



FACULTAT
D'EDUCACIÓ, TRADUCCIÓ,
ESPORTS I PSICOLOGIA

UVIC | UVIC-UCC

FINAL DISSERTATION

**Comparing and contrasting teaching pronunciation when learning English
as a foreign language versus teaching pronunciation as an L1 language:
the case of Catalan learners.**

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4th grade – Final Dissertation Project

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May 2023

Acknowledgments

First of all, I would like to thank my tutor, Anna Vallbona. My final dissertation project would not have been the same without her direction and guidance. Her advice was crucial in achieving the goal of this investigation.

I would also like to express my gratitude for all the teachers who participated in the study and took the time to answer rigorously and seriously. Their participation has not only helped me achieve the goal of this final dissertation but has also allowed me to reflect on the practices and beliefs of the teachers. Reading and talking about their thoughts on education, and their worries, also allowed me to give my own practice some thought. Without their intervention and sincerity, none of this would have been possible.

Finally, I would love to thank my family and my partner, who have helped me not only through this Final Dissertation Project but throughout my degree. Their involvement, their advice, their help, and their love have pushed me, day by day, not only to become a better professional but a better person.

Abstract

Pronunciation has recently been more recognized among researchers and teachers. Up until now, other aspects of the language came before pronunciation. Recent studies, though, revealed that intelligible pronunciation was key in order to prevent failed communications between speakers. However, there are crucial aspects of this skill that are yet to be investigated. The following dissertation explores the differences between teaching Catalan pronunciation as a first language (L1) versus teaching English pronunciation as a second language (L2), with a focus on the case of Catalan learners. Furthermore, it also explores the perceptions of teachers when teaching pronunciation in the settings mentioned. The study was conducted through a questionnaire sent to schools across Catalonia, and 60 participants took part in the study voluntarily. The findings of this dissertation suggest that the two approaches have quite a few similarities, but there are also differences that should be considered in order to improve communication and language learning outcomes for students. This dissertation argues that working together as language specialists should be a priority in order to overcome differences and ensure effective language teaching.

Key words: Pronunciation – Early Childhood teacher – English as a foreign language teacher – English as a foreign language — Early Years – Intelligibility – Teacher’s beliefs

Resum

Recentment, la pronúncia de la llengua ha guanyat importància entre els investigadors i les persones docent. Tot i així, fins fa poc, altres aspectes de la llengua com ara la gramàtica i el vocabulari tenien més rellevància que la pronúncia. Estudis recents mostren que per tal de tenir una comunicació fluida, el fet de tenir una pronúncia intel·ligible és clau per garantir que aquestes interaccions puguin esdevenir. No obstant això, hi ha aspectes cabdals de la pronúncia de la llengua que encara estan pendents d’investigar. La recerca realitzada en aquest treball final de grau explora les diferències que hi ha entre ensenyar la pronúncia de la llengua en una classe de català com a primera llengua (L1) i ensenyar la pronúncia de la llengua en una classe d’anglès com a segona llengua (L2). Aquest treball se centra en l’alumnat que té com a llengua vehicular i d’aprenentatge el català. Així mateix, aquest treball també busca entendre les percepcions dels i les docents quan ensenyen la pronúncia de la llengua en els diferents àmbits d’aprenentatge. L’estudi d’aquest treball s’ha fet a través d’un qüestionari que es va enviar a diferents escoles d’arreu de Catalunya i 60 docents d’aquestes escoles hi van participar de manera voluntària. Els resultats d’aquest treball de final de grau suggereixen que tant l’ensenyament de l’L1 com l’ensenyament de l’L2 comparteixen força similituds, però que alhora hi ha diferències que s’han de tenir en compte per millorar la comunicació i les habilitats lingüístiques dels i les estudiants. Aquest treball de final de grau argumenta que com a docents s’hauria de treballar conjuntament com a especialistes de llengua per superar les diferències que hi ha actualment i assegurar l’efectivitat de les pràctiques educatives.

Paraules clau: Pronunciació – Mestres d’Educació Infantil – Mestres amb l’especialitat d’angles – L’anglès com a segona llengua – Educació Infantil – Intel·ligibilitat – Creences dels docents

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1. Introduction

Vocabulary and grammar have clearly been studied extensively for many years. The study of pronunciation, however, has not been as thorough as that of the preceding features. Nevertheless, pronunciation is undoubtedly one of the most crucial elements of oral communication, and it goes without saying that one of the objectives when teaching a language is for students to have good communication skills. In other words, that their speech be intelligible.

In the pages that follow, a discussion will be provided on the importance of pronunciation in both Catalan as an L1 classroom and English as an L2 classroom in Early Years. This report will also analyse the perception and beliefs of teachers in the settings mentioned when teaching pronunciation. Therefore, the main objective of this final dissertation will be to compare and contrast the teaching of pronunciation in both L1 and L2 classrooms.

The motivating factor for choosing pronunciation instructions lies in my own experience. When I was fifteen, I went on an exchange to Canada for over a year. While my grammar and vocabulary skills were good enough for a fifteen-year-old, even though I believed that my communication skills were also on point, I was clearly wrong. I found myself in a country where no one spoke my language and where communication needed to happen. Therefore, I found that my speech was unintelligible because of my strong accent and that some words were clearly mispronounced. Even though I managed to make myself understood, as an English teacher, I believe that I should be a good pronunciation model for the students so that, in the event of something similar happening to them, they would not feel as lost as I did. Furthermore, a few years later, I started to work as an EFL teacher and found that a lot of the pupils I was teaching had great skills regarding some parts of the language but had greater difficulties when speaking. Additionally, some pupils mispronounced some words, and correcting those mispronunciations was practically impossible. I realized, then, that being a good model for the students, and having proper resources to teach them how to effectively communicate was something that had become important to me as a teacher.

With that being said, there's another reason why I wanted to compare and contrast the teaching of pronunciation in both L1 Catalan classrooms and L2 English classrooms. During my various placements in the schools, I found that EFL teachers were considered special: they used resources that no one else had, they sang all day, and they always explained stories. On the other hand, the perception of non-EFL teachers was that their job was much harder when it came to teaching a language. I believe that this dissertation is a way of overcoming some of these beliefs and understanding that EFL and regular classroom settings are different in some aspects when teaching a language, but that should not impede language specialists from working together as a priority. In the end, the students' communication is what is at stake.

2. Theoretical framework

Language teachers, both in EFL and regular classrooms, acknowledge the relevance that intelligible pronunciation has for effective communication. However, teachers are unsure of how to include this key aspect of the language into the curriculum (Levis & Grant, 2003). Moreover, especially in L2 contexts, a growing number of studies regarding pronunciation have been published in a number of journals, but these studies are difficult for teachers or individuals without very concrete knowledge of phonetics to access it. Additionally, the studies are conducted under certain laboratory conditions, and even language specialists are unsure of how these findings can apply in the classroom. Therefore, these studies are rarely cited in publications dedicated to teachers' materials or students' texts. Furthermore, this lack of reliable literature and the lack of focus on pronunciation instruction have led to a lack of understanding of how to effectively implement pronunciation instruction in EFL courses. This poses a huge dilemma because there is little published research on pronunciation teaching and limited reliance on what is available (Derwing & Munro, 2005).

The literature on the relevance of pronunciation teaching, the factors that affect pronunciation teaching in EFL contexts, and the beliefs of teachers (both EFL teachers and regular teachers) will be briefly and generally reviewed in the lines that follow.

2.1 Factors that affect pronunciation in EFL contexts

The objective when talking about pronunciation is to understand the significance that pronunciation has in EFL classrooms. As Kelly (1969) claims, "Western philologists and linguists have studied grammar and vocabulary much longer than pronunciation. For this exact reason, grammar and vocabulary have been much better understood by most language teachers than pronunciation." (Celce-Murcia, 1996, p.2). Grant (2014) highlights:

There is little doubt that L2 pronunciation has gained ground over the last few decades. Yet, compared with other skill areas, pronunciation remains the "orphan of ESL/EFL" (Gilbert, 2010, p.3). It has yet to occupy its fair share of course time in the ESL curriculum or in teacher education programs. (Derwing & Munro, 2015; Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011; Levis, 2005 (as cited in Grant, 2014: 7)

According to Grant (2014), most of us focus on consonants and vowels when we think about what pronunciation implies. She also mentions that for a number of years, she conducted her sessions without going much further than the pronunciation of sounds in words and isolated phrases because she assumed that she already knew what was required to teach pronunciation successfully.

However, it was believed that for students to become proficient at English, they should sound exactly like a native speaker. Nevertheless, with the exception of a small number of really talented and driven people, this objective is not realistic at all. What would be more realistic would be to enable learners so that their pronunciation will allow them to have good oral communication (Celce-Murcia, 1996). Yoshida (2016) agrees that even though students might have good grammatical and vocabulary skills, if their pronunciation is not intelligible enough, their communication will fail.

Celce-Murcia (1996), Grant (2014) and Yoshida (2016) talk about different factors and false myths that teachers should bear in mind when teaching pronunciation to students. Some of the factors mentioned can be controlled by the teachers, and some are simply dependent on the students' capacities and abilities. In the lines that follow, the most crucial elements of the factors that affect pronunciation will be reviewed.

2.1.1 Age

Some adult students show great ability when attaining proficiency levels in morphology and syntax. Nevertheless, they show less ability when obtaining native-like pronunciation. For quite a long time, researchers believed that it was because there was a stage of life that, according to biology, had the best conditions for learning languages, which was called the **critical period**. After this period, something called **fossilization** happened. Selinker (1972) used this concept to explain the process that a second language speaker goes through when they are unlikely to develop some aspects of the target language (Derwing & Munro, 2014). However, Derwing & Munro (2014) discussed whether it is possible or not to modify the learner's pronunciation once you have been speaking the language for a while and whether it depends or not on the student's age.

Speakers of a second language can improve their pronunciation skills with hard work and devotion. Yoshida (2016) also mentions the critical period for language acquisition, stating that children can achieve native speaker pronunciation but only if they are exposed to the language and are given numerous opportunities to hear it. In this case, children can absorb language sounds more naturally than adults. However, this is not usually the case when students are learning L2 languages since they have limited input contexts. She argues that "Effective pronunciation learning is not limited to young children, however. Older children and adults have their own strengths and can also learn pronunciation well, even if they never sound quite like native speakers". (Yoshida, 2016).

2.1.2 Exposure to the target language

Celce-Murcia (1996) explains that most students in EFL settings do not always have the chance to be exposed to native input in the target language and that the teacher will have to keep in mind that the model he or she will provide will be what the students later on copy. Yoshida (2016) supports this claim, saying that students who live in an English-speaking country are constantly in touch with the language, so the melodies and sounds of English are more familiar to them. Nevertheless, students who do not have these conditions will probably only hear English for a few hours each week, and "The quality of teaching that students receive certainly affects the quality of their learning" (p.9), especially when students have no other source than their teachers when learning the target language.

2.1.3 The role of the learners' first language

Yoshida (2016) implies that the learner's first language (L1) "has a strong influence on the way he or she learns the pronunciation of a second language (referred to as the L2)." (p.31) Although she contends that pronunciation can be a little trickier if the learner's first language has pronouncing sounds that the target language does not, this influence can be beneficial if the languages share

similar sounds. Celce-Murcia (1996) maintains that in order to decide on pronunciation priorities, we need to consider the students' native language(s). She formulates some questions on diverse topics, such as how comparable the process of learning the sound system of an L2 is to learning the phonology of one's L2, whether the process of learning phonology in an L2 depends on pronunciation patterns that were learned in the first language, and if there are any underlying phonological principles that apply to all languages.

2.1.4 Aptitude, attitude, and motivation

Both Yoshida (2016) and Celce-Murcia (1996) agree that learners will make more progress if they show an interest in what they are supposed to learn. That being said, it is important that teachers see what goals students have in order to boost their motivation and help them achieve their objectives. Nonetheless, teachers can provide resources, materials, and information to try to change their students' pronunciation and improve it, but they don't have the power to change it because students must do this part of the work for themselves. Celce-Murcia (1996) talks about different types of motivation.

