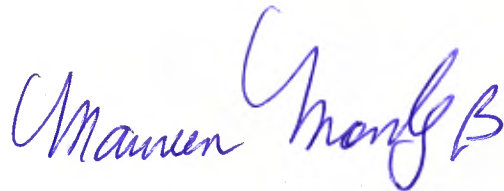Ana Isabel Méndez Valerio B24118

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Abstract:

The following qualitative research states the use of songs in English as a didactic strategy in order to foster pronunciation by determining the most common mistakes that Spanish speakers make. Also, it exposes the participants' perception on the specific songs chosen and the effectiveness of its use. As well, it explores the application of the Participatory Action Research method to conduct the study of pronunciation acquisition and its role in the students' intelligibility. Finally, it defines different types of limitations and recommendations for future research on the "Mother Tongue Effect", which was the most common type of mistake that students made.

Key words: English songs, pronunciation acquisition, didactic strategy, English as a foreign language, common mistakes in Spanish speakers.

Resumen:

El siguiente trabajo aborda el uso de canciones en inglés como estrategia didáctica para determinar los errores más comunes y alentar su pronunciación, y desarrolla temas como la importancia de la pronunciación como eje central de la comunicación en un segundo idioma por su papel en la inteligibilidad del individuo, motivación y autoconfianza para desenvolverse en el medio cultural del que proviene el idioma. A su vez, consigna la aplicabilidad del Método de Investigación Participativa y las razones de su ejecución para definir si las canciones en inglés constituyen o no una estrategia didáctica para la mejora de la pronunciación. Relata la experiencia de definir si a un grupo de diez estudiantes de diferentes carreras de la Universidad de Costa Rica les resultó efectivo el uso de canciones en Inglés como estrategia didáctica y también sus percepciones generales en torno a los objetivos del presente trabajo. Ha demostrado que la mayoría de los errores cometidos por los hispanohablantes se suelen basar en el "Efecto de la Lengua Materna" y recomienda a su vez, un abordaje amplio de dicho efecto en futuras investigaciones, para así posibilitar la aplicación de estrategias didácticas relacionadas a la adquisición de pronunciación en inglés como lengua extranjera.

Palabras Clave: canciones en inglés, adquisición de pronunciación, estrategia didáctica, inglés como lengua extranjera, errores comunes en hispanohablantes.

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CHAPTER I

1.1. Introduction

Pronunciation is one of the most challenging skills to acquire when studying English as a foreign language. Due to that situation, researchers, teachers, and professionals have been analyzing different strategies to apply in benefit of learners' pronunciation skills. In terms of Bartoli (2005), despite the advances and innovations that have occurred in the teaching of English as a foreign language, pronunciation continues to be neglected and still not receiving adequate attention. This problem is directly related to the lack of materials and proposals intending to integrate pronunciation to the communicative focus on the process of acquiring English as a foreign language. Currently, in the communicative focus, the acquisition of oral skills is associated with writing skills, serving as a support for teachers at the moment of teaching oral courses. Based on the above, the necessity to create innovative didactic strategies that function as an elemental tool for the effective acquisition of pronunciation skills is observed. Those strategies must promote active learning by inducing it through elements that seem attractive for students. For instance, the actual study pretends to provide a new didactic strategy that promotes the use of songs as a tool that benefits the pronunciation skills of the English current students in the country.

First, it is necessary to define the concept of pronunciation. In its most basic definition, Hancock (2018) comments that "pronunciation is more than 'listen and repeat'. Pronunciation includes features of language (...) and skills (...)" (p. 02), continue mentioning that "since pronunciation is part of speaking, it is also physical" (p. 05), and additionally he states that "pronunciation involves listening to how the language sounds" (p. 06). Derived from the terms of Hancock (2018), it is possible to observe that pronunciation can be defined as an element of the speaking and listening skills, which affect features such as vocabulary, grammar, phonetic, and phonology. Also, regarding the first part of the quote, the base of the research hypothesis by Hancock is to demonstrate that pronunciation acquisition is more than listening and repeating. An effective pronunciation acquisition process is influenced by features such as the interests and the context of the learners, such as the type of songs that seem popular for them and that could be employed for acquiring knowledge by themselves.

When teaching English as a foreign language it is appropriate to incorporate external assets into the class to trigger students' interest. Songs often constitute a beneficial strategy when facilitating the acquisition of an accurate English pronunciation since they endorse the practice of listening and repeating. "Cook (1996 as cited in Pourhoseini, 2016) defined pronunciation as the production of English sounds" (Branch, 2016, p. 02). However, Pandya Prashant offers a broad description that not only fits the present study, but also provides a strong starting point to the discussion on whether songs constitute a pertinent didactic strategy

on the pronunciation acquisition process or not.

> Pronunciation is the production of sounds that we use to make meaning. It includes attention to the particular sounds of a language (segments), such as intonation, syllable, phrasing, stress, timing, rhythm how the voice is projected (voice quality) and attention to gestures and expressions that are closely related to the way we speak a language. (Prashant, 2018, p. 16)

Intending to measure students' stage at broadening the phonetic and phonological domain of sounds of language mentioned by Prashant become relevant since they will be protagonists in accomplishing a deeper understanding of students' articulation practice. Even though a diversity of texts referring to pronunciation exist, regarding its parts, role in language, and the use of music to foster it, it is also imperative to pay close attention to the learners' perceptions of the songs with which they are taught. Music fulfills the educational process because it brings elements such as balance, proportion, rhythm, and joy (Sorouri, 2016); such elements resemble aspects of the phonetic and phonological spectrum of the English language.

Furthermore, to continue analyzing the importance of pronunciation, it is necessary to comment that, in terms of Pourhosein (2016), "pronunciation is one of the basic requirements of learners' competence" (p. 01), that is when studying the relevance of pronunciation becomes essential. The importance of pronunciation can be summarized in three different factors. The first one is related to people's skill to make themselves understood and understand others more quickly. According to ASC English (2020), English has many difficult sounds, such as /θ/ "th" and /tʃ/ "ch", that is why foreign language learners could have difficulties learning how to properly pronounce words. Moreover, "by using the correct sounds when you speak, others can quickly understand what you're trying to say" (ASC English, 2020, para. 03). Additionally, applying good pronunciation could make learning English as a second language easier, "this is because pronunciation forces you to listen to speakers more carefully, focusing on how they make the right sounds when they speak" (ASC English, 2020, para. 04). Listening to a natural native accent and pronunciation, facilitates the repetition or the oral production, which makes the learning process easier. Finally, good pronunciation can also help social skills. According to ASC English (2020), "having good pronunciation will make you more confident. You'll be able to participate in conversations" (para. 06). Besides being able to participate in English conversations actively, it will provide the opportunity of building more relationships. The acquisition of good pronunciation is an important goal that learners reach in a foreign language; it is a sign of self-satisfaction, self-confidence, and self-esteem since it allows them to communicate spontaneously and interact with native speakers, teachers, and classmates.

This research has as its main problem the question if English songs could act as an effective didactic strategy for the process of acquiring pronunciation in English as a foreign language. In terms of Rais, Djoko & Permata (2020), "song is one of the media that can be used to teach pronunciation. By using songs, students can learn how the word is pronounced" (p. 133). The ideas expressed by the authors above are the same that motivate the hypothesis of the study, which is that teachers can use English songs as a strategy to help learners in their process of acquiring pronunciation skills. To get the most reliable result possible, it is necessary to consider which Spanish speaker mistakes are the most common when learning English so that researchers can implement the strategy focused on the students' issues. Moreover, in terms of the results, it is necessary to constantly observe and test the students because it will provide specific hints referring to how the strategy is being applied, if it is working or not, and if the students are improving or not. Finally, the data collected and the process of the application of the English songs in the classroom will provide a list of benefits and limitations of the strategy, and recommendations that researchers could give for further investigations based on their experiences.

1.2. Justification

For many decades, people have been looking to learn English as a foreign language to communicate with other people or to construct a better future for themselves and their families. Consequently, pedagogues, researchers, teachers, professionals, and students have been looking for strategies that impulse learners to develop the elemental competencies to acquire new language skills effectively. In terms of Gonzales (2015), the purpose of the teachers and specialists for looking for new strategies is that the focus should not be because students do not want to learn but to motivate them through a satisfactory and attractive medium of acquiring knowledge. In addition, Gonzales (2015) explains that an effective method for oral skills acquisition is based on audiolingualism, which means the employment of strategies and techniques to involve students in the environment of the target language culture, inducing them to communicate in this language. However, it is well known that the didactic strategies that have been employed are unsuccessful, and there comes the necessity to look for new strategies like the one proposed in this study, in which music can be utilized as a tool for the acquisition and development of the pronunciation skills.

The English songs as a foreign language didactic strategy usually incorporates external assets, such as devices, materials, and general objects of daily life. One of those resources is songs, which can be presented in English classrooms as assets that contribute to the process of fostering an accurate pronunciation. Furthermore, studies such as the one carried out by Salas

& Lopez (2017), which is explained deeply in the theoretical framework, have demonstrated that the use of songs can represent a significant resource to employ during the language acquisition process of each student that pretends to acquire effective skills in learning English as a foreign language. According to the authors mentioned above, the reason for the significance of the use of songs comes from how music can motivate learners to acquire new language skills; that motivation comes from the attractiveness of the employment of an element that is natural for them.

At this point of the section, it is necessary to emphasize the role of songs within the pronunciation acquisition process to know the implications of implementing them in the foreign language classroom, allowing a conscious syllabus design. Castelo (2018) describes a set of advantages of including songs within the English classroom for the fostering of pronunciation in a punctual and detailed manner; examples of segments, coarticulation, word stress, and rhythm are a few included by her description in the following quote:

> In the specific case of the phonetic-phonological training, the pedagogical value of the song stands out even more. In terms of competence, a song allows the teacher to explore various relevant topics: (i) segments (it being possible to select songs with more occurrences of sounds difficult for the students); (ii) coarticulation and syllabic structure (because there are lyrics in which certain sound sequences or syllabic structures are more challenging and therefore an excellent means of articulation training); (iii) word stress (as the memorization of the oral form of new words should include the location of primary stress); (iv) rhythm and intonation (although some songs generate additional difficulties for playing with rhythm and intonation, in general the music helps to show the rhythm of the language - Betti, 2012; Santos Asensi, 1996). Teaching pronunciation through songs has other advantages also. Being an authentic document, the song can show different rates of speed which are common in real language usage (ranging from a very slow tempo song to a high-speed rap song). (p. 11)

The advantages that Castelo mentions above are developed through listening and repetition of songs within the classroom and how learners respond to the application of this concept, which constitutes an integral part in acknowledging the employment of music samples for didactic purposes, in terms of complementing the information that professionals can perceive with the intangible experience of student's perception. Songs provide language pronunciation samples in colloquial and formal speech figures; these figures of speech constitute a resource for the English class as listening input material and as a base for speaking activities design. Endorsing diction training through songs potentially impacts their academic performance because it broadens the space to explore the knowledge each person is passionate about

pedagogically.

Furthermore, practical immersion into English-speaking countries is a recurrent choice among English learners who decide to take exchange programs in high school and college, because it grants an opportunity to be immersed in the target language and produce speech with sound accuracy, among other reasons. Within any classroom, communication is decisive to achieve the aim of the class, accurately pronouncing words and phrases reinforces an effective transmission of ideas in spoken language. For example, when immersed in an English-speaking environment at a University abroad, the language learners expose themselves to the sounds of words and phrases within different contexts. Such exposure provides a chance for them to imitate the pronunciation of such language structures and supports the construction of pronunciation patterns.

Therefore, to make exchange programs an actual possibility for students, it is essential to impulse their performance towards meeting universities required language level test results. The TOEFL test is one of the challenges that students have to overcome in order to participate in an international exchange program. This test is one of many admission requisites from Universities in English-speaking countries, and it generates a reflection of the learners' abilities on the four language skills of listening, reading, writing, and speaking. (Educational Testing Service [ETS], w.d). It also provides room for opportunity within the workplace. Since pronunciation is evaluated through this and other tests such as TOEIC, it is beneficial to pay close attention to the didactic strategies used in the pronunciation acquisition process of English as a foreign language.

Along the theme of pursuing international opportunities, finding a job position is a challenge to anyone and as such, it requires preparations that have increased or changed throughout time; accurately pronouncing words and phrases in English adds a desirable asset to applicants who compete for job positions in the current areas of possibility such as call centers, hotels, tourist businesses, and language teaching. Obtaining and maintaining a stable job contributes to a person's quality of life since it guarantees different types of health and necessity fulfillment for every individual. Consistent and focused attention to pronunciation is appropriate to establish a solid background experience so that learners can pursue their personal and work-related interests and necessities.

Based on the ideas above, this study is important because it can provide teachers with benefits of using English songs as a strategy to acquire pronunciation. Besides correcting students' most common mistakes, it also could help learners acquire more intelligible and native-like English pronunciation, and consequently develop other areas that are closely related,

such as listening and communication skills. All research that provides knowledge on how to learn a language is important, regardless of the result, because it provides information on how to apply or not a didactic strategy, which will always be beneficial for learners.

1.3. Objectives

1.3.1. General Objective: To analyze the use of popular English songs as a didactic strategy to rectify common pronunciation mistakes in the foreign language acquisition process.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives:

1.3.2.1. To determine the most common pronunciation mistakes students of English as a foreign language make.

1.3.2.2. To apply English songs activities in the process of acquiring pronunciation as a didactic strategy to overcome the most common pronunciation mistakes students of English as a foreign language make.

1.3.2.3. To evaluate the effectiveness of using English songs as a didactic strategy in the process of acquiring pronunciation and correcting mistakes.

1.3.2.4. To identify the benefits and limitations of using English songs as a strategy in the process of acquiring pronunciation in English as a foreign language acquisition process.

1.4. Problem:

Does the use of English songs constitute an appropriate didactic strategy for the process of acquiring pronunciation in English as a foreign language?

CHAPTER II

2.1. Theoretical Framework

In this section, researchers explain the different approaches of English Learning such as English as a Second Language, English as a Foreign Language, English for Academic Purposes, and English for Specific Purposes. Moreover, the investigators present data regarding pronunciation acquisition and frequent pronunciation mistakes produced by English as a Foreign Language learners, and how popular English songs are used in education as well as in Costa Rican context.

2.1.1. English Learning Approaches

Considering this research works with a specific population, it is important to highlight what kind of approach for English learning is being implemented. As the most important approaches of English learning, it is possible to find English as a Second Language (ESL), English as a Foreign Language (EFL), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). According to Mitchell, Cleeve, & Perrett (2017), ESL means that the students are native to other languages; however, they live in a country where English is an official or important language, which allows speakers to unwind themselves in a context where they can constantly practice the target language. On the contrary, EFL means that students learn a target language that is not an official language where they live; therefore, learners do not have the opportunity of being constantly exposed to the language. Moreover, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) means when people are learning English to study at a college or university, so they would need to develop reading and writing skills. Finally, ESP refers to the action of learning English that will be used in one specific area, such as arts or commerce, as well as the specific goal of learning English for traveling purposes.

2.1.1.1. English Acquisition as a Foreign Language in Costa Rica

In Costa Rica, as in most Latin American countries, students learn English during Elementary and High school by studying listening, speaking interaction, speaking production, reading, and written production. However, their acquisition is limited to a basic level, they learn basic English. In terms of Consejo Superior de Educación [CSE] (2021), the results showed that 11% of the population who graduated from secondary school spoke English at an intermediate-advanced level, while 65% had a basic level of English (A1). Therefore, students' English level does not allow them to communicate effectively. Costa Rican English learners do not always count on communicating with native English speakers in the streets, and very few of them travel abroad to use these skills in a challenging context; consequently, English is considered a foreign language in the country.

Additionally, most Costa Ricans learn English for professional purposes. According to CSE (2021), Costa Ricans seek to learn English as a foreign language to increase their

employment possibilities, since there is a wide gap between urban and rural areas regarding job opportunities associated with the ability to speak foreign languages. Otherwise, as native Spanish speakers, Costa Ricans do not usually have the opportunity to interact with native English speakers constantly. Given that there is little space for fluent English speaking in Costa Rica's traditional daily life, students acquire the language throughout their formal education process. In the best scenarios, students continue their English acquisition process in a superior education program; however, most of the time, they do not.

2.1.2. American English

To introduce this section, it is fundamental to start by mentioning that, around the world, there are several types of English language variants, such as American, British, Canadian, Australian, New Zealander, South African, Indian, and Jamaican. Moreover, the study will only cover the differences between Great Britain's English and English from the United States (US) to study the main benefits of acquiring an American English pronunciation, which could vary depending on the city or state. In terms of Cameron (2019), when learning English, people must become familiar with different accents; subsequently, learners will improve their pronunciation, yet it is essential to take into consideration that regardless of the existent variety of accents, the type of language that speakers choose to learn will depend on other features such as necessities, or purposes.

Above all, it is necessary to define the characteristics of British and American English. First, British English is considered the most traditional, formal, and neutral form. Also, it is derived from the Anglo-Saxon language, which is well-known as old English. In the view of Grimaldi (2009), British accentuation has enjoyed greater prestige in Western Europe, partly due to its use in the British Empire, its style, and elegance. The idea expressed by Grimaldi is associated with the respectful and polite appearance of British English, as well as the premise that if they acquire British pronunciation, they will give the impression of being an educated person. Secondly, it is essential to start defining the characteristics of American English. This type of English is the most popular language worldwide. Following Zamora (2020), thanks to the influence that the United States has in the world, its use is widespread, especially in the rest of America. Zamora's conception refers to the globalization of US English as mostly related to mass media, the film industry, and entertainment. Moreover, thanks to the global influence, people perceive that American English has an accessible accent to learn, especially regarding different acquisition features such as those that will be mentioned below. In terms of prestige and formality, American English is associated with more casual and colloquial figures of speech.

Now that the characteristics of British and American English are defined, it is necessary to contemplate the selection of American English as the language chosen for English

acquisition in the Costa Rican educational system. In Costa Rica exist different educational policies that pretend to motivate English acquisition as a tool to expand the students' possibilities in both academic and work success (Diaz, 2021). In summary, the idea of teaching American English as a foreign language is related to expanding learners' opportunities to construct a better future for themselves and their families. However, foreign language acquisition will help Costa Rica in its cultural enrichment. As stated by Centro Cultural Costarricense - Norteamericano (2022), public educational institutions have been boosting the American English given all the cultural influence of the United States in Costa Rica as a Central American country. The idea of instructing this type of English instead of British regards the familiar reference more than social development. It is essential to observe a few reasons to select US English as a foreign language option:

2.1.2.1. Globality: In terms of globalization, American English functions as a neutral language that people employ to communicate with people who speak different languages. "Spoken almost everywhere in the world to some degree, and tied to no particular social, political, economic or religious system, or a specific racial or cultural group" (Houghton, 2007, p. 01). Based on the above, it is observed the relevance of the globality of US English functions for the people regardless of their social, cultural, or political community.

2.1.2.1. Homogeneity: According to Cameron (2019), the accent of the United States is more homogeneous, unlike the United Kingdom, in which a multitude of dialects with very different accents exist. In the quote, the author refers that even if the United States has many distinct states with different accents, it is easier for natives and foreign learners to communicate with people from such states because of the use of the same extensive vocabulary and pronunciation.

2.1.2.1. Easiness of understanding: American English is simpler to understand because the accent and the manner of Americans speaking is much slower, and their tone is more monotonous (Midleton School, 2019, paras. 6-7). Then, it is understood that because of its slow rhythm of speaking, the message and the conversation become more comprehensive when one English speaker is talking to another. Moreover, syntax and spelling tend to be simpler than in British. Also, because of globalization, foreign learners can learn some vocabulary, culture, and pronunciation through songs and the film industry, acquiring singers' and actors' pronunciation.

2.1.3. Pronunciation Acquisition

The relevance of pronunciation skills acquisition relates to communication and the actors of the process. In terms of Bartoli (2005), "pronunciation is the production and perception of sounds, accent, and intonation" (p. 3). The idea explained by Bartoli introduces the significance of pronunciation skills as part of communication and the learning process as the attribute that represents the understanding and acquisition of sounds, accents, and

intonation. Furthermore, the pronunciation acquisition process of how people obtain knowledge from a source varies according to each learner. In the case of this study, the objectives are closely related to reaching a higher level of communication, in which the articulation of sounds is one of the most significant features of the process. To analyze the pronunciation skills' relevance, it is necessary to start studying a variety of aspects.

The first fundamental aspect to consider is the relevance of the acquisition process. This aspect regards how learners are exposed to an authentic language in use. The access to language acquisition depends on the input exposition and the learners' environment. Input is internalized by learners and is complemented by the learner's environment and context, so it can be applied in the acquisition of a foreign language. In terms of Benati (2017), "learners must be exposed to comprehensible and message-oriented input. Input is the primary database on which learners build a linguistic system" (p. 2). Then, based on the idea mentioned by Benati, the exposure to input allows learners to comprehend the knowledge they are acquiring and the meaning of the message. Also, input is the main database for the acquisition process since it is the main conduit for the native language as well as in foreign language acquisition.

Additionally, the acquisition process of learning refers to developing foreign language skills through the same technique used for the approach of knowledge in learners' early years in their home environment. To illustrate the employment of the technique, it is essential to relate it to a language study in which Sherry (2014) investigates the process of language acquisition by focusing on reading skills, the author explains:

> Most children follow a similar pattern and sequence of reading behaviors as they learn how to read: from appreciation for and awareness of print to phonological and phonemic awareness to phonics and word recognition. Foundation skills are reading skills that students typically develop in the primary grades. The skills and behaviors that develop early serve as the base for later competence and proficiency. They are the building blocks that children learn to utilize to develop subsequent, higher-level skills to become proficient readers. (p. 02)

Based on Sherry, the employment of patterns and sequence behaviors similar to the ones utilized in learners' early years to acquire their native tongue can facilitate the acquisition and development of foreign language skills. Correspondingly, those tools conform to the foundation for future competencies, progress, and proficiency. The previous knowledge and techniques support learners in their processes to learn how to speak, read, or put into practice any other skills in their target language.

Based on the previous premise, it is observed that the production of sounds is one of

the most significant characteristics of language acquisition, mainly related to communication and comprehension of what learners intend to share with others. Pronunciation skills are a requirement for learners' competence since it is essential for their foreign language acquisition. "It should be viewed as an important part of communication that is incorporated into classroom activities" (Pourhosein, 2016, p. 5). This skill plays an essential role in English learning because it is one of the founding elements of oral communication and communicative competence. Those skills complement communication and comprehension qualities. According to Pourhosein (2016), "pronunciation acquisition is fundamental because it is the main source of understanding" (p. 6). In summary, through pronunciation, learners can comprehend the sounds, accents, and phrases they will employ in conversations. Pronunciation skills are a conduit in a conversation between two different speakers; if it fails, speakers will lose comprehension of the message and its meaning.

Moreover, pronunciation is related to producing certain speech sounds and improving speaking skills. To explain the relationship between pronunciation and speech sounds, it is essential to point out the definition of pronunciation provided by Augustyn (2018) for Encyclopedia Britannica, in terms of the editor "pronunciation (...) [is] the form in which the elementary symbols of language, the segmental phonemes or speech sounds, appear and are arranged in patterns of pitch, loudness, and duration" (p. 01). Based on that concept, it is signalized that pronunciation is not only concerning an effective communication process but also the pitch, the volume, and timing that should be employed to pronounce the words, phonemes, and speech sounds appropriately, regardless of the accent or the type of English in which it is used.

2.1.3.1. Frequent Pronunciation Mistakes Produced by Spanish Speakers when Learning English as a Foreign Language

During the language acquisition process, it is completely normal for Spanish speakers to commit pronunciation mistakes when they are learning a foreign language. To introduce this section, it is necessary to start by defining the concept of mistakes. In terms of Lopéz, Encabo, Iseni, & Clarkson (2007), mistakes can be defined as something natural, something that the teacher and the students may identify, treat or ignore. However, Schwarts (2010) conceives this term as the cause of some degree of pain, loss, or struggle, which is necessary to experience. Because of the ideas expressed by the authors above, mistakes can be conceived as a natural part of learning, which must be faced by the actors in the acquisition process. Moreover, Schwarts explains how learners conceive making mistakes as a dislikeable situation; however, those implications will be necessary to acquire the target knowledge.

On the other hand, whereas the concept of mistake has been defined, it is necessary to explain the concept of error. As stated by the Université des Cultures (2014), an "error is defined as a deviation resulting from ignorance of the rule" (p. 1) and continued mentioning

that an "error does not entail spontaneous self-correction, since it results from the speaker's ignorance" (p. 1). In summary, the concept of error regards a deviation caused by the incomprehension not only about a rule and how to apply it but also the impossibility of the speakers to correct themselves at the moment. According to Lopéz et al. (2007), "mistakes and errors may be caused because of: a) Ignorance, of not knowing the rules, the structure of the language, and so on. b) The inability of students to apply what they have learned" (p. 4). In other words, mistakes and errors are caused by ignorance or inability.

People can perceive these mistakes in different ways. Consequently, some learners recognize them as a weakness, while others perceive mistakes as an opportunity for improvement. In terms of McGonigal (2011), "one looks like a 'wake-up call'. The brain hones in on the negative outcome, and treats it like a problem that needs solving" (p. 3), and he adds that "when this happens, people are much more likely to improve their performance and learn from the mistake" (McGonigal, 2011, p. 3). Based on the previous idea, foreign language students should perceive mistakes as an issue that can be solved, and from which, it is possible to improve. Moreover, as a learner progresses, it goes from making mistakes continuously to making fewer mistakes. The hypothesis mentioned above is supported by the terms of Richards (2017), who expresses that an evolutionary process of skill development takes place when acquiring pronunciation skills. People who do not make mistakes during a conversation were not born with the ability of speaking fluently, they acquired it in a step-by-step pedagogical process. This is why pronunciation will not be perfect at first, but that should not be a reason to stop building the bases of such skill. It is essential to emphasize that part of the acquisition process is to improve their skills. Although, it is a long and for-stages process in which, with a lot of effort, learners' abilities will improve day by day.

Mistakes can occur both in native and foreign learners. Nevertheless, it is possible to point out the similarities or differences between apprentices. Rumel (2016) signalizes that "when learning either a first or second language, the learner uses context clues, prior knowledge, and interaction with others to understand the new language" (p. 01). Based on the concept expressed by Rumel, it can be inferred that foreign language learner mistakes can be associated with the employment of their native language as a source to adapt to the new language acquisition; conjointly, through active communication and interaction within the target language culture, learners can acquire or put into practice phonological features that would help them to develop their pronunciation skills.

In terms of this study, the group of foreign language learners referred to native Spanish speakers. Most mistakes made by Spanish-speaking learners can range from situations related to their mother tongue / First Language (L1), aspiration, and intonation. Researchers, teachers, and writers such as Tavarez & Almanzar (2020), Rodríguez, (2018), Singh (2016), &

Zhao (2019) have mentioned that most of the mistakes made by Spanish speakers around the acquisition of English pronunciation are related to the "Mother-tongue effect", which regards the difficulties related to differences between the native language and foreign language. Furthermore, regarding this type of effect, Zhao explains that learners depend on their mother tongue previous knowledge to fill unknown vocabulary or ideas while trying to communicate in their target language (Zhao (2019), cited by Moraga, 2021, p. 08). In this scenario, the "Mother-tongue effect" refers to the effects on language acquisition associated with interlingual mistakes. In the case of the present study, the analysis of those effects will be focused on pronunciation and speaking skills. Following Singh (2016), "the native language is the most influential factor affecting a learner's pronunciation" (p. 2). During the acquisition process, learners take advantage of their mother-tongue language, its phonetics, and phonology to comprehend and acquire a new phone based on their target language.

