TITLE: A SYSTEM OF COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES TO POTENTIATE PRONUNCIATION
3rd GRADE STUDENTS FROM GROUP C AT “RAMÓN PANDO FERRER” PRIMARY SCHOOL

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CONCLUSIONS

The accomplishment of this research enabled the researcher to state the following conclusions:

1. The theoretical and methodological judgments that back up the treatment of pronunciation in 3rd grade are based on a communicative approach. The didactical materials used for the grade include materials to work with pronunciation; however, these exercises are excessively repetitive, and most of them lack a communicative purpose. On the same light, there are no specific guidelines for the treatment of this sub-skill in the level.

2. The diagnosis of the current situation of 3rd C grader at “Ramon Pando Ferrer” Primary school revealed the students’ difficulties in English pronunciation, and also that there is a need to integrate games within the lessons as they seem to like the most this type of activities in the TV lessons. Although the materials used for the grade include activities to work with pronunciation, they do not seem to meet the challenge as the target students show problems when pronouncing in English.

3. The design of the preliminary proposal took as a starting point the results of the needs assessment, the students suggestions, the communicative functions taught at this level, and the students’ needs and characteristics shown in the diagnosis of 3rd C graders at “Ramon Pando Ferrer” Primary school.

4. The preliminary activities led to the development and improvement of the process of building up the system of communicative activities to potentiate students’ pronunciation in 3rd C class. The impact on the students was very positive, since it provided a new way of potentiating their pronunciation.

5. The system of communicative activities revealed positive results, since the students were able to produce correctly those sounds and intonation patterns which they were not able to at the beginning in a motivating way.
RECOMENDATIONS

- To continue working on this theme in order to enrich and improve the proposal.

- To validate the proposal to be implemented in other 3rd grade groups in future courses.


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Annex 1

Guide for the analysis of the documents

Objective: to verify the objectives, contents, and types of activities recommended for the Teaching Learning Process of English in 3rd grade.

Documents:

- Methodological guidelines for the treatment of pronunciation in 3rd grade.
- Material for the teaching of English. (Tabloids.)

Aspects to analyze:

- Types of activities.
- Methodological suggestions.
- Quality of the activities.
- Orientations towards motivation.
Annex 2

Interview to the students.

Objective: to know about the methodological treatment to the development of speaking ability.

Indicators

1. Procedures used to present the communicative functions
2. Characteristics of the exercises used.
3. Number of exercises to develop the speaking ability.

Guía para la entrevista

1) Selecciona la vía que utiliza tu profesor para presentar las funciones comunicativas:
   - El mini diálogo
   - Textos escritos
   - Láminas
   - Diálogos

2) ¿Encuentras difícil expresarte oralmente en inglés?
   ¿Encuentras interesantes los ejercicios que se te asignan en clases?
   Selecciona qué actividades de las que se relacionan a continuación usa tu profesora con más frecuencia en clases:
   - Practicar diálogos en parejas
   - Preguntas y respuestas
   - Hablar sobre una lámina
   - Hablar a partir de un texto
   - Un juego lingüístico
   - Describir a una persona
   - Describir un lugar
   - Hablar sobre tus actividades diarias
   - Hablar de las actividades que realizaste en el pasado
   - Hablar de tus planes futuros
   - Otras
3) Una clase de idioma inglés dura 45 minutos. ¿Cuántos minutos de la clase están tus compañeros practicando el idioma inglés aproximadamente?

¿Son suficientes para ti las actividades que se realizan en clases para que mejores tu expresión oral en especial tu pronunciación? ¿Qué actividades te gustan más y por qué?
Annex 3

Guía de observación a una clase de expresión oral.

Objetivo: Valorar cómo se desarrolla la habilidad de expresión oral en la asignatura inglés en 3er grado.

1. Rating Scale for Speaking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>often</th>
<th>almost always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaning can be understood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shows confidence in using English words and phrases.</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
<td>almost always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses the appropriate vocabulary and structures they have practiced.</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
<td>almost always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reproduces or approximates English pronunciation for most words.</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
<td>almost always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks smoothly, with pauses at the end of phrases or groups of words.</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>sometimes</td>
<td>often</td>
<td>almost always</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX 4

Pedagogical test

Objective: to diagnose the students’ weaknesses and strengths in the English language, and to corroborate what had been observed through the lessons.

Escribe la siguiente conversación en inglés para luego interpretarla oralmente con tu compañero/a de mesa.

Estudiante 1

Imagina que estás en el patio de tu escuela durante el horario de receso, y un niño/a que no conoces se te acerca para jugar.

- Salúdalo/a teniendo en cuenta el momento del día.
- Dile tu nombre y pregúntale el suyo.
- Tu nuevo/a amiguito/a te preguntará tu edad, tú también debes preguntarle la suya.
- Despídete.

Estudiante 2

Imagina que estás en el patio de tu escuela durante el horario de receso, y te acercas a un/a niño/a que no conoces para jugar:

- Salúdalo/a teniendo en cuenta el momento del día.
- Él/ella te preguntará tu nombre. Respóndele.
- Pregúntale la edad a tu nuevo/a amiguito/a, y dile la tuya cuando te lo pregunte.
- Despídete.
Annex 5

Overview of the system of communicative activities within the 3rd grade English Book

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
<th>ADAPTED FROM</th>
<th>LESSON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>SPELLING GAME</td>
<td>“Language Games People Play”</td>
<td>2 “A, B, C. The alphabet”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>MATHEMATHICAL BINGO</td>
<td>“Language Games People Play”</td>
<td>3 “I already know the numbers”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>DO AS I SAY…</td>
<td>“Language Games People Play”</td>
<td>7 “Sit, open, learn”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I SPY…</td>
<td>“Adventures in English”</td>
<td>8 “How to ask in English?” (it can also be adapted to work in lessons, 9,10 and 16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A TYDY-UP RHYME</td>
<td>“Oxford Basics for children”</td>
<td>9 “How to ask in English? II”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>RHYMING: TEDDY BEAR, TEDDY BEAR TURN AROUND</td>
<td>“Mother Gosse Jazz Chants”</td>
<td>10 “May I..?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>YES OR NO PINGPONG</td>
<td>“Language Games People Play”</td>
<td>15 “My school objects”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>FAMILY TREE</td>
<td>“Say what you think: pictures for the young learner”</td>
<td>18 “My family tree”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>LET´S GO SHOPPING!</td>
<td>“Say what you think: pictures for the young learner”</td>
<td>21 “I’m hungry. Let´s eat”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>HAPPY BIRTHDAY!</td>
<td>“Say what you think: pictures for”</td>
<td>22 “Likes and dislikes”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Source(s)</td>
<td>Page(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER</td>
<td>“Games for Language Learning”</td>
<td>22 “Likes and dislikes”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>GOSSIPING: WHO IS WHO?</td>
<td>“Language Games People Play”</td>
<td>25 “What’s your name?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>PETS</td>
<td>“Adventures in English”</td>
<td>34 “My pet”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(it can also be adapted to work in</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lessons 35 and 36)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“The point is to develop the childlike inclination for play and the childlike desire for recognition and to guide the child over to important fields for society. Such a school demands from the teacher to be a kind of artist in his province.”

Albert Einstein.
To the Cuban Revolution for giving me the opportunities to see by myself its accomplishments and for helping me develop my potentialities.

To my family, specially my mum for all the love and support across the distance.

To Esperanza Hernández, my “Cuban mum”, for making me feel at home all the time.

To my mentor, Idelses Álvarez Céspedes for her patience and dedication.

To Julio César Paz, Dayalí Galvez, Helen Torres, and Milton Bosch for lighting me up with their recommendations when I needed them the most.

