

Online Language Learning Communities and the Development of Pronunciation in English as a Foreign Language

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Abstract

Technology has advanced dramatically as a major contributing factor in education and in foreign language learning particularly. New and diverse online learning environments have offered the alternative for language students to complement language learning traditionally taken place in the classroom with enhanced interaction in Online Language Learning Communities (OLLC). This research is based on a mixed method design and examines the use of significant OLLC aimed at improving pronunciation in A1-A2 English Level students at the Language Academic Institute of Central University. The data were obtained through the statistical values reported by the OLLC of the experimental group, as well as the statistical values reported by the textbook platform. Voice recordings were used to reveal if OLLC are effective in relation to the development of pronunciation. Additionally, after applying a questionnaire related to the OLLC used, the OLLC that was considered most appropriate and pleasant for the students during the work time was determined. Finally, the results indicated that the students who participated in the OLLC improved their pronunciation by decreasing the number of pronunciation errors.

KEY WORDS: Online communities, pronunciation skills, interaction.

Resumen Ejecutivo

La tecnología ha avanzado dramáticamente como un factor principal en la educación y particularmente en el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras. Los nuevos y diversos ambientes de aprendizaje online ofrecen la posibilidad de que estudiantes de lengua puedan complementar su formación, tradicionalmente llevada a cabo dentro del aula, con el uso y la interacción que permiten las Comunidades en Línea para el Aprendizaje de Lenguas (CLAL). Esta investigación está basada en un diseño cuali-cuantitativo y examina el uso de CLAL para mejorar la pronunciación de estudiantes de nivel A1-A2 de inglés en el Instituto Académico de idiomas de la Universidad Central. Los datos fueron obtenidos de los valores estadísticos reportados por las CLAL del grupo experimental, así como los valores estadísticos reportados por la plataforma del texto de trabajo. Grabaciones de voz fueron usadas para revelar si las CLAL son efectivas en relación al desarrollo de la pronunciación. Adicionalmente, después de aplicar un cuestionario relacionados a las CLAL utilizadas se determinó aquella que fue considerada como más adecuada y agradable para los estudiantes durante el tiempo de trabajo. Finalmente, los resultados indicaron que los estudiantes quienes participaron en las CLAL mejoraron su pronunciación disminuyendo el número de errores de pronunciación.

Palabras clave: Comunidades en línea, Habilidades de Pronunciación, Interacción.

Introduction

Online Language Learning Communities (OLLC) are virtual spaces where an individual or a group of people interact in order to fulfill specific needs, exchange information, share activities, record audios, or listen to authentic recordings. In this sense, this article aims to determine how

OLLC are expected to improve pronunciation in students of English as a foreign language, so that they can use it in international contexts, having in mind that English is now referred to as English as an International Language (EIL) as it has become global and it is spoken by both native and non-native speakers in every part of the world. Our argu-

ment is that our English language students should be ready to use and identify pronunciation features that would allow them to communicate at ease in any English speaking environment.

Pronunciation is by far one of the most difficult aspects to master when learning a language, yet it is also one of the aspects upon which least time is spent by language teachers in the classroom (Pourhossein, 2011), added to the difficulties and lack of confidence that teachers feel in how to teach pronunciation, which in the end might be due to the traditional thought that teaching pronunciation should enable students to acquire an accent that is as close as possible to that of a native speaker only (Brown 1992, Claire 1993, Fraser 2000, Jenkins 2002). Certainly, teaching pronunciation can be a challenge; and language teachers have to be alert to the fact that there is a constant emerge of different varieties of international English by the power of people who speak it as lingua franca in different contexts and encounters where we expect our students to be part of one day as they should feel empowered to understand and be understood by all; therefore, alongside this global changes, new teaching strategies should be also applied and OLLC are definitely suitable alternatives.

In this regard the purpose of the OLLC to be implemented is to promote autonomous-learning, so students become their own guides, as they can choose their own studying rhythm and time. Learners should carry out a sequence of skilled actions to become proficient in a language different from their own, of course not all the skills are to be mastered at once (Lupiccinni 2007; Jones, 2014), and so the A1-A2 level learners' linguistic competences over pronunciation can be enhanced based on constant practice performed on OLLC and complemented by classroom oriented- types of interactions, having in mind that students' language production at this level should be clear enough to be understood while dealing with simple and straightforward information as they express themselves in familiar contexts; this description corresponds to the expected achievements of A1-A2 learners of English as a Foreign Language stated by the Common European

Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2001).