However, it is necessary to underline that the "Mother-tongue effect" is not necessarily positive for the acquisition of pronunciation. "The variables in the mother tongue that hinder effective communication in English are caused by differences in phonetics" (Singh, 2016, p. 2). The differences in phonetics and pronunciation between a language or another can produce communication and comprehension problems. In terms of McLellan (2019), it happens because "some sounds are physically very difficult for us to make, as they don't exist in our native language" (p. 11). Also, McLellan indicated that the reason for the difficulties mentioned above is that the phonetics existing in the first language are not usually the same for the second language and vice-versa, as well as some phones that may not even exist in a certain language. Moreover, with practice, learners will understand the pronunciation of the sounds in each word that they learn. In terms of McLellan (2019), "just like when you are learning a new sport or dance move, it's important that you train your mouth to know how to form new sounds" (p. 10). Consequently, practice and training will be beneficial tools for learners because of their usefulness in facilitating the learning process.

On the other hand, Spanish-speaking pronunciation mistakes in English as a foreign language are not only related to their native language. Another factor that interferes with the development of pronunciation skills is "aspiration". In terms of JTA Technology Consulting (2010), "aspiration is a phonological process that we use in English to alter the sound of /p/ and other voiceless stops" (p. 7), and it includes that "alterations are often made to make the words easier for the speaker to articulate, or for the listener to hear, and as a result, are considered more efficient" (p. 7). As mentioned, aspiration is related to the alterations produced to adapt the sounds and pronunciation to their native or target language. Consequently, as JTA comments, the idea of creating those phonological modifications is to make the comprehension and acquisition of the words easier for the speaker and the listener.

Additionally, aspiration and the sound in which it is employed change depending on the

language. For example, in the English language, aspiration can be mostly identified in consonants such as /p/, /t/, and /k/ at the beginning of words; however, the same sound is not aspirated when they are at the middle or the end of the words. The aspiration of the consonants above results in a challenge for Spanish speakers, since the Spanish language pronunciation does not aspirate the sounds as the English language does. For instance, "In Spanish, the /t/ is typically pronounced with the tongue touching the top teeth, while in English the tongue typically touches the roof of the mouth" (Erichsen, 2020, p. 1). The above refers to the Spanish pronunciation of consonants, such as /p/, /t/, and /k/ are softer and less explosive. It means that the sounds seem to be "closed" in comparison with the English pronunciation. By contrast, in the case of the English language, the University of Manitoba (2005) explains that the stop of air at the beginning of words such as "*pill", "till",* and "*kill"* are followed by a short puff of air called aspiration, which is not presented in words such as "*spill", "still",* and "*skill".* In addition to this, according to Vaux (2002), "aspiration in English is generally thought to be the product of a straightforward allophonic rule" (p. 2). Aspirations are not only alterations, but also relate to the puff of air necessary to formulate a correct phonological sound and the product of a straightforward allophonic rule. The aspiration and puff of air in most of the consonant sounds can be considered correct or not depending on the allophonic rules which help comprehend messages as well as develop clarity on pronunciation skills.

Nonetheless, good pronunciation is not only about the clarity of the sounds or the difficulties related to the native language, there is another feature to consider that is equally important, such as intonation. It is necessary to define and comment on this characteristic, but also its most common mistakes. First, intonation refers to the changes in the tone of voice and rhythm during a sentence. In terms of Rusadze & Kipiani (2018), the concept can be defined as "intonation – the rise and fall of pitch in our voice – plays a crucial role in how we express meaning" (p. 7). In consequence, if a foreign language learner makes an intonation mistake in a conversation, it would be fateful because the skill is crucial for effective communication and expression of meaning. Intonation can cause misunderstanding, and in the case of a daily, academic, or professional conversation, it can cause an unfavorable impression of a person. According to Rusadze & Kipiani (2018), "the most common intonation mistakes are no rising pitch and the use of the wrong pitch. Students often have more trouble imitating the rising than the falling intonation, and they often don't use the right pitch to convey feelings" (p. 7). In brief, intonation mistakes refer to the incorrect pitch, tone, and rhythm employed in a conversation and how they can affect communication and the acquisition/development of pronunciation skills.

2.1.3.2. Voicing of the Sounds

When acquiring the pronunciation of a foreign language, several factors must be taken into consideration. Every language in the world is ruled by segments. The concept "segment" could be defined as "any discrete unit that can be identified, either physically or auditorily, in the stream of speech" (Crystal, 2008, p. 426). Those speech sounds may differ from one language to another. Some phonetic alphabets or phones are completely different from the ones in the learner's target language, and they are represented with phonemes (Bizzocchi, 2017). In the case of the English language, it has some similarities and differences in contrast with the Spanish language. According to Goldstein (2000 as cited in Helman, 2004), there are some consonant combinations that are similar in English and Spanish, "these shared consonant blends include *pl, pr, bl,br, tr, dr, cl, cr, gl, gr, fl,* and *fr"* (p. 453). Although the */r/* sound is produced differently in both languages, the fact that these clusters are used in English and Spanish (e.g., *gris/green*) offers some support to English-language learners (Helman, 2004).

Most of these variations take place due to the phonology and phonetics of each language. To introduce some of these factors, it is auspicious to mention a few aspects of aspiration of speech sounds. According to Crystal (2008), aspiration is "a term in phonetics for the audible breath which may accompany a sound's articulation, as when certain types of plosive consonant are released" (p. 38). Besides acquiring new speech sounds, aspiration is also one of the challenges that students face when learning to articulate sounds in the English language. The above occurs because sounds are aspirated or unaspirated. Some consonants are aspirated when they are found at the beginning of the word and are unreleased when they are at the end of the word. Likewise, those sounds are classified as voiced and unvoiced (Crystal, 2008).

In congruence with the aforementioned information, it is necessary to emphasize a fundamental issue regarding the classification of sounds. The auditory vibration result of the vocal folds is called voicing. Therefore, a sound is classified as voiced when the vocal cords are stretched tight so that they vibrate during the pronunciation of a sound, and it is voiceless when it is produced without vibration of the vocal cords (Yoshida, 2016). Consonants of English are either voiced or voiceless. For example: */z/, /d/, /ð/ /ʒ/, /dʒ/, /j/, /b/, /v/, /g/, /w/, /l/, /r/, /m/, /n/, /ŋ/* sounds are voiced, and */s/, /t/, /θ/, /ʃ/, /tʃ/, /p/, /f/, /k/, /h/* sounds are voiceless.

2.1.4. Popular English Songs

In terms of Sandoval (2016), popular songs are defined as the type of music that is empowered by society and its social groups. Those groups are in charge of diffusing their favorite kind of songs to other groups, countries, cultures, and generations. Additionally,

Sandoval (2016) commented that popular songs depend on the acceptance of the group to achieve a global and collective reach. In summary, popular songs are a type of music that is encouraged by the diverse cultures of social groups, whose variations are extensive from one to another. Also, as it was mentioned by Sandoval, the genders of popular songs are recognized depending on the collective acceptance. On the other hand, in the view of Middleton (2002), popular music is disseminated by mass media and/or by the mass market. Recapitulating, popular music can be transmitted by people's acceptance but also by mass media, inducing people to listen to popular songs by reproducing them in applications, platforms, and many other resources. At this point of the study, it is necessary to mention that the type of songs employed in the actual research will be more related to the music disseminated by mass media to use learners' well-known songs. Analyzing the concept of popular songs is fundamental because popularity changes through time. Additionally, most songs are written to be popular at the moment, and whether people keep listening or not, it will depend more on taste. However, for this investigation purpose, popular English songs are a fundamental aspect of the hypothesis because those songs would be transformed into a didactic strategy to acquire pronunciation skills. Moreover, the idea of employing popular songs comes from the possibility that participants could know the songs from the past or daily life.

Based on the definition provided above and according to Diana (2021) for Spinditty, the ten most popular English songs between 2013 and 2015 were:

1. *"See You Again"* by Wiz Knalifa ft. Charlie Puth
2. *"Sorry"* by Justin Bieber
3. *"Uptown Funk"* by Mark Ronson ft. Bruno Mars
4. *"Blank Space"* by Taylor Swift
5. *"Shake It Off"* by Taylor Swift
6. *"Lean On"* by Major Lazer & Dj Shake ft. Mo
7. *"Hello"* by Adele
8. *"Roar"* by Kary Perry
9. *"Sugar"* by Maroon 5
10. *"All About That Bass"* by Meghan Trainor

2.1.4.1. The Use of English Songs in Education

Teachers can select songs to suit the students' needs and interests. Talking about language and music, it is possible to find a connection between songs when communicating messages, concepts, contexts, feelings, ideas, and emotions. In terms of Goering and Strayhorn (2016), "there are truths revealed about students when music is part and parcel of the teaching of English" (p. 29). Educators could use the lyrics of songs concerning the daily situations of the world around them. Furthermore, songs can reinforce and improve many skills

when acquiring a foreign language, from enhancing grammar, speaking, listening comprehension, acquiring new vocabulary and a natural native accent, analyzing the context, knowing unique accents, and getting the right intonation. By repeatedly listening to and learning these songs, students will gradually correct their mistakes and achieve more native-like pronunciation. In terms of Merino (2008), to use songs in a classroom helps to make students see that the English language is not merely an area of the curriculum that must be approve, but it is something that is around, that is part of our daily life and that it is worth being studied and acquired.

Consequently, it is necessary to look for popular English songs that students can use in their daily life, in the classroom, and in their process of language acquisition. Part of the main characteristics of these types of songs is a simple melody, a great metric, easy-to-understand lyrics, and comprehensive intonation of the words. To illustrate those characteristics, Ray and Colorado (2017) provide an example, "*Only You*" by Selena Gomez. In this song, the artist employs easy-to-understand lyrics, a simple melody, and a slow or easy-to-follow rhythm. The features found in the song facilitate language acquisition because of its simplicity. By the same token, the songs selected for the lessons must be adapted to the level of the students. According to Villalobos (2008):

> The students' level is very important; short and slow songs should be used with beginners so that they will be easier for them to understand. On the other hand, advanced students would feel more challenged if songs have a certain degree of difficulty. Moreover, the students' age is significant because perhaps adults and teenagers would not necessarily like to listen to a children's song. (p. 100)

Villalobos's idea suggests that the categories of the selected songs will depend on the students' level and their needs. Those songs could have a slow or fast rhythm. However, not all the slow songs must be children's songs. According to Ray & Coronado (2017), songs like *"Sign of the times"* by Harry Styles, which is a slow rhythm song, are "perfect for students of all levels. Beginners can quickly pick up words, as the piece of music is slow and repetitive" (p. 50). In addition, slightly faster but catchy-paced songs can also be employed. On the other hand, the lyrics of the selected song must be sincere, repetitive, with a lot of vocabulary, and with common but meaningful words (Ray & Coronado, 2017). The songs used are more effective if they relate real stories, human relationships, and everyday situations with which people can feel identified. An example of music lyrics that meets these requirements is the song *"Malibu"* by Oren Yoel Kleinman and Miley Cyrus. Here is a stanza of the lyrics:

> We watched the sun go down as we were walking
> I'd spend the rest of my life just standing here talking
> You would explain the current, as I just smile

Hoping I just stay the same and nothing will change

And it'll be us, just for a while

Do we even exist?

That's when I make the wish

To swim away with the fish. (Cyrus & Kleinman, 2017, 1:21 – 1:56m)

Moreover, there are some musicians and composers whose songs have been recognized and studied as a significant resource for learning a foreign language and developing corresponding skills, such as Harry Styles and the Beatles. According to Victoria (2020), concerning The Beatles, "their lyrics are easy to follow, and you will adopt a proper English accent just by singing along" (p. 8). Likewise, regarding Harry styles songs, Ray and Coronado (2017), referring to the song called *"Sweet creature"* (2007), explain that even some words such as *"creature"* are difficult to pronounce for beginners; the slow timing of the song facilitate learners acquisition because it helps them to listen to sounds clearly. Based on the terms of both authors, it is observed that in the process of language acquisition, it is necessary to utilize songs with lyrics and rhythm appropriate for the learners' listening level to encourage the development of the skills. As mentioned by Victoria (2020), aspects such as meaning, tone, and register of the songs have to be considered when selecting songs to learn English. Indeed, at the moment of creating a selection of songs to acquire language skills, it is not only essential to select a song for the articulation of sounds but also for the meaning and tone employed by the composer.

2.1.4.2. The Use of English Songs in Costa Rican Education

In Costa Rica, different students, pedagogues, teachers, musicians, and experts have been studying if the use of songs can improve second language acquisition regarding various skills, such as in the research studies briefly mentioned ahead. The research studies approached by this investigation are associated with different recognized institutions, such as Universidad Nacional de Costa Rica (UNA) and Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR).

According to Salas & Lopez (2017), popular songs in a second language classroom are relevant and have many benefits. By analyzing the research results, it is possible to observe that songs seem attractive to the students. The learners themselves indicated that the music tracks related to their interests, which also motivated them to acquire the necessary skills. The sample highlights that teachers have been trying to employ this strategy for many years. The participants said they had been using songs since the beginning of their acquisition process. In the opinion of Salas & Lopez (2017), among the benefits observed in the results, the population found that English songs were useful for them to learn, acquire a good rhythm, and improve their pronunciation. Also, it helped learners to increase their fluency when speaking and acquiring more vocabulary, without the necessity to mention the great contribution to

listening skills. It is possible to observe that, in the view of the authors, the rhythm of music and how attractive it could be for students to use songs, proved the hypothesis and the didactic strategy of their present investigation.

However, to focus on the specific skill associated with the hypothesis presented in this research, it is necessary to continue by commenting on a research study strictly directed to pronunciation skills. The inquiry conducted by Villalobos (2008) from UNA will introduce the usage of songs to improve EFL students' pronunciation. Through the study, the author analyzed the practicality of the utilization of songs in English lessons, and how teaching learners through songs could help them to develop pronunciation skills. According to the results obtained by Villalobos (2008), the use of songs is an essential tactic to implement in class; nevertheless, it is key to consider the level of the students regarding language skills in all the areas before developing this type of strategy. According to Villalobos (2008), students considered it necessary to take into consideration the students' reactions and likes, and the difficulty level and rhythm of the songs. Villalobos also stated that "students recommend listening to songs to practice pronunciation because they have found them effective for that purpose" (p. 10). Then, in Villalobos' study, the sample was able to conclude how the implementation of songs played an important role in practicing their language comprehension and pronunciation acquisition.

Finally, a descriptive article of a workshop called "Cantemos y Aprendamos Inglés" was a project that Villalobos (2015), in collaboration with UCR, created to motivate teachers to incorporate music and songs in the different techniques used during the lessons. According to Villalobos (2015), the introduction of the songs' lyrics, singing, and creating rhythms in the foreign language can help students in the following aspects:

- Introduce new words, expanding the grammatical structure (...).

- Facilitate the phonetic intonation of a speech.

- Use sound structures previously used in a class of music (musical language).

- Existing vocabulary is enriched and put into practice oral and written skills in an enjoyable way. (p. 3)

Based on Villalobos, the employment of song lyrics as an acquisition technique can be fruitful in the skills' evolution process, especially in aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, oral, pronunciation, and phonetic skills. Subsequently, Villalobos (2015) underlines that the technique can only function effectively if the use of songs is continuous. Then, to use songs as a didactic strategy, it is necessary to try to employ them in most of the activities and techniques to identify their level of functionality.

As observed in the previous works by Salas & Lopez (2017), Villalobos (2008), and

Villalobos (2015), songs can be transformed into a helpful didactic strategy that can benefit the English teaching/learning process in different areas, such as motivation, grammar, rhythm, and pronunciation. Pronunciation is sporadically addressed in second language studies in Costa Rica; however, it is worth pausing and reflecting on what it represents in the communication process. According to Villalobos (2013), "pronunciation plays a very important role in language learning because even if grammar and vocabulary are used correctly, if the sounds of vowels and consonants and aspects such as intonation, linking, rhythm and stress are not produced accurately, the intended message cannot be delivered" (p. 03). Premised by the author, this is why it is favorable to delve into the process of implementing songs as a pedagogic strategy for fostering pronunciation skills of the English language as a foreign language in the present study.

CHAPTER III

<div align="center">***3.1.* Methodological Framework**</div>

This section displays some different aspects of the investigation process. To introduce this section, it is essential to explain that the actual study is a qualitative study with an action research method and its corresponding participatory action research design. The structure mentioned was settled by the group of researchers in terms of the needs of the study and its corresponding sessions. In this framework, the study population and sample would be described as a group made up of current students from different campuses of the Universidad de Costa Rica. For the study, the employment of different types of instruments, such as tests, questionnaires, observations, and rubrics, is fundamental because they play different and essential roles. Moreover, another category of this section is the session development, a brief description of the lessons, which are the base of the study process. Additionally, a description of the data collection process and the study sessions' development is included. The data collection steps are developed by explaining how the information would be gathered through the use of a variety of instruments.

3.1.1. Qualitative Research

Because of its nature, the actual study is created under the qualitative design. To illustrate the qualitative research design, it is necessary to relate to McLeod (2019), the author explains this concept as a process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting non-numerical data, such as language. This data can be collected making use of diary accounts or in-depth interviews, and analyzed using grounded theory. Resources like texts, videos, photographs, or audio recordings can be defined as qualitative data. Generally, this type of research allows groups of researchers to gather information through observations and questionnaires and use contextual information to create theories or proposals that might satisfy problems or challenges in a given community.

This study aims to foster pronunciation of the English language learners through popular songs in English. For the study, a series of assessments are applied to a group of volunteer participants in virtual meetings with the instructors, to practice pronunciation through speaking interaction, speaking production, reading, and listening exercises related to English songs. When assessing whether there has been a change in the participant's pronunciation in a series of exercises, they pronounce the studied words out loud, and researchers listen, observe, and rate their development through rubrics for their posterior analysis. The data which these rubrics collect is in its majority speech sounds; however, it can also be nourished from other types of data such as the participants' opinions, which is why a qualitative design fits the characteristics

of this research.

This qualitative study is complemented through the implementation of three exams. The first one functions as a diagnostic, the second as a progress evaluation, and the last as a results examination. This exam will be applied on three multiple occasions; in this way, researchers can obtain a numerical result through evaluation rubrics. Consequently, the data obtained from the test results are valuable for the triangulation of the present qualitative study. According to Lewis, McNaughton, Ormston & Ritchie (2003):

> Qualitative research is often associated with specific kinds of data, usually involving words or images rather than numbers. The volume and richness of qualitative data are often highlighted, as are the distinctive approaches researchers bring to the analysis and interpretation, and the kinds of output that derive from qualitative research. (p. 3)

Considering Lewis et al. (2003), it is clear that the previous data gathered in the theoretical phase of the study would be sustained by the new information collected through short questionnaires that illustrate the participant's perceptions of the music selection, sessions, and strategies employed, and participants' experience. Furthermore, this data derived from the participant's experience is analyzed alongside the observation rubric's results, interpreted by the researchers in the light of previous literature about fostering English pronunciation through didactic strategies (specifically the use of songs as a means), and eventually studied in the section of the results' analysis comparing both resources (rubrics and previous literature).

3.1.2. Action Research

According to Pascual (2017), "action research implies reflecting on their performance and that of others, giving a central role to the dialogue between the theory, the researcher, and the situation being investigated" (p. 3). In other words, action research involves the theory, researchers, hypothesis, and the situation that is investigated. Being the means for an effective pedagogical process, it is opportune to apply an action research process for this study because of its collaborative and improving methods' nature, especially taking into account that in the actual study researchers are teachers looking to transform the use of songs into a didactic pronunciation strategy.

Moreover, in terms of Ferrance (2000), "action research is a process in which participants examine their educational practice systematically and carefully, using the techniques of research" (p. 1). This type of research allows a constant evaluation of the strategies that are implemented by the instructors in every lesson, knowing participants' perceptions concerning them, and the adaptation or construction of new didactic strategies for English pronunciation. The above conveys the steps for an adequate action research process.

The step-by-step procedure consists of selecting a group, collecting the data, documenting it, and reflecting on these results to plan accordingly the following cycle of collecting, documenting, analyzing, and planning; until a conclusion is accomplished. (These steps are broadly detailed in section 5.7.)

In terms of the study, it is fundamental to employ action research because of the study nature. Action research could be addressed as a channel to reform educational practices in the classroom and be conducted by a group of teachers in a specific group, which is called collaborative in terms of Ferrance (2000). Action research will provide researchers with the possibility to construct a collective and collaborative investigation process; in which the data collected, the participants, and the researchers have an active role in the entire study process.

Furthermore, the cycle of collecting data that characterizes this method of research is practical for the study and the active process in which the information is gathered. The above refers to the possibility of selecting a group of participants who take part in the collective stage of the process (collecting data). Moreover, in the following steps, the data gathered through questionnaires, tests, and observation rubrics about the student's pronunciation performance is analyzed, reflected, and compared with the information from the theoretical framework of this study.

3.1.3. Participatory Action Research (PAR)

In terms of Baum, McDougall, & Smith (2006):

PAR seeks to understand and improve the world by changing it. At its heart is collective, a self-reflective inquiry that researchers and participants undertake, so they can understand and improve upon the practices in which they participate and the situations in which they find themselves. (p. 3)

The presented approach is designed and led by local practitioners and community members, who may seek help from professional researchers and evaluators to guide the design and execution of the process. PAR presents an element in its design, which is the active participation of both the investigators and the participants of the study (Participatory Action Research and Evaluation, Organizing Engagement, w.d.). The main objective of such type of research is to reform, comprehend, or even improve a particular situation previously recognized as the study problem, aiming to this study, the fostering of the English pronunciation as a foreign language in Spanish-speaking learners through some multimedia resources, such as songs.

After researchers have identified an area that represents students' vulnerability, whether it be difficulty in the oral production of specific sounds, voicing, incorrect pronunciation, or the inability to produce certain speech sounds, they plan a course of action towards a solution to the problem. This plan consists of several steps to follow, implementing the use of songs

through didactic strategies with different exercises that can address the assertive instruction of the acquisition of English pronunciation. Once the plan has been executed, the data is collected and analyzed, then a new plan is designed to restart the cycle. Data concerned with the participant's intelligibility, their perceptions of the chosen songs, strategies used, and overall activities serve for the design of new auspicious strategies. This is possible thanks to the mutual collaboration between researchers and participants.

3.1.4. Study Site

3.1.4.1. Population

The population selected for this research are current students of Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR) from different campuses, such as Pacific, Rodrigo Facio, Caribbean, Guanacaste, Atlantic, South, Occident, and Interuniversity of Alajuela. Students are picked from any bachelor's major and geographical zone of the country because the sessions are developed virtually, which provides researchers with the opportunity to select participants from different places. The idea to select them in that manner comes from the necessity to know more about the hypothesis in a closer relationship with the Universidad de Costa Rica students population and their pronunciation acquisition process.

3.1.4.2. Sample

The sample of this research study is a group of 10 current students from Universidad de Costa Rica bachelor's degree who participate voluntarily in a group to prove the study hypothesis. In the following section, researchers present the list of the careers and the amount of participants selected from each major.

1. Computer Science and Multimedia Technology (only students from the fourth year): two active participants in the sample group from Pacific Campus.
2. Electric engineering (only students from the fourth year): one active participant in the sample group from Rodrigo Facio Campus.
3. Business Computing (only students from the third year): one active participant in the sample group from Caribbean Campus.
4. Physiotherapy (only students from the fifth year): one active participant in the sample group from Rodrigo Facio Campus.
5. English with Business Management Training (only students from second to fourth year): three active participants in the sample group from Pacific Campus.
6. Primary Education Sciences with a concentration in English (only students from the third year): one active participant in the sample group from Occident Campus.
7. English Teaching (only students from the second year): one active participant in the sample group from Pacific Campus.

Moreover, the sample members meet virtually twice a week for a total of thirteen weeks

for intensive English lessons taught by the researchers. Furthermore, the concourse and selection means are done through social networks like Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp.

3.1.5. Instruments

3.1.5.1. Test

According to Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen & Razavieh (2006), "tests are valuable measuring instruments for educational research. A test is a set of stimuli presented to an individual to elicit responses based on which a (...) score can be assigned" (p. 171). As it is observed, the necessity to create instruments such as tests is to get responses that allow researchers to evaluate the level of knowledge in the subject, in this particular case, the level of participants' pronunciation from the beginning to the end of the study. Also, tests help researchers to identify the effectiveness of the strategy planned to impact the pronunciation level of the participants. Besides, this type of instrument would function as an indicator of how the subject was measured and the level that the respondents acquire during the process of the study. The type of test that would be employed for the actual test is the assessment tests, specifically researchers-made tests. Moreover, it would be necessary to apply different tests, to evaluate the starting participants' pronunciation level, assess the process of pronunciation acquisition, and evaluate the final participants' pronunciation level (see annex #1). The tests are individual; it is one test for each member of the sample in all the applications, which means three tests for each participant at the end of the research.

3.1.5.2. Observation

In terms of Zohrabi (2013), "observation is a preplanned research tool that is carried out purposefully to serve research questions and objectives" (p. 4). As it is recognized, observation is a preplanned instrument based on the objectives that researchers need to achieve to get the results and analyze the effect of using songs in the students' English acquisition process. By using this instrument, the researchers can observe events and learners' behavior as they naturally occur. Besides, an observation is an act that "permits researchers to study people in their native environment to understand 'things' from their perspective" (Baker, 2006, p. 1); in other words, the reaction of the participants is fundamental and taken into consideration. Additionally, "observation requires the researcher to spend considerable time in the field (..) in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the people being studied" (Baker, 2006, p. 1). Therefore, based on that close attention to learners' behavior, the investigators can understand and interpret the context in which the members of the sample are acquiring knowledge.

In the actual research study, the observations have the purpose of interpreting and

identifying the effects of using songs on the participants' pronunciation skills development and their English language acquisition. During the application of the instrument, the skills' improvement is measured with the help of a rubric that enables researchers to evaluate learners' progress.

In addition, the observations take place in two sessions weekly for six weeks, a total of ten sessions, except for the sessions in which the tests and questionnaires are carried out. These classes are held on an evening schedule, since it allows participants to continue with their career lessons and family or job responsibilities. Those sessions are on different schedules from the sample university classes. Also, it occurs through Zoom meetings for better access of participants to the lessons. This instrument is fundamental for the study, mainly because of the triangulation of the data and the need to observe the results of the strategy in practice. It would provide researchers with the possibility to apply the theory of the study, by observing it in context and getting the first results of the strategy.

3.1.5.2.1. Rubrics.

In the opinion of Jonsson & Panadero (2016), "rubrics are assessment instruments designed to assist in identifying and evaluating qualitative differences in student performance" (p. 1). Based on the description above, the investigators of the research study use this instrument to identify and evaluate the development, improvement, and differences in students' performance and pronunciation acquisition throughout the study process. Therefore, the process of language acquisition of the sample members is evaluated (see annex #2). Moreover, the rubrics function with its corresponding observation supporting the assessment and the skills evaluated. The rubrics are a group evaluation, one for each activity, the number of rubrics depended on the total of exercises per lesson. At the end of the process, the rubrics for each activity were averaged to make it easy to analyze, making a total of ten rubrics that generally measure the abilities during each lesson.