To my friends Damarys Rojas, Englys Pérez Cruz, Neidys Gil, Nirosha Udayangani, Pichry Chhay, Vernon Belle and Yordany Gonzáles Bormey.

To Raja Yasir and Faheem Gardazi, for helping me cope with the stress of this process.

To every teacher from the English Department of this University, for being examples of professionalism and humanism, I’m eternally indebted to them all.
The National System of Education is under a process of transformation aimed at the multilateral formation of students as a way of increasing and developing their cultural level. The Primary education is not an exception; and the changes taking place in this level of education are aimed at getting the students familiar with the English language and its characteristics, but, the results obtained are not yet the ones expected.

Consequently, the scientific problem presented in this research is how can pronunciation in the English language be potentiated in the students from Group 3rd C at “Ramón Pando Ferrer” Primary School. In order to solve this problem, the researcher built up a system of communicative activities for the English classes to make possible the development of this ability. To carry out this objective, a group of methods and tools were administered, which permitted in the theoretical level, to compile information about some information about the treatment that has been given to the speaking skill through the history of language teaching. In the empirical level, several instruments were used to diagnose the subjects of investigation and then to elaborate a system of communicative activities to potentiate their pronunciation. The proposal comprises fifteen activities for controlled and free practice stages.
Le système national d’éducation à Cuba est sous quelques processus de transformation qui sont dirigés à la formation multilatérale des étudiants pour qu’ils augmentent et améliorent leur niveau culturel. L’école élémentaire n’est pas une exception, et les transformations à ce niveau sont consacrés à familiariser l’élèves avec la langue anglaise et ses caractéristiques, mais les résultats qui ont été obtenus ne sont pas encore les attendus.

Par conséquent, le problème scientifique présenté dans cette recherche a été : Comment peuvent-ils les professeurs contribuer au développement de l’habileté de prononciation dans l’enseignement de la langue anglaise des élèves de la 3ème année à l’École Elémentaire « Ramon Pando Ferrer » ?. Pour résoudre ce problème, l’investigatrice a décidé proposer un système d’activités communicatives pour les leçons d’Anglais à l’école élémentaire pour faire possible le développement de l’habileté de prononciation. Pour répondre à cet objectif, un groupe de méthodes ont été utilisés, ce qui ont permit, dans le niveau théorique, joindre d’information sur quelques méthodes méthodologiques qui ont été utilisés pendant l’histoire de l’enseignement des langues étrangères. Dans le niveau empirique, plusieurs instruments ont été employés pour diagnostiquer les sujets d’investigation et après, faire un système d’activités communicatives pour développer l’habileté de prononciation des sujets de recherche qui ont été choisis. Le système communicatif d’activités contient 15 activités pour les étapes de pratique contrôlée et pratique libre.
El Sistema Nacional de Educación está inmerso en una revolución educacional enfocada a la formación multilateral de los estudiantes a modo de elevar y desarrollar su nivel cultural. La escuela primaria no es una excepción, y los cambios ocurridos en ella están enfocados a familiarizar y sensibilizar a los estudiantes con las características de la lengua inglesa, pero los resultados obtenidos no son aún los esperados.

Por consiguiente, el problema científico presentado en esta investigación es cómo potenciar precisión en la pronunciación de la lengua inglesa en los estudiantes del grupo 3ero C de la Escuela Primaria “Ramón Pando Ferrer”. Para resolver este problema, la autora construyó un sistema de actividades comunicativas para las clases de inglés para potenciar mencionada habilidad, y un grupo de métodos fueron aplicados para llevar a cabo el objetivo, los cuales permitieron, en el nivel teórico, compilar información sobre algunos de los métodos que han sido utilizados en la historia de la enseñanza de las lenguas. En el nivel empírico, varios instrumentos fueron utilizados para diagnosticar a los sujetos de investigación, y así entonces construir un sistema de actividades comunicativas para potenciar la precisión de su pronunciación. La propuesta consiste de quince actividades para la práctica controlada y libre.
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INTRODUCTION

To speak accurately and fluently in the vernacular language and master at least one foreign language is one of today’s necessities to face the rapid growth of technology and communication. The English language has acquired a substantial role as an extension tool, transfer of knowledge and technology, due to the globalization effects, the scientific progress, and the human relationships all over the world; that is why, this language has become an international language and a means of knowledge propagation globally.

Although the study of a foreign language has always been a part of curriculum designs in the Cuban educational system, at the moment it has acquired new dimensions and it has widely spread to the whole country from early ages. With the aim of satisfying this objective, several transformations have been carried out in different educational levels, English as a subject has not been exempted.

Cuba educational program is guided to the student’s total integrity, transforming and demanding more from the teaching and learning process. The current tendencies aligned to the educational process make special emphasis on the importance of the student-teacher interaction, and the students’ active participation which, impose new demands to teachers, who should be able to create a communicative atmosphere in the classroom that propitiates a creative and independent attitude in the students.

English as a foreign language is taught in the Cuban National Education System from 3rd grade until 12th grade with the objective of contributing to the students’ integral general culture through the development of the basic communicative abilities.

In particular, in the syllabus of Primary Education, it has been included so that the students become familiar with the English language characteristics; and sensitize them with it gradually. Through the teaching-learning process, they should develop habits and basic communicative abilities which allow them to express themselves in a simple way about their close relatives, and the daily routines at home, at school and the community, with special emphasis on the oral expression, but specifically at the end of third grade, students should:
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understand, ask, and answer simple personal information questions, with emphasis on speaking.

According to the new teacher’s guidelines given by the Ministry of Education, English should be thought through TV lessons as an alternative for the lack of teachers of English in most primary schools. Those TV lessons last twenty minutes, but the teacher should devote ten minutes before viewing activities, and fifteen minutes after viewing activities, so as to review and practice the contents studied.

The authoress of this paper is carrying out her practicum at “Ramon Pando Ferrer” Primary School, in group 3rd C. There, she could observe that her students have an inaccurate use of grammar, lack of interest while doing independent assignments, which delays the acquisition of new knowledge, deficit of essential vocabulary, besides the students have problems in pronunciation, mainly in those sounds which do not exist in Spanish. Also there are problems concerning intonation and rhythm in those patterns which differ from Spanish and that the students need more time in class to carry out a more efficient and meaningful practice. This problem has also been corroborated by means of an interview to other teachers and to the students themselves.

In addition, in their vernacular language, the teacher has diagnosed difficulties regarding spelling (most of them change v for b, g for q, d for b and g) and handwriting. As to speaking, some of them tend to say /l/ for /r/.

There are also positive aspects which can be pointed out; for instance, their enthusiasm about the idea of learning a new language, new words and sounds. Also, due to their age, it is easy for them to acquire a new language, because they do not care about making mistakes, so they can repeat words as many times as needed without embarrassment.

The development of speaking with emphasis on the improvement of pronunciation has been object of several researchers such as, Jose Ramon Torres Aguila’s Ph.D. thesis (Universidad de Barcelona, Spain, 2007: Las
INTRODUCTION

actividades en los manuales de pronunciación de inglés como lengua extranjera. In this paper, Torres Aguila presents a detailed analysis on the manuals and textbook aimed at the teaching of pronunciation, and its effectiveness, but his research is emphasized on the teaching of adults’ pronunciation.

In the Cuban context, pronunciation is also a language skill of concern at all levels of education, thus it has been a topic of research, for: MSc. Milton Bosch (2007) at “Felix Varela” University of Pedagogical Sciences, MSc. Moya Mérida (2010) at “Antonio Maceo” “Microuniversidad”, and BSc. Telor Sotoukee (2012) at “Capitán Roberto Rodríguez” Secondary School.

