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USING METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES TO RAISE AWARENESS OF STRESS AND  
INTONATION

Using Metacognitive Strategies to Raise Awareness of Stress and Intonation

Diana PEÑUELA

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Directed by:

Pedro Pablo Maldonado Chacon

Department of Languages and Cultures

Universidad de La Sabana

Chía, Colombia

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# USING METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES TO RAISE AWARENESS OF STRESS AND INTONATION

## **Abstract**

International studies have analyzed the impact of language awareness and metacognitive strategies for intelligibility as perceived by native speakers. In Colombia few studies have approached these topics in the context of English as an International Language (EIL). This qualitative action research study examined the impact of using three metacognitive strategies to raise awareness of adult learners' stress and intonation at a private language center in Bogota. The participants, 10 advanced English learners, initially showed lack of awareness of the communicative value of suprasegmentals to express ideas intelligibly in an oral interview. The implementation took three cycles. Each one lasted an hour every day for two weeks. During the first week, the participants were trained to use one metacognitive strategy in different tasks: goal setting, overviewing, and self-evaluating. During the second week, they learned to identify a suprasegmental feature (stress or intonation) from video or audio input. Finally, they monitored the use of such feature through the strategy they had learnt in the first week. The data collection instruments were learning logs, recorded artifacts, and teacher's field notes. The results showed that the participants may have raised awareness in a triadic process that involves fostering of metalinguistic awareness for learners expanded their knowledge of suprasegmentals, promoting learning awareness for they learned how to use metacognitive strategies, and provoking self-awareness for they enhanced their confidence as English speakers. Such results may be useful to revisit the current teaching of pronunciation both at the institution and in the city. They may provide insights about the use of elements from the lingua franca core in the Colombian context.

## **Resumen**

Estudios internacionales han analizado el impacto del conocimiento lingüístico y las estrategias metacognitivas para mejorar la percepción de hablantes nativos sobre el grado de inteligibilidad de aprendices del inglés. En Colombia, pocos estudios han abordado estos temas en el contexto del inglés como Lengua Internacional (EIL). Este estudio cualitativo de investigación acción examinó el impacto de tres estrategias metacognitivas en el uso y reconocimiento de aspectos suprasegmentales como entonación y acento de estudiantes adultos de inglés en una institución privada. Los participantes, 10 estudiantes avanzados, mostraron falta de conocimiento sobre el valor comunicativo de estos aspectos durante una entrevista oral inicial. La implementación tomó tres ciclos que duraron una hora cada día por dos semanas. Durante la primera semana, los estudiantes aprendieron a usar una estrategia metacognitiva para cumplir diversas tareas. Durante la segunda semana, aprendieron a identificar un aspecto suprasegmental a través de videos. Finalmente, monitorearon el uso de la entonación y el acento a través de la estrategia. Los instrumentos de recolección de datos fueron diarios para registrar el conocimiento de los aspectos suprasegmentales de los participantes, grabaciones para analizar su entonación y acento, y notas de campo de la profesora. Los resultados mostraron que los estudiantes tomaron conciencia en un proceso triádico que incluyó: un conocimiento metalingüístico de los aspectos suprasegmentales, una toma de conciencia de su aprendizaje que promovió el uso de las estrategias metacognitivas, y una conciencia de sus capacidades, por cuanto mejoraron su confianza como hablantes del inglés. Estos resultados pueden ser útiles para revisar la manera en la que se enseña la pronunciación del inglés actualmente tanto en la institución como en la ciudad. También, pueden dar cuenta del uso de los elementos que hacen parte del inventario de elementos de lingua franca en el contexto colombiano.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction to the study**

Advanced learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) face challenges in the pursuit of fluency. Richards (2008) states that one of the problems they encounter is that even though their language production may be adequate, it often lacks the characteristics of intelligible speech. Although the term intelligibility has been widely discussed by scholars throughout the last decade, Jenkins (2000) provides what seems to be the most appropriate definition for the context of this research proposal. According to her, intelligibility refers to the phonological features necessary for communication among speakers of English as an international language.

To speak intelligibly, EFL learners may need more than the repetition of lexical phrases. They may need to use a variety of phonological elements to enrich their oral production such as suprasegmental features namely emphatic stress and intonation. However, once learners can make themselves understood, they might disregard these elements to convey messages naturally and effectively. Therefore, students appear to have reached what some authors call “plateau” (Yi, 2001).

At the plateau, learners find it harder and harder to take in new language data and in consequence, do not perceive further progress in their learning. This might cause students’ lack of fluency and it may also interfere with effective communication. Yi (2001) states that learners in the plateau seem to be able to talk about a specified language feature or in a specific tense, but they do not seem to use it effectively to communicate. The target

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population of this research project seems to have reached a plateau because they can use complex language in interactions but they seem not to enrich their oral production by means of suprasegmental features, which affects their intelligibility. Therefore, their oral progress seems to be insignificant.

This research project aimed at analyzing the impact of using three metacognitive strategies: goal setting, overviewing, and self-evaluation to raise awareness of adult learners' stress and intonation, when they seem to have reached an oral plateau.

### **1.2 Rationale of the study**

The Centro Colombo Americano (CCA) is a private language center located in Bogota, Colombia; which provides several English programs for different populations. One of them, the Adult English Program, aims at providing students with communicative and learning strategies. Such strategies intend to enhance learners' autonomy and encourage them to use target pieces of language. Therefore, students who reach advanced levels in this program are expected to interact by means of nearly accurate statements, to use a variety of grammar tenses, and to self-correct.

Although in the Adult English Program, oral skills prevail over written production, instruction seems to focus on students' use of the target grammar and vocabulary for communication. Thus, it appears to disregard phonological elements such as shifting stress and modifying intonation to convey different messages. For this reason, students who get to advanced courses, called Challenge, which equate the B1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), may struggle when they are requested to use

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phonological elements to communicate spontaneously. Training students from advanced courses to use metacognitive strategies to monitor their use of phonological elements consciously may help them become more effective communicators of English.

### **1.2.1 Needs Analysis and Problem Statement**

The Adult English Program selects the skills learners are expected to have developed before starting advanced courses at the Center on a document called Exit Profile (See appendix A). This document based on the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), states that learners should be able to use correct intonation and stress patterns for different circumstances. However, the needs analysis procedure (see appendix B) evidenced students' difficulty doing so. Actually, most students seemed to struggle to highlight relevant data in their speech, or to express ideas in thought groups. They seemed to use a linear speech and to communicate word by word, which complicated the listener's understanding.

This problem might have taken place due to the influence of the institutional curriculum, which seems to focus on accuracy and interaction, rather than the training in the use of suprasegmentals. In fact, As Figure 1 shows, results of the survey designed for the needs analysis procedure suggest that most learners in an advanced course considered accuracy, vocabulary and pronunciation of English sounds to be important aspects when they speak. None of the participants considered intonation or stress to be important.



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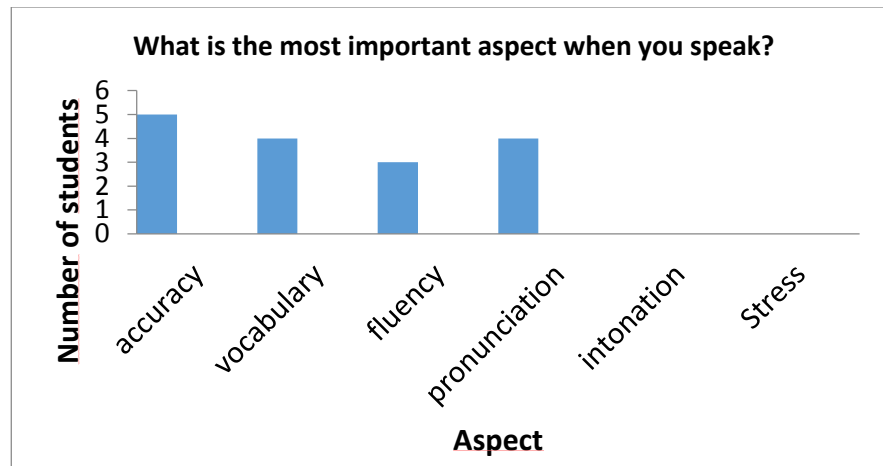


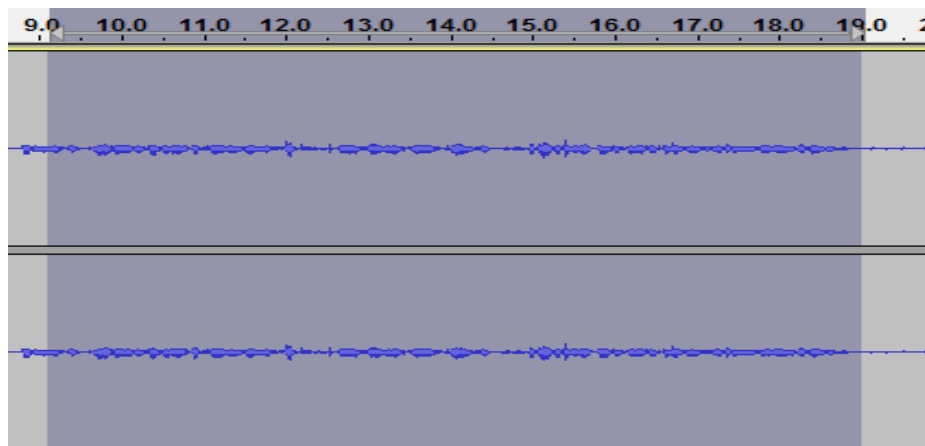
Figure 1: Bar graph showing the importance of linguistic aspects for advanced learners' oral speech.

Most participants acknowledged having been told by their teacher about the importance of such suprasegmental features, a minority reported not having received specific instruction on these aspects, as shown in Figure 2. The recorded questionnaire, on the other hand, revealed that learners do not seem to use intonation and stress spontaneously (see Figure 3). This may suggest that the type of instruction they received (if any) about suprasegmentals might have been ineffective.



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*Figure 2: Pie chart showing participants' previous instruction on suprasegmental features.*



*Figure 3: Stereo track showing students' not using suprasegmentals for spontaneous speech.*

Furthermore, students seem to lack awareness of the importance of modifying their register to convey different kinds of messages. Actually, the needs analysis survey revealed paradoxical results: most students reported their difficulty to use emphatic stress, as shown in Figure 4. However, to support their choice, most of them answered that it was difficult for them to pronounce words correctly (see Figure 5). Students' answers may suggest that they are aware of the existence of word stress but they might ignore the role of sentence stress for communication in English. Lack of awareness relates directly with poor use of linguistic elements, according to Kennedy (2010). For that reason, raising students' awareness of the use of suprasegmental features might help learners improve their usage.

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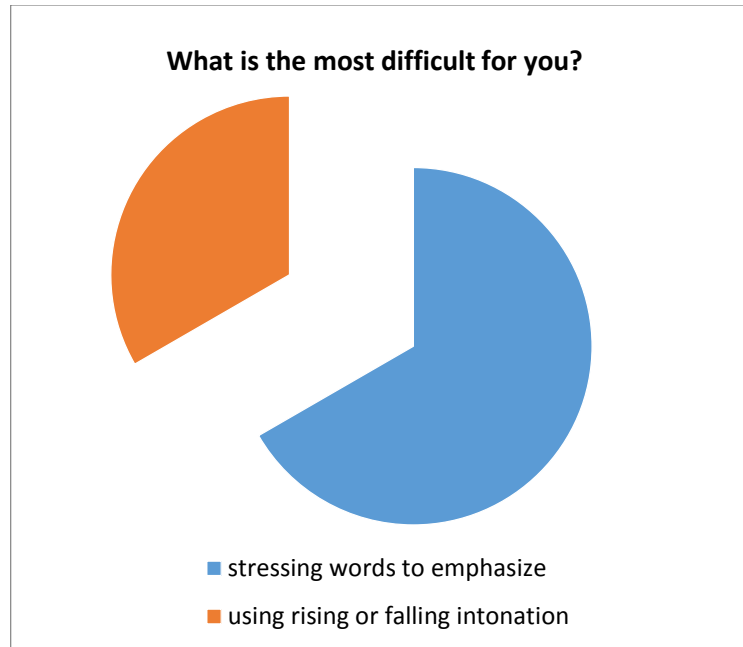


Figure 4: Pie chart representing students' difficulty with suprasegmental features.

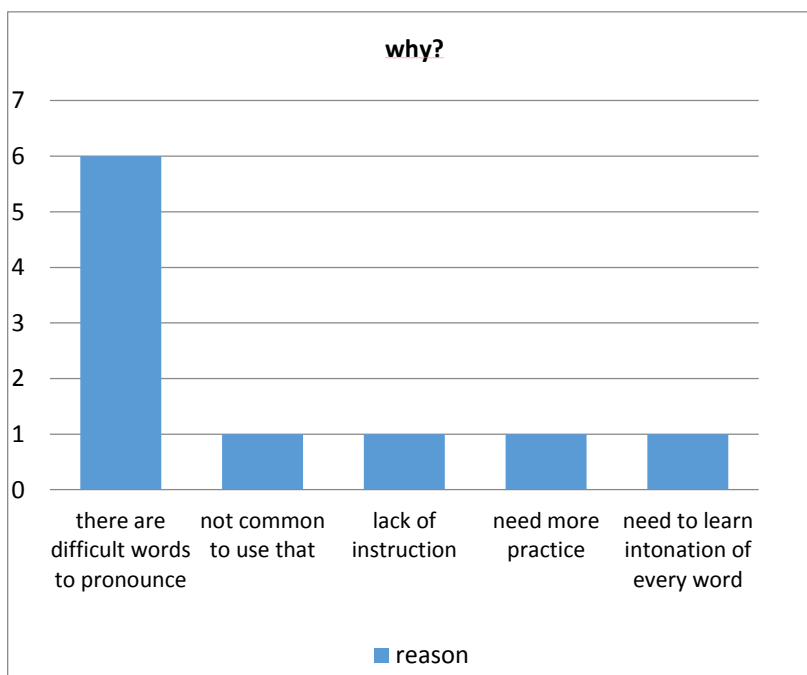
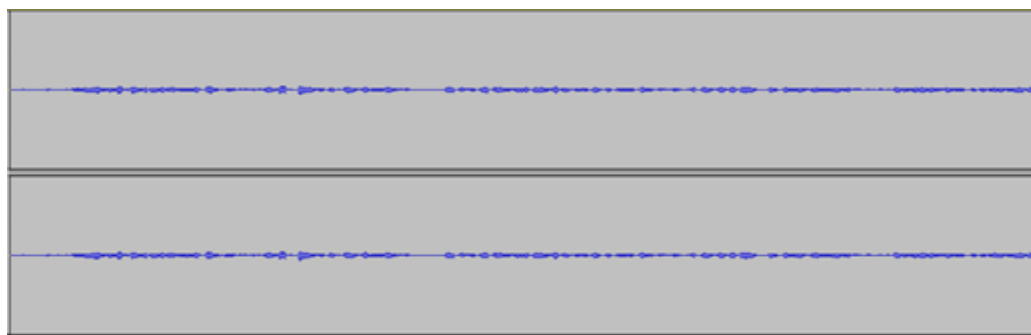


Figure 5: Bar chart displaying reasons for students' difficulty to stress words.

