

English Pronunciation: Difficulties for a Chinese Speaker

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ABSTRACT

This article reports on a case study that describes the pronunciation difficulties faced by a 39 years old Chinese speaker of female gender, who possesses a B1 (Common European Framework of Reference), required to apply to an internship in the process of learning English as a second language in the context of United States of America. To develop this topic, a questionnaire was designed and sixteen questions were selected to have a diagnosis of the student's difficulties. During the teaching process through observation, diagnostic and the theoretical framework, it was discovered that the difficulties with the pronunciation of the English language faced by the Chinese speaker are related to four aspects: first: the pronunciation of the vowels (i, u, a) and consonants (p, b, t, d, k, g, v, f, s, z, l, and r), second: tension of the word, third: patterns of intonation, and finally Chinese culture.

RESUMEN

Este artículo informa sobre un estudio de caso que describe las dificultades de pronunciación que enfrenta un hablante chino de género femenino de 39 años de edad, quien posee el nivel B1 (Marco Común Europeo de Referencia), requerido para aplicar a un intercambio académico en el proceso de aprendizaje del inglés como segunda lengua en el contexto de Estados Unidos de América. Para desarrollar este tema, se diseñó un cuestionario y se seleccionaron dieciséis preguntas para tener un diagnóstico de las dificultades del alumno. Durante el proceso de enseñanza, a través de la observación, el diagnóstico y el marco teórico, se descubrió que las dificultades con la pronunciación del idioma inglés que enfrenta el hablante chino se relacionan con cuatro aspectos: primero: la pronunciación de las vocales (i, u, a) y consonantes (p, b, t, d, k, g, v, f, s, z, l, y r), segundo: tensión de la palabra, tercero: patrones de entonación, y por último la cultura china.

KEYWORDS

Chinese, English pronunciation, English phonology, English teaching, Culture, English as second language (ESL).

PALABRAS CLAVE

Chino, pronunciación en inglés, fonología del inglés, enseñanza del inglés, cultura, inglés como segunda lengua.

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INTRODUCTION

A B. Ed. in English graduate of Universidad La Gran Colombia is trained as an integral, receptive teacher, with an interest in research, to contribute in pedagogical processes to the teaching of the English language, motivating the students to carry out academic exchanges. Those characteristics are strengthened with experiences with other cultures, particularly in this case, the approach to Chinese culture.

This paper seeks to contribute, from the capacity as a teacher of the English language, to the identification and description of the difficulties that a Chinese speaker faces regarding the pronunciation of the English as a second language.

The first chapter of the project, refers to the research problem and contextualization. In the second chapter, the following aspects of the theoretical framework are outlined: phonemes, phonetics, phonology, the pronunciation of the English language and Chinese culture. The third chapter defines the research methodology. The last chapter reports on the findings and describes the most common difficulties in pronunciation when the Chinese speaker faced the process of learning the English language.

CHAPTER 1

1.1 Research problem

Some Chinese people who have the opportunity to make academic exchanges in universities of the United States, particularly in the University of the State of Missouri, expressed their desire and interest in learning the English language, being this a clue factor for me as an English teacher were I was able to learn and identify aspects from the Chinese students.

The La Gran Colombia University, and specifically the School of Education Sciences, and the B.Ed. of English Language, creates student's expectations that awaken interest in participating in international exchanges. The main purpose of the internship was to do a scholarship which allowed me to enrich my professional profile as an English Teacher by learning from other cultures, teaching, preparing and organizing English lessons.

The opportunity to teach English to a Chinese student, during their process of learning the English language, allowed identifying factors that hinder their learning. During the monograph, it was determined that the student read and wrote the English language without difficulties, however, opportunities to practice oral expression were not possible in her country. Therefore, the following exploratory question was worked out: What are the pronunciation difficulties faced by a Chinese student during their English language learning process? This led to a series of questions that were synthesized in a questionnaire of twenty, solved during the interaction with the Chinese student.

Subsequently, sixteen questions were selected to diagnose the difficulties with the pronunciation of the Chinese speaker during the teaching and learning process. Then, the difficulties with the pronunciation of English were classified into 3 linguistic categories and 1 category related to the native language and culture. The close contact and interaction with the Chinese student was also a fact that motivated the development and completion of this project.

1.2 Rationale

The training that a student receives at La Gran Colombia University allows to make international exchanges to the graduates in English and interact with students from diverse cultures, who wish to learn the English language. With this monograph, is showed a methodological system based on identification, diagnosis, categorization and description of difficulties of the pronunciation of the English Language that other langue speakers may have.

In the last three decades, the Chinese government has allowed to its population to emigrate to other countries, that's how the number of immigrants from mainland China in the United States nearly doubled from 299,000 in 1980 to 536,000 in 1990, and again to 989,000 in 2000, reaching 2.1 million in 2016¹, generating cultural interaction, stimulating in the Chinese population the social necessity of learning English; representing this an opportunity to all the teachers and professors of the English as a second language, where they can carry out their education in the United States.

¹ Zong, J. & Batalova, J. (2017) Chinese Immigrants in the United States, MPI Migration Policy Institute

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 General objective

To describe the pronunciation difficulties that a B1 level Chinese speaker faces in the process of learning the English language by following a case study method.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

1.3.2.1 To make a linguistic and cultural diagnosis of the Chinese student regarding her English language learning process.

1.3.2.2 To follow up the English learning process of a Chinese student, focusing on pronunciation.

1.3.2.3 To categorize the difficulties of the pronunciation faced by the Chinese student during her English learning process by using known theory, the student's diagnosis, and class observations.

CHAPTER 2

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To develop this monograph, observation was done in a Chinese learner, during the Learning process of the English Language, highlighting his capacity to read and write as well as the difficulties in the pronunciation. Therefore, it becomes necessary to take into account the concepts of phoneme, phonetic and phonology. Through the theoretical approaches of Quilis and Mott (2005), the difficulties that a Chinese speaker has in the pronunciation of the English language are sustained.

Based on the information gathered from the student and the Chinese culture, the student is skilled in the memorization of words, something that allows them to identify the words in spelling and writing, but on the other hand, pronunciation is difficult for them as they can't practice too much and they also tend to forget the right pronunciation of the words.

2.1 Definition of foreign language and second language

Inpahu University Foundation, in its language policy defines:

By definition the foreign language refers to a language other than the language maternal or own language, and different from the language of the country in which it is learned. It is known as EFL, L2 or target language, is the language object of learning, whether formal or natural, and includes the terms of foreign language and second language. The distinction between one and the other is established general way by virtue of the learning situation, that is, if it is learned in a country where the language is neither official nor native, is considered a 'foreign language'. On the contrary, if the language is learned in a country where it coexists as an official or native language with another or other languages, is considered 'second language for its usability in next learning context. p.(1)

2.2 Learning vs. acquisition

Krashen, S. (1987), in text *Principles and practice in second language acquisition* defines:

There are two different strategies that are used to develop the management of a second language. The acquisition of a language is similar to the way children develop their ability to manage their mother tongue. It is, in two senses, a subconscious process: (a) people often do not even realize that they are acquiring a language; (b) concentrates more on being able to use it to communicate. Moreover, the apprentice is generally not aware of what he has acquired; he can not talk about the rules he has assimilated or describe them; he simply internalized them, without noticing it.

The learning of a language is different. It is knowing about a language, or knowing it formally. It has been assumed that the explicit presentation of rules and the correction of errors facilitate the learning of other languages. Supposedly, the correction of errors helps the learner to arrive at the correct mental representation of a rule. p. (10-11)

2.3 Phoneme definition

For Roman Jakobson (1939), phonemes are sound characteristics produced and recognized by speakers during rehearsed speech. For Samuel Gili Gaya (1988), a phoneme is the sum of simultaneous properties through which the sound of a language is distinguished from other sounds, differentiating the meanings of the words.