1. **Integrative motivation:** This is when someone has a desire to learn a language because they are curious about the people, culture, and way of life that come with it.
2. **Instrumental motivation:** This is referred to when you study a new language for practical purposes, such as to be able to travel, to increase employment possibilities, or to interact with people from other nations.
3. **Assimilative motivation:** They aspire to be seen as legitimate group members. They wish to avoid being perceived as "outsiders."

Yoshida (2016) talks about the importance of teachers knowing their students, their strengths, and their weaknesses because that can affect how they can learn pronunciation. Although we might think that outgoing students are the ones that are going to be better at pronunciation because they are not afraid to make mistakes, students that are shyer might be very careful when talking, so they might be more likely to make fewer mistakes. Therefore, every student is different, so their learning process as well as their improvements will be something particular to each and every one of them. (Yoshida, 2016). Celce-Murcia (1996) also mentions that "Teachers (and pronunciation syllabuses) need to be sensitive to such learner differences and not expect all learners to achieve the same level of success in the same amount of time (p.18)".

2.2 Teachers' beliefs and practices regarding pronunciation teaching

Zeng and Borg (2014) explain that, especially in EFL classrooms, language teachers have to face different restrictions, such as the school curriculum, a culture that emphasizes too much on exams, and inadequate institutional and collegial support, which can cause a huge gap between their teaching beliefs and their practices. Derwing and Munro (2005) point out how the study of pronunciation has been overlooked within the field of applied linguistics. Therefore, they explain that teachers "are often left to rely on their own intuitions with little directions. Some can successfully

assist their students under these conditions, while many others are reluctant to teach pronunciation” (p.397). Furthermore, they assert that although intuition based on practical experience has enormous value, relying only on it has significant downsides because these resources may not always result in appropriate, fruitful classroom activities and they cannot answer many of the relevant problems that challenge classroom educators.

Bai and Yuan (2019) conducted a study that explored the opinions, beliefs, and methods of 16 non-native English speakers who taught pronunciation in Hong Kong. This study aimed to look into EFL teachers’ methods and beliefs on teaching pronunciation in light of the importance and complexity of teaching and learning English pronunciation. Another study conducted by Nagle, Sachs and Zárate-Sández (2018) examined the beliefs of teachers regarding Spanish pronunciation instruction as an L2. Another research project by Couper (2017), which recruited participants from different types of institutions regarding the teaching of English, was done to understand teachers’ knowledge and thoughts on teaching pronunciation. The first study mentioned focused on teaching English as an L2, the second study mentioned focused on teaching Spanish as an L2, and the last study mentioned focused on L1 pronunciation teaching. Although the studies concerned different settings, their findings were similar, which will be reviewed and gathered in the lines that follow.

2.2.1 Who should teach pronunciation?

On the one hand, Bai and Yuan (2019) found that teachers believed and recognized how teaching pronunciation was key in their language classrooms, and they argued that having proper pronunciation not only made it easier for students to communicate effectively in their daily lives but also boosted their motivation and self-esteem, which indirectly benefited other elements of language study as well. Nagle, Sachs and Zárate-Sández (2018) research showed that teachers also understood the importance of pronunciation instruction and held that it was not overlooked in their classrooms.

As shown in Bai’s and Yuan’s research (2019), however, teachers often encountered numerous personal and contextual challenges when trying to put their ideals into their foreign language classrooms. A lot of non-native English teachers felt uncomfortable with pronunciation teaching because they were not sure of their own English pronunciation, which is why they felt at ease when teaching other aspects of the language, such as grammar or vocabulary, because they believed that their pronunciation would not be taken into consideration when teaching these skills. Moreover, they believed that native English teachers were more qualified to instruct pronunciation. Nagle’s, Sachs’ and Zárate-Sández’s (2018) study had similar revelations since participants believed that although non-native speakers could train in pronunciation instruction, they were less likely to succeed when teaching pronunciation than native speakers.

Couper’s study (2017) showed that although a lot of the teachers had done pronunciation training, this did not give them the tools and resources needed to be confident when teaching this aspect of the language. Contrary to this, Nagle, Sachs and Zárate-Sández (2018) found that the more method- and pronunciation-related coursework teachers had taken, the more likely they were to

view pronunciation as one of the most crucial elements of language for effective communication, and, therefore, implement it in their classrooms. Nonetheless, Couper (2017) maintains that though a lot of teachers had done training courses regarding pronunciation instruction, a lot of them found themselves not using what they learnt in these courses but using strategies they found while teaching. As mentioned, this led not only to a lack of confidence in teaching this language skill but also to ignoring some of the key aspects of pronunciation when teaching. Moreover, some teachers, though they considered pronunciation instruction necessary in their classrooms, felt uncertain about where to start. Additionally, as pointed out in the other studies mentioned above, a lot of teachers felt that they needed to improve their own pronunciation in order to teach this aspect to other children since they did not want to be a bad pronunciation model for their students. Therefore, they expressed that teaching pronunciation was not something they were a hundred percent comfortable doing.

2.2.2 What should the curriculum consider?

Bai's and Yuan's research (2019) found that although teachers were convinced that pronunciation teaching could contribute to the student's learning interest and willingness to communicate, opportunities to use the language weren't enough in the students' daily life, and they believed that their communication would most likely fail if special attention from language teachers was not paid to the student's pronunciation. However, these teachers also argued that pronunciation was not central in their EFL classrooms because other language abilities were more crucial in exams. Lewis and Grant (2003) maintained that incorporating pronunciation into a speaking curriculum is a must since targeting elements that naturally result from a speaking activity is another benefit of teaching pronunciation.

2.2.3 Which are the goals that teachers should set when teaching pronunciation?

The findings in Couper's' research (2017) showed that although most of the teachers expressed that effective communication and intelligibility were their major goals, others believed this was not enough and that accuracy, clarity, and fluency were also crucial. However, it was also found that teachers conducted their practices when difficulties were observed, but goals and strategies were discussed without any prior planning. Bai's and Yuan's study (2019) also showed that intelligibility was the ultimate goal for the vast majority of the teachers, but that they should be equipped with teaching strategies and materials when teaching English communication. Additionally, Nagle's, Sachs's and Zárate-Sández's (2018) research found that participants did not consider all aspects of pronunciation equally significant, and they believed that pronunciation concerns that do not affect communication should not be a teacher's top priority. However, the study showed that if teachers were aware of the relevant issues regarding pronunciation, they could consider whether what they were focusing on would improve their students' speech intelligibility and comprehension. Additionally, in settings where students are older, teachers should also consider the learner's pronunciation learning objectives, which often include achieving a more native-like accent. Derwing and Munro (2005) maintain that:

Though it is often assumed that greater accentedness automatically entails reduced intelligibility and comprehensibility, the situation is not so straightforward. [...] The gap between what is unintelligible and what is merely heavily accented but still understandable might be explained in part by the fact that listeners use context to interpret speech. Although research indicates that intelligibility is an achievable goal, a greater understanding is needed of the relationship between accent phoneme and interference with meaning. (p.385-386).

2.2.4 Which are the challenges when teaching pronunciation?

As mentioned above, when teaching pronunciation, there are challenges that teachers need to face. First of all, as already pointed out, Bai and Yuan (2019) explained how EFL teachers lack not only time but also resources. Moreover, since the curriculum puts such pressure on teachers, they tend to focus their practice more on vocabulary and grammar than pronunciation because that is what students will be evaluated on. Additionally, Levis and Grant (2003) agree on this aspect and say that even when teachers want to introduce pronunciation instruction in their classes, most of the time they are lost on where to start. Therefore, teaching pronunciation is based on activities such as listening comprehension, very structured or not structured oral communication, and correcting students all the time.

2.2.5 Should teachers assess pronunciation?

Isaac (2018) considers assessment any information-gathering that is used to draw judgments about a person's language proficiency or that can provide us with other non-linguistic abilities of that same person. Pronunciation assessment has changed over time, and at the beginning of the 20th century, it solely focused on quality translations and grammatical accuracy (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). However, although the focus on evaluation has shifted, as Celce-Murcia (1996) remarks:

“In the existing literature on teaching pronunciation, little attention is paid to issues of testing and evaluation. In part, this absence can be explained by the fact that the large body of literature on language assessment applies to pronunciation just as it does to any skill – reading, listening and speaking. But unlike these other areas, there are features unique to pronunciation that affect how evaluation is carried out, how feedback is provided, and at which stages of instruction feedback is most appropriately given” (p.341)

3. The study

3.1 Research methods

To be able to compare and contrast how pronunciation is taught in Early Childhood classrooms when students are learning Catalan as their first language (L1) versus English as a second language (L2), a questionnaire was designed in order to collect the data. The questionnaire was key to analyzing pronunciation instruction in these two different settings.

3.2 Methodology

The aim of this dissertation is to understand how pronunciation is taught in Early Childhood classrooms. In order to do so, it is important to comprehend how Catalan (which is the L1 taught in the schools in Catalonia) pronunciation is taught and if it is different from how English as an L2 is taught regarding pronunciation. Teaching English as an L2 has been a priority for the Education Department of Catalonia, and even though it is not mandatory to start in Early Years, many schools are starting to implement the teaching of this language at this stage.

The questions set for the research as well as the objectives will allow us to understand how teachers around Catalonia are conducting activities to teach pronunciation in both L1 and L2 classrooms. As already mentioned, pronunciation is key to achieving good oral competence, which is why this research is significant.

The research questions for this final dissertation will be the following:

1. Which are the main differences between teaching Catalan pronunciation in an L1 classroom versus teaching English pronunciation in an L2 classroom?
2. What are the perceptions of teachers about teaching pronunciation as an L1 versus teaching pronunciation as an L2?

The aim of this final dissertation will be to explore the following aspects:

- Discover the main differences between teaching pronunciation as an L1 versus teaching English pronunciation as an L2.
- Discover the main difficulties that teachers find when teaching English pronunciation in an EFL context.

3.3 Instruments

The instrument used for this dissertation is the questionnaire. The reason why a questionnaire is enough for this study depends on the type of questions on it. The goal of this dissertation was to obtain both representative and qualitative data. Therefore, the questions that were considered provided the participants with the opportunity to answer numerically or within certain parameters (which provided quantitative data), but also allowed them to express their opinions, beliefs, and experiences about pronunciation and phonological awareness (which provided qualitative data). Other types of instruments were not chosen because they were not thought to be relevant for this dissertation.

The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions. Since the objective was to see how pronunciation in Early Years is taught both in EFL classrooms and L1 classrooms, the questionnaire was done in Catalan to facilitate the comprehension and participation of all the teachers since not all of them were English specialists. The questionnaire was thought out and designed, and the questions were not taken from another study. The transcription of the questionnaire can be seen in the [Appendix 1](#) section.

The first five questions, along with question number eight, are close demographic questions that are necessary in order to have a general view of the characteristics and qualities of the target participants. These types of questions provide us with great quantitative data that is meaningful when analyzing the open questions because it allows us to relate certain aspects of pronunciation and the way it is taught to gender, age, and the location of the schools.

Question six was a closed-ended dichotomous question that gave the participants the opportunity to answer affirmatively or negatively, and it was the first question regarding pronunciation training. Those who answered affirmatively had to specify where their pronunciation training was conducted and the reason why they wanted to get more training regarding this aspect of the language.

Questions nine and ten were closed-ended questions that allowed participants to explain which language they were using in their classrooms. Question nine was directed to the teachers that had a regular classroom¹, and question ten was directed to the teachers that were teaching English as a foreign language. Although Catalan is the language most used in L1 classrooms, it was necessary to give the teachers the option to choose Spanish because they could encounter situations in which they could need to use this language to communicate with the students. On the other hand, it was key to see what English specialists teaching English were speaking in their EFL classrooms. Moreover, these teachers had an open question to explain the reason why they were using the language that they did in L2 classrooms.