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Although students' not stressing important words does not interfere with communication in the classroom, it might affect their ability to communicate efficiently. In fact, despite the controversy around suprasegmental features like stress and intonation, authors like Crystal (1975) acknowledge their grammatical and semantic functions. For this reason, students' difficulty with suprasegmentals may hinder their communicative competence. At this upper level, learners may need more opportunities to practice with suprasegmentals in order to become effective communicators and avoid staying at the plateau stage.

Additionally, CEFR descriptors state that B1 students ought to sustain fluently a straightforward description of a variety of subjects. However, learners in the selected class present difficulty being fluent when making descriptions, as evidenced in the needs analysis recorded interview (see Figure 6). Here, the participants expressed most of their ideas word by word, instead of expressing thought groups, which may seriously affect their fluency. In conclusion, not using suprasegmentals may prevent students from reaching the standards envisaged in the CEFR, as the program expects them to do.



*Figure 6: Waveform analysis showing ideas expressed word by word.*

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## **1.2.2 Justification of problem's significance**

Considering the needs analysis results and the class observations made by the teacher/researcher, it can be concluded that this research proposal was pertinent and significant for the institution because it may promote actions to meet students' communicative needs in the context of English as an international language. Additionally, it may provide useful insights to evaluate the current teaching of pronunciation in order to make it more effective for accomplishing the objectives set by the CEFR.

## **1.2.3 Strategy proposed to address problem**

To address the research problem, the researcher decided to train learners in the use of three metacognitive learning strategies: goal-setting, overviewing, and self-evaluating. According to Oxford (1990), learning strategies are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential for developing communicative competence. This research proposal focused on Oxford's taxonomy because she studies two types of strategies: to deal with new language (direct) and to manage learning (indirect). This approach correlates to the institutional approach and philosophy of language learning. Although advanced students seem to recognize and use learning strategies to accomplish speaking tasks, they seem to rely on social strategies to interact, or on cognitive strategies to use target language. Thus, they do not seem to use metacognitive strategies to monitor their own register yet.

Oxford (1990) defines metacognitive strategies as actions that provide a way for learners to coordinate their own learning process. She classifies them into strategies for

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centering, arranging and planning, and evaluating one's learning. Training students in the use of these three types of strategies may help them be aware of their own oral progress in different stages. If raising awareness enhances the learners' level of oral intelligibility, this training may be pertinent for the program because it may guide them to reach a closer to B1 level, which the program aims to achieve and students long to accomplish.

### **1.3 Research question and objective**

#### **Research Question**

- To what extent might the use of three metacognitive learning strategies: overviewing, goal-setting, and self-evaluating raise awareness of students' intelligible stress and intonation in English?

#### **Research Objective**

- Analyze the extent to which the use of metacognitive learning strategies to train students on suprasegmentals might have an impact on advanced students' awareness of oral intelligibility in English.

### **1.4 Conclusion**

To conclude, the relevance of training learners in the use of metacognitive strategies to raise awareness of the use of suprasegmental features may bring useful insights in three contexts. Firstly, globally, this study may support the need for research on the teaching of pronunciation in the current context of English as an International language (EIL). Secondly, in the national context, it may provide insights about the way learners can develop their oral

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skills and keep track of their speaking progress, which is one of the objectives proposed by the Ministry of Education. Thirdly, in the institutional context, it may foster autonomous learning, one of the institutional cornerstones. In sum, this study is related to the global, national, and institutional concerns and it is based on a rigorous needs analysis process.

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## **Chapter two: Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The second chapter accounts for a theoretical review related to the main constructs of this research proposal. It considers seminal and contemporary theories to explain the concept of language awareness, metacognitive strategies and intelligible stress and intonation. These constructs provide solid support for the research settings.

### **2.2 Definitions and State of the Art**

#### **2.2.1 Intelligible Stress and Intonation**

The concept of intelligibility has been widely debated by language teachers and researchers. Kenworthy (1987) sees intelligibility as being understood by a listener at a given time in a given situation. This may suggest that understanding every word a speaker produces might guarantee understanding the message he intends to convey. More recently, however, Smith (1992) stated that in order to understand the term “intelligibility” one needs to draw a clear distinction between intelligibility, comprehensibility and interpretability. According to him, intelligibility refers to word/utterance recognition; comprehensibility refers to word/utterance meaning, and interpretability relates to meaning behind word/ utterance. This distinction seems insufficient to understand intelligibility in the context of the present research study because learners can communicate by means of words and utterances. Their utterances seem to be recognized and generally understood. However, their messages may not be completely communicated because of their lack of use of suprasegmentals.



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Although in different words, most researchers in the field of intelligibility previously used this term to refer to a one-way process in which non-native speakers struggle to make themselves understood by native speakers through English sounds. However, more recently, authors such as Jenkins (2000), Crystal (2004) or Graddol (2006) have questioned the extent to what this language is spoken by native or nonnative speakers. Actually, Crystal (2004) states that for every English native speaker, there are three non-native ones. This phenomenon has changed the panorama of the phonological field. Because of the large amount of non-native speakers of English around the world, the standard sounds and patterns of English have changed. For this reason, speakers do not seem to need to sound native in order to be considered as intelligible anymore.

In the light of English as an international language (EIL), Jenkins (2000) has studied the impact this new panorama has had on intelligibility. She has provided the most suitable definition of intelligibility for this research: a two-way process involving both the speaker and listener in the production and recognition of phonological form. This definition implies that both the listener and the speaker play an important role in communication. For that reason, both of them need to be able to produce and understand phonological features that may guarantee communication. Consequently, Jenkins (2000) studied how speakers may use segmentals (vowels and consonants) and suprasegmentals (prosodic features such as thought groups, word stress, rhythm, sentence stress and intonation) to convey messages. As a result, she has come up with the Lingua Franca Core of phonological features that need to remain standard for all speakers of EIL to be able to interact successfully. The core includes mostly segmental features. However, Jenkins also acknowledges the importance of some

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suprasegmental features for intelligibility, such as thought groups (semantic units of intonation) and nuclear contrastive stress (strong words in a statement or strong syllables in a word).

Other researchers have attributed a significant role to suprasegmentals for communication throughout the years. Crystal (1975) has defined intonation not as an isolated category, but as “the product of the interaction of features from different prosodic systems – tone, pitch-range, loudness, rhythmicality, and tempo, in particular” (p. 9). This may mean that intonation implies more than falling or raising one’s tone during speaking, as students seemed to consider in the needs analysis. Instead, it seems to be the interaction of all these prosodic features what helps the speakers express meanings. As Bradford (1988) explains, people can convey different ideas by using the same words, in the same order but saying them in different ways.

Recently, a number of studies have been carried out about stress and intonation. Field, (2005) studied the effect of manipulated lexical stress on the perception of intelligibility of native and nonnative listeners. The results suggested that the consequences of misinterpreting even a small number of content words can be extremely damaging to global understanding. Field (2005) focused his study on stress because “research evidence suggests that suprasegmentals play a more important role than segmentals on communication” (p.402). This can explain the need for research on the field of suprasegmentals.

Similarly, Hahn, (2004) focused on stress and she analyzed native English speakers’ reactions to nonnative primary stress in English discourse. Her results evidence that primary

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stress contributes significantly to the intelligibility of nonnative discourse. Finally, Rasmussen and Zampini, (2010) analyzed the impact of phonetics training on the intelligibility of native speakers of Spanish as perceived by L2 learners. Their results illustrate the benefits of phonetics training for enhancing intelligibility.

In the Colombian context, not many studies have approached suprasegmental features to build intelligibility. Frodden and McNully (2011) explain how they implemented a traditional approach to teach pronunciation to adult university students by focusing on segmentals and moving gradually to suprasegmentals. They conclude that suprasegmental aspects of English may enhance learners' intelligibility and make native speakers more intelligible to them. Their paper illustrates the way teachers traditionally approach phonological elements in the Colombian classrooms. Nevertheless, the authors recognize, "the neglect for teaching pronunciation in recent years may be due to a misconception about what the content of a pronunciation course should be and also about the way pronunciation should be taught." (p. 102).

Although research around the world has proven the impact of stress and intonation to build intelligibility, most studies have followed the tradition of analyzing the perception of native speakers. This approach may disregard the actual communication patterns in the context of EIL, in which speakers do not usually need to interact with native but rather with non-native speakers. Therefore, a more realistic approach is needed to understand the impact of these suprasegmental features on the communication among speakers of different varieties of English. Additionally, in the Colombian context there seems to be a research gap in this

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field because little research has analyzed the training on suprasegmental features to improve speakers' intelligibility.

### **2.2.2 Language awareness**

Language awareness (L.A. hereafter) has been a quite controversial matter in the language teaching and learning field. Scholars have adopted two main positions regarding L.A. Some have assumed that it does not matter because language learning is innate so, speakers do not need to be aware of the language in order to communicate (Krashen, 1995). Others have assumed that conscious language learning refers to knowledge about the language structures and rules. (Doughty 1991; Long 1991). However, recent studies have conceived L.A. as a broader concept that goes beyond the mere knowledge of how the language works. Lier (1996) explains the overview James and Gerrer (1991) came up with to illustrate all the domains L.A. encompasses. Affective, social, cognitive, and even power relationships have been considered inside the umbrella term L.A. Particularly, within the affective domain, the concept of the learner-centered second/foreign language teaching has also been considered. This area is the one that fits this research study because according to Lier (1996), L.A. involves forming attitudes, developing attention and evaluating the way speakers use the language for communication. This concept of L.A. sets the ground for the expected behaviors from the participants of this study throughout the intervention.

However, it is Ellis (1994) who provides a wider explanation of the role of awareness in foreign language acquisition and learning. Through an extensive literature review, he presents the controversial distinction between explicit and implicit knowledge. Particularly,

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he points out that explicit knowledge or awareness functions as a facilitator, helping learners to notice features in the input that they would otherwise miss and to compare what they notice with what they produce. Ellis's conclusion may explain the need for advanced learners to be aware of the role of stress and intonation for communication. Students' awareness might enable them to contrast what they notice with their actual production to assess their own outcomes.

One aspect that contributes to the development of language awareness is the students' characteristics as adult learners. In fact, the way in which adult learners understand and develop a foreign or second language (L2) seems to be different to the way in which young learners do it. Therefore, several researchers and language teachers have attempted to explain the different affective, linguistic, cognitive and even physiological factors involved in L2 learning. Singleton and Ryan (2004), for instance, demonstrate how linguistic and psychological theories have explained these differences in a broad theoretical review. They state that the notion of age-related differences in L2 learning capacity may be associated with cognitive differences between children and adults. According to them, one of the main differences between young and adult learners lies on the level of awareness. Children appear to be neither generally aware of the fact that they are acquiring a language, nor aware of the social values and conventions related to languages. In contrast, adults seem to be more conscious of their own learning and intentionally tend to focus their attention on certain aspects of the language.

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The fact that adult learners need to be aware of their learning has been the subject of a number of studies since the early twentieth century. Some authors have even used the term *andragogy* to refer exclusively to the assumptions about how adults learn. Andragogy studies have provided the researcher with insights about the behaviors and attitudes adult students may have towards their learning and how raising awareness might be meaningful for this kind of population. Fidishun, (no date, circa, 2005), for instance, affirms that adults want to know the reason they need to learn something or how it will benefit them. Similarly, Knowles (1980) considers that adults become ready to learn something when they feel they need to learn it in order to perform better in a certain task, (as cited in Fidishun, n.d, p. 5). In conclusion, understanding how to use suprasegmental elements consciously might help adult learners at Centro Colombo Americano be more engaged in their learning and at the same time, become more proficient communicators.

Recent studies have proven the effectiveness of L.A to help learners become proficient. DeKeyser (2000), for example, studied how adult native speakers of Hungarian learning English were able to use explicit learning mechanisms to overcome their language difficulties in L2. This demonstrated their high levels of awareness. DeKeyser's work provides an update model to approach the concept of L.A in the current research study. Such a concept is used to refer to explicit strategies to address students' language difficulties, which learners at CCA seem to need, according to the needs analysis results.

Historically, most studies related to consciousness to develop phonological awareness have been focused on the perception of native speakers. Venkatagiri and Levis (2007), for

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instance, examined the relationship between phonological awareness and speech comprehensibility in EFL language adult learners in The United States. Their findings revealed that form-focused instruction in phonology may contribute to the comprehensibility of EFL speakers as perceived by native speakers. Although students at Centro Colombo Americano do not interact with native speakers on a regular basis, Venkatagiri and Levis's (2007) study might be useful to contrast their results with the ones obtained in the present research.