Even though, these papers have contributed to potentiate pronunciation, there are still some weaknesses as they have not particularly emphasized on teaching 3rd graders, and it has become patent that the materials that are being used still do not satisfy the objectives of the grade.

Therefore, from the aforementioned problematic situation, the following scientific problem is derived: How can pronunciation in the English language be potentiated in the students from Group 3rd C at “Ramón Pando Ferrer” Primary School?

Object of research: The potentiation of the speaking ability in the Teaching-Learning Process (TLP) of the English language in Group 3rd C at “Ramon Pando Ferrer” Primary School.

Field of action: Potentiation of pronunciation in the English language in Group 3rd C at “Ramon Pando Ferrer” Primary School.

Objective: Build up a system of communicative activities to contribute to potentiate pronunciation in the students from Group 3rd C at “Ramón Pando Ferrer” Primary School.

In order to carry out this paper, the following Scientific Questions were elaborated:

1. What are the theoretical and methodological judgments that back up the treatment of the speaking ability with emphasis on pronunciation in 3rd grade?
INTRODUCTION

2. What is the current situation in the development of the speaking ability with emphasis on pronunciation in students from group 3rd C at “Ramón Pando Ferrer” Primary School?

3. What system of communicative activities should be introduced in the teaching and learning process of English to potentiate the development of the speaking ability with emphasis on pronunciation in the students from group 3rd C at “Ramón Pando Ferrer” Primary School?

4. What transformations could be accomplished with the implementation of the pre-proposal of activities built up?

5. What system of communicative activities is build up as a result of the transformations that take place during the process of implementation of the preliminary activities?

Scientific Tasks

1. Establishment of the theoretical methodological judgments that support the development of the speaking ability with emphasis on pronunciation in English language in 3rd grade.

2. Diagnosis of the present state regarding the development of the speaking ability with emphasis on pronunciation in English language in 3rd grade students at “Ramón Pando Ferrer” Primary School.

3. Design of a system of communicative activities to contribute to potentiate pronunciation in English language in 3rd grade students at “Ramón Pando Ferrer” Primary School.

4. Evaluation of the results of the implementation of the pre-proposal of activities built up through teacher’s reflection.

5. Evaluation of the transformations that take place during the process of implementation of the preliminary system of communicative activities.

Variables:
INTRODUCTION

**Dependent:** Pronunciation in the teaching learning process of the English language.

**Independent variable:** A system of communicative activities to contribute to potentiate pronunciation in 3rd grade students at “Ramón Pando Ferrer” Primary School.

Population and subjects of investigation:
The population of this paper is composed of the 543 students at “Ramón Pando Ferrer” Primary School located in Camacho-Libertad Neighborhood, and the subjects of the investigation are the twenty-six third-grade students from Group C, fifteen boys and eleven girls. They were chosen intentionally by the authoress, since it is in that group where she does her practicum.

In correspondence with the object of study and the field of action, a qualitative strategy of research has been followed, in which the following methods were used:

From the theoretical level:

**Analytic –synthetic:** to carry out the mental structuring of the information collected through the literature reviewed and through the process of diagnosis.

**Inductive-deductive:** to determine generalizations and empiric laws to define and confirm theoretical presuppositions from which other logical conclusions can be deduced and submitted. This has enabled the authoress to establish the relationship between motivation, language teaching and its contribution to the teaching learning process of English with emphasis on pronunciation.

**Logical-historical:** To understand the evolution and development of the phenomenon which constitutes the object of study of this paper, it was also used to analyze the antecedents of the scientific problem and different authors’ points of view regarding the speaking ability and pronunciation.

**Systematic Approach:** to illustrate the relationship among the different elements
INTRODUCTION

that guarantee the systematic structure of the proposal and the general approach
during the process of the research.

**From the empirical level:** to collect all the necessary data which helped the
researcher corroborate the problem studied.

- Analysis of documents.
- Participant observation.
- Interview.
- Pedagogical test.
- Triangulation.

From the mathematical and/or statistic level:
**Percent Analysis:** to process and quantify the data obtained during the research
and implementation stages.

Practical Contribution and Scientific Novelty:
The significance and innovation of this paper lies on the design of a system of
communicative activities aimed at potentiating students’ pronunciation within the
teaching and learning process of English rooted in the use of games. This is the
first time that a system of activities like the one built up by the authoress is
implemented in Group 3rd C at “Ramon Pando Ferrer” Primary School within the
English subject.

This paper is structured in six parts: Introduction, Development, Conclusions,
Recommendations, Bibliography, and Annexes.
Theoretical and methodological judgments that back up the development of pronunciation in the teaching and learning process of English language.

1.1. Historical background on the teaching of pronunciation of English language.

This epigraph is intended to describe briefly the basic principles and procedures of the most recognized and commonly used approaches and methods for teaching foreign languages, and to understand how they have given treatment to pronunciation.

According to an analysis made by Jill Kerper Mora (2012) there are four general orientations among modern second-language methods and approaches:

- **Structural/linguistic**: It is based on beliefs about the structure of language and descriptive linguistics; and it involves detachment of grammatical and syntactic elements of the target language taught either deductively or inductively in a determined order. Often involves much metalinguistic content (the relation between language and other aspects of culture) or "learning about the language" in order to learn the language.

- **Cognitive**: It is based on theories of learning applied specifically to foreign language learning. Focus is on the learning strategies that are compatible with the students’ own style. The content to be taught is selected according to theories and techniques that facilitate overviews about the language, memorization and "competence" leading to "performance".

- **Affective/interpersonal**: It focuses on the student’s psychological and affective pre-dispositions that enhance or inhibit learning. It emphasizes students and teacher/student interaction, also the atmosphere of the learning situation as well as students' motivation for learning.

- **Functional/communicative**: It is based on theories of language acquisition, often referred to as the "natural" approach, and on the use of language for communication. It comprehends manifold aspects of the communicative act, with
language structures selected according to their convenience in achieving a communicative purpose. Instruction is concerned with the input students receive, comprehension of the "message" of language and student involvement at the students' level of competence.

In spite of the fact that the above categorization made by Kerper Mora (2012) is valid, the authoress upholds Celce-Murcia’s (1996) classification of two main approaches, due to the fact that those approaches are concretely applied to the teaching of pronunciation: an **intuitive-imitative approach** which depends on the student’s ability to listen to and reproduce the rhythms and sounds of the target language without any explicit information, it also presupposes the accessibility of good models to listen to, an opportunity that has been enhanced by the accessibility first of phonograph records, then of tape recorders and language labs, and more recently of audio- and videocassette and compact discs; and an **analytic-linguistic approach** which uses information and tools such as phonetic alphabet, articulatory descriptions, charts of the vocal apparatus, contrastive information, and other aids to supplement listening, imitation, and production. It informs explicitly the student and it focuses attention on the sounds and rhythms of the target language. This approach was developed to complement rather than to replace the first approach, which was typically retained as the practice phase used in cycle with the phonetic information.

According to Kerper Mora (2012), in the history of language teaching different methods have been used, but it must be acknowledged that in methods such as Grammar-Translation and Reading-based approaches the teaching of pronunciation is considered irrelevant.