Traditionally, teachers have tried to make use of the different components of this core skill in order to apply them in the classroom. Language textbooks have facilitated this process; however, several factors such as the difficulty of teaching this skill, time constraints as well as unawareness of alternative approaches to reinforce this basic linguistic competence on language students have restricted teachers' efforts to at least work on core features of pronunciation (Hill and Raven, 2009; Kelly, 2012). For instance, in the Ecuadorian context, the teaching of pronunciation has not been given the importance that it deserves as other skills have; moreover, English teachers will agree that students, because Spanish is their first language, do not always have the opportunity to practice English in a real English speaking environment other than in the classroom, (Quezada 2017, Almeida *et al.* 2018), a reality that affects the mastery of the English language learning altogether.

This allows OLLC become important alternative resources both to promote general pronunciation awareness on students' language production and to gain attention on the importance of teaching and practicing pronunciation in the classroom. But then again, teachers should have in mind that it is very certain that having a good command of grammar or vocabulary and being able to read and write appropriately are all part of mastering a language (Kelly, 2012); however, not being able to pronounce a word hugely hinders communication no matter the English speaking environment our students could be immersed in.

This article will endeavor to provide insights on what pronunciations aspects are required at an A1-A2 level, exploring the potential technological affordances of online language learning communities in this regard. Therefore, it would attempt to contextualize the issue of practicing pronunciation and the relevance it deserves when learning a foreign language. The results of some practical techniques and activities, which involve the use of online language learning communities, are presented as evidence to promote general phonetic awareness by A1-A2 English level students;

therefore, improvement of their pronunciation is also shown.

2 Online Language Learning Communities - Overview

Online Language Learning Communities, as stated by Garrison et al. (2007), are fundamentally social by nature; they take, as a starting point; the Learning in Community notion which refers to the group of individuals who, in a collaborative way, get together with the sole purpose of arriving at a balanced critical and reflective proposal to construct meaning and to obtain mutual understanding. By doing so, learning communities are conceived under the principles of social constructivism, which in practical terms perceives learning in a social environment, where students are the ones in charge of building their own learning, motivated by common interests.

In such way, an online learning community is a virtual community whose members interact principally through the internet. The emphasis of the learning process is mainly collaborative; knowledge is perceived as a social construct (Lupicchini, 2007), so it is implied that educators become facilitators of the construction of knowledge and at the same time members of the same community which is characterized by promoting interaction, meaning negotiation and constant practice, without leaving aside easy accessibility, where new learning skills and relevant content can be developed (Swan & Shea 2005, Pérez et al 2001).

A learning community can act as a system of communication through which its members, upon previous registration, can upload discussion topics, give advice, interact via forums, chats, blogs, e-mails, social networks, virtual worlds, or games to name a few. Interaction then can be both synchronous and asynchronous, this latter could facilitate the instructors control over the topics studied, online discussions for example can afford participants the opportunity to take more time to reflect on their classmates' ideas and contributions about the same topic.

Nevertheless, the discussion built around this claim also triggers queries on its feasibility to ensure continuous students' participation over time

and how to keep interaction; therefore, this study deemed it necessary to consider an equilibrium model as part of the learning process, this is to refer to the students' expected level of interaction in online communication, a concept supported by content analysis of online discourse, (Rourke, et al., 2001). In this sense, the OLLC indirectly show that while working on their online collaborative activities, participants already possess the tools and motivation to continue joining in the activities which later could be discussed and shared collectively in the classroom.

2.1 Online Communities and English Language Learning

There is still a limited number of studies with reference to the use of OLLC and Applied Linguistics in the teaching of English, nonetheless, it is clear that language is a social phenomenon which, because of the logic of social dynamics, has been immersed in the insistent demand for complementing language teaching with the broad spectrum of technical benefits offered by web-based instruction (Lupicchini, 2007), in the sense that this communities facilitate cooperative learning among individuals who share a common project which is practice pronunciation, in spite of being physically separated.

The term online language learning has been referred to several learning arrangements such as web based learning, blended learning, hybrid course, virtual learning, distance learning, teleconferencing, videoconferencing, audioconferencing or online courses, mistakenly, overgeneralizing the use of electronic technologies for the delivery of instruction they offer, besides mixing their delivery formats with the technological tools and methods surrounding technology classroom use. In this study, we focus on Online Language Learning Communities according to the previously defined notion of virtual spaces, where its characteristic will facilitate learning.

