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Theme: Activities to improve the pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/ of regular verbs in past in ninth graders.

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Abstract

This present paper proposes activities to improve the pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/ of regular verbs in past on students from 9th grade at "Rubén López Sabariego" Junior High School.

For the fulfilment of this research there were used different methods of investigation from the theoretical, empiric and statistical levels that permit to diagnose the problem and value the results of the investigation.

The activities proposed constitute a way to improve the treatment of the sounds worked by the professors of English and contribute to improve the pronunciation of these sounds by the students.

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Introduction

English is spreading more and more each day. Over 70 countries in the world use English as the official or semi-official language. It is the main foreign language taught in most school systems. Moreover, it is a language very useful for international communication through internet.

On the other hand, English is the Language of international business, the main language of airports, air traffic control and international shipping. It is the language of science, technology and medicine. It is one of the working languages of the United Nations.

Nowadays, in the National System of Education, English Language responds to the political, economic, social and cultural importance of Foreign Languages. In regard to this context, English language fulfills a very important role to guarantee the relation among our country and the others from all over the world. This subject contributes to the scientific formation of the world in the students, taking as the starting point the language as a social phenomenon and the relation thought-language-culture, as well as when providing the analysis of the language to realize its essence.

In Junior High School Education, the teaching of English language has as a purpose the development of the cognitive-communicative competence which implies the expression, interpretation and negotiation of meanings in the interaction between two or more people or between a person and an oral or written text. On the other hand, it should not only contribute to the linguistic functional efficiency, but also to the ability of constructing and reconstructing new knowledge what means to develop in the students the basic knowledge, habits and abilities that allow them to communicate in the foreign language: to comprehend oral and written information and to express themselves orally about familiar topics to their social and school life, as well as to write up brief and simple messages.

Many investigators have given valuable ideas about the study of the pronunciation of the English language in different stages, for instance: Gimson, A. C. (1975) gave important theoretical elements related to the pronunciation; Parator, Clifford H. Jr. (1975) offered a simple and practical introduction to the English language phonetic with emphasis in the

North American pronunciation; Tench, Paul (1990), deepened in its features, except the paralinguistic one.

Other authors that have also dealt with this theme are Soto Vázquez, Faustino (2001) who studied the English Phonetics and Phonology; Cazabón, María Juana (1981) who made a comparative analysis of English and Spanish; Antich de León, Rosa (1988) offered methodological tools for the teaching of pronunciation to the students and professors of English and Enrique O´Farril, Isora in her tabloid of the third course of English of “Universidad paratodos”: “Let’s speak clearly!”, where theoretical information about the English phonological system and exercises to practice them can be found.

Besides, in our province, authors like Matos Castillo, Levis (2000) and Poll Massabó, Jenny (2006) have proposed activities to favour the pronunciation of the English language.

Although many investigations related to the development of a correct pronunciation in order to perfect the teaching-learning process of English language have been carried out, the experience accumulated in pedagogical practice and the results obtained after the application of scientific methods showed that there are still difficulties in the development of abilities of the students’ oral expression, mainly in the aspect of pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/ in the English language.

Through the observation of classes, the interviews to the professors and the inquiries to the students of the career, it could be determined that there exist insufficiencies such as:

- The treatment given to improve the pronunciation of the suffix –ED in English classes is insufficient.
- Activities that are planned in order to improve the pronunciation of these final sounds are scarce.

Due to this fact, it was stated as the scientific problem the following:

How to contribute to improve the pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/ of regular verbs in past on students from 9th grade at "Rubén López Sabariego" Junior High School?

In order to give solution to the problem, it is intended the following objective:

Elaboration of activities to improve the pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/ of regular verbs in past on students from 9th grade at "Rubén López Sabariego" Junior High School.

According to the problem it is intended the following scientific questions are given:

1. Which is the historical background that supports the teaching of pronunciation in the English language teaching learning process?
2. Which are the theoretical foundations that support the teaching of pronunciation in the English language teaching learning process at "Rubén López Sabariego" Junior High School?
3. What's the real situation that persists in relation to the pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/ on students from 9th grade at "Rubén López Sabariego" Junior High School?
4. What kind of proposal of activities can be used to improve the pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/ of regular verbs in past on students from 9th grade at "Rubén López Sabariego" Junior High School?
5. What level of effectiveness would the application of the proposal of activities have to improve the pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/ of regular verbs in past on students from 9th grade at "Rubén López Sabariego" Junior High school?

In order to fulfil the objective proposed, it is intended the following scientific tasks:

1. Determination of the historical background that supports the teaching of pronunciation in the English language teaching learning process.
2. Characterization of the theoretical foundations that support the teaching of pronunciation in the English language teaching learning process at "Rubén López Sabariego" Junior High School.
3. Diagnosis of the real situation that persists in relation to the pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/on students from 9th grade at "Rubén López Sabariego" Junior High School.
4. Elaboration of activities to improve the pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/ of regular verbs in past on students from 9th grade at "Rubén López Sabariego" Junior High School.

5. Determination of the effectiveness that the activities proposed has to improve the pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/ of regular verbs in past on students from 9th grade at "Rubén López Sabariego" Junior High School.

Methods of investigation

For the development of this work the following methods of investigation were applied:

From the theoretical level:

Historic and logical: they were used for the elaboration of the historical review of the problem in a logical way and a chronological order.

Analysis-synthesis: In order to support theoretically the theme of investigation by consulting several bibliographies; to the diagnostic study of the problem and the evaluation of the results.

Induction-deduction: In order to get to general conclusions with the empiric knowledge in the observation. Conclusions will be valued through all the investigation.

Documentary analysis: In order to know the objectives, contents and abilities to be developed in the students during the ninth grade.

From the empiric-experimental level:

Interview: In order to know the grade of knowledge that English professors have about the theme from a didactic point of view.

Inquiry: In order to know the opinion and the interests of the students in relation to the theme of investigation.

Observation: In order to know the reality of the problem through the direct perception of classrooms.

From the statistic-mathematical level:

The percentual analysis technique: In order to indicate the data obtained in the interviews and the inquiries.