In Asia, researchers have carried out several studies regarding language awareness. Jin (2011) applied the theory of noticing, which aims at renewing teaching ideas, improving teaching methods, and learning strategies in English teaching and learning in China. Takimoto (2008), studied the differences between deductive and inductive training on pragmatics. His findings highlight the importance of phonological awareness to improve the students' performance in oral tasks.

Finally, Kennedy and Trofimovich (2010) examined the relationship between the quality of L2 learners' language awareness and the quality of their L2 pronunciation. They analyzed the comments participants made in journals about their own process of assimilation and production of suprasegmental aspects of English. Their study demonstrated that higher pronunciation ratings were associated with a greater number of language awareness comments. Thus there seems to be a relationship between the level of intelligibility of students' production and their level of awareness of how suprasegmental aspects work and how they can acquire them. This would be worth to be examined in the present study.

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Kennedy and Trofimovich's work serves as a model for this particular research study because it analyzed the students' level of intelligibility with their level of awareness, which is one of the present study objectives. It also provides a state-of-the-art description of the field of awareness and phonology, although the authors acknowledge not to have found much literature regarding these areas because most research on awareness seems to focus on grammar, rather than pronunciation.

A similar research gap seems to exist in the Colombian field. Some studies such as the one carried out by Camargo and Hederich, (2010) have analyzed the relationship between language awareness and the learning process. They have acknowledged that besides the learning content, it is necessary to learn its form. However, studies on L.A. seem to be quite general and not many of them have focused on phonological awareness in Colombia. For instance, Quintero, Leon and Pino (2011) focused on phonological awareness as a means to develop the reading process in L1 young learners. Uribe (2012) analyzed language awareness to facilitate interaction. She stated that language awareness may help speakers understand what interlocutors really mean and identify the right moment to intervene. These studies may be useful for the researcher to identify what has been done in terms of L.A in relation to learning and communication.

To conclude, although international studies have been carried out to analyze the relationship between language awareness and EFL pronunciation, in Colombia there seems to be a research gap in this field. Therefore, this research study seems to be pertinent to explain the impact consciousness may have on students' learning and communication.



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### **2.2.3 Metacognitive Strategies**

As the previous two constructs, learning strategies have been discussed by a number of authors since the early 80s. Although authors agree that strategies facilitate learners' successful performance in a specific task, seminal authors have differed on their concept and classification of language learning strategies. According to Ellis (1994), it is not clear whether they are to be perceived as behavioral or as mental processes, or as both. Nevertheless, Oxford (1990) assumes language learning strategies as mainly behaviors or actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferrable to any situation. Oxford's definition serves to support this research proposal because she takes an affective and self-directed approach, which may be useful for assessing students' awareness of their use of suprasegmentals. Also, her framework suits the strategies and stages I implemented.

Oxford (1990) points out that language learning strategies stimulate the growth of communicative competence. For instance, direct strategies (memory, cognitive, and compensation) involve the target language directly. They aim at helping learners perform better in specific tasks in the target language. Indirect strategies, on the other hand, support language learning as such. They manage learning without directly involving the target language. For the purpose of this research proposal, indirect strategies may provide the necessary support to guide students to raise awareness of their own learning process and oral production.

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Regarding indirect strategies, metacognitive strategies provide a way for learners to coordinate their own learning process. They include three strategy sets: centering one's learning, arranging and planning one's learning, and evaluating it. In this study, the researcher decided to work with one strategy from each group because they may gradually guide students towards a smooth self-regulated learning process through different stages and tasks (pre, while and post). These strategies are:

- **Overviewing**

This strategy corresponds to “centering one's learning”, the first group of metacognitive strategies described by Oxford (1990). It refers to the association of previous and new language with an upcoming task. It helps the learner understand why an activity is being done. This strategy might be useful for students to pay closer attention to the use of suprasegmentals in a conscious way, which they tend to ignore, even though they are acquainted with the concept of stress and rising/falling intonation. It may serve for students to relate their previous theoretical knowledge to the upcoming tasks and how such knowledge may help them convey messages more intelligibly.

- **Setting goals and objectives**

This strategy corresponds to the second group of metacognitive strategies presented by Oxford (1990): arranging and planning one's learning. It implies setting students' own aims for language learning. She suggests keeping track of these objectives in a journal, along with deadlines for accomplishing them and an indication as to whether those deadlines were met. This particular strategy works for the current research context because

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It is students who decide the extent to which they want to incorporate suprasegmental features to their oral speech. This decision depends on students' long-term goals such as using English to interact with native or non-native speakers, to learn English for specific purposes, or for reading or writing exclusively, as in some academic contexts.

- **Self-evaluating**

This strategy refers to evaluating one's own progress in the target language. It belongs to the third group of metacognitive strategies and it implies measuring students' own progress in the use of any piece of language, in this case, suprasegmental features. Oxford proposes several ways for learners to gauge their progress. For instance, recording and then listening to find out how learners use suprasegmentals may help them critically assess their own register.

The taxonomy presented by Oxford (1990), fits the principles and components of self-regulated learning explained by Zimmerman (2000): setting specific goals, adopting strategies to attain them, monitoring one's performance, restructuring one's time and context, self-evaluating, and adapting future methods. Additionally, it agrees with Ridley, Schutz, Glanz and Weinstein's (1992) views on self-regulation. Even though their approach rather than a pedagogical one corresponds to a psychological one, both Ridley et al (1992) and Oxford's (1990) proposals share the focus on the individual as an active agent in his/her own learning process, metacognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally. Ridley et al. (1992) studied how goal-setting and metacognitive awareness relate to students' performance. They found a close

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relation between these self-regulatory processes. Regarding this relationship, they declare that:

A student who effectively self-regulates is one who bases explicit goals for his own learning on high levels of self-awareness. This student will likely outperform others because he has both a target goal, which provides a motivating challenge, and metacognitive awareness, which provides information about possible appropriate strategies for accomplishing the goal. (p. 295)

Their insights may support the relation between advanced learners' uses of metacognitive strategies to self-regulate in the three stages of the tasks. During the first stage of the intervention, students received training on overviewing and setting goals, which may have, according to these authors, motivated and challenged them. Secondly, students evaluated their own goal accomplishment by the end of the intervention. This may have helped them keep track of their progress regarding the use of suprasegmentals, and at the same time, assess the effectiveness of the strategies used, which might increase their metacognitive awareness.

Recently, a variety of studies have been carried out internationally regarding the field of metacognitive strategies to tackle different language skills. Although it is not clear if their proficiency arose from their explicit knowledge or vice versa.

White & Ranta (2002) examined the relationship between metalinguistic task performance with respect to grammar, and the oral production of French-speaking children in an intensive ESL program in Quebec. They found a close correlation between the two constructs, which benefitted the students' speaking skill. Regarding listening, Cross, (2011)

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analyzed the effect of metacognitive instruction for advanced EFL learners' listening comprehension. His findings suggest that strategy instruction may enable learners to explore and use strategies to develop their listening comprehension ability. However, he also acknowledges that metacognitive instruction may not necessarily be equally beneficial to all students in the class, which is discussed later in the present research study. Finally, regarding suprasegmentals, Kaltenböck, (2001) presents the design of a CD-ROM that aims at helping learners improve their intonation by fostering autonomy. He demonstrates how self-monitoring and self-evaluation may help learners raise awareness of their oral production and become more self-efficacious. These international studies seem to support the hypothesis that metacognitive learning strategies may enhance the development of different communicative skills and contents.

Also, a wide range of research has approached learning strategies in the Colombian context. For instance, Orrego and Monsalve, (2010) analyzed the learning strategy use by university students in Antioquia. Their results demonstrated that cognitive, social, and compensation strategies are the most frequently used by young adult learners. They did not analyze the use of metacognitive strategies, though. Diaz, (2015) examined the effects of metacognitive strategies to help students recall vocabulary. She trained them in the use of strategies for planning, monitoring, and evaluating their own vocabulary acquisition and she found that metacognitive strategy training contributed to the participants' learning process. Her approach, based on the Cognitive Academic Language Learning (CALL) instructional model, relates to the one followed by the present research study.

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Other Colombian researchers have focused on metacognitive strategies to approach different language skills. Flórez, R., Torrado, M., Rodriguez, I., Güechá, C., Mondragon, S., and Perez, C. (2005), for example, explored metalinguistic skills and metacognitive operations and their relationship with reading and writing. Their findings show that even young learners are able to perform successfully in tasks that require metacognitive skills when they are trained on such strategies. Also Camelo (2010) analyzed how writing can be improved through metacognition. Her results show that the quality of writing increased significantly due to the reflective process young learners went through with the guidance of the teacher and peers. Regarding listening, Barbosa (2012) trained a population of young adult learners, similar to the participants of this study, in the use of learning strategies to develop listening comprehension. Her findings suggest that the participants improved their listening comprehension and developed various types of awareness, namely metacognitive and linguistic awareness. Such results may relate to the ones of the current research study as well. Rodriguez (2007) conducted an action research study with a population of a similar profile to the one in the current study. He trained young adults at a language center in the use of metacognitive strategies to keep track of their progress in listening through a journal. Although his work did not focus on the students' oral progress, Rodriguez implemented the same type of strategies in a comparable context, obtaining satisfactory results. This provided a model for the researcher to develop the study in a cultural context in which metacognition and self-regulated learning are somewhat new.

In Colombia, a number of researchers have conducted studies in the area of metacognitive strategies to improve different language skills. However, not many of them

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have studied the implications of such strategies in the students' awareness of their own register. For that reason, training students in the use of metacognitive learning strategies to keep track of their oral progress may be relevant to discuss the effectiveness of the approach Colombian teachers tend to use to approach pronunciation and what implications their methods may have on the students' learning and intelligibility.

### **2.3 Conclusion**

To conclude, the researcher took into consideration the work of scholars in the fields of intelligible stress and intonation, language awareness, and metacognitive strategies to set the theoretical basis of the study. She also took into account the studies carried out recently by both international and national researchers in these fields in order to come up with an innovative proposal that responds to the research gaps encountered.

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## **Chapter Three: Research Design**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes and justifies the research design, validation of instruments and procedures carried out during the data collection stage. Their relations addressed the research problem and aimed at answering the research question.

### **3.2 Type of Study**

The current research project corresponds to an action research study because it takes place in an educational context. It involves the teacher's reflective, critical, and systematic approach to explore and problematize her teaching milieu, as explained by Burns (1999). The particular problematic situation was deeply analyzed in chapter one, which refers to learners' lack of awareness of the use of suprasegmentals for communication. The teacher played different roles in the classroom to bring about changes that may solve such a problem.

The study followed the principles of qualitative research presented by Ritchie and Lewis (2003). According to them, this naturalistic approach aims at interpreting phenomena by means of rich qualitative data. So the researcher collected information from the participants by means of learning logs, recordings, and observations that helped her analyze the problematic situation and propose changes from solid data, rather than from assumptions.

### **3.3 Context**

The current study took place in the Adult English Program, an EFL course taught at a private language center in Bogotá, Colombia. The institutional teaching cornerstones include communicative approach, task based learning, ongoing assessment, and autonomous



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learning, for which the training on learning strategies is a class routine. Courses in this institution are divided into three main blocks according to the language level. The study was implemented in the last block, in which learners' level is advanced: B1, according to the CEFR.

The Challenge 1-3 block consists of three courses. Each of them lasts one month and classes are taken Monday through Friday for two hours. In this block learners develop a project called *Global Citizenship*, whose final outcome is a position paper about a controversial topic. In the first month, learners choose their topic; in the second, they write the paper, and during the third month, they prepare and carry out an oral presentation. This project is relevant for the current research study because the training in metacognitive strategies had to adapt to the course pace and syllabus. Therefore, learners were trained in one strategy each month and the instruments used for data collection had to relate to the project tasks.

### **3.3.1 Participants**

The population is a group of ten adult learners whose ages range from 18 to 30. They have been studying English for about a year at the institution and they can communicate in English and use a number of learning strategies. Although they study together, their educational and professional backgrounds differ significantly and so do their learning goals. Most learners are professionals who aim at learning English to enrich their professional profile. A few of them are university students and one of them is a master's student. These peculiarities of the population had an impact in the development of the current research

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project because most professional learners were willing to participate and showed a great deal of interest in improving their fluency and oral skills. The others did not show as much interest in the oral component. Instead, they seemed to be more engaged in class activities related to writing and reading.

### **3.3.2 Researcher's role**

Because of the nature of the current study, I played the role of a teacher-researcher and participant. As Burns (1999) explains, "In Action Research the teacher becomes an "investigator" or "explorer" of his or her personal teaching context, while at the same time being one of the participants in it" (p 2). As a teacher, I facilitated the learning process and guided students towards the accomplishment of the class activities. I trained learners on the use of the strategies and adapted them to the curriculum. As a researcher, I was in charge of designing, piloting, and administering the instruments for data collection. I also gathered data from observations for the subsequent analysis and concluding processes. As an active participant, I lead class discussions and interacted with the members of the population and carried out the implementation.

### **3.3.3 Ethical considerations**

The ethical considerations for this study involved both institutional and personal aspects. Regarding the former, permission to pilot and implement the study in the Challenge 1-3 block was given by the coordinator of the Adult English Program at the language center (Appendix C). About the latter, students signed a consent letter in which they accepted to participate in the study in an anonymous way (Appendix D). Therefore, students' identities

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were kept confidential and they were assigned a number to recognize each participant's process.

The findings and conclusions of the present study will be shared with the institutional community such as coordinators, supervisors, and teachers at an annual symposium that will take place next year at the center.

### **3.4 Data collection instruments**

In order to gather information, instruments were designed and administered in two stages. The first one corresponded to the needs analysis. For this stage, two main instruments were applied: a questionnaire and its recorded version (appendix B). The second stage was the implementation. For collecting data in this stage I designed three instruments: two students' learning logs (appendix E), three recorded artifacts (Appendix F), and the teacher's field notes. The way these instruments provided information to justify the research problem and to answer the research question is explained below.

