

# Teaching Pronunciation through ICT Tools: A Case Study



**Universitat Jaume I**

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**ABSTRACT**

The world is increasingly turning into a global zone where communicating becomes imperative. As a consequence of this globalisation, a common language should be spoken to enable interaction. English is an essential means of communication between different places which bridges cultures and life styles. However, “What do we learn in a language course?” or, more importantly, “how do we communicate with this language?” are two significant questions in language teaching. This document focuses on pronunciation and it shows how pronunciation has been taught from a historical perspective. In order to deepen on the research, this document contains a study conducted in an actual classroom in Secondary Education in Castellón de la Plana. The teaching of pronunciation has been neglected for many years in EFL. Consequently, some class weaknesses regarding pronunciation have been identified and fully treated. Evidence and results of the study can be seen in the audio files attached and the tables analysed. Eventually, some discussions as well as future implementations can be observed as well.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PQPI - Programa Qualificació Professional Inicial

PDC - Programa de Diversificación Curricular

EFL - English as a Foreign Language

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The present document entitled “Teaching Pronunciation through ICT Tools: A Case Study” embraces a two-fold aim. On the one hand, it delves into the difficulty for Spaniards to pronounce certain combination of phonemes. The first part of the study has a theoretical nature which exhibits the English pronunciation instruction over time. It also explores how “troublesome” English pronunciation has been and it still is for Spanish learners. On the other hand, triggered by these difficulties, I conducted a study to pave the way for a new approach to be implemented. It needs to be stated that what it is meant by “new” is any creative and brand-new approach for this particular high school.

After an arduous reading process and exhausting observation, the main weaknesses of the analysed groups were identified and classified. These weak points were the pronunciation of “-ed endings”, initial consonant clusters, homophones, and minimal pairs. Therefore, these four elements are the core subjects of study of the project. In order to provide a precise description of the study, several sections have been devoted to expose the steps followed in detail.

Firstly, the class background and its features are thoroughly explained. Within this section, the languages spoken in the classroom, the role of the English teacher, and the identified problems are mandatory in the development of the study. Secondly, bearing in mind the aforesaid weaknesses and the classroom traits, an approach of teaching pronunciation has been proposed. It consists of two didactic units which are devoted to the study of “Homophones, Minimal Pairs and Consonant Clusters” and “The pronunciation of –ed endings” respectively. It needs to be mentioned that minimal pairs have been included in these didactic units since, in order to determine which are distinctive sounds and phonemes, the customary practice is to set up minimal pairs. This practice is also called commutation test (替换法/测试, 2002:93).

Thirdly, I offer an intensive description of both didactic units including the students background knowledge, timing and sequencing, competences, materials, space, activities, and evaluation criteria. Once the study has been explained in depth, the results as well as some improvement proposals can be observed. Eventually, some conclusions are drawn.



## 2. MOTIVATION

The motivation that triggered the current study was encountered in my “Pràcticum” internship in Matilde Salvador Secondary School. Some students were required to give a short oral presentation on the six most relevant items for them in life. They needed to indicate which object it was and the reason why they had chosen this particular thing. They could also have visual aids to base their oral presentation on. However, as usual, they did not complete the oral activity since they asserted that they were not able to do it. It was a fifteen-student classroom and no more than three students accomplished the task.

As the session continued its normal path, the entire group was correcting the written homework that they were required to. The difficulty of these written activities was genuinely high compared with the oral presentation task. After observing the students behaviour and considering it truly striking, I thought that there was a lot to be done in that field. Therefore, this study was willing to put an end to this failure on speaking, and especially on pronunciation.

After an exhaustive observation of the students, a gap in their learning process was identified. Extremely little value was placed in both teaching and learning pronunciation. The students found it truly complicated pronouncing certain words. However, providing them a crumb of hope might lead them consider that pronunciation is, at least, a fun challenge. This study regards this hope as a proper starting point.

As a result of the observation, it was possible to determine which sounds caused more trouble to the students. Thus, previous to implement the new approach, the main difficulties were identified and grouped. These weak points, although deeply explained afterwards, can be listed pronunciation of “-ed endings”, initial consonant clusters, homophones, and minimal pairs.

It is paramount that the learners should discern several sounds. Learners should be aware of what they hear and produce. Any minimum change of sounds can prompt a misunderstanding in communication. Since spoken language is primary, the sounds of the language should be imperative in our teaching. The sounds may be taught one at a time with priority given to those impeding comprehension and/or/by contrasting them in what is called “minimal pairs” (Finocchiaro, and Bonomo, 1973:106) Therefore, it is a must that the teacher reinforces the awareness of pronunciation being such a key point in the learning process. It must be stated that pronunciation is key since “we judge people by the way they speak, and so learners with poor pronunciation may be judged as incompetent, uneducated or lacking in knowledge” (Gilakjani, 2012:96).

It should be emphasised that the students are taught grammar as well as vocabulary (semantics of words). No exposure to any pronunciation remark has been observed which makes the study a demanding task. Nevertheless, the present study tackles the idea that pronunciation should be a central element in the acquisition of any language. “Pronunciation instruction is a prominent factor in foreign language teaching” (Gilakjani, 2012:96). Students will have “oral communication problems no matter how excellent and extensive English grammar and vocabulary might be” (Celce-Murcia, et al. 1996: 7).

### 3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Despite widespread agreement on the importance of pronunciation teaching, in ESL courses around countries where English is taught, pronunciation is the aspect of language that receives least attention. (Fraser, 1999:2). In spite of the importance of pronunciation in L2 learning, its training has remained largely neglected in the field of English language teaching (ELT) and does not have a secure place in most L2 curricula (Hashemian, and Fadaei, 2011:22)

The present section seeks to provide a historical overview of how pronunciation has been treated in language teaching over the past hundred years. As Kelly stated (1969) Western philologists and linguists have studied grammar and vocabulary much longer than pronunciation. Two general approaches to the teaching of pronunciation have been developed in the field of modern language teaching.

On the one hand, the intuitive-imitative approach is determined by the student’s listening and imitating skills. The rhythms and sounds of the target language are imitated without any external intervention. A good approach depends on the available resources for the learner to access. In the mid-twentieth century, these resources are phonographs records, tape recorders, audio-cassettes, and compact discs. Before the late nineteenth century, it was the only approach used.

On the other hand, the analytic-linguistic approach uses the phonetic alphabet, articulatory descriptions as well as other aids to assist listening, imitation, and production. This approach is mainly concerned about the sounds and rhythms of the target language. Special mention should be made to the fact that the analytic-linguistic approach does not replace the intuitive-imitative approach. What it does is complementing it in the practice phase.

Apart from these two approaches, throughout the twentieth century, additional language teaching methods have been used. However, some of them did not focus their teaching principles on pronunciation. Some approaches such as the well-known Grammar-Translation and Reading-Based method did not embrace oral communication as a “primary instructional objective” (Celce-Murcia, et al. 1996:2). As the current project focuses on teaching pronunciation, the approaches regarding this field are further explained.

Direct Method foreign language teaching is mainly based on intuition and imitation. This method became more popular in the late 1800s and early 1900s. It consists of imitating a model – from the teacher or a recording- and attempt to resemble it. Naturalistic methods such as Asher’s Total Physical Response or Krashen and Terrell’s Natural Approach support the idea that the initial focus on listening without pressure to speak gives the learner the opportunity to internalise the target sound system. When learners do speak later on, their pronunciation is supposedly quite good despite their never having received explicit pronunciation instruction (Celce-Murcia, et al. 1996:3).

It was in the 1890s that the first linguistic or analytic contribution of teaching pronunciation arose. It came with the Reform movement influenced by phoneticians such as Henry Sweet, Wilhelm Viëtor, and Paul Passy. They established the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). In the 1940s and 1950s Audiolingualism emerged in the United States and the Oral approach in Britain. Many historians acknowledge that the Reform Movement played a part in the development of Audiolingualism. In both methods, students imitate and repeat, as in the Direct Method. Nevertheless, unlike the latest method, the teacher includes information from phonetics to be aware that the students have internalised the articulation of sounds. Moreover, teachers use minimal pair drills to discriminate sounds by practicing oral production.

In the 1960s, a method influenced by transformational-generative grammar and cognitive psychology emerged. It is called the Cognitive Approach which regarded “language as rule-governed behaviour rather than habit formation” (Celce-Murcia, et al. 1996:5). It emphasised grammar and vocabulary since achieving a native-like pronunciation was an unrealistic objective.

During the 1970s, two approaches emerged. They are named the Silent Way and Community Language Learning. Dealing with the former, it deepens on the accuracy of production of sounds and structures of the target language from the first teaching stage. Moreover, words combination in phrases is also a main focus including blending, stress, and intonation. The

Silent Method resembles the Audiolingualism approach. However, they differ in the Silent Way learner's attention since it is focused on the sound system without having to learn a phonetic alphabet (Celce-Murcia, et al. 1996:5). The Silent Way embodies the figure of the teacher being "silent" and indicating by gestures. It embraces a complete system for teacher to show the position of the articulators or the number of syllables. It also uses indispensable tools such as a sound-colour chart, the Fidel charts, word charts, and coloured rods.

The sound-colour chart was created by Gattegno and contains the whole range of vowel and consonants sounds of a target language in small coloured rectangles.

The Fidel charts include all the conceivable spelling patterns for each sound in the language. Each letter or combination of letters is color coded: Sounds that are pronounced alike are coloured alike. Because of the complex nature of English spelling, eight charts in the set represent sound-spelling correspondence.(Celce-Murcia, et al. 1996:6).

The coloured rods are different blocks of wood or plastic of distinct lengths. Their purposes can vary. However, being pronunciation their purpose, the rods can be built to display intonation patterns, and to illustrate differing pronunciations of morphological endings.

The Community Language Learning method (CLL) is developed by Charles A.Curran. It consists of students sitting around a table with a tape recorder. A person (a counsellor) stands behind one of the students with his or her hands on the student's shoulders. The counsellor tells the student to say a sentence in his or her native language. Afterwards, the counsellor provides the sentence in the target language and the student needs to pronounce it fluently. The last sentence is recorded on tape. In the following lesson, the student's productions are played again and they need to relate the expressions in their native language to in the target-language. Later, if the students are willing to repeat the task, they do so by adding a variation. The human computer technique is introduced which consists of the counsellor being a computer. It can be switched on or off at the will of the student. The human computer contains the correct pronunciation of a given phrase or piece from the computer.