Universe and Sample

From a universe of 110 students of ninth grade and the professor of English of them at "Rubén López Sabariego" Junior High School, it was taken a sample of 35 students that represents the 31.8%, and there were applied some instruments to them.

Development

Historical background related to pronunciation

After the Triumph of the Revolution, the Cuban National System of Education could experiment the first change with the introduction of the English language in Junior High School in (1961). In that period, it was created the institute of educational development with the aim to prepare the necessary specialists for the country, including the ones of English language. In that way, it began the formation of professors of English to respond to the social changes and to the new objectives. These institutions were in charge of supplying the scarce of professors of English, in the scientific and professional order.

In that period, the programs were of structural and traditional character. The oral practice oriented to the students was not enough and it was made, in most of the cases, chorally, without paying much attention to the individual differences of the students, taking into account that the oral expression didn't constitute one of the main objectives in that time, but reading and comprehension of written texts.

In the 80s, with the plan of perfecting the education, some important changes were included in the subject in order to support students' oral expression, and there were included some activities of oral application, such as: the development of the audition, the training by imitation, the oral practice of grammar and vocabulary, among other exercises of pronunciation.

But even when professors propitiated the participation of the students in classes, procedures used while directing the process was centred mainly in them and not in the students. So that, most of the students weren't able to communicate by themselves in English, they did it in Spanish and this brought about the fact that they couldn't neither master the phonological system of the language nor develop their pronunciation.

In the 90s, some changes in the treatment of the pronunciation were included: It was decided to stop with the structural and traditional teaching that was applied till that moment, and it was put in practice a more up-to-day communicative approach. Although, the oral expression was among the general objectives of the program, students couldn't achieve a good pronunciation; but it was not until the beginning of this century that some important changes took place whose principal goal was not only to

high the quality of the teaching-learning process but also to ensure the increasing access of all citizen to an integrated general culture.

In this course (11-12), the same methodology, general objectives and ways of evaluations (systematic, daily, and fundamentally oral) guide the teaching-learning process at this middle studies institution, but classes are given in such a way that the students can get the knowledge by themselves and be able to put them into practice in everyday life situations.

Regularities of the historical background:

When the study of the English Language was introduced in middle studies institutions, it was mainly centred in reading comprehension.

After the plan of perfecting the education, there were included changes in order to increase the students' oral expression.

In the 90s, the structural and traditional teaching was substituted by a more up-to-day communicative approach.

Theoretical Foundations related to the pronunciation

Pronunciation is very important because being the language a system of oral communication in which sounds, as minimal units of significance, are integrated to transmit a message, the mastery of pronunciation constitutes the main way to become comprehended orally, hence the necessity that the students acquire a good pronunciation.

The concept of 'pronunciation' may include:

- The sounds of the language, or phonology
- Stress and rhythm
- Intonation.

The first of these is perhaps the most obvious and clearly defined of the three. However, this does not mean that the other aspects should be neglected: a learner may enunciate the sounds perfectly and still sound foreign because of unacceptable stress and intonation; in Oriental 'tone' languages intonation often makes a difference to meaning.

It has been defined by C. Richards, Jack in Longman Dictionary like: the way a certain sound or sounds are pronounced. Unlike articulation, which refers to the actual production of speech sounds in the mouth, pronunciation stresses the way sounds are perceived by the hearer; and according to Nelson's Encyclopedia it is defined like the art of articulating utterance and the art of uttering words with their correct sounds and accents.

Pronunciation is, according to Tench, Paul in his book "Pronunciation skills", a complex of sounds (consonants, vowels and diphthongs), syllables (word accent and rhythm) and intonation; and according to Enriquez O' Farril, Isora the ability to recognize and produce the distinctive sounds conveying different meanings, as well as stress, rhythm and intonation.

This concept given by Isora Enriquez is assumed by the author of this investigation because in this one pronunciation involves the ability to understand what people are saying and the ability to be understood while speaking to others.

The mastery of pronunciation constitutes the main way to become understood orally, considering that language is a system of oral communication in which sounds as minimal units of significance, are integrated in order to transmit a message.

The acquisition of a good pronunciation is related to the development of abilities in two main aspects: the audition to recognize the significant and interpretative sounds and the production of phonological system of language. These abilities include both the articulatory aspect of sounds and the prosodic features. The main aspects that must be taken into account in the teaching of pronunciation are from linguistic, psychological and pedagogic character.

Linguistic, psychological and pedagogical aspects of teaching pronunciation

Linguistic aspects are related to the analysis and the comparison of the phonological systems of the student's mother tongue and the one that is taught. Two languages although they have similar sounds may differ deeply for two essential reasons: The distribution of the phonemes and their frequency of use on one part, and the physiological and psychological habits (articulation, rhythm, intonation) on the other hand. The first one of these two reasons belongs to the own linguistic system.

When accomplishing the comparison of the system of sounds from the mother tongue and the foreign one, they can present different situations. The more frequent ones are:

- a. Similar phonemes with the same variants and the same distribution of allophones.
- b. Similar phonemes with different variants and allophonic distribution.
- c. Phonemes that do not appear in the mother tongue.

The psychological aspects of pronunciation are related to the transference, the interference and the acquisition of habits and abilities to recognize and produce the system of sounds of the language. The knowledge of the linguistic transferences that the student can make represents obviously an appreciable saving of time, since it will not be necessary to emphasize those elements from the system.

Interferences can be known while establishing the comparison between the phonological systems from the mother tongue and the foreign one through the linguistic contrast, its determination will permit to avoid difficulties and errors that the student may commit.

In regard to pronunciation, there are three types of habits related to the foreign language mechanism of acquisition:

- The existent habits in the mother tongue that must be transferred into the new linguistic material and also adapted.
- The habits of the mother tongue that must be changed.
- The new habits.

Pedagogical aspects make reference to the elaboration and application of criteria for the selection and graduation of the phonic material that is going to be taught.