#### **3.4.1 Description**

##### ***3.4.1.1 Needs analysis stage***

###### ***3.4.1.1.1 Questionnaire***

This instrument consisted of 15 questions aimed at obtaining students' insights regarding their previous experience with suprasegmentals and their initial opinions about the usefulness of such elements. To design the questionnaire, I considered the suggestions Lietz

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(2010) gives about question wording, length, and order to avoid inaccuracies due to misinterpretation of the samples.

### ***3.4.1.1.2 Recorded questionnaire***

This artifact corresponded to the recorded version of the answers students prepared to answer the questionnaire on suprasegmentals. It provided an initial idea of the students' actual use of suprasegmentals.

### ***3.4.1.2 Implementation stage***

#### ***3.4.1.2.1 Students' learning logs***

As explained by Hopkins (2008), learning logs may have advantages and disadvantages. They can provide the learners' perspective on the activities carried out during the implementation, they involve learners in the research process and they can become part of a lesson. Nevertheless, they may be subjective and may have an influence on the students' answers, which might have ethical implications. However, due to the students' language level and the focus of the research proposal on awareness and metacognition, learning logs seemed to be effective for data collection. They were designed to obtain students' insights about their own use of strategies. They also gathered the learners' impressions on how these strategies may have helped them achieve the objectives proposed. For that reason, they were used at the end of the first two implementation cycles.

#### ***3.4.1.2.2 Recorded artifacts***

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Recordings had a dual purpose. First, they were designed to help learners keep track of their own oral process. Secondly, they allowed the researcher to obtain evidence of the learners' use of suprasegmental features. They took place at the end of every implementation cycle. This kind of instrument was used considering the experience of Kennedy and Trofimovich (2010), who used recorded artifacts to analyze the students' accentuation comprehensibility, and fluency in a study related to language awareness and second language pronunciation. Although they used recordings to assess areas related to pronunciation in a quantitative way, their experience inspired me to use this kind of instrument to carry out a qualitative analysis that may account for the learners' actual use of the target language features.

### *3.4.1.2.3 Teacher's field notes*

This kind of instrument was used to collect the teacher's class notes on comments and reactions she observed or heard from the learners during the implementation. It was also used to gather her insights about the learners' processes.

### **3.4.2 Validation and Piloting**

Before implementation, the researcher piloted the questionnaire and learning logs with a similar population in order to refine them and to guarantee their effectiveness for data collection. To obtain validity in the results of the data analysis, the researcher triangulated the information collected in the three instruments as follows: The students' learning logs were compared with the teacher's field notes. This contrast provided insights related to the constructs of language awareness and metacognitive strategies. Furthermore, the students'

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learning logs were compared with their recorded artifacts. Analysis of how students used these suprasegmental features in their performance provided insights about the construct of intelligible stress and intonation. Finally, as the teacher was consistently noting students' use of suprasegmentals, her field notes were compared with their artifacts. This contrast provided ideas about the students' intelligible stress and intonation in spontaneous and recorded speaking.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

This research study aimed at examining the impact of strategy training on the population's awareness. Therefore, the research designed focused on instruments and procedures that may describe the extent to which learners developed awareness of the use of suprasegmentals in their everyday communication.

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## **Chapter 4: Pedagogical intervention and implementation**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the institutional vision of language, curriculum and learning that influenced this research design. It also describes the steps and processes followed to carry out the implementation, as well as the activity design, lesson planning, and intervention cycles and materials.

### **4.2 Visions of language, learning, and curriculum**

#### **4.2.1 Vision of language**

The Centro Colombo Americano has a constructivist vision of language. According to social constructivists such as Bakhtin (1990) the main function of language is to be a medium of communication and it is immersed in social and cultural contexts. Similarly institutional documents adapt this view of language. For instance, Taylor (2009) explains that at this institution language is a tool that helps people be part of the world, connect with others, and reach their objectives. Therefore, instruction at the Center aims at providing learners with opportunities to use the target language as an interactive tool and to develop the communicative competence needed in today's world.

This vision of language influences both the teaching practices and research proposals at the institution. In class, teachers are expected to facilitate the development of the four communicative skills and to provide input about language features that are generally used in English-speaking contemporary contexts. The textbooks used at the institution offer corpus information that tells learners about the most commonly used expressions and ways to

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manage daily conversations. Likewise, they expose students to several accents and variations of English. Teachers are expected to use these materials to raise awareness of the actual use of English these days and to encourage learners to adapt their language to various communicative contexts.

The institution accepts research proposals as long as they help learners develop communication. For that reason, for the current research study the researcher had to come up with a communicative methodology to approach suprasegmental features. As for the center, language is a tool to communicate, and its phonological features cannot be taught isolated. Instead, they need to be used to convey meaning. In this regard, Canagarajah (2005) agrees that in the current context of English as an international language, pedagogy has to “shift from language as a system to language as a social practice.” (p. 31) So, the activities planned for the implementation of this research proposal aimed at helping students use suprasegmentals to interact, rather than to practice with them in drilling exercises. Additionally, the training in suprasegmentals required an analysis of their communicative role and their impact on the listener.

### **4.2.2 Vision of learning**

According to the “Curricular Framework for Evaluation” from the Centro Colombo Americano (Taylor, 2009), the vision of learning at the institution relates to life-long learning and autonomy. Benson (2007) explains what the most recognized definition of autonomy is: the ability to take responsibility for one’s learning. This definition fits the institutional objective of guiding students to become effective learners who do not depend on a teacher,



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but who can use different strategies to learn more, better, and faster. Autonomous learners use strategies to keep track of their progress and decide on action plans to improve. As Benson (2007) states, taking responsibility for one's learning implies planning, choosing appropriate materials, self-monitoring, and self-evaluating (p.24). The current research study considered these behaviors to propose strategies that may guide learners towards autonomy: setting learning goals and self-evaluating. These learning strategies are not new for students. Because autonomy is one of the cornerstones of the Adult English Program, learners are acquainted with their usage. However, they seem to need more training on metacognitive strategies to keep track of their oral performance. It can be concluded that the vision of learning that underpins this study relates to and supports the institutional vision of language because it focuses on the development of learning strategies to develop lifelong learning habits.

### **4.2.3 Vision of curriculum**

Due to the fact that the current research study took place at a private language center, it respected and adopted the institutional vision of curriculum with all its characteristics and components. Regarding its characteristics, the shape of the institutional syllabus appears to be linear and modular, as described by Nuñez (2007). It is linear because the content of the courses is based on a textbook. Teachers are expected to follow it and not to change the order of units. This characteristic had an impact on the current research study because the teacher/researcher had to adapt the input and activities she planned to the textbook content. Additionally, the syllabus is modular because it integrates thematic or situational contents.

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In this regard, the researcher adapted the implementation activities to the weekly tasks in which students were expected to use target language they studied during a week and she guided them to integrate suprasegmental features.

Regarding the components of the curriculum, some of the aspects that were considered for the development of this research project were related to task based learning and project based learning. Regarding the first approach, the institution shares the definition of task given by Skehan (1998), who considers it as “an activity in which meaning is primary, there is a problem to solve and relationship to real-world activities, with an objective that can be assessed in terms of an outcome” (p. 95). The current research project had to make the implementation activities part of the content students to need to complete the weekly tasks. For instance, during the last week of the course, the students had to carry out an oral presentation. For completing this task, they were required to use emphatic stress, which was part of the content for the implementation of this research study.

### **4.3 Instructional Design**

Considering the abovementioned institutional visions of language, learning and curriculum, the researcher came up with an instructional design that respected and supported these visions to develop the research study inside regular classes without affecting their development. It was based on the needs analysis and the literature review discussed in chapters one and two, and it was designed for a three-month block. During the implementation stage, two weeks per month were dedicated to both the training on metacognitive learning strategies and the use of suprasegmental features. The following

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sections explain how implementation occurred, as well as the timeline and planning carried out (Appendix G)

### **4.3.1 Lesson planning**

The lesson planning for the implementation took into account the principles for class development established by the institution, which were presented in the previous section. Taylor (2009) states that language elements such as grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary should address a mix of styles, and invite students to find patterns and make their own rules, (inductive reasoning). Also, learners should be asked to apply models and to analyze rules (deductive reasoning). For that reason, the planning of activities for the implementation aimed at giving students the opportunity to use both inductive and deductive reasoning. During the first sessions of each implementation week, students were guided through questions to find patterns of intonation and stress and to infer their own rules about their use. During the fourth and fifth sessions of every week, students had to apply such rules to self-evaluate their oral production on learning logs.

To address the research question and objectives, the lesson plans designed for the implementation stage described the implementation objective, which referred to the phase of the framework described by Oxford (1990), which corresponded to each day (preparation, presentation, practice, evaluation or expansion). Additionally, each lesson plan described in detail the activity in which the metacognitive strategy or suprasegmental feature was integrated. Finally, the data collection instrument used and the construct the researcher

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wanted to tackle were presented. A sample of the implementation lesson plans is available in Appendix I.

### **4.3.2 Implementation**

#### ***4.3.2.1 Methodological Rationale***

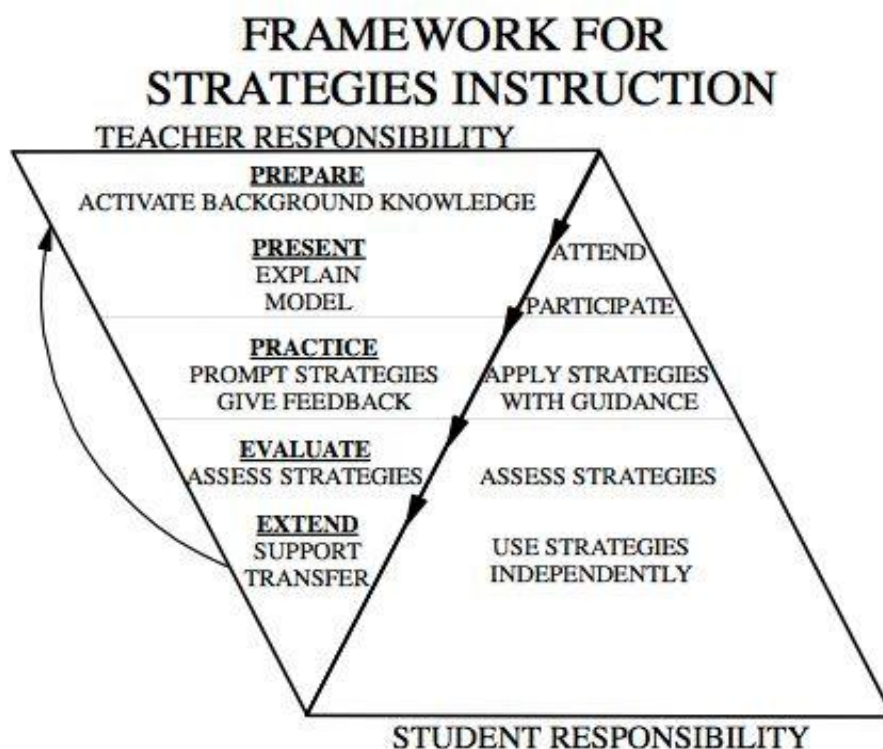
The lesson planning for the implementation took into account the institutional vision of learning, for which life-long learning is the main aim. To accomplish this aim, the Centro Colombo Americano usually trains students in direct learning strategies to compensate for lack of vocabulary, memorize useful information, and ask for help. Despite the fact that these strategies seem to help learners perform better in class tasks, students seem to rely on them and not to use other strategies to manage their own learning. As a result, they need to be constantly guided by the teacher to identify their mistakes, to evaluate their accomplishment and to understand why they passed or failed a course.

Students at this institution may benefit from training in indirect learning strategies to become more self-regulated. According to Zimmerman (2002), self-regulation refers to thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that are oriented to attaining goals. In other words, if students at Centro Colombo Americano can set their own goals, relate previous to new language knowledge, and evaluate their own oral production, they may become more self-regulated and responsible for their learning, without depending on the teacher.

The apparent gap in learning strategy training at the institution inspired the researcher to dedicate significant time to the training in metacognitive strategies during the lesson

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planning stage. For that reason, the first week of every cycle was entirely devoted to the integration of these types of strategies in different class activities and tasks. To do so, the researcher followed the five basic phases in the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) instructional framework presented by Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary, and Robbins (1999). Such a framework has been previously used by teachers at the institution and it fits this research study because it allows a progression from teacher-guided activities to students' independent use of strategies. Figure 1 illustrates how the progression takes place.



*Figure 1.* Framework for strategy instruction according to Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary & Robbins 1999:11 - The Learning Strategies Handbook

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The second week of every month was dedicated to train students in the use of suprasegmental features, namely stress and intonation. This training followed the same five stages from the CALLA framework to add coherence to the research study but most importantly to guide students smoothly from guided to independent use of these phonological elements.

According to the needs analysis results (see chapter 3), students in the institution claim to have received instruction on stress and intonation in previous courses. However, such instruction seems not to have been meaningful or effective for students because they tend not to use these elements, as can be seen in the analysis of their initial recordings.

To address this matter, the researcher based the instruction of suprasegmentals on the institutional vision of language and the theoretical considerations about intelligible stress and intonation analyzed in depth in chapter two. About the former, suprasegmentals were analyzed from the input (video and audio) for learners to understand how stress and intonation can help speakers convey meaning. As the CCA curricular framework states, “We expect pronunciation to be taught explicitly, and with an eye to training students to understand the main features of the system, not just to listen and repeat” (p. 11).