What needs to be clear is that the proposal of Online Language Communities lies in the direct impact that it has over the teaching and learning of languages, allowing students and teachers to participate in a collaborative learning environment and promote creative and active tasks in the lear-

ning process (Harrison and Thomas, 2009). At the same time, learning skills and other cognitive aspects as well as social processes like interaction, cooperative learning, identity, autonomous learning, critical and reflective thinking are integrated. To these advantages, it must be added the ability for immediate feedback, not only from the teacher as part of the formal learning guidance, but also from the supporting tools that accompany the OLLC.

Having said so, a Language Learning Community, allows students and even teachers work together to develop different aspects of a language they would like to learn or perfect. Santamaria (2007) affirms that these types of communities have recently appeared with the need of educational and supporting resources for language learning on the Web taking advantage of the Web 2.0 concept of information sharing and collaboration tools or social tools as they are also known, and so English teachers, would definitely appreciate the didactic approach in a natural and holistic way that the teaching and learning of pronunciation could have, since there is no need to prepare any additional material as students practice English pronunciation by direct communication or mutual and immediate correction of the proposed exercises by the OLLC.

2.2 Previous Studies on OLLC and Language Teaching

Research based on these communities mostly focus on technical aspects, accessibility, impact, type of learning content offered and even the interaction between language and culture. Some have shown weaknesses in the interactive sphere, while language learning has been very effective; nevertheless, their users have established new interactive web spaces with the purpose of inclusively practice and learn English outside the community, that is the case of one of the most widely accepted online communities: Livemocha, for example, which despite having being closed and now redesigned by Rossetta Stone, has absorbed a great number of followers to be connected and organized on their own (Zourou 2013, Zorou & Laoiseau 2013).

Jones (2014), mentions a case study about learning Welsh, which corresponds to a linguistic minority spoken natively in Wales. This group has found the way to revive their language through the Say Something in Welsh (SSIW) online language learning community where learners can participate in conversations, forums, to later meet face-to-face practice and promote a culturally rich Welsh festival.

Another study, mentioned by Harrison (2009), was conducted in Japan with students of English as a foreign language, who participated in online language learning communities which proved that students not only improved their language skills, but also their learning identity, in the sense that students were able to create their own personal learning environment, and through a mediating process they were also able to understand the importance of the other as studied from a psychological educational perspective as to manage their own particular learning strategies.

A similar view on social interaction and continuity in the study of languages was conducted in China by the Research Center for Language Learning of the International Studies University. English language students participated in the research, proving once more, that the sense of community perceived and created by them was a direct result of their involvement in online language learning communities as they were immersed in constant interaction. The project raised awareness and developed a desire of continuity in the learning process (Zhao & Chen, 2014).

Indirectly, as stated in the cases previously mentioned, participants in an online language learning community make use of the tools offered by those communities, in a way that their linguistic competences are developed in real contexts of interaction, achieving effective communicative competence in the foreign language; therefore, for this study we view OLLC not only as merely common meeting spaces online but as an alternative for:

1. Students sharing and comparing information in regards of their strengths and knowledge of pronunciation.

2. Potential disagreement on pronunciation appropriateness use, which becomes necessary as each student brings up meaningful knowledge creation.
3. Negotiation of meaning so students can clarify, rephrase, and confirm what they have learned from their pronunciation practice online.
4. Finally, evaluation of students' own pronunciation progress and experience in the process.

3 OLLC and the teaching of English pronunciation

As English has become a global language, there is no need for students to model accents as if they were native speakers of English; anyhow, students should become aware of making their own speech intelligible to others, for it is noticeable for some language learners their difficulty on producing particular sounds, teachers should then help students being able to communicate effectively rather than seeing pronunciation as a way for students to speak perfectly (Walker 2001, Tennant 2007, Ur 2012). In other words, showing proper fluency and accuracy while speaking really matters, but most importantly students need to be aware of the standard phonological conventions used by most speakers in international communication.

In language teaching, pronunciation has been identified with the articulation of individual sounds, with stress and intonation patterns of the target language, added to connected speech and fluency, and the correspondence between sounds and spelling (Harmer, 2005; Kelly, 2012; Trask, 1996). To find a way to teach pronunciation, and cope with intelligibility, it would be important to first analyze some of the most common mispronunciation features found in international English conversations produced by non-native speakers of English as cited by Jenkins (2002) and Ur (2012):

Phonetic reduction

- Substitution of vowel sounds for example in words like: live /i:/– leave /ɪ/.