In the preparation and dosage of the material must be taken into account the mother tongue of the students, although in the teaching of pronunciation it is evident that the mother tongue learning process can't be repeated; it is necessary to find a brief and rational way that permit to make a good use of the students' potentialities and the conditions in which they learn.

For this, it is necessary to apply the following basic procedures:

- a. The audition of a given phonetic material, preferably extracted from the linguistic context of the lesson.
- b. Orientation of the attention towards the phenomena that are going to be exercised.
- c. Exercising by imitation.
- d. Phonetic correction.

The phonetic correction

The phonetic correction procedures must be varied, because they are determined by the nature of sound production, their function within the system and the kind of mistake produced by the student. The principal phonetic correction procedures are:

- The articulatory and the phonological oppositions ones, the tonal-verbal system and, in especial cases the use of phonological symbols.

- The phonetic correction can be divided into two different stages of a same process directed to the acquisition of an adequate pronunciation of foreign language.

These stages are:

- The acquisition of phonological system, through a controlled language.
- The usage of the phonological system, through the spontaneous expression.

Stage of acquisition

It is directed to state the auditive and articulatory bases of the foreign language system of sounds. The procedures of correction must be simple and dynamic, so that the rhythm of assimilation of the linguistic material won't be broken.

Correction must be made according to the characteristics and type of error, and to the end of emission in which it is produced. The main objectives of this first stage consist in re-educating the audition in order that the student may perceive the sounds of foreign language correctly and achieve an efficient oral production creating new habits and abilities of articulation.

Stage of usage and consolidation

In this stage, a more directed correction is applied to the conscious assimilation of the system when the student has developed habits and abilities in the use of basic elements of the language and he has exceeded imitation and, in general, from the oral production controlled to the spontaneous expression.

The main objectives of all the posterior stage of learning consist in deeply strengthening the phonological system of the foreign language as well as creating the bases that allow the development of abilities of complex structure, such as: writing and reading, so that exercises are directed to the aspects of pronunciation in which the students have had bigger difficulties.

That's why rules will be limited to those situations in which they' would need some help to generalize and to apply the knowledge in terms of abilities. The essential part will always be the achievement of a spontaneous language, so that the work of phonetic correction will be just a complement of the teaching activity.

Phonetic correction procedures

There are several forms for the phonetic correction in the pronunciation, such as:

1. The articulatory correction

This procedure consists on explaining and teaching the students how to place the phonic organs to obtain a correct pronunciation of sounds. The professor can help himself of illustrative facial diagrams, slides and pictures. Also he could orient the students so that they learn to perceive for instance the vibration of sounds and the exit of the air.

This type of correction is eminently descriptive. It does not take any auditive factor into account, neither the effects of combinatorial phonetics, or prosody, but it can be effective with determined sounds, which production could be easily observable, and this can favour imitation.

2. The correction for phonological oppositions

This procedure is based on the classification of phonemes according to their distinctive features, what shows oppositions of minimal pairs in which the change of a phoneme produces the change of the meaning of the word.

The procedure derived from these conceptions consists on making the student knows the phonemes in opposition and trying to imitate them in multiple oppositions. Besides, it is important that it won't be used if it is unnecessary, making the students practice oppositions that do not present difficulty for the students, for example the /p/ /b/ oppositions to Spanish-speaking people.

3. The tonal verbal correction

This procedure is based on the close relation existing between the audition and the articulation, as well as in the integral character of language. A good audition constitutes a synthesis of audible stimuli categorized by the brain like significant, so that the auto correction for the feedback is secure.

But, as it has been seeing, even with a perfect audition, the student does not perceive the sounds of foreign language with precision, neither classifies them correctly, and there is a resistance to any change in the articulatory habits; that is to say that, the student of foreign language tends to hear, and to articulate starting from the system of his mother tongue.

The tonal verb system proposes to reach a conditioning of audio phonatory process itself that is characterized especially because the action is exerted first on the model to achieve its correct audition, before exerting the action on the student's oral production. Within the general principles of the tonal verbal system, the motivation occupies an important place. Emotional situations favour the intonation and the rhythm.

4. The correction by the use of phonetic symbols

The use of the phonetic symbols in the teaching of pronunciation depends on the utility of this, in relation to the tongue that it is taught and the level and the student's interest. In most of the cases it will be enough that the students learn how to recognize those phonetic symbols that help to visualize sounds in which there isn't a direct correlation with the way of writing, or those ones in which it is presented the problem of the interference of the mother language.

The professor can write the symbol in the blackboard and illustrate its pronunciation articulating the sound, in order to guide the students' attention towards what is going to be exercised. This symbol recognized by the students provides one referential point to make a fast correction of errors of pronunciation making reference to its symbolization.

The most common errors which result from failure to observe the above principles are:

- 1- The pronunciation of /-Ed/ as a separate syllable after consonants other than /d/ or /t/.
- 2- The pronunciation of /-Ed/ as /t/ after /l/, /r/, or a vowel.
- 3- Apparent omission of the entire ending.

The pronunciation of the ending of regular verbs in past (consonant sounds) is something on which they have to concern about, because every ending has its particular sound, they really do need to work on until fully master them. If they focus their attention on this, the results will probably be more noticeable because they are working with a limited and clearly perceived objective in mind.

On the other hand, they must see pronunciation from the viewpoint of how it can better enable them to make their meanings and intentions clear to a listener.

The pronunciation of this inflectional ending is one of the few variations in English which can be reduced to rule.

When /-Ed/ represents the past tense or the past participle of a verb, without forming an extra syllable, it is pronounced /d/ when the immediately preceding phoneme is voiced, as in: begged, rubbed, lived, bathed, charged, screamed, dozed, gained, cared, pulled, or flowed. The students should pronounce these words aloud and convince themselves of the vocal-band activity in the phoneme preceding the final /-d/.

The inflectional /-Ed/ is pronounced /-t/ when the immediately preceding sound is voiceless, as in baked, wrapped, reached, passed, laughed, and rushed. Pronounce these words aloud and convince yourself of the voiceless quality of the phoneme preceding the final /-t/.