The Communicative Approach emerged in the 1980s and it is still dominant nowadays. It stands out that the chief aim of language is communication. Therefore, using language should be central and vital in the classroom instruction.

The Communicative Approach is based on some comprehensible techniques. The "*Listen and Imitate*" technique, although previously used in the Direct Method, focuses on the students

listening to a model and their imitation of it. The *phonetic training* technique, despite being used in the Reform Movement, involves phonetic transcriptions and their reading. The Minimal- Pairs drills, introduced in the Audiolingual method, allow students distinguishing sounds through listening, sound discrimination, and spoken practice. The use of *visual aids* enhances the teacher's description of how sounds are produced. The use of tongue twisters is a strategy to practice speech correction, and recordings of learner's production provide students with opportunities for feedback. Eventually, today's pronunciation teaching is willing to identify the most important aspects of segmentals and suprasegmentals and include them appropriately in language courses.

The goal of teaching pronunciation is not to make student sound like native speakers. In fact, a more realistic aim seeks to enable students pronounce properly so that their pronunciation does not detract from the ability to communicate (Celce-Murcia, et al. 1996:8).

Currently, there are four groups of English language learners whose English level needs to be mandatorily high (Morley,1991: 2). They need to be taught some pronunciation since they require special assistance on it. These four groups are the following:

- “
1. Foreign Teaching Assistants in colleges in English-speaking countries.
  2. Foreign-born technical, business, and professional employees in business and industry in English-speaking countries.
  3. International business people and diplomats in need to use English as their working lingua franca.
  4. Refugees in resettlement and vocational training programmes who are inserted in English-speaking countries. ”

To this category, according to Celce-Murcia, et al. (1996:8), two more groups should be added. They are, on the one hand, non-native English teachers since they serve as a model for their learners. On the other hand, people in non-English-speaking countries working tour guides, waiters, and hotel staff, among others.

#### 4. THE STUDY

The present study was conducted in Matilde Salvador Secondary School located in the South area of the city of Castellón de la Plana. This area can be regarded as a working-people zone whose inhabitants are middle-class citizens. Matilde Salvador Secondary School launched its teaching activity in September 1995. It embraces both compulsory education courses as well as vocational and professional training courses on health, construction, and civil engineering.

The object of the present study comprised three different groups of students. These three stages are the classes of 2<sup>nd</sup> ESO D, PQPI (*Programa Qualificació Professional Inicial*), and PDC (*Programas de Diversificación Curricular*). Although deeply explained afterwards, generally speaking, their English level was remarkably low.

The group of 2<sup>nd</sup> ESO D is composed by fifteen students, 4 boys and 11 girls. Their age ranges from thirteen to fourteen years old. As far as their nationality is concerned, twelve students are Spanish whereas three are from the Dominican Republic, Romania, and Colombia. The English level of the class is relatively low. As a main feature, it must be mentioned that the group is a complete hodgepodge. The teacher is not allowed to teach any content accurately. The atmosphere which the students are surrounded by is combination of laughter and swearing. Additionally, they shout at the top of their lungs in every session. In the words of the English teacher in the centre: “The situation is unsustainable”.

PQPI can be defined as a new qualification programme which is mainly addressed to students over 16 and under 21 years old. This official programme is intended to make students acquire the core competencies to continue studying and reinforce their abilities to access the labour market (Educaweb, 2015).

The students of PQPI programme comprise a fifteen-student group whose students are mainly boys. Concerning their age, it ranges from seventeen to eighteen years old. With reference to the student's nationality, it is conceivable to encounter students from Spain (13 students) as well as South America (2 students). As a significant remark, it is noteworthy mentioning that the English level that this group presents is equivalent to a 2<sup>nd</sup> ESO English level. They are indeed some particular cases in which the English level is prominently higher. However, it does not correspond to a 4<sup>th</sup> ESO English level which they are required to possess.

PDC programme might be considered a measure of attention to diversity designed for those students who have featured widespread difficulties of learning during the first courses of

Secondary Education. This programme aims at promoting the reduction of absenteeism as well as encouraging the students to attain the basic skills.

The number of students of the PDC programme is ten. Roughly five out of ten are absentee learners. They are principally girls (seven students) and the rest is three boys. They are aged between sixteen and nearly eighteen years old. Regarding their demographic origin, the vast majority of the class is from Spain whilst two students are from Colombia and Morocco. Resembling the former two groups, the level of English of the class is extremely low. In fact, when they are exposed to any English being listening or speaking, they panic and seem reluctant to perform any activity.

Along the same lines, the groups of PQPI and PDC encompass comparable characteristics. The students' motivation is nearly null. Taking these circumstances into account, it needs to be claimed that these students have been taught with diminished requisites. That is, the teacher facilitates the students' task by modifying the evaluation criterion. The students are provided with a condensed dossier of activities which will be part of the exam. Having offered this easiness, one student out of the rest sat the exam and passed it.

As for the planning and timing of every lesson, each group meets three times a week. It is a fifty-minute session throughout the entire academic year. However, the lessons are vastly reduced to a limited thirty-five minute lesson. The reason why this happens is the aforesaid *devastating* traits that the groups display.

Regarding the materials used in class, PQPI and PDC groups cover the well-known *English Plus* textbook by Oxford University Press publishing house. As *English Plus* describes itself in the textbook, it is "a tool that develops students' communication skills through a structured and methodical approach, helping students to achieve their individual learning outcomes in every lesson". (English Plus, 2010).

It includes both written and oral skills. In the "Speaking" section, a topic is established and there is a "model" conversation which the students need to imitate as a role-play. Apart from that, *English Plus* does not contain any complete description of consonant or vowel sounds. Occasionally, some textbooks include the consonant and vowel charts so that, at least, two sessions can be devoted to pronunciation. Unfortunately, it is not the case.

Once the primary traits of the study and its participants have been established, it needs to be claimed that this study has been settled to be a challenge. Apparently, it seems unlikely that a

study on pronunciation can succeed with these arduous circumstances. Taking into consideration the disrupting atmosphere, the negligible English level, and the demotivation of the teacher, it seems out of the question that these lessons cannot be prosperous and satisfying. Notwithstanding the uphill struggle for the students, a more participatory atmosphere is highly required.

Based on observation, the students have never been exposed to an English class where the vehicular language was English. They seem to be extremely shocked when they are addressed in English. In fact, lacks of respect and utterances of swear words show their feeling of reluctance towards English.

Spanish is the only language spoken in the classroom since the teacher is not willing to use English in the classroom. Students could speak Catalan due to geographical reasons. Nevertheless, no sign of Catalan language can be identified in these three analysed groups.

#### **4.1 THE ROLE OF THE ENGLISH TEACHER**

The role of the foreign language teacher is central to the learning process. The teacher's behaviour would determine a great deal the students' attitude towards the subject. Moreover, the foreign language instructor needs to teach the organs of speech to move in unprecedented ways; the sounds striking the listener's ears must be perceived without distortion from or confusion with the known sounds of the native language (Finocchiaro and Bonomo 1973:23). "Since sounds play an important role in communication, foreign language teachers must attribute proper importance to teaching pronunciation in their classes" (Gilakjani, 2012:96).

It seems apparent that the English teacher in charge of the three selected groups has abandoned hope regarding her students. It is acknowledgeable that she has made many efforts for the groups to be successful. However, she has not been rewarded with any satisfaction. When she was asked if she used English to address her learners, she answered by saying that, at first, everything seemed possible. Nevertheless, as time passed by, she noticed that English being the vehicular language of the class made its development tough. Therefore, in the teacher's words, "I surrendered. I am doing what my teachers have always done". As Freeman (1996:64) states, instructors teach as they have been taught. In fact, the "13.000-hour-apprenticeship of observation" phenomenon exemplifies the teacher's former statement. That is, teachers recall their own language learning experiences.



This study is based on the idea that any teacher needs to “keep the motivation of his or her students at a high level, not only by varying his method of presentation or his instructional materials but also by giving students a sense of security, success, and achievement” (Finocchiaro and Bonomo,1973:23).

#### **4.2 IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS: CLASS WEAKNESSES**

The fact of being in contact with several classes during my internship made me realise that teaching pronunciation does not receive the importance it deserves. Bearing in mind that I was willing to conduct my study on pronunciation, several weaknesses were distinguished.

##### a) Homophones

See-Sea; To-Two-Too; Pear- Pair; Read-Red; Ant-Aunt; Mail-Male; Night-Knight.

The main weakness regarding homophones is related to the students’ understanding of the term. In other words, while listening, the students can tell that the words sound the same. However, they are not able to distinguish which word is uttered.

##### b) Initial Consonant clusters

English has initial clusters made up of [s] + [ p, t, k, f, m, n,l ,w,j] (Mott, 2011:272). The “st”, “sp” as well as the “sk” groups have been also recorded.

- ST- Group: Stone, Stable, Staff, Stuff, Star, Starbucks, Station, Step, Stick, Stolen.
- SP- Group: Spring, Spanish, Spain, Spa, Space, Spaghetti, Speed, Spider, Spicy, Spray.
- SK- Group: Skate, Skin, Sky, Skirt, Skeleton, Skinny.

The students’ pronunciation of initial consonant clusters is characterised by the “epenthetic e”. In their speech, it appears every time they pronounce any initial consonant cluster shown above.

##### c) Minimal Pairs

Bin-Pin; Bow-Pow; Boy-Toy; Bye-Pie; Bomb-Tom; Bow-Tow

Concerning minimal pairs, the students cannot discern some phonemes. As a consequence, for some students the set of minimal pairs are pronounced the same way. They cannot neither identify the sound nor pronounce it properly. Therefore, the weakness in minimal pairs is both understanding as well as producing phonemes.

#### d) Pronunciation of “-ed endings”

The present study focuses on the following words to examine this phenomenon. They can be accessed in the attached audio file. They are: Promised, Locked, Started, Showed, Convinced, Happened, Believed, Wanted, Loved, Missed.

The weak point in the pronunciation of “-ed endings” is that the students pronounce them /ed/ as it is written. They do not acknowledge the distinction of pronouncing /d/, /t/ or /ɪd/ sounds.

### 5. MY APPROACH

The chief purpose of the study is two-fold: strengthen oral skills and bring forward another approach to teach the pronunciation of “-ed endings”, initial consonant clusters, homophones, and minimal pairs. Furthermore, the present study also aims at examining the results in order to explore the effectiveness of this approach suggested. Some tables are shown to compare the groups' results.

