Listening comprehension to improve pronunciation in students of Mechanics Career-ESPOCH. A linguistic analysis

Comprensión auditiva para mejorar la pronunciación en estudiantes de Mechanics Career-ESPOCH. Un análisis lingüístico

Compreensão auditiva para melhorar a pronúncia em estudantes de Mecânica de Carreira-ESPOCH. Uma análise linguística

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Ciencias de la educación
Artículo de investigación

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Resumen

La importancia de la comprensión auditiva en la pronunciación del inglés es incuestionable. Los objetivos de este proyecto fueron establecer si se correlacionan la comprensión auditiva y la pronunciación del inglés de estudiantes de Mecánica de la ESPOCH y mejorar su pronunciación del inglés. Técnicas interactivas para mejorar la pronunciación y una triangulación de métodos, técnicas e instrumentos fueron aplicados. Elementos segmentales, suprasegmentales, sociolingüísticos, metalingüísticos y códigos extralingüísticos fueron estudiados. Se colectaron datos en la práctica docente. Se observó el fenómeno sistemáticamente mediante pruebas y rúbricas que sirvieron como guías de observación para medir la pronunciación. Con el método analítico se contabilizaron errores fonéticos y fonológicos en el idioma inglés. Se observó una mejora significativa del 11.4 % en la pronunciación de los estudiantes, mejorando el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje del Idioma Inglés. Se recomienda la experimentación sistemática con técnicas similares y la creación de otras bajo la Lingüística Aplicada.

Palabras claves: Comprensión auditiva; técnicas; pronunciación; enseñanza; aprendizaje; mejoramiento.

Abstract

The importance of listening comprehension to improve English pronunciation is unquestionable. The objectives of this project were to establish whether the listening comprehension correlates with the English pronunciation of the students of Mechanics Career at ESPOCH and improve their English pronunciation. Interactive learning techniques and a triangulation of methods, techniques and instruments were applied. Segmental, suprasegmental, sociolinguistic, metalinguistic and extra-linguistic codes factors were studied Data was collected in teaching practice. The phenomenon was observed systematically through tests and rubrics that served as observation guides to measure pronunciation. With the analytical method, phonetic and phonological errors were recorded in the English language. It was observed an important improvement of 11.4 % in the student's pronunciation and besides the process of teaching English language learning was improved. Systematic experimentation with similar techniques and the creation of others under Applied Linguistics is recommended.

Keywords: Listening comprehension; techniques; pronunciation; teaching; learning; improvement.

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Resumo

A importância da compreensão auditiva na pronúncia do inglês é inquestionável. Os objetivos deste projeto foram estabelecer se a compreensão auditiva e a pronúncia em inglês dos alunos do ESPOCH Mechanical estão correlacionadas e melhorar sua pronúncia em inglês. Foram aplicadas técnicas interativas para melhorar a pronúncia e uma triangulação de métodos, técnicas e instrumentos. Foram estudados códigos segmentar, supra-segmentar, sociolinguístico, metalinguístico e extralinguístico. Os dados foram coletados na prática de ensino. O fenômeno foi observado sistematicamente usando testes e rubricas que serviram como guias de observação para medir a pronúncia. O método analítico foi responsável por erros fonéticos e fonológicos no idioma inglês. Uma melhora significativa de 11,4% foi observada na pronúncia dos alunos, melhorando o processo de ensino-aprendizagem da Língua Inglesa. Recomenda-se a experimentação sistemática com técnicas semelhantes e a criação de outras sob Linguística Aplicada.

Palavras-chave: Compreensão auditiva; técnicas; pronúncia; ensino; aprendizagem; melhoria.

Introducción

The listening comprehension project in the pronunciation process is presented as a low-level solution in the pronunciation of the students of the Mechanics Career at ESPOCH. The importance of listening comprehension in pronunciation is unquestionable. Around the world, there have been performed multiple studies that show how listening skills and more specifically listening comprehension positively or negatively affects the development of pronunciation in a foreign language and especially in the English language. This approach is supported by Iruela (2007) who in his article "Teaching principles for teaching pronunciation in foreign languages" conceives pronunciation as a determining factor to improve communication in foreign languages and among one of the factors that help the development of listening comprehension.