About the theoretical considerations, intelligible stress and intonation were not analyzed from native speakers’ input, but from proficient non-native speakers of English. It can be argued that native speakers could best model the use of suprasegmental features. However, according to Jenkins (2000) in the light of English as an international language, speakers do not need to sound native to sound intelligible. In fact, any speaker of English has

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the potential to be understood clearly by others regardless their accent. For speakers to sound intelligible in English, it is necessary to express ideas in thought groups (semantic units of intonation) and to stress important words in a statement (nuclear contrastive stress). In conclusion, Jenkins's ideas about intelligibility accounted for the approach and materials selected for the training in suprasegmentals during the implementation stage of this research proposal.

### **4.4 Conclusion**

Although the researcher's personal views of language, learning and curriculum permeated this research study, it was mostly based on the institutional visions because it had to adapt to the requirements of the context of implementation. Conveniently, both visions did not differ significantly but complemented one another.

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## **Chapter 5: Data Analysis and Findings**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the results of the research project implementation by describing the process carried out through the principles of qualitative action research. It accounts for the data management procedures of analysis in the light of the Grounded Theory approach. Furthermore, it describes and explains the categories that emerged to answer the research question. Their relationships suggest that the training in three metacognitive strategies has an impact on learners' awareness of stress and intonation in three dimensions: linguistic, psychological, and learning.

### **5.2 Data management procedures**

This section explains the way in which the data collection instruments were applied during the 6-week period of implementation, which was divided into three main cycles. Every cycle lasted two weeks. During the first week, students were trained in the use of one of the three metacognitive strategies: goal setting, overviewing, and self-evaluating. Following the framework for strategy training stated by Oxford (1990), the researcher prepared the ground to present the strategy on the first day by guiding the participants to see the need to use it in order to improve their learning process. Then, she presented it and gave them the opportunity to practice with it for completing different class activities during the following three days. At the end of the activities, the participants evaluated the usefulness of the strategy. Throughout the week, the teacher took notes about the participants' comments and attitudes towards the strategy training in one of the data collection instruments: field notes.



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During the second week of the cycles, students were trained in the use of intonation and emphatic stress. The researcher prepared the ground by means of an input video in which learners could see how native and nonnative English speakers would use intonation and stress to convey intelligible messages. After, she elicited the learners' insights about the use of such features through guiding questions. This was generally the presentation stage. During the practice stage, the participants used these suprasegmentals to complete both listening and speaking activities. For listening activities, they had to identify how speakers communicated their ideas using suprasegmentals. For speaking activities, they were to modify their stress and intonation according to the message they wanted to communicate in interactive tasks. These tasks are institutionally called Communicative Events, they occur daily, and serve as preparation for a weekly main task. In order to comply with the institutional requirements, the participants were asked to record their voice while completing these weekly tasks. Their recorded artifacts, served as data collection instruments for they gave an impression on the learners' communicative use of stress and intonation. These artifacts were later analyzed by means of Audacity™, a kind of software to record and edit audio. This software has a spectrogram mode that may give a visual representation of the learners' voice. Such a representation was used to account for the way they modified their register to make emphasis on some words and to express complete ideas, rather than isolated words. At the end of each cycle, the participants filled up a learning log. Through this data collection instrument, the researcher obtained their insights about their use of the weekly metacognitive strategy and suprasegmental feature.

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Before the analysis stage, all data collected in the three instruments was gathered in a matrix created by the researcher to facilitate the process of management and analysis. All participants' responses and artifacts were classified using numbers to maintain the participants' anonymity and confidentiality. (Appendix H)

### **5.2.1 Validation**

In order to validate the data collected on the three instruments described above, the researcher adopted the method of constant comparison described by Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2005). According to them, in this method the researcher compares the new and existing data to obtain categories that fit perfectly with them. Therefore, three main comparisons took place in order to triangulate and give meaning to the data. First, the participants' learning logs were compared with the teacher's field notes to obtain information related to the constructs of language awareness and metacognitive strategies. The second comparison was between the learning logs and their recorded artifacts. Analysis of how the participants used these suprasegmental features in their performance provided the researcher with insights about the construct of intelligible stress and intonation. Finally, the teacher's field notes were compared with the participants' artifacts. This contrast provided ideas about their intelligible stress and intonation in spontaneous and recorded speaking.

### **5.2.2 Data Analysis Methodology**

The data analysis process was based on the principles of qualitative action research, and took place by means of the grounded theory approach, which involves the generation of analytical categories, their dimensions, and the identification of relationships between these

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(Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). To generate categories, the researcher followed the steps for analysis and coding described by Corbin and Strauss (2008): Open Coding, Axial Coding, and Selective Coding.

### *5.2.2.1 Open coding*

According to Cohen et al., (2005) the preliminary stage or open coding involves “exploring the data and identifying units of analysis to code for meanings, feelings, actions, events, and so on” (p. 493). Therefore, the researcher went over each of the three instruments applied during the implementation in order to name and categorize the emerged phenomena into codes.

The first instrument the researcher analyzed was the participants' learning logs. This thorough analysis required her to digitalize and examine all comments made by the learners on the two logs in order to identify and name the phenomena they revealed. The first learning log, administered after the second week of the implementation, revealed comments about their understanding and use of the first metacognitive strategy in which they were trained: **goal-setting**. Some of the codes derived from this analysis were: capacity to write specific learning goals, awareness of the usefulness of the strategy, and potential to transfer it to other contexts.

The second learning log took place at the end of the fourth week of implementation. It aimed at evaluating the use of the strategy and at gaining insights about the participants' awareness of a suprasegmental feature. In this case, the strategy was over-viewing and the suprasegmental was emphatic stress. After reading the comments, the researcher found codes

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that were similar to the ones found in the analysis of the previous learning log, as well as new codes such as: relation between stress and intelligibility or enhanced self-confidence to speak. These codes appeared to be more frequent than those related to the use of the strategy, as opposed to the first learning log, in which all codes related to the strategy use itself.

Up to this point, I had completed the open coding stage for the first instrument. The two remaining instruments: field notes and recorded artifacts had a similar management. The teacher researcher digitalized and analyzed field notes for each of the 18 sessions of the implementation. Some of the codes found were similar to the ones from the first instrument. They accounted for the attitudes towards the strategy she observed in the participants, as well as the comments or reactions she witnessed as a teacher/observer during the strategy-training time. Codes of this nature came out more evidently in the first and last cycles of the implementation. During the second or mid cycle, they were scarce, though. Other codes found in the field notes related to suprasegmentals. They appeared more frequently than in the participants' learning logs. They derived from the observation of the teacher about the way participants would actually use stress and intonation. Some of the codes found were: awareness of the correct use of intonation (thought groups), accurate use of stress for communication, etc. These codes differ significantly from the first to the last cycle of the implementation. During the first cycle the codes related to awareness, whilst during the last cycle they referred to enhancing, improving, or accurate use. The explanation of these differences is presented in detail in the discussion section.

Once the field notes analysis was completed, the researcher examined the participants' recorded artifacts. For this analysis, she listened to each of the three recordings by means of

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Audacity™. As mentioned before, this software provided a visual representation of the students' use of emphatic stress and ideas expressed in thought groups. As no codes would emerge from such representation, the researcher used a tally sheet to keep a record of the overall presence or absence of these suprasegmental features in the participants' speech. Through the interpretation of the recorded artifacts I concluded the open coding stage. The next step was axial coding.

### ***5.2.2.2 Axial Coding***

This second cycle of data analysis aimed at making links between the codes obtained during the open coding stage to integrate them around the axes of central categories, as explained by Cohen et al (2005). In order to do so, I used the color coding technique to identify visually the codes that related to the same phenomenon, as well as some samples from the raw data, which served at illustrating the emergence of the three main categories presented.

### ***5.2.2.3 Selective Coding***

During this final stage of the data analysis process, I analyzed deeply the three main categories and subcategories that emerged during the axial coding stage in order to identify a core category that would answer the research question by means of a new grounded theory. The core category that emerged from data analysis and reduction is: *Enhancement of learners' awareness of intelligible stress and intonation through a triadic process.*

## **5.3 Categories**

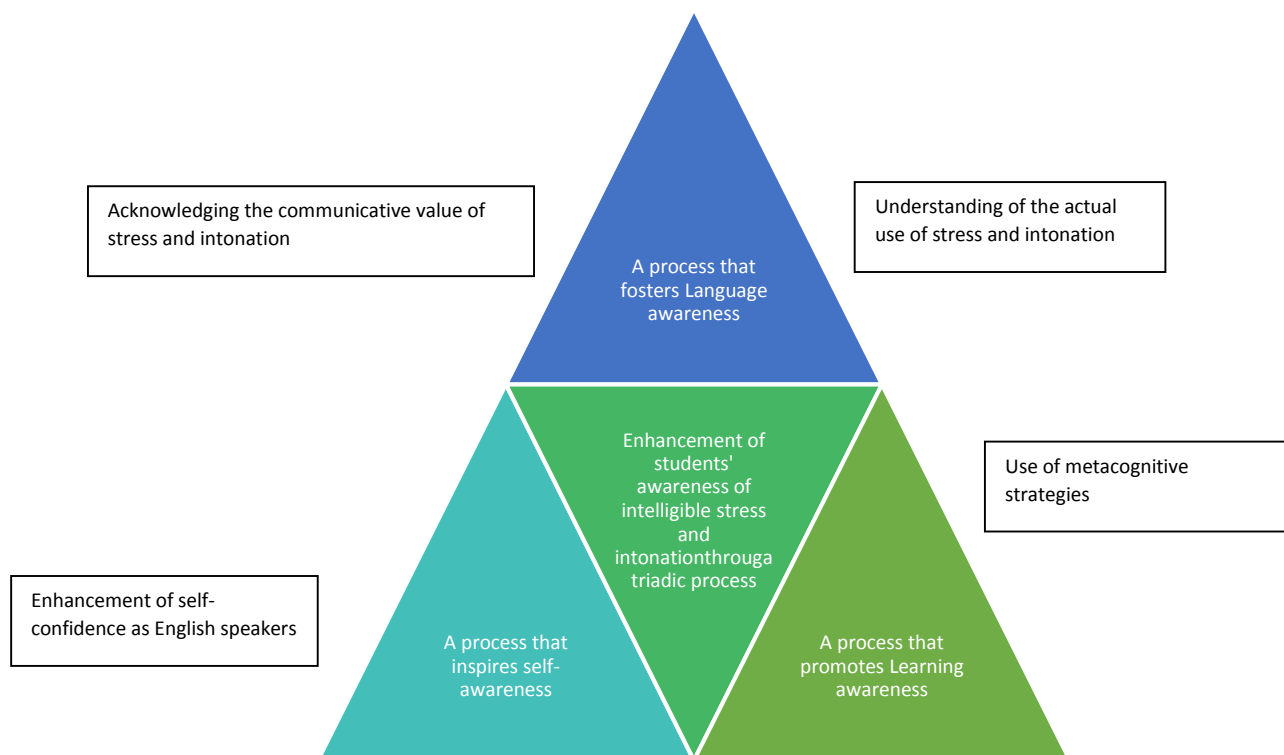
### **5.3.1 Introduction**

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This section explains how the research question can be answered by means of the core category in relation with the main categories and subcategories resultant from the axial coding stage. It accounts for the paradigmatic relationships between these elements in an abstract level of analysis.

## 5.3.1.1 Category mapping

*Graph 1: Category mapping*



*Graph 1: Triad showing the categories emerged from the axial coding stage*

## 5.3.1.2 Identification of core category

The data analysis and reduction process gave rise to a core category that aimed at explaining the extent to which the training in three metacognitive strategies may help the

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participants raise awareness of their intelligible stress and intonation. Such category is: *Enhancement of learners' awareness of intelligible stress and intonation through a triadic process*. The analytical processes that provoked the emergence of such category are explained in the following section.

### **5.3.2 Analysis of categories**

#### ***5.3.2.1 Description of categories***

The analysis of the relationships between the codes that emerged from the three data collection instruments displayed the existence of three main categories: fostering language awareness, provoking self-awareness, and promoting learning awareness.

##### ***5.3.2.1.1 Fostering language awareness***

Despite the fact that intonation and stress were familiar terms for the participants at the institution, the needs analysis had evidenced that their understanding of these suprasegmental features was rather vague. They seemed to see intonation merely as falling or rising one's pitch in statements or questions. Similarly, they appeared to be aware of word stress but they seemed to ignore the role of emphatic stress to convey different kinds of messages. After the implementation, the participants seem to have raised language awareness about two aspects: the actual use of suprasegmentals and their communicative value. This language awareness was evident in the analysis of the students' learning logs and teacher's field notes during the open coding stage. Data in these instruments revealed what Svalberg (2012) called engagement with the language. The participants' seemed to have evolved in

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their language awareness after elaborating on their language related knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes. For instance, they seem to understand more complex uses of suprasegmentals than the ones they initially knew, which can be evident on some of the entries on their learning logs.

- Learning log 2. Student 7

*Also, I have to improve the stress for content words.*

This comment reveals that the participants are acquainted with the concept of content and function words and how they differ in emphatic stress. Additionally, they seem to acknowledge how these features can interfere with communication, as registered by the teacher on her field notes.

- Field notes session 16

*When presenting in pairs, they actually stressed important words for the part they had prepared. All students used their body language and stress to highlight the most important words. Peer feedback was positive because stressing important information seems to have allowed listeners to understand the ideas in the presentation.*

This comment reveals how the participants may have modified their register by stressing important words from their presentation. Such a variation seems to have been perceived by their peers for they gave positive feedback on how intelligible the presenters' speech was.

It appears that language awareness was fostered in two ways: understanding the actual use of stress and intonation and acknowledging their communicative value. Such results are illustrated below.



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### *5.3.2.1.1.1 Understanding of the actual use of stress and intonation*

As Svalberg (2012) explains, noticing and attention are important concepts in language awareness. They imply directing one's attention to specific target features. During the implementation of this study, the participants were guided to pay attention to stress and intonation both in a theoretical and practical way. Videos exposed them to the use of these features, and the class discussions that followed aimed at addressing their attention towards these target features. Furthermore, the participants' text-books supported their initial discoveries about stress and intonation by means of a pronunciation booster section in which the target features stood out through italics and bold text to help learners notice the ways they can be used. As a result, the participants were able to confirm the predictions they had made through the videos about the different ways suprasegmentals can work and they seem to have expanded their knowledge about them. The teacher's field notes illustrate this.