From question twelve to the end of the questionnaire, the questions were all regarding pronunciation, and some also regarding phonological awareness. Question twelve allowed teachers to express how important it was to teach pronunciation in their classrooms, and they had an importance closed-ended question, where they had to choose, on a scale from one to five, how relevant pronunciation teaching was. Question thirteen gave participants the option to choose the main objectives for them when teaching a target language, and they had various options to choose from. Question fourteen was an importance closed-ended question that allowed them to express, from their point of view, if pronunciation needed to be taken into consideration when teaching a language. These three questions allow us to have a general view of the importance of pronunciation teaching.

Once these questions were answered, if teachers had chosen that pronunciation teaching was relevant, they had an open question to explain which strategies they used in the classroom to

¹ The concept of regular classroom will be used to describe non-EFL settings, which will be Catalan language classrooms as an L1.

improve the pronunciation of the language and, at the same time, promote phonological awareness. If teachers had answered that pronunciation teaching was not something they considered, they had options to choose the reason why they didn't take that into account, and they also had a space to express their opinion on pronunciation teaching.

The last questions of the questionnaire were to ask teachers if they evaluated the pronunciation of their students. Question number seventeen was a closed-ended dichotomous question that teachers had to answer affirmatively or negatively. No matter what they answered, they had a space to explain why they did or didn't evaluate the pronunciation of their students and why it was relevant or irrelevant to do so. The last question was connected with question number sixteen because it asked participants which types of materials (on top of the strategies mentioned in question sixteen) they used to work on pronunciation. There was one extra question that was not mandatory to answer, where participants were given a space to explain and add whatever they wanted regarding the topic of pronunciation.

3.4 Participants

Since one of the objectives of this Final Dissertation was to collect data to get a wider look at how pronunciation around Catalonia is taught to Young Learners (3–6-year-old), it was not coherent to conduct the study in just a specific school or county. Since there are many things that can affect how pronunciation is taught in schools: the complexity of the school, whether they start to teach English as a L2 in Early Years or not, the resources available, etc., it only made sense to send the questionnaire around schools all over Catalonia. With a focus on collecting as much data as possible and considering that, a lot of times, some schools do not want to participate in these types of research, the research was conducted in the following way.

The schools in Catalonia have been distributed by the Government of Catalonia into different territorial provinces. In total, there are 10 territorial provinces, which are Baix Llobregat, Barcelona Comarca, Catalunya Central, Girona, Lleida, Maresme-Vallès Oriental, Tarragona, Terres de l'Ebre, Vallès Occidental, and Consorci d'Educació de Barcelona.

Bearing in mind the goal of gathering the most representative data feasible, although at first it was thought to only send the questionnaire to 10 schools in each territorial province, in order to ensure that some of the schools answered the questionnaire, 20 schools in each territorial province were sent the questionnaire. To not make a difference between schools, the 20 schools were selected randomly. Moreover, the questionnaire was also sent by a teacher to other teachers at other schools. Out of all the teachers and schools that the questionnaire was sent to, there were **60 participants**.

Out of these 60 participants, **56** were female (which represents 93,3% of the participants), while only **4** were male (which represents only 6,7% of the participants).

Table 1: Questionnaire: Age

Age range	Participants	Percentage
From 23 to 30 years old	7	11,7%
From 30 to 40 years old	15	25%
From 40 to 50 years old	23	38,3%
From 50 to 60 years old	15	25%

The age range varied from 23 years old (which is normally when teachers can start teaching in schools) to 60 years old, and except for the first option, they were all ranges of ten years. The age range where most teachers participated was those who were from 40 to 50 years old, while the age range where the least teachers participated was those who were from 23 to 30 years old.

Table 2: Questionnaire: Choose the territorial province where your school is located.

Provincial province	Participants	Percentage
Baix Llobregat	0	0 %
Barcelona Comarca	5	8,3 %
Catalunya Central	23	38,3 %
Girona	12	20 %
Lleida	6	10 %
Maresme-Vallès Oriental	3	5 %
Tarragona	3	5 %
Terres de l'Ebre	4	6,7 %
Vallès Occidental	1	1,7 %
Consorci d'Educació de Barcelona	3	5 %

One of the most important aspects of this dissertation was collecting meaningful and representative data. Although it is clear that the vast majority of teachers are from Catalunya Central (38,3%) and Girona, (20%) it is important to see that almost all the other territorial provinces got some representation as well, except the province of Baix Llobregat, which has no representation in this study.

Table 3: Questionnaire: Degree and specialization

Degree and specialization	Participants	Percentage
Early Childhood teacher	28	46,7%
Early Childhood teacher with English speciality	4	6,7%
Early Childhood technician	0	0%
Primary teacher	7	11,7%
Primary teacher with English speciality	21	35%

In this table we can observe that 53,4% of teachers were Early Childhood teachers and that 46,6% of teachers were Primary teachers. Although the goal was for teachers in Early Years to answer the questionnaire, some Primary teachers also did. What's most important is that the vast majority of Primary teachers that answered the questionnaire were teachers with English speciality (35%), which is meaningful because they can provide great data regarding pronunciation. Since in the

research there were no Early Childhood technicians, these won't be mentioned in the tables that follow.

Table 4: Age range and degree

Age range	Degree	Participants	Percentage
From 23 to 30 years old	Early Childhood teacher	3	5%
	Early Childhood teacher with English speciality	2	3%
	Primary teacher	0	0%
	Primary teacher with English speciality	2	3%
From 30 to 40 years old	Early Childhood teacher	6	10%
	Early Childhood teacher with English speciality	0	0%
	Primary teacher	2	3%
	Primary teacher with English speciality	7	12%
From 40 to 50 years old	Early Childhood teacher	11	18%
	Early Childhood teacher with English speciality	2	3%
	Primary teacher	3	5%
	Primary teacher with English speciality	7	12%
From 50 to 60 years old	Early Childhood teacher	8	13%
	Early Childhood teacher with English speciality	0	0%
	Primary teacher	2	3%
	Primary teacher with English speciality	5	8%

In the table above, we can see the age distribution of the participants and their degree and specialization.

Table 5: Questionnaire: Have you got any official certificate in English?

Degree	Affirmative/Negative	Teachers	Percentage
Early Childhood teacher	YES	9	15%
	NO	19	31,6%
Early Childhood teacher with English speciality	YES	4	6,6%
	NO	0	0%
Primary teacher	YES	3	5%
	NO	4	6,6%
Primary teacher with English speciality	YES	20	33,3%
	NO	1	1,6%

An important aspect to take into consideration in this dissertation when understanding the different teacher profiles, especially those teaching English in Early Years or Primary, was to see if they possessed any official certificates in English. Out of all the participants in the study, 24 did not possess any official certificate in English which represented 40% of the total participants. On the other hand, 36 participants did possess an English certificate, which represented 60% of the total participants. Out of the teachers whose speciality was English, only one participant did not have any certificate (which represented only 4% of the EFL teachers), while all the other English specialists possessed some sort of certificate, which represented 96% of the English specialists.

Table 6: Questionnaire: If the answer is yes, could you specify which one?

Degree	Type of certificate	Teachers	Percentage
Early Childhood teacher	A2 or Basic English Test	1	2,7%
	B1 or Preliminary English Test	2	5,5%
	B2 or First Certificate in English	2	5,5%
	C1 or Advanced Certificate in English	2	5,5%
	C2 or Proficiency Certificate in English	0	0%
	Not specified	2	5,5%
Early Childhood teacher with English speciality	A2 or Basic English Test	0	0%
	B1 or Preliminary English Test	0	0%
	B2 or First Certificate in English	0	0%
	C1 or Advanced Certificate in English	3	8,3%
	C2 or Proficiency Certificate in English	0	0%
	Not specified	1	2,7%
Primary teacher	A2 or Basic English Test	0	0%
	B1 or Preliminary English Test	0	0%
	B2 or First Certificate in English	2	5,5%
	C1 or Advanced Certificate in English	1	2,7%
	C2 or Proficiency Certificate in English	0	0%
	Not specified	0	0%
Primary teacher with English speciality	A2 or Basic English Test	0	0%
	B1 or Preliminary English Test	0	0%
	B2 or First Certificate in English	7	19,4%
	C1 or Advanced Certificate in English	6	16,6%
	C2 or Proficiency Certificate in English	2	5,5%
	Not specified	5	13,8%
Total participants with possession of English certificate		36	100%

Although the type of certificate was not mentioned in the questionnaire, most of the teachers answered with the Cambridge Exams terminology, which is why it is the one mentioned above. However, four teachers specified that their certificates were obtained through the Official Language School of Catalonia and one participant specified that they got their certification through the British Council. However, all these certificates are within the levels established by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages², so they can be considered within the same table. Out of the 36 teachers that possessed a certificate, 8 didn't specify the type of certificate they had obtained, which represented 22% of the teachers with possession of a certificate. As it can be seen in the table above, out of the teachers that answered with an specification of their certificate (which was 28 teachers), there is only one teacher that has the A2 (3,5%), two teachers that have the B1 (7,1%), eleven teachers that have the B2 (39,2%), twelve teachers that have the C1 (42,8%), and two teachers that have the C2 (7,1%).

² The Common European Framework (CEFR) provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. This document is intended to overcome the barriers to communication among professionals working in the field of modern languages arising from the different educational systems in Europe. (Council of Europe, 2001). The CEFR sets up six reference levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2) that grade an individual's language proficiency.

Table 7: Questionnaire: Which is your current teaching year?

Current teaching year	Degree			
	Early Childhood teacher	Early Childhood teacher with English speciality	Primary teacher	Primary teacher with English speciality
Current teaching year not specified	1			2
I3 (1st grade of Early Years)	7			
I4 (2nd grade of Early Years)	6			
I5 (3rd grade of Early Years)	3			1
Heterogeneous group (I3, I4 & I5)	3	1	1	
Support teacher in Early Years	3			
English specialist of the school				9
English specialist in Early Years		2		2
English specialist in Primary	1 st and 2 nd Grade			3
	3 rd and 4 th Grade			1
	5 th and 6 th Grade		1	1
	All Primary Grades			
1st Grade of Primary	2		1	2
2nd Grade of Primary	1		1	
3rd Grade of Primary				
4th Grade of Primary			1	
5th Grade of Primary				
6th Grade of Primary			1	
Specialist	Special needs	1		1
	Language and audition	1		
	Speech therapists of CREDA ³			1

The table above provides us with crucial information, which is the fact that even though some teachers are English specialist, they are not working (at least this present year) as English specialists. Therefore, out of all the teachers that could teach English, which are 25 (42% of the teachers), only 19 of them are working as specialists at the moment. Another important aspect to take into consideration is how there are five teachers who explained they were teaching in Early Years but with a heterogeneous group, which means that all the children in Early Years were mixed in the same classroom.

3.5 Data analysis

As previously mentioned, all of the data, both qualitative and quantitative, was gathered using the questionnaire. Considering the objectives, which were to understand the main differences between teaching Catalan pronunciation in an L1 versus teaching English pronunciation in an L2 as see the perceptions of teachers about teaching pronunciation as an L1 versus teaching pronunciation in an L2, the analysis and description of the data gathered for this research study are presented in the section that follows.

As previously seen when explaining the participants, the data that was obtained from the closed-ended questions has been analyzed quantitatively and calculated through percentages. Regarding the open-ended questions, the participant's responses gave the study qualitative data, which will

³ CREDA is a support service to schools that adapt to the needs of students with great speech, audition and language difficulties that interfere in their personal, social, and curricular development.

be categorized and explained below. Nonetheless, in some open-ended questions, the responses of the participants were similar, so it gave the opportunity for analyzing the data both qualitatively and quantitatively. Although mentioned above, the questionnaire was conducted in Catalan, but in the section that follows, these questions are translated into English and analyzed in this language.

3.6 Results

In the following section, the results of the questionnaire are presented. In order to facilitate the understanding of the results obtained, these will be put into five different categories, and each of the results found in the study will be divided by the teacher's specialisation, not their current teaching year. That's because some EFL teachers who may not be working in an EFL classroom at the moment expressed their opinions in terms of specialisation.