2.4 Phonetic and phonological concepts

According to Algirdas Julien Greimas (1982), Phonetic is the linguistic discipline that focuses on the study of the expression of natural languages. Phonology is the linguistic discipline that aims at the expression of natural languages, more specifically in the study of the form of expressions. Two main units are used: the phonemes or syntagmatic classes obtained by paradigmatic commutation and the semiotics categories or semantic categories, few in number, that establish and specify the oppositional relations between the phonemes of each of the paradigms.

Likewise, Antonio Quilis (2005) established in his treatise on Phonetics and Spanish Phonology: “Phonology is the discipline in charge of sounds in language, it studies the phonetic elements of a language, analyzing the function in the system, studies the phonic elements of a language specifically in its origin, constitution and acoustics from its perception”.

Nikolai Serggeyevich Trobetzkov and Roman Jakobson (1939), refer to the Phonetic as the material science that represents the sounds in the human language. They refer the phonology as the science of the sounds of the language. The phonology has to investigate which phonetical differences are connected with a difference in the meaning, as the differentiation elements, their behavior, and according to what rules they can or not be linked to create words and phrases.

2.5 Phonetics classification

There are three main types of phonetic research:²

1. Articulatory phonetics (speech production)

Articulatory phonetics is the study of how, after receiving a signal from the brain, the human vocal tract is manipulated into a configuration which generates a speech sound wave form.

Articulatory phonetics describes sounds in terms of the movement of the organs in the vocal tract.

2. Auditory phonetics (speech perception)

Auditory phonetics studies how the human ear receives the speech sound wave form, processes the wave form and converts it into a signal for interpretation by the hearer's brain. Auditory phonetics is the study of the perception of sounds by a hearer or hearers.

3. Acoustic phonetics

Acoustic phonetics, also called experimental phonetics, studies the physical qualities of the sound wave form which is emitted by the speaker and perceived by the hearer. Acoustic phonetics examines the frequency, amplitude and duration of the sound wave passing between the speaker(s) and hearer(s).

² Roach, P., (2009), *English Phonetics and Phonology fourth edition*. p.31

3 domains of phonetics

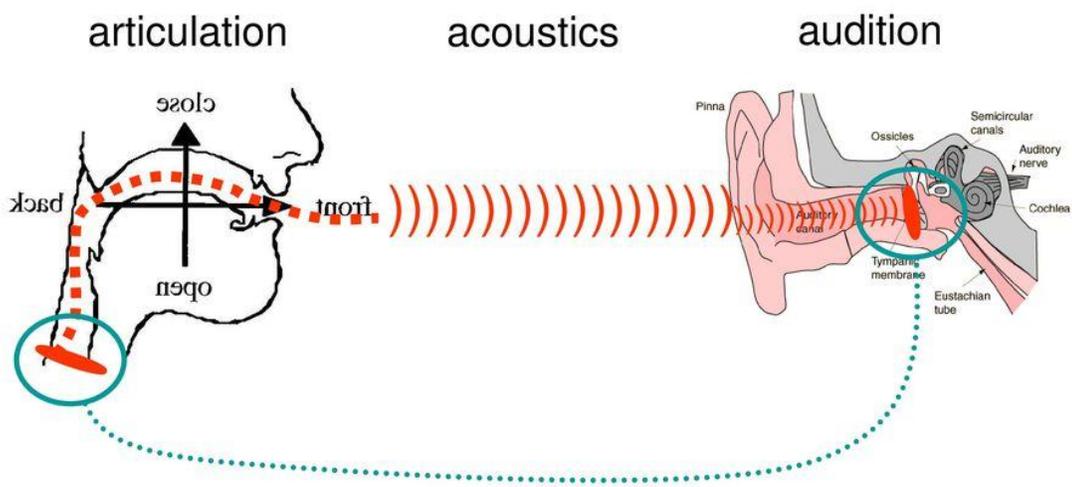


Figure 1. The phonetics studies three aspects of the sounds used in speech

Note:
<https://slideplayer.com/slide/13166980/>

2.6 English Phonology

Mott (2010), refers to phonology as: "Although phonology does not deal with all the articulatory minutiae of sounds that fall within the scope of phonetics, it does deal with the rules that govern the use of allophones (understood as the different combinatorial variants). That can present a phoneme), for the phonologist, the sounds are linguistic elements centered their interest is their function, behavior and organization " (Mott, B. (2010) *English Phonetics and Phonology for Spanish speakers*. p. (33)). The author defines phonology as a science related to phonetics. This science, on the other hand, has the main objective of identifying the sounds following the function, the possible behavior and the organization in the use. This phonetic science, describe the sounds and their use in the speech. Mott makes reference to: "the basic notions in phonology: unity, realization and distribution" (Mott, B. (2010) *English Phonetics and Phonology for Spanish speakers*. p.(33-34)).

Unity, realization and distribution are also branches that allow the classification of phonemes in phonology. Unity refers to the phonemes used in the language during the speech. The Realization refers to all the allophones of the language. Finally, the distribution of all the allophones and phonemes of the language are used and categorized according to their application in the discourse.

The concepts of vowels phonemes, consonants phonemes, stress and intonation are considered relevant aspects in phonology and are raised with reference to the definition given by Szilágyi László in the year 2014 through the research "*Put English Phonetics into Practice*".

2.6.1 Vowels phonemes

The vowels are usually made with the current of air that does not find obstruction in the mouth, nasal and pharyngeal cavities³. At the articulatory level, the description of the vocal notes changes:

- in the stability of the joint
- in the position of the tongue
- in the position of the lip
- in its length

All the vowels in English are divided into 3 groups: monophthongs, diphthongs, diphthongoids.

Monophthongs are vowels whose articulation is almost invariable.

They are - [i e æ a: o o: U ʌ ə: ə].

In the pronunciation of the diphthongs, the speech organs slide from a position of vowel to another within a syllable. The starting point, the nucleus, is strong and distinct.

They are - [ei ai oi au əu iə eə uə]

In the pronunciation of diphthongoids the joint is changing slightly but the difference between the initial point and the end is not as different as in the case of diphthongs.

They are - [i: u:]

³ László, S., (2014) *Put English Phonetics into Practice*. p.13

Position of the tongue: The tongue can move forward, backward, up, down, thus changing the quality of the vowels.

1. When the tongue is in the front of the mouth and the front of the tongue is raised for the hard palate, a frontal vowel is pronounced.

They are - [i: e æ]

2. When the tongue is in the front of the mouth but slightly retracted and the part of the language closest to the center that rises up front, pronounces a vowel retracted frontally.

3. When the front of the tongue rises toward the back of the hard palate, the vowel is called central.

They are - [ʌ ə: ə].

4. When the tongue is on the back of the mouth and the back of it is raised towards the soft palate a posterior vowel is pronounced.

They are - [ɑ: o or: u:].

5. When the tongue is in the back of the mouth, but is slightly advanced and the central part of it rises towards the front of the soft palate, an advanced vowel is pronounced.

Is U].

Moving up and down in the mouth, the tongue can rise at different heights towards the roof of the mouth.

1. When the front part or the back of the tongue is raised towards the palate, the vowel is called close.

They are - [i: I u u:].

2. When the anterior or posterior part of the tongue is as low as possible in the mouth, the open vowels are pronounced.

They are - [æ a: o o:].

3. When the highest part of the tongue occupies the intermediate position between the closure and open half vowels are pronounced.

They are - [e Λ ə: ə].

Lip position

When the lips are neutral or separate, the vowels are called unrounded.

They are - [i: i e æ a: Λ ə: ə].

When the lips are joined so that the opening between them is more or less round the vowel is called rounded.

They are - [o o: u u:].

Length of the vowel

All the vowels in English are divided into short and long vowels.

Long vowels are - [i: a: o: u: ə:].

The short vowels are - [i e or u Λ ə]

2.6.2 Consonants phonemes

Consonant phonemes classify:⁴

I. According to the work of the vocal cords and the force of exhalation the English consonants are subdivided into voiced and voiceless.

Voiced consonants are: /b, d, g, z, v, m, n, l ,r, j, w/.

Voiceless consonants are: /p, t, k, s, f, h, t/.

⁴ László, S., (2014) Put English Phonetics into Practice. p. 18

The force of exhalation and the degree of muscular tension are greater in the production of voiceless consonants therefore they are called by the Latin word “fortis”, which means “strong, energetic”.