However, the main objective of the current study is not exclusively that. In fact, what this study is more concerned about is conveying the message that pronunciation is pivotal in any language. This study is about spreading the feeling that languages are all about communicating. Being able to communicate what your feelings, intentions, emotions are to other people from all over the world is extraordinary.

The phonological competence has always caused a lot of difficulties to Spaniards while learning English at any level. As one student claimed in one of the sessions, “English is a “double language” since it is not exclusively the meaning of the words that you have to learn, but also the pronunciation of them”. The students do not pay attention to their oral mistakes. As a consequence, they become fossilised and, eventually, they occur systematically.

Having to learn new words and meanings added to the complexity of pronouncing them properly makes the learning process harsher. Occasionally, this troublesome process paves the way for some students to despair and abandon hope. With all the aforesaid drawbacks, this study is willing to ingrain the importance of pronunciation in the students. I consider it remarkably useful since it broadens their minds to the idea that pronunciation is crucial in learning any language. Moreover, it also activates their background knowledge about the meaning of several words.

## 6. DIDACTIC UNITS

As they embrace the same English level, the activities of my study are identical for the three groups.

### Objectives

In order to establish the objectives of the current project, the study takes as its legal basis the Boletín Oficial del Estado (3<sup>rd</sup> January 2015). Despite the disparity of levels of the groups assessed, they share their features which correspond to a 2<sup>nd</sup> ESO level. As a consequence, the objectives shown in the section below belong to the second year of Secondary Education.

They are comprised in the second year of Secondary Education and they are regarded as the key points to be truly based on. The objectives run as follows:

- To identify essential information, main points, the most relevant details in brief and well-structured oral texts. They can be live voice or by technical or articulated means at low or media speed, in a formal, informal or neutral register. They can be related to everyday issues in common situations or to general, educational and occupational topics.
- To recognise oral vocabulary in common use on everyday issues and topics related to interests, studies and occupations.
- To discriminate sounds, rhythm, and intonation in common use patterns, and to recognise meanings and communicative intentions.
- To know and apply the most appropriate strategies to produce simple and clear monologues or dialogues, oral texts, procedures such as the adaptation of the message to the first language patterns.
- To pronounce with a clear and intelligible intonation. Although sometimes the accent becomes evident or sporadic pronunciation mistakes are committed, they are allowed unless they do not interrupt communication.
- To master written repertoire as well as enough vocabulary to convey meaning. To foster direct structures in common situations.

Taking the former objectives into account, it is important to mention that, although the oral domain of the language is fully covered, the current didactic unit includes objectives related to the written skills as well. The main reason for that is that the learners do not exclusively have to pronounce certain words, but draft them in short and simple sentences. Written expression and comprehension are also tackled.

## **6.1 HOMOPHONES, INITIAL CONSONANT CLUSTERS AND MINIMAL PAIRS**

### *1. Background Knowledge and Requirements*

Students should possess a minimum knowledge base about the proposed lexicon. Bearing in mind that their English level is low, the difficulty of the selected words might be accessible for them. Notwithstanding their language level, they are highly required to follow the class in English, if possible. They also need to be fluent enough to express their doubts accurately. Additionally, their participation is a prerequisite since their contributions and explanations will be assessed.

### *2. Timing and Sequencing*

The study on homophones, minimal pairs and consonant clusters is conducted in two lessons in each level. Each session lasts fifty minute. An extra session would be devoted in case the need for follow-up activities emerged. The sessions have been designed in five stages: warm-up, presentation, accuracy practice, free-production, and feedback. Within each session, there is a review of the previous knowledge, introduction and practice of new knowledge and final review.

### *3. Competences*

During my work placement, I attended some work-trainings on basis competences. It is vital to include them in the current didactic unit.

#### 1. Linguistic Communication Competence:

- To comprehend the phenomena: homophones, minimal pairs, and consonant clusters.
- To broaden lexicon.
- To master how to look up words in the dictionary.
- To be able to expose their own ideas fluently.
- To draw some conclusions and express them to the rest of the class.
- To pronounce the homophones, minimal pairs, and consonant clusters properly.

#### 2. Information and Digital Competence:

- To integrate ICT tools.

- To manage the ICT application named “Kahoot: Make Learning Awesome”.  
(See Annex 6)

### 3. Autonomy and Personal Initiative Competence:

- To develop an autonomous learning process guided and supervised by the teacher.
- To burst the personal initiative creating their own oral and written texts.
- To foster disinhibition.

| BASIS COMPETENCES                   | DIDACTIC UNIT |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Linguistic Communication         | YES           |
| 2. Mathematical                     |               |
| 3. Knowledge of Physical World      |               |
| 4. Information and Digital          | YES           |
| 5. Social and Civic                 |               |
| 6. Cultural and Artistic            |               |
| 7. Learning to Learn                |               |
| 8. Autonomy and Personal Initiative | YES           |

TABLE 1: Basis Competences in the study: Boletín Oficial del Estado

3<sup>rd</sup> January 2015

**Linguistic Communication Competence:** the subject offers students the opportunity to participate in communicative situations and to reflect on the language itself.

**Information and Digital Competence:** Students will use different sources of information, different means of communication, different digital tools, and different learning resources which will involve the use of new technologies.

**Autonomy and Personal Initiative:** the knowledge of a language helps students to solve situations in which otherwise they would need help.

#### 4. *Materials and Spaces*

The fundamental materials for the realisation of the present project are the succeeding ones: a computer for each student or for a two-student group, a projector, a voice recorder, a PowerPoint presentation, English magazines or newspapers, and Internet access. No handouts are required in these sessions.

The sessions are completed in the “Multiple Use Room”. It is the exclusive venue where the students can have an individual computer and Internet access. The teacher needs to book the room in advance.

### 5. *Activities*

PowerPoint Presentation employed for both sessions (See Annex 1)

## **1<sup>st</sup> SESSION: Description of the activities and Timing**

### INTRODUCTION OF THE TOPIC: (5 MINUTES)

The teacher explains what the topic is about and provides the students with a detailed description of the following game.

### WARM-UP ACTIVITY: (15 MINUTES)

The students play an appealing game to them. It consists of identifying if the two images that they will be exposed to are similar or different. These images will be truly familiar to them so that they are engaged enough. Once they have asserted that the whole range of images is similar, the same phenomenon will occur with words. The students will be required to say the meaning of the words aloud. The topic of homophones will be introduced by playing a guessing game.

### PRESENTATION (5 MINUTES):

Having played and checked that students have internalised what homophones are, the teacher corroborates so by giving a 5 minutes presentation on the phenomenon. Some questions are asked at random to any particular student. A good proportion of the class time that is spent on pronunciation is devoted most usefully to identifying difficulties and dealing with one difficulty at a time. (McCarthy, 1978: 4).

### PRACTICE: ACTIVITY 1 (10 MINUTES)

Looking at the screen, the students will need to tell the teacher to circle three minimal pairs. They will be circled in the PowerPoint Presentation In order to do so, they will need to discuss it in groups of three for a few minutes. If any doubt, the students are more than welcome to interact with the teacher as long as it is in English.

### FREE PRODUCTION AND FEEDBACK: ACTIVITY 2 (10 MINUTES)

The students need to think of three words that sound the same (Homophones). Some examples will be provided so that they have a supporting idea in advance. The teacher needs to constantly bear in mind that their level is extremely low. Therefore, any scaffolding technique is useful.

### ACTIVITY 3 AND FEEDBACK (5 MINUTES)

The students will be given five pairs of words and they will need to pronounce them aloud. While doing so, they will need to identify the different sound. It is when the minimal pairs are introduced.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> SESSION: Description of the activities and Timing**

### REVIEW SESSION 1: PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE (5 MINUTES)

The teacher makes a quick revision of the previous class content. She also gives a brief insight of what the lesson will be about.

### INTRODUCTION, PRACTICE OF NEW CONTENT, AND ACTIVITY (15 MINUTES)

As the phenomenon of “minimal pairs” was not deeply examined in the previous session, the teacher introduces them as new content. After a detailed explanation, the students are required to complete an activity. They will be shown a set of pair of words and they need to choose two minimal pairs. Once they have selected their favourite ones, they need to draft sentences with them. For instance, “Fin threw a pin in the bin” would be a clear example of “minimal pairs”. Sometimes students find hard to pronounce these sentences since they resemble tongue twisters. Therefore, it is a good way to connect Minimal Pairs with Tongue Twisters and explain to them what they are.

This activity has been prepared for including those “minimal pairs” in complete sentences. A sound which may have been practiced in isolation be inserted immediately in words, phrases, utterances, or sentences which have, in addition, the stress, rhythm, pauses, and intonations – the “suprasegmentals” – which are the characteristic of the language being learned (Finocchiaro and Bonomo, 1973:119)

### ACTIVITY 2: REALIA (5 MINUTES)

Realia in EFL terms refers to any real objects we use in the classroom to bring the class to life (British Council, 2011). The students are handed in several English magazines and newspapers. The teachers gives them 5 minutes to find as many “homophones” or “minimal pairs” as possible. They can work in teams so that the activity is more involving. Working with realia would make the students believe that what they are doing exists in English real life. Thus, it would give a reason for them to continue working.

### INITIAL CONSONANT CLUSTERS’ GAME: (10 MINUTES)

Before the students are exposed to the game, the teacher places emphasis on the importance of pronouncing properly. It is also added that Spanish learners of English present some difficulties while pronouncing the initial “s” with several consonants following her.

Once the teacher has exposed that idea, they are explained a game in which several words will appear in the screen gradually. Each student needs to record himself or herself uttering them. The audio recorder will be passed around the class. They will perform twice since the first time they do so, they will not be paying attention to the pronunciation of the consonant clusters. In the second recording, as the teacher will have already explained this phenomenon in depth, they will be attempting to pronounce the consonant clusters properly.

### ASSESSMENT: (15 MINUTES)

This is the moment when they need to use their computer. They will need it as a remote control for several questions appearing on the main screen. Some questions regarding the two sessions will be asked and the students’ names will appear on the screen. The quicker the students answer, the more points they will get. The winner will obtain an extra mark in the final grade. The game is entitled “Kahoot: Make Learning Awesome” since it is the name of the didactic website that they have been playing with.