Similarly, Cantero (2003) in his article "Phonetics and pronunciation didactics" affirms that the phonetic mechanisms that allow the integration of discourse help the listener to increase their hearing capacity through practice and furthermore influence the articulation of sounds for the production of phonemes, phones, sentences and speech. Besides, Águila (2005) explains the aforementioned and states that regardless the age of English learners, if exposed more time to

audios in a foreign language, positive results regarding various aspects of pronunciation such as accent, tone and rhythm would be obtained. Following the same approach (Gilbert, 2012), demonstrates the relationship that listening comprehension has with pronunciation and therefore with English communication.

This study follows the idea that "input determines output", just as a child listens from his parents a language and over time perfects it, it is also possible to do it in a foreign language. In such a way, it is important to investigate new ways of teaching to motivate students through interactive activities that help them to develop speaking with clarity, fluency, rhythm and proper intonation. In this regard, it results important to understand the different factors inherent the subject studied in this paper.

Linguistic competence and communicative competence

When communicating the interlocutors integrate Linguistic and communicative competence. In relation to the first, Chuquicondor, R, (2016) mentions that in the speaker there are conscious and unconscious factors that comprise linguistic competence. It means that the speaker has the innate ability to develop phonological, semantic, syntactic, and morphological factors. On the other hand, Haarmann (2011) agrees with Saussure, Coseriu, Hymes and other authors that linguistic competence implies grammatical factors inherent in human capacity; also that, this competence is developed with the interaction of the speaker with society, concluding that this competence implies innate linguistics and social factors. Bearing in mind the aforementioned concepts, it is inferred that the development of both linguistic competence and communicative competence depend on physiological development and interaction of the subjects, this can be observed empirically in everyday life when a child learns a language; he/she progressively through interaction incorporates vocabulary, creates sentences and communicates effectively.

Listening

It was previously mentioned that listening and listening comprehension have a lot of similarity, in this context some authors conceive them as the same process in which there is an interactive and complex level of development, however listening comprehension would be a step beyond that, since it implies the correct assimilation of the information that is demonstrated through

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appropriate responses, which are verified in listening comprehension exercises applied in different contexts.

Rost defines listening as a process of receiving what the sender actually expresses (receptive orientation); build and represent meaning (constructive orientation); negotiate the meaning with the issuer and respond (the collaborative orientation); and create meaning through participation, imagination and empathy (transformative orientation). "Listening is a process of active and complex interpretation in which the person who listens establishes a relationship between what he hears and what is already known to him or her." (Rost, 2002, p. 13)

The author adds that listening is shown as a complex process that involves more than just the perception of sounds and so he qualifies it as a sophisticated and dynamic process which involves several cognitive operations. Also, the author perceives listening "as four overlapping types of process: neurological, linguistic, semantic and pragmatic" (Rost, 2015, p.17)

Listening comprehension in the classroom

There is no doubt about the importance of listening comprehension in the process of teaching English, several authors remark this as an essential and extremely determining factor for a correct oral expression and more specifically for a proper pronunciation. Ocaña (2009) highlights the close relationship between listening comprehension and oral expression and affirms that the "lack of a rigorous treatment at the first has slowed the development of the second." Despite the fact they are interdependent factors, it is necessary to study them separately for a more rigorous analysis and work on the practice of English language teaching.

Phases in the development of listening comprehension

Even in the early ages, children respond to listening stimuli such as songs, games, or stories only with gestures, with sounds or even with the mother tongue as mentioned by Amin et al. (2012) in his work "Integrated Hispanic-British curriculum for early childhood education and guidance for its development"; later on along the school development, students will begin to interact with L2.

Sánchez, Costa, & Jiménez (2002) in their study "Influence of a program of development of psycholinguistic skills in reading and writing access" mentioned that despite the belief that a child who is well lateralized, with a normal IQ, good visuomotor coordination, good body

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scheme can fully develop literacy, but often it is not. Learning not only depends on cognitive psycholinguistic factors that can influence, they do not always do it directly, it is necessary to understand that before writing or reading, first listening and speaking are developed; therefore, there is a close relationship between oral, listening and visual, the important thing is to move from a phonetic expression to syntactic and semantic expressions, for this the appropriate orientation is necessary in the development of all the skills, without forgetting that the appropriate input can considerably improve the output.

This study evidenced not only the relationship between skills, but also that with the proper exercise of psycholinguistic skills, a parallel and interrelated improvement of skills can be obtained.