3.1.5.3. Questionnaire

According to Mathers, Fox, & Hunn (2009), this type of instrument could be defined as: "a very convenient way of collecting useful comparable data from a large number of individuals" (p. 20). Based on that instrument's convenience and for this actual research, one of the instruments employed in the data collection process is a questionnaire. Additionally, the questionnaire employed in the study has the purpose of retrieving some experiences of actual university students in their English acquisition process and the effect that English songs have on it. The researchers apply two different questionnaires, one of those instruments is applied at the beginning of the study, in which participants would respond to

questions to evaluate and know more about the sample's previous language experience (see annex #3); by contrast, the second questionnaire regards the sample's experience during the process of the study and the sessions (see annex #4). Each of the questionnaires counts ten qualitative questions, and all of those questions are distributed as closed and opened. Moreover, apart from the two questionnaires mentioned before, researchers would create a third questionnaire to function as a conduit to communicate with the target population and collect some specific information before the study. The three questionnaires are displayed in Google form format, which does not require any materials beyond the sample's digital resources like a cellphone or computer. In the case of the third questionnaire, using this format, the researchers can take advantage of social networks and digital applications to reach the target population.

3.1.6. Session Development

Researchers recognize the population's main characteristics before designing the pertinent lesson scheme for each session. Elements such as average level, age, and area of expertise are highly influential on the lesson delivery process since the group of participants is not heterogeneous. The first session contemplates the first test as well as questionnaire number one. In this first test, researchers aim to identify participants' previous English knowledge; additionally, questionnaire one pretends to evaluate learners' previous experiences regarding language acquisition. During the second session, researchers display icebreaker activities to facilitate rapport and provide an opportunity for learners to get to know their peers in a ludic virtual environment before pronunciation practices start. Besides, the sixth session regards the middle test of the study, and the last session, the thirteenth, contemplates the third test and the second questionnaire. In the third test, researchers evaluate the development of learners' pronunciation acquisition. In the case of the second questionnaire, it is about the learners' experience throughout the sessions and their advance in pronunciation skills.

Before each session, the research team analyzes the information gathered in the past session and develops a lesson plan that enables listening to an English song, clarifying vocabulary doubts, and training the sounds' articulation. Two researchers deliver instructions and guide the class, while the other two observe the class with rubrics indicating pronunciation competencies. Each lesson plan is created after carefully analyzing the results of such rubrics and the data retrieved from tests to disclose the ineffectiveness or sustain the selection of the lesson design, approach, and other aspects of it. Moreover, with the purpose of creating spaces to practice, a Drive folder was created in which all the materials and activities were deposited for participants' employment.

3.1.7. Data Collection Description

3.1.7.1. Selecting the Group

Researchers create an announcement on social networks, such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. The announcement is shared in the researchers' profiles and the Universidad de Costa Rica groups. The Google Form includes information about the study, a blank space for popular music suggestions, and the sessions' schedule. Also, the document asked for personal information questions, such as name, age, major, gender, Universidad de Costa Rica campus, residence place, level of English language, etc. Moreover, the post of the announcement includes not only the Google form but also a poster with information about the study and the sessions. People who want to participate in the sessions need to complete the Google form document. It is specified in the Google form all the restrictions of the study and the desired English level of the participants based on the requirements explained in the sample section of this paper.

3.1.7.2. Collecting the Data

The collection of data is carried out through the use of three tests, rubrics, ten observations, and two questionnaires. The researchers apply a test during the first, the sixth, and the last session that states the student's English pronunciation level by using an indicators' system. Through those exams, researchers can compare and analyze the results to comprehend if the use of English songs is a reliable strategy to acquire the expected pronunciation of the target language. The rubrics contain aspects related to pronunciation skills, such as development, improvement, and differences in students' performance and pronunciation acquisition. Furthermore, the total number of observations is ten, each of them counts with a checklist rubric and takes place in each one of the different sessions during the study process. Moreover, in the first session, the investigators apply one questionnaire to evaluate participants' previous experiences related to English acquisition; likewise, in the thirteenth session, the researchers apply another questionnaire to analyze participants' experiences during the study sessions. In addition, researchers write journals for every week session, in which they relate and summarize what happened during the sessions.

3.1.7.3. Documenting the Data

Once the participants answer the questionnaires, and all the journals and rubrics are completed, the research team analyzes the results obtained and proceeds with a triangulation of the results from the observations. This process facilitates the design of new strategies and the transformation of the existing ones, aiming to improve the participants' English pronunciation.

CHAPTER IV

4.1. Results

The following chapter encloses a detailed analysis of the results obtained from the research instruments that were applied to a mixed group of ten current students from the different campuses of Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR). In addition, the data collection was conducted with the application of a variety of instruments, such as three different tests, two questionnaires, a total of ten observations and its corresponding number of rubrics. Equally important, the practical stage of the study was constituted by a total of thirteen sessions, with a number of ten observed pronunciation lessons, and the other three were employed as a space for the tests applications. In terms of the analysis, the data collection process and its instruments are organized chronologically according to its application date during the investigation. Furthermore, it is significant to mention that the fieldwork stage was carried out from May 21st to July 02nd, 2022. It was executed through different technological means including the Zoom meeting platform, YouTube, Google Drive, Canva, WhatsApp networks, and Google Forms.

4.1.1. Tests

In this study, it was essential to apply three types of tests to evaluate the participants' skill development. Firstly, in test number one, the investigators evaluated the starting participants' pronunciation levels. In the next one, they appraised the assessment of the process of pronunciation acquisition. Consequently, in the last test, researchers measured the final participants' pronunciation level after the study sessions. Indeed, the idea for the employment of the same exercises in the tests was to evaluate learners' acquisition process regarding the differences in their performance results during the three tests. The type of test employed was the assessment tests, specifically researchers-made tests.

Furthermore, the three tests included rubrics in the last three exercises (2, 3, and 4), in which the researchers evaluated several features. Those features can be summarized into pronunciation, drop of consonants, intelligibility, diction, intonation, fluency, naturality, tone of voice, voicing, aspiration, mother-tongue effect, and interaction. It is essential to emphasize that the function of the tests was to evaluate the students' process of English language pronunciation acquisition from the beginning to the end of the study.

4.1.1.1. Test I

As an introduction, it is necessary to emphasize that the objective of the test was to evaluate the initial English language skills of the learners who participated in the sessions as part of the study. The evaluation of previous skills is fundamental for the investigation because of two specific reasons, firstly, to evaluate the students' process of pronunciation acquisition; and secondly, to identify their level of language proficiency from the beginning. The test was taken by the ten members of the sample. Additionally, the test was applied on May 21st, 2022.

Furthermore, the first test was applied in a Google Drive format. Indeed, the relevance of the application format regards the necessity to construct a sample of mixed students from the Universidad de Costa Rica. In addition, the oral exercises of the examination were carried out through the Zoom platform. There were three investigators in two different breakout rooms applying the tests, recording their performances, and checking the exam rubrics; additionally, the fourth investigator was in the main room in charge of conducting learners to the exam.

Moreover, the test was divided into four different exercises. The first exercise had the purpose of evaluating learners' competencies associated with the pronunciation of the most basic phonetics sounds; the activity consisted of two lists of words, in which the first one was about consonants and the second one about vowels. Through the employment of this first test, learners demonstrated a variation in their pronunciation performance depending on the type of activity they were intended to complete. In the first exercise, 70 percent of the learners showed native skills, which regard approaching 36 to 44 points or pronouncing accurately the corresponding number of sounds in the list of words (44 words in total). On the other hand, 30 percent of the participants performed "*excellent*", which corresponds to a total of 28 to 35 points obtained, or the same number of sounds perfectly pronounced.

Additionally, in exercise two, it was intended to evaluate participants' pronunciation skills in a normal conversation, so the exercise was based on a daily conversation about a TV show. Learners' development showed variations concerning the level of skills, 50 percent of the group got to show a "*native-like*" performance in correspondence with achieving from 30 to 35 points; but the other half of the group received a categorization of 30 percent of "*excellent*", and 20 percent of "*good*" skills' performance, in which "*excellent*" means from 20 to 29 points and "good" represents from 15 to 19 points.

Equally important, in the third exercise, learners read out loud a short story to listen to their naturality and fluency. Students' execution was completely varied, especially because the group was categorized as 30 percent "*native-like*" (25 to 30 pts), 30 percent "*excellent*" (20 to 24 pts), 10 percent "*good*" (15 to 19 pts), and finally, 10 percent of the participants obtained an "*acceptable*" level (10 to 14 pts). At last, the last exercise had the same objective as exercise three, and its second purpose was to prove the didactic strategy of the study. The activity consisted of reading loudly the lyrics of a song by Katy Perry. Learners did an exceptional performance in which the majority, 70 percent of them, got a "*native-like*" level (25 to 30 pts), the

other part got 20 percent of "*excellent*", and 10 percent of "*good*" level. *Figure #1* illustrates the results obtained by the students in test one.

Figure #1. Test 1. May 21st, 2022.
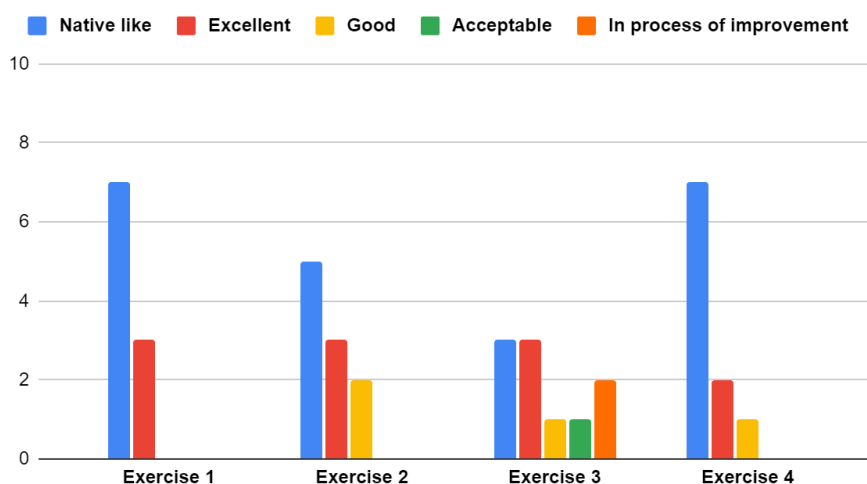
Source: Own elaboration.

4.1.2. Questionnaires

To introduce this section of the study, it is essential to mention that the function of the questionnaires is to meet and evaluate the sample's experiences with the employment of songs as a didactic strategy in previous classes and during the study sessions. Moreover, another objective of the questionnaires is related to the necessity of identifying the benefits and limitations of the use of English songs as a didactic strategy.

For the validity of the study, it was necessary to apply different questionnaires. In terms of the convenience of the study, the first one pretended to get an impression of learners' English previous skills; and the second one was intended to show a difference in relation to the first one, by analyzing participants' experiences after the sessions. Furthermore, each of the questionnaires was composed of ten different questions, divided into close-ended and open-ended ones. In addition, the total of the members of the sample participated actively during the application of both examinations, which corresponded to a total amount of ten learners. Finally, the two instruments were applied with questions in the participants' native language, and subsequently, the responses were supposed to be in Spanish in terms of getting a bigger level of objectivity.

4.1.2.1. Questionnaire I

The questionnaire's convenience for the study is associated with the purpose of being informed of actual UCR students' experiences during language courses and their familiarity with the use of English songs as a strategy in language pronunciation acquisition. The first questionnaire was applied to the entire group of participants in the first session, on May 24th. This instrument was designed in Google Forms and was sent via email.

Additionally, the topics in this questionnaire varied from the level of relevance of pronunciation in English acquisition and most common mistakes to the effectiveness and use of English songs during classes. The total of inquiries was four open and six closed questions. Moreover, in this case, the number of variables differed between the interrogation. In the opened categorization, questions like number two and three got ten and five variables correspondingly; additionally, it was the same for the closed ones, in question number five (twenty-one variables) and number seven (six variables).

To start, in the first question (illustrated in *Figure #2*): "*Indique cuál es el nivel de importancia que tiene para usted aprender una buena pronunciación en Inglés en su formación académica*", the students had to choose between four options: "*Nada importante", "Poco importante", "Importante"* and *"Muy importante"*. A number of eight students indicated that it was "*Muy importante*" to learn good pronunciation, and the other two said it was "*Importante*".

Figure #2. Indique cuál es el nivel de importancia que tiene para usted aprender una buena pronunciación en Inglés en su formación académica. Costa Rica, May 21st, 2022.
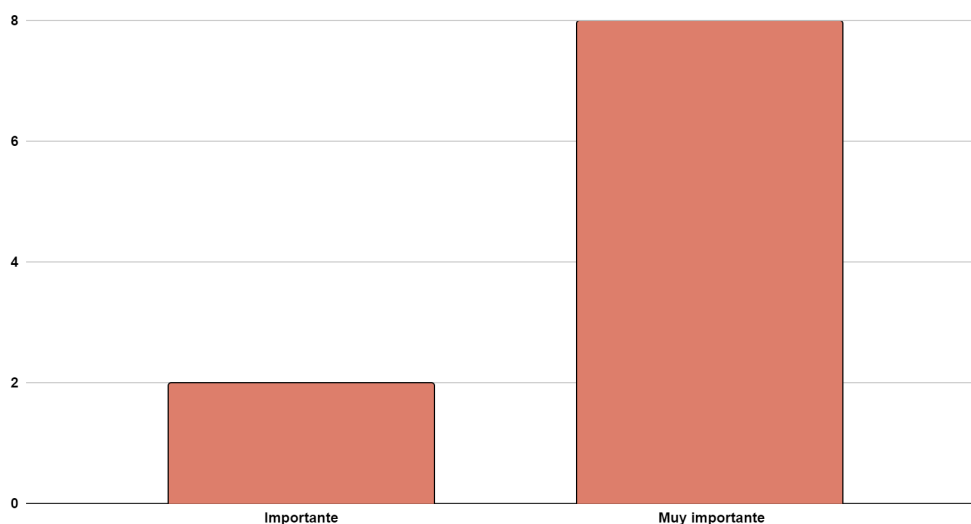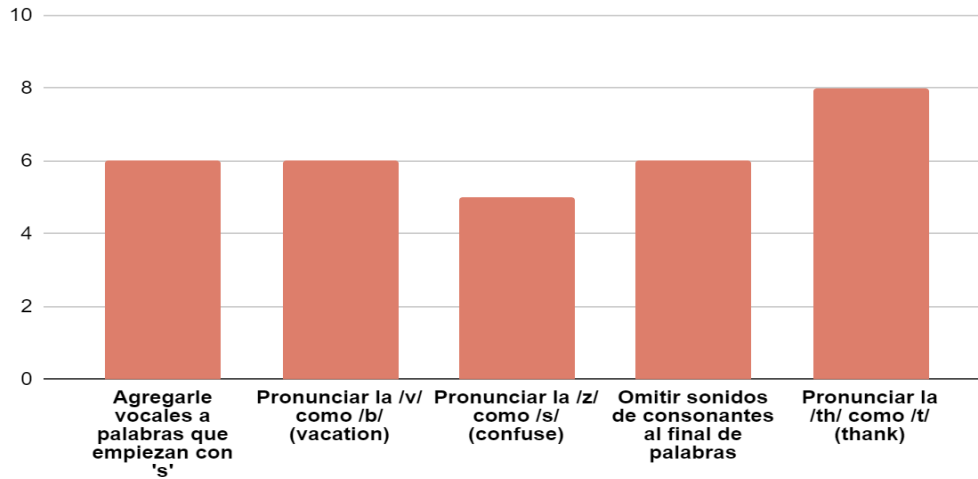

Source: Own elaboration.

Continually, in the second question (elucidated in *Chart #1*): "*Marque los sonidos (vocales o consonantes) del inglés que ha encontrado difícil de aprender*", the participants selected multiple answers from ten different options. In the first place, six of ten participants said that the sounds they found hard to learn were words with consonants such as "*x", "y", "h", "sh"*, and "*th" (three, mouth, bath)".* In the second place, five of these participants chose the consonants of *"s", "sh", "ch",* and *"k"* at the beginning of words. In the third place, three individuals picked the */ei/, /ai/, /ou/* and */au/* diphthongs, and "*ed", "ing", "s"* and *"z"* endings. In the fourth place, two individuals took the options of consonants such as *"b", "s", "f", "t", "p", "k", "v", "m", "z",* and *"r"*. Finally, in the last place, one student selected open vowel sounds as in vowels *"a", "e", "i",* and *"o"*.

Chart #1 Students of Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR) from different campuses Question #2: Marque los sonidos (vocales o consonantes) del inglés que ha encontrado difícil de aprender. Costa Rica, May 21st, 2022.	
Variables	Absolute Frequency
Diptongos (ei, ai, ou, au)	3
Terminaciones (ed, ing, s, z)	3
Sonidos no sonoro (b, s, f, t)	2
Inicios (s, sh, ch, k)	5
Sonidos explosivos (p, t, f, k)	2
Vocales abiertas (a, e, i, o)	1
Palabras con sonido w- (where, how, require)	0
Palabras con sonido th- (three, mouth, bath)	6
Sonidos con sonoro (v, m, z, r)	2
Sonidos de bloqueo de aire (x, y, h, sh)	6
Total	30

Source: Own elaboration.

Subsequently, continuing with the topic of phonetic sounds, learners were asked which were the most common mistakes for them when learning English. The third question was: *"¿Cuáles cree usted que son los errores más comunes a la hora de aprender pronunciación en inglés?"*. In addition, to look for the answer, participants deemed the most accurate response in a multiple-choice list with types of mistakes they considered the most common. Firstly, it was possible to observe that six students used to have difficulties with adding an extra vowel sound to words that begin with "*s*", also pronouncing "*v*" like "*b*", as in "*vacation*", and omitting consonant sounds at the end of words. Besides, five of the members of the sample demonstrated difficulties with pronouncing "*z*" like "*s*", as in "*confuse*". Last but not least, eight of the learners showed difficulty with pronouncing "*th*" like "*t*", as in "*thanks*". The above results are observed in *Figure #3*.

Figure #3. ¿Cuáles cree usted que son los errores más comunes a la hora de aprender pronunciación en inglés?. Costa Rica, May 21st, 2022.

Next, in question number four, participants were queried about the regularity with which they used to listen to English songs. The actual question was: "*¿Qué tan a menudo escucha canciones en inglés?*". To select the best time lapses, learners were provided with four responses in a multiple choice assessment. In consequence, the sample members got separated answers, three of them showed "*Casi siempre*" lapses, some other three picked "*Siempre*", and the last four members of the group selected "*Algunas veces*". The results mentioned are illustrated in *Figure #4*.

Figure #4. ¿Qué tan a menudo escucha canciones en inglés?. Costa Rica, May 21st, 2022.
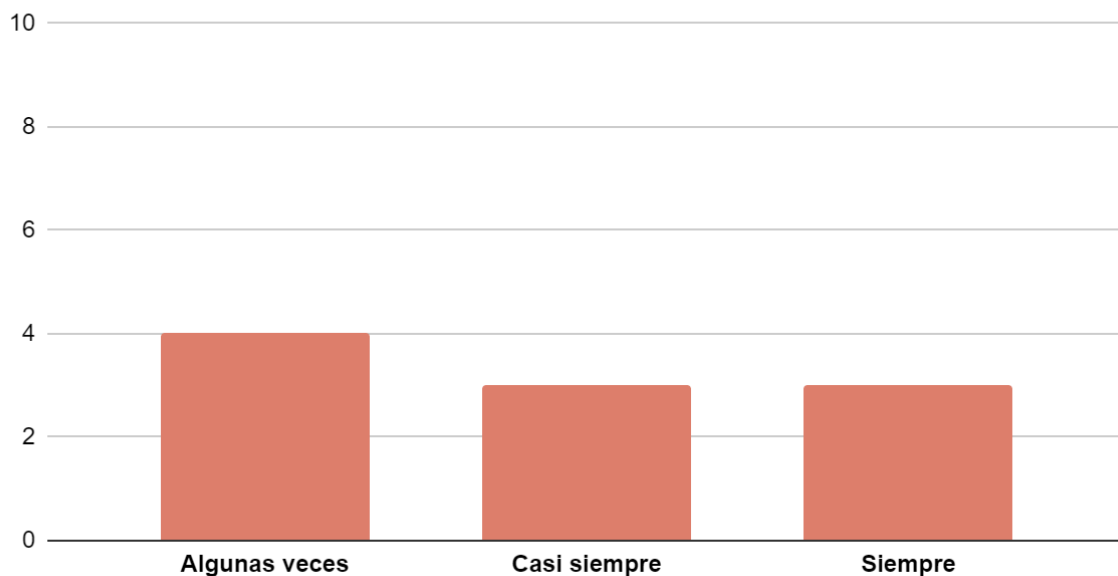
Then, in the fifth question (portrayed in *Chart #2*): *"Mencione nombres de canciones en inglés que han sido útiles para usted para aprender el idioma",* the students mentioned the name of many songs and musical artists (for the purpose of this study the data were organized according to the name of the artists). The list of singers is very long and some of them were repeated. Firstly, five of the students named *"Imagine Dragons, Trey Songz, Lana del Rey, ColdPlay,* and *Duran Duran".* The other four individuals mentioned *"Ariana Grande, Shawn Mendez, Miley Cyrus, John Legend, Ed Sheeran, Sam Smith, Adele, Lukas Graham, Bruno Mars, Michael Jackson,* and *Mariah Carey".* Three of them also cited *"Audioslave, Twenty One Pilots,* and *R.E.M".* Besides, two of them stated "*Celine Dion",* and finally, a student named *"Leeland".*

Chart #2
Students of Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR) from different campuses
Question #5: Mencione nombres de canciones en inglés que han sido útiles
para usted para aprender el idioma.
Costa Rica, May 21st, 2022.

Variables	Absolute Frequency	Total of responses	Data representation
Imagine Dragons, Trey Songz, Lana Del Rey, Cold Play, Duran Dura	5	27	
Audioslave, Twenty One Pilots, R.E.M	3	27	
Leeland	1	27	
Ariana Grande, Shawn Mendez, Miley Cyrus	4	27	
John Legend, Ed Sheeran, Sam Smith	4	27	
Adele	4	27	
Lukas Graham, Bruno Mars, Michael Jackson, Mariah Carey	4	27	
Celine Dion	2	27	
Total	27		

Source: Own elaboration.

The following question was the sixth, and it was about if their previous English teachers had ever employed songs during their lessons. The exact query was: "*¿Alguna vez en sus clases de inglés han utilizado canciones?*". As it is observed, it seems to be an open question, participants were motivated to provide a simple and concise response. As a result, seven of the sample members stated that their previous language instructors had used it, and three of them claimed they never knew about the strategy in their past classes. Additionally, those numbers are represented in *Figure #5*.

Figure #5. ¿Alguna vez en sus clases de inglés han utilizado canciones?. Costa Rica. May 21st, 2022.

Source: Own elaboration.

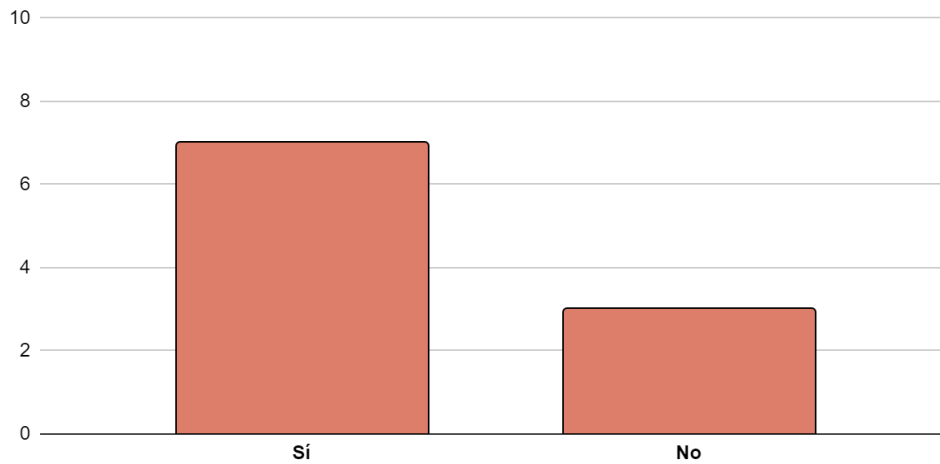Continuing with question number seven, students were induced to try to remember the type of exercises in which their previous teachers used to utilize songs during their classes. The current question was: "*Por favor, explique de manera breve alguna actividad donde sus docentes hayan utilizado canciones en inglés durante la clase*". Likewise, it was an open assessment, learners were allowed to describe the way in which their last educators employed songs in their language classes. However, for the purposes of the chapter, the results obtained will be divided into four categories of variables: "*Complete*", "*Significado y contexto*", "*Calentamiento y escucha*" (description of warm-up activity), "*Cantar canciones*", "*Ninguna*", and finally, "*No contestó*" (a variable that reflects the number of participants who did not provide an answer). The results of the question are shown in the *Chart #3.*

Chart #3 Students of Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR) from different campuses Question #7: Por favor, explique de manera breve alguna actividad donde sus docentes hayan utilizado canciones en inglés durante la clase. Costa Rica, May 21st, 2022.	
Variables	Absolute Frequency
Complete	3
Significado y contexto	1
Calentamiento y escucha (description of warm-up activity)	1
Cantar canciones	2
Ninguna	1
No contesto	2
Total	10

Source: Own elaboration.

To summarize, only three members remembered to do fill in the blanks exercises, and the other two members minded singing along during the lessons. Sadly, the other two learners were not able to answer. Finally, yet importantly, the last three members showed a variety of replies. For example, one of them had kept in mind practices associated with the significance and context of the lyrics, another recalled doing vocal exercises and singing songs, and the last participant was not able to mention any practice done with songs provided by the teachers.