If the vocal bands vibrate for the immediately preceding sound, they vibrate for the sound represented by /-ed/; if they do not vibrate for the immediately preceding sound, they do not vibrate for the sound represented by /-Ed/.

In such words as heated and needed, the pronunciation of /-Ed/ as either /-t/ or /-d/ after an immediately preceding /-t/ or /-d/ would be awkward and not in keeping with English speech habits.

The treatment of particular sounds can be more easily appreciated, and their execution more easily practiced, if they are set in the context of a communicative utterance whose intonation we are able to take into account.

The /-Ed/ ending is added to regular English verbs to form the past tense and the past participle, it has three different pronunciations: /-t/ as in wished, /-d/ as in failed, and /-Id/ as in needed. This ending is pronounced:

- /-d/ after all voiced consonants except /d/, and after all vowel sounds:

Planned /plænd/, judged /dzʌdʒd/, played /pleɪd/

- /-t/ after all voiceless consonants except /t/:

Rocked /rækt/, kissed /kɪst/, ripped /rɪpt/

- As a separate syllable, /-Id/, after /d/t

Protected /prəteɪtɪd/, intended /ɪntendɪd/

If the verb ends in a consonant + **y**, we change **y** to **i** and add -ed.

e.g: study - studied

copy - copied

reply – replied

If the verb ends in a vowel + **y**, the **y** remains the same as the base and we only add /-ed/.

e.g: stay – stayed

play – played

If the verb ends in a consonant + **e**, we add **d** to the verb.

e.g: dance – danced

place – placed

change – changed

If the verb ends in one vowel and one consonant, and it is a two syllable verb with the stress in the last syllable, we double the consonant and add /-Ed/.

e.g: occur – occurred

prefer – preferred

If the verb ends in one vowel and one consonant, and it is an one syllable verb, we double the consonant and add /-Ed/.

e.g: stop – stopped

sob – sobbed

When the verb ends with a voiceless sound, / **s, k, p, t, ç, t** тече / **çt**, the final /-ed/ is pronounced /-t/ sound.

e.g: ask – asked

talk – talked

stop – stopped

watch – watched

When the verb ends in a voiced sound, / **z, g, b, v, 3, d3, m, n, l, r, ŋ** / except **d**, the final -ed is pronounced /-d/ sound.

e.g: play – played

name – named

serve – served

call - called

remember – remembered

When the verb ends in **t**, **d**, the final –ed is pronounced /-**ɪd**/.

e.g: visit – visited

decide – decided

point – pointed

hate – hated

need – needed

/-**t**/ whenever the base form of a regular verb ends in a voiceless sound except **t**, an /-**ɪd**/ is added without pronouncing an extra syllable.

e.g: stopped, asked.

/-**d**/ whenever the base form of a regular verb ends in a voiced sound except /-**d**/, an /-**ɪd**/ is added without pronouncing an extra syllable.

.e.g.saved, cleaned, died.

/-**ɪd**/ whenever the base form of a regular verb ends in a /-**t**/ or /-**d**/ sound, a separate syllable is added in pronouncing the /-ɪd/ suffix.

e.g: rested, ended, visited.

Presentation of the results

In order to verify the state in which the pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/ of regular verbs in past were on students of ninth grade at "Rubén López Sabariego" Junior High School, different empiric methods were applied, such as: the observation of classes, the interview to the professor of the grade and the inquiry to the students. From them it could be obtained that:

- Only in 2 classes from 8 observed, it was given treatment to the improvement of the pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/ of regular verbs in past.
- It was corroborated in the interview applied to the professor of the grade that the activities that are planned in order to improve the pronunciation are scarce.
- It was also corroborated that the pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/ of regular verbs in past, taking into account the contents of the program, is one the elements that with bigger frequency make difficult that the students express themselves orally.
- From the inquiries applied to the students, it could be verified that the activities developed in classes to improve the pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/ are not motivating enough.

Activities proposed to improve the pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/ of regular verbs in past.

There are different ways to practice the pronunciation in the English language, for example: the oral reading, the songs, the poetries, the spoken chorus, the linguistic games, the oral exercises, the role plays, among others.

The following proposal consists in a set of activities grouped in three types taking into account the levels of assimilation, from the identification of sounds in isolation , the reproduction in words, phrases, sentences, until the production of them in communicative systems created by the own students in a simple and spontaneous way.

Taking into account what has been presented; activities were divided into three groups:

1st group: Activities of identification of sounds.

2nd group: Activities for the reproduction of sounds in communicative situations.

3rd group: More free and spontaneous activities of communication.

Activities will be applied when the content that is studied, propitiate the improvement of pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/, mainly in unit # 9. They will be used in new content classes and mainly in exercising classes. There have been included activities where the community's potentialities are used.

Activities for slow-learners

Activity # 1

Title: Listening to verbs in past.

Unit # 9: A trip around the country.

Objective: To identify the pronunciation of regular verbs in past.

Ability: Speaking and listening.

Content: Simple past tense (regular verbs).

Method: Individual work.

Procedure:

The teacher will copy the orientation of the exercise on the board, and then he will explain it to the students. Then, he will play the tape recorder, and will have the students listen to the material which can be played twice. Then, the students will be given some minutes to think and check what they have done in their notebooks. The teacher will develop the necessary seatwork so as to check the students' answers. For checking this exercise, the students will be asked to go to the board to place the verbal forms in their correct group.

Orientation:

- Listen to the recording material.
- Write down all verbal forms in their corresponding categories according to their pronunciation.
- Be ready to pronounce them all aloud:

Evaluation: Oral and written.

Verbal forms: worked, closed, ended, phoned, lived, regretted, danced, visited, finished, rained, watched, and landed.

1. /-t/: ----- /----- /----- /----- /-----

2. /-d/: ----- /----- /----- /----- /-----

3. /-ld/: ----- /----- /----- /----- /-----

Activity # 2

Title: Discriminate the sounds.

Unit # 9: A trip around the country.

Objective: To identify the pronunciation of regular verbs in past.

Ability: Speaking and listening.

Content: Simple past tense (regular verbs).

Method: Individual work.