As mentioned earlier, it is important that you work on the input to get good results in the other skills. It has already been pointed out that language skills are divided into receptive and productive skills, and that receptive skills are divided into reading comprehension and listening comprehension, but what processes underlie listening comprehension¨?

Oral speech

The teaching of the spoken language has been one of the major concerns both pedagogically and linguistically, and even more in the teaching of foreign languages where orality plays a very important role in the communication process, Santasusana et al. ., (2005). When you talk, you communicate thoughts, feelings, when the teacher interacts in the classroom, he tries to awaken the social interaction with the students, to present their opinions about certain knowledge expressed and finally that the students can explain and argue about knowledge exposed in the classroom and outside it. The fundamental idea is to teach through interaction, what is said, how it is said and how it interacts since the oral discourse is, as mentioned by Roulet (cited in Santasusana et al., 2005, p. 11), "a real-time joint construction of a content, a situation, and a relationship and interaction with the other ".

For speech process to take place, it is necessary to have several elements: the stage, the participants, the purposes, the form, the content, the mode, the code, the rules of interaction and interpretation and the genres, as stated by Hymes as cited by (Graesser A. & et. al., 2008, p. 33)

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Personal assessment of the oral speech

It can be said that the personal assessment of the speech is a form of manifestation of the listener, Santasusana et al. (2005) mention that there are components that facilitate the assimilation of the message such as interest, need or curiosity. The issuer values the speech according to their sociocultural and pragmatic competence.

Rodriguez (2006) points out important issues to interact in the classroom and consider the personal assessment of students' language. Some of them are mentioned: first, to present clear criteria for listening and speaking activities based on techniques oriented to the development of these competences, then the elaboration of instruments that help the interpretation of oral speeches, in the case of this project in English It is also necessary to develop grammatical, semantic and pragmatic skills, this must be done in a communicative way and finally strengthen the space for oral interaction. To understand speaking, metalinguistic, cognitive, perceptual, attitudinal and sociolinguistic factors must be considered.

Extralinguistic codes

Muñoz, Rupérez, & Angrehs (2011) mention that all verbal communication is accompanied by non-verbal communication, it contains facial expressions, gestures and other elements such as pauses, nuances of voice and hesitation, these codes significantly affect the message that If you try to transmit, they can constitute even 55% of the transmitted message. These codes constitute part of the social ability of the interlocutors who can interpret the meanings without having to listen to the whole speech as long as it fits the communication context. Among these extralinguistic codes are gestures, facial expressions, hesitation, unfinished phrases, extended pauses.

Pronunciation

Roach, (2010) considers that when studying the pronunciation of the English language you have to analyze the phonemes and not the letters or graphemes, it is understood by pronunciation to the way in which a word or a language is produced orally, the way in you pronounce a word. If it is said that someone has a "correct pronunciation", it means that the sounds produced conform to the sound patterns determined in a certain language. A word can be spoken differently by

different individuals or groups, depending on many factors such as: the duration of the cultural exhibition during your childhood, the location of your current residence, speech or speech disorders, your ethnic group, your class social, or their education. It is important to know what sounds can be studied in pronunciation, for this it is important to know the linguistic terminology that refers to them.

Phone

In phonetics and linguistics, a phone is any different sound or gesture, regardless of whether its correct sound affects the meaning of the words.

Phoneme

It is a speech sound that, given a specific language, if it were replaced by another phoneme, would change the meaning of the word.

Once the difference between phone and phoneme has been determined, it can be said that the phones are absolute, not specific in any language, but phonemes are discussed only in reference to a specific language. Loos, (1999)In the context of spoken languages, a phone is a sound of an unanalyzed language. A phone is a segment of speech that has perceptual or physical properties and serves as a basic unit for the phonetic analysis of speech. Phones are generally consonants or vowels.

In the present study, the segmental and suprasegmental elements were studied, analyzed and taught, as well as the dissertation of sociolinguistic factors that could affect the achievement of the objectives set.

Segmental elements

Roach (2010) defines the segmental elements as a consecutive string of sounds that make up a wider sound with meaning for a given language, these can be divided into vowel phonemes and consonant phonemes.

Vocal phonemes

Roach (2010) considers that vowel sounds usually have no obstruction, it can be said that a vowel is a sound of spoken language, produced with an open vocal tract, so that the tongue does not

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touch the lips, teeth or roof of the mouth, as in the case of "ah" / ɑː / or "oh" / oʊ /. There is no air pressure built at any point on the glottis. This contrasts with the sound of consonants such as the English "sh" [ʃː], which has a constriction or lock somewhere along the vocal tract. The vowel sounds constitute the nucleus of the syllable that is a vowel, it can happen in the form of monophthong, diphthong or triphthong, other times it is a syllable consonant.