Now, the following is question number eight. Its subject regards the frequent use of English songs in the language-learning process. The actual inquiry was: "*¿Está usted de acuerdo con el uso recurrente de canciones en el proceso de aprendizaje de un idioma extranjero?*". Subsequently, for the nature of the study and the employment of the didactic strategy of it, it was fundamental to obtain the participants' responses in terms of the relevance of the project. Fortunately, the entire sample expressed acceptability with the learning strategy, seven members signaled a "*Muy de acuerdo*" response and the other three participants chose "*De acuerdo*". The data mentioned above is illustrated in *Figure #6.*

Figure #6. ¿Está usted de acuerdo con el uso recurrente de canciones en el proceso de aprendizaje de un idioma extranjero?. Costa Rica. May 21st, 2022.
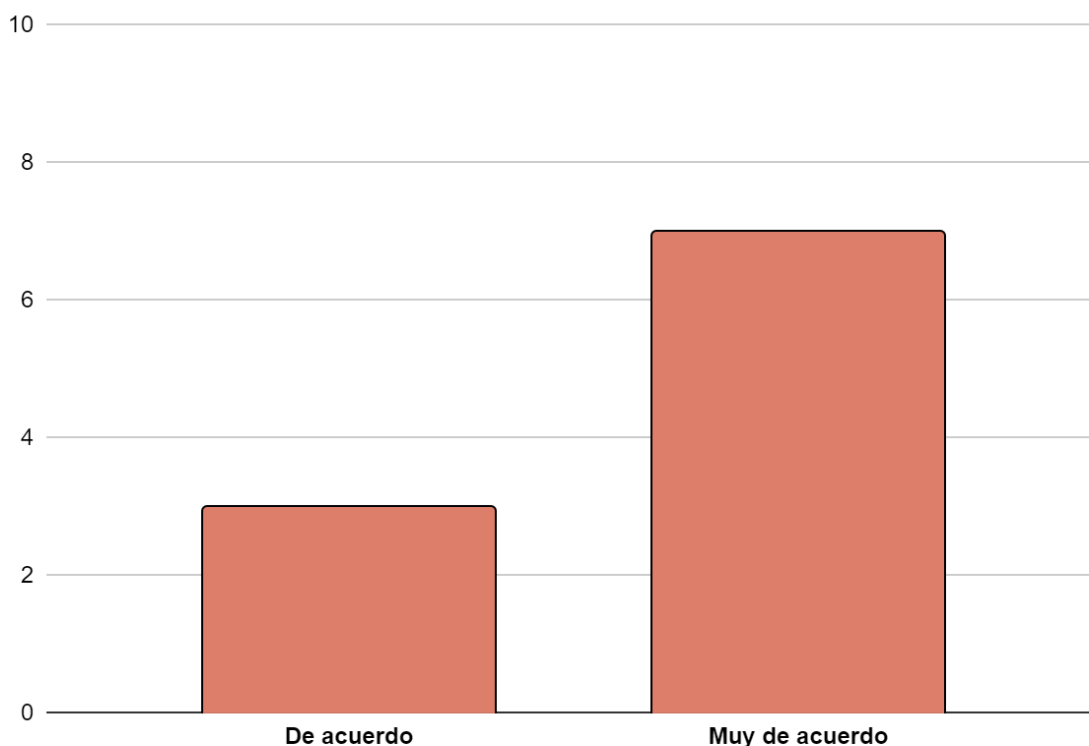
Source: Own elaboration.

Furthermore, carrying on with the next question (demonstrated in *Chart #4*): *¿Qué tan efectivo considera que es la utilización de las canciones en inglés en comparación con otros métodos que se emplean para mejorar la pronunciación (tales como audios de*

conversaciones)?, the individuals had to choose between "*Muy mala", "Poco efectiva",* "*Efectiva",* and "*Muy efectiva"* options. The number of seven students indicated that the utilization of English songs was "*Muy efectiva",* while the other three chose "*Efectiva".*

Chart #4 Students of Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR) from different campuses Question #9: ¿Qué tan efectivo considera que es la utilización de las canciones en inglés en comparación con otros métodos que se emplean para mejorar la pronunciación (tales como audios de conversaciones)? Costa Rica, May 21st, 2022.	
Variables	Absolute Frequency
Muy mala	0
Poca efectiva	0
Efectiva	3
Muy efectiva	7
Total	10

Source: Own elaboration.

Finally, the last question was number ten, it was about if participants notice language skills improvement when they listen to or sing to an English song. The present question was: "*¿Ha notado algún avance en el aprendizaje de pronunciación cuando escucha y canta la letra de una canción en inglés*?". Likewise, it was a free assessment, participants were allowed to describe the advances or differences they noticed when they used the action of listening and singing a song in contrast to employing any different language learning strategy. Nevertheless, the responses are summarized into "Yes" and "*No*". Fortunately, for the intention of the project, the total of the study sample (ten participants) provided an affirmative response.

4.1.3. Observations

A total of ten observations were conducted by the researchers. The sessions were scheduled from May 24th to June 28th. To analyze the data, the researchers created an observation rubric. Furthermore, it is important to indicate that the researchers focused on observing several features such as pronunciation and drop of consonants; intelligibility and diction; intonation and fluency; naturality and tone of voice; voicing and aspiration; mother-tongue effect; topic, task fulfillment, and vocabulary; and interaction and comprehension. In addition, those features were categorized from "*in need of improvement" (1),* "*acceptable" (2), "good" (3), "excellent" (4),* to "*native-like" (5).*

4.1.3.1. First five observations / Sessions 2-6

The first five observations were scheduled from May 24th to June 7th (from session number two to six). The total average of students who attended in the first five class sessions was five to seven individuals. Some of them justified their absences; some of the most common reasons were for academic, work, or family commitments. In the observations sections the variables are calculated using percentages depending on the level (*native-like, excellent, good, acceptable,* and *in process of improvement*) reached by participants during each session, for example: 20 percent (one session), 40 percent (two sessions), 60 percent (three sessions), 80 percent (four sessions), and finally, 100 percent (five sessions). To start with the sessions, it is fundamental to mention the topics covered throughout the classes; from the session four to five, the vowels sounds /i/, /ɪ/, /a/, /æ/, /ʌ/, and /ə/ were taught, and in the session six, the vowels /ɛ/, /u/, /ʊ/, /ɔ/.

The first competence observed was learners' pronunciation and drop of consonants (represented in *Figure #7*), where the mispronunciation and omission of consonants at the end of the words was beheld. The participants showed 80 percent of the time *"good"* performance and got "*in need of improvement*" only in the session number four while learning about the vowels sounds: /i/, /ɪ/, /a/, /æ/, /ʌ/, and /ə/. As an example of drop of consonants, students evidenced omission of the consonant *"g"* at the end of the word "*hoping*", especially in the fourth session.

Figure #7.Pronunciation & Drop of Consonants. Sessions 2-6. Costa Rica. May 24th - June 7th, 2022.
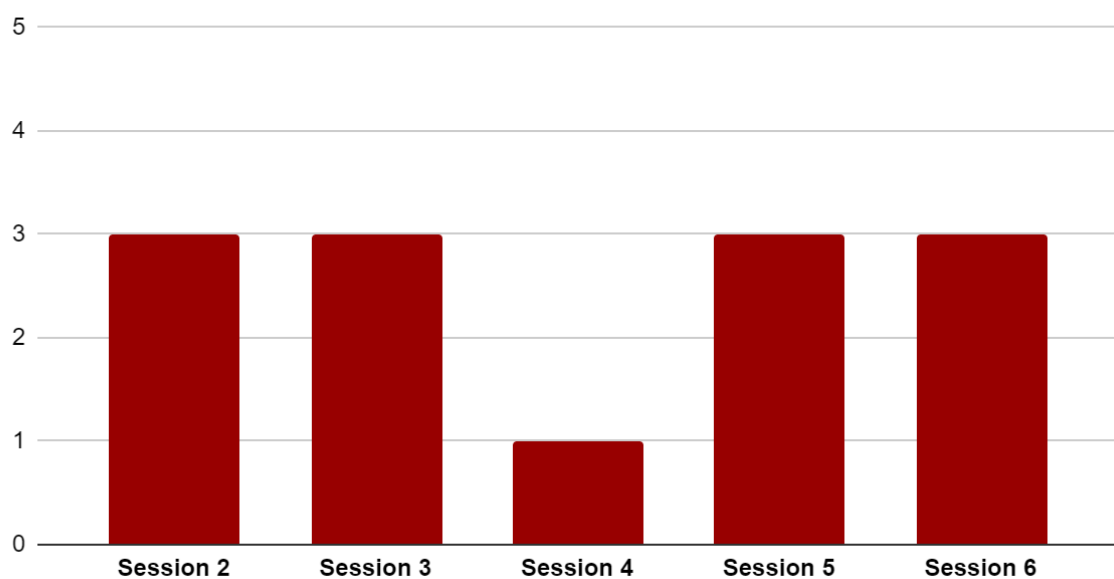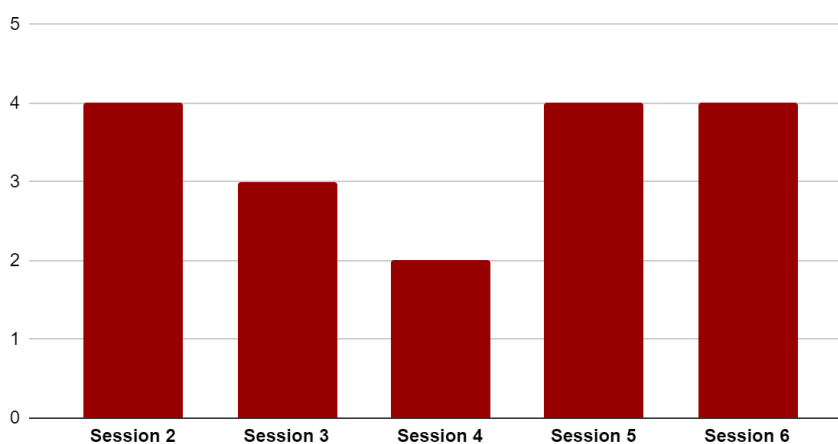

Native-like = 5   Excellent = 4   Good = 3 Acceptable = 2   In need of improvement = 1

Source: Own elaboration.

The following capacities analyzed were intelligibility and diction to identify whether the student's pronunciation of sentences, words, and syllables were easy to understand. They performed *"excellent"* in the aspects of intelligibility and diction during all the sessions. Some examples of words that gave them trouble when practicing pronunciation during the sessions were: "*ever*", "*could*", "*dream*", "*awful*", "*flaw*", and "*echoing*".

Continuing with the third aspect, intonation and fluency were recognized in the participants through the pitch modulation when pronouncing the words; the speed and smoothness were recognized during their oral production. Indeed, students got 60 percent of the time (three sessions) *"excellent"* intonation and fluency, and got *"good"* and *"acceptable"* in the other two sessions (illustrated in *Figure #8*).

Figure #8. Intonation & Fluency. Sessions 2-6. Costa Rica. May 24th - June 7th, 2022.

Native-like = 5   Excellent = 4 Good = 3 Acceptable = 2 In need of improvement = 1

Source: Own elaboration.

In the fourth aspect, the naturality and tone of voice were examined while paying attention to the students' tone of voice, volume, and level of energy. Actually, those skills were recognizable in learners' performances when researchers asked them to participate, during the breakout rooms, the activities, and even in conversations between the classmates. They kept 100 percent of the time *"excellent"* naturality and tone of voice.

Additionally, voicing and aspiration were observed to check how students were pronouncing the voiced and voiceless phonemes, as well as the aspirated and unaspirated consonants. The participants showed 60 percent of the time *"good"* voicing and aspiration, and in the other 40 percent they kept an *"excellent"* performance in the same category (portrayed in *Figure #9*).

**Graph #9.Voicing & Aspiration. Costa Rica. Sessions 2-6.
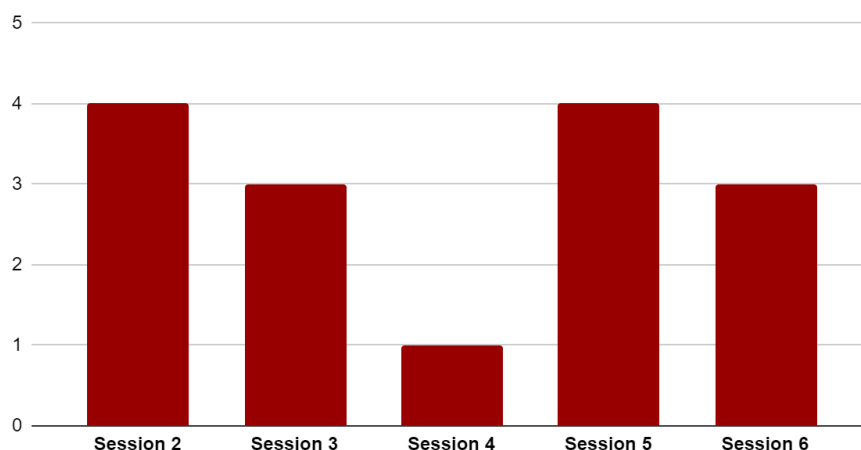Costa Rica. May 24th - June 7th, 2022.**
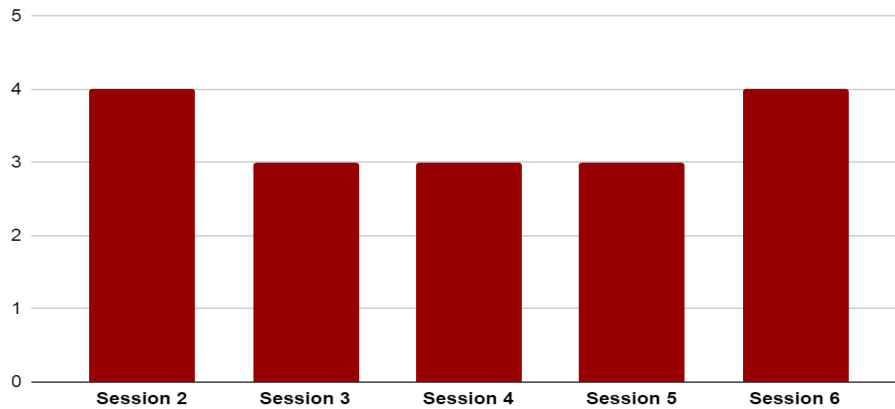
Native-like = 5   Excellent = 4 Good = 3 Acceptable = 2 In need of improvement = 1

Source: Own elaboration.

Moreover, the mother-tongue effect was evaluated to observe if the students were able to switch from their native language to their target English accent. Some examples of this effect in participants' performance regarding vowels are: "*pin*", "*niece*", "*women*", "*woman*", "*have*", "*top*", "*stop*", "*on*", "*done*", "*some*", "*other*", "*treacherous*", and "*door*". Regarding the mother-tongue effect, the individuals displayed varied results. For instance, 40 percent of the time they did "*excellent*", in the other 40 percent they did *"good",* and in the last 20 percent they obtained "*in need of improvement*" (being the fourth session again the one with lower performance). The description of the results is shown in *Figure #10.*

**Figure #10. Mother-Tongue Effect. Sessions 2-6. Costa
Rica. May 24th - June 7th, 2022.**

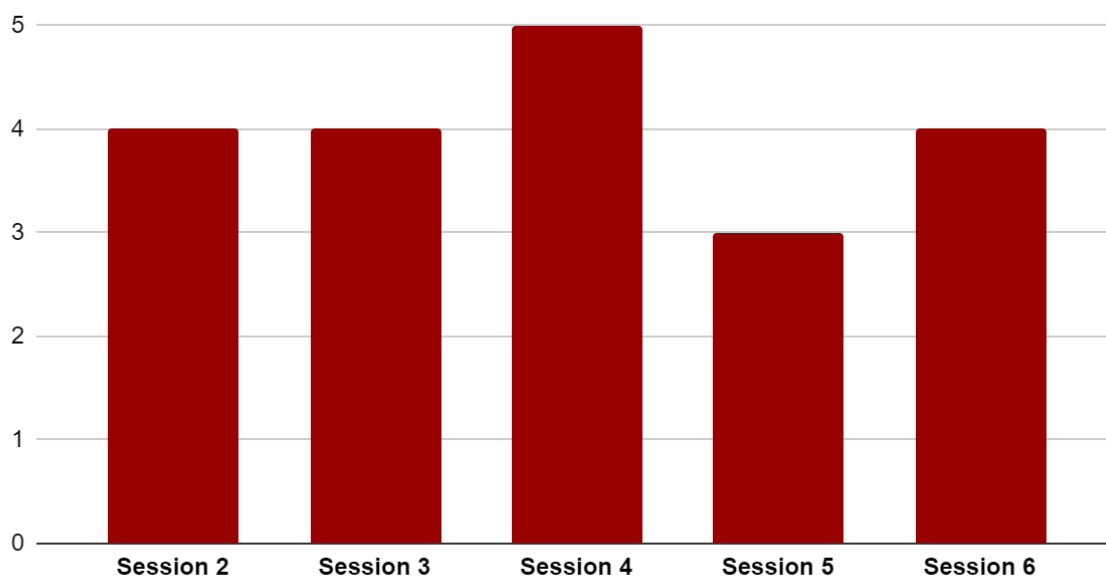**Native-like = 5   Excellent = 4 Good = 3 Acceptable = 2 In need of improvement = 1**

Source: Own elaboration.

In the category of topic, task fulfillment, and vocabulary (elucidated in *Figure #11*), the ability to understand instructions and follow them during the activities was observed. The participants surprisingly showed a "*native-like*" performance during session number four, even

though this session was the one with the lowest achievement. In fact, learners demonstrated enthusiasm in participating in the session activities. On the other hand, in session number five they did *"good"*, and in the other 60 percent of the time, they did *"excellent".*

Figure #11. Topic, Task fulfillment & Vocabulary. Sessions 2-6. Costa Rica. May 24th - June 7th, 2022.

Native-like = 5   Excellent = 4 Good = 3 Acceptable = 2 In need of improvement = 1

Source: Own elaboration.

Finally, the competence of interaction and comprehension (represented in *Figure #12*) were observed to evaluate if the participants were able to speak to each other and ask for help when working individually or in groups. The students performed 20 percent of the time a "*native-like"* work, just like the previous feature (in the fourth session). In the other 40 percent, they did *"excellent"*; in session six, they showed *"good"* interaction and comprehension. Lastly, in the final 20 percent (the second but first session of class), the participants did an *"acceptable"* performance in this category.

Figure #12. Interaction & Comprehension. Sessions 2-6. Costa Rica. May 24th - June 7th, 2022.
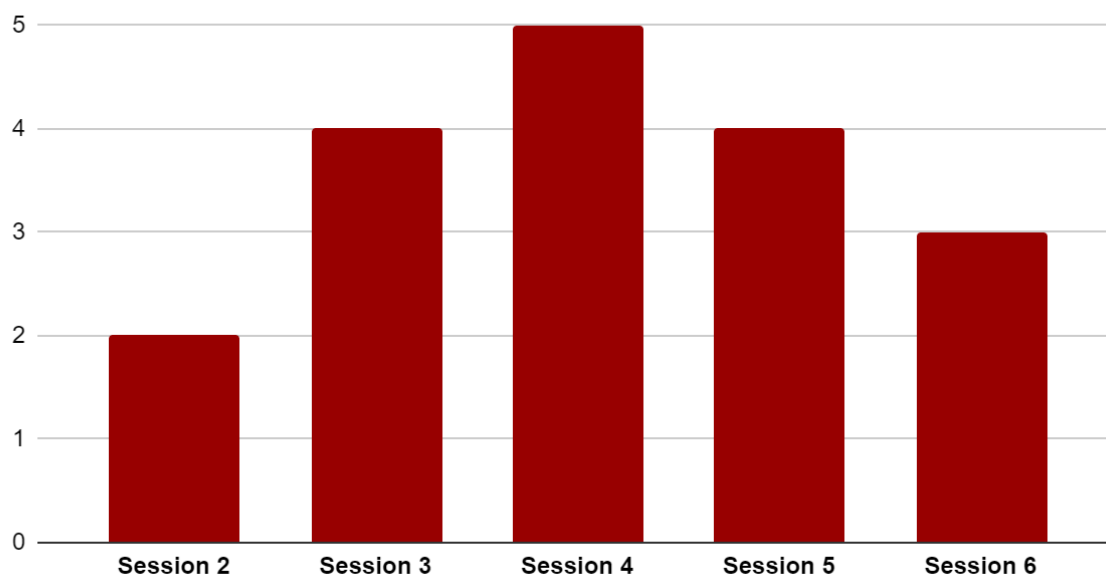
Native-like = 5   Excellent = 4 Good = 3 Acceptable = 2 In need of improvement = 1

Source: Own elaboration.

4.1.4. Test II

As a preamble, the objective of the application of this test in the middle of the sessions was to evaluate the skills that learners had constructed during the first block of observations. The evaluation of pronunciation skills recently acquired was essential for the investigation because the significance of the study regards the learners' acquisition of pronunciation skills during the entire process of the sessions; it means through the activities and explanations done in the classes.

As it was in the first test, the examination was done by the ten members of the sample. This test was applied on June 11th, 2022. Moreover, the evaluation was divided into four exercises, they were exactly the same as in the first exam. Indeed, the necessity to apply the same exercises comes from the nature of the study. The idea is to evaluate or identify how learners construct their pronunciation skills and the development of their performances after the first five sessions. Briefly, in terms of the application of the test, it was applied by using a Google Drive format and during a Zoom Meeting, in which learners were divided into three break-out rooms in which one of the investigators was in charge of evaluating and recording them, meanwhile, the fourth one was in the main room organizing them into the breakout rooms.

In the case of this second examination, learners demonstrated a variation in their pronunciation of the sounds depending on the exercise they were performing. For example, in the first exercise, learners showed improvement because they demonstrated a 90 percent "*native-like*" level (36 to 44 pts) and just a 10 percent "*excellent*" level (28 to 35 pts). However, in the second exercise, the group was significantly divided and demonstrated variability in their

pronunciation skills. In this exercise, only 20 percent of the students got a "*native-like*" (30 to 35 pts) performance, but 60 percent of their classmates did "*excellent*" (20 to 29 pts), and on the other way around, unfortunately, 10 percent of the group obtained a "good" (15 to 19 pts) level, and 10 percent got "*in process of improvement*" (0 to 9 pts) level.

Furthermore, in exercise three, learners' performance was pretty different because it indicated differences between the sample. Only 20 percent obtained a "*native-like*" (30 to 35 pts) level, the 40 percent of the group achieved an "*excellent*" (20 to 24 pts), an unfortunate 20 percent got "*in process of improvement*" (0 to 9 pts), and finally, the last percentages of the population represented 10 percent of "*good*" (15 to 19 pts) and 10 percent of "*acceptable*" (10 to 14 pts) levels, correspondingly. Finally, in terms of the last exercise, most participants of the study demonstrated their competencies in this exercise obtaining a 90 percent of "*native-like*" score (25 to 30 pts), and 10 percent "*acceptable*" (10 to 14 pts) performance. *Figure #13* illustrates the results obtained by the students in the four exercises in test number two.

Figure #13. Test 2. Costa Rica. June 11th, 2022.
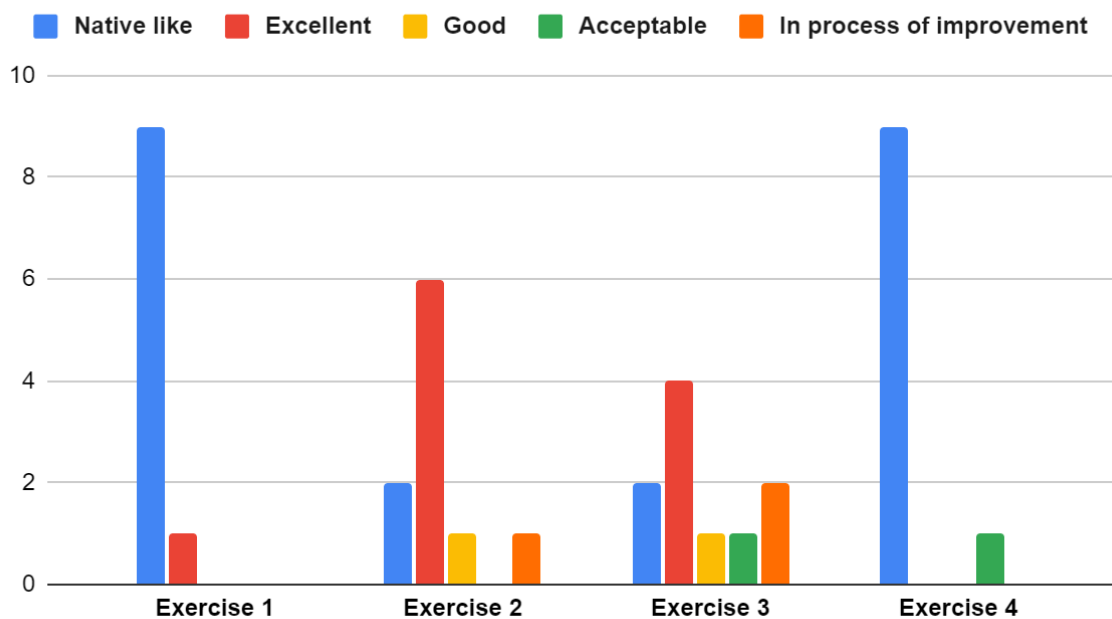
Source: Own elaboration.

4.1.5. Last five observations / Sessions 8-12

The last five observations were scheduled from June 14th to June 28th (sessions eight to twelve). The total average of students who attended the last five class sessions was four to nine individuals. Some of them justified their absences; for instance, some of the most common reasons were academic, work, or family commitments. In order to start with the sessions, it is important to mention that from sessions eight to nine the diphthongs /eɪ/, /aɪ/, /oʊ/, /ɔɪ/, and /aʊ/ were covered, from session ten to eleven the sounds /s/, /z/, /iz/, /θ/, and /ð/ were approached, and in the last session (number twelve), the sounds /ʒ/ and /dʒ/ were taught by the professors.

First, the participants demonstrated 60 percent of the time *"good"* performance about pronunciation and drop of consonants, and got *"excellent"* in the session number nine, and *"native-like"* in the last session (twelfth session) while learning about the sounds /ʒ/ and /dʒ/. Some words mispronounced throughout these sessions were: *"imagination"*, *"hear"*, *"this"*, *"lifts"*, *"although"*, *"eyes"*, *"though"*, *"either"*, *"laugh"*, *"persuasion"*, *"equation"*, and *"confusion"*. Those results are shown in *Figure #14*.

Figure #14. Pronunciation & Drop of Consonants. Sessions 8 - 12. Costa Rica. June 14th - 28th, 2022.
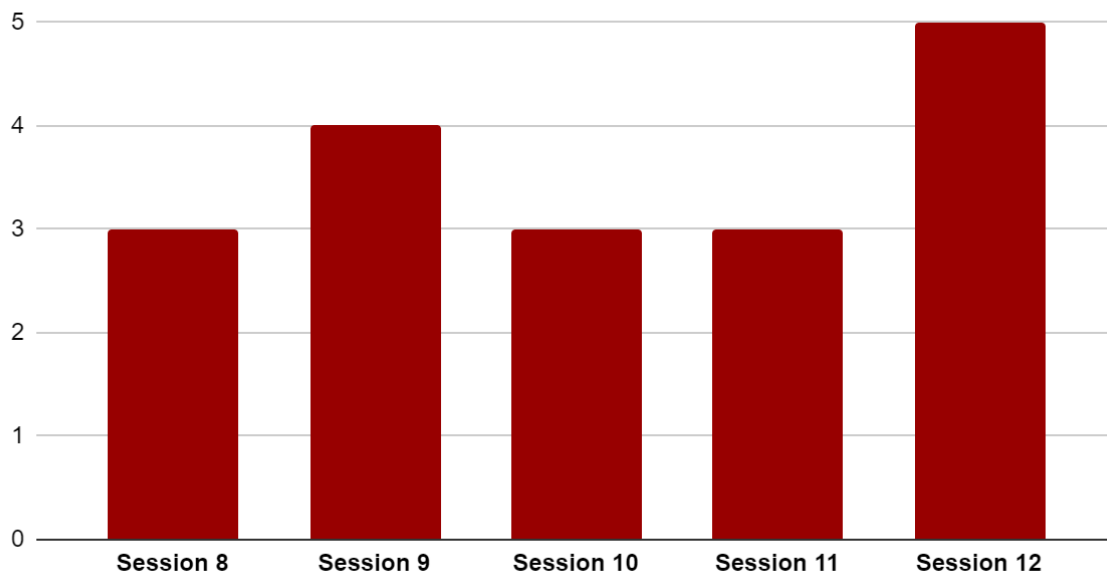
Native-like = 5   Excellent = 4 Good = 3 Acceptable = 2 In need of improvement = 1

Source: Own elaboration.

