UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE MINAS GERAIS

Faculdade de Letras da UFMG

Curso de Especialização em Língua Inglesa – CEI/ELI

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COMPARARING AND CONSONATING: DELVING INTO ENGLISH COMPARATIVE AND THE SOUND OF "L": Navigating between English Grammar and Phonetics

Belo Horizonte

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Monografia de especialização apresentada à Faculdade de Letras da Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais como requisito parcial à obtenção do título de Especialista em Língua Inglesa.

Orientadora: Prof. Dra. Marisa Carneiro Mendonça

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ATA DE DEFESA DE TRABALHO DE CONCLUSÃO DE CURSO

Às 10:30 horas do dia 02 de dezembro de 2023, reuniu-se na Faculdade de Letras da UFMG a Comissão Examinadora indicada pela Coordenação do Curso de Especialização em Língua Inglesa -CEI/ELI , para julgar, em exame final, o trabalho intitulado COMPARARING AND CONSONATING: DELVING INTO ENGLISH COMPARATIVE AND THE SOUND OF "L", apresentado por **Luisa Cardoso Avelar Abbade**, como requisito final para obtenção do Grau de Especialista em Língua Inglesa . Abrindo a sessão, a banca examinadora, após dar conhecimento aos presentes do teor das Normas Regulamentares do Trabalho Final, passou a palavra ao candidato para apresentação de seu trabalho. Seguiu-se a arguição pelos examinadores com a respectiva defesa do(a) candidato(a). Em seguida, a Comissão se reuniu, sem a presença do candidato e do público, para julgamento e expedição do resultado final. Foram atribuídas as seguintes indicações:

Prof(a). Dr(a). Júnia de Carvalho Fidélis Braga, indicou (X) **aprovação/** ( )**reprovação** do(a) candidato(a);

Prof(a). Dr(a). Ronaldo Correa Gomes Júnior, indicou a (X) **aprovação/** ( ) **reprovação** do(a) candidato(a).

Pelas indicações, o(a) candidato(a) foi considerado (X) **aprovado(a)/** ( ) **reprovado(a)**.

Nota: 85

O resultado final foi comunicado publicamente ao(à) candidato(a) pelo Presidente da Comissão. Nada mais havendo a tratar, este encerrou a sessão, da qual foi lavrada a presente ATA assinada eletronicamente por todos os membros participantes da Comissão Examinadora.

A crescente necessidade de proficiência em inglês nos contextos comerciais e acadêmicos eleva a importância de métodos de ensino inovadores e eficazes. Esta monografia apresenta a elaboração de duas unidades didáticas independentes destinadas ao ensino do inglês. A primeira unidade aprofunda-se na gramática dos comparativos, propondo uma abordagem que estimula os alunos a identificar padrões linguísticos, minimizando a dependência da mera memorização de regras. A segunda unidade centra-se na fonética, com um foco específico na pronúncia da letra "L" em inglês, desvendando suas nuances e os desafios que representa para falantes não nativos. Em ambas as unidades, prevalece a abordagem comunicativa, incentivando a interação e a prática comunicativa genuína entre os estudantes, proporcionando assim uma experiência de aprendizado imersiva e contextualizada.

Palavras-chave: ensino de língua inglesa; abordagem comunicativa; comparativos em inglês; fonética da letra "L".

The rising demand for proficiency in English within commercial and academic contexts underscores the importance of innovative and effective teaching methods. This thesis introduces the development of two distinct didactic units aimed at English instruction. The first unit delves into the grammar of comparatives, proposing an approach that encourages students to recognize linguistic patterns, thus reducing reliance on mere rule memorization. The second unit focuses on phonetics, specifically on the pronunciation of the letter "L" in English, uncovering its nuances and the challenges it poses for non-native speakers. In both units, the communicative approach takes precedence, fostering genuine interaction and communicative practice among students, offering an immersive and contextualized learning experience.

SUMMARY

1 INTRODUCTION

Throughout my school journey, pronunciation in English was always a tricky part for me. I remember many times when I said words the wrong way, and these mistakes just stuck with me. When I started learning about phonetic transcription for my TKT certificate, I found it really hard. But as I learned more about pronunciation and sounds, what first seemed too tough became something I loved. This topic, which I once found hard, is now what I want to know more about and teach others.

My own challenges have shaped how I teach. Like many students, I had my own struggles, from getting pronunciation right to understanding grammar rules. But facing and overcoming these struggles pushed me to dive deeper into English and help others in their learning journey.

Now, as I work on this project, it's not just an assignment for me. It's a reflection of my journey, my thoughts on teaching, and my goal to help students learn with confidence. So, I've created two units that I think connect well with today's learners.

The First Unit talks about comparatives but links it to the topic of social media - something many students are familiar with. The idea is to not just teach the rule but to connect it with things they know and like.

The Second Unit is all about pronunciation, looking at different accents and why understanding sounds is important. While getting the sounds right is key, I mainly want to help students see that they shouldn't be scared of saying things their way.

Both units are made for students at the B1/B2 level. This covers young adults in high school, college, and also those in language learning schools. This way, a lot of different learners can benefit from the content.

To wrap up, this work brings together my personal experiences and what I've learned in school. Through it, I hope that students can better understand English and feel good about their own way of speaking.

**2 COMPARING AND CONSONATING: DELVING INTO ENGLISH COMPARATIVE AND THE SOUND OF "L"**

LUISA CARDOSO

DECEMBER 2023

COMPARARING AND CONSONATING: DELVING INTO ENGLISH COMPARATIVE AND THE SOUND OF ''L''

NAVIGATING BETWEEN ENGLISH GRAMMAR AND PHONETICS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2.1 UNIT 1: THE ILLUSION OF PERFECTION

1) READING

- Do you feel pressure to present a perfect image of yourself on social media?
- How does social media affect your self-esteem?
- Do you think social media can contribute to anxiety or other mental health issues?

1.1) Match these words to their definitions

1) Unattainable	**a)** Any material that is burned or consumed to produce energy, such as gasoline, diesel, or natural gas.
2) Grin	**b)** To smile widely, often in a way that shows amusement or pleasure.
3) Fuel	**c)** Impossible to achieve or reach, often due to being too difficult or unrealistic.
4) Verge	**d)** the point at which something is about to happen; the edge or brink of something.
5) Millennials	**e)** a generation of people born between the 1980s and early 2000s, who are often characterized as tech-savvy and socially conscious.

1.2) Read the following excerpt about the impact of social media on individuals' self-image and mental health. After reading, answer the questions below based on the content.