- Field notes session 8

*When preparing ideas before interaction, most students were able to use arrows and parenthesis to identify intonation patterns and thought groups.*

This excerpt from the teachers' field notes reveals how she perceived that the participants were aware of the use of suprasegmentals.

### *5.3.2.1.1.2 Acknowledgement of the communicative value of stress and intonation*

As Svalberg (2012) acknowledges, developing language awareness or explicit knowledge about language is a complex process that implies developing a conscious perception and sensitivity about the way the language works to impact language learning and

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use. During the implementation of this study, the participants were exposed to the actual use of suprasegmentals through videos in which a number of international speakers of English expressed their ideas by using emphatic stress and taught groups. Such an input could have an impact on the participants' meta-linguistic awareness because after watching, they had the opportunity to reflect upon the way such speakers used these suprasegmentals to convey meaning. They drew conclusions about the impact suprasegmentals had on the speakers' messages. Although the participants had watched videos before and they had been instructed on suprasegmentals, it was a new experience for them to comment explicitly about the way speakers used intonation and stress to communicate. Their conclusions may have guided them towards new objectives in their language use because they started to target these features as areas they need to improve. This was evident in the participants' learning logs:

- Learning log 2. Student 7

*Some verbs ended by "ed" are hard for me to performance. Also I have to improve stress for content words.*

This excerpt may relate to the skills scholars say learners of English as an international language should develop. According to Canagarajah (2005), "students should be able to inductively process the underlying system in the varieties one encounters in social interaction." (p. 27.) This may mean that in the context of English as an international language learners may benefit from analyzing the actual use of different varieties of English in order to incorporate the aspects that facilitate communication among different kinds of speakers.

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Although as a teacher/researcher I witnessed the participants' willingness to use stress and intonation for class interaction, I also witnessed the difficulty this implied for most of them. They seemed to have understood the correct use of stress and intonation but it was rather complicated for some of them to incorporate them in their speech. This can be evidenced in the teacher's field notes.

- Field notes. Session 7

*When trying to imitate thought groups, a few students seemed to have difficulty and they had to repeat over and over. Most students did it correctly after trying a couple of times. When expressing their own ideas, most students struggled to express them in thought groups, though. They focused on what they said rather than how they said it.*

This comment seems to imply that the participants need more opportunities to practice with suprasegmentals to overcome their difficulties. Struggling to use stress and intonation may happen because of the influence of the learners' L1, Spanish. This language, according to Crystal, is a syllable-timed language, whereas English is a stress-timed one (as cited in Roach 1982). This difference may explain the learners' difficulty to use the stress patterns of English. However, in the context of English as an international language, this differentiation seems not to interfere with intelligibility.

### ***5.3.2.1.2 Promoting learning awareness***

The open coding stage revealed a number of codes related to learning. The participants' learning logs and the teacher's field notes evidenced common codes about this

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dimension. Firstly, the learning logs contained comments related to their understanding of how to deal with the metacognitive strategies studied: goal setting and overviewing. They also referred to their acknowledgment of the usefulness of such strategies to complete the assigned tasks. Despite the fact that the participants were already familiarized with these two strategies, they seemed to ignore how they could help them become more efficacious learners and speakers. It appears that the training in goal setting and overviewing helped the participants to focus their learning to accomplish specific objectives related to intelligibility. Also, the training in these metacognitive strategies seems to have helped them give steps towards self-regulation because they seem to be aware of their difficulties and possible ways to improve. Their learning logs reveal such a kind of awareness:

- Learning log. Student 4

*As for me, I still have problems with intonation. I heard myself too plane and I need to improve that part if I want my English sounds natural. There are a lot of exercises on the book I can work on. Try to do those exercises weekly and make a self-monitoring of my progress recording my voice while reading a short text.*

This excerpt shows the participants' awareness of his/her difficulties and how one of the strategies used in the implementation could help him/her improve. Nevertheless, not all participants included comments related to the usefulness of the metacognitive strategies for their learning processes. Actually a number of participants wrote very general comments on their learning logs, which did not evidence much reflection. Comparing the learning logs and the recorded artifacts, the researcher finds a relation between the quality of the participants'

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reflective comments and their actual production of suprasegmentals, as illustrated in the following parallel.

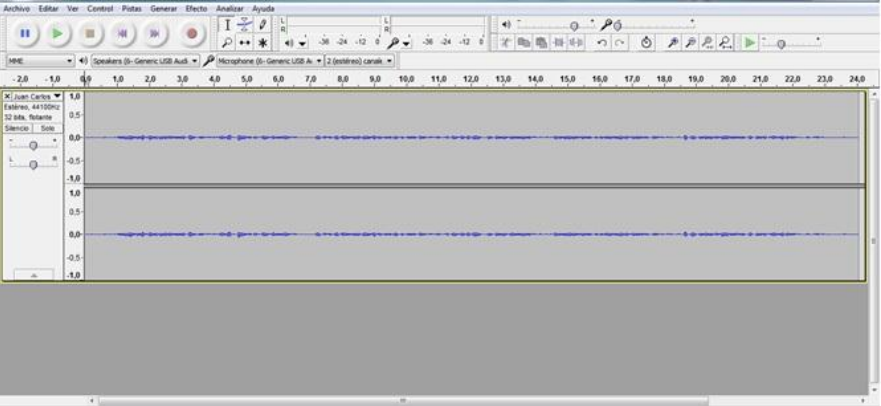
Table 1	
<i>Relation between student's vague comments and little use of suprasegmentals.</i>	
Student 8	
Recorded artifact	Learning log 1
	<p>What is setting SMART goals about?</p> <p><i>I read about globalcitizenship, because I don't know anything.</i></p> <p><i>This strategy help me to accomplished my objective task because i think that in this unit i learn more vocabulary and new expressions.</i></p>

Table 1: Parallel showing the relationship between a student's vague comment on the learning log and the little usage of suprasegmentals.

Table 2
<i>Relation between learners' reflective comments and appropriate use of suprasegmentals.</i>

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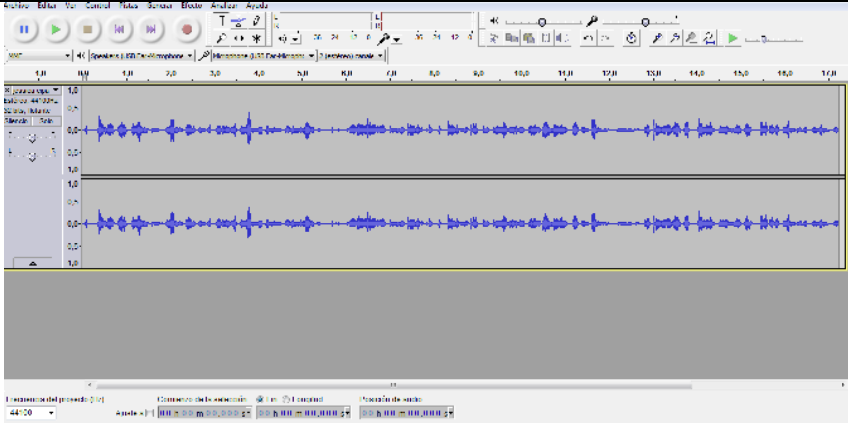
Student 7	
Recorded artifact	Learning log 1
	<p>What is setting SMART goals about?</p> <p><i>It is about to set achievable goals that can be measurable as well.</i></p> <p><i>I think the better way to improve my oral performance is listening to some conversations and repeating them trying to simulate</i></p>

Table 2: Parallel showing the relationship between a student’s reflecting comment on the learning log and the appropriate usage of suprasegmentals.

As the tables show, it seems that the participants who wrote vague comments about the use of the strategy on the learning log struggled to modify their register in their recordings. Metacognitive strategies seem to have helped other participants become aware of the importance of modifying their register, develop metalinguistic awareness and thus, include stress and intonation in their recorded speech.

Schunk (2001), has acknowledged the importance of metacognitive strategies, particularly goal-setting for developing self-regulation, given that goals seem to be involved in all the different stages of self-regulation: forethought (setting a goal and deciding on

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strategies to accomplish it); performance control (employing goal-directed actions and monitoring performance); and self-reflection (evaluating one's goal progress and adjusting strategies to ensure success.) This study intended to train the participants in three metacognitive strategies to be coherent with Oxford's framework for strategy training, which was initially selected. Goal-setting was the first strategy used, but it seems that the participants continued using it to guide their learning and keep track of their progress in different areas or skills. This can be evidenced on the learning logs.

- Learning log. Student 4

*This strategy (goal-setting) helped me a lot in the sense that I could develop this task step by step. I wrote those paragraphs taking into account the previous knowledge I had about the topic and with the one acquired during the classes but I consider I didn't use new vocabulary or probably as much as I wanted.*

In this comment the relation between goal setting and other stages of self-regulation such as self-monitoring can be observed.

### ***5.3.2.1.3 Inspiring self-awareness***

The researcher decided to name the category like this because some codes that appeared in the learning logs and teacher's field notes referred to the participants' own persona, whether as a learner or as an English speaker. I initially thought this was derived from language awareness in the sense that learners were able to identify the right use of suprasegmentals in their own speech, just as they did with the speakers from the video input. However, after the open coding stage, I realized that the participants were initially unaware

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of what they sounded like. After the implementation, this situation seems to have had a slight change. Learners seem to be more conscious of their own actual register. They are able to recognize the peculiarities of their speech as English communicators and they seem to understand what areas they need to improve in order to become more intelligible. The samples that illustrate such types of awareness are displayed below.

### ***5.3.2.1.3.1 Identification of one's own actual register***

The recorded artifacts revealed the participants' ideas in which they reported being able to communicate intelligibly, but after recording and listening to themselves, their perception of themselves as speakers seemed to have changed. It seems that they became more aware of what they actually sound like in English. Other studies have found a similar kind of awareness after the participants' recorded and listened to themselves. Arevalo (2014) reports the use of self-recordings to be a strategy that allows learners to adopt new methods to reflect upon their own strengths and weaknesses in terms of pronunciation. The participants' learning logs reveal a more realistic perception of themselves as intelligible speakers, after listening to themselves.

- Learning log 2. Student 3

*I noticed about I talk so slow and without use the linking, probably, for to not practice my speaking for example, read aloud and stuff like that. Trying to say my paragraphs, and recording them, I realized that I need to improve the linking when I talk, because it's important to said the things more naturally.*



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This entry may illustrate how self-recordings could have helped learners raise awareness of their own actual register.

### ***5.3.2.1.3.1 Enhancement of self-confidence as English speaker.***

There seems to be a relation between the participants' intelligibility and the learners' self-concept. Ushioda and Dörnyei (2009) explain different perspectives to analyze the concept of *self* in the context of English as an international language, in which intelligibility is not only desired but required. They explain that proficiency in the target language (intelligibility in the context of this study) is part of one's ideal self, and that it plays the role of a motivator to learn the language or in our context to improve one's intelligibility. The participants in this study used expressions such as: improving fluency, being more natural, and feeling more confident to describe their register after the implementation. They reported to have enjoyed the experience of recording and listening to themselves to improve speaking, which enhanced their confidence to speak English. This was evident both in their learning logs and the teacher's field notes.

- Learning log 2. Student 4

*Despite it was my own composition I felt comfortable reading it. I was very fluent while I was reading it.*

- Field notes. Session 10

*Students commented on the usefulness of the thinking time before recording.*

*"It was necessary to write the paragraph before" "I felt my speaking was more*

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*natural because I can use thought groups correctly when I think before" "I forgot to include intonation in my objective but I know I had to use it".*

These two entries may reveal that the participants' seem to feel more confident about speaking English despite the difficulties they had to implement suprasegmentals. This can be explained in the light of a psychological approach that explains learners' reactions towards their goals. Dweck (2000) states that learners facing a learning goal may feel challenged and willing to increase their competence. The participants in the target population could have been challenged by the difficulty they had using suprasegmentals and consequently may have tried very hard to use them. Listening to themselves and noticing improvement could have had an impact on their perception of themselves as speakers.

All in all, this final category may explain the importance of training learners in features to improve their intelligibility in the context of English as an international language.

### **5.3.2.2 Core category**

To answer the research question and through the interrelation of the three categories presented above and the literature that supports them, a core category appeared: *Enhancement of the learners' awareness of intelligible stress and intonation through a triadic process*. The researcher decided to use the term triadic process because the enhancement of the learners' awareness did not occur immediately or quickly. On the contrary, it took long for them to give steps towards awareness of intelligibility and such process is not complete yet. Developing awareness may require long time of strategy use, reflection, and implementation of the target areas in one's speech. Additionally, the metaphor of the triad was used to

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illustrate the three areas in which awareness could have been developed, which were interrelated and equally important for the implementation of the current study. In fact, after implementing the strategies and activities proposed for this research study, it was evident that advanced English learners can raise awareness of their own intelligible stress and intonation by a triadic process that involves: Firstly, a process that fosters language awareness to understand the use of suprasegmental features and acknowledge their communicative value. Secondly, a process that promotes learning awareness to use metacognitive strategies in order to become self-regulated learners. Finally, a process that inspires self-awareness as learners identify their own register and enhance their self-confidence as English speakers.

### **5.4. Conclusion**

Raising awareness of the learners' intelligible stress and intonation implies the development of awareness in different areas and at different levels. Although not all participants from the population reached the same level of awareness in terms of language, learning, and themselves, the data collected suggests that the individuals reflected upon these areas during the implementation stage, which had an impact on their performance.

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## **Chapter 6: Conclusions and pedagogical implications**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the discussion about the findings of the current research study and the implications it may have on the global English language teaching and learning community, as well as the national and institutional context.