#### *6. Evaluation Criteria*

The teacher assessed if the students acquired some knowledge about homophones, minimal pairs, and consonant clusters. After the two sessions, the evaluation criteria followed was the Internet didactic tool “Kahoot”. Furthermore, the participation of the students and their ability to follow the class in English was a point to be assessed as well. Eventually, the students who showed more implication in both sessions received an extra point in the final mark of the



English module. This motivates the students who, hopefully would believe that pronunciation is such an important factor to take into consideration.

### 7. Results of the recordings

Although the present study includes audio files in Annex 5, some tables are also shown to complement this information.

The results of the group of 2<sup>nd</sup> ESO D are the succeeding ones:

**TABLE 2 – First attempt to pronounce consonant clusters (2<sup>nd</sup> ESO D)**

|         | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | S5 | S6 | S7 | S8 | S9 | S10 | S11 | S12 | S13 | S14 | S15 |
|---------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Skin    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | X   |     |     |     |     |     |
| Stone   |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     | X   |     |     |     |     |
| Spain   |    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     | X   |     |     |     |
| Spring  |    |    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     | X   |     |     |
| Spray   |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     | X   |     |
| Smile   |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |     | X   |
| Spanish |    |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Sky     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Skate   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | X  |     |     |     |     |     |     |

RESULTS: 15 students pronounce the initial consonant cluster incorrectly.

**TABLE 3 – Second pronunciation of consonant clusters (2<sup>nd</sup> ESO D)**

|         | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | S5 | S6 | S7 | S8 | S9 | S10 | S11 | S12 | S13 | S14 | S15 |
|---------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Skin    | ✓  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | ✓   |     |     |     |     |     |
| Stone   |    | ✓  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     | ✓   |     |     |     |     |
| Spain   |    |    | ✓  |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     | ✓   |     |     |     |
| Spring  |    |    |    | ✓  |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     | ✓   |     |     |
| Spray   |    |    |    |    | ✓  |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     | ✓   |     |
| Smile   |    |    |    |    |    | ✓  |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |     | ✓   |
| Spanish |    |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Sky     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Skate   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | X  |     |     |     |     |     |     |

RESULTS: 15 students:

- 12 students pronounce the consonant cluster correctly.
- 3 students pronounce the initial consonant cluster incorrectly.

**TABLE 4 – Comparison between TABLE 2 and TABLE3**

|         | 1st Attempt | Evaluation:<br>After explanation |
|---------|-------------|----------------------------------|
| Skin    | X           | ✓                                |
| Stone   | X           | ✓                                |
| Spain   | X           | ✓                                |
| Spring  | X           | ✓                                |
| Spray   | X           | ✓                                |
| Smile   | X           | ✓                                |
| Spanish | X           | X                                |
| Sky     | X           | X                                |
| Skate   | X           | X                                |

**RESULTS:** After the teacher's explanation, 6 initial consonant clusters out of 9 were pronounced properly.

After analysing the recordings of the group of PQPI, these are their results:

**TABLE 5 – First attempt to pronounce consonant clusters (PQPI)**

|         | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | S5 | S6 | S7 | S8 | S9 | S10 | S11 | S12 | S13 | S14 | S15 |
|---------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Skin    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | X   |     |     |     |     |     |
| Stone   |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     | X   |     |     |     |     |
| Spain   |    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     | X   |     |     |     |
| Spring  |    |    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     | X   |     |     |
| Spray   |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     | X   |     |
| Smile   |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |     | X   |
| Spanish |    |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Sky     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Skate   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | X  |     |     |     |     |     |     |

**RESULTS:** 15 students pronounce the initial consonant clusters incorrectly.

**TABLE 6 – Second pronunciation of consonant clusters (PQPI)**

|         | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | S5 | S6 | S7 | S8 | S9 | S10 | S11 | S12 | S13 | S14 | S15 |
|---------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Skin    | ✓  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | ✓   |     |     |     |     |     |
| Stone   |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     | X   |     |     |     |     |
| Spain   |    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     | X   |     |     |     |
| Spring  |    |    |    | ✓  |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     | ✓   |     |     |
| Spray   |    |    |    |    | ✓  |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     | ✓   |     |
| Smile   |    |    |    |    |    | ✓  |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |     | ✓   |
| Spanish |    |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Sky     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |

|       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|-------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Skate |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | X |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|       |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**RESULTS:** 15 students:

- 8 students pronounce the initial consonant cluster correctly.
- 7 students pronounce the initial consonant cluster incorrectly.

**TABLE 7 – Comparison between TABLE 5 and TABLE 6**

|         | 1 <sup>st</sup> Attempt | Evaluation: After Explanation |
|---------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Skin    | X                       | ✓                             |
| Stone   | X                       | X                             |
| Spain   | X                       | X                             |
| Spring  | X                       | ✓                             |
| Spray   | X                       | ✓                             |
| Smile   | X                       | ✓                             |
| Spanish | X                       | X                             |
| Sky     | X                       | X                             |
| Skate   | X                       | X                             |

**RESULTS:** 4 initial consonant clusters out of the 9 were pronounced properly.

These are the results of the group of PDC:

**TABLE 8 – First attempt to pronounce consonant clusters (PDC)**

|         | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | S5 | S6 | S7 | S8 | S9 | S10 |
|---------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| Skin    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | X   |
| Stone   |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |
| Spain   |    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |
| Spring  |    |    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |     |
| Spray   |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |     |
| Smile   |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |    |     |
| Spanish |    |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |     |
| Sky     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |     |
| Skate   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | X  |     |

**RESULTS:** 10 students pronounce the initial consonant cluster incorrectly.

**TABLE 9 – Second pronunciation of consonant clusters (PDC)**

|         | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | S5 | S6 | S7 | S8 | S9 | S10 |
|---------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| Skin    | ✓  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | ✓   |
| Stone   |    | ✓  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |
| Spain   |    |    | ✓  |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |
| Spring  |    |    |    | ✓  |    |    |    |    |    |     |
| Spray   |    |    |    |    | ✓  |    |    |    |    |     |
| Smile   |    |    |    |    |    | ✓  |    |    |    |     |
| Spanish |    |    |    |    |    |    | ✓  |    |    |     |
| Sky     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | ✓  |    |     |
| Skate   |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | ✓  |     |

**RESULTS:** 10 students pronounce the initial consonant cluster correctly.

**TABLE 10 – Comparison between TABLE 8 and TABLE 9**

|         | 1st Attempt | Evaluation:<br>After explanation |
|---------|-------------|----------------------------------|
| Skin    | X           | ✓                                |
| Stone   | X           | ✓                                |
| Spain   | X           | ✓                                |
| Spring  | X           | ✓                                |
| Spray   | X           | ✓                                |
| Smile   | X           | ✓                                |
| Spanish | X           | ✓                                |
| Sky     | X           | ✓                                |
| Skate   | X           | ✓                                |

**RESULTS:** The whole range of initial consonant clusters was pronounced properly after the teacher's explanation.

#### 8. *Improvement Proposal*

Taking into consideration the results of the three groups and being in contact with the students, the present study can be regarded as satisfactory. Bearing in mind their motivation and the conditions that they are working under, it has been a grateful experience. Thanks to the use of ICT tools which is an innovative element for them, they have been more participative and responsive to any content imparted.

Moreover, they have not considered the session as a burden since the work load was not extremely demanding. They have enjoyed a different and dynamic learning process. As an improvement proposal it should be mentioned that it would have been great to know the students in depth to adapt all the material to them. However, as the circumstances did not favour it, as a future English teacher, I will try to implement the same didactic unit to explore the effectiveness in other Secondary Education centres.

## **6.2 PRONUNCIATION OF “-ED ENDINGS”**

### *1. Background Knowledge and Requirements*

Students should embrace an intermediate level on vocabulary. Apart from that, the vehicular language is English during the whole range of sessions. The students must have a suitable level to follow the class and to produce English discussing certain issues at any point. Thus, it would be extremely necessary, although utopian at first, that they manage to express themselves being fluent enough.

### *2. Timing and Sequencing*

Three sessions in each level are devoted to the pronunciation of “-ed endings”. Each session consists of a fifty-minute class. The sessions have been created to follow five stages: warm-up, presentation, accuracy practice, free-production, and feedback. Within each session of fifty minutes, there is a review of the previous knowledge, introduction and practice of new knowledge, and final review.

### *3. Competences*

#### 1. Linguistic Communication Competence:

- Identify “-ed endings”
- Comprehend the use of “-ed endings”
- Pronounce “-ed endings” properly.
- Reinforce the ability to listen to “-ed endings”
- To broaden lexicon
- To be able to expose their own ideas fluently
- To draw some conclusions and express them to the rest of the class

#### 2. Information and Digital Competence:

- To integrate the ICT usage.: PowerPoint Presentations

3. Social and Civic Competence:

- To respect their classmates while giving the oral presentation
- To understand and accept an established order.
- To acknowledge the work of their classmates.
- To reinforce equality and democracy.
- To cooperate in the proposed activities
- To foster social cohesion

4. Autonomy and Personal Initiative Competence:

- To develop an autonomous learning process guided and supervised by the teacher.
- To burst the personal initiative creating their own oral and written texts.
- To foster disinhibition.

| BASIS COMPETENCES                | DIDACTIC UNIT |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Linguistic Communication         | YES           |
| Mathematical                     |               |
| Knowledge of Physical World      |               |
| Information and Digital          | YES           |
| Social and Civic                 | YES           |
| Cultural and Artistic            |               |
| Learning to Learn                |               |
| Autonomy and Personal Initiative | YES           |

TABLE 11: Basis Competences in the study of the pronunciation of “-ed endings”

Boletín Oficial del Estado ( 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2015)

**Information and Digital Competence:** Students will use different sources of information, different means of communication, different digital tools, and different learning resources which will involve the use of new technologies.

**Social and Civic Competence** is based on knowledge of the concepts of democracy, justice, equality, citizenship, and civil rights, including how they are expressed in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and international declarations and how they are applied by various institutions at the local, regional, national, European and international levels. It includes knowledge of contemporary events, as well as the main events and trends in

national, European and world history. In addition, an awareness of the aims, values and policies of social and political movements should be developed. (Civico, 2011)

**Autonomy and Personal Initiative:** the knowledge of a language helps students to solve situations in which otherwise they would need help.

#### *4. Materials and Spaces*

The basic materials are a computer or laptop, a projector, some speakers, English magazines or newspapers, the students' PowerPoint Presentations or posters. Internet access is not required since the media files are previously downloaded to avoid any problems. Students will need lots of energy, involvement and motivation.