How Social Media Pressure to be Perfect is Making Millennials Stressed and Anxious
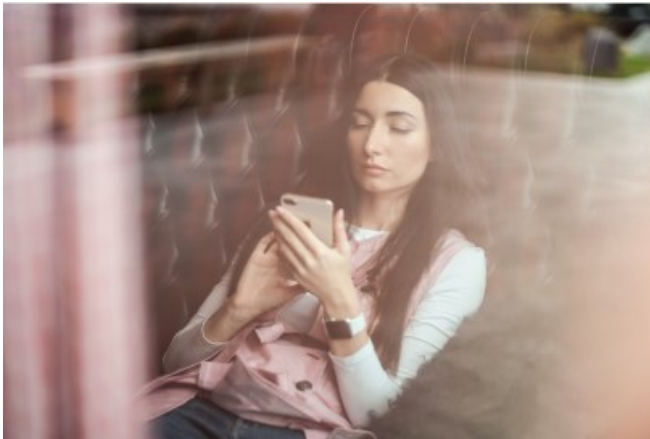
If you've been anywhere near social media in the last several years, you know what many people's accounts are like: one perfectly curated photo after another, complete with filters to smooth out one's skin and make everyone look about ten years younger. The social media pressure to be perfect is prevalent in our society. It mostly impacts younger generations, including millennials. And it can cause perfectionism, anxiety, and depression.

Social Media Fuels Perfectionism

Perfectionism and social media are among the top reasons for anxiety among millennials. I write about social media frequently because it causes so many of my clients to feel like absolute shit. In my opinion, it's one of the worst things for millennials' mental health. Social media is a highlight reel of everyone else's lives, but the truth is those highlights aren't even real much of the time. People don't accurately represent themselves. Someone will post a beautiful photo of a sunny beachside, surrounded by family, with a caption like "Having such a blast!!!" and then as soon as they put their phone away they begin to worry about the financial impact of their vacation. Or they start bickering with their mom for the 20th time that day. But the rest of us don't see what happens behind the scenes – and once again, we feel like our lives are awful by comparison. When you compare yourself to everyone else's perfect highlight reel, you feel like you also need to be perfect.

Seeing filtered and photoshopped images also adds to mental health problems. When you see photos that make everyone look younger, thinner, healthier, prettier, and less wrinkled than you, of course you're going to feel like you need to step it up. Even their dog looks cuter than yours. Comparing your unedited self to everyone else's filtered faces adds to the pressure to be perfect. Consider this scenario: you're scrolling through the gram and see a video of some jacked woman grinning while she whips up a green smoothie. You start to think, Do I need to eat more

smoothies? Maybe that would help me be happier and look like her. Videos like this make other people's lives look effortless, fun, and more fulfilling than yours. But you have no idea what her life is really like. She could have an eating disorder that controls her life. She could be on the verge of an injury from too many gym sessions. She could have massive anxiety about skipping leg day because she centers her self-worth around the way she looks. But all you see is someone whose life looks perfect.

—--

Excerpt from: https://www.millennialtherapy.com/anxiety-therapy-blog/social-media-pressure-to-be-perfect

1**. What is the impact of social media on younger generations?**

a) It causes perfectionism, anxiety, and depression.

b) It leads to a sense of belonging and connection.

c) It helps people learn new skills and ideas.

d) It makes people feel more fulfilled.

2. What is the author's opinion about social media's impact on mental health?

a) It is one of the worst things for millennials' mental health.

b) It has no impact on mental health.

c) It is beneficial for mental health.

d) It depends on how it is used.

3. What is social media according to the author?

a) A highlight reel of everyone else's lives.

b) A place to learn new skills and ideas.

c) A way to connect with people who otherwise never would have met.

d) A platform to market an online business.

4. What is the relationship between perfectionism and anxiety?

a) They are not related.

b) Perfectionism is directly linked to anxiety.

c) Perfectionism reduces anxiety.

d) Anxiety leads to perfectionism.

5. What is the danger of feeling like you need to be perfect all the time?

a) It can lead to feelings of low self-worth.

b) It can cause tremendous amounts of anxiety.

c) It can threaten your sense of belonging.

d) All of the above.

6. What is the irony of feeling lonely and disconnected on social media?

a) Social media is designed to be social.

b) Social media is not designed to be social.

c) Social media is only for people who have a lot of friends.

d) Social media is only for people who are outgoing.

7. What is the author's suggestion to lessen anxiety and ease up on perfectionism?

a) Follow more people who make you feel like shit.

b) Scroll endlessly through seemingly perfect accounts.

c) Give yourself a reality check.

d) None of the above.

8. What is the author's opinion about social media in general?

a) It is all bad.

b) It is all good.

c) It has both advantages and disadvantages.

d) It depends on the person using it.

2) GRAMMAR - COMPARATIVE FORM

- Do you agree with the author's view that social media puts pressure on people to be perfect? Why or why not?

2.1) In the text, there was a line that said:

"When you see photos that make everyone look younger, thinner, healthier, prettier, and less wrinkled than you."

a) Can you identify the words that compare two different things?

b) What is being compared?

c) Can you explain the purpose of using comparatives in advertising or media?

d) What are some other situations in advertising or media where the use of comparatives can be found? Why are they used in those situations?

To form comparatives, we have two rules:

- For short adjectives with one or two syllables, we add "-er" at the end. For example: "young" becomes "younger" and "thin" becomes "thinner."

PS: adjectives ending in "y" preceded by a consonant, we remove the "y" and add "-ier" to form the comparative. For example:

Easy – Easier

Busy - Busier

Funny - Funnier

- For long adjectives, which are adjectives with three or more syllables, we use the word "more" before the adjective to form the comparative. For example:

Interesting - More interesting

Beautiful - More beautiful

Expensive - More expensive

2.2) Look at these famous quotes and complete the sentences using the comparative:

Ps: type the sentence on this website: https://youglish.com/ and pay attention in the pronunciation.

a) "The _____ the storm, the _____ the rainbow." – Unknown (strong, bright)

b) "The _____ the mountain, the _____ the view." – Unknown (high, good)

c) "The _____ you work, the _____ you get." – Thomas Edison (hard, more)

d) "The _____ the struggle, the _____ the victory." – Mahatma Gandhi (great, sweet)

e) "The _____ the obstacle, the _____ the triumph." – Unknown (big, great)

f) "The _____ you dream, the _____ you achieve." – Michael Phelps (big, more)

2.3) Work in pairs to do this activity. Each pair will have a set of pictures featuring different people. Your task is to compare the people in the pictures using the comparative form. Take a few minutes to discuss the pictures with your partner, making comparisons using the comparative form. Be ready to share your comparisons with the class afterward.
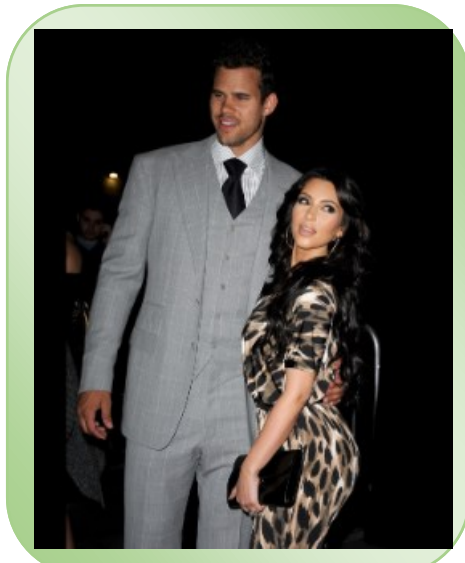
3) LISTENING

- Do you regularly use social media? Which platforms are your favorites?
- How do you feel when you see photos or posts from other people on social media?
- Do you think social media can affect the way we see ourselves? Why?