**1. Grammar-Translation Method (1890-1930)**

This method was historically applied in the teaching of Latin and Greek. In the 19th century this method was rather widespread for learning foreign languages, and it focuses on the teaching of the foreign language grammar through the presentation of rules together with some exceptions and lists of vocabulary translated into the vernacular tongue. Translation is considered its most
important classroom activity. The main procedure of an ordinary lesson followed this plan: a presentation of a grammatical rule, followed by a list of vocabulary and, finally, translation exercises from selected texts. Even today, in spite of its obsolescence, some textbooks still use it. (Fernando Cerezal Sierra, 2006)

Some of the Grammar-Translation Method principles are:

• Classes are taught in the students' vernacular tongue, with little active use of the target language.
• Vocabulary is taught in the form of isolated word lists.
• Elaborate explanations of grammar are always provided. Grammar instruction provides the rules for putting words together; instruction often focuses on the form and inflection of words.
• Reading of difficult texts is begun early in the course of study. Little attention is paid to the content of texts, which are treated as exercises in grammatical analysis.
• Often the only drills are exercises in translating disconnected sentences from the target language into the mother tongue, and vice versa.
• Little or no attention is given to pronunciation.

2. The Cognitive Method (1940s-1950s)
This method arose as a reaction to Structuralism and to behavioral principles. Language learning started to be considered as a product of rule formation and hypothesis testing, being Chomsky its most representative figure. It paid attention to sub skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, such as sounds discrimination, pronunciation of specific elements, and so on needed to be understood before the student could participate in real communicative activities. This method has a hierarchical structure whereby phonemes should be learnt before words, words before sentences, and so forth. Some advocates of this approach deemphasized pronunciation in favor of grammar and vocabulary,
because they considered that native-like pronunciation was unachievable; therefore, time would be better spent on more “learnable” items such as grammatical structures and vocabulary.

3. The Audio lingual Method (ALM) (1950s-1960s)

This method is based on the principles of behavior psychology. It adapted many of the principles and procedures of the Direct Method, in part as a reaction to the lack of speaking skills of the Reading Approach. It became a basic source for the Army Method, which was a response to the need of army personnel after the USA entry into the Second World War.

Its main characteristics are:

- New material is presented in the form of a dialogue.
- It is based on the principle that language learning is habit formation, the method fosters dependence on mimicry, memorization of set phrases and over-learning.
- Structures are sequenced and taught one at a time. Structural patterns are taught using repetitive drills.
- Little or no grammatical explanations are provided; grammar is taught inductively. Skills are sequenced: Listening, speaking, reading and writing are developed in order.
- Vocabulary is strictly limited and learned in context.
- Teaching points are determined by contrastive analysis between the vernacular tongue and the target tongue.
- There is an ample use of language laboratories, tapes and visual aids.
- There is an extended pre-reading period at the beginning of the course.
- Great importance is given to precise native-like pronunciation. Use of the vernacular tongue by the teacher is permitted, but discouraged among and by the students.
- Successful responses are reinforced; great care is taken to prevent students’ errors.
- There is a tendency to focus on manipulation of the target language and to disregard content and meaning.
• Teaching units are organized following these three methodological points:
  ✓ Nothing will be spoken before it has been heard.
  ✓ Nothing will be read before it has been spoken.
  ✓ Nothing will be written before it has been read. (Fernando Cerezal Sierra, 2006; Jill Kerper Mora, 2012; Celce-Murcia, 1996)

Some critics of ALM, like Noam Chomsky, stated that this over-emphasis on repetition and accuracy eventually did not help students achieve communicative competence in the target language, in this case English. Chomsky developed his own definition about communicative competence in 1957. He considered that being linguistically competent meant to be able to understand and produce sentences correctly from the syntactic point of view only, but he makes references neither to context nor to the sociocultural significance in which these sentences are created, so that they could really have meaning.

4. Direct Method (1970s)
This method was based on observations of children learning their first language and children and adults learning foreign languages in no instructional settings. Pronunciation is taught through intuition and imitation, students imitate a model—the teacher’s or the recording—and do their best to approximate to the model through imitation and repetition. Its main characteristics are:

• Lessons begin with a dialogue using a modern conversational style in the target language.
• Material is first presented orally with actions or pictures.
• The mother tongue is never used. There is no translation.
• The preferred type of exercise is a series of questions in the target language based on the dialogue or an anecdotal narrative. Questions are answered in the target language.
• Grammar is taught inductively—rules are generalized from the practice and experience with the target language. Verbs are used first and systematically conjugated only much later after some oral mastery of the target language.
• Advanced students read literature for comprehension and pleasure. Literary texts are not analyzed grammatically.
• The culture associated with the target language is also taught inductively. Culture is considered an important aspect of language.

5. The Natural-Communicative Approach
The Natural Approach considers language as communication, so meaning, rather than grammar, is at the core of their notion of language. Thus, the focus is not on explicit analysis of structures either by the teacher or student. Following the notion that the process of learning a foreign language should be similar to the way children learn their mother tongue, comprehensible input is provided using visual and kinesthetic aids, and students are not asked to produce output immediately, as they usually go through a silent period in which they understand, but are not able to use the target language.

This approach is based on five main hypotheses:
1. Acquisition versus learning hypothesis: There are two different ways to ‘learn’ a language: a subconscious process, natural, identical to the one children learning their mother tongue use, and effective —acquisition—, and a second process —learning—, which is conscious and consists of learning grammar rules.
2. Natural order hypothesis: Foreign language rules are acquired in a fixed way, pre-established, determined by innate mechanisms and not by linguistic complexity or explicit teaching.
3. Monitor Hypothesis: The monitor only controls learning, not acquisition. The monitor plans, edits and corrects the student’s production when there is time. It sometimes interferes with the process of acquisition.
4. *Input Hypothesis:* It explains how language is acquired. A foreign language is acquired processing comprehensible input, that is, input that has been listened to and understood. If that input is beyond the student’s level and he/she does not understand it, then that input is useless. For acquisition to take place the input has to be slightly superior to the student’s level and comprehensible. To achieve comprehension, the student can use some help, through the context, pictures, mime, etc. To achieve acquisition the student must use inherent mechanisms such as the Language Acquisition Device (LAD), triggered when input is heard and understood.

5. *Affective filter Hypothesis:* It considers the role in acquisition of several factors, such as motivation, self-confidence or anxiety. These factors foster or impede acquisition, though they do not produce acquisition. To be more concrete, lack of motivation or self-esteem can raise the affective filter so that comprehensible input is not able to trigger the LAD and acquisition becomes impossible.

Its main activities are:

- Affective humanistic activities, intended to reduce the students’ affective filter and involve their feelings, ideas and experiences, such as dialogues, interviews, preference ranking, personal charts, etc.
- Problem-solving activities in which students have to find a correct answer to a situation or problem.
- Games, considered as an important element in the acquisition process and not as a way to fill up students’ lessons.
- Content activities, which focus on learning something else besides language, including mathematics, science, etc., for example, music, films, television reports, news broadcasts, and the like.

6. **The Silent Way**
Caleb Gattegno developed a method based partly on mentalist notions of learning, and took into account the way children acquire their mother tongue.
Thus, in his theory teaching should be student-centered, and learning was considered an active, creative problem-solving process in which the use of physical cues was essential. The Silent Way had a structuralist basis, with language being considered as a set of structures and vocabulary, but with a focus on its oral aspects. However, the social function of language was not yet taken into account.

It has a very uniform classroom procedure; first sounds, then words and afterwards sentences are taught through colored rods of different shapes, which have been previously associated to the different linguistic items. The teacher pronounces each element and asks for its repetition. The teacher can use mime to guarantee or check comprehension or to indicate slight changes in content. Thus, the teacher directs the classroom. He/she has an indirect role, because he/she has to be silent most of the time, giving an active role to the student. In general, the method follows an audio-lingual perspective, as translation is avoided at all costs.


In the 70's there was a growing dissatisfaction with the foreign language teaching methods because the emphasis laid on the mastery of language structures and the manipulation of grammatical forms, teachers focused on producing structurally competent students, but at the end they turned to be communicatively incompetent unable to transfer outside the classroom the amount of classroom work on repetitive habit-forming exercises. Dissatisfaction showed as well from the new educational realities created by the development of the European Union. Thus, a new approach that could improve the teaching of English was needed, due to this CLT emerged.