Voiced consonants are called “lenis”, “soft, weak”, because the force of exhalation and the degree of muscular tension in their articulation are weaker, e.g.

FORTIS

/p/ pipe

/t/ tight

/k/ cake

LENIS

/b/ Bible

/d/ died

/g/ gag

/v/ vibrant

The English consonants /h, m, n, w, j, r/ do not enter into fortis-lenis opposition which can be represented by the following minimal pairs: Pat-bat, tip-dip, come-gum, etc.

II. According to the position of the active organ of speech against the point of articulation (the place of obstruction) consonants are classified into:

1) labial,

2) lingual,

3) glottal.

This principle provides the basis for the following distinctive oppositions: labial vs. lingual (what-hot), lingual vs. glottal (that-hat), labial vs. glottal (foam-home).

Labial consonants are subdivided into: a) bilabial and b) labio-dental. Bilabial consonants are produced with both lips. They are the /p, b, m, w/. Labio-dental consonants are articulated with the lower lip against the edge of the upper teeth. They are /f, v/.

Labial consonants enter into bilabial vs. labiodental opposition which can be represented by the following minimal pairs: Wear-fair, mice-vice, etc.

Lingual consonants are subdivided into:

- a) forelingual,
- b) mediolingual
- c) backlingual.

Forelingual consonants are articulated with the tip or the blade of the tongue. According to the position of the tip of the tongue they may be: apical articulated by the tip of the tongue against either the upper teeth or the alveolar ridge /t, d, s, z, t, n, l/ and cacuminal /r/. Within the group of forelingual apical can be opposed to cacuminal: dim-rim; oppositions can be found among interdental, alveolar, post-alveolar and palato-alveolar: same-shame (alveolar vs. palato-alveolar), those-rose (interdental vs. post-alveolar), etc.

Mediolingual consonants are produced with the front part of the tongue. They are always palatal. Palatal consonants are articulated with the front part of the tongue raised high to the hard palate /j/.

Backlingual consonants are also called velar, they are produced with the back part of the tongue raised towards the soft palate “velum” /k, g, ŋ/.

Within the group of lingual oppositions can be found among forelingual, mediolingual and backlingual: yet-get (medio vs. back), yes-less (medio vs. fore), tame-game (fore vs. back).

The glottal consonant /h/ is articulated in the glottis.

III. The classification of consonants according to the manner of noise production from the viewpoint of the closure, which is formed in their articulation may be:

complete closure, then occlusive consonants noise /p, b, t, d, k, g/

2.6.3 Stress

"Stress"⁵ is the emphasis of the tone of the voice on a syllable of a word. For example, in the word "English", stress in Spanish falls on the syllable "glés".

There are two very simple rules about stress:

⁵ László, S., (2014) Put English Phonetics into Practice. p. 24

1. One word has only one stress. (One word cannot have two stresses. If you hear two stresses, you hear two words. Two stresses cannot be one word. It is true that there can be a "secondary" stress in some words. But a secondary stress is much smaller than the main [primary] stress, and is only used in long words.)
2. We can only stress vowels, not consonants.

2.6.4 Intonation

Every language has its own intonation⁶, or speech melody. Intonation helps you to recognize the language that you hear in the same way as the melody of a song helps you to recognize the song that you hear. If you change the melody of a song, it will be difficult for your listener to recognize and understand the song you are singing. The same is true in reference to intonation: if you speak English with Russian intonation, your listener will have a problem understanding what you are saying.

English intonation is a complicated and varied phenomenon. There are dialectal and regional differences in intonation; for example, there are quite a few differences between British and American intonation. Intonation may sound differently depending on whether the speakers have high or low voices, speak fast or slowly, loudly or quietly, energetically, emotionally, neutrally, or listlessly. Men and women may have their own differences and preferences in intonation. For the purpose of studying, this variety may be described in several intonation patterns characteristic of English speech.

⁶ László, S., (2014) Put English Phonetics into Practice. p. 26

2.7 Chinese speaker and her culture

In Chinese culture, the majority of Mandarin speakers are located in southern China and Oceania (Annex 1). The Chinese language is spoken in approximately one fifth of the world's population (Culture 10, June 2009). In Asia, the Chinese language is known as Han and has the most important qualities of eight Chinese dialects. Only one stands out as the best known, is the mandarin that comes from the north of China. The other seven dialects, arise from other Chinese areas. Seventy percent of the Chinese population speaks the northern language, known mainly as Mandarin, this has been considered as the basic standard of modern Chinese and is accepted by all Chinese as the national language.

Chinese language has been highlighted because it has a particular characteristic which comes from different linguistic families, on one side, the Chinese emerged from the Sino-Tibetan and on the other side the Indo-European. Each of these has a different structure, which hinders the learning process of Mandarin in its different stages. This being a relevant aspect to take into account when teaching the English language to a Chinese student. In Chinese culture, English is not considered the second foreign language, this is a factor of difficulty when it comes to learning English, given that the Chinese speaker is not immersed in the English language. Due to the fact that they did not have contact in their early childhood with the English language, exchange students were shown a degree of oral difficulty at the time of communication.

Since the last decade of the twentieth century, the Chinese Republic opened its country to the world, and since then the Chinese populations began to travel in large groups to European and North American countries (Annex 2). Oral communications have become a priority for

Chinese travelers, as they need to exchange ideas and interact with people from other countries. This is something new that is happening in the Chinese culture, the country allows the Chinese to travel abroad, something that generates the need to speak the English language.

High school students in China acquire vocabulary from the English language, through reading documents in English and writing tasks developed in high school. However, schools do not have a solid structure that allows students to speak the English language.⁷

⁷ Zhang. J., (2015), English vocabulary teaching in Chinese junior high schools, Purdue University p.26

2.8 Difficulty in the pronunciation of the English language

What are the difficulties?

It is a barrier in the assimilation of sounds, to express or organize a phrase in the English language. Students may have previous problems related to the difficulty in pronouncing the mother tongue. Vellutino and Scanlon cited by Sparks and Ganschow, said in 1993: "The causes of the difficulty may be related to the phonology and / or syntax of the mother tongue." Arries in 1999, also supports phonological prosecution as one of the most frequent problems. He points out how it was mentioned that dyslexia could also be another cause of the difficulties, García and Tyler in 2010, discussed how other factors related to the difficulties of a second language could be the problems related to the acquisition of new vocabulary, problems in auditory processing, visual coding and classification of new information.

Examples of common difficulties in pronunciation: For Gili Gaya, the accent is defined as the increase in muscular effort used in pronunciation. There is more amplitude of the sound wave and, therefore, of physical intensity, it is a common difficulty. (Gili, S. (1988) *Phonetics* ed. 5).

Another difficulty is intonation, for Tomas Navarro, the intonation has ideological, emotional and idiomatic components. However, it does not affect the particular meaning of the word, but it does affect the meaning of the phrase. (Navarro, T. (1957), *Manual de Fonética*)

CHAPTER 3

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Type of study

To develop this monograph, it was used a descriptive study, describing the pronunciation difficulties of the English Language found in a B1 Chinese student, who was studying English as a second language through an internship in Missouri State University.

The descriptive studies (quoted by Hernández, Fernández and Baptista, 2003) are taken as a reference, which defines that: "Descriptive studies seek to specify properties, characteristics and important profiles of people, groups, communities or any other phenomenon that is subject to analysis "(p. 80). In other words, in descriptive research, information is collected to later describe the characteristics or factors of the object studied. For Tamayo (1998), the descriptive research: "... works on the realities of the facts and their fundamental characteristics".

The strategy used for collecting information was developed based on the experience of a Chinese student with whom she interacted during the first semester of 2018 at the Missouri State University, using the study technique, information on learning styles, this is complemented by a series of questions that allowed us to focus on the difficulties of the pronunciation of the English language by the Chinese student.