- Confusion to distinguish “th” sounds in words like: think /θ/ or the /ð/,
- Substitution of /s/ for /z/ in words like: zoo
- Shortened pronunciation of unstressed syllables when using the schwa for weak forms such as in the word about /ə/, or in complete sentences as for example I had **an** apple **for** lunch **today**.
- Pronunciation of silent consonants, like /d/ in Wednesday.

Sentence phonetics

- Stress in the wrong syllable: Where is the *hó-tel?* or Where is the *hotél?*, I would like some *désert*. I would like some *dessért*.
- Speech rhythm based on context: I was **angry** because my boyfriend **didn't call**.

Therefore, it is not expected from the instructor to teach and focus on all the aspects mentioned before, but emphasize on those in which students are more prone to mispronounce. Crystal (2010) mentions that students should be exposed to as many varieties of English as possible, so they realize that there is more to learn than what is stated in their textbooks. Repetition is also important, but not in isolation as Harmer (2005) & Gilakjani (2012) advocate; pronunciation skills go hand in hand with communication (both comprehension and production). Likewise, Harmer (2005) assures that the more students get exposed to some audio or videotape materials, the greater chance that their intelligibility gets improved which is basically the main objective that through the use of OLLC this study has tried to reach.

And with this said, when using OLLC as alternative to develop A1-A2 English level students' pronunciation skills in English, our proposal states:

1. Students need to know what a word sounds like, and consistently practice those sounds to improve their own pronunciation regardless their English proficiency level.
2. Teachers should first identify students' weaknesses in pronunciation to later guide them

- on the type of exercises students should emphasize while working in the OLLC.
3. Students should understand these communities to access to supporting learning material that will make them aware of different English sounds and sound features to improve their speaking immeasurably.
 4. Students will be able to interact with the content, instructor, and other learners, to help them achieve the goal of improved comprehension and intelligibly.
 5. Finally, students will become autonomous learners of the learning process which means that they will be able to construct personal meaning, to their own understanding of spoken English, and of course to improve their pronunciation from the whole learning experience.
 6. OLLC are a great alternative if teachers are limited in time and classroom resources to help students improve their pronunciation. Pronouncing words can sometimes be difficult. This why it is necessary to practice saying English words as often as you can as it is one of the most important features of OLLC.
 7. In summary, teachers should be aware that through OLLC, their students will be involved in the following tasks:
 - **Recording** It's an effective tool to find out if you are pronouncing words properly and if you can be understood.
 - **Listening and Writing**, which promotes sound discrimination, word stress and sentence stress.
 - **Reading and listening**, which enhances students' awareness about intonation to signal stress and accurate message conveyed, as word order is also encouraged.
 - **Listening and Lexical Recognition**, which promotes content and meaning discrimination through the exposure of real life situations, routines, emotions, food, shopping, whether, and so on.
 - **Listening** to understand word and sentence formation.
 - **Focused explanations** on how certain sounds are produced.
 - **Imitation of sounds** includes training rhythm in the repetition of simple words, sentences and dialogues.
 - **Intonation to** differentiate meaning and recognizing intonation patterns.
 - **Production of sentences** via repetition or translation
 - **Phonetic explanation of words**
 - **Exchanging of information** with the OLLC members
- While students get involved in the exercises offered by the OLLC, they automatically receive feedback on their percentage on fluency, and learned words in a weekly basis or at the end of each unit.

4 The five Online Language Learning Communities chosen

For the purpose of this research, five online language learning communities were chosen to be tested by A1-A2 Level English students. The characteristics of each OLLC are explained next:

English Class 101, described as free podcast online community designed for English language learning. It offers English audio and video lessons, voice recording activities, mobile applications, vocabulary learning tools like space repetition flash cards, word of the day, and English core word lists. (Six students registered to work in this free OLLC).

Wlingua, offers 600 English lessons in areas of writing, speaking, listening, and reading, from A1 to B2 levels of English. The practice is based on repetition as each lesson is approved once all the concepts have been mastered, it offers free mobile apps. (Six students registered to work in this free OLLC).