First of all, it's important to see if the teachers that answered the questionnaire have any extra training regarding pronunciation teaching, and if so, why they chose to do it, which will help to understand how they feel about pronunciation instruction. Second of all, especially for EFL teachers, it's important to see which language they use in their classrooms and why they do it that way. Another category will be about the importance of pronunciation teaching in Catalan classrooms (as students L1) as well as in EFL classrooms (as students L2), which will be useful to understand how pronunciation is being taught around Catalonia in both language settings. Another important category to consider are the strategies and materials that teachers use to work on pronunciation instruction, which will give a general idea of whether teachers have enough resources available to teach this aspect of the language. To finish, data regarding the evaluation of pronunciation will also be presented.

3.6.1 Training regarding pronunciation teaching

Previously stated, it was important to see if teachers had received any special training regarding pronunciation teaching.

Table 8: Questionnaire: Have you done any special training to specialize in the teaching of the pronunciation of the language?

Age	Degree	Affirmative/Negative	Teachers
23-30 years old	Early Childhood teacher	YES	0
		NO	3
	Early Childhood teacher with English speciality	YES	0
		NO	2
	Primary teacher	YES	0
		NO	0
	Primary teacher with English speciality	YES	0
		NO	2
30 – 40 years old	Early Childhood teacher	YES	0
		NO	6
	Early Childhood teacher with English speciality	YES	0
		NO	0
	Primary teacher	YES	1
		NO	1
	Primary teacher with English speciality	YES	2

		NO	5
40-50 years old	Early Childhood teacher	YES	0
		NO	11
	Early Childhood teacher with English speciality	YES	0
		NO	2
	Primary teacher	YES	1
		NO	2
Primary teacher with English speciality	YES	3	
	NO	4	
50-60 years old	Early Childhood teacher	YES	3
		NO	5
	Early Childhood teacher with English speciality	YES	0
		NO	0
	Primary teacher	YES	1
		NO	1
Primary teacher with English speciality	YES	3	
	NO	2	
Total participants		YES	14
		NO	46

Out of all the participants in the study, 77% of them answered that they hadn't had any special training regarding pronunciation. Only 23% of them answered that they did. As can be observed in the table above, older teachers had a higher interest in training themselves for pronunciation teaching. After this first question, teachers had to answer the reason why they chose to do training on pronunciation teaching and where they did the training. The answers given were various.

One Primary EFL teacher explained that she enrolled in the training program because, in order for her to teach English, she considered that the level given at the university was not good enough to teach pronunciation to children. In addition to this, two participants answered that they went to a training course to improve their own pronunciation.

There was one Early Childhood teacher who explained she did it for the students because in the training program she took, resources for the classroom were offered, which are difficult to find and which students don't have access to, so in order to provide students with resources, she did the training. Another participant, who mentioned that she was a speech therapist at CREDA, explained that she wanted to do more training on this aspect to help pupils that arrived in the classroom from other countries improve their language and pronunciation of it.

Similar to what these participants mentioned, three Early Childhood teachers mentioned that the reason to take the course was to learn strategies to teach pronunciation to their students, and as another Primary teacher pointed out, learning strategies to teach pronunciation is key since teachers are the pronunciation models for the students. Two Primary EFL teachers explained that pronunciation and linguistics were things they enjoyed learning about, which is the reason they took the training.

As to the question of where they took this training, a participant answered they did it in an Academy in Palafolls, another did a master's at the University of Vic, three people explained they took a

course through the Education Department of Catalonia (they did not mention the place where they took it), three other people affirm they did their training at EOI which is the Official School of Languages in Osona, another participant did their training at the University College of London, and the last one did a post-degree in speech and language but didn't specify the place.

3.6.2 Language used in the classroom

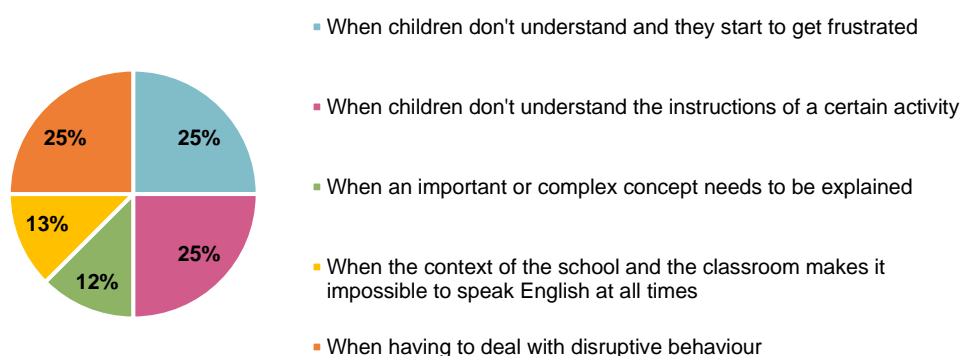
As mentioned before, there are 25 teachers with English speciality, but only 19 of them are in an EFL classroom this current year. However, in the questionnaire, 22 teachers with English speciality answered as if they were teaching English at present, and the other 3 teachers that are English specialists but aren't teaching English this year, answered as if they were teaching in a regular classroom.

Table 9: Questionnaire: Which language do you use in the classroom?

Classroom	Language Used in the Classroom	Teachers	Percentage
Regular classroom	Catalan	38	100%
	Spanish	0	0%
EFL classroom	English and Catalan	15	68%
	English at all times	7	32%
	Catalan at all times	0	0%
	English and Spanish	0	0%

English teachers or specialists were asked to explain the reason why they combined English and Catalan (which is the L1 of most of the students) when teaching English as a foreign language. The answers given were various, but there were a few aspects that teachers kept explaining to justify why they used Catalan in their EFL classrooms.

Figure 1: Questionnaire: Which is the reason you use Catalan in your classrooms?



The question above was only for EFL teachers. Although not all the EFL teachers have an EFL classroom this year, some answered the question anyway. We can see how 25% of the participants who answered this question explained that they use Catalan when they observe that their children are not understanding what is going on in the class, and they either disconnect from the class or don't engage in the activities as much as they could. When justifying this, a teacher said that it was

impossible to talk English at all times, and another supported this belief by saying that a balance between English and Catalan needs to be found to cohabitate in the EFL classrooms, especially in Early Years. There was a teacher who said:

“In Early Years it’s important to create a comfortable setting; the attention span of children in this stage is very fragile, and speaking from experience, it’s better to combine the two languages. If you do so, you are also taking into consideration the great diversity that can exist in a classroom. In Early Years, there are pupils who don’t even speak their own language properly. How can you engage them in an activity if you are only using the foreign language as a means of communication?”

Another 25% of the participants who responded to the question explained they always used English except when children didn’t understand how to engage in a certain activity, so they translated the instructions in Catalan so they could participate actively. These teachers explained that Catalan sort of slips when a child is not following the instructions and that only one-word translations are used in this case. Another teacher explained that once they have exhausted all communicative resources and have repeatedly explained something to a student and they don’t follow, they will explain in Catalan in order to avoid, as the teachers in that use English and Catalan explained, the frustration and irritability of the children.

The 13% of teachers who answered the question, explained that speaking English at all times in an EFL classroom really depended on the context of the school (which is understood as an economic and cultural level). While there are schools in which you can always speak English, there are others that you have to combine because there are other needs to be considered. A teacher explained that she is now working in a high-complexity school and that if she wanted students to understand what she was saying, she had to translate it.

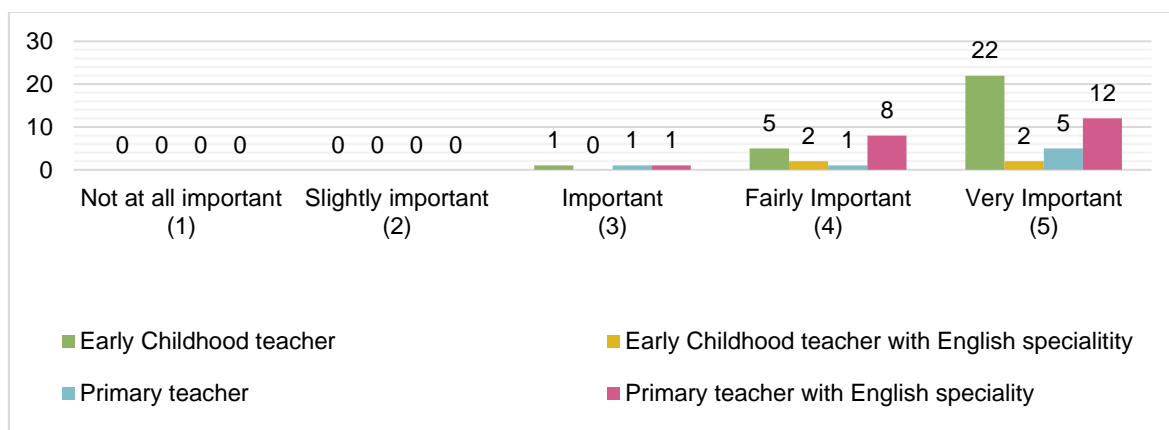
Something that 25% of the teachers agreed on was the fact that when dealing with classroom management, this needed to be done in Catalan, especially with really disruptive behaviours. They all agreed that even though teaching English is the priority in EFL classrooms, this cannot be something that can pass over misbehaviour or misconduct.

There was a non-EFL Early Childhood teacher who made a comment in this section which was that even though she talked Catalan at all times, sometimes she also needed to use other languages such as English or Spanish to help children from her classroom integrate into the school or comprehend what she explained.

3.6.3 Importance of pronunciation teaching

Teachers, both regular and EFL, were asked about how important they believed pronunciation was in their language classrooms.

Figure 2: Questionnaire: Do you believe teaching pronunciation in the classroom is important?

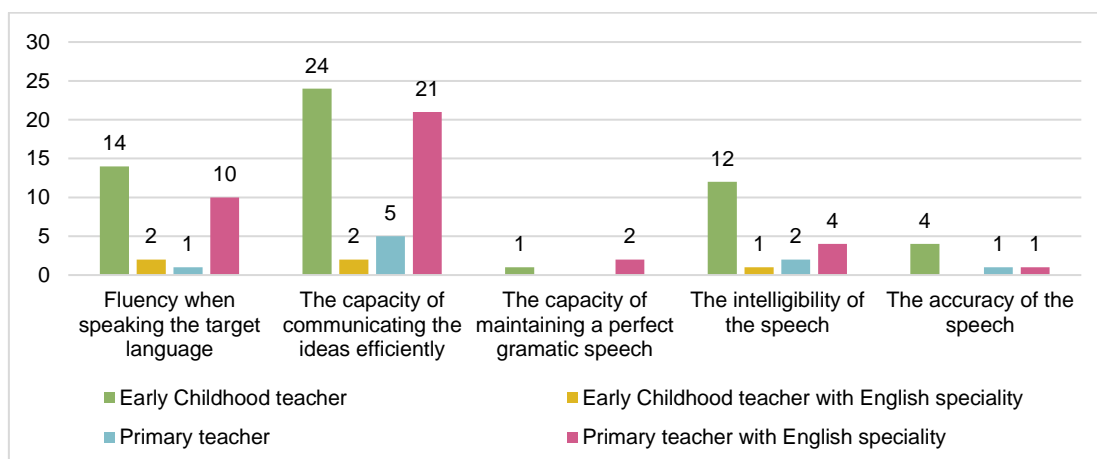


In this question, which was for both EFL teachers and regular teachers, none of the participants considered that pronunciation was neither not at all important nor slightly important. All of them considered that pronunciation was something to consider when teaching. However, Early Childhood teachers, specifically 22 of them, were the ones who believed that pronunciation is key when learning a language. Primary teachers also believed that pronunciation was important, but they did not consider this aspect of the language to be as important as they considered it to be for teachers of Primary with English speciality.

3.6.3.1 Objectives when teaching a target language

In the following question, teachers could choose more than one option. The goal was to see which were the objectives for teachers when teaching a language in both language settings: Catalan as an L1 and English as an L2.

Figure 3: Questionnaire: From your perspective as an educator, which are the main objectives you set for your teaching when teaching a target language?