Historically, CLT has been seen as a response to the audio-lingual method (ALM), and as an extension or development of the notional-functional syllabus. This approach is considered an "umbrella term" since it includes new ideas, concepts and techniques that improve students’ learning, and makes the teachers’ work more effective. It also gathers the strengths of previous methods
used in foreign language teaching. CLT is a flexible approach to teaching, whose main objective is the formation of profitable students that should be able to communicate in a speech community, in other words to achieve a communicative competence, “which is a high-level concept that implies the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning involving interaction between two or more persons, or between one person and a written or oral text.” (British Columbia Teachers’ Federation, “Creating a Language Learning Classroom”, 2003)

This concept implies the development of abilities in an interaction among two or more people, or between a person and a text, written or oral. Therefore, the dimensions to measure communicative competence are:

• Cognitive: the ability to contract and/or re-construct knowledge through knowledge.

• Linguistic: the ability to use and interpret linguistic forms accurately.

• Sociolinguistic: the ability to produce appropriately utterances according to the rules of use, the communicative situation, and the participants in the communicative act.

• Discursive: the ability to produce and interpret different types of discourse and interpret and produce coherent texts.

• Strategic: the ability to use verbal and non-verbal strategies to avoid breakdowns in communication.

• Sociocultural: the ability to understand the cultural meaning underlining linguistic forms and to understand the culture of the peoples whose language is studied. (British Columbia Teachers’ Federation.” Creating a Language Learning Classroom”, December 2003)

The principles of CLT have been defined by specialists such as Keith Morrow (1983) and Neil Naiman(1989) and later redefined by PhD. Alfredo Camacho
In this paper, the authoress has chosen Camacho´s since they are contextualized taking into account Cuba´s educational needs:

• Classes should be active and centered on student´s educative needs, interests and experiences.
• Materials, tasks, activities and resources should be chosen on the basis of educative and linguistic criteria, and should provide for learning and acquisition.
• Practice should be carried out through meaningful tasks, which engage students in thinking and activity.
• Practice should provide for strategy development.
• Students should be engaged in monitoring, self-correction and self-evaluation tasks; they must be as well asked to question and reflect on what they have learned and how they have learned it.
• Opportunities should be given to learn content from other areas of the curriculum through the medium of English.
• Practice should engage students in cross-cultural comparison.
• Classes should foster an atmosphere of co-operation and open communication among students and teacher.

Some of the activities that can be done using the CLT are:
• Role plays
• Interviews
• Information gap
• Games
• Language exchanges
• Surveys
• Pair works
• Learning by teaching
• Group work
English as a subject has been taught under the conceptions of different methodologies and approaches. With the beginnings of the millennium, the curricular delineation of the subject of English in primary school has been nationally improved: the use of television and the introduction of new materials (tabloids) started to be implemented. The traditional structuralism teaching turned into the contextualized communicative perspective of teaching. Regarding the communicative approach, this change has meant the implementation of methodological principles to achieve communicative competence.

1.2 Speaking

Prior to conceptualizing our field of action, it is necessary to contextualize the skill where this element works. Thus, defining Speaking became the aim of this part.

Speaking is one of the four abilities to develop in the students. It is a productive skill that belongs to oral communication. The goal of developing speaking is oral fluency: the ability to express oneself intelligibly; that is, reasonably accurately and without too much hesitation. In the process of oral communication the speaker interacts with a listener where both change their role in the conversation (feed-back). That is to say, the speaker may become a listener and the other way around. In this interaction the speaker shows his/her understanding, he/she selects what and how to speak according to the context and where the listener does not know what the speaker is going to say. (Donn Byrne, 1989)

Spoken language may be used for two main purposes:

- For interaction or social purposes: the emphasis is on creating harmonious interactions and not for communicating any information. E.g. for greeting, telling jokes, etc.
- For transactional purposes: the emphasis is on communicating information. E.g. it is “message” oriented. Coherence and accuracy are important to present the information. (Donn Byrne, 1989)
Several researchers have pointed to interaction in the foreign language as being important for learning. The conditions for acquisition are especially good when interacting in the foreign language; specifically, conditions are good when a breakdown in communication occurs and students must negotiate for meaning. The modifications to speech arising from interactions like this help make input more comprehensible, provide feedback to the student, and push students to modify their speech.

In order to develop speaking skills, students should:
- Talk a lot in class and outside of it.
- Get the chance to speak in all lessons.
- Be interested in the topic.
- Understand and express ideas with acceptable language accuracy.
- Work in cooperative activities; group and pair work. (Garcia Cabrera S., et al., “Methodology Booklet”, 2007)

The teaching of speaking is carried out during these stages:

**Presentation stage:** In this stage, the teacher’s task is to introduce the new communicative function to the students and have them get used to it.

**Controlled practice stage:** In this stage, the teacher will make the students repeat the communicative function, explain to them its use in real life situations and mistakes should be corrected on the spot.

**Free Practice stage:** Finally, in this stage, the students are supposed to produce the communicative function with the tasks given by the teacher, acting out real life situations they may face in the future and mistakes should be corrected at the end of the lesson.

In 3rd grade, it is unlikely for the students to reach the free practice stage; in fact, they can only get to the controlled practice stage due to the shortage of vocabulary and little knowledge about the language. Richard-Amato (1996) considers that accuracy and fluency cannot genuinely be achieved in the early stages of learning. Then she adds that both do not need to be achieved at the same time in order to produce effective speakers.
The development of the speaking ability comprises the communicative functions, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, fluency; as well as, the teaching of the supra-segmental phonemes: intonation, rhythm, and stress.

The communicative functions provide context for learning, and are the main objectives to be attained in each grade. The programs of the different grades are organized taking into account the different communicative functions of the language.

Vocabulary is understood as the words to be taught in the foreign language. However, vocabulary may be more than a single word. For example, post office and mother-in-law, which are made up of two or three words, but express a single idea. When teaching new words to the students, teachers should teach them pronunciation and spelling, grammar, meaning relationship and the process of word formation if it is a compound word or a new word formed by affixation. (Ur, Penny; 1988)

Fluency is considered the ability to express oneself intelligibly; reasonably accurately and without too much hesitation (taken from García Cabrera S., et al., “Fundamentals for FL Teaching”, 2007)

When talking about grammar, students should be taught form (structure), meaning (notion), use (function), and pragmatics (the rules of how to use language in socioculturally appropriate ways, taking into account the participants in a communicative interaction and features of the context within which the interaction takes place). (Olson; 1994:119)

Being pronunciation the main objective of this research the authoress considered essential to dedicate a special part to define it.

1.2.1 Pronunciation and the prosodic elements of speech

All along the literature reviewed were found diverse definitions of pronunciation:
"Pronunciation is the way you say a word or the way in which a language is usually spoken." (http://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/pronunciation)

1. The act or manner of pronouncing words; utterance of speech.
2. A way of speaking a word, especially a way that is accepted or generally understood.
3. A graphic representation of the way a word is spoken, using phonetic symbols." (The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language)

“1. (Linguistics / Phonetics & Phonology) the act, instance, or manner of pronouncing sounds
2. (Linguistics / Phonetics & Phonology) the supposedly correct manner of pronouncing sounds in a given language
3. (Linguistics / Phonetics & Phonology) a phonetic transcription of a word” (Collins English Dictionary cited in)

According to Longman Dictionary, pronunciation is “the way a certain sound or sounds are produced. Unlike articulation, which refers to the actual production of speech sounds in the mouth, pronunciation stresses more the way sounds are perceived by the hearer.”