The three sessions will be held in corresponding classroom of each course. Each classroom has a projector and laptop will be provided by the teacher. The teacher will also bring the speakers as well as the magazines or newspapers. The students will contribute with their PowerPoint presentations or posters.

#### *5. Activities*

##### **1<sup>st</sup> SESSION: Description of the activities and Timing**

##### **INTRODUCTION OF THE TOPIC: (5 MINUTES)**

A brief insight of the session is given so that the students are not misled in the development of the session.

##### **WARM-UP ACTIVITY: (5 MINUTES)**

The students are given a handout which contains a box full of verbs ending in “-ed”. They are provided the opportunity of pronouncing them aloud. No pressure is put on them because the content has not been explained yet. The students are recorded twice (before and after the teacher's explanation) to observe how their pronunciation of these terms is. The words can be seen below.

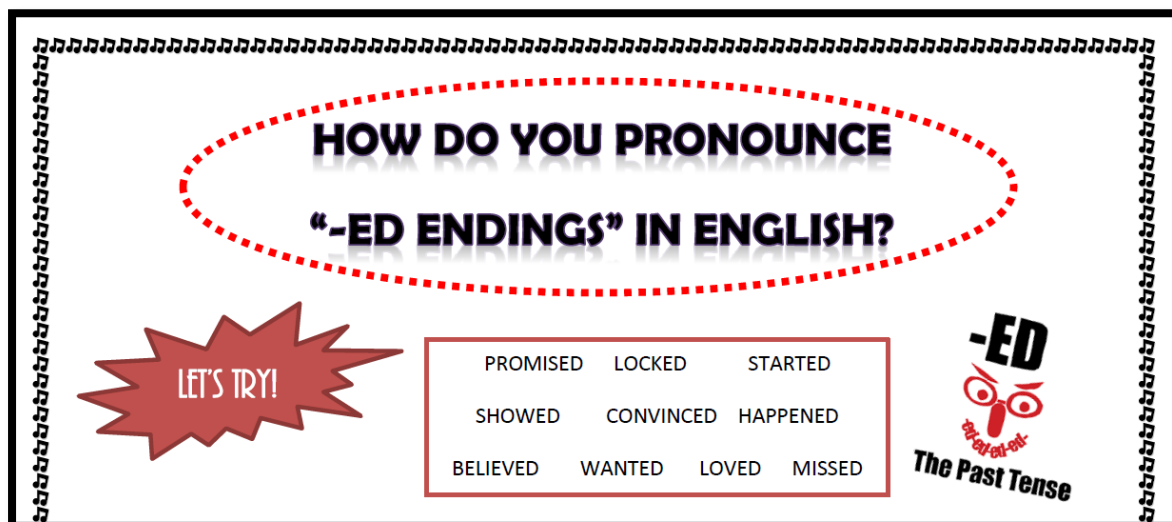


Image: ACTIVITY 1 (WARM-UP)

### PRESENTATION (10 MINUTES):

The teacher fully explains the concept and how the “-ed endings” are properly pronounced. Further examples are provided so that the learners internalise the concept. It needs to be mentioned that the instances given are appealing to them so that the students are involved in the task. Adapting the examples to them is a crucial technique. It has been possible due to the observation period previously completed.

### PRACTICE: ACTIVITY (10 MINUTES)

The students need to draft a short text in Past Simple or Present Perfect. (They have not been exposed to Past Perfect yet). Some students will read it aloud to examine whether they have comprehended the right pronunciation or not.

### FREE PRODUCTION AND FEEDBACK: ACTIVITY (15 MINUTES)

The students need to listen to a song which has been meticulously chosen by the teacher. The song is entitled “Who knew” and it is composed and sung by “Pink”. The song can be seen in Annex 2.

The students are required to listen to the song and focus on the words that they have pronounced previously. A song will be played twice, and they need to fill in the gaps with these words. The trick is that three words do not match any gap. Thus, they need to be more focused. Once they have filled the gaps, some students will check them and, again, some emphasis will be placed by the teacher on the pronunciation of the terms.



EXTRA ACTIVITY (5 MINUTES)

After the song, the students need to think of two more verbs in English and build a sentence with them. If they do not complete it for today's session, it will be checked in the next lesson as homework.

**2<sup>nd</sup> SESSION: Description of the activities and Timing**REVIEW SESSION 1: PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE (5 MINUTES)

In the first five minutes of the session, the teacher will check the activity regarded as homework. It will serve the teacher to review the previous session's content. Thus, the knowledge will be partially consolidated.

PRACTICE WITH REALIA (15 MINUTES)

The students are provided with several newspapers as well as magazines. The teacher will organise the students in several groups. They need to be formed by three or four students. What they need to do is to identify the "-ed" terms and write them down in a separate sheet of paper. They need to encounter up to ten words. Once all the groups have their words ready, they need to come to the front of the class and pronounce them properly. The chief point of doing so is that they feel the need to perform correctly so that they do not get embarrassed in public.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FOLLOWING TASK (5 MINUTES)

The teacher introduces the following task which will be assessed. It will be part of a 20% of the final grade. More details about the evaluation criteria are shown below. The task consists of giving a short and individual oral presentation of three-minute long. The students are required to choose six famous characters. They need to provide the rest of the students with an explanation of why they have chosen this character. Moreover, the students should talk about the character's life or works using "-ed words". If the students do not utter the "-ed endings" appropriately, they will fail the task since special emphasis has been placed on that. The students can support their oral presentation with visual aids: PowerPoint Presentations or posters.

FINAL REVIEW (5 MINUTES)

The teacher will review the pronunciation of the "-ed endings" so that the students do not have any doubt. If any clarifications are needed, the teacher will explain them again.

PREPARATION AND PROBLEM-SOLVING TIME (20 MINUTES)

The teacher will let the students start planning their oral presentations. They are allowed to ask whatever question they come up with. They are offered some time for thinking, planning, asking for clarification about the pronunciation of the “-ed endings”, even rehearsing.

**3<sup>rd</sup> SESSION: Students’ oral presentations**

It is the time for the students to perform in public. They will be giving their short oral presentations. As mentioned above, they could bring some posters or even use PowerPoint Presentations. Some results of the posters can be shown in Annex 3.

After the whole range of oral presentations has been given, the students will be told the grades of their performance. It needs to be stated that all the students that completed the task passed since they made a great effort. Having up to two points of the final mark encourages the students and makes them realise how important pronunciation is.

*6. Evaluation Criteria*

The teacher will evaluate whether the student has acquired the needed knowledge on the pronunciation of the “-ed endings”. The participation of students and the ability to follow the class in English will be examined. Moreover, what it is actually assessed is the oral presentation and the correct pronunciation of the “-ed endings”. Any effort made as well as the contribution of additional visual materials will be also valued. In order to assess, an evaluation rubric has been designed by me and the English teacher in Matilde Salvador Secondary School. It can be seen in Annex 4.

*7. Results of the recordings*

With regards to the group of PQPI, these are their results:

**TABLE 12: First attempt to pronounce “-ed endings” (PQPI)**

|           | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | S5 | S6 | S7 | S8 | S9 | S10 | S11 | S12 | S13 | S14 | S15 |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Promised  | X  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     | X   |     |     |     |     |
| Locked    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     | X   |     |     |     |
| Started   |    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     | ✓   |     |     |
| Showed    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     | X   |     |
| Convinced |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |     | X   |
| Happened  |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Believed  |    |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |

|        |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |  |
|--------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| Wanted |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | ✓ |   |   |  |  |  |  |  |
| Loved  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |   | X |   |  |  |  |  |  |
| Missed |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |   |   | X |  |  |  |  |  |

**RESULTS:** 15 students:

- 2 students pronounce the suffix correctly
- 13 students pronounce the suffix incorrectly.

**TABLE 13 – Second pronunciation of “-ed endings” (PQPI)**

|           | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | S5 | S6 | S7 | S8 | S9 | S10 | S11 | S12 | S13 | S14 | S15 |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Promised  | ✓  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     | ✓   |     |     |     |     |
| Locked    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     | ✓   |     |     |     |
| Started   |    |    | ✓  |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     | ✓   |     |     |
| Showed    |    |    |    | ✓  |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     | ✓   |     |
| Convinced |    |    |    |    | ✓  |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |     | ✓   |
| Happened  |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Believed  |    |    |    |    |    |    | ✓  |    |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Wanted    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | ✓  |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Loved     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | X  |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Missed    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | X   |     |     |     |     |     |

**RESULTS:** 15 students:

- 11 students pronounce the suffix correctly
- 4 students pronounce the suffix incorrectly.

**TABLE 14 – Comparison between TABLE 12 and 13**

|           | 1st Attempt | Evaluation:<br>After explanation |
|-----------|-------------|----------------------------------|
| Promised  | X           | ✓                                |
| Locked    | X           | ✓ /                              |
| Started   | ✓           | ✓                                |
| Showed    | X           | ✓                                |
| Convinced | X           | ✓                                |
| Happened  | X           | X                                |
| Believed  | X           | ✓                                |
| Wanted    | ✓           | ✓                                |

|        |   |   |
|--------|---|---|
| Loved  | X | X |
| Missed | X | X |

RESULTS: 6 more suffixes were pronounced properly in the end.

Considering the results of the group of PDC, they run as follows:

**TABLE 15 – First attempt to pronounce “-ed” endings (PDC)**

|           | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | S5 | S6 | S7 | S8 | S9 | S10 |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| Promised  | X  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |
| Locked    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |
| Started   |    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |
| Showed    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |     |
| Convinced |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |     |
| Happened  |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |    |     |
| Believed  |    |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |     |
| Wanted    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | ✓  |    |     |
| Loved     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | X  |     |
| Missed    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | X   |

RESULTS: 10 students:

- 1 students pronounce the suffix correctly
- 9 students pronounce the suffix incorrectly.

**TABLE 16 – Second pronunciation of “-ed” endings (PDC)**

|           | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | S5 | S6 | S7 | S8 | S9 | S10 |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| Promised  | ✓  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |
| Locked    |    | ✓  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |
| Started   |    |    | ✓  |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |
| Showed    |    |    |    | ✓  |    |    |    |    |    |     |
| Convinced |    |    |    |    | ✓  |    |    |    |    |     |
| Happened  |    |    |    |    |    | ✓  |    |    |    |     |
| Believed  |    |    |    |    |    |    | ✓  |    |    |     |
| Wanted    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | ✓  |    |     |
| Loved     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | ✓  |     |
| Missed    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | ✓   |

RESULTS: 10 students pronounce the suffix correctly.