Both Early Childhood teachers and Primary teachers with English speciality agreed that the capacity to communicate ideas efficiently was an ultimate goal when teaching a target language. Moreover, these same teachers also agreed that fluency and the intelligibility of speech were very important when teaching a language. Early Childhood EFL teachers and Primary teachers also believe what the others do. The skills of accuracy and grammatically perfect speech were options

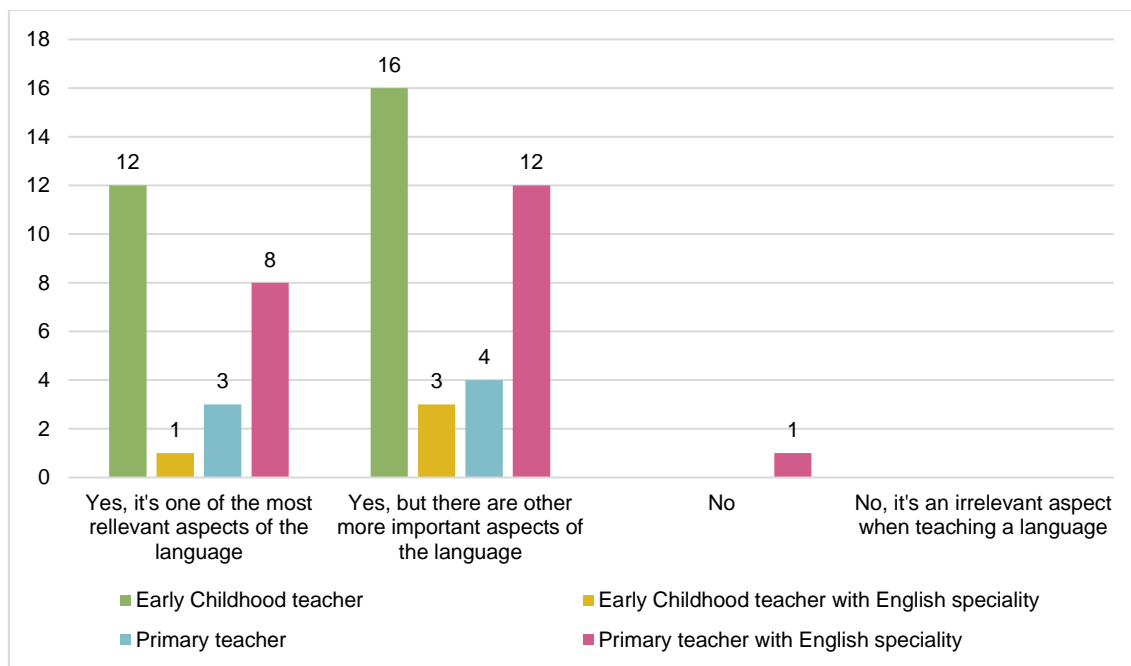
that teachers thought were less important than others when teaching a language, regardless of whether it was Catalan as an L1 or English as an L2.

There was also a space for teachers to add something to the question about the goals they had when teaching a language. Different answers were gathered, and, on the one hand, Early Childhood teachers (both EFL and regular teachers) agreed that when teaching a language, it's important that children have enough abilities to communicate their ideas, needs and emotions. On the other hand, something that is relevant for all teachers (independently of their category) is the fact that children should be able to understand them properly. A teacher expressed that in Early Years, there are children that are yet to acquire the production of all the sounds, and, therefore, as teachers, a priority should be to dedicate many moments to oral expression (through conversation) but also to comprehension and diction (especially when some difficulties are detected in practices, omissions, and sound substitution).

3.6.3.2 What to consider when teaching a language

Teachers were asked about what their considerations were regarding teaching pronunciation to children. Various questions were conducted to see their point of view on this concrete aspect.

Figure 4: From your perspective as an educator, do you believe that the pronunciation of the language is something to consider when teaching the target language?

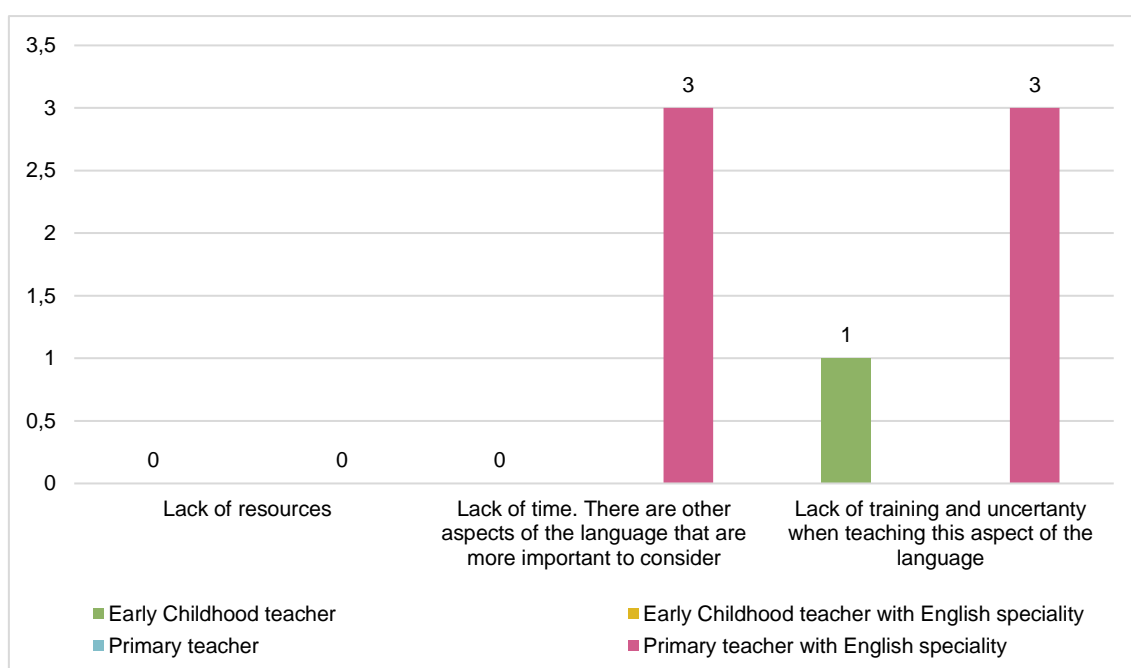


In the figure above, we can observe that almost all the teachers who answered the question believe that pronunciation is important (97% of the participants). Moreover, none of the participants thought it was irrelevant when teaching a language, but 3% of the participants thought that pronunciation should not be considered when teaching a target language.

On the one hand, Early Childhood teachers believed that even though pronunciation was important, there were other aspects that required more attention at this stage. The comments they made

regarding this were that in Early Years, teachers should understand pronunciation as something that goes along with the other aspects of the language and that, understanding it as a whole would help students conquer the target language. Additionally, they believed that promoting oral communication and expression was enough since, inherently, pronunciation would be associated with it. On the other hand, Primary teachers with English speciality were quite tight in their beliefs: while 8 participants believed that pronunciation was one of the most relevant aspects of the language, 12 other participants believed that pronunciation was important, but they agreed with Early Childhood teachers when they said that there were other aspects that were more important than pronunciation. Those Primary teachers who believed other skills came before pronunciation argued that teaching pronunciation can be tricky. They explained how teachers have to know exactly when to correct mispronunciations by the students. They maintained that overcorrections would make students lose confidence in their abilities to speak the target language. Teachers in Early Years doing EFL also commented on the fact that even though pronunciation was one of the most relevant aspects of the language, it was not valued enough in the curriculum and in the classrooms. Primary teachers supported that claim.

Figure 5: If you have answered NO to the last question, which is the reason why you do not take into consideration the pronunciation of the language? Choose the more appropriate answer.



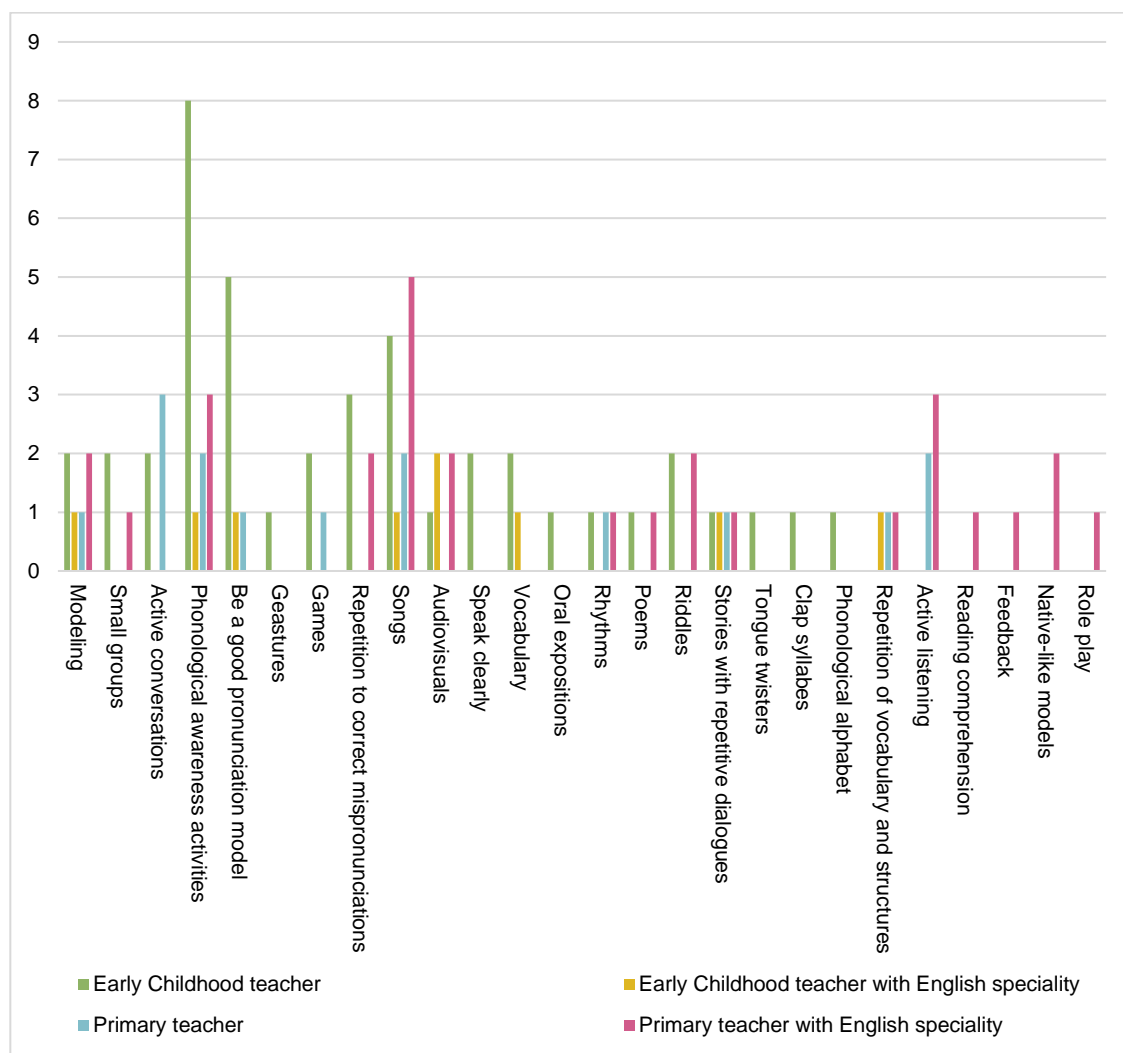
Although only one participant (Primary teacher with English speciality) answered that pronunciation was not important when teaching a language, there were other teachers who answered this question. Primary teachers with English speciality supported their previous claim, which was that pronunciation was important but other aspects were more important than this, by saying that they did not have enough time to fit all the different aspects of the language into their classrooms. Furthermore, there was also another Early Childhood teacher who answered this question by saying that the reason they did not take pronunciation into account in their classrooms was because

she did not have enough training and felt uncertain when teaching this aspect of the language. Three EFL Primary teachers also supported this claim. Although there was space to explain their beliefs, no one argued their reasons. Additionally, not a single teacher (EFL or regular) believed the lack of resources was the root of the problem and why they were not teaching, or they did not consider pronunciation to be important.