Although most of the definitions focus on the act of uttering sounds, the authoress considers and upholds the following definition, that the term “pronunciation” should not be assumed as the articulation or production of sounds only, but in relation with the prosodic elements of speech; that is, intonation, rhythm and stress.

In the complex process of communication, the incorrect use of any of the elements of pronunciation may cause confusion, lack of understanding, or it can totally change the meaning of what is intended. As the incorrect choice of a word may cause annoyance in the speaker; also, a change of vowel or consonant, or the incorrect use of the intonation patterns may cause the same effect. Bosch, M
(2006), makes a reference on his thesis about “intelligibly comfortable pronunciation”, (a concept given by Professor David Abercrombie in 1963), which is an understandable pronunciation with little or none conscious effort made by the receptor. The authoress agrees with this concept, and upholds that it is almost impossible for a student to achieve a native-like pronunciation; therefore, aiming at an “intelligibly comfortable pronunciation” is a more likely and accomplishable target than aiming at perfection.

1.2.1.1 The suprasegmental phonemes

Following the definitions given by Longman Dictionary, intonation can be defined as the phenomenon that consists in raising or lowering the pitch of our voice forming pitch patterns, and giving some syllables in our utterance a greater degree of loudness and changing their speech rhythm.

Intonation has definite patterns which can be analyzed according to their structure and purposes. Intonation is sometimes neglected by second-language students, but it is very important, because it is employed to carry information which is conveyed by the words of the sentence.

Regarding the functions of intonation, The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language, gives a detailed description of the functions of this suprasegmental phoneme, which enables the authoress to reinforce the importance of it:

• Emotional: intonation’s most obvious role is to express attitudinal meanings—sarcasm, surprise, reserve, impatience, delight, shock, anger, interest, and thousands of other semantic nuances.

• Grammatical: intonation helps to identify grammatical structure in speech, performing a role similar to pronunciation. Units such as clauses and sentences often depend on intonation for their spoken identity, and several specific contrasts, such as question/statement, make systematic use of it.
• Informational: intonation helps draw attention to what meaning is given and what is new in an utterance. The word carrying the most prominent tone in a contour signals the part of an utterance that the speaker is treating as new information: I’ve got a new pen, I bought three books.

• Textual: intonation helps larger units of meaning than the sentence to contrast and cohere. In radio news-reading, information can be shaped through the use of pitch. In sports commentary, changes in prosody reflect the progress of the action.

• Psychological: intonation helps us to organize speech into units that are easier to perceive and memorize. Most people would find a sequence of ten numbers (4,7,3,8,2,6,4,8,1,5) difficult to recall; the task is made easier by using intonation to chunk the sequence into two units (4,7,3,8,2\6,4,8,1,5).

• Indexical: intonation, along with other prosodic features, is an important marker of personal or social identity. Lawyers, preachers, newscasters, sports commentators, army sergeants, and several other occupations are readily identified through their distinctive prosody.

As follows the authoress will define stress due to the fact that it is another suprasegmental that should be taken into consideration when dealing with pronunciation since a change in stress may bring about a change in meaning. Microsoft Encarta (2008) defines stress as “the emphasis placed on a sound or syllable by pronouncing it more loudly or forcefully than those surrounding it in the same word or phrase.” Longman Dictionary amplifies the definition by adding that syllables may be stressed or unstressed, and that the listener distinguish a stressed syllable or word “as being louder and/or of longer duration and/or produced with a higher PITCH that in the surrounding words or syllables.”

Finally, the authoress will define rhythm in linguistics, rhythm or isochrony is one of the three aspects of prosody, along with stress and intonation. Every language in the world has a characteristic speech rhythm. English is a stress-timed
language with rhythmic patterns based on a fairly regular recurrence of stressed syllables.

In actual speech the accented syllables are separated from each other by equal units of time, or in more technical terms, that the rhythmic beats are isochronous. English rhythm shows a tendency towards isochrony. Each accented syllable constitutes the peak of prominence in a rhythmic group, which may or may not include other accented syllables.

However, Spanish people give equal weight to each syllable, making the rhythmic patterns appear to be more syllable-timed. Another difference between English and Spanish rhythm lays on the fact that Spanish vowel weakening in terms of quality and quantity is very slight compared with English.

In 1945 K. L. Pike coined the terms “stress-timed” and “syllable-timed” to describe the two different types of rhythm. English has a stress-timed rhythm because the accented syllables tend to occur at fairly regular intervals. When two accented syllables are separated by unaccented ones, these tend to be compressed and quickened, so that the time between each beat will be approximately the same as the time taken by two consecutive accented syllables.

Although Spanish rhythm is also determined by rhythmic beats, their occurrence is not so regular as in English. Spanish can be said to have a syllable-timed
rhythm because it is the syllables, either accented or unaccented, which tend to occur at more or less regular intervals.

English pronunciation goes up and down, and this up and down movement is not easy to learn. However, if the students are asked to practice pronunciation taking into account those ups and downs their pronunciation will sound natural. The use of songs will help the students to practice and improve their rhythm.

### 1.2.2 Pronunciation problems

In their book, *Teaching American English Pronunciation*, Avery and Ehrlinch (1995) state that many pronunciation problems vary according to the native languages of the students, it is also true that many problems of a more general nature can be found. For example, students from most language backgrounds have difficulty with /θ/ and /ð/ sounds, represented by the grapheme *th*. This is basically because these sounds are not common in most of the languages of the world. A whole chapter is dedicated to pronunciation difficulties that foreigners from different language back-grounds (Vietnamese, Chinese, Portuguese, Polish, Spanish, and so on) usually have when learning English as a foreign language. Besides the authors previously mentioned, José Ramon Torres Aguila on his Ph.D. thesis, dedicates an epigraph to the special needs that Spanish speakers have when learning English, too.

These authors identify the following problems:

1. **/b/ vs. /v/**
   Although the letter 'v' is used by Spanish spelling, the sound /v/ does not exist. In initial position, Spanish speakers may pronounce the English /v/ sound as /b/. In other positions, they may pronounce it as a bilabial fricative, a sound that does not exist in English. To the English ear, this bilabial fricative may sound like a /w/.

2. **Aspiration: /p/, /t/, and /k/**
Spanish speakers may not aspirate the voiceless stops /p/, /t/, and /k/ when followed by a vowel in the word-initial position.

• /ʃ/ vs. /tʃ/ as in ship and chip
Most Spanish speakers will pronounce ship as chip, or wash as watch, substituting /tʃ/ for /ʃ/.

• Problem /s/+ consonant in word-initial position: spit, stay, and sky
When /s/ is followed by another consonant in word-initial position, Spanish speakers usually insert a vowel at the beginning of the word. For example, ‘I espeak espanish’.

• Problem /θ/ and /ð/ as in think and this
Spanish students will often substitute /t/ for /θ/ in think and /d/ for /ð/ in this. A sound very similar to /ð/ exists in Spanish as a positional variant of /d/, occurring between vowels and at the end of a word. This means that Spanish speakers will be able to produce /ð/, while not necessarily realizing it. (Avery and Ehrlinch; 1995)

The authoress have found out that most of those pronunciation problems described by the aforementioned authors are common to those problems found in 3rd graders from group C at “Ramon Pando” Ferrer Primary School. Moreover, some possible tips are suggested in order to solve the problems described below, but neither a communicative purpose is provided nor the students’ needs are considered.

2. Needs assessment
Through this epigraph, the authoress explains all the process followed to build up the proposal, taking as a point of departure the process of diagnosis.