3.2 Population

The student, a 39-year-old woman, expressed her desire to identify her difficulties in the process of learning English, given that she had had communication problems with her classmates, and saw in this a limitation to take advantage of her exchange experience. Her name is not indicated in this project to protect her identity, since she said that she would collaborate with her experience but that she does not want her identity to be known

Within her academic record she manifested her English language acquisition through middle school for approximately 3 years, emphasizing on writing and reading skills. Apart from this, she has not studied more English. She came to United States in June of 2017 practicing empirically and took free English classes at the Morison Building center.

This student was selected from a group of 10 English-speaking students who were between 18 and 39 years old, where more than half of the class group was from China. In this descriptive study, the Chinese student was taken as a reference, in order to meet the goal of the "Teaching English as a Second Language" course, in which a student was assigned to follow up during a semester the difficulties in learning prediction of the English language.

CHAPTER 4

4. FINDINGS

The linguistic and cultural diagnosis made in the Chinese student revealed the difficulties that the Chinese student faces in the pronunciation of the English language, as well as the multiple intelligences that they use in their learning.

4.1 DIAGNOSIS

4.1.1 Observation and student identification

The chart below was used to start exploring the student's learning style (Annex 3) and obtaining an initial diagnosis:

Use the grid⁸ below to help you assess your selected learner's learning style:

Learner's name: xxx Gender: Female Age: 39 years old	Notes
Date: May – June of 2018	
VISUAL	
Write from the board	Do you like writing / taking notes form the board? Answer: She writes / takes notes in her notebook; she

⁸ Bridges, P., (2018), *Student's learning styles*, Missouri State University MO.

	<p>writes the sounds in her notebook. She likes to write down the sounds words as they let her know how to pronounce them. By following the reading, she can guess the pronunciation of the words.</p> <p>When do you write / take notes from the board?</p> <p>Answer: She copies all the time from the board, as it helps her to find the right pronunciation of the words, the intonation, and other aspects like the spelling, which are directly related to the phonetic and phonology.</p>
AUDITORY	
Answering questions	<p>How do you feel when you have to answer a question from the teacher?</p> <p>Answer: She thinks its fine, she can talk, answer to the teacher question. She talks only if it's required.</p> <p>According to the observation, she is shy when talking aloud or in front of the class. This may represent why she may have more difficulties when talking with others as she doesn't practice because she is shy to interact with the rest of the class.</p> <p>Mr. Mott (2000) said "The sounds which are used vary from language to language, and within each language</p>

	<p>these sounds resolve themselves into “families” and form a system of contrasts.” p. (30). This quote shows on how languages are created based on different phonemes and phonology analysis. This may difficult the learning of a language as it will vary from language to language. For the Chinese speaker, the right pronunciation of words could only be acquired by having experiences with others, if the student is shy, then it represents a problem for the development of the language.</p> <p>Do you think it is easy to understand the teacher questions?</p> <p>Answer: She believes she can understand all the information given by the teacher. She thinks it is possible to understand what the teachers says, sometimes she struggles with the pronunciation, as she is not used to it. She says how it looks how easy for the teacher to talk, but how complicated it is for her.</p>
Working with a partner	<p>Do you like working with a partner? Why?</p> <p>Answer: She likes to work with a partner. She thinks she can learn more from others by practicing her speaking and listening when speaking to others and listening to others. She tends to have more difficulties when talking with</p>

	<p>partners as they don't understand what she wants to say, generally, she has to repeat her ideas so the other person can understand what she wants to say.</p> <p>Do you think it is good to work with a partner?</p> <p>Answer: Yes, it allows me to practice my speaking and listening. She believes these two are very important skills as it is required to talk and interact with people by taking in English.</p>
KINAESTHETIC	
Working in a group (3-4 students)	<p>She works in groups, cooperate, discuss and support with ideas. She likes to use her body language when she has to deal with communication problems, where their peers don't understand what she wants to say. She has to repeat on her ideas and use clue words in order to stablish her believes. The author Mott (2000) said: "In addition to the fact that not all the different sounds in a language are contrastive, it is equally important to note that different languages organize sounds differently and have different systems of contrast" p. (30). The author emphasizes on how the sounds may vary a lot from language to language.</p> <p>The Chinese learner would have to practice and heart the correct pronunciation and rules of phonemes in English</p>

	in order to reach a good speaking level.
Working with the whole class	<p>She doesn't participate too much in the classroom when there are many students in the lesson. She prefers to share the information with her peer. Before heading to any conversation, she writes down her ideas in order to be more organized, so she can remember the clue words she will use during the speech.</p> <p>Do you like to participate at class?</p> <p>Answer: Sometimes, she prefers to wait, so after another classmate has spoken, she feels more confident to talk aloud. She also prefers to participate when the teacher indicates her to do so.</p> <p>Do you feel shy to participate? Sometimes? Why?</p> <p>Answer: Yes. She feels shy to talk and participate but she tries as she believes it is the best way to improve her abilities. She believes that only by experimenting and sharing ideas, she would be able to improve her speaking and listening abilities.</p> <p>It is inferred that a practice is important as it allows the student to have different experiences with others, where</p>

	<p>she can notice pronunciation mistakes, correcting them by listening to their peers and trying the words again with the correct phoneme.</p>
INDEPENDENT	
Working on their own	<p>Do you like to work on your own?</p> <p>Observation: She thinks that individually work is a great opportunity to improve skills by having a more reserved space. On the other hand, she likes to check her answers with her partner. This process of sharing the answers with a partner, allows her to be more motivated, by listening to other accents and correct pronunciations. She likes to be organized and clear. This allows her to use her written information in order to avoid mistakes when speaking. “Words like “sheep” and “ship”, “chip” are distinguished by one phoneme called “Minimal pairs”” (pg. 32, 2000). Here the author shows how there may be possible to have different phonemes or small variation in the pronunciation of some words that may look the same. This kind of spelling is challenging for the Chinese student as for them, all of them may see as the same pronunciation. With the companion of a peer, she can understand and correct her spelling mistakes.</p>

Doing worksheets	<p>She solves and makes all the worksheets from the class.</p> <p>It happens that sometimes she requires more time in order to compare her answers with her partner, she likes to double check her answers and see her partner's answers.</p> <p>This process is very important, that she can identify mistakes and correct them. During this process, the pronunciation of words is done, creating a space where she can improve her spelling abilities.</p> <p>How useful are the worksheets?</p> <p>Answer: Quite a bit. She believes the worksheets let her identify the correct spelling of words as she has to memorize the alphabet and correct her spelling mistakes.</p> <p>By the same time, she thinks she can use the worksheets to reinforce her learnt knowledge. By using the spelling, she tries the right pronunciation of the words, there she repeats and verify the pronunciation of the words.</p> <p>The worksheets, allow her to better understand the pronunciation of the words as they work as a guide during the spelling practice time.</p>
TACTILE	
Working with flashcards	Do you like to think flashcards helps learning?

	<p>Why?</p> <p>Answer: Yes. She likes them.</p> <p>She also thinks the flashcards are materials that allow the student to easily memorize the content and learn in a didactic way. The flashcards let her practice the spelling of words as she tries to pronounce the words seen in the flashcards. By using the flashcards, she can see different words, identifying them according to the phonetical English rules. While having this process with a partner, she learns more and improves her phonetic skills.</p>
ANALYTIC	
<p>Contributing to teacher-led discussions</p>	<p>Do you like to participate in the class discussions?</p> <p>Answer: Not too much.</p> <p>She doesn't like to participate too much in class discussions as she tends to have communication difficulties. She is shy and she tends confuse some words and their correct usage in the conversations. Sometimes she forgets articles and words during the sentences construction.</p> <p>Do you prefer the teacher telling you to talk or do you rather raise your hand to do so?</p> <p>Answer: She prefers the teacher to point her to speak</p>