Procedures:

The professor will ask the students to work individually. Then, he will present them some sentences with spaces in blank which will be filled in with the verbs between parenthesis that they are going to turn into past. After that, they will select the correct pronunciation of each verb in past. At the end, the students will be asked to read the sentences with the correct pronunciation of regular verbs in past.

Orientation:

- Complete the following sentences with the suggested verbs, in past tense.
- Circle the correct pronunciation /-t/, /-d/, /-ld/ that appear on the right side of each sentence.
- Read each sentence aloud.

A) Ann always _____ (like) her hometown. /-t/, /-d/, /-ld/

B) She never _____ (want) to move out. /-t/, /-d/, /-ld/

C) When she got married, her husband _____ (move) in with her. /-t/, /-d/, /-ld/

D) Ann's husband _____ (work) near their house. /-t/, /-d/, /-ld/

E) He _____ (love) Ann very much. /-t/, /-d/, /-ld/

F) They _____ (talk) about their job every night. /-t/, /-d/, /-ld/

G) Ann's mother-in-law _____ (visit) them very often. /-t/, /-d/, /-ld/

H) She even _____ (stay) with them two or three days each time. /-t/, /-d/, /-ld/

I) Ann _____ (appreciate) her mother-in-law's help a lot. /-t/, /-d/, /-ld/

Activities for middle-learners

Activity # 3

Title: Selecting the intruder.

Unit # 9: A trip around the country.

Objective: To reproduce the pronunciation of regular verbs in past.

Ability: Speaking and listening.

Content: Simple past tense (regular verbs).

Method: Individual work.

Procedure:

The teacher will copy the orientation of the exercise on the board, and then he will explain it to the students. Then, he will play the tape recorder, and will have the students listen to the material which can be played twice. Then, the students will be given some minutes to think and check what they have done in their notebooks. The teacher will develop the necessary seatwork so as to check the students' answers. For checking this exercise, the students will be asked to go to the board to place the verb that differs to the other ones.

Orientation:

- Listen to the recording material.
- Identify in each group the verbs that have the different pronunciation of the ending –Ed and pronounce them.

1. Snowed – closed - pushed. The different verb is: _____

2. Shouted – watched - landed. The different verb is: _____

3. Filled - laughed - brushed. The different verb is: _____

4. Danced – played - stayed. The different verb is: _____

5. Cried - wanted - rained. The different verb is: _____

Activity # 4

Title: Selection of regular verbs in past.

Unit # 9: A trip around the country.

Objective: To reproduce the pronunciation of regular verbs in past.

Ability: Speaking and listening.

Content: Simple past tense (regular verbs).

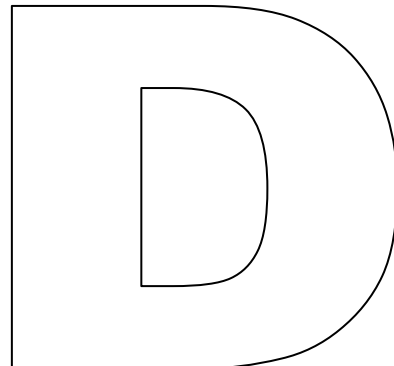
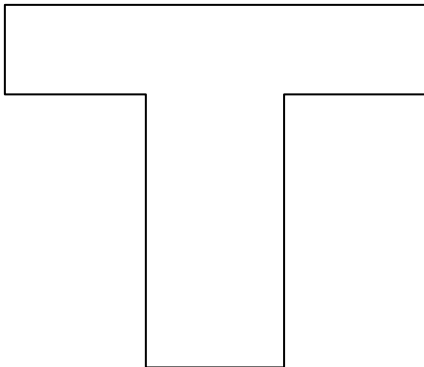
Method: Individual work.

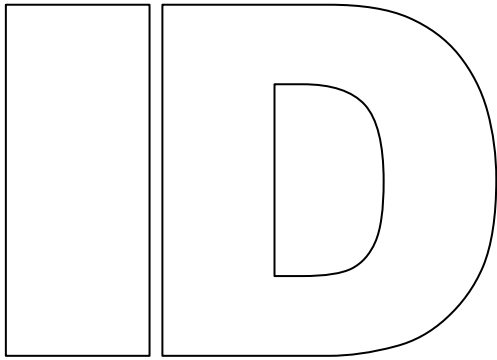
Procedure:

The professor will copy the paragraph on the board, and then he will read it twice for the students to listen to the correct pronunciation of all regular verbs that appear in it. Then, the students have to make a silent reading in order to group all the verbs into the correct inflectional final sound that the professor is going to paint on the board in form of letters. After that, the students have to place each verb into each letter according to their pronunciation.

Orientation:

- Copy the whole paragraph, and then read it.
- Select all regular verbs that appear in it.
- Group each -ED final sound into the right letter and be ready to pronounce them.





A Night's Tale

It was a cold winter night. It **rained** a lot. The city was quiet. Mary **turned** the lights off, as she usually did before sleeping. Then, she **realized** the window was **opened** and immediately she stood up and **closed** it. Suddenly, she heard a noise. "Was it a baby crying or a cat?" she **asked** herself. It **seemed** to be coming from the street. As far as she **remembered**, the neighbours did not like cats. She immediately stood up, put on her coat, **turned** the lights on and went outside.

Luckily, all the street lights were on. She **headed** towards the place where the cry was coming from. After she had **walked** for some time, she saw a **wrapped** package. It was moving like a baby. She **hurried** to take it. As she **approached**, she **realized** it was a kitten. Someone had **tied** it into a box and had **abandoned** it in the cold weather.

Marie felt sorry for the poor animal. She took the kitten home, fed him and put him to sleep. She had never **liked** having a cat. But after a second thought she **decided** to keep it at home.

Activity # 5

Title: Pronunciation and memorization of sentences.

Unit # 9: A trip around the country.

Objective: To reproduce the pronunciation of regular verbs in past.

Ability: Speaking and listening.

Content: Simple past tense (regular verbs).

Method: Individual work.