3.1) Watch the video and answer the questions: Social Media And Self-Image

a) Why does the speaker feel bad about herself when she checks her feet?

b) What did the speaker do to address their negative feelings about themselves?

c) What is the speaker watching instead of social media?

d) Why does the speaker say social media is designed for you to feel bad about yourself?

e) What does the speaker think about social media despite its negative aspects?

3.2)

a) Do you agree with the opinions presented in the video? Why or why not?

b) What steps can you take to maintain a positive self-image while using social media?

c) Do you have any personal experiences related to this topic? Share with your conversation partner.

4) AGREEING AND DISAGREEING

- When expressing opinions in English, it is important to use appropriate language and sentence structure to convey your thoughts and feelings. One way to do this is to use phrases such as "I think that," "In my opinion," or "From my perspective," at the beginning of your sentence.

Giving an Opinion in English:

You can start a debate or discussion by sharing your opinion, or you can give people your opinion within a conversation:

- If you ask me…
- I would have to say that (opinion)
- You know what I think, I think that…
- The point is…
- As I see it…
- The way I see it is…
- I sometimes think that…
- In my opinion/In my view…
- From my point of view…
- The way I see it is (that)…
- To my mind

Expressing Agreement:

Let's look at some phrases when we agree strongly with someone.

- I (totally/completely/absolutely) agree with you.
- I couldn't agree more.
- I feel the same.
- You're absolutely right.
- Absolutely/Definitely/Exactly.
- That's a good point/ I see your point.
- That's so true.
- I couldn't agree more.
- Partial Agreement

Partially agree:

- I see your point but…
- You make a good point, but…
- Yes, OK, but perhaps…
- It sounds interesting, but…
- It's only partly true that…
- I agree with you in principle, but…
- I agree with you in part, but…

Expressing Disagreement:

In spoken English, just saying "I disagree" is often too direct. Most English speakers use phrases that are modified to be more polite, or indirect methods to express disagreement. Let's learn some phrases listed below:

- I don't agree with you/that.
- That's not the way I see it.
- I don't think so/ I don't feel the same.
- I'm not sure about that.

4.1) Divide the class into two groups: Group A and Group B.

Group A argues that social media has a positive impact on self-esteem, and Group B argues that social media has a negative impact on self-esteem.

Encourage students to use phrases that they have already learned.

4.2) After the debate, which argument did you find most convincing? Do you agree with the argument presented by the opposing group?

5) WRITING

- Below are some quotes by famous individuals regarding social media. After reading each quote, reflect on its core message.

SELENA GOMEZ

"I think our world is going through a lot, obviously. I would say for my generation, specifically... that social media has really been terrible for my generation," Gomez said, adding "It does scare me when you see how exposed these young boys and young girls are. They are not aware of the news or anything going on. I think it's dangerous for sure. I don't think people are getting the right information sometimes," she said in the Los Angeles Times. The former Disney Channel star has pointed out that she often deletes Instagram from her phone. Speaking to the New York Times, she said, "You can't avoid it sometimes. I delete the app from my phone at least once a week. You fixate on the [negative] ones. They're not like, 'You're ugly.' It's like they want to cut your soul. Imagine all the insecurities that you already feel about yourself and having someone write a paragraph pointing out every little thing — even if it's just physical."

CAMILA CABELLO

"You know what's so funny? I'm not on social media. I post, but I haven't had Twitter on my phone for three years," she explained. "I do it to protect my energy. I intensely just want to live the best life that I can and be the best artist I can be. I can't do that if I care about what people think. I can't do that if I'm trying to please."

ED SHEERAN

"I've had such an amazing ride over the last five years, but I find myself seeing the world through a screen and not my eyes, so I'm taking this opportunity of me not having to be anywhere or do anything to travel the world and see everything I missed," he posted on social media.''

ELIZABETH OLSEN

"My image, in my mind, is just to disappear. I just want people to see the work that I'm proud of. I feel like you let people touch you when you have Instagram or Twitter, and I don't want to be touched all the time. I'm not going to do it — ever."

5.1) Choose one quote that resonates most with you and write a short paragraph explaining why.

https://padlet.com/profluisacardosola/social-media-4y103od3an6ietjp

5.2 Social media comments, whether supportive, critical, or inquisitive, are a unique genre of writing. They are short, direct, and meant to convey strong feelings or opinions in just a few lines. In this activity, you will practice crafting comments in response to the statements of famous personalities.
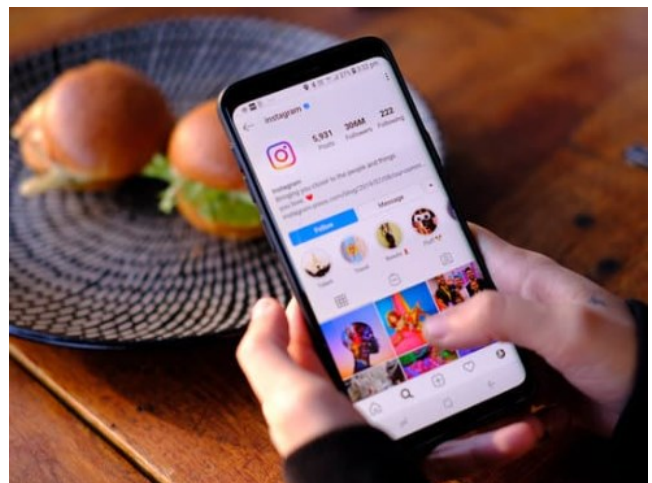
Imagine you are on a social media site. Write a short comment to respond to each celebrity.

After your comment, write if your comment is nice, not nice, or just a question.

2.2 UNIT 2: ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION
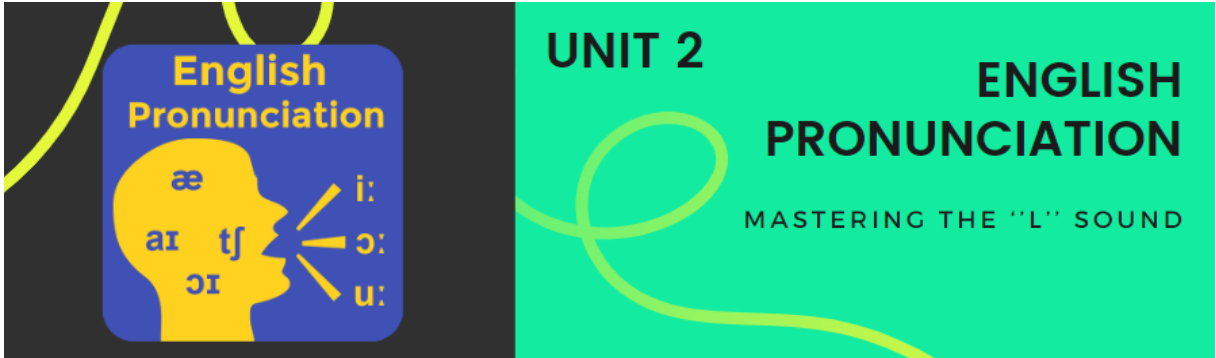
1) READING

- What sounds in English do you find most challenging to pronounce?
- Have you ever misunderstood someone or been misunderstood because of pronunciation?
- What do you think is the difference between accent and pronunciation?