Second, students performed 60 percent of the time *"good"* intelligibility and diction, they showed *"excellent"* work in session number twelve and *"native-like"* in session number nine (elucidated in *Figure #15*). During these classes, they produced some intelligibility errors, including "*defy*", *"know"*, *"change"*, *"suit"*, *"eyes"*, and "*laugh".*

Figure #15. Intelligibility & Diction. Sessions 8-12. Costa Rica. June 14th - 28th, 2022.
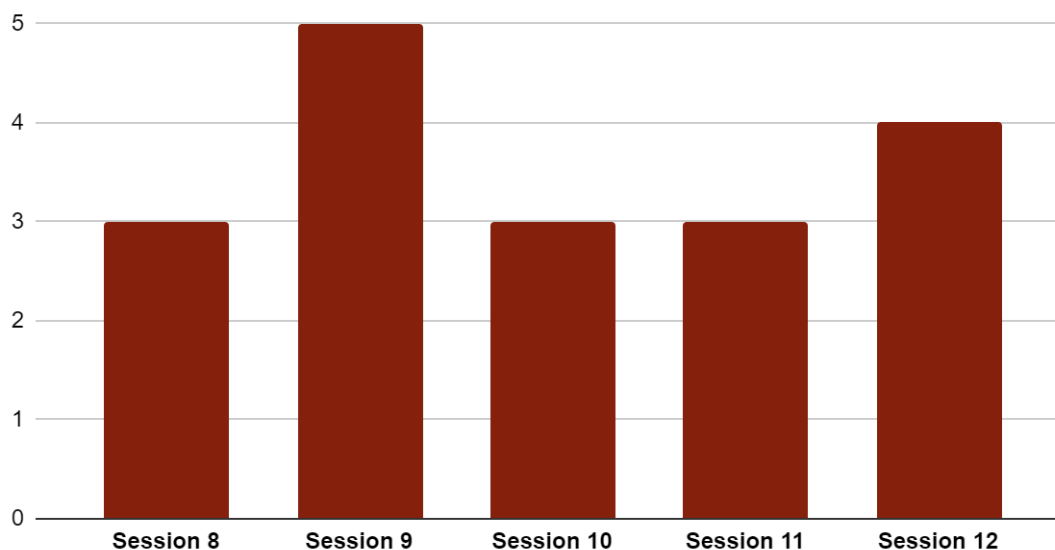
Native-like = 5   Excellent = 4 Good = 3 Acceptable = 2 In need of improvement = 1

Source: Own elaboration.

Third, in the aspect of intonation and fluency (illustrated in *Figure #16*), the participants displayed consistent results. They got 80 percent of the time *"excellent"* performance and got *"native-like"* in the ninth session (while practicing the diphthongs /eɪ/, /aɪ/, /oʊ/, /ɔɪ/, and /aʊ/). As it is observed, in session nine, learners reached the highest level in terms of intonation and fluency. In this session, there were gaming activities such as Kahoot and a memory game, in which learners practiced the intonation of the words in the lyrics.

Figure #16. Intonation & Fluency. Sessions 8-12. Costa Rica. June 14th - 28th, 2022.

Native-like = 5   Excellent = 4 Good = 3 Acceptable = 2 In need of improvement = 1

Source: Own elaboration.

Fourth, the students kept 40 percent of the time *"native-like"* naturality and tone of voice, in the other 40 percent they got a *"good"* development, and in session number eight they did *"acceptable"* (demonstrated in *Figure #17*). In the eighth session, the one with the lowest performance, students carried out an activity where they had to read stanzas of a song with the transcription of the words that included vowels.

Figure #17. Naturality & Tone of voice. Sessions 8-12. Costa Rica. June 14th - 28th, 2022.

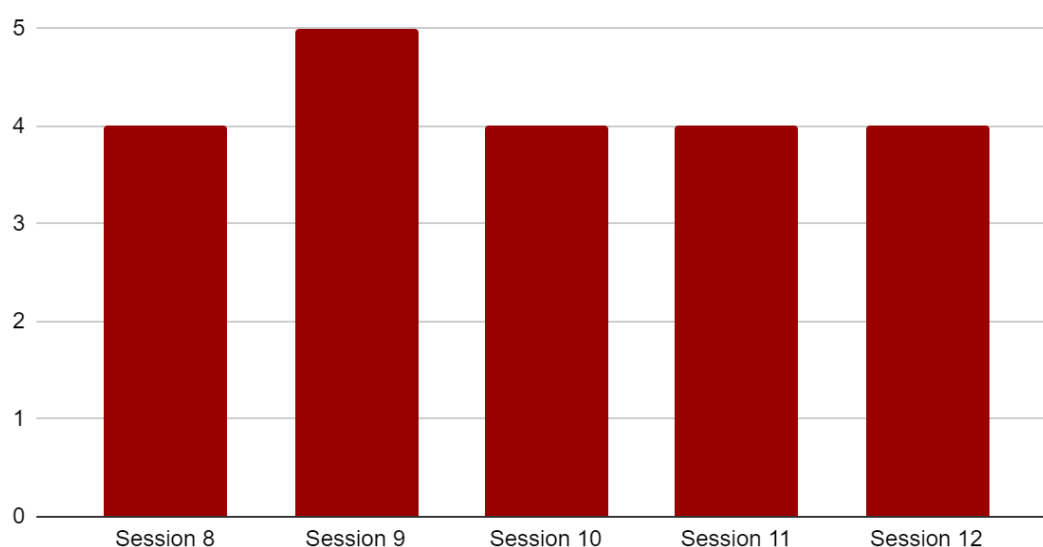**Native-like = 5   Excellent = 4 Good = 3 Acceptable = 2 In need of improvement = 1**

Source: Own elaboration.

Fifth, the participants showed 60 percent of the time *"good"* voicing and aspiration, in session nine they kept an *"excellent"* performance, and in session twelve they did *"native-like"* work (while learning about the sounds /ʒ/ and /dʒ/). Furthermore, some of the sounds which represented a bigger difficulty for learners were the words with "*th*" consonants, the sounds /θ/ and /ð/. For example, words such as *"thing"*, *"think"*, *"something"*, *"myth"*, "*though*", "*although*", *"this"*, "*these*", and "*either*". This information is represented in *Figure #18*.

Figure #18. Voicing & Aspiration. Sessions 8-12. Costa Rica. June 14th - 28th, 2022.
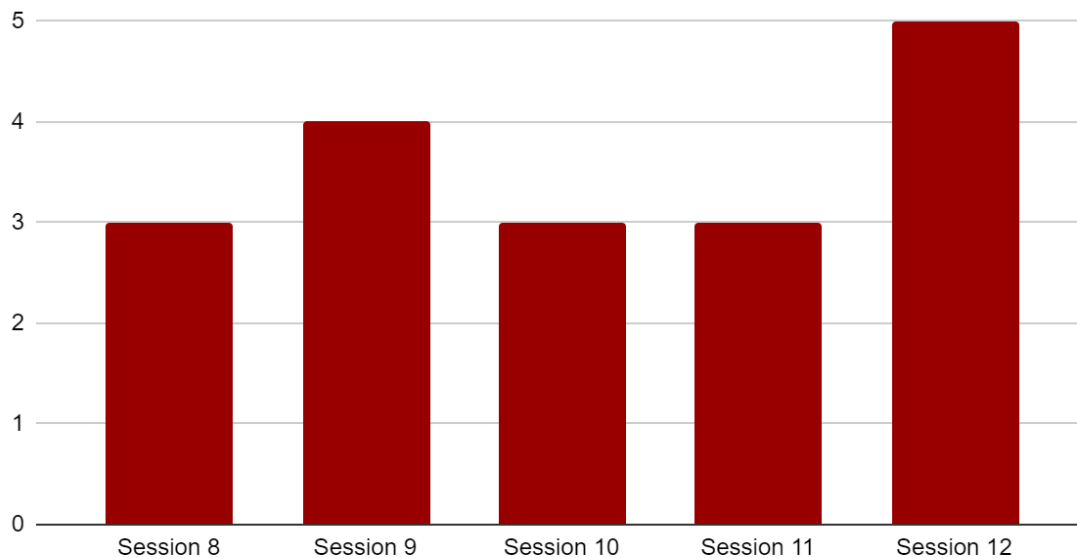
Native-like = 5   Excellent = 4 Good = 3 Acceptable = 2 In need of improvement = 1

Source: Own elaboration.

Sixth, the individuals also got consistent results about the mother-tongue effect (elucidated in *Figure #19*). Students showed 60 percent of the time *"good"* performance, and in the other 40 percent they did an *"excellent"* work. Some examples of the mother-tongue effect portrayed by the participants during these sessions were: "*at"*, *"eyes"*, *"suit"*, *"stop"*, *"this"*, *"laugh"*, *"join"*, *"sorrow"*, *"robbed"*, and *"hide"*.

Figure #19. Mother-tongue Effect. Sessions 8-12. Costa Rica. June 14th - 28th, 2022.

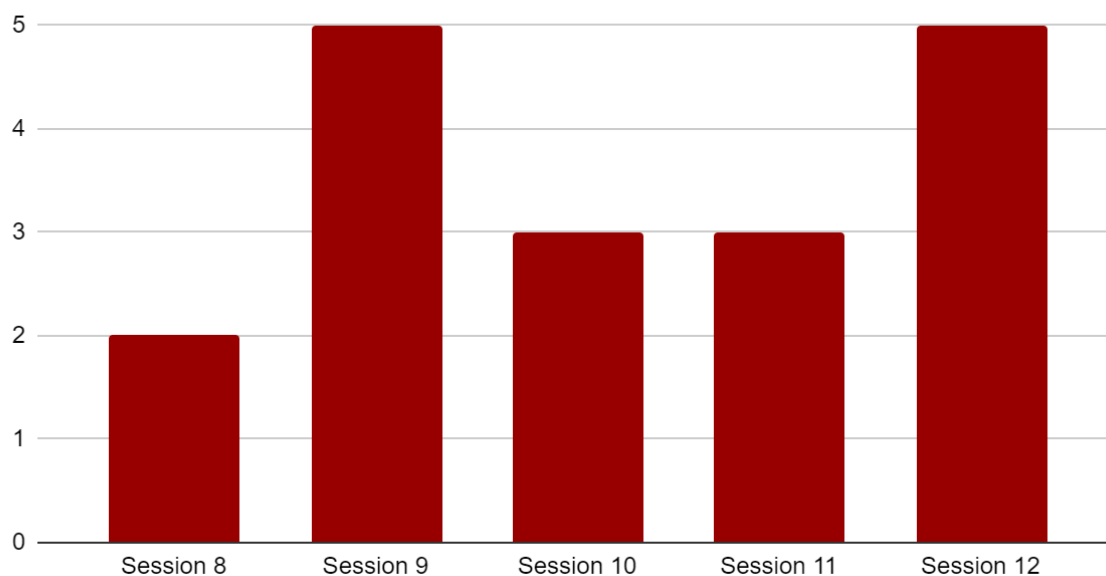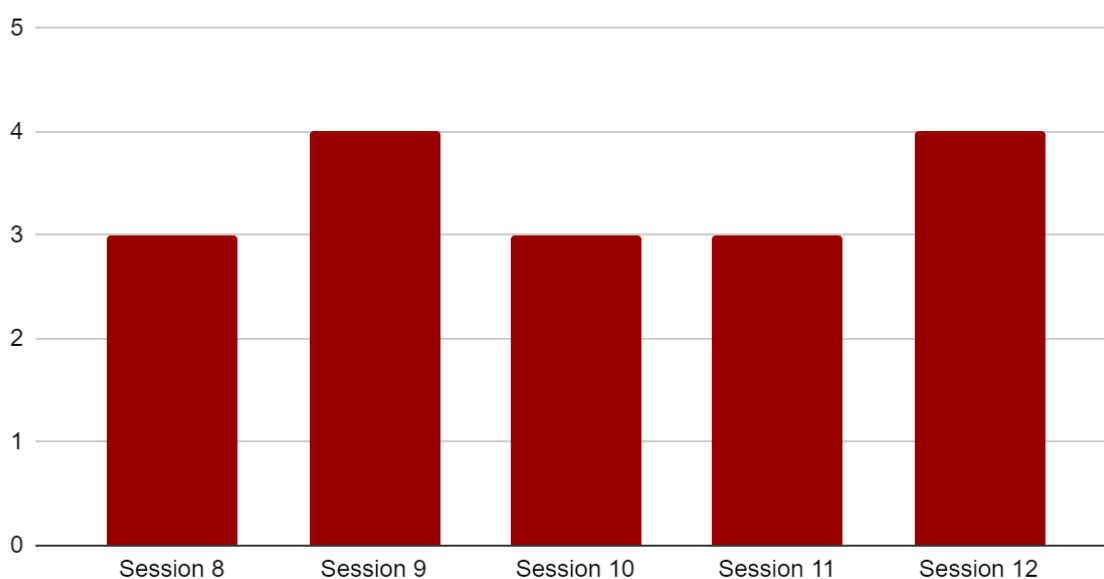**Native-like = 5   Excellent = 4 Good = 3 Acceptable = 2 In need of improvement = 1**

Source: Own elaboration.

Seventh, in the case of the topic, task fulfillment, and vocabulary, the participants were also consistent. Students showed 80 percent of the time an *"excellent"* work*,* and in the ninth session they did a *"native-like"* performance (shown in *Figure #20)*. During those sessions, the learners participated in different activities such as hang it, memory cards, lyrics training, listening with allophonic sounds, crossword, and board games. They demonstrated an exceptional understanding of the activities and disposition in their learning process.

Figure #20. Topic, Task fulfillment & Vocabulary. Sessions 8-12. Costa Rica. June 14th - 28th, 2022.
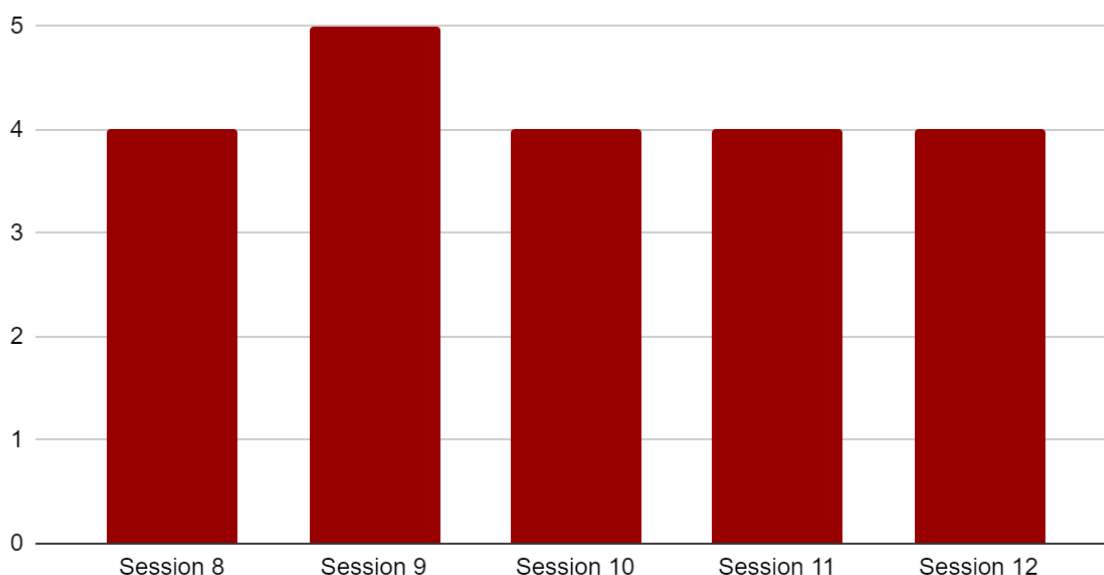
Native-like = 5   Excellent = 4 Good = 3 Acceptable = 2 In need of improvement = 1

Source: Own elaboration.

Finally, about the interaction and comprehension (elucidated in *Figure #21)*, the students performed 20 percent of the time an "*acceptable"* work, and in the other 80 percent they showed a *"native-like"* interaction and comprehension. During the eighth session, the one with the lowest performance, learners participated in an exercise of reading stanzas with the phonetic transcription of the words. Some of them expressed that it was confusing to read the lyrics in that way, mostly because they did not know the lyrics of the song very well, or they had never met the context of the words.

Figure #21. Interaction & Comprehension. Sessions 8-12. Costa Rica. June 14th - 28th, 2022.
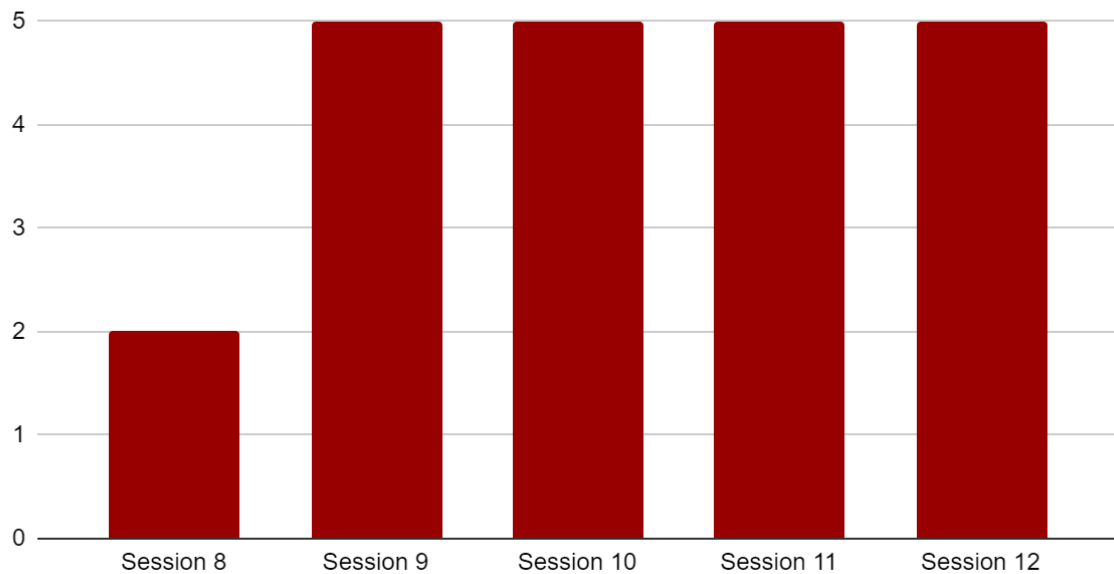
Native-like = 5   Excellent = 4 Good = 3 Acceptable = 2 In need of improvement = 1

Source: Own elaboration.

4.1.6. Test III

To introduce this section, it is fundamental to initiate by explaining that the main purpose of applying a test for the third time is to examine students' development of pronunciation skills and performance until they conclude the entire session process. The idea is to evaluate the learners' growth regarding second language pronunciation acquisition and if they have already learned from the study lessons. Moreover, the objectives of the study are reflected in the combination of the third test and the previous examinations.

Additionally, in terms of the results obtained in the application of this last test, learners had shown a general great development in the four exercises. First, in exercise number one, students denoted that since they started with the process of the sessions, they were able to maintain and continue building their competencies in terms of acquiring new pronunciation skills. The above can be illustrated by the 90 percent of "*native-like*" capabilities (36 to 44 pts) and 10 percent of an "*excellent*" (28 to 35 pts) level. In the second exercise, learners demonstrated a better level in terms that the group manifested an increase in the percentage of "*native-like*" performance (30 to 35 pts), which corresponded to an 80 percent, and consequently, the results in terms of "*excellent*" level (20 to 29 pts) decreased to a 20 percent.

Next, in relation to exercise three, participants manifested an increasing trend associated with the categories they reached during this last test, in which 50 percent obtained an "*excellent*" (20 to 24 pts), 30 percent got "*native-like*" (25 to 30 pts), and finally, 20 percent reached a "*good*" (15 to 19 pts) score. Finally, in exercise number four, it was possible to observe that depending on the emotions of learners the results can vary from one evaluation to

another. Mostly, because they showed a downward trend in the same categories that were reached in the previous test, in the same exercises. The above means that learners got an 80 percent of "*native-like*" (25 to 30 pts), 10 percent less than test II, and subsequently, it also happened with the "*excellent*" percentage (20 to 24 pts), which increased from a 10 percent in the second test to 20 percent in the last one. *Figure #22* illustrates the results obtained by the students in the four exercises in test number three.

Figure #22. Test 3. Costa Rica. July 2nd, 2022.
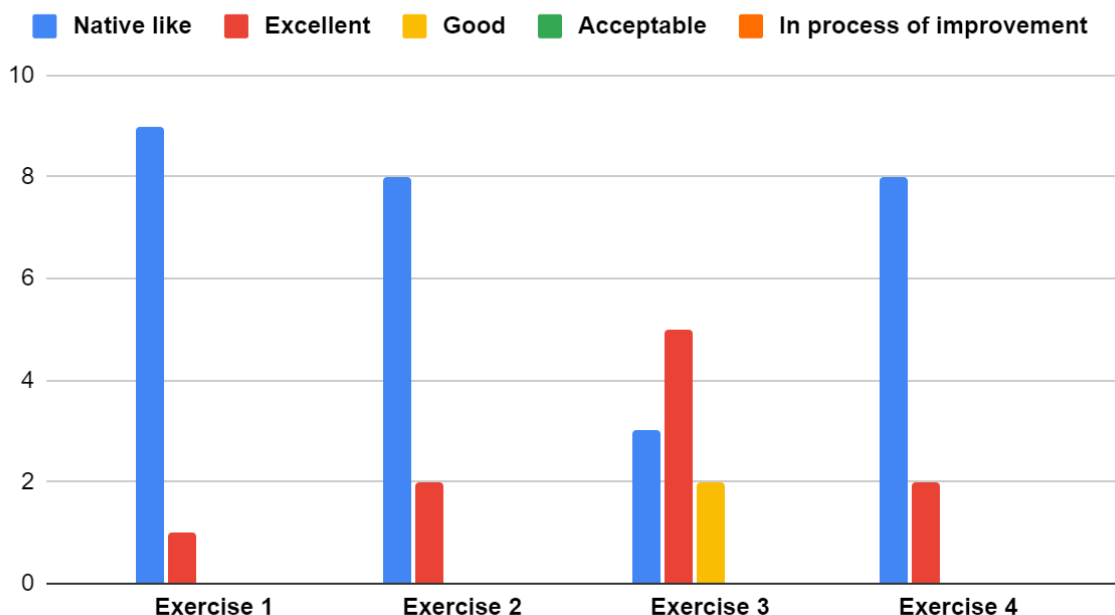
Source: Own elaboration.

4.1.7. Questionnaire II

The questionnaire's functionality for the study is associated with the purpose of being informed of actual UCR students' experiences during the sessions that are the base of the study and the direct employment of the didactic strategy proposed by researchers. In addition, the second questionnaire was applied to ten members of the group of participants, during the last session on July 2nd. Also, the instrument was designed in Google Forms and was sent via email.

Equally important, the questionnaire consisted of ten inquiries through which participants were interrogated about various topics. In fact, some of those topics were: the effectiveness of English songs in language learning, the utility of the sessions' songs to reach the objectives of the course, the influence of the sessions' activities during their acquisition process, the put-into-practice of the sounds in the lessons, and finally, the approval of the recurrent employment of the strategy in future curses. Additionally, the total of inquiries was four open and six closed questions. Furthermore, in this case, the number of variables differs between the

interrogations; for example, in the open questions there was one with eight variables, and by comparison, in the closed category there was another with thirteen variables.

To start, the first question (illustrated in *Figure #23*) was: "*¿Qué tan efectivo considera el uso de las canciones al estudiar un idioma?*". The students had to choose between the options "*Muy efectivo*", "*Efectivo*", "*Poco efectivo*", and "Inefectivo". As a matter of fact, eight students indicated that the use of songs when studying a language is "*Muy efectivo*", and the other two said that is *"Efectivo"*.

Figure #23. ¿Qué tan efectivo considera el uso de las canciones al estudiar un idioma?. Costa Rica. July 2nd, 2022.
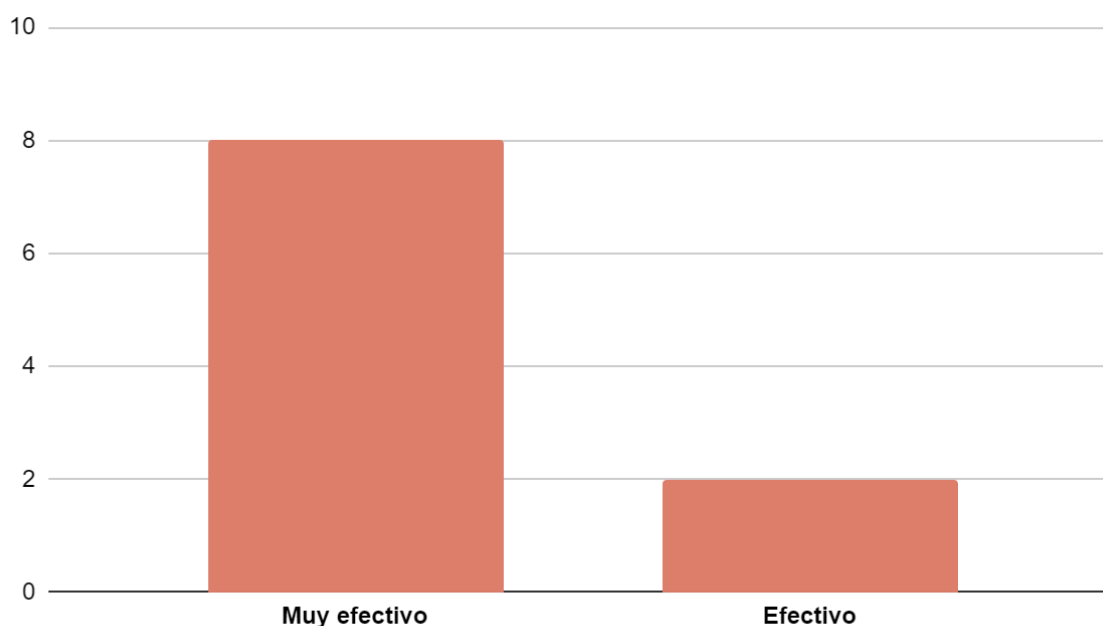
Source: Own elaboration.

To continue, the second issue (observed in *Chart #5)* was: "*A continuación se le muestra una lista de canciones, seleccione tres de ellas que hayan sido útiles en su proceso de aprendizaje de pronunciación, fluidez y nuevo vocabulario".* The students had to vote three times for the songs that they found the most useful in their learning process. A long list with all the songs employed in the sessions was presented. The participants voted as follows: Six of them chose *"Just the way you are por Bruno Mars";* five of them picked *"What do you mean por Justin Bieber";* four selected *"Sh-Boom por The Chords";* three chose *"You belong with me por Taylor Swift"*, *"Fireworks por Katy Perry"*, *"Pure imagination por Gene Wilder"*, *"Thriller por Michael Jackson",* and *"We don't talk anymore por Charlie Puth";* two picked *"Something just like this por The Chainsmokers"*, *"Perfect illusion por Lady Gaga"*, *"My life be like por Grits",* and *"Never enough por Loren Allred"*; and finally, one individual selected the song *"Sucker por The Jonas Brothers".*

	Chart #5

Chart #5
Students of Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR) from different campuses
A continuación se le muestra una lista de canciones, seleccione tres de ellas que hayan sido útiles en su proceso de aprendizaje de pronunciación, fluidez y nuevo vocabulario.
Costa Rica, July 2nd, 2022.