Procedure:

The professor will copy some sentences on the board for the students to copy them into their notebooks. Then, the students have to make a silent reading of them all in order to be prepared to read each sentence in front of the classroom. All of the students have to do the same making a good pronunciation not only of regular verbs but also of all sentences.

Orientation:

- Copy the sentences.
- Read them over and over again.
- Be ready to pronounce them taking into consideration the different final sounds of regular verbs in past.

Evaluation: Orally.

1. We played chess and then we asked for a deck of cards.
2. They used all the fuel.
3. Their dog attacked me.
4. Gaudy never finished his cathedral.
5. He crashed into a tree.
6. A Spaniard invented the mop.
7. They served us the second course first.
8. The package included all of the transfers.

Activity # 6

Title: Find the hidden verbs.

Unit # 9: A trip around the country.

Objective: To reproduce the pronunciation of regular verbs in past.

Ability: Speaking and listening.

Content: Simple past tense (regular verbs).

Method: Individual work.

Procedures:

The professor will ask the students to work individually. Then, he will present them a puzzle containing some regular verbs. After that, the students will be asked to find the

hidden verbs that appear in present, which they have to turn into past form. Then, they are going to make a sentence with each one and are going to read them with a correct use of the prosodic elements, making emphasis in the correct pronunciation of the regular verbs in past.

Orientation:

- Pick out all regular verbs that appear in the puzzle.
- Turn them all into past form.
- Make a sentence with each one and be ready to read them aloud.

U	Z	S	M	I	L	E	K
A	S	T	A	Y	I	H	I
C	L	O	S	E	L	B	S
M	S	P	L	A	Y	E	S
D	O	F	I	N	I	S	H
L	P	V	K	D	R	A	N
R	E	C	E	I	V	E	A
D	N	Y	H	E	L	P	W

Evaluation: Oral.

Activities for advanced-learners

Activity # 7

Title: Remember the sounds and pronounce them.

Unit # 9: A trip around the country.

Objective: To apply the pronunciation of regular verbs in past.

Ability: Speaking and listening.

Content: Simple past tense (regular verbs).

Method: Individual work.

Procedure:

The professor will copy a list of regular verbs in past on the board, and then he will have the students to make a description of them by saying if they are voiced or voiceless. After that, he is going to ask the students to group them by their final sounds and will have them not only to pronounce them all aloud but also to make a sentence with each one to be pronounced at the end.

Orientation:

- Copy the following verbs.
- Say if they are voiced or voiceless.
- Group them according to their final sounds.
- Be ready to pronounce them all aloud.
- Make a sentence with each one.

List: washed, touched, showed, satisfied, guided, stayed, carried, counted, boiled, added, earned, decreased, and danced.

Evaluation: Oral and written.

Activity # 8

Title: Let's talk about past.

Unit # 9: A trip around the country.

Objective: To apply the pronunciation of regular verbs in past.

Ability: Speaking and listening.

Content: Simple past tense (regular verbs).

Method: Individual work.

Procedure:

The professor will ask the students to count from one two in order to divide the group into two teams facing one to each other. Then, he will ask the ones to sit down on the left side and the twos in the right one. After that, he will give them some card-strips with some questions in past and some with regular verbs in present that they have to turn into past at the time of giving the answer. The card-strips that contain the verbs in present also contain the questions that he/she is going to ask back to his/her classmate. They are going to make a dialogue in pairs making special attention to the pronunciation of regular verbs they are going to turn into past form. After, he will give the students 5 minutes to work. After that, he will ask them to play the role.

Note:

The card-strips with the questions are going to be this way:

- What did you do yesterday morning?
- What did you do last night?
- What did you do last weekend?

The card-strips with regular verbs in present are going to be as follow:

- Visit (And you? What did you do?). And so on with the other verbs that appear in the following list:

Dance, listen, receive, enjoy, watch, clean, paint, study, play, help, travel, move and call.

E.g. What did you do last night?

I visited a friend of mine, and you? What did you do last night?

I watched the baseball game.

Orientation:

- Count from one to two in order to divide the group into two teams facing one to each other.
- After, you are going to have a card-strip that contains a question or a regular verb in present that you have to turn into past when giving the answer.
- The card-strip that contains the verb in present also has a question that you have to ask ask to your classmate.
- Make the dialogue and then play the role.

Evaluation: Oral and written.

Activities for slow, middle and advanced-learners

Activity # 9

Title: Stand up and sit down after the final sound.

Unit # 9: A trip around the country.

Objective: To improve the pronunciation of regular verbs in past.

Ability: Speaking and listening.

Content: Simple past tense (regular verbs).

Method: Collective work.

Procedures:

The professor will say the students what they are going to deal with. Then, he will ask them to count from one to two in order to form two teams facing one to each other. After, he will ask them to sit down, the ones on the left and the twos on the right. After that, he will head towards the students and will give them the opportunity to choose a card-strip containing a sentence with regular verbs in past and will tell them what the game consists on.

Orientation:

You are going to deal with a game entitled "Stand up and sit down", but first do the following:

- Count from one to two.
- Divide the group into two teams facing one to each other.
- Sit down the ones on the left and the twos on the right.
- Choose a card-strip I am going to take to your seats.
- Be ready to read it, paying special attention to the pronunciation of regular verbs in past that appear in each card-strip for having your classmate to make a good performance of the command.

- For making a good performance of the exercise, the one who listens has to pay special attention to the pronunciation of every final sound /-t/, /-d/, /-ld/ of each regular verb in past that his/her classmate is going to pronounce.

- While listening you have to:

- First, stand up if you listen to a verb with /-t/ final sound. If you listen to another sound /-t/ or /-ld/ you have to remain as you are.
- Second, sit down if you listen to a verb with /-d/ final sound. If you listen to another sound /-d/ or /-ld/ you have to remain as you are.
- Third, stand up and sit down and vice versa if you listen to a verb with only /-ld/ final sound.