1.1) Match these words to their definitions:

1) Standard	**a)** a level of quality, achievement, or excellence that is considered acceptable or desirable
2) Down	**b)** because of; as a result of
3) Dawn	**c)** precise; exact; correct
4) Accurate	**d)** the first light of day; sunrise
5) Due to	**e)** in a lower position or level; towards or into a lower place or condition

Difference Between Accent and Pronunciation

by Sensay Editorial Team | Mar 23, 2021 | Language Learning | 0 comments

Have you ever wondered about the difference between accent and pronunciation? In this short article, we'll talk about the distinction between the two.

From a linguistic point of view, the term accent refers to only the phonetic aspects of a dialect (Rogers, 2013). Taking English as an example, due to historical reasons, there is certainly considerable variation in the local English accents spoken in the north and south of the UK. Not to mention all the other "Englishes" spoken in the other continents!

To put it simply, pronunciation is the way we pronounce each syllable of a word, which can be accurate or not e.g. pronouncing "dawn" for "down" is wrong. Accent is the language rhythm and melody, which distinguishes regional variations of the same language. For example, if we hear Indian English, we are very likely to understand what is being said, as pronunciation is normally standard, but at the same time, we are able to tell the speaker's origins. As accent is more tied to culture, it is harder to change. The good news is, you don't need to change it! Instead, focusing on improving pronunciation will lead you to much greater achievements in your language learning journey, while keeping yourself natural and proud of your own origins.

Excerpt from: https://www.oksensay.com/language-learning/difference-between-accent-and-pronunciation/

1.2) Based on the text you read, can you identify which sentences are true and which are false? Explain the false ones.

a) Accent refers to the phonetic aspects of a dialect.

b) There is no variation in English accents spoken in different regions of the UK.

c) Pronunciation refers to the way we pronounce each syllable of a word.

d) Accent is the language rhythm and melody.

e) Indian English has a distinct pronunciation from other English accents.

f) Accent is easier to change than pronunciation.

g) Focusing on improving pronunciation is more important than accent in language learning.

h) Accent is tied to culture.

i) It is necessary to change your accent to achieve success in language learning.

j) Being proud of your own origins is important in language learning.

1.3) Based on your opinion, why is it easier to change pronunciation than accent?
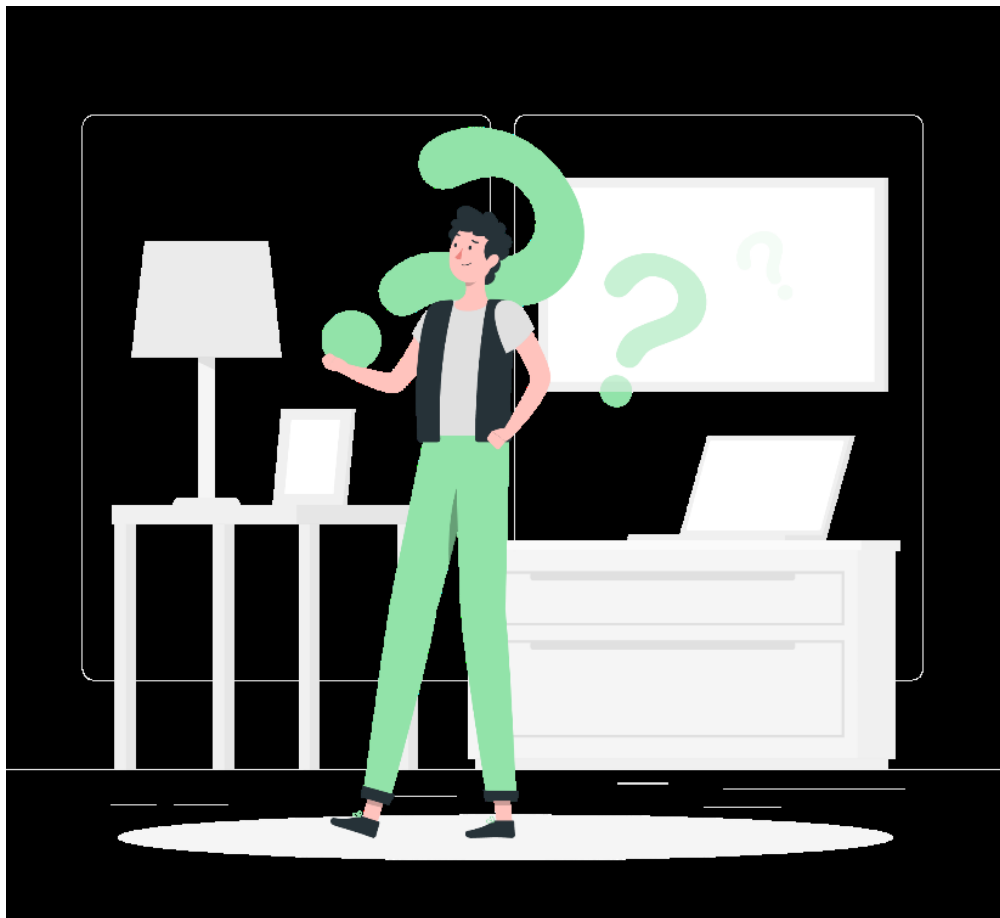
2) LISTENING

- Do you think the way we speak in our native language affects how we speak in a second language? Why or why not?
- Share examples of how you feel more confident or intelligent speaking in your native language compared to English.

2.1) Watch the Video and Answer the Questions:

https://youtube.com/shorts/pd3pAxOnk8o?si=QEmlBmmyyv46SDyW

a) Why does Gloria find it frustrating to have to translate everything in their head?

b) How does Gloria feel when people laugh at them because they are struggling to find words?

c) What does Gloria want others to do?

d) What does Gloria say about their intelligence in Spanish?

2.2) The video showcases Gloria expressing a sentiment that many non-native English speakers might resonate with. The nuances of language, pronunciation, and confidence can greatly impact our communication and how we are perceived by others. To delve deeper into this, let's engage in a discussion and share our thoughts and experiences.

a) Why do you think people might feel more intelligent in their native language?

b) How does accent or pronunciation impact one's confidence while speaking a second language?

c) Discuss a time when you felt misunderstood due to pronunciation or accent.

3) INTRODUCTION TO 'L' PHONEMES

- How do you pronounce these words? Can you say them out loud for the class?

> **LIGHT - GIRL - HALF**

Are you aware that there are different ways to pronounce the 'L' in English? What can you tell about them?

3.1) Watch a video from Gavin Roy, an expert in English pronunciation, who will discuss the 'L' sound in English:

https://www.instagram.com/reel/CvNK1GPg4se/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igshid=MzRlODBiNWFlZA==

Light L: The Light L is produced with the tongue touching just behind the upper front teeth (the alveolar ridge). This is the 'L' you hear at the beginning of words. Example: In the word "light" [laɪt], the initial 'L' is a Light L.

Dark L

Dark L: The Dark L is made with the tongue positioned slightly further back in the mouth, often with the back of the tongue raised towards the velum (soft part at the back of the roof of the mouth). This 'L' sound is commonly found at the end of words or after vowels in a syllable. Example: In the word "girl" [gɜːrl], the final 'L' is a Dark L.