**TABLE 17 – Comparison between TABLE15 and TABLE 16:**

|           | 1st Attempt | Evaluation:<br>After explanation |
|-----------|-------------|----------------------------------|
| Promised  | X           | ✓                                |
| Locked    | X           | ✓                                |
| Started   | X           | ✓                                |
| Showed    | X           | ✓                                |
| Convinced | X           | ✓                                |
| Happened  | X           | ✓                                |
| Believed  | X           | ✓                                |
| Wanted    | ✓           | ✓                                |
| Loved     | X           | ✓                                |
| Missed    | X           | ✓                                |

RESULTS: The entire range of suffixes was pronounced properly after the teacher's explanation

The results of the group of 2<sup>nd</sup> ESO D are the succeeding ones:

**TABLE 18 – First attempt to pronounce “-ed” endings (2<sup>nd</sup> ESO D)**

|           | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | S5 | S6 | S7 | S8 | S9 | S10 | S11 | S12 | S13 | S14 | S15 |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Promised  | X  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     | X   |     |     |     |     |
| Locked    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     | X   |     |     |     |
| Started   |    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     | X   |     |     |
| Showed    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     | X   |     |
| Convinced |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |     | X   |
| Happened  |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Believed  |    |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Wanted    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | X  |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Loved     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | X  |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Missed    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | X   |     |     |     |     |     |

RESULTS: 15 students pronounce the suffix incorrectly.

**TABLE 19 – Second pronunciation of “-ed endings” (2<sup>nd</sup> ESO D)**

|           | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | S5 | S6 | S7 | S8 | S9 | S10 | S11 | S12 | S13 | S14 | S15 |
|-----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Promised  | ✓  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     | ✓   |     |     |     |     |
| Locked    |    | X  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     | ✓   |     |     |     |
| Started   |    |    | ✓  |    |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     | ✓   |     |     |
| Showed    |    |    |    | ✓  |    |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     | ✓   |     |
| Convinced |    |    |    |    | ✓  |    |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |     | ✓   |
| Happened  |    |    |    |    |    | ✓  |    |    |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Believed  |    |    |    |    |    |    | ✓  |    |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Wanted    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | ✓  |    |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Loved     |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | ✓  |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Missed    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    | ✓   |     |     |     |     |     |

**RESULTS:** 15 students:

- 13 students pronounce the suffix correctly.
- 2 students pronounce the suffix incorrectly.

**TABLE 20: Comparison between TABLE 18 and TABLE 19**

|           | 1st Attempt | Evaluation:<br>After explanation |
|-----------|-------------|----------------------------------|
| Promised  | X           | ✓                                |
| Locked    | X           | X                                |
| Started   | X           | ✓                                |
| Showed    | X           | ✓                                |
| Convinced | X           | ✓                                |
| Happened  | X           | ✓                                |
| Believed  | X           | ✓                                |
| Wanted    | X           | ✓                                |
| Loved     | X           | ✓                                |
| Missed    | X           | ✓                                |

**RESULTS:** 9 suffixes out of 10 were pronounced properly.

#### 8. *Improvement Proposal*

After the three sessions I consider my proposal to be an achievement since the students had a low degree of motivation. Thanks to having introduced songs or just the fact of projecting some content on the screen has favored the attention to the content. The students have seen how an

innovative element has been introduced in the classroom, and, as a consequence, they have been more receptive to the materials. In addition to that, students have not been pressured and they have enjoyed a different and dynamic teaching.

## 7. FUTURE IMPLEMENTATIONS

After implementing the study in the Secondary School, I took some courses on ICT for future teachers by Universitat Jaume I. The courses were “Create your own Moodle” and “Prepare your Digital Teaching Resources” (Annex 7), “How to use an interactive Smartboard” (Annex 8). They embraced different tools for making the lessons more profitable. Therefore, I created a Moodle on Minimal Pairs so that students can access it from outside the school. In this Moodle, I included some digital teaching resources that I previously created. It also contains extra information, visual aids, explanatory videos, activities, forums, and wikis. Regarding the interactive smartboard, the main requisite is possessing one to work on. Unfortunately, there are no interactive smartboards in every educational institution. In case the Secondary School could have access to one, it would be great to use this material previously created.

## 8. DISCUSSION: EFFECTIVENESS AND DIFFICULTIES

Taking into consideration the results of both didactic units, I reckon that this approach has been satisfying. That is, the aims of the study have been met. Being given the opportunity to have a direct contact with the students made me realise that what they actually needed was updating the content. By “updating” the content, I am referring to seek their interests (TV series, hobbies or famous people) and adapt the content of the lessons to those contents. Furthermore, this study regards language teaching as a way of “familiarising the students with the culture of the native speakers – including their gestures, distance maintained in speaking and formulas of expression” (Finocchiaro & Bonomo, 1973: 106). Therefore, the study contained an activity based on famous English people to introduce some English cultural insights in the classroom.

Bearing in mind how their behaviour was like, I could observe a change on their motivation. Thanks to having introduced the ICT, which is a completely new element for them, they have been more participative and responsive to any content imparted.

Another aspect that engaged the students was the light work load. They did not feel overcharged with lots of homework which they are used to having. As a consequence, they appreciated a different and dynamic learning approach. Although I consider my approach to be

satisfactory enough, it can be asserted that some students were not involved in any of the activities proposed.

After some research on that topic, it can be claimed that students are not the only ones to be held responsible for a learning process to succeed. It is often not realised how much various other external factors can affect adversely the concentration and interest that should be brought to every learning situation (McCarthy, 1978:6). In fact, several factors determine it. As Finocchiaro and Bonomo state (1973), the students, the teacher as well as the school community play an essential role in ensuring a meaningful learning. Therefore, some cooperation among them is extremely necessary.

In order to allow this cooperation, the present study has established an interdisciplinary relationship with other subjects of the curriculum. The subject of “mentoring” or “Tutoría” has been used to make students realise that collaboration and team work is vital. In this module named “mentoring”, the students were willing to watch the film entitled “The Hunger Games”. The film was watched in English, and the students were required to focus on the pronunciation of the “-ed endings”. In order to corroborate that the students were doing so, they needed to elaborate a list with ten verbs ending in “-ed”. In the following English lesson, they pronounced them aloud to check that the pronunciation was appropriate.

Special mention should be made to the diversity within the classroom. When facing students with certain difficulties, the project will need to be adjusted to meet the characteristic of another group. For instance, methodology, timing, didactic materials are some aspects that can be modified. Some techniques have been adopted to cater for diversity. On the one hand, one way of catering for diversity is appealing to each individual’s interests by creating motivational activities. These could be warmers, pairwork interviews, guessing games, role-play activities, jigsaw readings, memory games, quizzes, among others (Mott, 2011:6) On the other hand, other measures are grouping students (one with higher level of English) or individualised attention by the teacher when any problems emerge.

## 9. CONCLUSION

As a final remark, I would like to consider my experience as a teacher in the Secondary School while conducting the study. My stay has been really enriching and satisfactory. I could abandon the purely theoretical view and experience the reality by myself. I was able to observe in the centre all the principles that we learnt in the master.



Throughout my stay, I could reinforce my idea that any profession should be vocational. One of the aspects that I feared before doing my practicum was the proximity of age. However, I reckon that the student understood my figure as a teacher as well as a close instructor too. Being so close to the students has allowed me to model my teaching proposal since I was aware of their tastes, and interests.

One of the most important aspects that I learnt about the students is that if the teacher maintains the discipline and shows his or her vocation, the students and the teacher will cooperate to have fun teaching and educating. Perhaps it is this conception that we need to consider since teaching and learning is a hard and important process which deserves being pampered.

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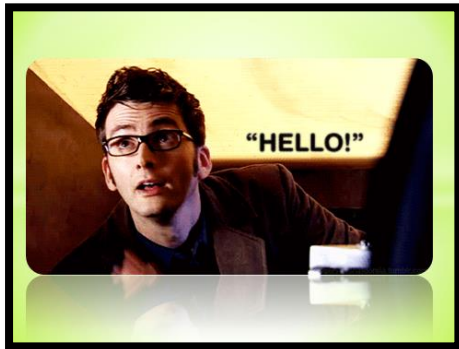
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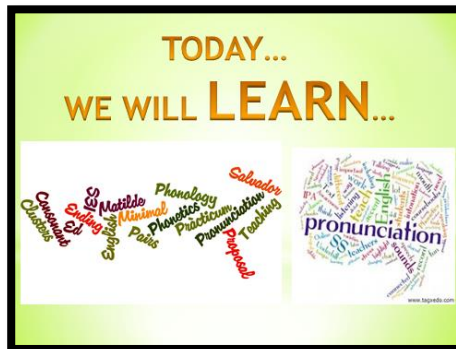
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ANNEX 1

PowerPoint Presentation on Homophones and Minimal Pairs



Greeting: Animated gif



Topic introduction



Guessing game: Oral skills reinforcement



Are they similar or different?:  
Appealing images to students



Guessing game



Guessing game

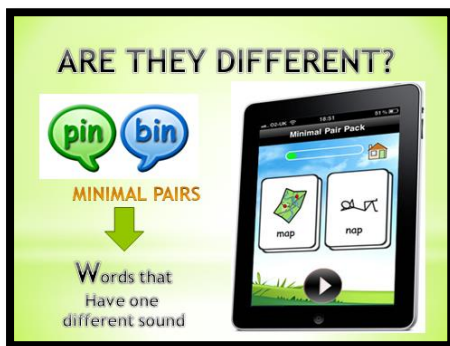




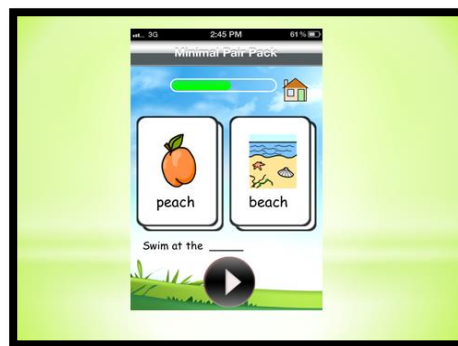
Possible answers Acitivity 2



Possible Answers Activity 2



Introduction of Minimal Pairs



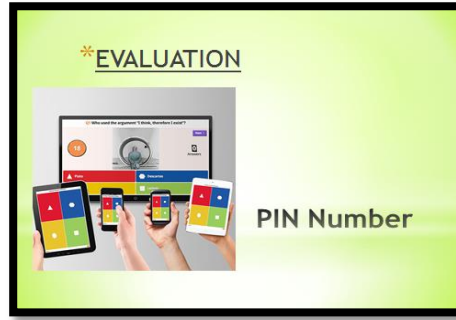
Visual Examples: Minimal Pairs App



Activity on Minimal Pairs



Another Activity on Minimal Pairs



Game on Initial Consonant Clusters:

Evaluation (Use ICTs): Kahoot App

Recordings



End of the lesson

## ANNEX 2

Activities on “-ed endings” (Fill-in-the-gaps song and sentence building using -ed endings)

**1. Listen to the song and fill in the gaps with the words in the box. Focus on the pronunciation. Watch out! Three words are not part of the song**


## WHO KNEW? By Pink

You took my hand  
 You \_\_\_\_\_ me how  
 You \_\_\_\_\_ me you'd be around  
 Uh huh  
 That's right  
 I took your words  
 And I \_\_\_\_\_  
 In everything  
 You said to me  
 Yeah huh, That's right


If someone said three years from now  
 You'd be long gone  
 I'd stand up and punch them out  
 Cause they're all wrong  
 I know better  
 Cause you said forever  
 And ever  
 Who knew

Remember when we were such fools  
 And so \_\_\_\_\_ and just too cool  
 Oh no, No no  
 I wish I could touch you again  
 I wish I could still call you friend  
 I'd give anything

When someone said count your blessings  
 now fore they're long gone  
 I guess I just didn't know how  
 I was all wrong  
 They knew better  
 Still you said forever  
 And ever, Who knew



**2. Think of two more verbs in English and build a sentence with them**

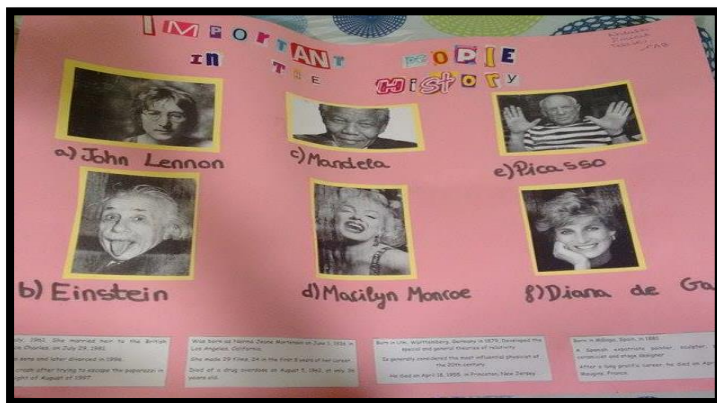
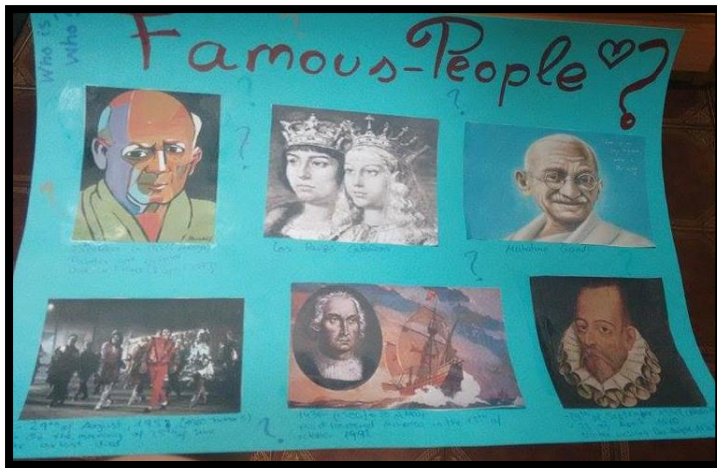
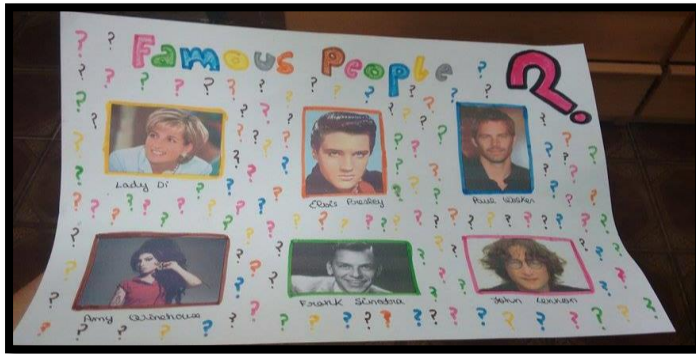


Yeah Yeah  
 I'll keep you \_\_\_\_\_ in my head  
 Until we meet again  
 Until we  
 Until we meet again  
 And I won't forget you my friend  
 What \_\_\_\_\_

If someone said three years from now  
 You'd be long gone  
 I'd stand up and punch them out  
 Cause they're all wrong and  
 That last kiss  
 I'll cherish  
 Until we meet again  
 And time makes  
 It harder  
 I wish I could remember  
 But I keep  
 Your memory  
 You visit me in my sleep  
 My darling  
 Who knew  
 My darling  
 My darling  
 Who knew  
 My darling  
 I \_\_\_\_\_ you  
 My darling  
 Who knew  
 Who knew

ANNEX 3

Some examples of oral tasks on “-ed endings”





## ANNEX 4

## Evaluation Rubric

|                                       |                                  |                              |                              |                    |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| ASSESSMENT SHEET                      |                                  | ACTIVITY:                    |                              |                    |
| NAME:                                 |                                  | FINAL MARK:                  |                              |                    |
| 1. COMMUNICATION: ( 4 POINTS)         |                                  |                              |                              |                    |
| 4                                     | 3                                | 2                            | 1                            | 0                  |
| very fluent                           | quite fluent                     | checks information           | reads sometimes              | reads all the time |
| 2. LANGUAGE: ( 3 POINTS)              |                                  |                              |                              |                    |
| 3                                     | 2                                | 1                            | 0                            |                    |
| good structures and varied vocabulary | simple structures and simple voc | poor structures and poor voc | incorrect structures and voc |                    |
| 3. PRONUNTIATION ( 3 POINTS)          |                                  |                              |                              |                    |
| 3                                     | 2                                | 1                            | 0                            |                    |
| good                                  | a few mistakes                   | many mistakes                | makes no effort              |                    |

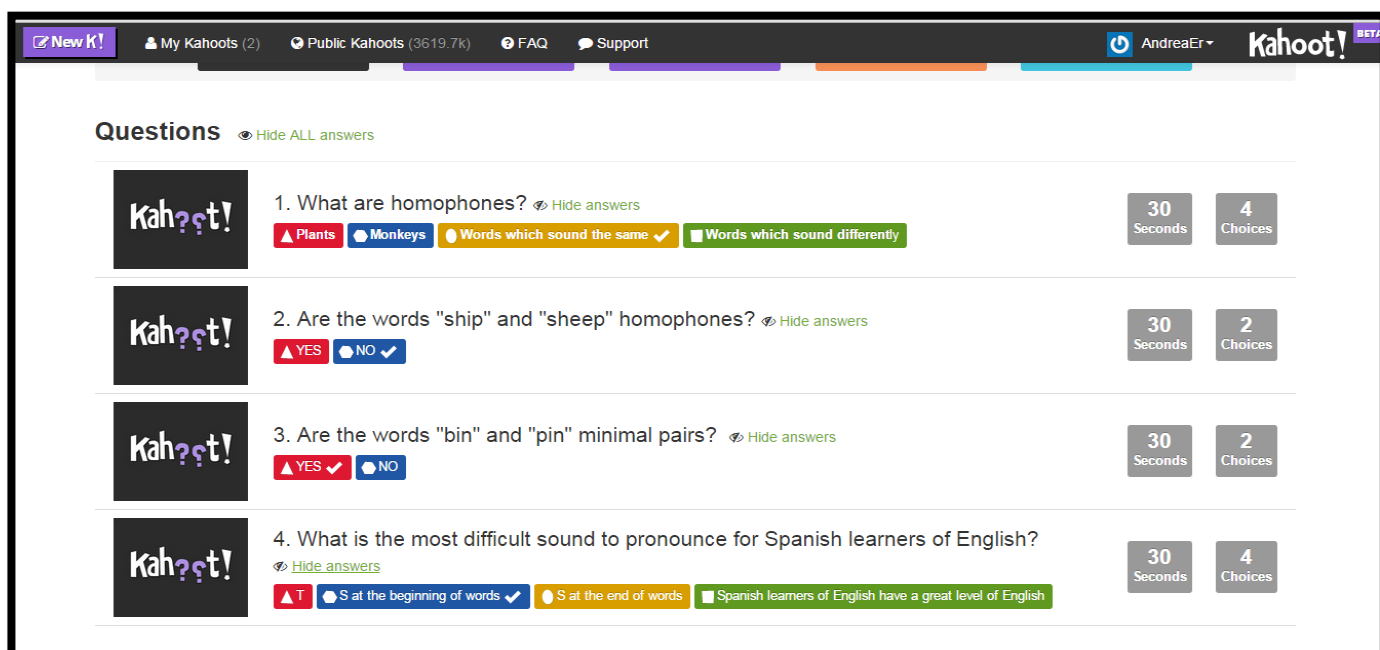
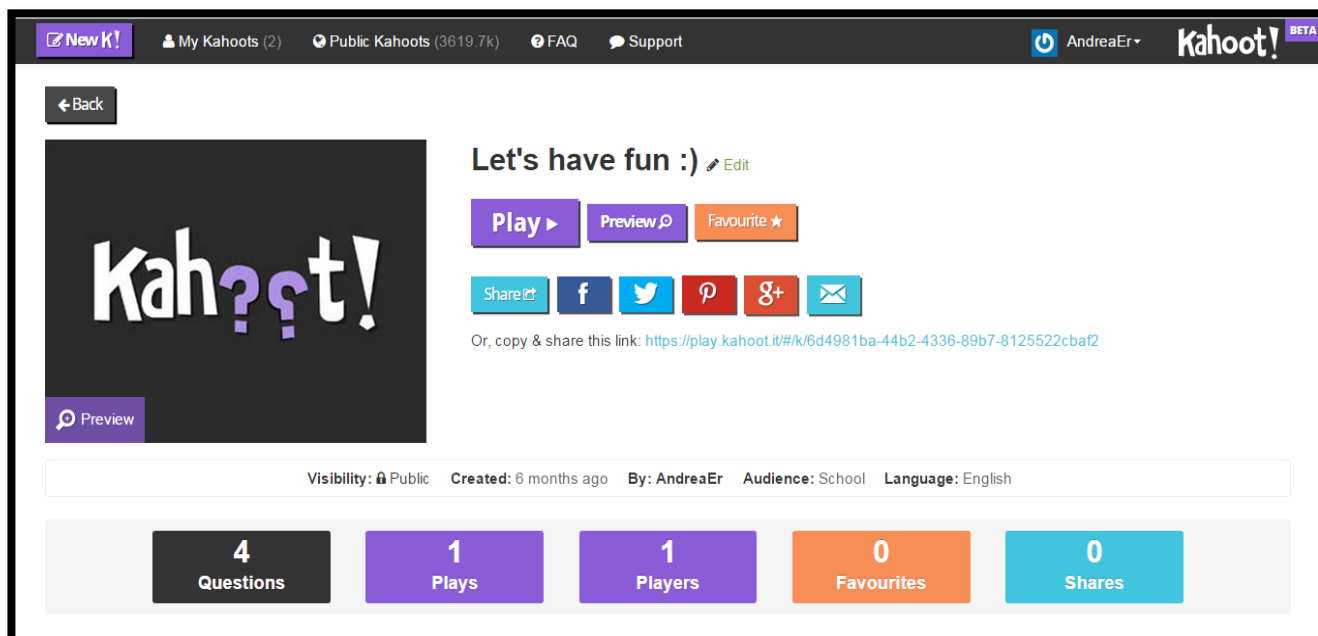
|                                       |                                  |                              |                               |                    |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| ASSESSMENT SHEET                      |                                  | ACTIVITY:                    |                               |                    |
| NAME:                                 |                                  | FINAL MARK:                  |                               |                    |
| 1. COMMUNICATION: ( 4 POINTS)         |                                  |                              |                               |                    |
| 4                                     | 3                                | 2                            | 1                             | 0                  |
| very fluent                           | quite fluent                     | checks information           | reads sometimes               | reads all the time |
| 2. LANGUAGE: ( 3 POINTS)              |                                  |                              |                               |                    |
| 3                                     | 2                                | 1                            | 0                             |                    |
| good structures and varied vocabulary | simple structures and simple voc | poor structures and poor voc | ilncorrect structures and voc |                    |
| 3. PRONUNTIATION ( 3 POINTS)          |                                  |                              |                               |                    |
| 3                                     | 2                                | 1                            | 0                             |                    |
| good                                  | a few mistakes                   | many mistakes                | makes no effort               |                    |