Duolingo, includes different lessons with their corresponding activities to promote oral pro-

duction, listening, reading and writing. Students receive immediate feedback on their progress in both, English and Spanish. It also offers free mobile apps. Each lesson is designed as a game; therefore, students are motivated to continue learning by receiving bonus points to access to other language practice benefits. (Six students registered to work in this free OLLC).

Busuu, provides complete free language courses, presented in short lessons concentrated in daily life, working and traveling contexts. Students are also allowed to chat with other members registered in the online community. (Six students registered to work in this free OLLC).

ABAEnglish, suggests a natural method to acquire the English language, students first listen and watch short films which present daily life situations, then students are invited to imitate the conversations they have heard to finally write and read using grammatical guidance. There are six levels in total, which go from A1 to C1; it has 144 units, with 8 lessons each. (All the students who participated in the previews OLLC mentioned, also registered and completed the exercises in this OLLC, with the purpose of participating in the summative tests it offered, as automatic statistic results were immediate delivered).

5 Research questions

This study seeks answers to the following research questions:

What type of Language Learning Communities can be used to the development of pronunciation in A1-A2 students?

What learning outcomes allow the Online Language Learning Communities for the development of pronunciation in English?

6 Methodology

This study was conducted by the mixed method approach, on one side it is qualitative as stated by Hernandez (2014) it uses data collection and analysis referred to the research questions or to come up with new ones during the interpretation process. On the other hand, it is quantitative because it is based on numbers which are used to analyze and to prove data and concrete infor-

mation useful to allow researchers to make decisions and to transform them into suable statistics to identify the teaching and the development of pronunciation and plan future interventions or improvements in this area.

7 Participants

The research took place during 2 months from January 2nd, 2018 to March 2nd, 2018 in an A1-A2 intensive English course at the Central University Language Academic Institute in Quito. It was a group of 30 Ecuadorian Spanish speaking students, aged between 20 and 33, male and female, each from different major subjects.

8 Research Project

Description

The research process was divided into three parts:

First, 5 different OLLC were used and assigned to A2-A1 to language learner students in to analyses the number of pronunciation activities as compared to the class textbook.

Secondly, the class members were divided into five groups, and were asked to register in the assigned OLLC which include the ones which had the most pronunciation exercises. Each group had a team leader whose English was certainly more fluent than the rest of the group members. This leader was in charge of supervising and reporting to the teacher the daily group participation, advances, and difficulties while working in the corresponding OLLC. A sixth group did not take part in the OLLC practice, and were dedicated to study their normal class pronunciation exercises offered by the textbook.

The third and last part, was to select two students, one who was part of all the pronunciation activities offered by the OLLC plus the ones offered in the textbook and another who only use the class textbook for practice, therefore, voice recordings were conducted to see how OLLC was or not effective in terms of pronunciation development.

9 Data Collection Procedure

To collect data, two instruments were designed:

1. A questionnaire to gather the type and number of pronunciation practices offer the OLLC in terms of frequency and features, and how appealing they were for students.
2. An observation sheet for group leaders to register what students did as part of their practice in the OLLC as compared to the ones in the textbook.

In general, data of this research was collected through data triangulation such as review of statistics provided by the OLLC, observation during student's participation in the OLLC, written reports, and focus groups. An initial introductory class took place to familiarize students with the concept of OLLC, general guidance was given during the two-month-practice period, in which the teacher and the group leaders, observed and held group sessions, to discuss progress, doubts, and provide feedback. Screen shots on students' progress and results generated by the OLLC were

taken as an evidence of the work accomplished. Students together with their group leaders presented oral and written reports to be shared with the class on a total of 10 occasions from the beginning to the end of the research. Important final discussions in focus groups were held to consolidate students' perceptions on the effectiveness of OLLC.

OLLC allow a great variety of practice in all language skills, anyhow, for the purpose of this research, it was important to focus on specific technological oriented tools for practicing pronunciation that the OLLC generated, which include: audio comments on students oral production, students repetition recordings, modeling exercises, listening comprehension exercises; and depending on the OLLC, evidence of text messages and audio and video conferences with other participants members of the OLLC were also collected.

10 Objectives

Demonstrate whether the use of online language learning communities was beneficial or not for students to improve their pronunciation in English.

Recognize the difference in students' performance between individual assigned and group OLLC.