3.6.4 Strategies and materials used to teach pronunciation

In this section, participants were asked to explain which strategies and materials were useful to them to teach pronunciation. The question of strategies confused some of the participants, which is why materials and strategies have similar findings.

Figure 6: Questionnaire: If you have answered yes to the question, which strategies do you use in the classroom that improve the pronunciation of the language, and at the same time, promote phonological awareness?



In this question, teachers were asked to talk about the strategies used to teach pronunciation. Although the intent of this question was to know how they treated pronunciation in their classrooms, most of the teachers answered with the types of materials they used to work on pronunciation.

Moreover, this was an open question that had the possibility for teachers to explain their strategies, but since some of the answers were similar, I was able to put everything together to also analyse it quantitatively. Teachers answered more than one strategy in their comments, and some did not make any.

The chart above shows that **14 participants** said that using phonological awareness games was something that helped students improve their pronunciation, especially in Early Years. Moreover, this was the primary strategy used by these educators when teaching Catalan as an L1. However, none of the teachers (neither the EFL ones nor the regular ones) mentioned which types of games they used, although one EFL Primary teacher specified that she created these games depending on the needs of a certain child or small group.

As it can be seen in the figure above, **12 participants** explained that they used songs as a means to teach pronunciation. EFL Primary teachers primarily used this strategy to teach pronunciation. One of them (currently teaching in both Early Years and Primary) explained she used Jolly Phonics songs to work on this aspect of the language and that once the children understood the song, she worked on the target vocabulary that was already in the song. An Early Childhood teacher explained that using songs was something very practical because it allowed students to hear the right pronunciation of the words, and it was also a useful resource, also for her, because it gave her indications on how to correct mispronunciations. Another EFL Early Childhood educator agreed on this perspective, and she argued that offering students native pronunciation models through songs was practical to make children repeat vocabulary or simple structures and that their pronunciation when doing that was as similar as possible to the native one. However, this educator held that doing this is something teachers cannot do in one session; it is something that should take place every day in their classrooms. The previous teachers mentioned these strategies when talking about Early Years. On the other hand, there was this teacher who was a Primary teacher who explained that they looked for songs or videos on YouTube, they worked on the vocabulary, and afterwards, she sent it to the students via the platform Classroom, so they would have the resources available when working and studying at home.

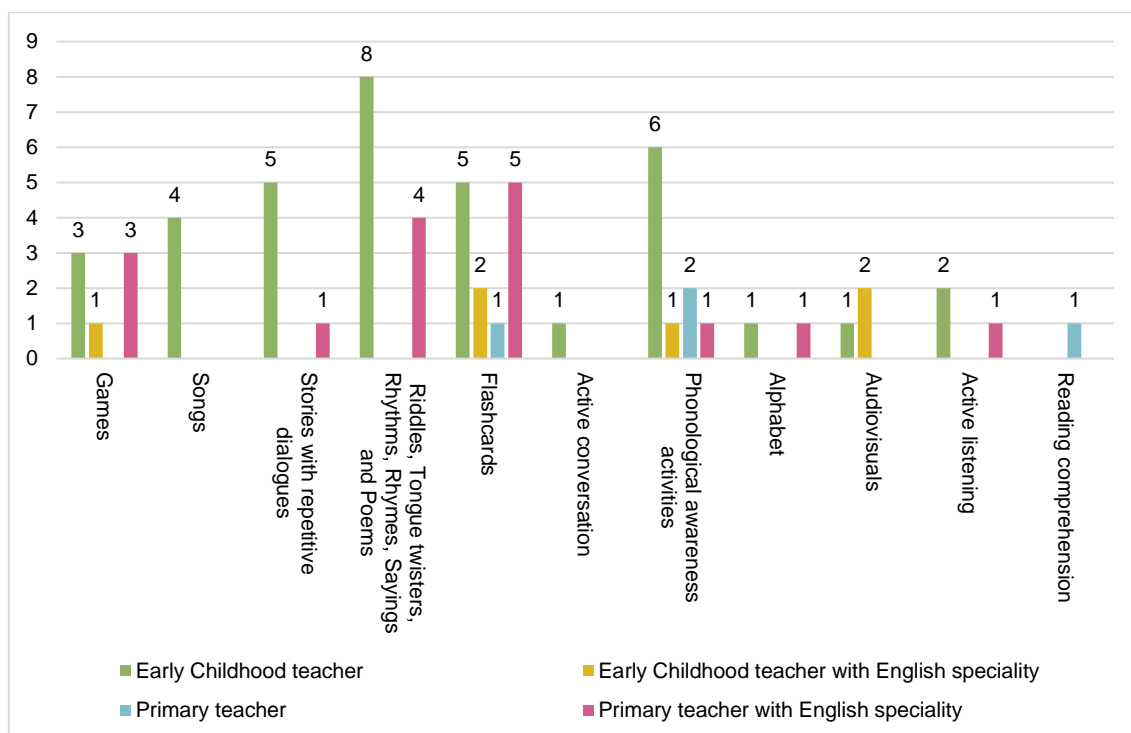
Also observable in Figure 6, **7 participants** agreed that being a good pronunciation model for the students was essential for children achieving a good pronunciation too. Both Primary and Early Childhood educators explained that when communicating with children, they had to speak clearly, slowly, and vocalize a lot, since that helped students understand and integrate the right pronunciation of words. A teacher in Early Years explained that approaching students and talking right in front of them helped with their communication and understanding, and therefore, she could also be a model on how to properly pronounce the words. Furthermore, two Early Childhood teachers agreed that using diminutives when talking did not help students achieve good communication or pronunciation, which is why they avoided doing that.

Another important strategy mentioned by **5 participants** (3 Primary teachers and 2 Early Childhood teachers) was using active conversation to promote communication and, therefore, correct pronunciation. One of the Primary teachers explained that, in small groups, she recorded the

students talking about a certain topic and allowed them to hear themselves talk afterwards. She said that doing that gave them the opportunity to see where they were mistaken and correct their own sentences. Moreover, she explained that students liked to be given this opportunity because they were active in their own evaluation, and it promoted not only great conversations but active listening as well. An Early Childhood educator explained that, even though this was not implemented in her school, she believed that the figure of the godparents (which in some schools is when the older children from the school go to help children in Early Years with some activities) would be something profitable to promote so conversations and spontaneous dialogues would happen. She argued that by doing that, older children, who are most likely to have a good pronunciation of the words, would be a good pronunciation model for younger pupils. As it can be seen, this strategy was not mentioned by any EFL teacher.

All the other strategies mentioned were important to understand the types of resources the schools had available. As can be seen in the figure above, EFL Primary teachers as well as Early Childhood teachers had a major variety of strategies to use when teaching pronunciation. However, some Early Childhood teachers added that the lack of human resources to split up the groups and work harder on pronunciation and expression, especially in Early Years, was something that prevented them from working more on these aspects. Another Early Childhood teacher agreed by saying that they have to guarantee that speech specialists work with students with the greatest difficulties regarding speaking, which is why they are only able to work fully on pronunciation as well as phonological awareness sometimes.

Figure 7: Questionnaire: Which materials do you use to work on pronunciation?



As previously mentioned, although some participants answered which strategies they used in their classroom by naming types of materials, there was another question where participants had the opportunity to explain which resources worked better for them.

As can be seen in Figure 7, **13** teachers believed that using **flashcards** was key for students to learn pronunciation. 5 of these teachers were Early Childhood teachers; 5 more were EFL Primary teachers; 2 of them were EFL Early Childhood teachers; and 1 of them was a Primary teacher. The Primary teacher explained that she used images of the mouth as a flashcard as well as mirrors, so students could see how the sound is articulated and try to do it for themselves.

In the graphic above, we can also observe that some of the most commonly used strategies when teaching pronunciation are rhythms, riddles, tongue twisters, rhymes, poems and sayings. These are not materials in themselves, but **12 teachers** (8 Early Childhood teachers and 4 EFL Primary teachers) explained that these techniques helped students become better at pronunciation.

Another thing that was mentioned in this question was using phonological awareness materials (without specifying which ones) to help students learn pronunciation. In this case, all types of educators (**10 participants**) argued how important it was to use these materials.

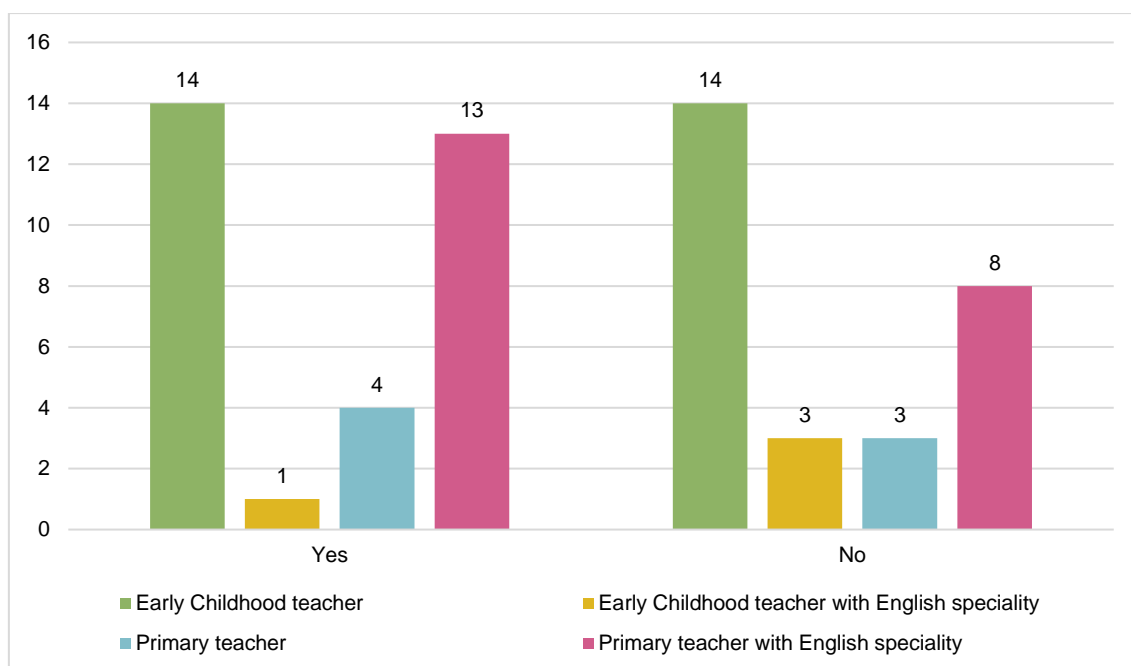
Along with that, some Early Childhood teachers (**5**) mentioned that for Early Years they used storytelling to work on vocabulary and structures, and even some teachers mentioned they prepared dialogues that were easy enough for them to remember and made them do a small representation, which was another way to work on pronunciation, voice modulation, and fluency.

To finish, both EFL teachers and regular teachers explained that there were no concrete materials to work on pronunciation and that they developed some depending on the needs of the children. Moreover, some teachers expressed their concerns, saying that they were the ones choosing the materials, without knowing which were the most appropriate ones.

3.6.5 Evaluation

In the following questions, the evaluation and the beliefs of the teachers regarding the topic will be analysed. Even though some teachers expressed that pronunciation was not something they considered, the vast majority of the teachers expressed that they did. Therefore, it was important to see that if they did consider pronunciation, there was a follow-up on this through the evaluation of it. First of all, participants were given the option of answering affirmatively or negatively to the question about whether they evaluated the pronunciation of their students. Those who did had a space to express why they chose to evaluate their students on this aspect. Moreover, they had another question to explain which materials or resources they used to evaluate the pronunciation. Those teachers who answered negatively, although they had the opportunity to express why they didn't evaluate the pronunciation, were asked an extra question to express the reason as to why they did not.

