

PROCEDURES FOR ENGLISH CONTRACTIONS LEARNING AT FOREIGN LANGUAGES TEACHERS TRAINING

Alexis Pérez Ramirez and Rodolfo Acosta Padrón

Reason for focusing contractions in English teaching and learning.

- Contractions are widely used in informal oral English.
- Contractions are a missing chapter in English teaching.
- Contractions hinder English oral understanding if not well learned.
- The lack of using contractions goes against real English use.
- Contractions has much to do with real English intonation.
- Few students use English contractions correctly and properly.
- The students' English contractions level of use is low.

The digital version of *Alice in Wonderland* contains more than 700 contractions in 76 pages, a means of 10 contractions per page. Page 24 has 16. Examples:

If you don't explain it	It's by far the most....	I think you'd better leave off.
They can't have anything.	That's the judge.	I wish they'd get the trial done.
Well, it's got no business.	Sure, I don't like it	I wonder what they'll do next.
I'm sure I don't want to.	I hadn't to bring but one.	Bill's got the other, Bill.
Where's the other ladder?	Put'em up at this corner.	They don't reach enough.
Oh, they'll do well enough.	Don't be particular	Who's to go down the chimney?

The *Boys of Summer* (1968), shows a ample use of English Contractions in informal conversations. There are 10 Contractions per page, in a total of 442 pages for about 4 420 Contractions. Page 112 has gotten 19 Contractions, while page 401 shows 17. Some of the most frequently contractions used are these:

We're gonna win the pennant	He's gonna look awful.	That's what I mean.
And I'll protect them	I can't tell you.	They won't let me in.
Ain't afraid That's right	They don't like Rob'son.	...or any of 'em.
I don't believe that town has...	You can't do that job.	I wouldn't be here.
Don't cheer those bastards	Y'all oughta heah 'em sing.	It isn't mine.

Observation Class Outcomes

Six lessons checked show that teachers frequently use the Contractions; however, few opportunities are offered for students to use them. Consequently, few students use contractions in their participation in class.

<u>Participation</u>	<u>Sts</u>	<u>Contractions</u>	<u>Means</u>	<u>Most frequently used</u>
0 to 5	6	12	2 Low	Don't, it's. doesn't.
6 to 11	9	19	3,5 Low	Doesn't, I'm, She's.
12 to 17	4	22	5,2 Low	It's, he's, don't.
More than 18	2	24	12 Fair	Don't, can't, it's.

MODELLING TASKS TO ENCOURAGE THE ENGLISH CONTRACTIONS LEARNING AND USE

TASK 1: LISTEN, READ, REPEAT, COPY, READ AND SHADOW.

- a) ARE YOU ANN? NO, I'M NOT ANN. I'M JANE.
- b) DID YOU SAY PAUL? I DIDN'T SAY PAUL. I HAVEN'T SAID IT.
- c) WHO'S HERE? NOBODY'S THERE.
- d) WHEN'S SHE COMING? SHE'LL BE HERE SOON.

TASK 2: READ CONTRACTIONS STRESSING CONTENT WORDS.

- a) THAT'S A FUNNY WAY TO SING, ISN'T IT?
- b) THERE'S NO SMOKE WITHOUT FIRE. ISN'T IT?
- c) I DIDN'T EAT IT. THAT'S MY MONEY, ISN'T IT?
- d) SHE'LL BE THERE TONIGHT, WON'T SHE?
- e) THAT'S THE ANSWER, ISN'T IT?
- f) NASTY WEATHER, ISN'T IT? LET'S TAKE AN UMBRELLA.

The methodological procedure follows these steps: listen, read, reflect, repeat and shadow, later, students do oral and written tasks to produce contractions in different situations. The effectiveness of the procedure was measured and the end of the pre-experiment, carried out with 21 first year English learning students at the Teachers Training College in Pinar del Río.

Contractions	Recognize %		Produce %	
I'm/It's	21	100%	21	100%
You're	21	100%	21	100%
She's/he's	21	100%	18	85%
We're/They're	21	100%	16	76%
There's	22	100%	17%	80%
There're	19	90%	16%	76%
don't	21	100%	21	100%
aren't	19	90%	21	100%
isn't	21	100%	21	100%
I'll	17	80%	15%	71%
It won't	16	76%	15%	71%