Variables	Absolute Frequency	Total of participants	Data representation
Sh-Boom por The Chords	4	10	
What do you mean por Justin Bieber	5	10	
You belong with me por Taylor Swift	3	10	
Just the way you are por Bruno Mars	6	10	
Fireworks por Katy Perry	3	10	
Pure Imagination por Gene Wilder	3	10	
Sucker por The Jonas Brothers	1	10	
Something just like this por The Chainsmokers	2	10	
Thriller por Michael Jackson	3	10	
Perfect Illusion por Lady Gaga	2	10	
My life be like por Grits	2	10	
Never Enough por Loren Allred	2	10	
We don't talk anymore por Charlie Puth	3	10	
Total	39		

Source: Own elaboration.

Continuing with the analysis, in the case of the third question, it was an open question, in which participants were allowed to describe their routines when listening to new songs before participating in the activities in the sessions. The actual inquiry was: "*¿Han influido las actividades realizadas por los profesores durante las sesiones en su rutina al escuchar una nueva canción en inglés*?". Interestingly enough, because of the participants' possibility to provide a variety of responses, there were six different variables, in which most of them were mentioned by only one of the members. In fact, the variables with the bigger number of responses (four participants) was "*Buscar la letra y estudiar las palabras*", and the "*Uso de subtítulos*" (two participants). In contrast, the other four variables had only one response, those variables were "*Escuchar y analizar la letra*", "*Escucha y complete*", "*Buscar la letra y cantarla*", and finally, "*Aprendizaje por contexto*". The results briefly mentioned are illustrated in *Chart #6.*

Chart #6
Students of Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR) from different campuses
Question #3: ¿Han influido las actividades realizadas por los profesores durante las sesiones en su rutina al escuchar una nueva canción en inglés?
Comente cuál es su rutina cuando escucha una canción en inglés y no la entiende.
Costa Rica, July, 2nd, 2022

Variables	Absolute Frequency
Buscar la letra y estudiar las palabras	4
Uso de subtítulos	2
Escuchar y analizar la letra	1
Escucha y complete	1
Buscar la letra y cantarla	1
Aprendizaje por contexto	1
Total	10

Source: Own elaboration.

The following question was number four. In this inquiry, the sample members compared the facility with which they had learned the pronunciation of the words by using songs in contrast with the most traditional strategies. In addition, it was a multiple-choice question, in which participants could select one option to provide the corresponding response. The current question was: "*En comparación con las estrategias empleadas en su experiencia previa, ¿con cuánta facilidad ha aprendido la pronunciación de las palabras que aparecen en las canciones?*". Fortunately, researchers received positive responses from learners, eight of them signalized a "*Mucha*" level of simplicity, and the other two members provided "*Regular*" replies. Those results are represented in *Figure #24*.

Figure #24. ¿Con cuánta facilidad ha aprendido la pronunciación de las palabras que aparecen en las canciones?. Costa Rica. July 2nd, 2022.
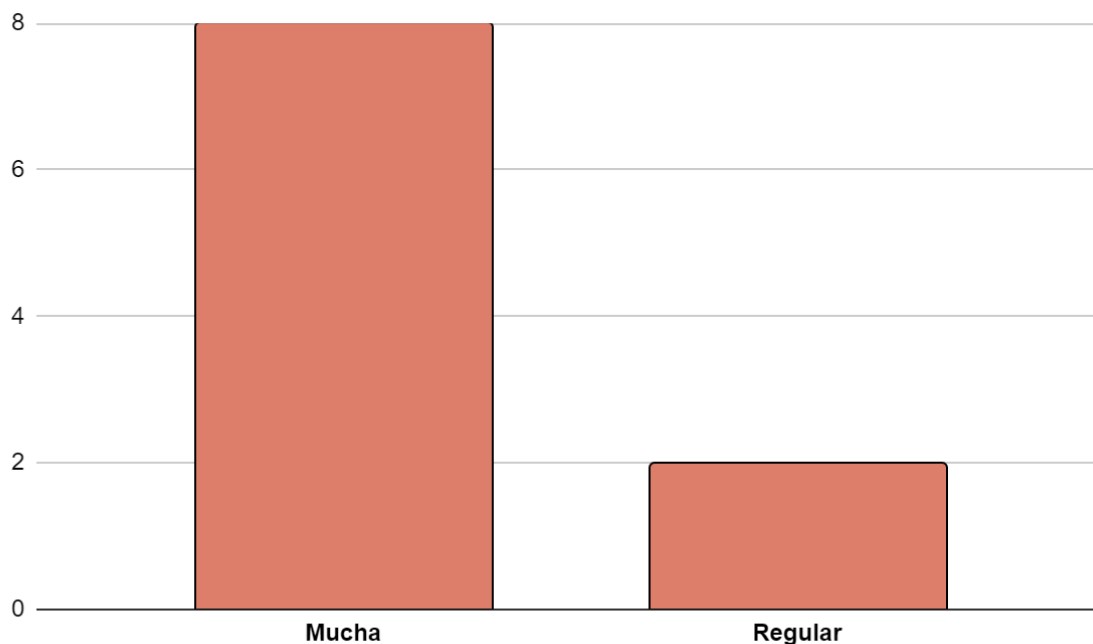
Source: Own elaboration.

Next, in question number five, participants were expected to confirm if they put into practice the knowledge acquired during the sessions. Indeed, the exact question was: "*Pone usted en práctica la pronunciación de las palabras aprendidas que se mencionaron previamente*?". However, in terms of results, the sample response represented a bittersweet sense to researchers. On this occasion, the sample members demonstrated their differences in their active acquisition process; four members answered a "*Casi siempre*" level of exercise, some other three a "*Siempre*" level, and the same total of people showed an "*Algunas veces*" level. As an illustration, the results previously commented on are detailed in *Figure #25*.

Figure #25. ¿Pone usted en práctica la pronunciación de las palabras aprendidas que se mencionaron previamente?. Costa Rica. July 2nd, 2022.
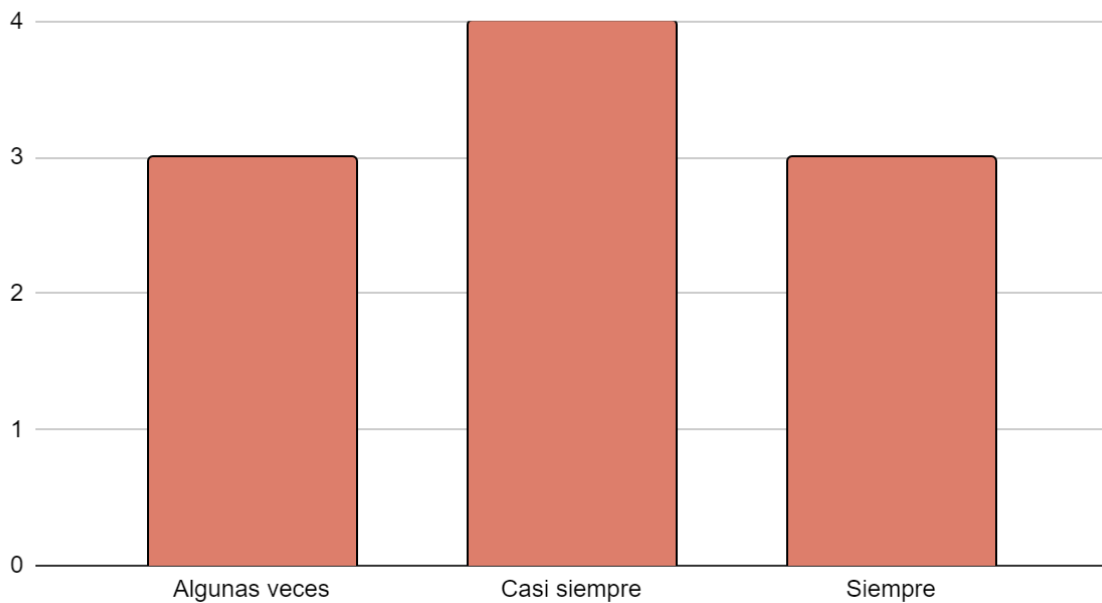
Source: Own elaboration.

Continually, the sixth inquiry was an open question in which learners were intended to describe if they had noticed any advance in their pronunciation skills and if they considered that their competencies had improved after the conclusion of sessions. The original question was: "*¿Ha notado algún avance en el aprendizaje de pronunciación del inglés? Es decir, ¿considera que su pronunciación en inglés ha mejorado*?". Because of the nature of the issue, learners provided descriptive answers about their testimony. However, in terms of the analysis of the results, replays were summarized into three categories: "*Sí*", "*No*", and finally "*Mejoró un poco*". In consequence, nine of the ten participants described a "*Sí*" stage of improvement, and the last remaining member reported a "*Mejoró un poco*" stage. The results above are delineated in *Figure #26*.

Figure #26. ¿Ha notado algún avance en el aprendizaje de pronunciación del inglés? ¿Considera que su pronunciación en inglés ha mejorado?. Costa Rica. July 2nd, 2022.
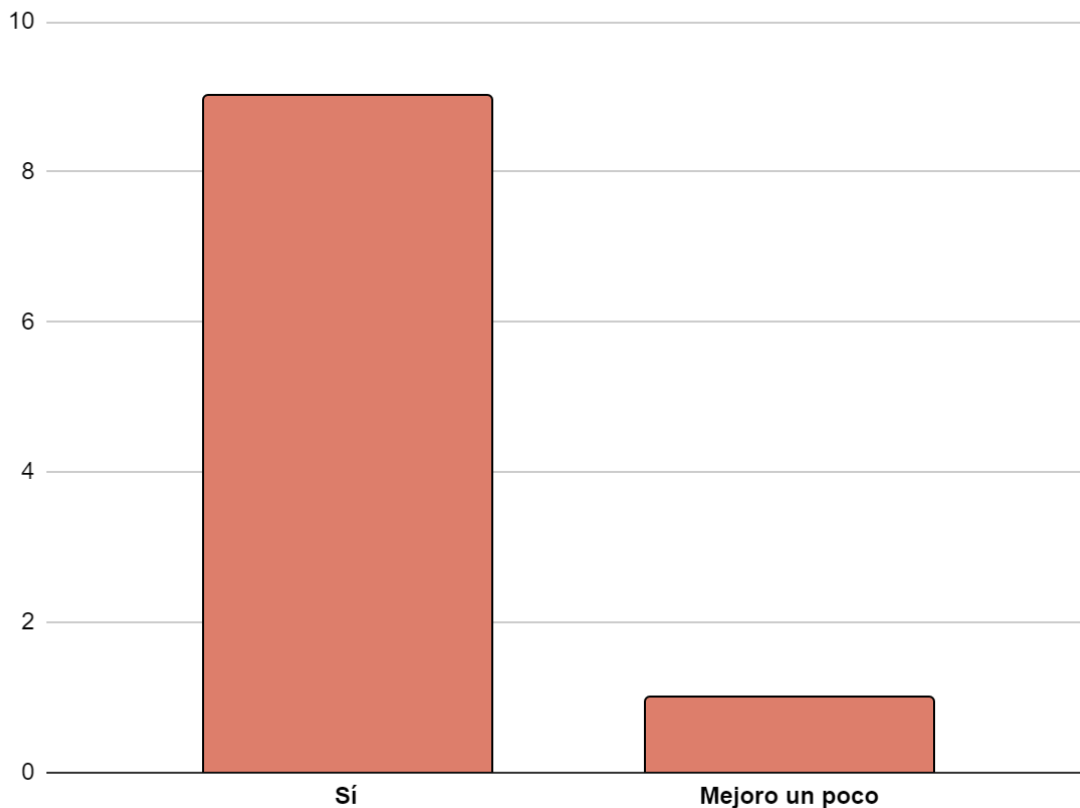
Source: Own elaboration.

Furthermore, regarding question number seven, it was also an open question in which participants illustrated if they had noticed changes related to their most common mistakes after concluding with the sessions' process. The concrete question was: "*¿Ha notado algún cambio con relación a los errores comunes de pronunciación que cometía antes de participar en este proyecto*?". Regarding the essence of the inquiry, the sample members narrated their experiences as much as they could. Furthermore, it was essential to recapitulate the responses into three different categories: "*No*", "*Sí*", and finally, "*Posiblemente*". Essentially, the majority of the sample (eight members) signaled a "*Sí*" level of improvement, and on the other hand, the last two members pointed out a "*Posiblemente*" level. In general, most of the participants indicated that they had noticed significant progress in their pronunciation when speaking and practicing reading. Also, two students declared that they could correct their pronunciation in words like "*again*", "*above*", and in words with "*th*" consonants, as in "*that*". Those previous results are elucidated in *Figure #27.*

Figure #27. ¿Ha notado algún cambio con relación a los errores comunes de pronunciación que cometía antes de participar en este proyecto?. Costa Rica. July 2nd, 2022.
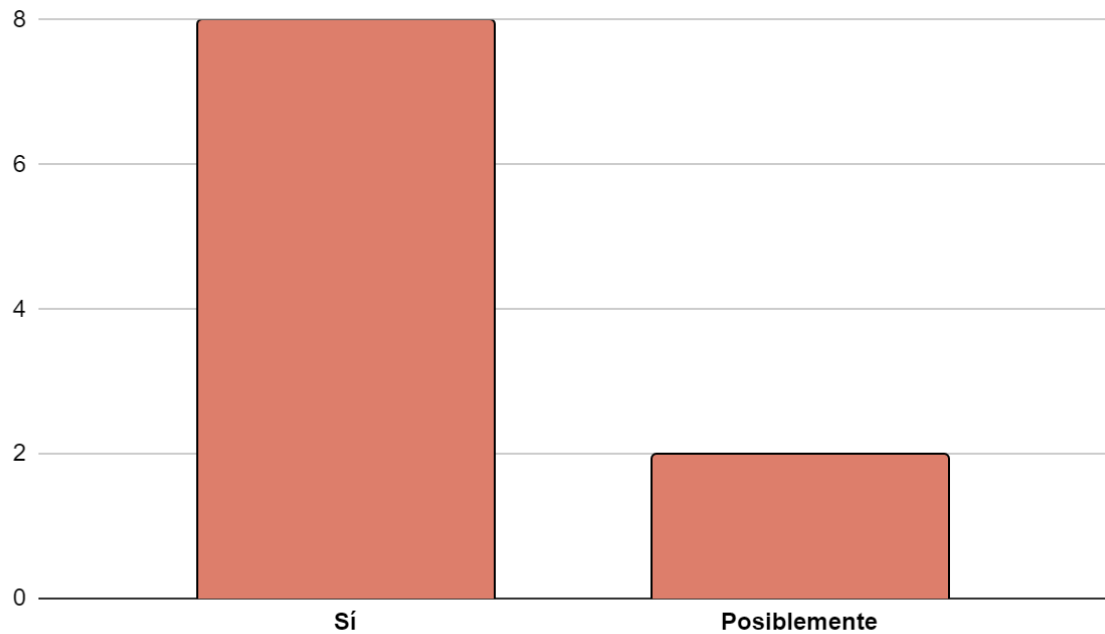
Source: Own elaboration.

To continue with question number eight, the issue of the question was about if participants considered that the didactic strategy of the study could be useful to help them to improve their most common mistakes. The actual query was, "*¿Considera usted que las canciones pueden ser una estrategia efectiva para corregir los errores en la pronunciación del inglés*?". Propitiously, regarding the issue of the current statement, the results obtained by the sample members helped to validate the study. Indeed, in terms of the analysis, six of the members signaled "*Muy efectivo*" level of effectivity and the last four assigned an "*Efectivo*" reply. Those facts are observed in *Figure #28*.

Figure #28. ¿Considera usted que las canciones pueden ser una estrategia efectiva para corregir los errores en la pronunciación del inglés?. Costa Rica. July 2nd, 2022.
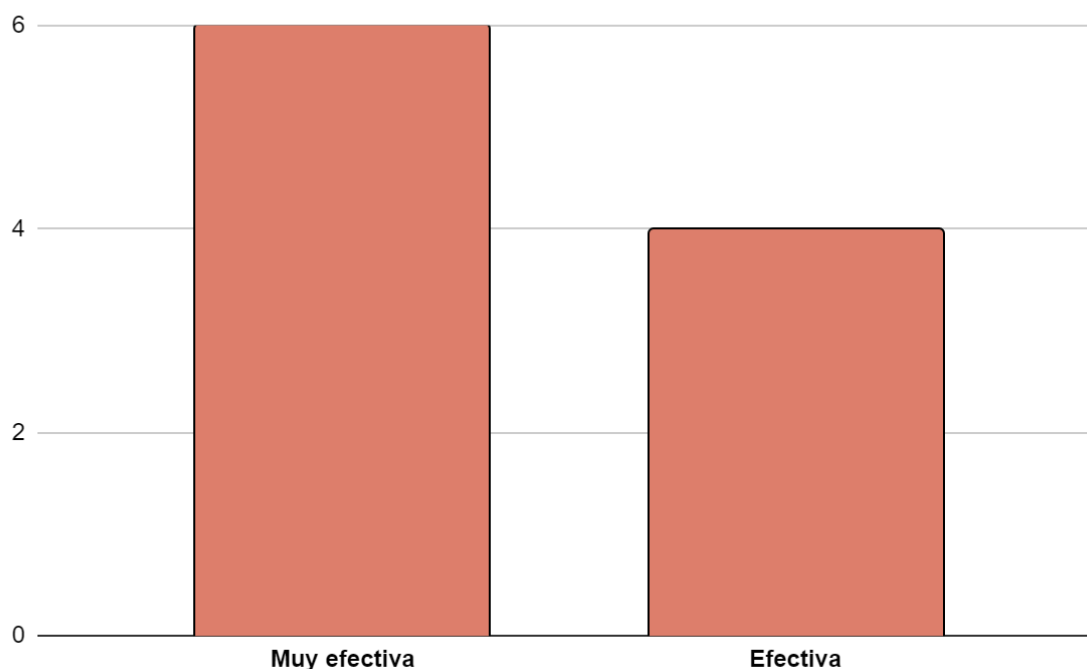
Source: Own elaboration.

In terms of the ninth inquiry, the sample was induced to indicate the level of effectivity that they could assign to the use of English songs as a didactic strategy in comparison with the most traditional strategies to improve pronunciation skills. In fact, the specific question was: "*¿Qué tan efectivo considera que es el uso de las canciones en inglés como estrategia didáctica en comparación con otras que se emplean para mejorar la pronunciación (tales como los audios de conversaciones)*?". Additionally, to provide a bigger number of possibilities, researchers planned the question as a multiple choice. Without a doubt, the replies obtained through the inquiry were totally positive for researchers, and in fact, the entire participants' group designated a "*Muy efectiva*" level of affinity.

Finally, concerning the last question (number ten), the subject was if the sample could support the recurrent employment of songs in future language learning courses. The particular question was, "*¿Apoyaría el empleo recurrente de canciones en el proceso de aprendizaje en otros cursos de idiomas*?". In addition, because of the criterion nature of the question, it was an open inquiry in which participants were in charge of describing the manner and their reasons to support the employment of songs in the language courses. Consequently, regarding the nature of the analysis, answers were recapitulated into if they approved it or not, providing a "*Sí*", or rejecting it with a "*No*" response. The entire description is exposed on *Chart #7*. To validate the relevance of the employment of English songs and the learning environment during the

sessions, the entire number of members in the sample answered affirmatively with a "Sí" response.

Chart #7
Students of Universidad de Costa Rica (UCR) from different campuses
¿Apoyaría el empleo recurrente de canciones en el proceso de aprendizaje en otros cursos de idiomas? Comente sus razones.
Costa Rica, July 2nd, 2022

Variables	Absolute Frequency	Description
Sí	1	Ayuda a entrenar el oído.
Sí	1	Es un método innovador. Aprendizaje y aplicación.
Sí	1	Empleo de frases y expresiones comunes.
Sí	1	Induce al aprendizaje innovador.
Sí	1	Es una herramienta atractiva para el aprendizaje.
Sí	1	Es una herramienta para ilustrar los temas.
Sí	1	Adquisición de vocabulario y pronunciación adecuada.
Sí	1	Empleo de canciones adecuadas para el contexto de aprendizaje.
Sí	1	Empleo de canciones de cantantes con una pronunciación comprensible.
Sí	1	Adquisición de nuevo vocabulario y pronunciación correcta.
Total	10	

Source: Own elaboration.

4.2. Discussion

The purpose of these instruments was to validate the study hypothesis and the samples' validation of the use of English songs as a learning and didactic strategy to rectify common pronunciation mistakes in the foreign language acquisition process. The three different instruments (tests, questionnaires, and observations) are deeply analyzed below.

4.2.1 Questionnaire I

The most important discoveries regarding the first questionnaire are highlighted in this analysis section. In fact, the participants were asked what sounds were more difficult to pronounce and whether they have used English songs as a tool to learn native-like pronunciation. There were many coincidences regarding each answer and the students' opinions.

According to Brenda (2020), "in Spanish there's a tendency to pronounce things the way that they're written. There are also some big differences between English and Spanish phonetics" (para. 02). It was found that the most difficult English sounds to pronounce by the

participants, before the sessions were implemented, were English sounds that are differently pronounced and articulated in English and Spanish.

Consonants at the beginning of words such as "*s*", "*sh*", "*ch*", and "*k*" are difficult sounds to pronounce according to the participants. In the case of "*s*", Spanish speakers tend to add an /*e*/ sound before words that start with "*s*" followed by another consonant. "As a result, you pronounce the words '*street*' and '*school*' as '*estreet*' or '*eschoo*l'" (Brenda, 2020, para. 14). According to Brenda, the reason that originates the problem is that Spanish words do not usually start with a consonant cluster; for example, in Spanish language words cannot start with an isolated "s", on the contrary, it needs a vowel as in the case of "*España*", "*español*", and "*estudiante*".

Another common mistake is the pronunciation of consonants such as "*x*", "*y*", "*h*", "*sh*" and "*th*". As it is seen in *Figure #3*, Spanish speakers frequently replace English sound with the closest sound in Spanish. The "*th*" consonant, for example, is commonly pronounced as "*t*"; therefore, instead of saying "thanks", they would say "tanks", which in a conversation might change the context of the message which is desired to provide. According to Brenda (2020), the "*h*" consonant might be omitted because "it is silent in Spanish. Take the words '*hola*', '*enhorabuena*', and '*albahaca*' for example" (para. 16). All this highlights that in between the two languages there are sounds that can be omitted or pronounced differently.

Moreover, Spanish speakers might also confuse other consonants such as "*b*", "*s*", "*f*", "*v*", and "*z*" with a similar sound found in minimal pairs. In Spanish, the consonants "*b*" and "*v*" tend to be merged as if they were the same sound and, because of the context, it is not difficult for Spanish speakers to realize the difference. Some examples of Spanish words with this phenomenon would be the following: *Basta* (enough) and *vasta* (vast), *bello* (beautiful) and *vello* (down of a bird), *bienes* (property) and *vienes* (conjugated form of *venir*, to come), and baca (luggage rack) and *vaca* (cow), (Erichsen, 2019, para. 17).

On the contrary, in English, the consonant "*v*" is labio-dental, which means that the upper teeth and lower lip touch. On the contrary, the consonant "*b*" is bilabial (two lips). As claimed by Brenda (2020), "this means both the lips touch together. [...] Mispronunciation of these sounds can cause some confusion. The word '*very*' sounds more like '*berry*', '*van*' sounds like '*ban*' and '*vase*' sounds like '*bars*'". Mistakes in the pronunciation of different sounds in English might interrupt the process of communication among people, provoking misunderstandings. Other differences between these two sounds in English might be words such as "*best* and *vest, bent* and *vent, bet* and *vet*" (Brenda, 2020), which might completely change the context of a conversation.

Furthermore, learners might confuse sounds regarding vowels and the pronunciation of the different diphthongs such as /eɪ/, /aɪ/, /oʊ/, /ɔɪ/, and /aʊ/. "This is because there are around twenty distinct vowel sounds in English, whereas in Spanish there are only five" (Brenda, 2020).

Even though diphthongs are also used in Spanish, words are pronounced as they are written; therefore, Spanish speakers do not confuse the difference among them. Examples of this might be words such as *"cueva", "reino",* and "*triunfo*". On the other hand, speaking about vowel pronunciation difficulties, "Spanish speakers tend to *stretch out* the vowel sound too much to overcompensate, or merge it with the closest sound in Spanish", according to Brenda (2020). For instance, Spanish speakers would confuse "*bit*" and *"beat", where "beat"* has a longer */i/* sound, so instead of pronouncing "*bit" w*ith a shorter sound of */ɪ/,* they would pronounce it as its minimal pair*, "beat".* The same situation occurs with words such as *"hit* and *"heat"*, and *"sit"* and *"seat"* (Brenda, 2020). Based on the above, it is observed some phonological differences in pronunciation, and the features of the words and its consonant patterns.

On the other hand, referring to the implemented strategy, students highlighted several artists as a useful tool to learn English. The most relevant musicians were: *Imagine Dragons*, *Trey Songz*, *Lana del Rey*, and *ColdPlay*. Moreover, most participants, as seen in *Chart #2*, answer affirmatively when they were asked about previously using English songs as a learning strategy. According to Cambridge University (2020), "when you learn a new language, [...] Singing also helps us learn how stronger and weaker sounds are pronounced differently in English" (para. 12). In summary, the use of songs can function as an effective tool to comprehend the differences between the sounds, and how stronger or weaker they are.

Additionally, students remembered completing exercises, searching for meaning, listening and singing the songs. According to Lizzy (2017), "pronunciation is one of the most difficult aspects to master when it comes to learning a new language" (para. 02). Besides this, Lizzy (2017) also comments that songs will help to train accent and pronunciation because by constantly repeating the songs, students can instinctively practice. As Lizzy exposed, pronunciation is a task that takes time and consistency to acquire, which is why it is important the ongoing practices of the strategy to improve pronunciation and increase the positive impacts on students. Following the idea of the implementation of the use of songs, participants agreed on considering repetition of English songs as an effective strategy to improve pronunciation, as seen in *Figure #6* and *Chart #4*.

4.2.2. Tests

Introducing this section of the analysis, it was possible to observe clear differences between the results obtained in the first test (in which researchers evaluated samples' initial level), the second test (in which their progress was measure), and the last test (in which investigators evaluated participants' final pronunciation level). Following this, the members of the sample demonstrated differences not only between the scores in the exercises but also between the tests, representing an increase or decrease depending on the assessment. Subsequently, those variations are explained by a group of reasons: learners' consistent

attendance, out-of-class dedication, musical taste, affective filter, and learners' home learning context.

Firstly, probably one of the most significant reasons could be participants' consistent attendance to the sessions. Indeed, consistent attendance refers to the assistance and integration of the participants during the sessions. The abstentionism of the students reduces the possibility of achieving the course or students' objectives and even a notable improvement in their tests and their participation in the classes. In terms of Mokhtari & et al. (2021), "students' absenteeism from the classes significantly reduces academic achievement" (p. 01), and continue explaining that "class attendance is a predictor of student success and reflects a student's positive learning habits, skills, and attitudes, all of which are directly related to their ultimate success" (p. 01). Under the premise of the aforementioned authors, low attendance reduces the opportunities for student achievement and, therefore, acts as a premonition concerning the success that learners obtain.