Sentences

1. He **missed** the train, so he **travelled** by plain.
2. She **visited** her mother and she **helped** her to clean.
3. They **arrived** home and **watched** the baseball game.
4. When you **called** me by phone, Mary **knocked** at the door.
5. The rain **stopped** and he **stayed** at home.
6. My sister **washed** the clothes and **ironed** them.
7. Susan **opened** the door and her brother **closed** the windows.
8. Robert **moved** to a new apartment and **decided** to paint it
9. He **shaved** himself and **washed** his face.
10. I **offered** her some coffee and she **accepted** it.
11. You **asked** to go to the park, but your friends **suggested** you to go to coppellia.
12. Even though you **walked**, you **arrived** on time.
13. They **returned** from the trip and **looked** for a new job.
14. My mother **combed** her hair and **dressed** herself.
15. We **walked** to our job and **enjoyed** a lot.

16. He **received** a present and **liked** it a lot.
17. When Fred **turned** on the lights, he **realized** his dog was on his bed.
18. When the dog **barked**, he **climbed** on the tree.
19. He **demonstrated** that he **loved** her.
20. You **mistreated** the girl and then you **kissed** her.
21. They **waited** for the bus and **helped** the old woman.
22. He **invited** her to go out and she **declined** the invitation.
23. I **studied** hard and **passed** the test.
24. He **tried** many times and **finished** tired.
25. He **played** with the doll and his friends **laughed** about him.
26. Her husband **died** and she **started** to cry.
27. She **calmed** the boy and he **stopped** crying.
28. The firemen **entered** to the apartment and **extinguished** the fire.
29. They **looked** through the windows and **enjoyed** the sunset.
30. She **headed** towards the place and **remembered** the whole accident.
31. He **talked** to his boss and **explained** him everything.
32. I **hurried** myself and **finished** my work on time.
33. They **played** the game and **celebrated** at the end.
34. The children **listened** to some music and **danced** a lot.
35. He **corroborated** that the activities **showed** some insufficiencies.

Evaluation: Orally.

Activity # 10

Title: Passing the ball.

Unit # 9: A trip around the country.

Objective: To improve the pronunciation of regular verbs in past.

Ability: Speaking and listening.

Content: Simple past tense (regular verbs).

Method: Collective work.

Procedure:

The professor will ask the students to form a circle, and will explain them what they have to do. Then, he will give a ball to one student in order to pass it from hand to hand until they listen to the word “stop”, the one who remains with the ball, will go to the teacher’s table to take out a card-strip from a box that contains some regular verbs in present. Then, the student will pronounce the verb aloud; first, in present; and then, in past and in that same moment he/she will have to make a sentence in past with that verb. If the student mispronounces the verb, the professor will ask to whatever student to pronounce it in the correct way.

Orientation:

Here I have a box containing some card-strips with regular verbs in present for you to play a game entitled “Passing the ball”, but first:

- Sit down in form of circle.
- Then, I will ask one of you to pass the ball from hand to hand until you listen to the word “stop”.
- The one who remains with the ball has to come to my table in order to take out one card-strip from the box and to pronounce the verb that appears in it aloud; first, in present; and then, in past and in that same moment you have to make a sentence in past.
- If you mispronounce the verb, one of your classmates is going to correct it for you.

Evaluation: Oral.

Valuation of the effectiveness of the activities proposed.

In order to corroborate the effectiveness of the activities designed with the objective to improve the pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/ of regular verbs in past, it was taken as a sample a group of ninth graders composed by 35 students representing 31.8% of the universe and the English professor of them, and there were applied some instruments to them, such as: observation, inquiry and interview.

The activities were applied in a total of 8 classes where it could be corroborated that the individual differences were taken into consideration, what propitiated that the development of the activities was carried out with a great protagonism and dynamism by the students. On the other hand, the professor did all her best in order to motivate the students while developing the activities, and asked them to pay special attention to the pronunciation of the three final sounds of the suffix /-Ed/ what sometimes breaks the development of a good communication and does not allow the students not only to make a good production of sounds, but also to have a good perception of them.

After having been applied the activities, the students stated that they felt motivated during the performance of the activities because they kept them quite active what encouraged them to increase their participation in class. They said that the activities were motivating, creative and of easy comprehension what propitiated them to improve their knowledge concerning to the pronunciation of those three final sounds of the suffix /-Ed/ that in the beginning were so difficult to them. They also said that they had liked all the activities, but the ones that they had liked the most were activities # 9 and # 10 because they had kept them encouraged and in constant action since the beginning of the performance. On the other hand, they said that the most difficult activity was # 7 because they were not able to identify when a sound was voiced or voiceless. At the end, they stated that they would really like to have more activities like those in order to improve their oral communication.

When having the interview to the professor of English of the group with the purpose to corroborate in what way the activities proposed improved the pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/ of regular verbs in past on the students, she expressed a great level of satisfaction and stated that she could see the feasibility of the activities proposed through the dynamic and active participation of the students. She said that the activities were really creative, motivating and that through them one can see the protagonism of the students

(annex # 7). She also said that they were very effective since the pronunciation is somehow difficult to the students and that because of their creativeness they could be applied in other schools.

Starting from the results obtained, the author of this investigation considers that the activities proposed were effective enough because showed a new way of dealing with the pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/. On the other hand, they not only allowed the students to have a great improvement concerning to the pronunciation of those final sounds, but also contributed to improve students' oral communication which can be corroborated on annex # 9 where the 85.7% of the students showed a great level of improvement with the activities proposed.

Conclusions

- The historical background permitted to know the different changes carried out in the teaching- learning process concerning to pronunciation in Junior High School education up to the present time.
- Through the theoretical foundations it could be corroborated in which way the pronunciation has been treated in the English teaching-learning process.
- By means of the diagnosis it could be determined the real situation in relation to the pronunciation of the suffix /-ed/ on students from ninth grade at "Rubén López Sabariego" Junior High School.
- The activities proposed constitute a new way of dealing with the pronunciation of the suffix /-ed/ of regular verbs in past.
- With the results obtained after having been applied the activities, it could be corroborated that they are applicable to other schools.