	<p>because she is shy to participate.</p> <p>She also feels better when another student participates first, then she doesn't have to break the ice in the group.</p> <p>Listening to the other students first, she can identify the correct pronunciation of clue words for the discussion topic. This is a strategy she uses in order to improve her speaking abilities. She likes to repeat after the other so she can identify the correct pronunciation.</p>
GLOBAL	
Spontaneous contributions	<p>She only talks when she is pointed by the teacher when she has to participate in the classroom.</p> <p>She likes discussion groups, since she can listen to her classmates and have short and more private conversations. These activities represent the best opportunity for her to practice her speaking abilities. She interacts with others, repeat pronunciation and phonemes she is not familiarized with, and the end, she improves her English language. At the same time, she has a motivation to talk as it is a close conversation between her peers and her. She feels more comfortable to talk and exchange ideas, identifying pronunciation mistakes and improving her speaking.</p>
Learning well through games	She is motivated by the use of games to learn. But she

	<p>highlighted on how the learning should be taken as a serious process. During games, she can see new vocabulary words, which are then pronounced by her peers. This represents a good opportunity for her to improve her speaking skills, identifying phonemes and stresses she didn't know before.</p>
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As data collection tools, charts were used to classify the information received from the student. The graphics are mainly focused on "learning styles", which were evaluated in the student as follows:

- Auditory learners: learning to listen and repeat. She has difficulties in doing this work in front of the group.
- Visual learners: they learn through graphics, diagrams and images. She likes to develop this skill.
- Tactile learners: they learn using drawing strategies. She always uses this skill.
- Kinesthetic learners: they learn using materials as objects. She makes great use of this skill in small and large groups.
- Global students: they learn by having a spontaneous and intuitive process. The student is hindered by her shyness in having to speak openly.
- Analytical learning: they learn by planning and organizing information. She doesn't take advantage of this ability to talk with other people.

The student must feel more secure when speaking in a group and make use of the "multiple intelligences" that she possesses.

Below are the questions that helped to categorize the difficulties that the Chinese student has in the pronunciation of the English language.

4.1.2 Questionnaire for a diagnosis

In order to gather data and information to analyze the Chinese student during the English Language learning process, a questionnaire was designed with twenty questions, based on the book “Practical English Usage, third Edition” (2005) from Michael Swan, in which the author details strengths and weaknesses, students’ from multiple nationalities have to face when learning the English Language.

In his book, Swan also refers to the words that are difficult of pronunciation for Chinese speakers. A group of these words was selected and the student was asked to pronounce them. After this, mistakes in the gesticulation, stress, pitch, intonation and phonemes were identified for each one of them.

1. Please pronounce the following words (they are front vowels):

1.2 Hat/æ/: The student pronounced the word as “head”, this is because she is confused in the pronunciation. After some repetition, she realized on the right pronunciation but still is not correct. She pronounced the word like “a” instead of the /æ/. This happens because the student is not used to the phoneme /æ/. In order to get the right pronunciation, the student should practice more.

1.3 Cake/i/: The student pronounces “Kek”. The “i” sound is not noticed in the pronunciation. The student avoids the “i” in the pronunciation, this could be improved with practice and identification of the word. Without the “i” in the pronunciation, the word is confusing and does not make really sense. This could be improved with more detail in the phoneme, and the pronunciation of the word.

1.4 Eat/I/: This word was pronounced correctly

1.5 Bet/e/: The “e” was pronounced correctly.

2. Please pronounce the following words (they are central vowels):

2.1 Cup/kʌp/: This word was pronounced correctly.

2.2 Rug/rʌg/: This words were pronounced correctly.

2.3 Above /ə'bu:v/: This words represents more difficulty for the student as she doesn't pronounce the /ə/ at the beginning of the word and then the /ʌ/ couldn't be heard at all. These phonemes are very important in the word as they identify the word. This generated a sound like /abou/, this is a bad pronunciation of the word, as the phonemes are not taken into account.

3. Please pronounce the following words (they are posterior vowels)

3.1 bathroom /ɑ:/: The word was pronounced correctly.

3.2 University /u:/: The word was pronounced correctly but the phoneme /u:/ could be deeper in the pronunciation.

3.3 Please pronounce the following words (they are called closed vowels)

3.4 Wood /ʊ/: The student pronounces correctly. She makes the /ʊ/ close at the end of the word. In this kind of phonemes, it is important to end the pronunciation with a close mouth gesture, where at the beginning is open and then it closes.

3.5 Put /ʊ/: The student pronounces the word correctly.

3.6 Bingo /ʊ/: The student doesn't pronounce the /ʊ/ at the end of the word. This happens as she is not familiarized with the word. Ending the pronunciation of the word with a close mouth gesture is important in order to pronounce the word correctly. At the beginning the word is correct but then the closing gesture is forgotten.

4. Please pronounce the following words (They are unrounded vowels)

4.1 Fur /fɜ:/: The word was pronounced as rounded but in reality it is not rounded. It is an open word. The "u" in the word, confuses the student and makes her think the pronunciation is closed when in fact it is open.

4.2 Got /gɒt/: The word was pronounced correctly

5. Please pronounce the following words (They are rounded vowels)

5.1 Saw /sɔː/: The word was pronounced as open but it is a rounded word. This happens because the student may have heard the words open, but it's really a closed vowel. At the end of the pronunciation of the word, it is necessary to close the mouth to finish the word pronunciation.

5.2 Too /tuː/: The word was pronounced correctly after the first try. In the first try, the student pronounced “to” and then realized it was /tu/ with a rounded pronunciation. Then, for the first time: the student pronounces the word open but it is closed.

A questions is asked to know the space-time of the student's English learning process in their country:

-What was your previous experience learning English?

Answer: The student stated that in high school, she had English classes two days a week for 2 hours each. Most of his educational process in English was carried out through the use of books and writing exercises with her classmates. Very rarely did she have the opportunity to have native English speakers as teachers. In general, her pronunciation was erratic since she could not practice much, her Chinese fellow also did not allow her to improve her pronunciation, making the same mistakes over and over again.

- What is the importance of developing skills to speak English?

Answer: She thinks it is very important to know how to communicate with others through the practice of speech skills, since she has to face different situations in which he does not know how to pronounce a word, creating confusion for the listener. She would have liked to have more experience and practical time to speak in China. Having colleagues with good pronunciation could also motivate her during the process, something she did not have.

- What are the problems with specific pronunciation patterns?

Answer: She manifested having problems with the pronunciation of /r/.

She struggles with stress during prayers. When pronouncing the / r / she tends to give you the wrong stress during the prayer. She does not know where to stop when he takes, and she also confuses stress in sentences, such as questions. During conversations, she confuses the correct pronunciation of words with other words, this causes confusion in the listener. She would have liked to have more practice in China with more native speakers since her classmates had pronunciation problems.

- What is the difficulty with stress in sentences?

She said that in Mandarin there are five different intonations that are used during the speech. This causes confusion when he is learning English. She does not know how to assimilate intonations with words since there are no stress patterns to follow. The only way to improve this situation is by practicing with another person who knows the correct intonation, stress and phoneme of the words in the conversations.

In the diagnosis it was found cultural aspects, strengths, weaknesses and grammatical aspects related to phonetics and phonology, concerns that the student showed when speaking or interacting with the class. This chart provides valuable information, highlighting some characteristics, such as, for example, the ability to write and the skills that the student had during English classes.

4.2 Categorization of pronunciation difficulties

In order to monitor the learning process of the Chinese student and focus on pronunciation, the concepts of phoneme, phonics and phonology, their classification, as well as Stress and Intonation, were previously defined in the theoretical framework.