11 Detail of Results

Part 1

Table 1. Number of Pronunciation activities

Pronunciation Features	Number of Pronunciation Activities (OLLC)	Number of Pronunciation Activities (TEXTBOOK)	Total number of Pronunciation activities
Sounds	3	5	8
Rhythm	7	10	17
Intonation	13	10	23
Stress	9	5	14
Total	27	30	57

The total number of pronunciation exercises according to pronunciation features comprises 57, out of which the majority number of exercises are stated in the OLLC. Phonetic reduction has been emphasized in the use of language texts, while pronunciation improvement activities such imitation, production, repetition and so on are more appealing for OLLC.

Table 2 – Analysis of recording – Mispronounced Words

Mispronounced Sounds	Speaker 1 OLLC	Speaker 2 TEXTBOOK	Total number
/θ/		something	1
/eɪ/		able	1
/θ/	birthday	birthday	2
/'rɪt.ən/		written	1
/rʌn/	run	run	2
Total	2	5	7

In this section, a short reading sample taken from the textbook was used in order to find out whether practicing pronunciation through OLLC was more effective. It seems that students present vowel sounds mispronunciation problems in a greater range than consonant sounds. Having had the opportunity to receive additional practice based on OLLC, students still make important mispronunciation mistakes, which could be caused by an increase of stress or different external factors now of recording the sample text.

Part 2 OLLC with the most number of pronunciation exercises

The data provided by the different OLLC were the bases for the analysis and reports in this research to determine the improvement in the skills, primarily the reason of this research, pronunciation.

Five different OLLC were chosen to see how students grow in their pronunciation skills and they were randomly assigned to the class.

To verify the obtained results, students who were part of the experimental group, were assigned a different OLLC, while those students who were part of the control group, had to work on the textbook platform. The contrast between the data of the OLLC helped us determine the rate of improvement in the skill reason of our study.

It was first intended to assess students’ performance and progress in each one of the initial OLLC assigned per groups, to later contrast these results with the progress and performance in the textbook platform where the entire class participated (See Tables 1 and 2).

Table 3. Pronunciation Rates of Assigned OLLC

REPORTING PERIODS	TEXTBOOK PLATFORM REPORT	ONLINE LANGUAGE LEARNING COMMUNITY REPORT
DAY 1	72%	79%
DAY 2	89%	82%
DAY 3	86%	100%
DAY 4	86%	89%
DAY 5	85%	93%
DAY 6	93%	92%
DAY 7	90%	94%
DAY 8	81%	95%
DAY 9	89%	98%
DAY 10	86%	98%

When observing and analyzing the results in the chart taken from the OLLC and the textbook platform reports, it can be said that the percentage of students' participation in OLLC was good enough to see that most students show high rates in their performance during the 2-month period of this research. It is also necessary to say there is a sig-

nificant difference in students' performance between those who work on the textbook platform and those who work with OLLC having higher results in the experimental group, because the activities in this OLLC were permanently observed and had a direct impact on their outcomes.

Table 4. Pronunciation performance contrast in Individual and Group OLLC

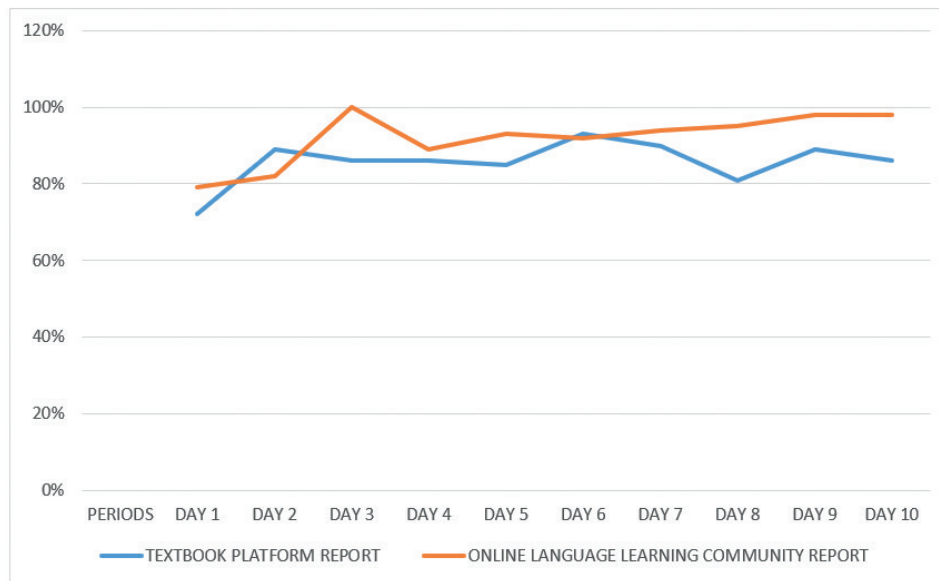


Table 4 states the relationship between the students' performance in the textbook platform and the online language learning community, from which we can conclude by saying that the students experienced a positive performance thanks to the permanent practice seen throughout the 2-month period.