Silent L: As the name suggests, the Silent L is not pronounced. It's present in the spelling but absent in the pronunciation of the word. Example: In the word "half" [hɑːf], the 'L' is silent.

Look at the words provided and categorize them based on their type of 'L' pronunciation. Place each word in the appropriate column.

bell [bel]	fall [fɔːl]	lamb [læm]
pillow [ˈpɪloʊ]	yolk [yoʊk]	light [laɪt]
calf [kæf]	leaf [liːf]	chill [ʧɪl]
tall [tɔːl]	talk [tɔːk]	world [wɜːrld]
feel [fiːl]	half [hɑːf]	could [kʊd]

LIGHT L	DARKL L	SILENT L

TIP: If you don't know how to pronounce a word, go to the Cambridge dictionary and listen to its sound. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/

3.2) Discussion: In pairs or small groups, discuss the challenges you face when trying to pronounce these different types of 'L'. Are there similar sounds or rules in your native language? Share strategies that might help you and others remember and practice these sounds.

3.3) Sentence Creation: Individually, create two sentences for each type of 'L' using the words from the list or any other words you know. For example:

- Light L: The light in the room is very bright.
- Dark L: The tall girl stood at the back of the room.
- Silent L: The calf walked next to its mother.

3.4 Pronunciation Practice: Choose 3 sentences created by you or your classmates and practice pronouncing them. Focus especially on the 'L' sounds. You can record yourself and play it back to evaluate your pronunciation, or practice with a partner.

4) SOCIAL MEDIA COMPAIGN

- Pictures can convey powerful stories, emotions, and information. The ability to accurately describe what you see in an image is not only an essential skill for language learners but also helps in enhancing observation and articulation skills. In this activity, we'll focus on describing images of famous foreign personalities, using position words and contextual understanding.

Position/Location Vocabulary List:

- **Above**: Higher than something else, but not directly over it.
- **Below**: At a lower level or layer than.
- **Beside**: Next to or at the side of.
- **Between**: In the space that separates two places, people, or objects.
- **In front of**: Directly ahead or in a position that faces something.
- **Behind**: At the back (of).
- **On the left/right**: At, towards, or from the side of something or someone.
- **In the center**: The middle point or part.
- **Near**: A short distance away.
- **Far**: At, to, or by a great distance.
- **Next to**: At or to the side of; adjacent to.
- **Opposite**: In a position facing something or someone, especially of the same type.

4.1) You will be shown pictures of famous personalities who hail from non-English speaking countries.

a) Examine the picture for a minute.

b) Use the position words and your existing vocabulary to describe the image in detail.

c) Mention who the personality is, their origin, what they might be known for, and other details you notice in the image.

d) Try to provide a clear description so that someone who hasn't seen the picture can visualize it in their mind. Share your description with the class.

4.2) Think about the person you described. How does their background or origin influence their work, success, or image in the media?

5) WRITING

- In the digital age, email has become a common mode of communication for both formal and informal purposes. While formal emails have specific structures and tones, informal emails give us more freedom to express ourselves. In this section, we will explore the components and tone of an informal email, enabling you to connect with friends, family, and acquaintances in a friendly and clear manner.

Discuss with your partner about the last time you wrote or received an informal email. Who was it from? What was it about? List down features that made it feel 'informal.'

5.1) Read a sample informal email provided by the teacher. Identify and highlight the greetings, body, sign-off, and any other feature that stands out.

Greeting	Hi Sandy,
Opening paragraph	Thank you for your email. Sorry for not replying earlier. I've been busy studying for my final exams. I'm excited that we're going to spend time together this summer. I'm sure I'm going to enjoy my stay with you and your family.
Main Paragraph 1	Regarding your question, I'm arriving in Toronto on June 23rd at 7:00 p.m. My flight number is AC709. I'll wait for you in the arrivals area near the coffee shops. I'll text you after I pick up my luggage.
Main Paragraph 2	I'd love to meet local people and go sightseeing. That's why I'm going to take a part time English course instead of a full time course. Also, I'd love to learn more about Canadian art. How about visiting art galleries in the city? If you want, we could go together. You know how much I love art. What do you think?
Closing	Well. That's all for now.
Goodbye	See you soon
Signature	Laura

Key Features of an Informal Email:

- **Greeting:** Unlike formal emails which might start with "Dear Mr. Smith", informal emails often use first names or even nicknames, e.g., "Hey Alex!" or "Hi there!"
- **Tone and Language:** Informal emails are characterized by a relaxed and friendly tone. You can use contractions (e.g., "I'm", "can't"), colloquialisms, and even emojis 😊.

- **Body:** Here, you express the main message of your email. While it's informal, it's essential to remain clear. You can share news, ask questions, or just check in.
- **Sign-off:** Unlike the formal "Regards" or "Sincerely", informal emails can end with "Take care", "See ya!", "Cheers", and other casual phrases.
- **Postscript (P.S.):** Sometimes used to add an afterthought or a personal touch at the end of the email.

5.2 Imagine you are writing to an old school friend you haven't seen in a couple of years. You recently came across a photograph of a school trip you both attended and wanted to share the memory and catch up on life. Using the features mentioned above, compose an informal email. Remember to include a greeting, a body where you share the memory and ask about their life, a sign-off, and, if you like, a P.S.

5.3 Pair up with another student (Exchange and read each other's emails. While reading, focus on: How well the features of informal emails are integrated. The fluidity of the narrative. Any specific references to pronunciations or accents that connect to our main theme of the unit.

Feedback Round: After reading, provide feedback to your partner. Discuss: What you enjoyed about the email. Suggestions for improvement, especially concerning the tone and features of an informal email. Any innovative integration of the theme you appreciated.

Reflection: Return to your email and reflect upon the feedback you received. Make a list of aspects you'd like to improve in your next writing task. Consider the integration of our main theme (phoneme 'L' and accents). Did you manage to subtly incorporate it, or would you like to do so more effectively next time?

3 TEACHER'S GUIDE

3.1 UNIT 1: THE ILLUSION OF PERFECTION

1) READING

- **Objective:** To foster critical thinking about the impact of social media on mental health and self-image.
- **Discussion Questions:**
  - For question A, start with a poll: "Raise your hand if you've ever felt the need to post only 'perfect' pictures or moments on social media." Use the results to jumpstart the conversation.
  - For question B, you could present some statistics or studies that discuss the impact of social media on self-esteem. This provides a foundation for students to then relate with their personal feelings.
  - With question C, ask students if they or someone they know have felt anxious or overwhelmed because of social media. Discuss possible reasons and ways to mitigate these feelings.
- **Tips**: Emphasize the difference between the virtual world and reality. The curated images on social media often don't represent a person's full reality. Facilitate an inclusive environment where all students' opinions are valued. Some may have strong feelings about this topic, given its relevance to their daily lives.

1.1) Vocabulary

- **Objective**: To understand and match vocabulary with their definitions to aid comprehension of the reading material.
- **Activity**
  - Ask students to use the vocabulary in sentences.
  - Discuss any words or phrases that students find confusing.