Figure 8: Questionnaire: Do you evaluate the pronunciation of your students?



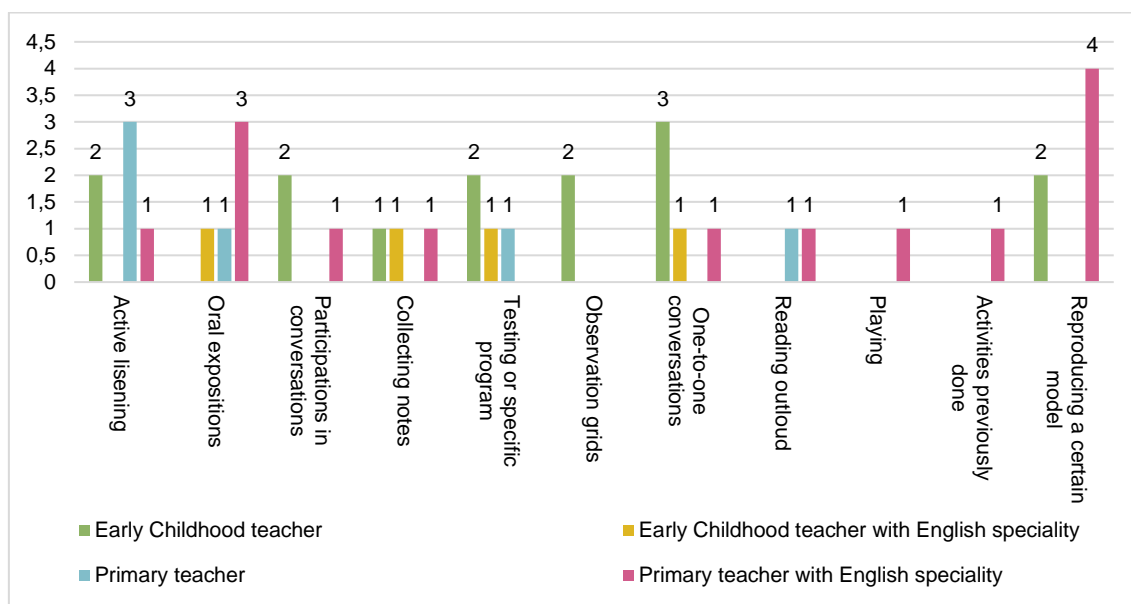
The figure above outlines that there are two clear positions among Early Childhood teachers since half of them evaluate the pronunciation of their students and the other half don't. However, if we look at the EFL Early Childhood teachers, they agree that it is not necessary to evaluate the pronunciation of their students. As far as the Primary teachers are concerned, both EFL and regular teachers evaluate the pronunciation of their students, although EFL teachers believe it is more important than regular Primary teachers.

Early Childhood teachers offered some explanations for why they chose to evaluate the pronunciation of their students. Some of these teachers explained that they only did it at times, and if they thought a child could have or develop some speech problem, so they could ask for a specific intervention to target this problem. They also argued that evaluating their students allowed them to intervene (if necessary) as quickly as possible. One specific Early Childhood teacher explained she was in I3⁴ and that evaluating the pronunciation of students was important for her but that sometimes it was too early to determine if an intervention was needed or children just needed to be a bit more mature.

Early Childhood English specialists made comments on why they chose not to evaluate the pronunciation of their students. Some primary teachers also believed what they thought. They explained that when children are little, they start to talk because of imitation, and since that was the case, there were not a lot of mispronunciations if the teacher was a good model. Additionally, Primary teachers believed that mispronunciations happened at older stages when children were starting to read and write.

⁴ I3 is the nomenclature in Catalan for the first year-course in Early Years.

Figure 9: Questionnaire: If your answer to the last question is yes, how do you evaluate the pronunciation of your students?



Those teachers who answered affirmatively when asked if they evaluated the pronunciation of their students were asked to explain how they evaluated it. This graph shows the resources and strategies used when evaluating the pronunciation of the students. Since participants had the option of expressing their management towards this aspect, this was an open question in the questionnaire. However, like in other graphs shown before, a lot of the answers were similar, and they were able to be put in a graph. Besides, bearing in mind that it was an open question, some participants expressed more than one resource to do the evaluation.

Gathered from the responses, we can observe that **3 Primary EFL teachers** evaluated their students throughout oral expositions in class. Another Primary teacher explained she also used this resource. Only 1 Early Childhood EFL teacher answered that they used this technique. However, none of the Early Childhood teachers believed they used this technique in their evaluations. Primary teachers concretely explained that the students had to prepare a topic and explain it to the rest of the class, and they evaluated not only their pronunciation but also their fluency when talking.

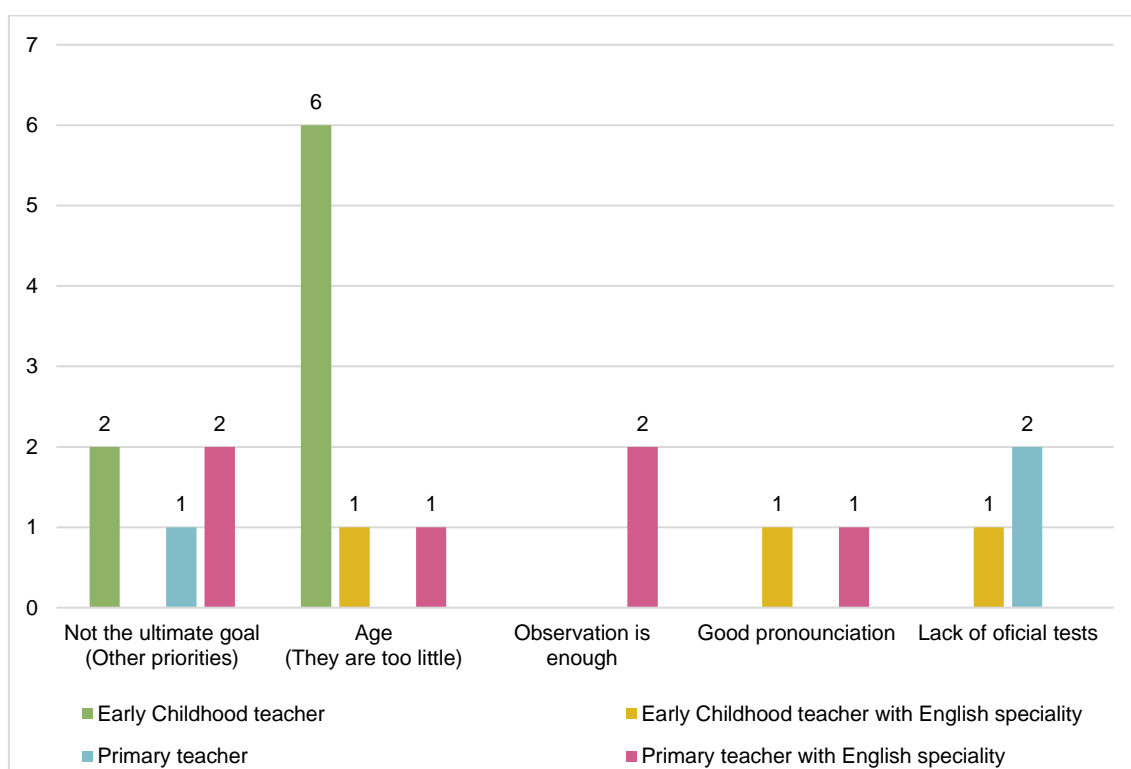
Another evaluation technique mentioned by the teachers, specifically 3 Primary teachers, 2 Early Childhood teachers, and 1 EFL Primary teachers was active listening. Early Childhood teachers explained that they observed the way pupils communicated their ideas, either in small groups or individually. Primary teachers believed that this strategy was the most useful one when evaluating the pronunciation of the students.

Along with this, there were a few teachers whose answer was to collect notes (**1 Early Childhood teacher, 1 EFL Childhood teacher and 1 EFL Primary teacher**) and evaluate pronunciation through observation grids (**2 Early Childhood teachers**). Early Childhood teachers explained that they focused on their linguistic level and registered sounds or words that students mispronounced.

Another teacher who explained that the evaluation was done when she made students reproduce activities previously done in the class (**1 EFL Primary teacher**) also agreed with the other teachers that not only pronunciation was evaluated but also words previously done to see if they had integrated their meaning and comprehension.

Generally speaking, all the teachers agreed that the reason they evaluated their students was because they considered communication to be key when learning and speaking a language. A lot of them also expressed that evaluating the interventions and the conversations that students had allowed them to see the starting point of the children and their evaluation throughout the year. Moreover, by doing this, almost all Early Childhood teachers expressed that they could also identify which students might potentially have some difficulties regarding speech, and by evaluating pronunciation, they had concrete data that supported their beliefs and observations in case they needed to ask for external interventions. Primary teachers (especially EFL ones) also agreed that evaluating pronunciation is much more than just filling in some grids and observation tables; it's something that gives them clues on what to work with students and how to appropriately choose activities for them that motivate them and make them want to talk in a certain language.

Figure 10: Questionnaire: If your answer to the last question is no, why don't you evaluate the pronunciation of your students?



Participants gave various answers to the open question as why they did not evaluate the pronunciation of their students. However, in order to make it representative, five categories of reasons were established as the main reasons why pronunciation is not being evaluated. These answers are from teachers who teach pronunciation in their classrooms but consider that it is not relevant to evaluate it.

As the graph shows, **7 participants** (2 Early Childhood teachers, 1 Primary teacher and 1 EFL teacher) believe that pronunciation is not their ultimate goal and, therefore, the evaluation of this item is not necessary. Early Childhood teachers explained that they prioritized the acquisition of vocabulary and the comprehension of what was being explained over pronunciation. Another Primary teacher claimed that, especially in Early Years and in the 1st and 2nd grades of Primary, there were other priorities when teaching a language (which she also thought depended on the context of the school). This teacher also mentioned that since pronunciation is not currently an evaluable item for Catalan students (it is not stated in the curriculum), she believes that pronunciation evaluation is not necessary.

Another common belief among these participants (**6 Early Childhood teachers, 1 EFL Early Childhood teacher and 1 EFL Primary teacher**) was that in Early Years, students were too young to evaluate their pronunciation. Early Childhood teachers (both EFL and regular teachers) argued that in this stage, they are yet to acquire lots of linguistic abilities, and especially in the case of L3, there are lots of differences in this age regarding language acquisition. A common preoccupation among these participants was that nowadays, the challenges in the classroom are growing and children might not have Catalan or English as their L1 and L2 respectively. An Early Childhood teacher argued that Catalan or English might even be some students' L3 and, therefore, they need more time to start acquiring some abilities and obtain a good pronunciation. Another Early Childhood teacher expressed that even though she believes an evaluation is not needed for this aspect of the language because children are too young and in constant evolution, she observes children's interventions in order to detect some possible needs regarding speech.

Something that **2 EFL Primary teachers** mentioned was that since observation is enough, evaluation is not necessary. These teachers expressed that in Early Years and Primary, teachers need to give children time to slowly acquire a good pronunciation. They believed that by observing students' interventions, identifying the sounds they have most difficulty pronouncing, and providing resources to tackle these difficulties, they were already doing something to help with their pronunciation, but that evaluating pronunciation as a single thing was not relevant until students were older (ex: high school). Moreover, another Primary EFL teacher doing EFL in Early Years, expressed the same thing, just pointing out that in Early Years just basic contents should be evaluated and, since from her perspective, pronunciation was just something inside communication and speech, it shouldn't be evaluated as a single item.

Another **2 participants** (both EFL specialists) explained that in Early Years, children reproduce everything the way they hear it, and therefore, the mistakes around pronunciation will be few because they will have a good pronunciation already. Another teacher supported this claim by explaining that since in Early Years most of the things are done orally, they do not tend to make mistakes until they are older and they begin to write things. One of these teachers explained that in order to speak a language fluently, an impeccable accent is not a must. Although he seemed to be a bit confused about the difference between pronunciation and accent, he expressed that the

accent of our L1 will always accompany us, and that teachers can do everything in their power to improve pupils' accents, but that they will never be able to eliminate it fully.