12 Discussion and Conclusions

The study states that the use of OLLC provided several significant insights into current language learning and the improvement of English language students' pronunciation because of the different learning activities proposed in the selected OLLC. The analysis and implications of the research will be discussed regarding the framework surrounding OLLC in language teaching and in the development of pronunciation.

Learning autonomy. It was evident that the focus group improved their pronunciation of target sounds over the time of the research process, as they were constantly engaged in benefits obtained

by doing so. The opportunity given by the OLLC in the sense of accessing, facilitated students' participation and curiosity gaining important improvements in the activities found in the OLLC they registered in. Speaking, oral repetition and recording within the OLLC proved to be beneficial in the sense that students became aware of their own phonological production motivating them to perfect their pronunciation through constant practice as time progressed.

Interaction. Learning should be interactive to enhance higher level thinking skills. Learners who participated in OLLC improved their pronunciation skill as shown these results in the charts. So, building community, as part of the educational process may enhance benefits in pronunciation awareness, since collaboration among learners, outside of class time, helped them solve primary concerns not only about perfecting their phonological competence, but also about using the technological tools provided in the most effective

way for learning. Aspects such as syllable stress, sentence stress, vowel and consonant sounds, intonation, and rhythm were the main areas statistical reported by the OLLC.

Technology and the Equilibrium model. OLLC tools clearly offered new opportunities to practice language skills. Students were committed to make the best of the material used. Therefore, to find equilibrium between the class and online instruction, learners should be given control of the learning process, but there should always be a form of guided discovery where learners can make decisions on leaning goals, and reflect during class time, knowing that their teacher is ready to provide feedback and has all the knowledge to clarify and bring what students have learned on their own, back to the class goals.

Development of Pronunciation. Before the research, students still needed to distinguish how speech rhythm change according to the meaning a person wants to convey, the context where it is used and who they are talking to evidence in; anyhow, it was of much interest to see how progressively students could distinguish specific pronunciation features as they were tested on syllable stress, sentence stress, vowel and consonant sounds, intonation, and rhythm while working with their course book.

Continuity. Being in contact with real English pronunciation provided by the OLLC, made students curious and lose fear to be in contact with English. A great majority showed interest in trying to have a conversation outside the classroom environment without worrying too much about making mistakes, but to produce communication. Some of the students kept their chatting box opened to continue contacting speakers they had met through the OLLC.

Students' perceptions. Students were asked to meet in groups to talk about the perceptions on

their experiences while working with OLLC. Since students were asked to mostly focus on improving their pronunciation while working on the OLLC, they found easy to try to perform better on one specific language skill and develop it the best they could. Moreover, some students realized, it was not as simple as saying the words in a natural way in English without really thinking about how to pronounce them correctly. At first, they felt forced, and they were not really convinced that the practice on the OLLC would help them improve pronunciation; however, there was an increased general awareness of how important is for them to improve this skill. They also found very helpful to get feedback from their classmates, especially those who didn't participate in the OLLC, confirming a sense of collaboration and community after all the work done. They also mention that it was a short, but intense learning process, and that by continually analyzing their own pronunciation, they were able to recognize some of their weaknesses and strengths not only regarding pronunciation, but other language skills as well. Finally, students found very interesting to record themselves while working in the OLLC assigned, they noticed that at the beginning their oral production was constantly broken, and their pronunciation was closely to the way they see words on written, in the end, it was obvious to all how they sounded more confident in the last recording practices within the OLLC as opposed to the first one. The ABA English OLLC was chosen to be the most integrated and highly reliable because of its statics measuring tools and incorporated generated tests with appropriate characteristics to measure oral and listening skills; and thus pronunciation. Therefore, the reliability and validation of these tests made possible to apply them as pre and post – tests evaluation instruments to be directed to experimental groups.

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