Consonant phonemes

Picello, (2018) mentions that a syllabic consonant or a vowel consonant is one that forms a syllable by itself, such as the "m, n" in the English words: rhythm, button and bottle, or more clearly is the nucleus of a syllable as the sound of r in the American pronunciation of the word work.

One of the most difficult aspects of English language study is pronunciation. The problem is further complicated because although the letters of the alphabet are the same in English and in many other languages, they are almost never pronounced in the same way. Thus, for example, many people believe that the English t is pronounced as the Spanish "t" simply because those letters are the same. The sounds of t, d, p, b, k and g in English are not only pronounced by placing the tongue in a different position but also are aspirated.

Suprasegmental elements

Becker & Bieswanger, (2017) Suprasegmental elements are a vocal effect that extends over more than one segment of sound within a pronunciation. This includes variations of accent, tone and intonation. They are the secondary elements of the language that in the field of phonology are related to accent, intonation, rhythm and pause. " In the teaching-learning process of the English language, knowledge and the proper application of these can significantly influence elements. The suprasegmental elements studied were accent, intonation, tone, rhythm and pauses

Although pauses are a natural characteristic related to breathing, their contribution to contrasting linguistic information is also attributed to them. Within the English language, the pause occurs more frequently, prior to a word with high information content. Defining the pause is a complex task: since it is necessary to distinguish between pauses of silence and "full" pauses.

Materials and methods

The research presents a triangulation of technics, methods and instruments, it shows the prevalence of empirical, inductive and analytical methods. The empirical method was used because during the experience of teaching English to the students of Mechanics Career standardized tests were applied with their respective rubrics that served as an observation guide, with this instrument it was possible to show in general terms the problems that the students have about pronunciation. One reason for this study the pronunciation. Subsequently with a more sophisticated instrument (observation guide) that measured in detail the pronunciation errors of the students, the problem could be analyzed with accuracy, the analytical method was applied here. And finally, with the analyzed results of the pre and post-test, and what was expressed in the questionnaire by the students, it was possible to induce (inductive method) that the listening understanding effectively influences the pronunciation of the students.

This research project is designed under a mixed quantitative approach linked to current research guidelines in the area of Social Sciences, this perspective is supported by Grinnell & Unrau (2007), cited by Ruiz, Borboa & Rodríguez (2013), who points out that Mixed Approach follows five interdependent phases such as observing and evaluating a phenomenon, establishing possible causes and consequences, testing and demonstrating them through scientific contrast, reviewing assumptions with tests or analysis and finally proposing. It is primarily quantitative because it uses descriptive and inferential statistics as the main reference to collect and contrast the information, in this case the number of errors in the pronunciation of the students of the ESPOCH Language Center. This information was contrasted under an arduous literature review which also makes it a qualitative investigation.

This research used as reference books, scientific articles of previous research, videos, graduation thesis on the subject, assessment instruments and observation guides taken from previous work, dictionaries and other documents, for all these reasons this research is located under the modality of documentary bibliographic research. This is also a field research worked with methods, techniques and instruments which demanded the presence of the researcher in time and space where the phenomenon was developed. To better support the proposed theory standardized diagnostic tests of Cambridge University w. Observation, diagnostics, student survey and content analysis tables were used for the analysis. This socio – educational research helped to achieve the objectives of the Plan Nacional del Buen Vivir in its four objectives, oriented to strengthen the

capacities and potential of citizens. A proposal is presented that will surely serve as a reference to achieve a significant improvement in pronunciation. This contribution helps students to increase their abilities and potentials.

In this research, three levels of research are evidenced, it is based on a descriptive level, then it is passed to an application level and finally to a correlation level to measure the relationship between the variables of listening compression and pronunciation. At the descriptive level, the characteristics of the problem were examined in detail, the sources of information were chosen and studied, the instruments and an application plan were developed. Finally, the data that served to intervene systematically in one of the variables. It is an applied investigation because the product "Listening comprehension techniques to improve the pronunciation of the students of the ESPOCH Language Center" was used with the students for an average of 20 minutes for approximately five months of English teaching, this served to critically and analytically link the correlation between the product and the theory. With the instruments content analysis table and tests the correlation between the listening comprehension variable and the pronunciation variable was established. The determining factor was the application of five listening comprehension techniques during the academic period October 2018- Februry 2019 after the diagnostic test. The result obtained in the second test after the application of the techniques showed a significant improvement in the reduction of errors in the pronunciation of the students. Statistical data shows the correlation between the variable once it has been operated.