Recommendations

After having finished the work and having made a really deep analysis of the importance of the pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/ of regular verbs in past in order to get a better oral communication, it is considered convenient to offer the following recommendations:

- To continue strengthening this investigation in different scientific events.
- To go on not only deepening but also widening in this so important topic in order to get the correct pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/.
- To continue improving the pronunciation of this suffix in other schools.

Annex # 1

Observation guide

Objective: To observe professor's work in order to contribute to the development of the oral expression and specifically of the pronunciation.

- Type of class
- Sounds in which the students present the major difficulties.
- Treatment given in order to improve the pronunciation.
- Activities developed to improve the pronunciation of the final sounds of regular verbs in past.

Annex # 2

Interview to the professor of English of ninth grade

Objective: To know the level of knowledge the teacher has about the adequate treatment of the oral expression, especially of pronunciation.

- 1- What's your opinion about the students' oral expression nowadays in classes?
- 2- Do you consider that the pronunciation is one of the elements that make difficult that the students express themselves orally?
- 3- What do you know about the development of the oral expression and the work with pronunciation?
- 4- Which are the most difficult sounds for the students from ninth grade?
- 5- Do you use different activities devoted to improve the development of the pronunciation?
- 6- What procedures do you use to correct them?
- 7- Is there anything stated in regard to it in the Methodological Guidelines of the grade?

Annex # 3

Answers to the interview to the ninth grade professor

1- It's not good because the students are afraid of committing mistakes and of the laughing of their partners.

2- Yes, of course. Pronunciation is one of the elements that make difficult that the students express themselves orally.

3- The development of the oral expression is one of the most important aspects nowadays, because it allows the students to improve the pronunciation of the words.

4- The different pronunciations of the ending of the regular verbs in past (/ -t/, / -d/, / -id/) are some of the most difficult sounds for the students this year.

5- Well, not too much. Activities designed to improve the pronunciation of these sounds are not found frequently.

6- I use some of the techniques of phonetic correction.

7- (She didn't answer).

Annex # 4

Inquiry applied to the ninth grade students.

Objective: To know the students' opinion about the state of their oral expression and the state of their pronunciation.

Dear student, an investigation related to the oral expression is being carried out at school, that's why, it's necessary that you answer the following questions honestly.

1-Do you like English lessons?

Yes _____ No _____ A little _____

2- Are they

___ motivating? ___ interesting? ___ boring?

3- How do you consider your way of speaking English is?

___Excellent ___Good ___Not bad
___Not good ___Bad ___Awful

4- Is there any difficult sound to pronounce in English?

___Yes ___No

5- Do you think your English lessons help you to learn how to speak?

___Yes ___No ___A little

a) If you select no or a little please say why?

___ Because there are not enough oral activities in our lessons.

___ Because students are not interested in the oral activities teacher develops.

___ Because teachers do not correct our way of speaking so much.

___ Because activities developed in classes to strengthen the correct pronunciation of difficult sounds are not motivating enough.

Question # 1

Do you like English?		%
yes	10	28.5
No	15	42.8
A little	10	28.5

Question # 2

Opinions about the subject		%
___ Motivating	8	22.8
___ Interesting	10	28.5
___ Boring	17	48.5

Question # 3

Their way of speaking English		%
Excellent	-	
Good	4	11.4
Not bad	6	17.1
Not good	10	28.5
Bad	7	20
Awful	8	22.8

Question # 4

Existence of difficult sounds		%
yes	30	85.7
No	5	14.2

Question # 5

If the English lessons help them to learn how to speak		%
Yes	5	14.2
No	28	80
A little	2	5.7

Item a

Why?		%
Reason # 1	10	33.3
Reason # 2	3	10
Reason # 3	2	6.6
Reason # 4	15	50

Annex # 5

Observation guide

- Type of class
- Participation of the students during the classes.
- Behaviour of the students while developing the activities to improve the pronunciation.

Annex # 6

Interview to the professor of English of ninth grade

Objective: To corroborate the measure in which the activities designed favour the improvement of the pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/.

Dear teacher, please answer the following questions:

1- What is your opinion about the characteristics of the activities proposed?

2- What do you think about the activities designed after applying them?

3- What is your opinion about your students' pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/ after the application of the activities?

Annex # 7

Professor's answers to the interview

- 1- I think those activities are good because the students have improved their pronunciation in general. On the other hand, those activities encourage them to speak and practice the language.

- 2- Those activities are really creative and motivating. On the other hand, they increase the level of protagonism of the students. Their feasibility is palpable because through them the students' participation is dynamic and active. Besides, they are very effective since the pronunciation is somehow difficult to the students. I think they can be applied in other schools.

- 3- My students oral expression have improved a lot since they are able to read or say a word, a sentence or a short idea with a good pronunciation due to these activities applied in English Lessons.

Annex # 8

Inquiry applied to ninth grade students

Objective: To know the degree of acceptance of the activities by the students.

It is necessary that you answer the following questions for an investigation. Please be honest.

1- Do you speak English?

Yes No A little

2- How is your oral expression in English now?

Bad Not so good Good Perfect

3-Did you improve your pronunciation in English?

Yes No

How?

Not so much A little Very much

4- Did the activities help you to improve your pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/of regular verbs in past?

Yes No

a- Why?

Because they:

are motivated are creative of easy comprehension
 of difficult comprehension

___improve the pronunciation of difficult sounds

Annex # 9

Results of the inquiry applied to the ninth grade students

Question # 1

Do you speak English?		%
Yes	18	51.4
No	7	20
A little	10	28.5

Question # 2

How's your oral expression now?		%
Bad	5	14.2
Not so good	10	28.5
Good	20	57.1
Perfect	-	-

Question # 3

Did you improve your pronunciation in English?		%
Yes	30	85.7
No	5	14.2
How?		%
Not so much	5	16.6
A little	5	16.6

Very much	20	66.6
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Question # 4

- Did the activities help you to improve your pronunciation of the suffix /-Ed/of regular verbs in past?		%
Yes	30	85.7
Not	5	14.2
Why		%
Reason#1	5	14.2
Reason#2	5	14.2
Reason#3	5	14.2
Reason#4	5	14.2
Reason#5	15	42.8

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