### **6.2 Comparison of results with results of previous studies**

The current research study aimed at examining the impact the training in metacognitive strategies may have on a group of adult learners' awareness of their stress and intonation. The results suggested that the use of goal-setting, overviewing, and self-evaluating could have had an impact on the learners' awareness by means of a triadic process that involved fostering metalinguistic awareness, promoting awareness of the use of metacognitive strategies, and provoking self-awareness to understand one's speech and increase self-confidence in English. Such findings relate to results of other studies carried out in Colombia and overseas.

The findings related to language awareness call to mind the results of a research study on the relationship between language awareness and second language pronunciation carried out by Kennedy and Trofimovich (2010) in Canada. Through a mixed-method research approach, they analyzed the comments made by participants about aspects of language awareness. They found a relationship between participants' pronunciation ratings, and the number of qualitative language awareness comments in their journals. Similarly, the results of the current research study showed a relationship between the participants' reflective

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comments on their learning logs and their use of suprasegmentals. It appears that participants whose comments about the metacognitive strategies were vague and general, struggled to understand how stress and intonation work or what their role is on communication. As a result, they seemed not to use suprasegmentals. It can be concluded that the use of metacognitive strategies to plan, monitor, and evaluate one's learning can help learners focus their attention on language elements such as suprasegmentals. Attention on such elements may, therefore, help learners use them intentionally for communication.

Nevertheless, this study did not analyze students' interests or motivations to learn English. It can be argued that in the context of English as an international language, learners may need it in order to participate in different communicative scenarios. For instance, one of the participants of this study reported he was learning English because he aimed at taking up an online master's program that required him to read and write in this language. Consequently, he did not show much interest in developing oral intelligibility. His comments on the learning logs seemed to be general and to focus on the use of the strategy for other purposes different than speaking. For that reason, this student did not show much progress in terms of intelligibility. Nevertheless, he did give steps towards self-regulation by transferring metacognitive strategies to other areas of his interest such as writing, in which he was not instructed for the purpose of this study.

Regarding intelligible stress and intonation, few studies have been carried out in the national context to tackle suprasegmentals. Frodden and McNully (2011) conducted a study about the teaching of suprasegmentals to beginner pre-service EFL teachers at a well-known

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Colombian University. Their findings suggest that giving priority to suprasegmentals may improve the learners' comprehensibility but also that "learners' motivation grows as they experience success in learning the rhythm and intonation of the new language." (p. 103.) Although they followed a different approach, the results of both studies may relate because there seems to be a correlation between learners' ability to use stress and intonation intelligibly, and their affective filter. The participants of this study seemed to have given steps towards intelligibility by modifying their register in English, which had an impact on their self-awareness. Listening to their own intelligible speech may have impacted positively their own perception as speakers and as Frodden and McNully (2011) state, they may feel more motivated.

### **6.3 Significance of the results**

The results of the present research study may be pertinent for the institution where it was carried out because it may suggest a methodology to tackle suprasegmentals in a way that is coherent with the program's vision of language and learning. Regarding language, the methodology used for this study explored suprasegmentals for communication rather than for drilling practice. This can be coherent with the institutional vision of language as a communicative tool, not as a system. About learning, the current methodology implied the use of metacognitive strategies to allow learners take responsibility for their own learning, which is one of the institutional main goals. Implementing such a methodology may help learners develop both their communicative competence and their self-regulation in the way the program requires them to do.

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These results can also be transferable to other contexts of adult language learning. As Knowles (1980) explains, adult learners experience a need to learn something when they feel it may help them cope with everyday situations and challenges. One of the challenges adult learners may encounter in their academic or professional lives is the need to be self-regulated, to develop resourcefulness and engagement with learning, as Zumbrunn (2011) states. Therefore, adult learners who are interested in developing such attitudes may benefit from training in metacognitive strategies, given that these strategies seem to foster self-regulation.

Additionally, the results of this study can be transferrable to other Colombian classrooms because the study seems to be coherent to the current demands the Colombian Ministry of Education has about English communication in the classroom. Colombian English classes are expected to be communicative. Due to the fact that one of the findings was that working on suprasegmentals may enhance the students' intelligibility, it can be pertinent to train learners in these language elements to guarantee effective communication.

In terms of the global context of English language teaching, the results of the current study may provide useful insights for analyzing the implementation of the lingua franca core proposed by Jenkins (2000) in Colombia, a country from the expanding circle (in which English is not the official language but it is studied by a large amount of people as a medium for international communication). Such insights may provide answers about the questions posed by Jenkins (2006) about the extent to which intelligibility in English is taken into account for international communication among teachers and learners for activity, syllabus and curriculum design.

# USING METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES TO RAISE AWARENESS OF STRESS AND INTONATION

## **6.4 Limitations of the present study**

During the development of this study, the researcher faced a number of limitations that produced significant changes in the research design and implementation. One of the most significant limitations faced has to do with timing. First, the fact that at the institution teachers are assigned their classes according to the customer demands delayed the needs analysis procedure. The teacher/researcher had to wait until she was assigned the target course to carry out the first stage of the process, which altered the preliminary proposal.

Once the implementation started, the teacher/researcher had to handle the numerous syllabus requirements and to accommodate her research lesson planning to the regular class activities. The strict and linear curriculum the institution has challenged the researcher to be resourceful and wise to manage the time. Due to the fact that during the course in which the research took place requires learners to develop an ambitious written project, it was difficult for the researcher to find the appropriate time for the implementation of the study, which was mainly based on speaking. She had to dedicate little time every day to collect data from learners and to develop the habit of taking field notes. Additionally, the researcher had to be resourceful to make the most out of the materials students are familiar with such as the book and videos. This made it possible for the researcher to incorporate the study in the daily class activities.

## **6.5 Further research**

Despite the limitations faced during the implementation, the research question posed for this study was answered. Nevertheless, after the implementation and data analysis stage



## USING METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES TO RAISE AWARENESS OF STRESS AND INTONATION

some questions arose. The first question relates to timing. Due to the written project learners had to develop in the target course, little time could be devoted to the training of suprasegmentals or metacognitive strategies. Probably as a result of that, not all learners seemed to have developed awareness in some of the three categories that emerged. The researcher hypothesizes that the implementation of this study may be more effective in a course whose emphasis is on speaking because it requires time to train learners in strategies and suprasegmentals. It would be worth implementing it in another course at the institution and compare the results. This may provide the institution with ideas to adjust the existent syllabi, which are being updated.

Another question that arose relates to the target population of the study, who are young adult learners, aiming at improving their professional and academic profiles. Could this study be carried out with a different kind of population and obtain similar results? Would younger learners benefit from the training in suprasegmentals and metacognitive strategies? These questions are pertinent because the results of the study demonstrated potential to be implemented in response to the requirements of the Ministry of Education in terms of communication. However, further research is needed in regards to younger learners, metacognition and language awareness.

### **6.6 Conclusion**

This study has addressed some of the needs the particular target population had at the institution. Despite the fact that a number of students seemed to have developed awareness of at least one of the emergent categories, some students did not show much interest in

## USING METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES TO RAISE AWARENESS OF STRESS AND INTONATION

participating or did not show evidence of having developed much awareness. The reasons for that to have occurred range from time limitations to individual interests but a number of questions arise from those particular situations: what effects may the study have on a different population? Would this study have similar results in a different institution where learners may have no training in strategies? Further research would be needed to answer them.

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# USING METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES TO RAISE AWARENESS OF STRESS AND INTONATION

## Appendix A: Exit Profile



centro  
colombo  
americano

### CHALLENGE 1-3 EXIT PROFILE

Feb.2015

#### Learning

I use English to learn about other subjects. I have identified tools to access information and learn English as a leisure activity.

#### Goals and assessment:

I have clear academic and/or professional goals and English is a key tool to achieve these personal goals. I am an active learner who can identify my own strengths and weaknesses and develop an action plan to improve my level of English.

#### Study habits and tools:

- I usually plan my lessons according to my teacher's instructions and spend the necessary time with my study materials to review what I have learned in class.
- I have established a study routine in which I use various resources such as videos, websites, TV shows in order to improve my grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary use.
- I use a monolingual dictionary to expand my vocabulary, keep record of new words and incorporate them in my daily interactions.
- I have a system to gather and organize information found on the Internet about global and local issues.

#### Class Project

I have developed a critical view about complex global issues and have learned to collaborate in order to research about these issues or respond to a community problem.

I can search the web, evaluate different sources of information and choose the most reliable ones to complete my project tasks.

#### Strategies:

- **Grammar:**  
I can analyze grammar charts and infer rules of complex English structures.  
I am aware of the different sentence patterns and can use them accurately in my writing assignments.
- **Listening:**  
I usually take notes, report and discuss on the information I hear. I listen for discourse markers to focus my attention on specific information. I can also infer points of view.
- **Reading:**  
I identify the writer's opinion in articles and reports about contemporary issues and I can create my own informed opinion. I can gather process and organize all the necessary evidence to support my thoughts. I can classify useful Web sources to search for information in English. I figure out the meaning of new words from the context.
- **Speaking:**  
I can use correct intonation and stress patterns to start a conversation, emphasize a topic, and introduce examples. I am aware of the differences between some vowel and consonant sounds and the importance of their correct pronunciation to avoid problems with communication (ship /I/ vs. sheep/i/, sink /s/ vs think /θ/).

# USING METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES TO RAISE AWARENESS OF STRESS AND INTONATION



centro  
colombo  
americano

## CHALLENGE 1-3 EXIT PROFILE

2105.d91

Feb.2015

- **Vocabulary:**  
I can use different graphic organizers to record new vocabulary that I need to retrieve when giving an oral presentation or participating in a debate.
- **Writing:**  
I can write—in my own words—a well-organized and relevant position paper about a controversial issue, using appropriate connectors and punctuation. I can summarize and give opinions about stories, articles, speeches, debates, interviews or documentaries as part of the process of writing my position paper. I can correct my composition based on correction rubrics my teacher uses (e.g. MW, VT, GR. Etc.)

### Language

I can use English to express my opinion about personal and general topics such as current events, lifestyles and values, popular culture, problems and regrets among other topics. I can provide explanations and share information about my field of study or work and interests in a clear way without much hesitation. I can adapt my speech to different levels of formality depending on the situation. I use conversation models to sound more native-like.

I can use various tenses (past, present, future, perfect, etc.) and more elaborate structures (conditionals, passive voice with modals, etc.) to discuss topics of general interest.

I understand main ideas and concepts in long conversations, lectures, TV shows, news, etc. about general topics and can report these ideas with some accuracy.

I use appropriate vocabulary to give descriptions, express my point of view, and present arguments in different situations.

### Communication

I can defend a personal position demonstrating solid argumentation skills and cultural awareness of a controversial issue. I can often correct my mistakes while communicating because I recognize their eventual interference with my flow of ideas.

I can use language chunks (I've heard..., To tell you the truth..., I wonder..., I suppose..., etc.) and expressions (I hope that's not a problem, What do you mean?, etc.) to state my position regarding controversial issues.

USING METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES TO RAISE AWARENESS OF STRESS AND  
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**Appendix B: Needs analysis questionnaire**

**CENTRO COLOMBO AMERICANO**

**QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions**

Take some time to read the following questions and to write a few **key words** to answer them tomorrow in our face to face session. Be ready to **support** your ideas. Remember you are **not** going to be assessed.

The information provided will help your teacher identify your interests and expectations regarding your oral performance and consequently, come up with an action plan.

**1. How long have you been studying English in a language center?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**1. What is the most important aspect for you when you speak?**

Accuracy (using structures correctly) \_\_\_\_\_

Vocabulary (using a variety of words) \_\_\_\_\_

Fluency (speaking fast and with expertise) \_\_\_\_\_

Pronunciation (producing English sounds correctly) \_\_\_\_\_

Intonation (falling or rising according to your intention) \_\_\_\_\_

why? \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Have your been instructed on intonation and stress?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**4. What type of instruction about intonation have you received?**

You read about it in your book or  
you listened and repeated on your own,  
your teacher told you about it? Other. What?

\_\_\_\_\_

**1. What type of instruction about stress have you received?**

You read about it in your book or  
You listened and repeated on your own,  
Your teacher told you about it? Other. What?

\_\_\_\_\_

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INTONATION

1. **How did you like the experience?**

\_\_\_\_\_

1. **How do you feel when you have to complete activities about intonation in your English class?**

Motivated? \_\_\_\_\_

Demotivated? \_\_\_\_\_

**Why?** \_\_\_\_\_

1. **What is the most difficult for you?**

Stressing words to emphasize \_\_\_\_\_

Using rising or falling intonation \_\_\_\_\_

**why?** \_\_\_\_\_

1. **What do you do to solve your difficulties with stress?**

\_\_\_\_\_

1. **What do you do to solve your difficulties with intonation?**

\_\_\_\_\_

1. **What do you think is the role of intonation for communication?**

\_\_\_\_\_

1. **What do you think is the role of stress for communication?**

\_\_\_\_\_

1. **Would you like to learn more about how to use intonation for communicating?**

\_\_\_\_\_

1. **If you are asked to record yourself to monitor your stress and intonation you would be:**

very interested

Interested

Somehow interested


Not interested


**why?** \_\_\_\_\_

Thanks for your time and thorough insights.

USING METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES TO RAISE AWARENESS OF STRESS AND  
INTONATION

**Appendix C: Program consent letter**

 **Universidad de La Sabana**  
Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures  
Graduate Programs  
► Master in English Language Teaching - Autonomous Learning Environments



**CENTRO COLOMBO AMERICANO  
ADULT ENGLISH PROGRAM**

Bogota, April 4, 2014

Mr. Samuel Reales  
Adult English Program Coordinator  
Bogota

I am currently working on an action research project at the Masters Program in English Language Teaching – Autonomous Learning Environments at Universidad de la Sabana. It is aimed to positively impact the students' learning through the implementation of Metacognitive strategies to raise awareness of their own use of stress and intonation in English. With the desire of contributing to the development of research projects that enrich the students' learning at Centro Colombo Americano, I would like to ask you for your permission to carry it out.