Population and Sample

Table 1: Population Observation Units

POPULATION	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGES
Students	25	100%
Total	25	100%

Table 2: Sample Observation Units

SAMPLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGES
Students	25	100 %
Total	25	100 %

The sample chosen for this study is made up of 25 students of the Mechanics Carries at ESPOCH. The population is the total of the population, 25 students. The product was applied to the students and had the by the researchers

Results and discussion

Results

In order to demonstrate the relationship between the variables listening comprehension and pronunciation, bibliography was analyzed in detail that evidenced the relationship between these two aspects of language. Several authors consider that there is a close relationship and interdependency between listening comprehension and pronunciation. According to the questionnaire instrument to know the criteria of the students about their pronunciation and aspects related to listening comprehension there is a relationship between the variables studied. The relation was analyzed with Person Correlation Test with a correlation of .594** and a significance of .002. The maximum sig. accepted was .005.

Person Correlation

**Table 3:** Listening comprehension and pronunciation Person Correlation Coefficient

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Listening Comprehension	2.7000	.40000	25
Pronunciation	2.6320	.56326	25

Correlations

		Listening Comprehension	Pronunciation
Listening Comprehension	Pearson Correlation	1	.594**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	25	25
Pronunciation	Pearson Correlation	.594**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	

N		25	25

Figure 1: Listening Comprehension and Pronunciation
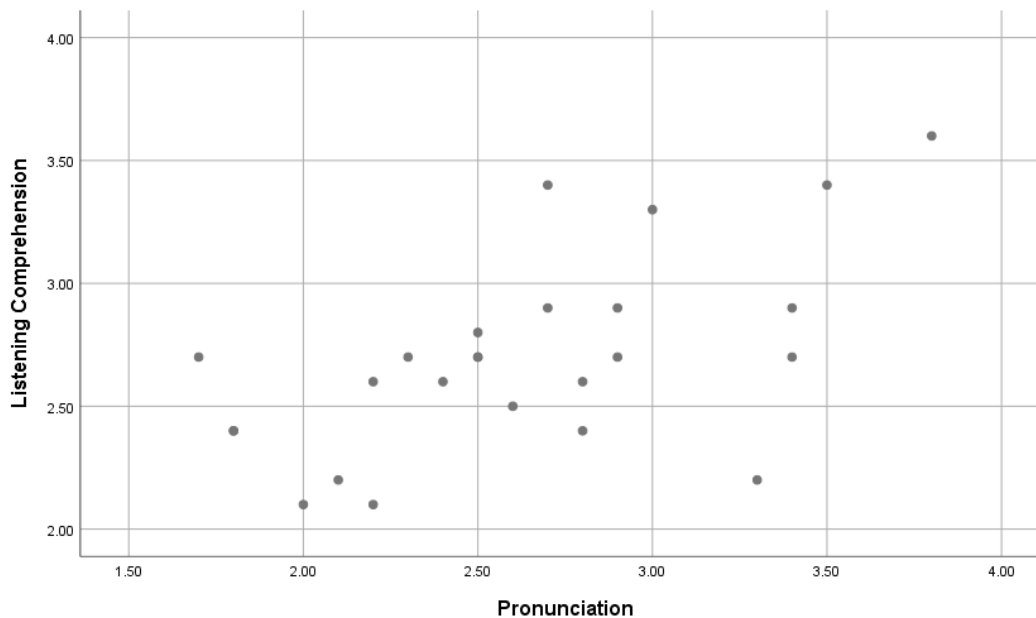
This figure shows the level of correlation between the two variables.