Considering the above, the main categories of study were established to show the difficulties in the pronunciation of the Chinese student who learns the English language, adding the difficulty that their own culture provides

Finding the following categories:

Vowel phonemes
Consonant phonemes
Word stress
Intonation patterns
Cultures

Learner profile	Name: XXX Age: 39 Gender: Female
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	<p>Nationality: China</p> <p>English level: B1</p> <p>Previous English learning experience:</p> <p>She learned English in middle school for about 3 years, focusing more on writing and reading skills. Apart from this, she has not studied any more English. Arrived to United States in June 2017 and since then, she has been practicing empirically. Now, she is taking the free English classes at Morison Building center downtown where free English classes are given to the community of Springfield.</p> <p>Motivation & purpose for learning English:</p> <p>Her main motivation to learn English is the importance it has in the world society. Also, she expressed how she has to use English as a tool in her classes as she is a social teacher in china. During her lessons in china, her students have to read English books to acquire more information and so she has to help them in this process. During her time in Springfield, she has taken courses and all of them has been in English, something that allowed her to practice her skills by communicating ideas and learning from her mistakes.</p>
Phonemes	<p>This is one of the main branches of the phonetics where according to Mott (2010):” it is studied the nature and limits of the human ability to produce</p>

	<p>speech sounds.” p. (29). According to the author, he focuses on the possible sounds that can be made in order to produce sounds, creating phonemes in a specific language. This branch is important as it identifies and describes the sounds produced by the student when pronouncing words. During the process of pronouncing a word, mouth gestures are done, giving detail and affinity that the phoneme created.</p> <p>In the case of the student, the articulations tend to change between words. She is not used to the English articulation, something that complicates the pronunciation. This also happens because she is not used to practice the pronunciation a lot. By listening to others and repeating, it would be possible to reach a good articulation of sounds, creating good phonemes in the speech.</p> <p>The Chinese student had problems with the articulation of the word “show” like for example the sentence: “show me the book”, where she has an articulation similar to the correct but, she pronounces it expelling more air, something that changes the pronunciation and making a “Chouu” sound. This is one of the examples of the mistakes in the articulation of sounds in the Chinese student.</p>
Phonemes	<p>According to the author Mott (2010), the acoustic phonetics refer to:” study the physical properties of speech sounds (pitch, frequency and amplitude) during transmission from speaker to hearer (from mouth to ear).” p. (29).</p> <p>Following the definition of the author’s, this branch focuses specifically on the pitch, frequency and amplitude. This branch is very important in the case of study of the Chinese, where the pitch, frequency and amplitude is different</p>

	<p>from a regular English learner student. The Chinese student usually presents a big variation in range of the pitch, frequency and amplitude. This happens because the Mandarin and other Chinese languages, has changes in pitch, frequency and amplitude in order to be comprehensible in the Chinese society. The words in Chinese are different and may be confused by a mandarin non-native speaker, this because the mandarin has five different pitches for every single phoneme. When the Chinese student is learning the English language, she tends to get confused on which pitch to use during the speech. The frequency is varying more in English speech for the Chinese student, as she doesn't know when to change the pitch, changing the frequency and finally also changing the amplitude.</p>
Phonemes	<p>According to the author Mott (2010):" it concerns the hearing and the perception of speech, or our response to speech sounds as received through the ear and brain" p. (29). The author mentions this branch as the one which studies the listening perception of the student. This perception is directly related to the phonemes as the student can identify what he listens by relating it to the phonemes he knows. In this process the brain is directly involved, where memory has an important role, by guiding the student on the identification of sounds (phonemes) during a conversation. As the Chinese student, presents problems with the phonemes, it happens that sometimes she confuses the sounds, understanding a different idea from what the speaker is trying to tell her. As there is fewer pitch in English than in Chinese, the student can't easily comprehend sounds from a conversation.</p>

	<p>Only by practicing this skills, the Chinese student could improve her listening skills, something that would also improve her speaking skills more specifically the phonemes, as she would be able to relate the sounds she hears with the phonemes and sounds he knows.</p>
<p>Typical issues speakers have when learning English</p>	<p>According to Swan and Smith “The phonological system of Chinese is very different from English. Some English phonemes do not have Chinese counterparts and are hard to learn.” (Learner English, 2001).</p> <p>The student has issues with the English pronunciation. She tends to forget the right pronunciation of words or get confuse with it. As a listener, sometimes it’s difficult to understand what she says. For example, the use of the phonemes /l/ and /i/ isn’t clear for her as in Chinese it’s the same pronunciation. The same thing happens with the /ʊ/ and the /u/.</p>
<p>Phonological</p>	<p>Stress</p> <p>You can use a simple vocabulary when you speak, but sometimes, when you try to use other words that you are not familiar with speaking, you pronounce them poorly, using the wrong stress and making it difficult to understand what you mean. For example, during the interview she said "... and I must write some articles for the university ..." but all this sentence had the same intonation "o o o o o o o o o o" so it sounded like a robot.</p>
<p>Phonological</p>	<p>Intonation</p> <p>It happened during the interview that I had to repeat the questions because</p>

	<p>she did not understand, something that made communication difficult. During the interview, I asked her about the number of years he studied English in China, but she did not answer the question. When asking questions, it is important to have the correct intonation in the words so she can understand the question. She does not usually listen to English. This causes confusion when asked something. When she answers the questions, her tone and stress change more than it should, this happens because she is not used to speaking fluent English, mixing tones and tensions.</p>
Phonology	<p>Mott (2000), refers to phonology as:” Although phonology is not concerned with all the articulatory minutiae of sounds which fall within the ambit of phonetics, it does deal with the rules which govern the use of allophones...for the phonologist, sounds are linguistic items whose intrinsic interest is their function, behavior and organization”. p. (35).</p> <p>Phonetics has the main objective of identifying sounds following the function, its possible behavior and the organization in use. While phonology, describes the sounds and its use in discourse.</p> <p>The author defines the phonology as a science related with the phonetics. Phonetics has the main objective of identifying sounds following the function, its possible behavior and the organization in use. While phonology, describes the sounds and its use in discourse. The author also says:” the basic notions in phonology are UNIT, REALIZATION and DISTRIBUTION.” p.</p>

	<p>(35). These three notions are related to the phonemes where the UNIT is the phoneme, the REALIZATION are all the allophones (groups of phonemes) and the DISTRIBUTIONS of all the phonemes. Based on what Mott said, Phonology investigate the functional properties and the communicative value. Phonology is based on the observation and identification of the phonemes. Having this idea into mind, the phonology is the branch that contributes to the identification of ideas from the Phonetic. Phonology establishes conclusions based on the data obtained in the phonetics to reach final ideals. Talking about the Chinese student, the Phonology allowed to identify complications with the pronunciation of phonemes, where the articulation, the pitch, frequency and amplitude are different in Mandarin language in comparison with the English language, making more difficult the learning process for the Chinese student.</p>
Cultures	<p>According to the article “The awaking of the new Chine” from Jacinto Soler Matutes, China was a country were Chinese students didn’t have the opportunity to travel abroad, learning, interacting and having other experiences different from their own country. This factor of enclosure of the student within China, caused a delay in the development of some skills in English, such as Speaking. The students, did not have the opportunity to practice knowledge acquired in the English classes in China, however, her writing and reading skills were good, since she could read and write documents in English following the grammar books.</p>

Jacinto Soler Matutes, in his article also says that the traditional Chinese culture qualifies the learning process as a very important value, English teachers define Chinese students who work hard during the exercises and activities as admirable learners. The Chinese students share the same ideas on how the learning process is taken seriously and requires effort and constancy.

The activities related to fun, relaxation or pleasure in the learning process, are not considered as something that could generate real learning, for them, these activities are considered as distractors. The teachers whose include the fun as part of the learning process, appreciate the cultural aspect reflected in the students.

In the Chinese culture, the teachers are treated with respect and viewed as authorities. It is important to remember how the teacher represent the basic structure for the society as they form students in the educational field, by transmitting knowledge from generations to generations. A study done in 2013 made by Varkey foundation and an economy professor from Sussex University⁹, found how the Chinese teachers enjoy from the highest recognition of respect and tolerance among big professions such as medicine and laws.

⁹ Dolton, P., University of Sussex, 2013. <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/profiles/275998>

4. 3 Description of pronunciation difficulties

After the observing the student, applying the questionnaire, the obtaining results from the analysis, identifying and categorizing the data obtained, a description was done based on the specific aspects in which the Chinese student has difficulties when speaking the English language.

Description and findings of the phonetic and phonological difficulties of Chinese students regarding the pronunciation of English as a foreign language:

4.3.1 Vowels phonemes

As in English there are more vowels than in Chinese, for the speakers it is difficult to distinguish the English vowels. For them, the vowels in English are similar in position and articulation compared to the Chinese. Some examples are:

- “The contrast between /i:/ and /I/ has no equivalent in Chinese. Learners confuse pairs such as “eat” and “it”, “bean” and “bin”.”¹⁰ The words “eat” and “it” have different pronunciation. For Chinese students, it is difficult to identify the correct pronunciation as they listen then with the same intonation.