One of the principles of CLT is students’ centered class; therefore, classes should be active and centered on students’ educative needs, interests and experiences in order to achieve the objectives of the year. This principle was taken as a premise in order to design a system of communicative activities aimed
at potentiating pronunciation in Group 3rd C at “Ramon Pando Ferrer” Primary School.

**Dependent variable:** Pronunciation in the teaching and learning process of the English language.

Prior to mentioning the independent variable, the researcher conceptualizes the **dependent variable:** Pronunciation. Within the TLP of English it is the articulation or production of sounds in relation with the prosodic elements of speech; that is, intonation, and stress.

**Independent variable:** a system of communicative activities to potentiate students’ pronunciation.

**Characterization of the subjects of investigation:**

In order to attain the objective proposed in this paper, Group 3rd C at “Ramon Pando Ferrer” Primary School was taken as subject of study. This group of students, ranging in age from seven to eight, is composed of twenty six students. The following methods from the empirical level were used in order to collect all the necessary data which helped the researcher corroborate the problem studied:

- **Analysis of documents:** It was used to know the treatment given to the development of the speaking ability in the syllabus of English for the level, and in the text book and workbook designed for the grade.
- **Participant observation:** It was carried out at the end of each class to evaluate the development of the students’ speaking ability with emphasis on pronunciation in the students from Group 3rd C at “Ramón Pando Ferrer” Primary School. Also, with the intention of corroborating what was stated on the interviews and to assess students’ attitudes and development toward the lesson through the research.
- **Interview:** it was carried out to the class in order to assess what type of activities are being used in the TV lessons, and what type of activities students like the most.
**Pedagogical test:** it was carried out to diagnose the students’ weaknesses and strengths, and to corroborate what had been observed through the lessons.

- **Triangulation:** it was used as a resource to obtain regularities about the phenomenon studied taking as point of departure the following empiric methods: the participant observation, pedagogical test, and the interview.

The following categories and subcategories of analysis were the ones taken into account to administer the different tools and for the analysis of the collected data as well.

Due to the low language level of 3rd graders, only three categories were taken into consideration. As it was previously stated, this was the first time students dealt with English, thus they are still getting familiar with the main features of the language.

1. **Guidelines for the treatment of pronunciation in the level:**
   - Objectives and contents projected for the grade.
   - Amount of activities aimed at potentiating pronunciation.
   - Types of activities used in the TV lessons.
   - Types of activities preferred by the class.

2. **Sound system:**
   - Pronunciation of sounds that do not exist in Spanish
   - Pronunciation of final sounds
   - Pronunciation of the initial sound /S/

3. **Intonation**
   - Intonation of Yes or No questions
   - Intonation of Wh-questions

1. Guidelines for the treatment of pronunciation in the level. (See annex 1)

Analysis of relevant school documents (syllabus, text book, and workbook) with the intention of determining the link between what has been designed and what happens in the teaching learning process. According to the methodological
guidelines for the teaching of English in third grade, at the end of the course children should: understand, ask, and answer simple personal information questions, with emphasis on:

- Telling their name, age, place where they study and live.
- Referring to family members and friends: names and personal qualities.
- Describing in a simple way personal belongings and school objects, telling their color and size.
- Answering teacher’s commands.
- Asking for permission and help.

At “Ramón Pando Ferrer” Primary School, there is not a syllabus to follow as such in the teaching of English in 3rd grade, in place of it, teachers have to guide themselves by the English text book and Workbook of the grade, which are designed to be used along with the T.V lessons.

Most of the activities developed during the T.V lesson are conceived for the speaking ability, but the exercises are monotonous and most of the time they lack a communicative purpose.

Also, T.V lessons do not take into consideration the students' particular needs, and timings; consequently, the T.V teachers might go ahead with the activities and/or the contents while the students still do not manipulate them.

As it was mentioned before, the Textbook is conceived to be used along with the T.V lessons.

The book referred to before consists of 40 lessons divided into 3 stages: before viewing activities, where the teacher devotes 10 minutes to arrange the classroom, activate the students’ previous knowledge and get them ready for the T.V lesson; later the while viewing activities; that is, the T.V lesson as such, where the T.V teachers deliver their lesson, in this stage the students’ role is merely receptive and repetition is the basis of the exercises displayed; then comes the after viewing activities, where the students are supposed to do the exercises oriented in the Textbook, mostly to manipulate the content given in class. There is at least one exercise devoted to the speaking ability per lesson,
but, as it has been stated earlier, most of them lack a communicative situation and they are monotonous. Most of the exercises ask the students to complete dialogues, sentences, activities which are not usually done in real life situations. 3rd graders also have a workbook, which consists of an average of one exercise per lesson aimed at working with the speaking ability. However, these exercises do not seem to meet the needs of the target class since they are repetitive and non-communicative.

The target class also favored the use of new techniques for practicing the language such as games, the use of pictures, songs, rhymes, realia among others.

2. Sound system. (See annexes 2, 3)

In order to assess categories 2 and 3, the following scale was designed:

- **Good**: students who have some irrelevant phonemic errors and foreign stress and intonation patterns, but the speaker is intelligible.
- **Fair**: students who have frequent phonemic errors and foreign stress and intonation patterns that causes the speaker to be occasionally unintelligible.
- **Poor**: students who have frequent phonemic errors and foreign stress and intonation patterns that cause the speaker to be unintelligible

After four weeks working with the class, the researcher administered a pedagogical test (see Annex 4) to the students. As it is in 3rd grade where English is first included in the Primary School curriculum, thereby this was the first time students faced to English lessons as such, and they lacked of a background knowledge to be taken as starting point making the preliminary diagnose a bit different from the usual. The information for the diagnosis was provided by the instruments administered to students and teachers during the first four weeks of classes, and mainly through systematic evaluations, to identify the students’ strengths and weaknesses.
Concerning the sound system, the results attained were the following:
In the first subcategory, 3 students were considered Good (12%), 10 students were considered Fair (40 %), and 12 students were considered Poor (48%).
The most common mistakes were found in sounds like: /ð/, /Ø/ and /∫/.
The second subcategory concerning pronunciation of final sounds, 4 students were considered Good (16%), 9 Fair (36%), and 12 (48%) students were considered Poor. The most frequent mistakes were: those final sounds which are consonants such as – k, m, n, p, and t because they are not common in that position in Spanish.
In the third subcategory related to the pronunciation of the initial sound /s/, it was observed that most of the students did not pronounced initial sound /s/. This sound is not pronounced in this position in Spanish.

3. Intonation.
Regarding this category, their main problem is related to the use of the rising falling pattern when asking questions with one of the interrogative pronouns. They tend to use the rising pattern as they do in Spanish.

Triangulation: After administering the tools, and processing the data offered by them, the authoress of this paper established the following regularities:

Regularities of the Needs Assessment.
Taking into account the results previously analyzed, the following regularities can be drawn:

- The didactic materials used for the grade include activities to work with pronunciation, but they are excessively repetitive, and most of them lack a communicative purpose. On the same light, there are no specific guidelines for the treatment of this sub-skill in the level.
- There are problems in intonation mainly in those patterns which differ from Spanish: raising falling intonation in Wh- questions
- There are difficulties in pronunciation, mainly in those sounds which do not exist in Spanish.
Students have difficulties in putting their ideas beyond the sentence level with an intelligible pronunciation.

There is a need to integrate games within the lessons as the target students like the most this type of activities in the TV lessons.

3. Proposal of a system of communicative activities to potentiate students’ pronunciation.

Rationale for the proposal.
The philosophical bases of the proposal of the present research are grounded on the Marxist-Leninist philosophy. In its most general characteristics, the dialectical materialism studies the nature of the being and its laws to turn the prior objective laws into method of further knowledge and transformation of reality. The historical antecedents of the improvement of pronunciation in English in elementary schools have been poorly studied. The proposal of the system of actions will help the students to potentiate their English pronunciation and will also serve as a material of reference for teachers delivering classes to 3rd graders.