In addition, the consequences of inconsistent attendance are a clear reflection of the bad habits and attitudes of the students regarding their performance during the lesson, the activities, and their perspective on it. Furthermore, an example of this situation is observable when the specific errors made by the students in each of the exercises of the three tests are analyzed. The above situation refers to the fact that some faults continued to repeat over and over again, and many were even words seen in class or words that included sounds within the course curriculum. An illustration of the actual issue can be distinguished in the case of student number three, who was able to attend only four of the lessons, and it affected her performance in the three tests. The consequences of her inconsistent attendance were noticeable with her difficulties with the sounds during the sessions, and continual repetition of the same mistakes. However, at the final test, the student improved her score by approving the last evaluation (reaching a 71 qualification).

On the contrary, student number two, who was able to attend only the same number of classes as number three, could show great progression during the process. Even though the second member demonstrated a very good English level from the beginning (he achieved a 76 on the first test), it was appreciated the evolution of his skills (81 on test two and 92 on test three), achieved through practice. The attitude of the aforementioned student induces the analysis of the second variable, which is the constant out-of-class practice.

Firstly, in oral courses such as the pronunciation course that was the base of this actual study, it is essential that learners practice the sounds of the lessons even if they have already finished the lessons. In accordance with Bala (2020), "the level of the students' involvement in English language activities outside the classroom is positively associated with their language proficiency" (p. 27). Based on Bala's comment, it is the students' involvement that functions as a complement to reach language proficiency and the course objectives by conducting themselves

on extracurricular practices of the class materials and subjects. Regarding the out-of-class practice relevance, Benson (2011) explains that "these approaches offer opportunities for learners to self-direct their learning and develop the skills and dispositions associated with autonomy through experimentation and discovery" (p. 127). In summary, it is recognized that out-of-class practice provides participants, in their learners' roles, with different possibilities to self-direct their learning, grow their skills, and complement the sessions with their experimentation. Consequently, the effort would culminate in better results in the tests and lesson rubrics.

Additionally, as it was mentioned by Benson, to motivate students to continue practicing once the sessions are already finished, it is necessary that they self-direct their learning and skills acquisition process through attractive resources. One of the greatest resources that can be employed to motivate them is appealing to their musical taste. To explain how it functions, Salas & Lopez (2017) signalize that "the language, (...), becomes a melody and the instruments accompany this message through sounds" (p. 03). Based on the authors' response, songs associated with learners' musical tastes can function as an effective and easy-to-comprehend pronunciation resource. The songs illustrate the appropriate pronunciation, naturality, and fluency of a specific language and transform it into a melody. In agreement with Cambridge University (2020), "singing is great for learning the rhythm of a language. It helps us learn how words are linked together in connected speech" (para. 09), and continues mentioning that "singing helps our mouths to form the right shapes and make these sounds loudly and clearly" (para. 12). In essence, the employment of well-known songs is efficacious since acquiring fluency skills would be easier because of the rhythm used by the singers. Also, learners can listen to how the words sound linked together in real life or in a normal conversation. An example of the efficiency of knowledgeable songs is exercise four, in which participants have shown more confidence and naturality at the moment of reading the stanzas of "*Fireworks*" by Katy Perry. The results are illustrated in *Annex #5*.

Continuing with the variables that can affect learners' performances, the fourth one is the affective filter. In the context of Krashen cited by Figueroa (2019), "the affective filter [...] is an attempt to describe how a student's attitudes or emotional variables can impact the success of learning a new language" (para. 01). Basically, the affective filter regards the emotional status that learners may face during a test or evaluation along with his habits, attitude and their emotional stress. Regarding the affective filter during tests, Sáez (2013) explains that in most cases, the majority of learners can deal well with their emotions during an evaluation, whether they approved or not; however, many others suffer stress crises that can turn into anxiety and anguish. Essentially, based on the above, in the case of the tests utilized in this study, the emotional variables were easily detected, especially because it was possible to be perceived through students' pronunciation, fluency, and voices. Moreover, contrary to Sáez results, most

of the sample members demonstrate their feeling through the way in which they pronounced words or if they got stuck in some parts of the reading. For example, in the case of student number one, during the last test, her nervousness was observed by the evaluators, and it was because she was not at home, then she got nervous because of the people around her.

Following the line of emotional reactions during the evaluations, it is time to continue with the last reason for some mistakes committed during the tests. The last reason is the learners' home learning context. Because of the whole process of moving to virtual learning, it has been quite common that learners get to multitask and be surrounded by their families during classes; consequently, they get distracted or tempted to engage in other activities simultaneously. Indeed, according to Fan (2021),

> Such demands on attention may lead to switching of attention from one task to another, or a sharing of attentional resources. When attention is divided between two tasks, performance is impaired, particularly when the two tasks are presented in the same sensory modality. (p. 07)

The situation expressed by Fan is a reality that students have been facing since the beginning of the pandemic of Covid-19, in which learners were obligated to start multitasking in their home study, and at the same time, spend more time and space with their families than they normally do. Equally important, this home learning context has been causing difficulties regarding the energy and attention that learners must spend in environmental circumstances and their own academic appointments. For example, during the study, student number nine was multitasking because she participated in the tests and sessions at the time that she was taking care of her baby. Fortunately, even if this student was in different tasks simultaneously, she was one of the learners with the best performances during the evaluations.

Finally, to conclude, it is fundamental to signalize that the results and data mentioned above are illustrated in *Annex #5* and *Annex #6*.

4.2.3. Observations

In order to develop the following section, the total of the ten sessions of observations are analyzed together. As an introduction, the results in general were positive and fulfilled the objective that was sought with the didactic strategy: the use of popular English songs to rectify common pronunciation mistakes in the foreign language acquisition process. In addition, it is necessary to mention that the observations were supported by a rubric made up of eight different categories, among them: pronunciation and drop of consonants, intelligibility and diction, intonation and fluency, naturality and tone of voice, voicing and aspiration, mother-tongue effect, topic, task fulfillment and vocabulary, and interaction and comprehension. Likewise, those rubrics were qualified as follows: "*native-like*" (5 pts), "*excellent*" (4 pts), *"good"* (3 pts), *"acceptable"* (2 pts), and *"in need of improvement"* (1 pt).

To start, the students achieved qualifications of "*good*", "*excellent*", and *"native-like"* most of the time. Those results were a significant contribution to the objectives of this study. However, there were some inconsistencies in the results, which are developed below. Firstly, in session number two (the first session of class) the participants got *"acceptable"*, one of the lowest qualifications, in the category of interaction and comprehension. Maybe the reason they got an *"acceptable"* result in the interaction category was that it was the first session/class, and they were shy about the project, the new professors, and the new classmates. According to Crozier (2004), "shy individuals are characterized by impression management concerns and low self-efficacy beliefs about their social performance" (p. 28). Therefore, the poor performance in the category already mentioned could be justified by the shyness of interacting with unknown people for the first time and in this case in a foreign language.

Secondly, session number four was the one with the lowest performance achieved. Students obtained two times in need of improvement, in the pronunciation and drop of consonants, and the mother-tongue effect categories, and they also got acceptable in the category of intonation and fluency. Looking back to that session, the sounds covered in the class were the vowels: /i/, /ɪ/, /a/, /æ/, /ʌ/, and /ə/. The song used in that class was "*Sh-Boom (Life Could Be a Dream)*" by The Chords. In the task, the students had to organize the words they had heard in the song in a table that contained the six vowels mentioned above and were divided: at the beginning, at the middle, and at the end of words. Then, in the post-task they had to listen to the song again and fill the blank spaces of the lyrics; and finally, after completing the activity, they read aloud the stanzas of the song with the answers. Due to the low results acquired in this class, it could be found that the vowels were problematic for the students. Rodriguez (2019) states that there is an obvious difficulty in auditory discrimination of English vowels /æ/, /ʌ/, /a/ by Spanish speakers since the three sounds tend to be perceived as the closest category existing in the first language: the Spanish vowel /a/. Hence, learning new vowels that they have never heard before could be a whole challenge.

However, even though the fourth session got the lowest rating in three categories, it was the session that reached the highest score "*native-like*" for the first time in two categories like: topic, task fulfillment and vocabulary, and interaction and comprehension. Although the vowels were difficult for them during class, they really enjoyed the activities, mainly because they liked the song so much. They enjoyed and laughed a lot when they read the song, some even ended up singing it. According to Salas and Lopéz (2017), popular songs are beneficial in the acquisition of a language since the language used is realistic, daily, and authentic, allowing students to feel familiar with the songs for emotional and linguistic reasons (p. 03). In this specific case, the song was familiar to the participants since it was from the movie "*Cars*".

Furthermore, from class number four, students began to achieve *"native-like"* ratings, until the last class. In particular, sessions nine and twelve are the ones with the highest score,

where they obtained the qualification *"native-like"* most of the time, followed by *"excellent",* and *"good"*. Therefore, all these results show that the didactic strategy helped the students to improve and acquire their pronunciation while they were learning new sounds. Music and songs have a great motivational value, which provides conversational language improvement. Goering & Strayhorn stated that "there are truths revealed about students when music is part and parcel of the teaching of English: interest, engagement, and motivation lead to student investment in projects that far exceed their weight in the grade book" (2016, p. 29). Educators could use the music and the lyrics of songs in relation to the daily situations of the world around them.

4.2.4. Questionnaire II

The purpose of the second questionnaire is to identify the student's perceptions of the effectiveness of using songs to acquire English pronunciation. Through the first question of questionnaire II, the target population agreed on the effectiveness of implementing songs, as stated in their responses (see *Figure #23*). Since all of them perceived it as effective or highly effective, researchers agreed on its effectiveness as a demonstrated fact. As exposed before, students characterized the strategy similarly as Aguirre, Bustinza, & Garvich (2016) did in their study: "As a matter of fact, the use of songs was the most preferred strategy for students when learning English" (p. 182). This reflects the researchers' first impressions on the applicability of songs during English classes as a promising strategy in the process of fostering pronunciation. Additionally, Ebong & Sabbadini for the British Council (2011) declares that "songs provide examples of authentic, memorable and rhythmic language" (para. 02). Also, the authors continue mentioning that songs are helpful in the pronunciation acquisition process because "songs are authentic and easily accessible examples of spoken English. The rhymes in songs provide listeners with repetition of similar sounds. Students often choose to listen to songs time and again, indirectly exposing them to these sounds" (para. 07). Indeed, this statement tends to support the activities developed during the work sessions maintained from May 21st to July 2nd, which were consistent with the ones described by the British Council.

Continuously, students affirmed that their routines when listening to a new song in English were influenced by the strategies performed during the work sessions. In fact, they uphold that after listening to a song they now find meaning by context and are driven to find new vocabulary, as well as the fact that they use previously mentioned words sometimes as a minimum. The fact that students acquired new techniques to foster not only pronunciation but also new learning techniques and vocabulary, reinforces the idea that "songs can also evoke vocabulary and expressions that are hardly found in texts, found in manuals or journalistic texts and which are common in everyday language" (Pachina, 2019, para. 03). This aids the second language acquisition process into a realistic contextualization which broadens students' possibilities to naturally behave in a friendly environment, not only academic. Consequently, this

continues to build up the researchers' argument of the effectiveness of songs as a didactic strategy.

In the results section, it is portrayed that students not only found it easier to practice pronunciation after using songs but also that an improvement in the pronunciation of certain English sounds was evident to them. Based on the answers provided by the participants, it is certain that they formed a new set of pronunciation acquisition skills that will support their English acquisition process. This was possible given that:

> ... the shape of our mouth helps control the flow of air while we sing, but it can also make sounds clearer for non-English speakers. The same techniques many voice coaches use to improve the sound of a singing voice can also be used to improve the sound of speech. (Amaadar, 2022, para. 04)

Since researchers developed several strategies which included singing popular English songs during the work sessions, students were able to notice an improvement and provided evidence by replying to the researchers' question, on whether songs may or may not be an effective strategy to correct English pronunciation mistakes. Furthermore, they asserted their approval of this idea since the totality of participants agreed that songs are effective as a strategy to correct the aforementioned mistakes.

Compared to other types of English teaching strategies, students considered the use of songs as an effective didactic strategy and would support the use of songs as a didactic strategy. Students affirmed that songs contribute to pronunciation and vocabulary acquisition, as well as an appealing activity to engage in, and also, some of them pointed out the importance of an apt song choice.

> Perhaps the greatest benefit to using songs in the classroom is that they can be fun. Pleasure for its own sake is an important part of learning a language, something which is often overlooked by teachers, and songs can add interest to the classroom routine and potentially improve student motivation. (Millington, 2011, pp. 134-135)

Conveying popular English songs compatible with the interests of every student in the class constitutes a challenge. Once the teacher gets to know students better, more of their common musical taste becomes clear. By virtue of making the English pronunciation class stimulating for students, songs chosen by the researchers matched the likes and dislikes of the group of participants. As exposed before, the sum of all students participating in the present study qualified the experience of using songs as a didactic strategy to foster English pronunciation as effective.

CHAPTER V

5.1. Conclusions

As illustrated above, pronunciation acquisition is a process to be addressed with effective didactic strategies to encourage learners' interests and pedagogic needs, such as popular English songs. The role of convincing English pronunciation goes beyond work-related relations and extends to the learners' lives. In terms of this study, when popular English songs were applied as a didactic strategy, the result was a positive attitude on behalf of the participants towards the song-based activities. With challenges as any other didactic strategy, popular English songs had demonstrated to evoke memories from students' lives when they were verbally asked about them. Indeed, they also had a positive reaction towards the designed activities; however, it was not in every case that the participants identified themselves with the music presented to them. One class that involves every learning style, interest, and intelligence is still a challenge for pedagogic research about pronunciation acquisition through popular English songs.

According to the four specific objectives of the present study and on account of finding if popular English songs are an effective didactic strategy for acquiring pronunciation in English as a foreign language, the research team developed the following conclusions:

1. *To determine the most common pronunciation mistakes students of English as a foreign language make.* The first objective was determined by the close study of ten participants' development through a series of activities based on thirteen popular English songs, that the most common mistakes made by students found their bases on the "mother-tongue effect". As stated in Chapter IV[1] of the present study: the majority of students pointed at consonants such as *"x", "y", "h", "sh", and "th",* as the ones they had more trouble with, whereas only one student selected the *"a", "e", "i",* and *"o"* vowels. All this information was confirmed with close observation to every session. For instance, the biggest difficulties for learners during the ten classes were to pronounce the vowels /i/, /ɪ/, /a/, /æ/, /ʌ/, and /ə/, and words with "*th"* consonants, the sounds /θ/ and /ð/[2]. This shows that sometimes students are aware of their weak areas and other times they are unaware of which skills they need to improve.

2. *To apply English songs activities in the process of acquiring pronunciation as a didactic strategy to overcome the most common pronunciation mistakes students of English as a foreign language make.* The second specific objective was achieved once the most common mistakes were determined, it was possible to observe the application of popular English songs as a didactic strategy in order to foster or even overcome a few of the most common mistakes made by students. During such process, their perceptions were

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[1] p. 32
[2] p. 36, para. 03

retrieved via questionnaire[3], in which students declared that they had not committed as many of those common mistakes as in the past, as it was demonstrated in Chapter IV:

> 2.1. Students showed 80 percent of the time an *"excellent"* work, and in the ninth session they did a *"native-like"* performance (shown in *Figure #20)*. During those sessions, the learners participated in different activities such as hang it, memory cards, lyrics training, listening with allophonic sounds, crossword, and board games. They demonstrated an exceptional understanding of the activities and disposition in their learning process."[4]

The application of songs as a didactic strategy is confirmed to help students avoid most common pronunciation mistakes and their perceptions about its use during the thirteenth sessions performed from May 20th to July 2nd.

3. *To evaluate the effectiveness of using English songs as a didactic strategy in the process of acquiring pronunciation and correcting mistakes.* Songs were determined to be effective as didactic strategies in the process of acquiring pronunciation and correcting mistakes. By using the thirteen chosen songs as a didactic strategy throughout the study sessions, it is possible to affirm that the complete number of students declared its use as "effective" or *"very effective"*[5]. Which demonstrates the purpose of the third specific objective. This outcome allowed the team to know the students' thoughts regarding the didactic strategies applied by the educators. Which leads to reflecting on the importance of listening to students and appealing to their tastes, in order to keep them motivated during the learning process.

4. *To identify the benefits and limitations of using English songs as a strategy in the process of acquiring pronunciation in English as a foreign language acquisition process.* A few benefits of implementing the English song-based activities include the participants' engagement in activities with a positive attitude. The strategy helped students to correct some of their previous mistakes. The stimulation of rhythmic muscular patterns facilitated the acquisition of new sounds, oral skills, and the construction of an ample vocabulary range. On the other hand, the most significant limitation found in the process of meeting the research purposes was the cultural context, regarding the absenteeism and lack of responsibility on behalf of the students when it comes to practicing the activities made in and out of class.

5. It is also concluded that the lack of spaces to practice outside the English class does impact their pronunciation acquisition process. The research team encourages paying further attention to the effects of the "Mother-tongue" when teaching the acquisition of

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[3] see p. 60. para. 01. figure #26
[4] See p. 53, para. 01. Last five observations / Sessions 8-12.
[5] See p. 56, para. 02. figure # 23. Questionnaire II.

pronunciation in English as a Foreign Language, since their role in such a process, seems to offer broad content to be explored.

According to the experience perception of students collected via the aforementioned instruments, it is accurate to state that the use of English songs does constitute an appropriate didactic strategy for the process of acquiring pronunciation in English as a foreign language. It is strongly recommended that future investigators determine the students' progress by closely detailing the process with observations, constant tests, and questionnaires; since that makes it possible to discover and record the students' improvement. It is also relevant to develop in-class activities based on those sounds and skills in which students find the most significant challenges so that they can be approached with apt didactic strategies, such as English songs.

5.2. Limitations

1. As it was broadly analyzed in the discussion section and was also an outright conclusion, the abstentionism and absenteeism weakened the main objective of the present research, which was to implement the use of English songs as a didactic strategy to correct students' mistakes. It was clearly notable how absenteeism directly influenced the desired final result of some students.

2. Another limitation that stood in the way of testing the effectiveness of the proposed strategy was the internet connection of the students. Most of the time, the students reported connection problems related to the signal and Wi-Fi, and a few times due to the country's weather conditions. These conditions of loss of communication led the learners to not be able to participate satisfactorily in the activities developed during the class.

3. In addition, as already vigorously addressed in the discussion section, the study was exposed to interruptions due to learners' home learning context. Although virtual learning has shown many benefits, it is still a challenge for some students, especially those who must have a multitasking role at home.

4. Continuing with limitations, related to cultural aspects, the students demonstrated a lack of autonomy. In other words, the lack of commitment to practice outside of class and the lack of a sense of responsibility were very evident. This indicates that if a study population does not have personal autonomy skills, it could weaken the verification process of a research hypothesis.

5. Finally, the last limitation concerns the reason for choosing American English for the implementation of songs. It was a previously made decision to use only American singers' music. The reasons behind this are stated in the Theoretical Framework section. However, in the course of the sessions, the group of researchers ran into some

restrictions, since some specific sounds were difficult to find in the American songs. Therefore, the variety of songs to address these sounds was very limited.

5.3. Recommendations

5.3.1. Methodological recommendations

1. Given that the Mother-tongue effect was an outstanding aspect of this research, it is essential to research ways to avoid it in the process of acquiring a language. Therefore, as a recommendation for future researchers, the subject of the "Mother-Tongue effect" should be further investigated, looking for possible solutions to address it in a foreign language classroom such as creating phonological strategies that immerse learners in a world of different sounds.

2. On the other hand, another valuable recommendation is that research on the Verbotonal Method be carried out using didactic strategies in a beginner-level classroom to study the direct impact of phonological techniques at the beginning of the learning and acquisition of a foreign language process. In the same manner, use the strategies of the said method to help students who have already acquired the language to avoid common pronunciation errors.

5.3.2. Academic recommendations

1. It is significant to designate songs with a simple melody, slow/soft rhythm, easy-to-understand lyrics, and comprehensive intonation of the words on behalf of singers. It is also indispensable to use slow-timing songs for the acquisition of language skills, because the lyrics and rhythm simplicity will always be useful when learning. The benefits of an appropriate rhythm when listening to the sounds and comprehending them can be seized by organizing their application as didactic strategies.

2. In addition, it is highly recommended to use a proportional amount of songs to the sounds' level of difficulty, the lesson content, its duration, and the number of observations. In fact, in the actual study, the majority of lesson plans counted on two songs per class and only a couple of them included only one song since the lesson time allowed it. Each investigator should adjust to the class size, lesson time, and sound level of difficulty. Based on our experience one or two songs are ideal for a class of an hour of duration.

3. Equally important, the sound accent in the lyrics words must be in a specific target accent. The idea to choose an accent will depend on the necessities of the study, its hypothesis, the sample selection, and also, the social and academic context of the population. Moreover, as the current study was developed in Costa Rica, the American

accent was determined in association with proximity to native-speaker countries and the preference of the national educational system for its type of English.

4. The following recommendation regarding the musical repertoire is related to the vocabulary and grammatical structures used in the musical piece, since the idea is that the lyrics can be easily interpreted and understood by the participants the vocabulary and grammatical structures must be related to the guidelines, contents, and objectives, so the research team encourages to find the appropriate songs and artists for the purposes of future studies on the subject of using popular English songs as didactic strategies to foster pronunciation.

5. The following recommendation is related to the musicians and singers selected within the musical repertoire of the course being offered. The singers' selection must have clear and precise pronunciation, articulation, and diction when speaking. Likewise, his way of speaking and accent must be easy-to-comprehend and familiar, so that the artist can allow students to learn from his/her music.

6. Continuing with the recommendations, the chosen singers' accent must be the same target accent that the chosen population for the study intends to acquire. In addition, researchers must try to find those vocalists who have a more neutral accent concerning the alterations in pronunciation and phonetics that exist between one city and another and even between one country and another. However, exceptions could be made for songs by singers of other nationalities (English-speaking) to use them under the same strategy. The main reason is to have more variety of popular music, but also more repertoire to cover the various sounds. We took this last advice into account since the same students made recommendations of non-American singers in the first questionnaire.

7. Following the approach of the recommendations around singers in the course repertoire, the nominated singers and songs should be familiar to the project population. The intention is that participants can recognize the singer, the piece of music, or even some words of the lyrics by the first time the music sounds. Indeed, if students recognize the artist or the song, they may be able to discern the vocabulary, context, and culture of the song, and even the accent or pronunciation of the singer. For researchers, a way to designate singers may be to choose well-known musicians and look at their interviews with the intention of recognizing if the artist meets the requirements.

8. Below, we will provide a couple of recommendations regarding the study population. For example, the number of students may vary according to the course needs, but seek to have the largest number of participants. At the same time, it is convenient to look for the biggest group of interested parties to participate in the project, based on the fact that the

project development is based on a free course and the voluntary participation of the population.

9. Continuing to focus on participants, it is essential to know the language level of the student. This will show the development language acquisition process, will evidence the level of competencies they possess before acquiring new ones, and it will also help to disclose their evolution from the beginning to the end of the project. For example, in the case of the current study, the students needed to have basic skills in oral expression to make it easier for them to develop their pronunciation. In the present investigation, the intention was that the group of students could acquire other skills related to pronunciation such as fluency, naturality, interaction, and comprehension.

10. Regarding the availability of schedules, different schedules must be opened so that students have more possibilities to access the project and participate in the sessions. Especially in projects with open populations, belonging to different groups and interacting from various parts of the country, there must be greater time availability. In the case of the current project, the opportunity provided by virtuality was an essential contribution.

11. Likewise, if the need arises to impart the virtual classes, the following precautions must be taken into account. For instance, the availability of the internet and technological devices that the participants have is crucial, since the participants are the main actors of the project, and the most important thing is that they can interact in the process and feel comfortable at the time of being in the lessons. For this reason, we must look for platforms and tools that allow researchers to take advantage of the various digital opportunities whenever it is possible.

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ANNEXES

The Use of English Songs on Pronunciation Acquisition of English as a Foreign Language.

Test.

Student name:_____

Speaking Test

1. **Exercise 1**

   ❖ Read aloud the words in the charts below.

Consonants

	IPA Symbol	Examples	X / ✔		IPA Symbol	Examples	X / ✔
1.	b	Robe		13.	s	Custom	
2.	d	Down		14.	t	Tear	
3.	f	Knife		15.	v	Vest	
4.	g	Flag		16.	w	Wine	
5.	h	High		17.	z	Puzzle	
6.	dʒ	Magic		18.	ʒ	Treasure	
7.	k	Queen		19.	tʃ	Teacher	
8.	l	Live		20.	ʃ	Shoe	
9.	m	Summer		21.	θ	Toothpaste	
10.	n	Funny		22.	ð	Together	
11.	p	Dippy		23.	ŋ	King	
12.	r	Carrot		24.	j	Yesterday	

Vowels

	IPA Symbol	Examples	X / ✔		IPA Symbol	Examples	X / ✔
1.	æ	Stair		13.	uː	Blue	
2.	eɪ	Case		14.	ɔɪ	Join	
3.	e	Went		15.	aʊ	Now	
4.	iː	Team		16.	ə	Pencil	
5.	ɪ	Gym		17.	eəʳ	Prayer	
6.	aɪ	Pride		18.	ɑː	Arm	
7.	ɒ	Top		19.	ɜːʳ	Bird	

8.	oʊ	Toe		20.	ɔː	Board	
9.	ʊ	Look		21.	ɪəʳ	Ear	
10.	ʌ	Love		22.	ʊəʳ	Tourist	

2. Exercise 2

❖ In couples, read a conversation together.

Name of the dialogue: Let's watch TV together!

Man: So, did you see the final episode last night?

Woman: Of course! As if I would miss that!

Man: And?

Woman: It was by far the best episode, definitely.

Man: Yeah, totally. The dragon at the end and all the special effects in that final scene were amazing.

Woman: I loved that part! But I still don't think this series was as good as the others.

Man: Really? But you said you wouldn't want to miss it?

Woman: I know, but still … it's a lot more predictable than it used to be.

Man: But that's because the story has been told so well that all the characters are reaching their destiny now.

Woman: I don't know … before, anyone could die at any time so it was exciting! But, this series, no key characters died and we all knew they wouldn't. When Jaime fell in the water after the dragon attacked him, we knew he would make it somehow. And … oh, surprise, Bronn jumps in and saves him.

Man: They did kill some characters in this series, though. What was that one's name …?

Woman: Exactly, see! You can't even remember who died!

Man: Hmm. The only thing I didn't like about this series was that it was shorter than the others. Seven episodes instead of ten. Maybe they spent all their money on that dragon! I reckon that now they're not using the story in the books anymore, they don't have as many ideas.

Woman: That would explain why they're not being as brave with the story too. It's more like a Hollywood film than a TV show now.

Man: So, is Tyrion still your favorite character?

Woman: You know … surprisingly, I think my favorite might be Cersei.

Man: What?!

Woman: She's so interesting! All the awful things she's done and the way she's just aiming for revenge, even though it won't make her happy…

Man: She's unpredictable because we just can't believe anyone would be like her. I guess. You

don't have to like a character for them to be your favorite!