¹⁰ Swan and Smith., (2001). *Learner English: A Teacher's Guide to Interference and Other Problems (Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers)* Ed. Scott Thornbury, ed. 2

- “The same applies to /u:/ and /ʊ/, leading confusion, for instance, between “fool” and “full”, “Luke” and “look”.”¹¹ The same thing happens when Chinese students can’t identify the correct pronunciation between the words “Luke” and “look”.
- “/æ/ does not occur in Chinese. Learners tend to nasalize it. It may also confuse with /a:/, /ʌ/, or /e/, so that a word such as “cap” might be pronounced /kaep/, “carp”, “cup”, or “kep”.”¹² The phoneme /æ/ is confusing for the Chinese students as they don’t have the same equivalent phoneme in Chinese language. This causes them to nasalize it because it represents the closest sound they can do according to the right pronunciation.
- “Chinese diphthongs are usually pronounced with quicker and smaller tongue and lip movements than their English counterparts. Learners therefore make these sounds too shorts, with not enough distinctions between the vowels of two components.”¹³ In Chinese language, the diphthongs sounds are short and quick. As the Chinese are custom to this pronunciation, they tend to pronounce the diphthongs shortly, something that may generate confusion.

4.3.2 Consonants phonemes

- “In the three pairs of stops /p/ and /b/, /t/ and /d/, /k/ and /g/, the unaspirated group /b/, /d/

^{11, 12, 13} Swan and Smith., (2001). *Learner English: A Teacher's Guide to Interference and Other Problems (Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers)* Ed. Scott Thornbury, ed.

and /g/ are voiced in English but are on the whole voiceless in Chinese. Chinese students tend to lose the voiced feature in speaking English.”¹⁴ As in Chinese the consonants /b/, /d/ and /g/ are non-voiced, Chinese students tend to forget to pronounce them in English.

- “/v/ is absent from most Chinese dialects. As a result, it is sometimes treated like /w/ or /f/: “invite” may be pronounced “inwite”; “live” pronounced “lif”.”¹⁵ The /v/ consonant is absent in most of the Chinese dialects, as a result, the Chinese students tend to replace it with the /w/ or /f/ consonant. This may cause confusion between the Chinese speaker and the listener.
- “/θ/ and /ð/ do not occur in Chinese. /θ/ is likely to be replaced by /t/, /f/ or /s/, and /ð/ by /d/ or /z/. So for example “thin” may be pronounced “tin”, “fin” or “sin”; “this” may be pronounced “dis” or “zis”.”¹⁶ The /θ/ and /ð/ does not exist in the Chinese language. As a result, the Chinese oral skills are limited to a large extent, making it difficult to correct pronunciation of several words correctly in a conversation.
- “Most Chinese dialects do not have /z/. The usual error is to substitute /s/: “rise” may be pronounced “rice””¹⁷ The same happens with the /z/ consonant where the Chinese change the correct sound in order to try to make the correct sound of the consonant.

^{14,15, 16, 17} Swan and Smith., (2001). *Learner English: A Teacher's Guide to Interference and Other Problems (Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers)* Ed. Scott Thornbury, ed. 2

- “Some southern Chinese find /l/ and /r/ difficult to distinguish, leading to the kind of mistake caricatured in jokes about “fled lice” etc.”¹⁸ This is the most common error in Chinese speakers, they can’t pronounce the /r/ consonant where they replace it with a /l/ consonant. This causes some funny sound among the Chinese. Many jokes were created based on this mistakes.

- “Initial consonant cluster is lacking in Chinese, and creates problems. The common error is to insert a slight vowel sound between the consonants, pronouncing “spoon”, for instance as “sipoon”.”¹⁹ The Chinese also have the common mistake of adding vowels sounds between the consonants, as they think this helps them to get the right pronunciation of the words.

The one word syllables are less frequented in Chinese language than in English language. The Chinese syllables are pronounced with more prominence than in English, as a consequence, speakers tend to stress much more the syllables in English mispronouncing them. For example: the words “fish” in English is pronounced as “Faesh” by the Chinese. This happens because the Chinese student is not sure on how to make the right pronunciation of the word in English. In the example of “fish”, the Chinese pronounced with an extra “e” pronunciation, mispronouncing the word.

^{18, 19} Swan and Smith., (2001). *Learner English: A Teacher's Guide to Interference and Other Problems (Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers)* Ed. Scott Thornbury, ed. 2

4.3.3 Stress

The reduced syllables are much less frequent in Chinese than in the English language. These syllables in Chinese tend to be pronounced more prominently than in the English language, and experience less phonetic changes. This is why Chinese students tend to emphasize too many syllables, and to give weak syllables a complete rather than reduced pronunciation:

Fish and chips (with and stressed and pronounced /ænd /)

4.4.4 Intonation

The tones are mainly used to distinguish the words that have similar sounds. In the Chinese, the tone tends to change a lot. For example, in Chinese the word “ma” is different from “má”, “mǎ”, “mà” and “mā”. This word has four different intonations where each and every one of them have a different meaning. They could mean “mother”, “horse”, “Dead” or “question intonation” according to the intonation used during the sentence.

In phrases, the intonation may present a variation in the English language. This pattern affects the significance, complicating the oral expression for the Chinese student. When a Chinese speaker listens to an English speaker, it seems to him like if he would be singing a song, this because of the different variations in tones. On the other hand, when an English speaker listens to a Chinese speaker, he interprets the sounds as a flat sound.

In English, some words come together in pronunciation such as “link in” sounds like “likin”, this rules tend to be omitted by the Chinese, separating the words making the sound to be less natural.

4.4.5 Cultural aspects from Chinese students

During the process of learning the English language with the Chinese student, it was observed that the memorization work was important for her, for which she used tools such as the repetitive writing of the phonemes that were difficult for her, the visualization of these and the frequency with which he wrote how she listened to them.

Within the Chinese population, the use of the spoken English language is not relevant, reason why there are few interaction spaces to practice it, however, it is emphasized that reading and writing are emphasized in the classrooms. Culture internalizes in its residents a respect and recognition for the figure of the teacher, which is evidenced in the omission of questions and doubts, which is a difficulty for progress in the process of learning the English language as a second language, considered as such because the Chinese student is studying in the United States.

In the Chinese student, difficulties were identified in the pronunciation of phonemes of the English language, with the articulation, the tone, the frequency and the amplitude due to their differences with the Mandarin language, which hinders the learning of the Chinese student.

Memorization is a prominent feature of Chinese education, because the writing of all Chinese characters must be individually learned from memory; this being a relevant factor when Chinese students face the process of learning English, the speakers feel predisposed to spending more time in memorization, than in the practical exercise of oral expressions.

It was discovered that the difficulties in the pronunciation of the English language by this Chinese speaker were the phonemes: vowels /i, u, a/ and consonants /p, b, t, d, k, g, v, f, s, z, l/ and /r/; the accent, the intonation and finally, the culture.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The difficulties in pronunciation faced by a B1 level Chinese speaker during the English Learning process described in this monograph are:

As in English there are more vowels than in Chinese, for the speakers it is difficult to distinguish the English vowels. The vowels in English are similar in position and articulation compared to the Chinese. Some examples are:

“The contrast between /i:/ and /I/ has no equivalent in Chinese.

The one word syllables are less frequented in Chinese language than in English language. The Chinese syllables are pronounced with more prominence than in English, and as a consequence, speakers tend to stress much more the syllables in English mispronouncing them. For example: the words “fish” in English is pronounced as “Faesh” by the Chinese.

This is why Chinese students tend to emphasize too many syllables, and to give weak syllables a complete rather than reduced pronunciation. Fish and chips (with and stressed and pronounced / aend /). In the Chinese, the tone tends to change a lot.