ANSWER-KEY:

a) C   b) B   c) A   d) D   e) E

1.2) Reading Comprehension

- **Objective**: To ensure understanding of the reading material.
- **Tips**:
    o Encourage students to underline key points in the text.
    o Promote group discussions for each question before finalizing an answer.

ANSWER-KEY:

a) A	c) A	e) D	g) C
b) A	d) B	f) A	h) C

2) GRAMMAR - COMPARATIVE FORM

- **Objective**: To understand and practice forming comparative adjectives.
- **Activity**:
    o Show advertisements or media content that use comparatives and discuss the intentions behind their choices.
    o Encourage students to come up with their own sentences using comparative forms.

ANSWER-KEY:

a) "younger", "worse", "better", "younger, thinner, healthier, prettier", e "more fulfilling".

b) Age: Photos on social media make everyone look "younger".

Quality of life: Real lives versus what's portrayed on social media, with social media often appearing "better".

Level of fulfillment: Other people's lives look "more fulfilling" than yours as portrayed on social media.

c) Comparatives in advertising or media are used to emphasize the superiority or difference of one thing over another. They highlight a product's or idea's advantages, making it seem more appealing or superior. In the context of the text, comparatives emphasize the stark difference between real-life and the idealized images on social media, making the latter appear superior and thus creating a sense of inadequacy in the audience.

d) Comparatives can be found in product comparisons (e.g., "Our product works faster"), in reviews (e.g., "This movie is more entertaining than the last one"), and in promotional materials (e.g., "Our service is more reliable"). They are used to highlight the perceived advantages of the item being advertised or discussed, making it more attractive to potential customers or viewers. The aim is to persuade the audience to buy a product, watch a movie, or take some other action based on the belief that it's superior to alternatives.

2.2) Comparative Form Practice

- **Objective**: To further solidify understanding of comparatives through practical examples.
- **Tips**:
  - o Have students use the website mentioned to listen to the pronunciation of sentences.
  - o Encourage students to create their own quotes using comparatives.

ANSWER-KEY:

a) "The **stronger** the storm, the **brighter** the rainbow." – Unknown

b) "The **higher** the mountain, the **better** the view." – Unknown

c) "The **harder** you work, the **more** you get." – Thomas Edison

d) "The **greater** the struggle, the **sweeter** the victory." – Mahatma Gandhi

e) "The **bigger** the obstacle, the **greater** the triumph." – Unknown

f) "The **bigge**r you dream, the **more** you achieve." – Michael Phelps

2.3) Comparative Pair Activity

- **Objective**: To practice oral use of comparative forms in a practical and interactive setting.
- **Tips**:
  - o Encourage creativity and humor in their comparisons.
  - o Allow time for each pair to present their comparisons to the class.

3) LISTENING

- **Objective**: To improve listening skills and understand different perspectives on the topic of social media.
- **Activity**:
  - o Watch the video multiple times if necessary.
  - o Encourage students to take notes while listening.

ANSWER-KEY:

a) The speaker feels blah about themselves when checking their feet because they compare themselves to others and feel like everyone is better than them or having more fun.

b) The speaker quit social media to address their negative feelings about themselves.

c) The speaker is currently watching a very interesting video about global warming.

d) Because influencers only show the perfect moments and hide the imperfect ones.

e) Despite its negative aspects, the speaker believes social media can be really great and full of fun things and interesting ideas.

4) AGREEING AND DISAGREEING

- **Objective**: To practice giving opinions, agreeing, and disagreeing in a structured manner.
- **Activity**:
  - o Facilitate the debate by setting rules and ensuring each student gets a chance to speak.
  - o Emphasize the importance of listening to others and forming counterarguments.

4.2) Reflection on the debate

- **Objective**: To reflect on differing perspectives and perhaps reconsider personal stances on the issue.
- **Tips**: Foster an environment where students feel comfortable sharing their opinions without judgment.

5) WRITING

- **Objective: To practice reflective writing and engage with real-world opinions on social media.**
- **Activity:**
  - o Encourage students to delve deep into their personal experiences with social media.
  - o Allow students to share their paragraphs if they feel comfortable.

5.2) Social Media Comments Practice

- **Objective: To understand the brevity and directness of online comments.**
- **Activity:**
  - o Ask students to craft comments for different scenarios: supporting an opinion, disagreeing, asking a question, etc.
  - o Discuss the implications of leaving comments online – the permanency, potential misunderstandings, etc.

General Tips for Unit 1:

- Allow students to share personal experiences with social media, but ensure it remains a safe space without judgment.
- Foster critical thinking by asking open-ended questions.
- Encourage students to use newly learned vocabulary and grammar structures throughout the unit.

3.2 UNIT 2: ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION

1) READING

- For question A, you can first model by sharing your own challenges with pronunciation when learning another language. This will encourage students to open up about their own challenges.
- For question B, prompt students to share anecdotes or experiences where pronunciation played a significant role. Again, sharing a personal story may help students feel comfortable.
- For question C, foster a discussion on what students believe constitutes an accent vs. pronunciation. Do they think one is more important than the other?

TIPS: Be patient and encouraging. Pronunciation can be a sensitive topic for some learners, and it's essential to approach it with empathy. Reiterate the value of practice. Like any skill, consistent practice can lead to improvement in pronunciation.

1) ANSWER KEY:

a) A   b) E   c) D   d) C   e) B

1.1) ANSWER KEY:

a) Accent refers to the phonetic aspects of a dialect.

- o True. The text states: "From a linguistic point of view, the term accent refers to only the phonetic aspects of a dialect."

b) There is no variation in English accents spoken in different regions of the UK.

- o False. The text mentions: "Taking English as an example, due to historical reasons, there is certainly considerable variation in the local English accents spoken in the north and south of the UK."

c) Pronunciation refers to the way we pronounce each syllable of a word.

- o True. The text confirms: "pronunciation is the way we pronounce each syllable of a word."

d) Accent is the language rhythm and melody.

- o True. As indicated by: "Accent is the language rhythm and melody, which distinguishes regional variations of the same language."

e) Indian English has a distinct pronunciation from other English accents.

- o False. The text says: "if we hear Indian English, we are very likely to understand what is being said, as pronunciation is normally standard."

f) Accent is easier to change than pronunciation.

- o False. The article points out: "As accent is more tied to culture, it is harder to change."

g) Focusing on improving pronunciation is more important than accent in language learning.

- o True. Supported by: "focusing on improving pronunciation will lead you to much greater achievements in your language learning journey."

h) Accent is tied to culture.

- o True. This is confirmed by: "As accent is more tied to culture, it is harder to change."

i) It is necessary to change your accent to achieve success in language learning.

- o False. The text asserts: "The good news is, you don't need to change it!" Being proud of your own origins is important in language learning.

j) Being proud of your own origins is important in language learning.

- o True. This sentiment is captured in the text's closing statement: "while keeping yourself natural and proud of your own origins."

1.3) Encourage students to think about their own experiences with language learning. How did they feel when trying to change the way they pronounced specific sounds versus the overall rhythm and intonation of sentences? Highlight the difference between individual sounds (pronunciation) and the broader melody and rhythm of speech (accent). Remind them that there's no right or wrong answer; this is an opportunity for them to reflect on their personal experiences and observations. It might also be helpful to discuss how our first language influences our accent in a second language, making it a deeper part of our linguistic identity.