Figure 2: KET-TEST ERRORS COUNTING

KET Errors Counting			
Students (S)	Total mistakes pre-test KET	Total mistakes post-test KET	Difference
S1	37.0	38.0	+1
S2	46.0	38.0	-8
S3	30.0	35.0	+5
S4	40.0	35.0	-5
S5	21.0	28.0	+7
S6	79.0	70.0	-9
S7	34.0	31.0	-3
S8	50.0	35.0	-15
S9	57.0	36.0	-21

S10	78.0	58.0	-20
S11	39.0	32.0	-7
S12	60.0	45.0	-15
S13	16.0	10.0	-6
S14	40.0	25.0	-15
S15	49.0	45.0	-4
S16	19.0	11.0	-8
S17	55.0	48.0	-7
S18	38.0	33.0	-5
S19	32.0	30.0	-2
S20	37.0	34.0	-3
S21	40.0	30.0	-10
S22	41.0	32.0	-9
S23	50.0	51.0	+1
S24	40.0	29.0	-23
S25	68.0	79.0	+11

After a thorough work of about 6 months among data collection, theorization, application of listening comprehension techniques and an extensive analysis of contents through the counting of errors, it was determined that students did improve already 12% in the reduction of errors after the application of these techniques. The affirmative criterion of the researcher is evidenced especially in table N ° 1. The results according to the instrument contents analysis table indicate a significant change. The specific items that were analyzed in the sample: vowels, consonants, pauses, rhythm and accentuation, show a significantly decrease, increasing the level of pronunciation of the students.

T-STUDENT

Another instrument that was used to verify the change of the students' level was a Cambridge rubric that qualified the level of the speaking skill, among the aspects evaluated was

pronunciation. The level of improvement according to standardized tests was 11.8%. I can be observed in the following statistical analysis.

Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre test KET	1.68	25	.988	.198
	Post test KET	2.44	25	.870	.174

Paired Samples Correlations

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Pre test KET & Post test KET	25	.510	.009

Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences							
				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	
Pair 1 Pre test KET - Post test KET	-.760	.926	.185	-1.142	-.378	-4.106	24	.000

Discussion

The execution of the project allowed the students of the Mechanics Career at ESPOCH improving English language pronunciation. Modern methodological techniques of listening comprehension were systematized: Productive Imitation technique, Communicative Phonetic technique, Sounds Contrast Technique, vowels change Technique, Reading and reproduction technique, these techniques serve to qualitatively and quantitatively improve the level of speaking skill.

Changes in the Cambridge test are presented and by means of the table of contents analysis the impact is measured after the application of the listening comprehension techniques.

It is also demonstrated the impact of the project, it explains the change in the level of the students in their pronunciation, this aspect allows improving the speaking skills and therefore communication. Communication is the fundamental part in the teaching- learning process of English language. In this way, the education provided to Mechanics Career transcends significantly and fulfills the academic mission proposed by the institution.

The correlation between the variable listening comprehension and pronunciation is demonstrated by thorough theoretical and practical work. The product of this research is also the techniques of listening comprehension that, based on the results obtained, demonstrate not only its validity, but also the contribution in the cognitive aspect to the research community.

Finally, the project contributes significantly to the objective of the ESPOCH, which is to train capable human beings who interact in a globalized world. This criterion is consistent with the teachers who work with groups of students to whom the project was applied. Teachers observe a better predisposition of the students to interact and participate in the classroom at the time of learning speaking. Finally, the ideas that are provided with the techniques of listening comprehension facilitate, according to the teachers' criteria, the socio-educational interaction of those who make up Mechanics Career.

Conclusions

The main objective of this research was to establish whether the listening comprehension correlates with the pronunciation of the students of the Mechanic Career at ESPOCH. The study group consisted of 25 students, to whom Cambridge tests, surveys and an interview were applied to evaluate the variables of this study. Considering the total of the instruments used, the specific objectives and following the relevant statistical analyzes, it can be concluded that:

- The pronunciation of vowels, consonants, accentuation, rhythm, pauses and intonation have a significant correlation with the comprehension techniques applied. If the partial changes that occur between the results of the content analysis tables of the pre and post tests are examined, it is demonstrated that in all the aspects analyzed there is a significant change, with the pauses indicator being the one that has improved the most.

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- The results show a significant improvement of one and two points average in the Cambridge standardized tests in the pronunciation item, this in turn influences the final result of the Speaking skill qualification.

- With respect to the theoretical value, it can be concluded that they are transcendental indicators of communicative competence. That is why it is necessary that in Ecuador more studies are developed and the teaching and learning process of pronunciation is continuously monitored, this will increase the cognitive heritage and allow contrasting results.

- It is also concluded that the good performance achieved in pronunciation, is a factor that positively affects the group of students, in the academic aspect, in the enthusiasm, as in the security to participate in class and benefits teachers.

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