In the Chinese student, difficulties were identified in the pronunciation of phonemes of the English language, articulation, tone, frequency and the amplitude due to their differences with the Mandarin language, which hinders the learning of the Chinese student.

The Chinese culture has a big respect and recognition of the teacher figure. This is evident in the omission of questions and doubts on the part of the student, and is presented also a difficulty to advance in the process of learning the pronunciation of English as a second language, considered as such because the Chinese student is studying in the United States.

It is recommended to promote the development of oral skills in English in Chinese adult students, because during elementary, middle and high school, Chinese students spend more time reading, writing and listening to English in the classroom, than speaking English.

Although in fact English is not considered as a second language in China, in the 21st century Chinese students have had the opportunity to travel abroad, learn, interact and have experiences other than those of their own country, and when they go studying or working in English-speaking countries such as the United States, they need to learn English as a second language and not as a foreign language.

It is advisable for future English teachers to put into practice methodological strategies, academic knowledge to teach English as a second language. The teaching experience of teaching a Chinese student in a personalized way, allowed an approach to culture, to know first-hand the manifestations of the student, generating confidence and security to put into practice the skills learned.

As a teacher, carrying out the exercise of researching, describing and discussing allows us to awaken the interest of systematizing experiential experiences. To make an academic

exchange requires interest, effort on the part of the student as well as family support, so that the educational institutions of origin and destination, demonstrate the commitment so that the spaces that the student can exploit can be opened. Being immersed in an English-speaking country, generates an impact on a personal and professional level, awakens the interest of new opportunities and values the knowledge of another language.

The international exchanges, carried out by the Universidad la Gran Colombia, strengthen the process of accreditation of high quality and, in turn, generate the recognition of the university before international entities that value the academic potential and the link of highly qualified teachers who promote these processes and make them viable for the educational community. This is how it is advisable to continue promoting agreements with international educational institutions through the provision of credits and educational incentives for students who request these exchanges.

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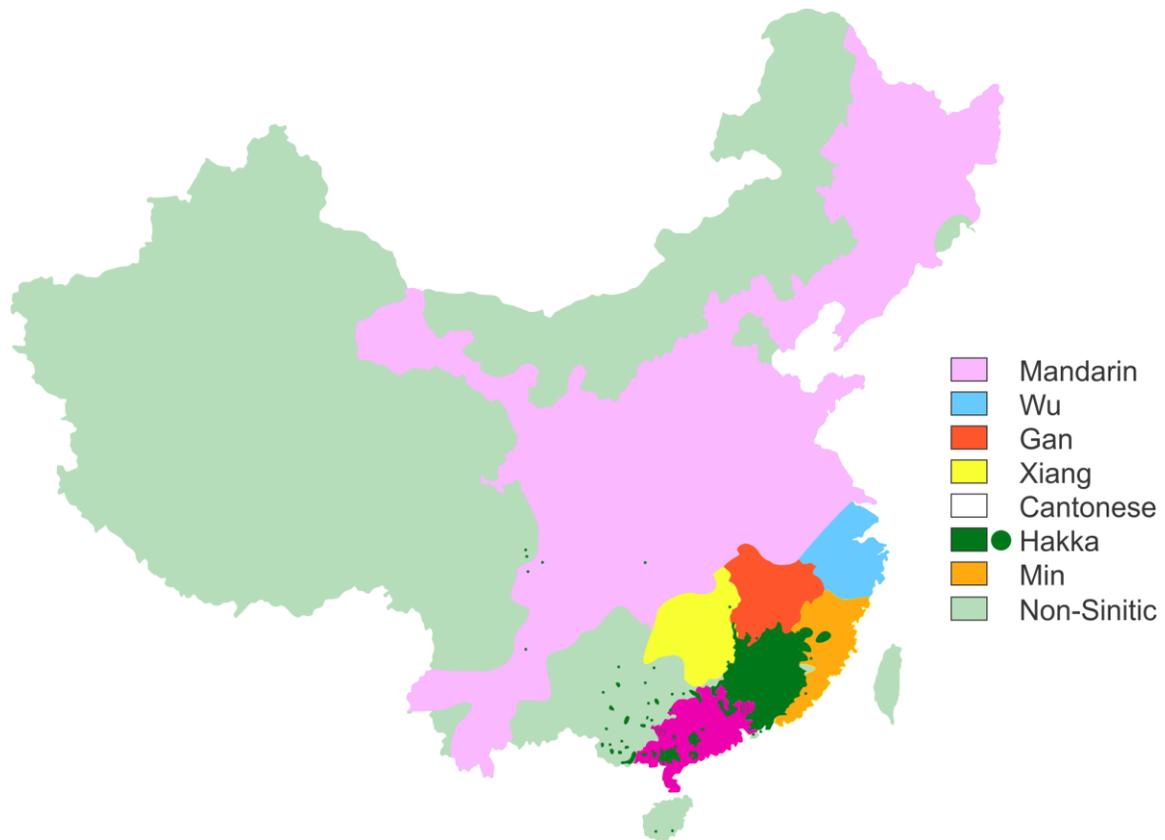
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ANNEX

Annex 1 Chinese speaker's location Map



Note: Graphic taken from

<http://www-acad.sheridanc.on.ca/MEDA10082/guanx/portfolio.html>

Annex 2. The awakening of the new China

In this text, the Spanish author Jacinto Soler Matutes evidence the implication of Chinas incoming in the national commerce organization. Since 2003, the commerce relations of China have been maximized globally starting the international emigration of Chinese population.

Link: https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.catarata.org%2Flibro%2Fel-despertar-de-la-nueva-china_45071%2F&h=AT2bIQ8XjdhbW_ikOCFm-VOZkV7u71jds-AMd6qpELRi_ROO4W4w6W3RTAfs3aDw0ojxNiJiX43AMLUt0__mqN7-AGiLPg_944z01kG9Y9TBxHVle_pDLGSgCi4Ek7LQGU0

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Annex 3 Study, information about learning styles

Information about learning styles is taken from Phil Bridges (2018), Missouri State University Professor.

It is always important for teachers to teach to their students' learning styles but this becomes crucial when teaching English language learners. Students may be highly literate in their own language but experience difficulties when acquiring English because they are accustomed to learning through a different style. In any case, most students are visual or kinesthetic learners when they first learn English. Most teachers, especially in the upper grades, teach to students with an auditory learning style (lecturing them!). This can be very difficult for the students in your class.

Auditory Learners

Students with this style will be able to recall what they hear and will prefer oral instructions. They learn by listening and speaking. These students enjoy talking and interviewing. They are phonetic readers who enjoy oral reading, choral reading, and listening to recorded books. They learn best by doing the following:

- interviewing, debating
- participating on a panel
- giving oral reports
- participating in oral discussions of written material

Visual Learners

Visual learners will be able to recall what they see and will prefer written instructions. These students are sight readers who enjoy reading silently. Better yet, present information to them with a video. They will learn by observing and enjoy working with the following:

- computer graphics
- maps, graphs, charts
- cartoons
- posters
- diagrams
- graphic organizers
- text with a lot of pictures

Tactile Learners

Students with this strength learn best by touching. They'll learn best by :

- drawing
- playing board games
- making models
- following instructions to make something

Kinesthetic Learners

Kinesthetic learners also learn by touching or manipulating objects. They need to involve their

whole body in learning. They remember material best if they act it out. These students learn best by:

- playing games that involve their whole body
- movement activities
- making models
- following instructions to make something
- setting up experiments

Global Learners

Global learners are spontaneous and intuitive. They do not like to be bored. Information needs to be presented in an interesting manner using attractive materials. Cooperative learning strategies and holistic reading methods work well with these learners. Global learners learn best through:

- recorded books
- story writing
- computer programs
- games
- group activities

Analytic Learners

Analytic learners plan and organize their work. They focus on details and are logical. They are phonetic readers and prefer to work individually on activity sheets. They learn best when:

- information is presented in sequential steps

- lessons are structured and teacher-directed
- goals are clear
- requirements are spelled out

Independent learners

An independent learner likes to work alone and try things for themselves. They like to write things down to practice new ideas, and will write things down several times to reinforce learning.