2) LISTENING

a) Begin a discussion on "interference" in language learning, which is when habits from one's native language influence the way they speak or write in a second language.

b) Encourage students to reflect on times when they could express complex ideas or emotions more easily in their native language.

2.1) ANSWER KEY:

- o **Why does Gloria find it frustrating to have to translate everything in their head?** Gloria finds it frustrating because translating everything in her head before saying it slows down her ability to communicate effectively and express herself in real-time. It also requires extra mental effort.

- o **How does Gloria feel when people laugh at them because they are struggling to find words?** Gloria feels upset and frustrated when people laugh at her because she's trying her best to communicate in a language that's not her native tongue. The laughter makes her feel belittled and not understood.

- o **What does Gloria want others to do?** Gloria wants others to understand her struggles and challenges with the language and not mock or belittle her for it. She wishes for empathy and patience from others.

o **What does Gloria say about their intelligence in Spanish?** Gloria points out that she is very smart in Spanish, implying that her intelligence and ability to communicate are not diminished, but the language barrier in English makes it challenging for her to showcase her intelligence in the same way.

2.2) ANSWER KEY:

o **A - *Possible Answers/Points to Consider:***

Comfort & Fluency: People have a natural command over their native language. The ease of expressing complex thoughts without searching for words gives a feeling of fluency and confidence.

Cultural Nuances: Native languages often contain idioms, cultural references, and expressions that don't have direct translations in other languages. Being able to use these enriches communication.

Emotional Connection: Our native language is deeply connected to our emotions, memories, and personal experiences. Expressing feelings in one's own language can feel more genuine and profound.

o **B - Possible Answers/Points to Consider:**

Fear of Judgment: Many people fear they might be misunderstood or judged for their accent, leading to hesitance or reluctance to speak up.

Identity & Belonging: Accents can sometimes lead to stereotyping. People may feel they are perceived as outsiders or not fully integrated into the community where the second language is dominant.

Communication Barriers: Mispronunciations can sometimes change the meaning of a word or make the speech unclear. This can result in miscommunication and require repetitive clarifications.

Self-awareness: Being constantly aware of one's accent can be distracting. It might make individuals self-conscious, leading them to focus more on how they sound rather than what they are saying.

o **C - Possible Answers/Points to Consider:**

Mispronounced Words: Students may share instances where they pronounced a word incorrectly, leading to confusion or laughter.

Cultural Misunderstandings: Sometimes, the way a word or phrase is said in one culture can mean something entirely different in another, leading to unforeseen humorous or awkward situations.

Feelings & Reactions: Encourage students to discuss not just the event, but how it made them feel. Did they feel embarrassed, frustrated, amused, or something else?

Resolution: Did they correct themselves? Did someone else help them understand their mistake? How did they move forward from that moment?

3) INTRODUCTION TO 'L' PHONEMES

- **Pronunciation Practice:** Ask students to pronounce the words LIGHT, GIRL, and HALF out loud one by one. Listen carefully to their pronunciation, making a mental note of their initial approach to the 'L' sound.

- **Discussion:** After everyone has had a chance to pronounce the words, ask them if they are aware that there are different ways to pronounce the 'L' in English. Let them share what they know. Some might be aware of the terms "light L" and "dark L", or they might just have an intuitive understanding without knowing the technical terms.

3.1) Explanation: Explain that the 'L' in LIGHT (often at the beginning or middle of words) is different from the 'L' in GIRL or HALF (often at the end of words or before consonants). The former is called a "clear L" and is pronounced with the tip of the tongue touching the alveolar ridge. The latter is called a "dark L" and is pronounced with the back of the tongue approaching the soft palate. Provide examples of each type of 'L' to help clarify.

ANSWER KEY:

Light 'L'	Dark 'L'	Silent 'L'
light [laɪt]	bell [bel]	calf [kæf]
leaf [liːf]	pillow [ˈpɪloʊ]	yolk [yoʊk]
chill [ʧɪl]	tall [tɔːl]	half [hɑːf]
fall [fɔːl]	lamb [læm]	
world [wɜːrld]		
could [kʊd]		
talk [tɔːk]		

- **Notes:**
    - o Light 'L': Pronounced with the tip of the tongue touching the alveolar ridge. Typically found at the beginning or middle of words.
    - o Dark 'L': Pronounced with the back of the tongue approaching the soft palate. Typically found at the end of words or before consonants.
    - o Silent 'L': The 'L' is not audibly pronounced.

3.2) Discussion

Teacher's Tips: Be sure to rotate around the room, listening to different groups and offering assistance where needed. Encourage students to practice and experiment with the sounds, even if it feels silly or unfamiliar. Physical practice can help solidify the differences between the phonemes. Sharing personal experiences can make the activity more engaging. Consider sharing your own experiences or challenges with pronouncing certain sounds in a foreign language.

3.3) Sentence Creation

Teacher's Tips: Encourage creativity! While the main focus is on the 'L' phonemes, this is also a chance for students to use vocabulary and grammar structures they've learned. If students are struggling, provide additional examples or offer prompts to guide them. Highlight any particularly well-constructed or creative sentences to boost confidence and provide examples for others.

3.4) Pronunciation Practice

Encourage students to listen actively when their partner is reading. Active listening helps in providing constructive feedback. If students are comfortable, you can organize a small 'pronunciation showcase' where volunteers can read their sentences in front of the class. Remind students that the goal is not to achieve 'perfection' but to make noticeable improvement and build confidence. If you notice a common pronunciation challenge faced by multiple students, address it as a class and provide tips or exercises specifically for that challenge.

4) DESCRIBING PICTURES

- **Introduction to Picture Description:** Engage students by discussing the power of images and the stories they can convey. Emphasize the importance of observation and articulation when describing visuals. Introduce and review the position/location vocabulary list, providing examples for each term.

- **Describing the Images:** Display an image of a famous personality to the class. Allow students a minute to quietly observe the image. Prompt students to use position words and other vocabulary to describe the image in detail. They should aim to provide a clear and comprehensive description that allows listeners to visualize the image. After individual observation, invite a few students to share their descriptions with the class. Contextual

- **Discussion:** Once several descriptions have been shared, initiate a class discussion around the personality in the image. Discuss their background, origin, and any known influence it might have on their work, success, or media image.

- **Teacher's Tips:** Encourage students to think critically about how cultural and regional backgrounds can influence an individual's global image. Highlight the importance of detailed description in communication and how it can provide insights into cultural appreciation and understanding.

5) WRITING

- Introduction to Informal Emails: Initiate a conversation about the digital age and the significance of emails.

- Emphasize the difference between formal and informal emails.

- Ask students about the last time they wrote or received an informal email and discuss its features.

- **Teacher's Tips:** Encourage creativity but stress the importance of clarity in communication. Remind students that while it's informal, good writing habits should still be maintained – proper grammar, punctuation, etc. If students are comfortable, have a few volunteers share their emails with the class for a broader feedback session.