From the pedagogical point of view, this work is backed up by the Vigostkian postulates and his Socio-Cultural school. He points out that the school plays an important role, as a socializing institution, in the transmission of the relevant products of culture.

Furthermore, he states that learning precedes development and must be raised in inter-subjective spaces, where an interaction that allows the internalization of the social historical experience is produced. The internalized products will form part of the actual development zone of the individual and will allow him to act by himself. It is considered that there is no learning without a certain level of previous development and there is no development without learning. Development and learning constitute a dialectical unit in which both receive a mutual influence. Another pedagogical aspect that supports this work is the use
of the communicative approach in the design of the activities proposed. This approach, as it was stated in the theoretical foundations of this work, is the one that permits to potentiate pronunciation.

From the psychological point of view, Piaget’s studies of cognitive development describe the Primary School stage as a period in which the child develops the ability to think in practical terms: the state of development reached also allows flexibility of thought, expressed by the possibility that mental operations are reversible, facilitating; for example, learning mathematics. (Piaget. J (1984), cited in: Castellanos Roxanne, 2003)

This period is characterized by a logical thought, and the perception of reality is objective; therefore, it is concrete. Children can focus on aspects of reality which are predictable, giving them a kind of stability, increasing their ability to learn. Also, they can focus their attention on details, discover and learn about the world that surrounds them. The relationship they establish with their environment and the level of maturity allow the expanding of the sense of self as an active and thinking being, in relation to others.

Certainly, the understanding of the cognitive development of the primary-school student is useful to teachers, so as to use teaching strategies in accordance with the stage of thought in which the child is (e.g. the use of the abacus as a concrete material to teach basic mathematical operations). This deduction does not elude English teachers: knowing that children are apt to learn better through concrete materials (pictures, objects...); it is presumable to say that through the use of them as material aids, children can learn English in a more efficient way.

It is also plausible to add that children are naturally open to language: less self-conscious and less anxious, they see a foreign language as an opportunity to do the things they already like: rhyme, sing, make up words, and so on. Moreover, children have a natural sense of amazement and inquisitiveness mixed with an incredible capacity for imitation, which can be beneficent when learning pronunciation and vocabulary in a new language.
3.1.1 Characteristics of the proposal.

The system of activities has been designed with the objective of helping students from 3rd “C” at “Ramón Pando Ferrer” Primary School to potentiate accuracy in pronunciation in English.

Marcelo Arnold y F. Osorio (2003) defined a system as a set of closely interrelated elements forming a complex whole, in which its global behavior attains a common objective.

The system of activities proposed is structured within the course syllabus, taking as starting points the contents of the units and, especially, the lessons devoted to potentiate pronunciation and the objectives of those lessons. The activities designed are thus in correspondence with the content included in the syllabus for each. Moreover, they are graded according to the students’ characteristics, the level of difficulty of the contents, always departing from the less complex activities to the most difficult ones included in the units and specifically in the lessons. The close interrelation and interdependence among these elements that function as an indissoluble whole, give a systemic character to this proposal.

The system proposed is based on the communicative principles for the foreign language teaching, taking as a starting point the humanist, developing, and dialectic-materialistic conception as a tendency of the current pedagogical thought, particularly in the historical-cultural approach of the human development as a contemporary pedagogical trend and as a learning theory.

Consequently with the results of the Needs Assessment, a system of activities based on games and rhymes seems ideal to help potentiate students' pronunciation since these techniques can lower anxiety; thus, making the acquisition of input more likely to achieve.

Games are often associated with fun, but one must not lose sight of their pedagogical value, particularly in foreign language teaching. In addition, they are often highly motivating, relevant, interesting, and comprehensible.

Games are sometimes used in the classroom to develop and reinforce concepts
(E.g. colors, shapes, numbers, word definitions) to add diversion to the regular classroom activities. Perhaps, their most important function is to give practice in communication skills.

Moreover, music also reduces anxiety and inhibition in foreign language students. Through music, language easily finds roots in the experience of the students at any age or proficiency level. At beginning levels, music can be used to teach basic vocabulary, colors, parts of the body, simple actions, items of clothing, and names of people, and more importantly rhythm.

3.1.2 Description of the proposal.

The system of communicative activities was put into practice in third grade C at “Ramon Pando Ferrer” Primary School. The system proposed comprises 15 activities structured within the syllabus of the subject for this grade aimed at potentiating accuracy in pronunciation. The flexible character of this system also allowed the adaptation to those conditions through the insertion of the changes considered suitable when needed, and all the activities were either taken from authentic sources or adapted by the authoress. Moreover, most of the activities were designed for the controlled practice stage in which the students are supposed to reproduce, while some others were designed for the free practice stage, in which the students are supposed to produce the sounds taught within the communicative functions correctly. The entire proposal can be found in Annex 5. The activities were designed considering these aspects: Title, Grade, Lesson, Time, Objective, Material Aids, and Procedure. Also, audio and video files can be found in Annex 6.

Sample Activity.

Title: What’s your name? (rhyme)
Grade: 3rd.
Lesson: 25
Stage: Controlled Practice
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Time: 15 min.

Objective: to reproduce the rhymes taking in consideration the following pronunciation points:

- The pronunciation of /hw/ in *what*
- Final sound /s/ in *what’s*
- Intonation in short statements in “Hello __x__” and “What´s your name?” (raising falling intonation)

Material Aids: A big soft ball

Procedure:
The teacher tells the children to sit in a circle, then he/she shows them a ball and passes it to one of the children, who in turn has to pass it to another child as well, until the teacher says: “Stop!, What´s your name?”. The child with the ball will have to answer. The teacher helps the child to respond (My name is __x__) and the teacher has the students repeat: Hello __x__!

Then __x__ stands in the middle holding the ball. The children move around and sing the following rhyme:

“__x__ has the ball- __x__ has the ball- hey ho around we go- __x__ has the ball”

Later, __x__ passes the ball to another child and so on, until most of the students have had the ball

3.1.3 Implementation of the proposal

In order to give solution to the pronunciation problems found in the practicum, the authoress designed a preliminary system of activities which aimed at potentiating students’ pronunciation.

The proposal was built up and implemented through the 2012-2013 academic year. The activities were carried out in the last fifteen minutes after the TV lesson, but some of them can also be adapted to be worked all along several lessons. All along the building-up process, the original proposal had to be
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adjusted in order to be fulfilled, due to the fact that some of the activities would take more than the established time (fifteen minutes).

The effectiveness of the system was corroborated by means of the observation and evaluations of the students’ performance taking into account the following categories and subcategories:

1. Sound system:
   - Pronunciation of sounds that do not exist in Spanish
   - Pronunciation of final sounds
   - Pronunciation of the initial sound /s/

2. Intonation
   - Intonation of Yes or No questions
   - Intonation of Wh- questions

Concerning the sound system, the results attained were the following:
In the first subcategory, 14 students were considered Good (56%), 8 students were considered Fair (32 %), and 3 students were considered Poor (12%).
It should be pointed out that 1 of the 3 students with Poor results, is hearing-impaired, and another one is working with a speech therapist for a case of dyslalia.
In the second and third subcategory concerning pronunciation of final sounds and pronunciation of the initial sound /s/, 13 students were considered Good (52%), 10 Fair (40%), and 2 (8%) students were considered Poor.
Concerning the Intonation category, a huge improvement was shown as the class was able to recognize and reproduce the raising-falling pattern of Wh-questions.