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https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/skills/listening/intermediate-b1/chatting-about-a-series

	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
Pronunciation & Drop of consonants	The student pronounces no consonant and vowel sounds accurately. The student makes more than 10 pronunciation mistakes.	The student pronounces a few consonant and vowel sounds accurately. The student makes 8 - 10 pronunciation mistakes.	The student pronounces some consonant and vowel sounds accurately. The student makes 6 - 7 pronunciation mistakes.	The student pronounces almost every consonant and vowel sound accurately. The student makes 4 - 5 pronunciation mistakes.	The student pronounces every consonant and vowel sound accurately. The student makes 1 - 3 pronunciation mistakes.	
Intelligibility & Diction	The student's pronunciation of sentences, words, and syllables is impossible to understand. The student makes more than ten intelligibility & diction mistakes.	The student's pronunciation of sentences, words, and syllables is difficult to understand. The student makes 8 - 10 intelligibility & diction mistakes.	The student's pronunciation of sentences, words, and syllables is understandable in spite of frequent mistakes. The student makes 6 - 7 intelligibility & diction mistakes.	The student's pronunciation of sentences, words, and syllables is efficient most of the time. The student makes 4 - 5 intelligibility & diction mistakes.	The student's pronunciation of sentences, words, and syllables is always easy to understand. The student makes 1 - 3 intelligibility & diction mistakes.	

Intonation & Fluency	The student shows several difficulties with intonation and fluency. The student makes more than 10 intonation and fluency mistakes.	The student needs to improve their intonation and fluency skills. The student makes 8-10 intonation and fluency mistakes.	The student speaks with good intonation and fluency. The student makes 6 - 7 intonation and fluency mistakes.	The student speaks with excellent intonation and fluency. The student makes 4 - 5 intonation and fluency mistakes.	The student speaks with native-like intonation and accurate fluency. The student makes 1 - 3 intonation and fluency mistakes.	
Naturality & Tone of voice	The student shows difficulties in demonstrating naturality and appropriate tone of voice during the exercise. The student makes more than 10 naturality and tone of voice mistakes.	The student needs to improve naturality and tone of voice skills. The student commits 8 - 10 naturality and tone of voice mistakes.	The student demonstrates good naturality and tone of voice during the exercise. The student commits 6-7 naturality and tone of voice mistakes.	The student demonstrates accurate naturality and tone of voice during the exercise. The student commits 4 - 5 naturality and tone of voice mistakes.	The student demonstrates native-like naturality and tone of voice during the exercise. The student commits 1-3 naturality and tone of voice mistakes.	

Voicing & Aspiration	The student does not voice consonants, nor aspirates them correctly. The student makes 10 voicing & aspiration diction mistakes.	The student rarely voices consonants and aspirates them correctly. The student makes 8 - 10 voicing & aspiration diction mistakes.	The student sometimes voices consonants and aspirates them correctly. The student makes 6 - 7 voicing & aspiration diction mistakes.	The student voices consonants and aspirates them correctly most of the time. The student makes 4 - 5 voicing & aspiration diction mistakes.	The student voices consonants and aspirates them correctly. The student makes 1 - 3 voicing & aspiration diction mistakes.	
Mother-tongue effect	The student shows difficulties managing interlingual mistakes. The student makes more than 20 "mother-tongue effect" mistakes.	The student needs to improve its management of interlingual mistakes. The student makes 8 - 10 "mother-tongue effect" mistakes.	The student demonstrates good management of interlingual mistakes. The student makes 6-7 "mother-tongue effect" mistakes.	The student demonstrates accurate management of interlingual mistakes. The student makes 4 - 5 "mother-tongue effect" mistakes.	The student demonstrates exceptional management of interlingual mistakes. The student makes 1 - 3 "mother-tongue effect" mistakes.	
Interaction	The way in which the student speaks is difficult to understand. The student makes 8 - 10 mistakes.	The student commits errors in pronunciation that sometimes lead to misunderstanding. The student makes 6 - 8 mistakes.	The student occasionally needs to repeat him/herself to be understood. The student makes 4 - 5 mistakes.	The way in which the student speaks is easy to understand constantly. The student makes 3 mistakes.	The student's level of Interaction and comprehension are excellent. The student makes 1 - 2 mistakes.	
Total						

Native like: 30 - 35 points

Excellent: 20 -29 points

Good: 15 - 19 points

Acceptable: 10 - 14 points

In process of improvement: 0 - 9 points

3. Exercise 3

❖ Read a short story.

Name of the story: "The Tale of the Three Brothers" from "The Tales of Beedle the Bard" by J.K. Rowling (2008).

The story is about three brothers who, while traveling together, reach a treacherous river. Being wizards, they make a magical bridge over the river. Halfway across the bridge, they meet Death, who is angry for losing three potential victims of the river. He pretends to be impressed by them and grants each a wish as a reward. The eldest brother asks for an unbeatable wand that will always grant him victory, so Death carves the Elder Wand from a nearby elder tree. The middle brother asks for the ability to call back the dead, so Death plucks the Resurrection Stone from the riverbank. The youngest and smartest brother doesn't trust Death and asks for something that could hide him from the eyes of Death himself, so Death reluctantly gives him his Cloak of Invisibility. Afterward, the brothers go their separate ways.

The eldest brother, bragging about his powerful wand, is robbed of it by a man and murdered while he is asleep. The middle brother uses his ability to bring back the woman he loved, who died before he could marry her. However, she is not fully alive and is full of sorrow. He kills himself to join her. So death takes the first two brothers for his own. As for the youngest brother, Death never manages to find him, as he stays hidden under his Cloak. Many years later, the brother removes his cloak and gives it to his son. Pleased with his achievements, he greets Death as an old friend and chooses to leave with him as equals.

Reference: Hellabore. (2009). *The Tales of Beedle the Bard (real)*. Harry Potter Wiki.

	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
Pronunciation & Drop of consonants	The student pronounces no consonant and vowel sounds accurately. The student makes more than 10 pronunciation mistakes.	The student pronounces a few consonant and vowel sounds accurately. The student makes 8 - 10 pronunciation mistakes.	The student pronounces some consonant and vowel sounds accurately. The student makes 6 - 7 pronunciation mistakes.	The student pronounces almost every consonant and vowel sound accurately. The student makes 4 - 5 pronunciation mistakes.	The student pronounces every consonant and vowel sound accurately. The student makes 1 - 3 pronunciation mistakes.	
Intelligibility & Diction	The student's pronunciation of sentences, words, and syllables is impossible to understand. The student makes more than ten intelligibility & diction mistakes.	The student's pronunciation of sentences, words, and syllables is difficult to understand. The student makes 8 - 10 intelligibility & diction mistakes.	The student's pronunciation of sentences, words, and syllables is understandable in spite of frequent mistakes. The student makes 6 - 7 intelligibility & diction mistakes.	The student's pronunciation of sentences, words, and syllables is efficient most of the time. The student makes 4 - 5 intelligibility & diction mistakes.	The student's pronunciation of sentences, words, and syllables is always easy to understand. The student makes 1 - 3 intelligibility & diction mistakes.	
Intonation & Fluency	The student shows several difficulties with intonation and fluency. The student makes more than 10 intonation and fluency mistakes.	The student needs to improve their intonation and fluency skills. The student makes 8-10 intonation and fluency mistakes.	The student speaks with good intonation and fluency. The student makes 6 - 7 intonation and fluency mistakes.	The student speaks with excellent intonation and fluency. The student makes 4 - 5 intonation and fluency mistakes.	The student speaks with native-like intonation and accurate fluency. The student makes 1 - 3 intonation and fluency mistakes.	

Naturality & Tone of voice	The student shows difficulties in demonstrating naturality and appropriate tone of voice during the exercise. The student makes more than 10 naturality and tone of voice mistakes.	The student needs to improve naturality and tone of voice skills. The student commits 8 - 10 naturality and tone of voice mistakes.	The student demonstrates good naturality and tone of voice during the exercise. The student commits 6-7 naturality and tone of voice mistakes.	The student demonstrates accurate naturality and tone of voice during the exercise. The student commits 4 - 5 naturality and tone of voice mistakes.	The student demonstrates native-like naturality and tone of voice during the exercise. The student commits 1-3 naturality and tone of voice mistakes.	
Voicing & Aspiration	The student does not voice consonants, nor aspirates them correctly. The student makes 10 voicing & aspiration diction mistakes.	The student rarely voices consonants and aspirates them correctly. The student makes 8 - 10 voicing & aspiration diction mistakes.	The student sometimes voices consonants and aspirates them correctly. The student makes 6 - 7 voicing & aspiration diction mistakes.	The student voices consonants and aspirates them correctly most of the time. The student makes 4 - 5 voicing & aspiration diction mistakes.	The student voices consonants and aspirates them correctly. The student makes 1 - 3 voicing & aspiration diction mistakes.	
Mother-tongue effect	The student shows difficulties managing interlingual mistakes. The student makes more than 20	The student needs to improve its management of interlingual mistakes. The student makes 8 - 10	The student demonstrates good management of interlingual mistakes. The student makes 6- 7 "mother-ton	The student demonstrates accurate management of interlingual mistakes. The student makes 4 - 5 "mother-ton	The student demonstrates exceptional management of interlingual mistakes. The student makes 1 - 3	

	"mother-ton gue effect" mistakes.	"mother-ton gue effect" mistakes.	gue effect" mistakes.	gue effect" mistakes.	"mother-ton gue effect" mistakes.	
Total						

Native like: 25 - 30 points

Excellent: 20 -24 points

Good: 15 - 19 points

Acceptable: 10 -14 points

In process of improvement: 0 - 9 points

4. Exercise 4

❖ Read some stanzas of an English song lyrics

Name of the song: Fireworks by Katy Perry (2010)

Do you ever feel like a plastic bag

Drifting through the wind

Wanting to start again?

Do you ever feel, feel so paper thin

Like a house of cards

One blow from caving in?

―――――――――――――

Do you ever feel already buried deep?

Six feet under screams, but no one seems to hear a thing

Do you know that there's still a chance for you

'Cause there's a spark in you

―――――――――――――――

You don't have to feel like a waste of space

You're original, cannot be replaced

If you only knew what the future holds

After a hurricane comes a rainbow

Reference: Perry, k. (2010). Fireworks. [Song]. From Teenage Dream. Capital Records.

	1	2	3	4	5	Comments

Pronunciation & Drop of consonants	The student pronounces no consonant and vowel sounds accurately. The student makes more than 10 pronunciation mistakes.	The student pronounces a few consonant and vowel sounds accurately. The student makes 8 - 10 pronunciation mistakes.	The student pronounces some consonant and vowel sounds accurately. The student makes 6 - 7 pronunciation mistakes.	The student pronounces almost every consonant and vowel sound accurately. The student makes 4 - 5 pronunciation mistakes.	The student pronounces every consonant and vowel sound accurately. The student makes 1 - 3 pronunciation mistakes.	
Intelligibility & Diction	The student's pronunciation of sentences, words, and syllables is impossible to understand. The student makes more than ten intelligibility & diction mistakes.	The student's pronunciation of sentences, words, and syllables is difficult to understand. The student makes 8 - 10 intelligibility & diction mistakes.	The student's pronunciation of sentences, words, and syllables is understandable in spite of frequent mistakes. The student makes 6 - 7 intelligibility & diction mistakes.	The student's pronunciation of sentences, words, and syllables is efficient most of the time. The student makes 4 - 5 intelligibility & diction mistakes.	The student's pronunciation of sentences, words, and syllables is always easy to understand. The student makes 1 - 3 intelligibility & diction mistakes.	
Intonation & Fluency	The student shows several difficulties with intonation and fluency. The student makes more than 10 intonation and fluency	The student needs to improve their intonation and fluency skills. The student makes 8-10 intonation and fluency mistakes.	The student speaks with good intonation and fluency. The student makes 6 - 7 intonation and fluency mistakes.	The student speaks with excellent intonation and fluency. The student makes 4 - 5 intonation and fluency mistakes.	The student speaks with native-like intonation and accurate fluency. The student makes 1 - 3 intonation and fluency mistakes.	

	mistakes.					
Naturality & Tone of voice	The student shows difficulties in demonstrating naturality and appropriate tone of voice during the exercise. The student makes more than 10 naturality and tone of voice mistakes.	The student needs to improve naturality and tone of voice skills. The student commits 8 - 10 naturality and tone of voice mistakes.	The student demonstrates good naturality and tone of voice during the exercise. The student commits 6-7 naturality and tone of voice mistakes.	The student demonstrates accurate naturality and tone of voice during the exercise. The student commits 4 - 5 naturality and tone of voice mistakes.	The student demonstrates native-like naturality and tone of voice during the exercise. The student commits 1-3 naturality and tone of voice mistakes.	
Voicing & Aspiration	The student does not voice consonants, nor aspirates them correctly. The student makes 10 voicing & aspiration diction mistakes.	The student rarely voices consonants and aspirates them correctly. The student makes 8 - 10 voicing & aspiration diction mistakes.	The student sometimes voices consonants and aspirates them correctly. The student makes 6 - 7 voicing & aspiration diction mistakes.	The student voices consonants and aspirates them correctly most of the time. The student makes 4 - 5 voicing & aspiration diction mistakes.	The student voices consonants and aspirates them correctly. The student makes 1 - 3 voicing & aspiration diction mistakes.	
Mother-tongue effect	The student shows difficulties managing interlingual mistakes. The student makes more than	The student needs to improve its management of interlingual mistakes. The student makes 8 -	The student demonstrates good management of interlingual mistakes. The student makes 6-	The student demonstrates accurate management of interlingual mistakes. The student makes 4 -	The student demonstrates exceptional management of interlingual mistakes. The student	

	20 "mother-tongue effect" mistakes.	10 "mother-tongue effect" mistakes.	7 "mother-tongue effect" mistakes.	5 "mother-tongue effect" mistakes.	makes 1 - 3 "mother-tongue effect" mistakes.	
Total						

Native like: 25 - 30 points

Excellent: 20 -24 points

Good: 15 - 19 points

Acceptable: 10 -14 points

In process of improvement: 0 - 9 points

7.2. Annex #2. Observation Rubric

The Use of English Songs on Pronunciation Acquisition of English as a Foreign Language.

	In Process of Improvement	Acceptable	Good	Excellent	Native like
Pronunciation & Drop of consonants The student pronounces every consonant and vowel sounds accurately.					
Intelligibility & Diction The student's pronunciation of sentences, words, and syllables is always easy to understand.					
Intonation & Fluency The student speaks with native-like intonation and accurate fluency.					
Naturality & Tone of voice The student demonstrates native-like naturality and tone of voice during the exercise.					

Voicing & Aspiration The student voices consonants and aspirates them correctly.					
Mother-tongue effect The student demonstrates exceptional management of interlingual mistakes.					
Topic, Task fulfillment & Vocabulary The student shows outstanding knowledge about the topic and instructions.			.		
Interaction & Comprehension The student's level of interaction and comprehension are excellent.					
Comments:					

7.3. Annex #3. Diagnosis Questionnaire

The Use of English Songs on Pronunciation Acquisition of English as a Foreign Language.

Cuestionario

Edad:_____ Género: _____

Queridos participantes,

El presente cuestionario forma parte del proyecto de tesis de la Licenciatura en Enseñanza del Inglés en la Sede del Pacífico de la Universidad de Costa Rica. Está dirigido a estudiantes actuales de diferentes carreras, especialmente aquellos que se encuentran en el grado de bachillerato de las diferentes sedes pertenecientes a la Universidad de Costa Rica. Tiene como objetivo observar el papel de las canciones en inglés dentro del proceso de adquirir una pronunciación eficaz en dicho idioma y ayudará a descubrir de qué maneras han sido empleadas dentro de su proceso de aprendizaje personal. Sus respuestas son de carácter anónimo y únicamente serán manejadas por el equipo de investigadores mencionado más adelante. ¡Gracias por su cooperación!

Instrucciones: En las siguientes preguntas, por favor seleccione o indique la respuesta que mejor se ajuste a sus experiencias previas, percepciones y expectativas.

Finalidad (Tema): El uso de canciones en inglés para la adquisición de pronunciación del inglés como lengua extranjera, aplicado a estudiantes de bachillerato de la Universidad de Costa Rica para corregir sus errores más comunes como hispanohablantes.

Instrumento

1. Indique cuál es el nivel de importancia que tiene para usted aprender una buena pronunciación en Inglés en su formación académica.

    (   ) Nada importante

    (   ) Poco importante

    (   ) Importante

    (   ) Muy importante

2. Marque los sonidos (vocales o consonantes) del inglés que ha encontrado difícil de aprender.

    ( ) Diptongos (ei, ai, ou, au)   ( ) Palabras con sonido th- (three, mouth, bath)

    ( ) Terminaciones (ed, ing, s, z)   ( ) Sonidos no sonoro (b, s, f, t)

    ( ) Sonidos con sonoro (v, m, z, r)   ( ) Inicios (s, sh, ch, k)

    ( ) Sonidos explosivos (p, t, f, k)   ( ) Sonidos de bloqueo de aire (x, y, h, sh)

    ( ) Vocales abiertas (a, e, i, o)

    ( ) Palabras con sonido w- (where, how, require)

3. ¿Cuáles cree usted que son los errores más comunes a la hora de aprender pronunciación en inglés?

   ( ) Agregarle vocales a palabras que empiezan con s- (eschool - school)

   ( ) Pronunciar la /v/ como /b/ (vacation)

   ( ) Pronunciar la /z/ como /s/ (confuse)

   ( ) Pronunciar la /th/ como /t/ (thank)

   ( ) Omitir sonidos de consonantes al final de palabras (tex - text, listenin - listening)

4. ¿Qué tan a menudo escucha canciones en inglés?

   ( ) Nunca
   ( ) Algunas veces
   ( ) Casi siempre
   ( ) Siempre

5. Mencione nombres de canciones en inglés que han sido útiles para usted para aprender el idioma.

   _____

   _____

   _____

6. ¿Alguna vez en sus clases de inglés han utilizado canciones? (Si su respuesta es negativa pase a la pregunta 8)

   ( ) Sí
   ( ) No

7. Por favor, explique de manera breve alguna actividad donde sus docentes hayan utilizado canciones en inglés durante la clase.

   _____

   _____

   _____

8. ¿Está usted de acuerdo con el uso recurrente de canciones en el proceso de aprendizaje de un idioma extranjero?

   ( ) Muy en desacuerdo
   ( ) En desacuerdo
   ( ) De acuerdo
   ( ) Muy de acuerdo

9. ¿Qué tan efectivo considera que es la utilización de las canciones en inglés en comparación con otros métodos que se emplean para mejorar la pronunciación (tales como los audios de conversaciones)?

( ) Muy mala

( ) Poco efectiva

( ) Efectiva

( ) Muy efectiva

10. ¿Ha notado algún avance en el aprendizaje de pronunciación cuando escucha y canta la letra de una canción en inglés? Comente.

_____

_____

_____

The Use of English Songs on Pronunciation Acquisition of English as a Foreign Language.

Cuestionario

Edad:_____

Género:_____

Queridos participantes,

El presente cuestionario forma parte del proyecto de tesis de la Licenciatura en Enseñanza del Inglés en la Sede del Pacífico de la Universidad de Costa Rica. Está dirigido a estudiantes actuales de diferentes carreras, especialmente aquellos que se encuentran en el grado de bachillerato de las diferentes sedes pertenecientes a la Universidad de Costa Rica. Tiene como objetivo observar el papel de las canciones en inglés dentro del proceso de adquirir una pronunciación eficaz en dicho idioma y ayudará a descubrir de qué maneras han sido empleadas dentro de su proceso de aprendizaje personal. Sus respuestas son de carácter anónimo y únicamente serán manejadas por el equipo de investigadores mencionado más adelante. ¡Gracias por su cooperación!

Instrucciones: En las siguientes preguntas, por favor seleccione o indique la respuesta que mejor se ajuste a sus experiencias adquiridas durante las sesiones, percepciones y expectativas.

Finalidad (Tema): El uso de canciones en inglés para la adquisición de pronunciación del inglés como lengua extranjera, aplicado a estudiantes de bachillerato de la Universidad de Costa Rica para corregir sus errores más comunes como hispanohablantes.

Basado en su experiencia y participación a todas las sesiones pertenecientes a este proyecto, donde se utilizaron canciones como una estrategia para mejorar la pronunciación del inglés, reflexione y responda las siguientes preguntas.

1. ¿Qué tan efectivo considera el uso de las canciones al estudiar un idioma?
   ( ) Muy efectivo
   ( ) Efectivo
   ( ) Poco efectivo
   ( ) Inefectivo

2. A continuación se le muestra una lista de canciones, seleccione tres de ellas que hayan sido útiles en su proceso de aprendizaje de pronunciación, fluidez y nuevo vocabulario. (*la lista de canciones puede aumentar con el transcurso de las sesiones)

( ) Malibú por Miley Cyrus   ( ) Fireworks por Katy Perry
( ) Beautiful por Cristina Aguilera   ( ) Pure Imagination por Gene Wilder
( ) Immortality por Celine Dion   ( ) Bohemian Rhapsody por Queen
( ) Under pressure por Queen   ( ) Somebody to love por Queen

3. ¿Han influido las actividades realizadas por los profesores durante las sesiones en su rutina al escuchar una nueva canción en inglés? Comente cuál es su rutina cuando escucha una canción en inglés y no la entiende.

_____

_____

_____

4. En comparación con las estrategias empleadas en su experiencia previa, ¿con cuánta facilidad ha aprendido la pronunciación de las palabras que aparecen en las canciones?

( ) Mucha

( ) Regular

( ) Poca

( ) Ninguna

5. ¿Pone usted en práctica la pronunciación de las palabras aprendidas que se mencionaron previamente?

( ) Nunca
( ) Algunas veces
( ) Casi siempre
( ) Siempre

6. ¿Ha notado algún avance en el aprendizaje de pronunciación del inglés? Es decir, ¿considera que su pronunciación en inglés ha mejorado? ( ) Sí
( ) No
Comente.

_____

_____

_____

7. ¿Ha notado algún cambio con relación a los errores comunes de pronunciación que cometía antes de participar en este proyecto? Comente.

_____

_____

_____

8. ¿Considera usted que las canciones pueden ser una estrategia efectiva para corregir los errores en la pronunciación del inglés?
   ( ) Muy efectiva
   ( ) Efectiva
   ( ) Poco efectiva
   ( ) Inefectiva

9. ¿Qué tan efectivo considera que es el uso de las canciones en inglés como estrategia didáctica en comparación con otras que se emplean para mejorar la pronunciación (tales como los audios de conversaciones)?
   ( ) Muy efectiva
   ( ) Efectiva
   ( ) Poco efectiva
   ( ) Inefectiva

10. Después de toda su experiencia, ¿apoyaría el empleo recurrente de canciones en el proceso de aprendizaje en otros cursos de idiomas? Comente sus razones.

_____

_____

_____

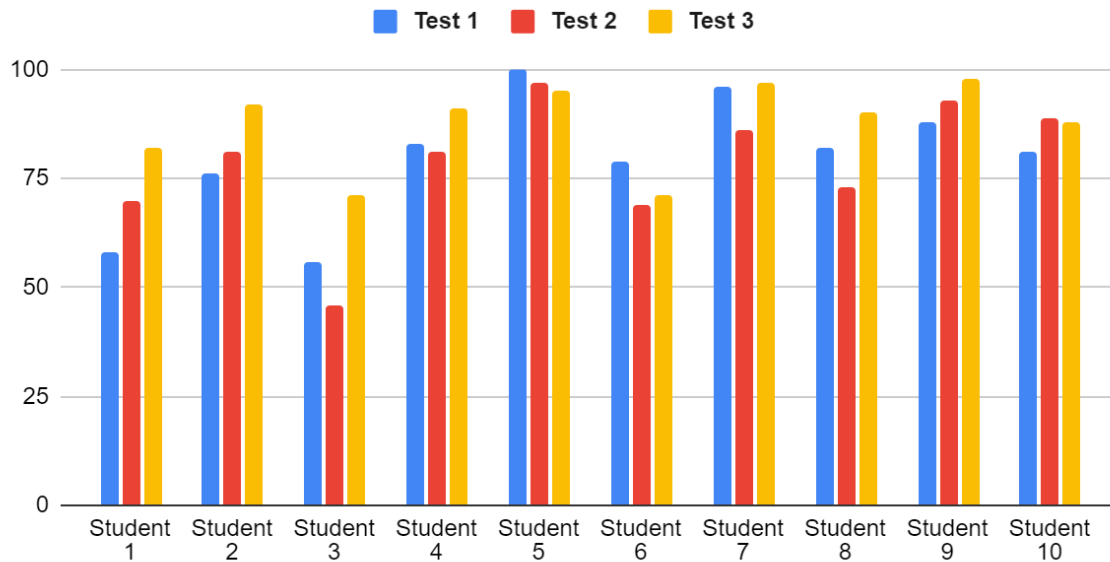**7.5. Annex #5. Summary Figure about Exercise 4 in Tests I, II and III**

Figure #29. Exercise 4 in tests 1,2 and 3. Costa Rica. May 21st, June 11th and July 2nd, 2022.
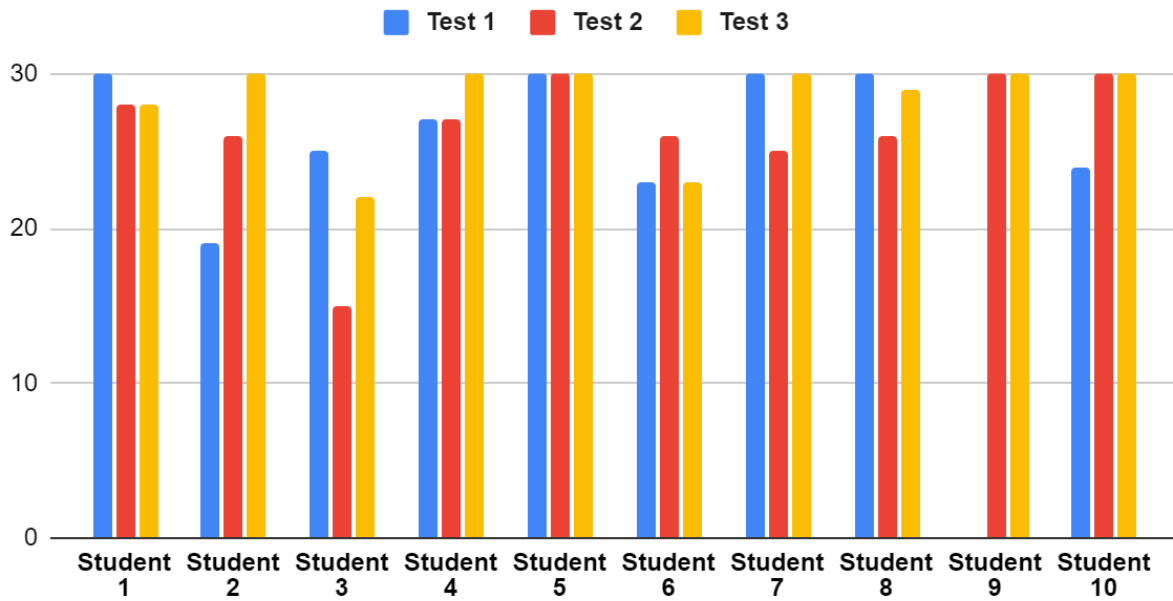
Source: Own elaboration.

7.6. Annex #6. Summary Figure about Population Results in Tests I, II and III

Figure #30. Test Results. Costa Rica. May 21st, June 11th and July 2nd, 2022.

Source: Own elaboration.