The proposal will be conducted during the first two weeks of the Challenge 1-3 block. All activities related to the Reseach project have been aligned to the institutional curriculum, syllabus and project of the block. Therefore, the implementation will not affect the students' learning processes or their outcomes. On the contrary, it aims to facilitate them.

This project will be conducted with the Challenge 1-3 group at 10 am. The participants will be informed of its objectives and their participation will be voluntary and anonimous. They will sign a consent letter to authorize me to use the gathered information for my final Master's thesis and further presentations.

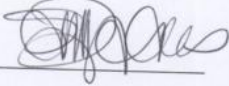
Sincerely,

Diana Carolina Peñuela Montoya  
Adult English Program Teacher

.....

CONSENT

YES  \_\_\_\_\_ NO  \_\_\_\_\_

NAME Samuel Reales SIGNATURE 

# USING METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES TO RAISE AWARENESS OF STRESS AND INTONATION

## Appendix D: Student consent letter



Bogota, August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013

Dear Student,

My name is Diana Peñuela. I am your teacher at Centro Colombo Americano and I am currently taking my Master studies in English Language Teaching – Autonomous Learning Environments at Universidad de La Sabana. Therefore I am carrying out an action research project entitled: Using Metacognitive Strategies to Raise Awareness of Stress and intonation. Such project aims to provide you with tools to improve your oral performance in English.

If you wish to participate, during this block you will be asked to answer some questions about your own perception of elements of your oral speech through a videotaped interview. Any information derived from your participation in the interview will be kept confidential and anonymous. It will not interfere with your learning process or results in the institution.

I appreciate your support and participation.

### Consent statement

*Having read the above, I voluntarily agree to participate in the research process. I acknowledge that I was informed about its objective and procedure and I inform that I would like to be identified by the following pseudonym: \_\_\_\_\_.*

Cristina Giraldo.

Signature



Aug - 22 - 2013

Date



USING METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES TO RAISE AWARENESS OF STRESS AND  
INTONATION

Appendix E: Learning log sample

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MY LEARNING LOG</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>A tool to keep track of my oral progress</b></p> 	
<p><b>TASK 1. Global citizenship</b></p> <small>© Can Stock Photo - csg8031876</small>	
<b>TASK OBJECTIVE</b>	
<b>STRATEGY TO USE</b>	<p><b>OVERVIEWING.</b> What is it about?</p>
<b>WHAT DID I DO RIGHT?</b>	
<b>WHAT DID I DO WRONG? WHY?</b>	
<b>DID THIS STRATEGY HELP ME ACCOMPLISH THE TASK OBJECTIVE? HOW?</b>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MY LEARNING LOG</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>A tool to keep track of my oral progress</b></p> 	
<p><b>TASK 2. Finding a topic for the position paper</b></p> <small>© Can Stock Photo - csg8031876</small>	
<b>TASK OBJECTIVE</b>	
<b>STRATEGY TO USE</b>	<p><b>SETTING GOALS</b> What is it about?</p> <p>What are my objectives in terms of speaking for this task?</p>

USING METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES TO RAISE AWARENESS OF STRESS AND  
INTONATION

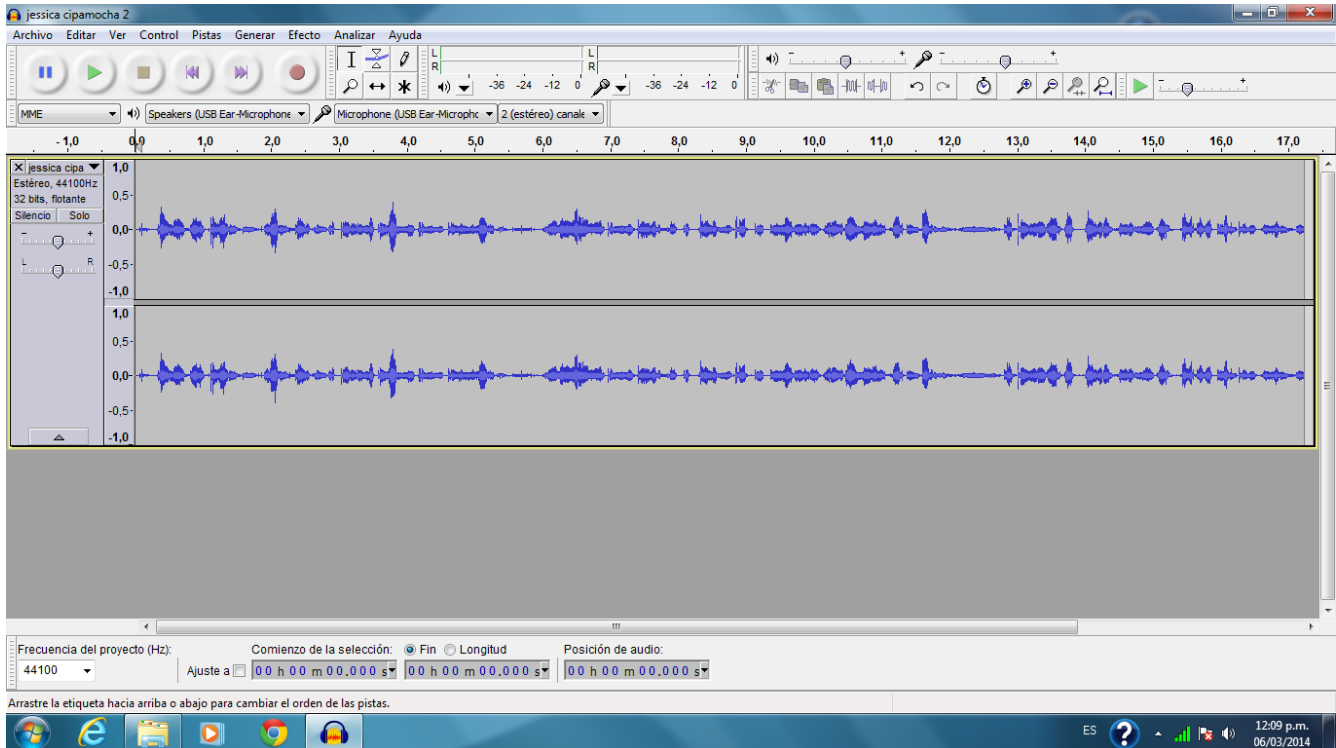
<b>WHAT DID I DO RIGHT?</b>	
<b>WHAT DID I DO WRONG? WHY?</b>	
<b>DID THIS STRATEGY HELP ME ACCOMPLISH THE TASK OBJECTIVE? HOW?</b>	

# USING METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES TO RAISE AWARENESS OF STRESS AND INTONATION

## Appendix F: Recorded artifact sample

### Student 1

### Recording 1



USING METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES TO RAISE AWARENESS OF STRESS AND  
INTONATION

**Appendix G: implementation time table**

<b>IMPLEMENTATION TIME TABLE</b>			
	<b>DATE</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>DATA COLLECTION</b>
	February 17 <sup>th</sup>	PREPARATION: GOAL SETTING initial reflection on learning goals for the month. 1 hour	N.A
	February 18 <sup>th</sup>	PRESENTATION: Use the SMART objectives worksheet for students to correct their own objectives for the course. 1 hour.	ARTIFACT: SMART goal format.
	February 19 <sup>th</sup>	PRACTICE ss set SMART objectives for the lesson based on their class preparation. 30 minutes	N.A
	February 20 <sup>th</sup>	PRACTICE students use worksheet to set their objectives before a video activity and to assess them at the end. 1 hour	ARTIFACT: Video activity worksheet.
	February 21 <sup>st</sup>	PRACTICE students set SMART objectives before a written task. They assess them at the end. 1 hour.	N.A
	February 24 <sup>th</sup>	EVALUATION students assess their accomplishment of their personal objective for the week by using the LEARNING LOG 1. 1 hour	LEARNING LOG to assess the strategy.
	February 25 <sup>th</sup>	EXPANSION students discuss the ways they can set personal goals in other contexts. 30 minutes	N.A
	February 26 <sup>th</sup>	PREPARATION Initial reflection about pronunciation aspects. After listening to a conversation from the book, students discuss upon their most serious difficulties to understand speakers (suprasegmentals). 1 hour.	N.A
	February 28 <sup>th</sup>	PRESENTATION Presentation of intonation patterns from track, pronunciation booster and reflection. 1 hour	ARTIFACT: Pronunciation booster exercise.
	March 3 <sup>rd</sup>	PRACTICE students will practice with intonation patterns during the communicative event. description of their favorite band. 1 hour	N.A

USING METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES TO RAISE AWARENESS OF STRESS AND  
INTONATION

March 4 <sup>th</sup>	PRACTICE students set goals to use intonation patterns in their oral communicative event about the role of music in their lives. 1 hour	TEACHER'S FIELD NOTES
March 7 <sup>th</sup>	EVALUATION students use intonation patterns to record their task. Then they fill up the learning log. 2 hours.	Audacity recording LEARNING LOG
March 20 <sup>th</sup>	PRESENTATION students reflect upon overiewing before the communicative event. they try to recycle previous content in the communicative event about buyer's remorse.1 hour	TEACHER'S FIELD NOTES
March 21 <sup>st</sup>	PRACTICE Use the strategy overiewing to recycle vocabulary in the communicative event about spending habits.	N.A
March 24 <sup>nd</sup>	EVALUATION students complete their learning log to assess the strategy for this unit.	LEARNING LOG
March 24 <sup>th</sup>	PRESENTATION STAGE: students identify the importance of changing one's intonation for communication	Field notes
March 25 <sup>th</sup>	PRACTICE STAGE: students practice stressing words to express certainty.	Students' artifacts
April 2 <sup>nd</sup>	EVALUATION STAGE: students complete a learning log to assess their performance on a recorded task	Students' learning log
	EVALUATION STAGE: students complete a learning log to assess their performance during the position paper presentation.	Field notes

# USING METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES TO RAISE AWARENESS OF STRESS AND INTONATION

## Appendix H: Matrix

DATA ANALYSIS updated ☆ diacarolin@gmail.com

File Edit View Insert Format Data Tools Add-ons Help Last edit was on November 30, 2014 Comments Share

Font: Arial, Size: 10, Bold, Italic, Underline, Text Color, Background Color, Bulleted List, Numbered List, Indentation, Paragraph, Styles, Table, Merge, Split, Undo, Redo, Find, Replace, Print, Zoom

student	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	student	Goal Setting	Codes	Overviewing	Codes					
2	1	1. write two paragraphs, awareness	1. write and speak capacity to write specific learning goals, self-monitoring to identify learning difficulties, linking as a target area.							
3	2	1. write two paragraphs of everyday use	1. make a connection capacity to write specific learning goals, improved pronunciation of new vocabulary, awareness of pronunciation							
4	3	1. write two paragraphs the strategy, capacity	1. write two paragraphs self-regulation to identify his/her own weaknesses, strengths and ways to improve, phonological awareness of							
5	4	1. write two paragraphs self-monitoring to identify	1. make a connection capacity to write specific learning goals, improved fluency, improved self-confidence to speak, self-regulation							
6	5	1. Global citizen 2. to identify difficulties	1. global warming self-regulation to identify his/her own strengths, weaknesses, and ways to improve, fluency as a target area							
7	6	1. yes, make a presentation difficulties	1. make a connection capacity to write specific learning goals, self-monitoring to identify his/her own difficulties, self-regulation to identify							
8	7	1. to define the given, and how to improve	1. make a connection capacity to write specific learning goals, phonological awareness of content vs function words, improved fluency							
9	8	1. to learn the best of the use of target	1. make a connection specific learning goals, relation between target language and speaking, improved self-confidence to speak, self-regulation							
10	9	1. include new vocabulary to identify his/her own weaknesses, strengths and ways to improve.								
11	10	1. write an article to identify his/her own	1. make a connection capacity to write specific learning goals, awareness of the usefulness of the strategy and how to use it. meta-cognitive							
12										
13	My research question: To what extent might the use of three metacognitive learning strategies: overviewing, goal-setting, and self-evaluating raise awareness of student?									
14	QUESTIONS IN EACH LOG									
15	Goal Setting: 1. task objective. 2. what is SETTING SMART GOALS about? 3. what did I do right? 4. what did I do wrong? why? 5. did this strategy help me accomplish the task?									

Learning Logs Recorded Artifacts Field notes Preliminary Categories Axial Coding Categories

USING METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES TO RAISE AWARENESS OF STRESS AND  
INTONATION

**Appendix I: Lesson plan sample**

**LESSON PLAN 16**

**BY DIANA PEÑUELA**

**IMPLEMENTATION SESSION NUMBER : 16**

**DATE : March 25th**

**IMPLEMENTATION TIME : 1 hour**

**SUPRASEGMENTAL : Stress**

**OBJECTIVES:**

COMMUNICATIVE: comment on a presentation

LANGUAGE: use indirect speech with modals

LEARNING: monitor my speaking

IMPLEMENTATION OBJECTIVE: PRACTICE STAGE: students practice stressing words to express certainty.

**CLASS ACTIVITIES**

CONVERSATION (20 minutes)

Students listen to a conversation and identify useful vocabulary to speculate. Then, they personalize the conversation to talk about people in the classroom.

GRAMMAR (30 minutes)

Students read and analyze the grammar box from their book and they complete the controlled practice exercise.

COMMUNICATIVE EVENT (1 hour)

Students prepare a mini presentation of their position paper (class project) and highlight the most important words they want to express. Later, they present in small groups and get feedback from their peers about their modifying stress to express certainty. They complete the assessment format (appendix 5)

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT: students' artifact

CONSTRUCT TO TACKLE: intelligible stress and learning strategies