ANNEX 5

See audio files attached.

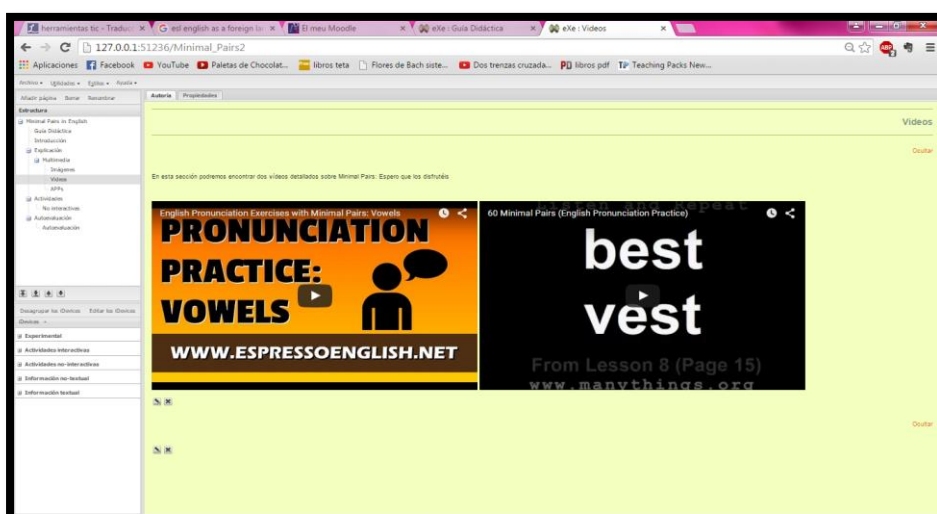
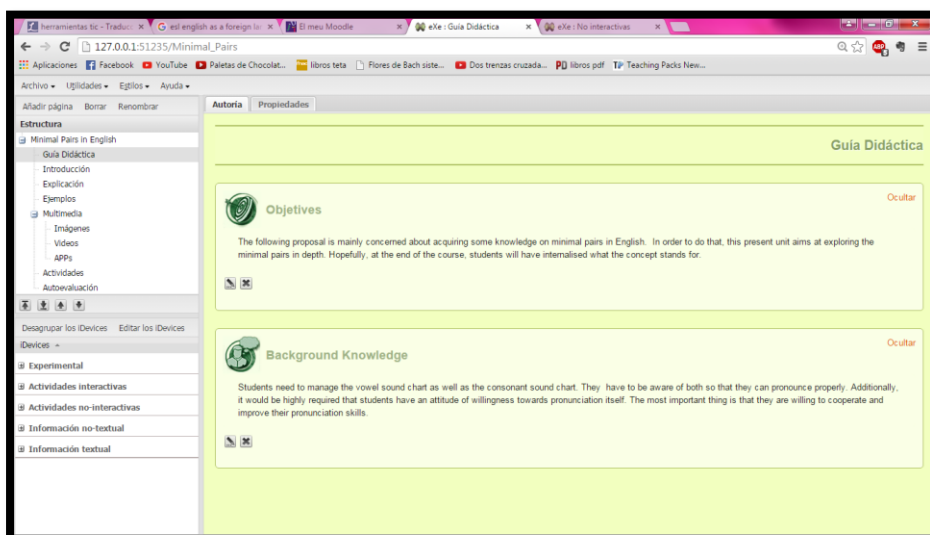
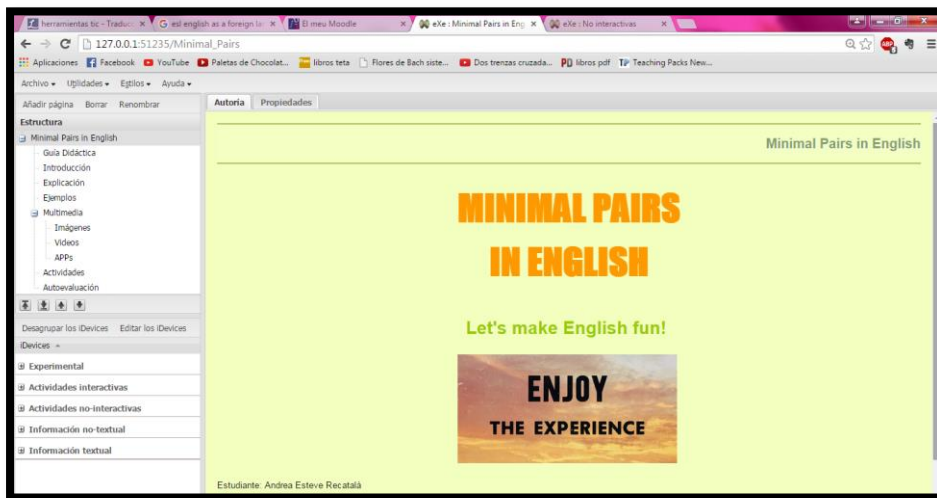
ANNEX 6

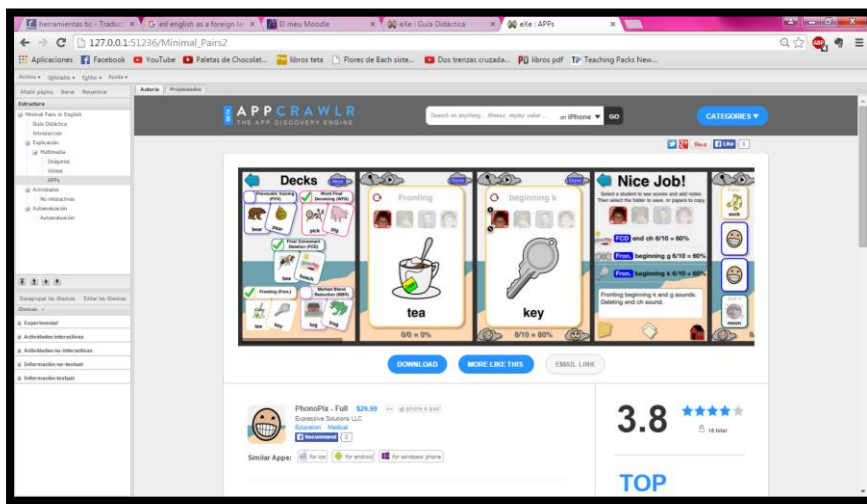
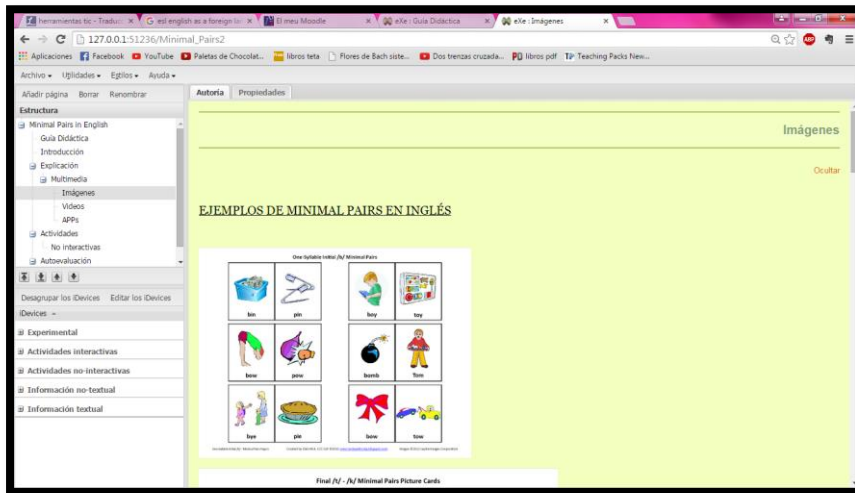
Kahoot: Make Learning Awesome



## ANNEX 7

## Create your own Moodle – Prepare your Digital Teaching Resources





## ANNEX 8

### How to use an interactive Smartboard