4 RATIONALE

The communicative approach, initially conceived in the 1970s and refined by Richards and Rodgers (2001), stands as a cornerstone of modern language teaching. It diverges from teaching grammatical rules as an end in itself, instead focusing on the use of language as a means of effective communication. Richards (2006) later clarified that the primary goal of this approach is communicative competence, which equips students to use the language in real social contexts.

In these units, the essence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is not just a theoretical framework; it is a dynamic, living practice that prepares students for the real use of the English language. It's about transcending the confines of traditional grammar exercises and venturing into the terrain of practical communication. My pedagogical units are carefully designed to move beyond mere grammatical accuracy, encouraging students to harness the language in contexts they'll encounter in their day-to-day lives.

a) The Integration of the Four Skills: Harmer (2015) contends that the skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening should not be taught in isolation. On the contrary, the efficacy of learning is maximized when these skills are integrated, reflecting the interconnected nature of language use in real life. In line with this view, the didactic units developed for this dissertation do not only focus on isolated aspects of language, such as comparative structures and the pronunciation of the /l/ phoneme, but also aim to interconnect them in communicative tasks that simulate authentic language use.

b) Task-Based Activities and Critical Thinking: Task-based activities, as explored by Nunan (2015), are pivotal for meaningful learning. Such activities not only encourage students to apply the linguistic structures they are learning in practical contexts but also promote the development of critical thinking. By engaging with tasks that require comparison and contrast, for example, students are not just practicing the use of comparative forms in English but are also developing analytical skills that are transferable to other areas of knowledge.

c) The Importance of Phonetics in Communication: The communicative approach does not neglect formal components of language such as phonetics. On the contrary, the mastery of phonetic elements is viewed as crucial for the clarity of communication. Cristofaro Silva (2012) highlights that the ability to produce and distinguish sounds in foreign languages is often one of the biggest challenges for learners, but it is also one of the most crucial for effective

communication. Thus, the didactic unit on the pronunciation of 'L' is directly relevant to improving the intelligibility and communicative competence of the students.

4.1 TEACHING READING SKILLS

In the design of our didactic units, the teaching of reading skills is not isolated from the broader communicative objectives of language learning; it is a reflective process that engages students in both understanding and interaction with the text. Grounded in the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR), reading is seen as a complex skill where students receive and process information, and our approach to teaching this skill is deeply rooted in the context and bolstered by a strong emphasis on vocabulary enhancement.

Drawing inspiration from Harmer's (1998) advocacy for intensive reading, we introduce texts with pre-reading activities that foster speculation and discussion. These activities equip students with the necessary cognitive tools to approach the reading material purposefully, thus not only setting the stage for a richer reading experience but also priming them for the communicative journey ahead. This pre-reading phase is crucial; it orients students to the text's environment and prepares them for the immersive experience of engaging with the language in context.

In our material, reading tasks are meticulously designed to draw students into the text's context, with thought-provoking questions that encourage engagement. These tasks are chosen not just for their face value but for their potential to expand the students' lexical repertoire—an essential component of communicative competence. The interplay of bottom-up and top-down strategies, as suggested by Anderson (2008 apud NUNAN, 2015), is integral to our approach, guiding students to navigate the text effectively, drawing on prior knowledge and rapidly identifying key vocabulary.

Our units also marry vocabulary work with the critical component of phonetics. Understanding that words are the keys to communication, we engage students in activities that not only expand their vocabulary but also improve their pronunciation, essential for both comprehension and production of language. In line with the insights from Silva (2012), we recognize the importance of phonetic mastery in English language acquisition, ensuring that reading skills are not developed in isolation but as part of a comprehensive communicative skill set.

The activities we select, such as gap-filling exercises and matching definitions, are not arbitrary; they are intentional in their aim to refine students' linguistic skills and extend their

ability to communicate effectively. By carefully integrating grammar, vocabulary, and phonetics within authentic reading contexts, we not only enhance our students' capacity to comprehend texts but also empower them to navigate the world in English with confidence and linguistic proficiency.

In essence, our approach to teaching reading is a testament to the living use of language. It is a journey through text that does not end with comprehension but begins there, leading our students to a place where English is not merely a subject to be studied but a medium through which they experience and interact with the world.

4.2 TEACHING WRITING SKILLS

In the development of our curriculum, I strive to transform writing from a commonly resisted task into an opportunity for students to express themselves creatively and effectively in English. My didactic units approach writing as Harmer (2015) describes, acknowledging the discomfort it can bring yet providing a supportive framework for success.

I embrace Harmer's view that a strong understanding of genres, along with coherence and cohesion, is vital for successful writing. Our materials are carefully curated to introduce students to the conventions of different genres, guiding them in recognizing and applying these conventions to communicate their messages effectively.

In essence, the didactic approach to writing skill development is characterized by a strategic, step-by-step build-up of competence, moving students from apprehension to confidence, and from confusion to clarity, as they learn to navigate the complex but rewarding process of writing in a second language.

4.3 TEACHING LISTENING SKILLS

In designing my didactic units, I place a strong emphasis on the active nature of listening. I've tailored my listening activities to be as reflective of authentic English usage as possible. My goal is for students to not just passively receive information, but to interact with the content, drawing from the dynamic approach of Larsen-Freeman (2000). I integrate exercises that enhance mechanical listening skills, such as phonetic discrimination—inspired by Silva's insights into English pronunciation—and strategic skills like inferencing, essential for real-life comprehension.

Taking cues from Badger & White (2000), the listening tasks I've developed are diverse and contextual, preparing students to listen with a clear purpose. This methodology aligns with Larsen-Freeman's (2000) assertion that setting a purpose is crucial in language teaching. My curriculum engages students with a combination of authentic recordings and scripted dialogues to mirror the varied situations they're likely to face in English-speaking environments.

To surmount the challenges inherent in listening comprehension, I actively teach strategies for decoding and contextual guessing, which bolster the students' ability to listen effectively across different contexts and dialects.

4.4 TEACHING SPEAKING SKILLS

When it comes to speaking, my instructional strategy is to balance fluency with accuracy. In my teaching practice, I incorporate Harmer's (1998) techniques, which cater to a broad spectrum of communicative contexts, from practical exchanges to more personal and expressive communication. The speaking activities I design, in accordance with Larsen-Freeman's (2000) principles, offer students a continuum of practice from structured drills to creative expression.

I've carefully sequenced the speaking tasks within each unit to build from simple to complex, reinforcing the language learned in other parts of the curriculum. I prioritize real-world tasks that encourage students to apply their reading and writing knowledge to speaking activities, thus solidifying their overall language skills.

In essence, my teaching philosophy for listening and speaking is about creating an immersive and interactive learning environment. I aim to equip my students with the necessary tools to not only understand but also actively participate in the English-speaking world, enhancing both their academic journey and everyday communicative competence.

5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, these didactic units were more than a mere collection of exercises; they represented a journey through the living use of the English language. The success of this pedagogical endeavor is reflected not only in the students' grammatical and phonetic mastery but also in their growing confidence and competence in using English meaningfully and effectively in their daily communication. Through the integration of the four language skills and an emphasis on task-based activities, these didactic units stand out as exemplars of a teaching philosophy that places real communication at the heart of language learning.

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