There were **3 participants** (1 EFL Early Childhood teacher and 2 Primary teachers) who expressed the reason why they did not evaluate pronunciation was the lack of official tests to do so. They both expressed that pronunciation is very important but that the actual curriculum doesn't take that into consideration, and they feel that only with their own resources it's not enough to objectively evaluate pronunciation.

To conclude with the results previously shown, it's important to know that participants were given the opportunity to express more beliefs and impressions on the topic of pronunciation. Many participants expressed that the questionnaire allowed them to reflect on their own practices, and especially, regarding pronunciation teaching. There was a Primary teacher that said:

It's important to be aware of the fact that showing good pronunciation at a certain age is crucial to avoiding mispronunciations and bad habits, but if this is not corrected in the school period, it can be much more difficult to solve when children are older.

While many participants expressed what was mentioned before, there were especially two of them that who were very critical regarding EFL and how English is taught in the schools. One Primary EFL teacher said:

“I believe that the aspect of learning English as a foreign language is something that has been imposed on the teachers, and it could not be more hypocritical. Teachers and students are asked to do a billion things, but then, through the news, you see that those who have to set an example (politicians) don't have a clue about English. I truly think that to learn English and be fluent in the language, people have to go abroad for a period of time.”

Another EFL Primary teacher expressed her concerns in the following way:

“I understand that there are theories and teachers that recommend full linguistic immersion because that way the student will identify the teacher with a certain communication language and that will stimulate the use of English in the classroom. However, I don't see it possible in Early Years and with diversity growing in classrooms.”

4. Discussion

In Catalonia, schools are left to decide whether to start English as a second language in Early Years or in Primary. Although lots of schools are yet to implement English in Early Years, the importance of English as a second language has greatly grown over the last decade. However, lots of schools are seeking for strategies and resources to start teaching English as an L2 in Early Years. Pronunciation is an aspect of the language that is not as well understood as grammar or vocabulary. Therefore, research and studies are necessary to tackle this challenge.

In order to conduct the study, a questionnaire was used to collect qualitative and quantitative data to provide an answer to the questions of this final dissertation. After gathering the results, I can say that the answers provided by the teachers allowed me to understand which are the main differences between teaching Catalan pronunciation in an L1 classroom versus teaching English pronunciation in an L2 classroom as well as understanding the perceptions of teachers when teaching pronunciation in both of the settings mentioned. Nevertheless, the participation of Early Childhood English specialists was very little, which mainly made the comparisons be between Early Childhood teachers and Primary English specialists.

As previously stated, pronunciation instruction can be a challenge for teachers. Not a lot of reliable resources are available, and few studies reveal how to help teachers teach pronunciation. Teachers feel uncertain when having to deal with this aspect of the language, and as Couper's (2017) study shows, though a lot of teachers have received training, they lack confidence when teaching this skill. 14 participants of the study explained they had done pronunciation training either because they enjoyed learning about pronunciation or because they felt they needed to improve their own pronunciation before teaching it to children. The older the participants were, the more trainings they had conducted, which has led to believe that since pronunciation teaching has gained some recognition, older teachers felt they needed to improve their skills to teach this language.

Although only the 23% of the participants had done pronunciation training, almost all of them considered pronunciation to be an important aspect of the language. Early Childhood teachers (22 of them) were the ones that believed that pronunciation was most important and, as in Nagle's, Sachs's and Zárata-Sández's (2018) study, these teachers maintained that this aspect was not overlooked during their language lessons.

The participants in the study were asked to talk about their objectives when teaching a language. Early Childhood and Primary EFL teachers agreed that their prime objective was for students to be able to communicate ideas efficiently. The study also revealed that teachers (both regular and EFL) thought that students' capacity of maintaining a perfectly grammatical speech was the least important objective of all the other ones stated, which agrees with Yoshida's (2017) claim that even if students have great grammatical and vocabulary skills, if their pronunciation is not intelligible enough, their communication will fail. Also supporting this statement, the results of the study showed that fluency when speaking the target language was the second-most important objective for the teachers. Some of the objectives (intelligibility of the speech, efficient communication, and

fluency) that were stated to be the most important ones in both regular and EFL classrooms in this study, directly agree with the findings in Couper's (2017) research which showed that although effective communication and intelligibility were the teacher's major goals, a high number of teachers in that study also believed that clarity, fluency, and accuracy were crucial. However, contrary to the last skill mentioned, in this study, practically none of the teachers (4 Early Childhood, 1 Primary and 1 EFL primary teacher) set the accuracy of the speech as a goal when teaching.

Participants were asked about how important, from their perspective, pronunciation was. On the one hand, 8 Early Childhood educators, 1 Early Childhood educator with English speciality, 3 Primary teachers and 8 Primary teachers with English speciality believed that it was one of the most important aspects of the language. On the other hand, 16 Early Childhood teachers, 3 Early Childhood teacher with English speciality, 4 Primary teachers and 12 Primary teacher with English speciality believed that although it was important, there were other aspects of the language that came before pronunciation. More teachers believed that though they recognized the importance of pronunciation, as Bai's and Yuan's (2019) research found, pronunciation was not central in their classrooms because other language abilities were more important in both the curriculum and the exams (specially in Primary). Teachers in this study argued that pronunciation should be thought of as something that goes hand in hand with teaching the language, but that by promoting oral communication and expression was enough because pronunciation is inherently associated with it. Only one of the participants, which was a Primary teacher with English speciality believed that pronunciation was not important when teaching a target language.

Even though only one participant answered that pronunciation was not important, other teachers wanted to express their opinions on why pronunciation was not being valued. As Bai's and Yuan's (2019) research pointed out, do not only teachers lack the time but also the resources. 3 participants of this study agreed that since there are other aspects that are more important to consider because they will be the items evaluated, there was not enough time to include pronunciation into their classrooms.

What was found in this study was that Early Childhood teachers and Primary EFL teachers used the widest variety of resources out of all the different teachers. On the one hand, Early Childhood teachers believed that working with phonological awareness activities was the most useful resource to work on pronunciation. On the other hand, Primary EFL teachers believed that songs were crucial because it gave students a native-like model to follow so the mispronunciations that could happen if the teacher was teaching the vocabulary were avoided. Celce-Murcia (1996) affirmed that in most EFL settings, students do not have the chance, most of the times, to be exposed to native input in the target language and that the teacher will have to bear in mind that the model that the students will copy will be his/hers. All the other teachers believed that being a good model for students was crucial for them to achieve a good pronunciation. Though teachers were very dedicated and explained how looking for new materials, creating them depending on what would be best for their students and adapting some others, I found that there was not a similar pattern in any of the settings. This led to believe what Derwing and Munro (2005) had previously claimed: teachers have

to rely on their own intuitions, and they adapt their resources to the experiences they go through, but the drawback of this is that some of the materials and resources may not always be the most effective and suitable ones.

When teachers were asked if they evaluated the pronunciation of their students, there were 14 Early Childhood teachers, 1 EFL Early Childhood teacher, 4 Primary teachers, and 13 EFL Primary teachers whose answer was yes. However, as Celce-Murcia (1996) pointed out, little attention to pronunciation evaluation is paid, and teachers are left to rely on their own intuitions and interpretations on how to properly evaluate their students. Early Childhood teachers explained that their main reason for evaluating children on their pronunciation was because they could see their development throughout the year. Moreover, they argued that evaluation was essential for them because it provided them with data that they could use in case they noticed some children having speech problems. Therefore, if that was the case, they had enough evidence to ask for a speech therapist or an intervention.

Contrary to this point of view, however, there were 14 Early Childhood teachers, 3 Early Childhood teachers with English speciality, 3 Primary teachers and 8 Primary teachers with English speciality who argued pronunciation should not be evaluated. One of the main reasons Early Childhood teachers were not evaluating their students on this aspect of the language was precisely because they believed students were too young and they still had to develop lots of language skills. Some EFL specialists also supported this claim. However, this point of view is not supported by most of the researchers, who argued that, according to biology, students were most likely to achieve a good pronunciation when they were younger, which a lot of them called the critical period. Selinker (1972) explained that after this period ended, fossilization happened. Therefore, based on their studies, teachers should correct mispronunciations before the critical period ended because correcting their pronunciation afterwards would be more difficult. Nonetheless, Derwing and Munro (2014) discussed whether correcting mispronunciations only depended on the aspect mentioned above or if other factors also influenced this process.

In the study, there were a few teachers who expressed their concerns about how English as a second language was being forced upon them as well as their schools. As Zeng and Borg (2014) explained, teachers sometimes have to face inadequate institutional and collegial support, which can cause a gap between their beliefs and their final practices. In line with this, there was an EFL teacher in the study who was very critical of how English was supposed to be taught in schools. She argued that every day, teachers are asked to do more and more; they have to try to create full immersion classrooms, but that there was not proper institutional support behind these impositions.

5. Conclusions

One of the goals of this final dissertation was to compare and contrast what pronunciation teaching was like in Catalan as an L1 and English as an L2. Moreover, the other goal was to see what the perceptions worked of teachers were when teaching pronunciation as an L1 versus teaching pronunciation as an L2. After collecting the data and analysing it with the literature reviewed, the conclusions of this final dissertation will be gathered in this section.

Although the data collection was not fully representative of how teaching pronunciation is conducted in Catalonia since the number of participants was only 60, it provided a general idea of how this aspect of the language is treated. Moreover, after conducting the literature review, what I found was the fact that there are very few studies regarding pronunciation teaching and the research conducted is either outdated or not accessible to teachers. Additionally, some of the research is not quite clear on how to implement the findings in the classrooms. This is why I believe this study is relevant, because it combines literature review with actual data from the classrooms. Nevertheless, I believe that further research should be conducted in order for teachers and students to have more resources available on how to instruct or learn pronunciation.

Before analysing all the data, I believed that regular teachers and EFL teachers had different objectives and perceptions about teaching pronunciation. Moreover, I perceived, during various placements in the school that regular teachers believed that EFL teachers had different priorities and approaches to language instruction. What was found in the research, however, is that teachers, both EFL and regular, had very similar approaches and beliefs when teaching pronunciation. As mentioned in the literature review, some teachers had done special training to teach this aspect of the language which provided them with resources not only for them but also for their students. However, some of these teachers, like in the literature review, mentioned that though they did pronunciation training, they still felt uncertain about how to incorporate this aspect in their language classrooms. Besides, some teachers, specially in EFL settings, felt that they could not be a good pronunciation model for their students, so they tried to provide as much native-like input as possible in order for students to achieve a good pronunciation.

Both types of teachers considered pronunciation to be a crucial aspect when teaching a language. Although some considered pronunciation to be very relevant, they believed that other aspects of the language were more important, and pronunciation was not something they could always instruct in their language classrooms because of lack of time, lack of human resources and other priorities. Celce-Murcia (1996) poses a challenge for teachers which is that in order to decide on pronunciation priorities, other aspects of the students are needed to be considered. On the one hand, when asked to EFL teachers which language they were using in their classroom, only a few expressed they used English at all times. The other EFL teachers who explained that they used English and Catalan, expressed that before teaching a language and pronunciation, there were certain priorities that they could not forget about. These priorities were basically that children needed to comprehend what was being told to them and that when disruptive conducts happened,

teachers had to deal with those types of behaviours in Catalan in order to set clear limits. Another EFL teacher explained that although one of her prime goals was to conduct her EFL classes in English, the context of the school where she was at made it impossible to do so. She explained that although she believed in a full immersion of the students, to which inherently good comprehension and good oral communication would be associated, she had to put the student's needs before her beliefs. On this same line, Early Childhood teachers explained that although pronunciation was important, they believed it had to be understood as a whole, not something that teachers should work on everyday. They argued that teaching a language is a complex thing, specially if the context of the school is complex, and that different activities should be done in order to facilitate the learning of the language for students.

When asked about their objectives when teaching a language, Early Childhood teachers and EFL Primary teachers expressed the same goals. They both believed that students should be able to communicate their ideas efficiently. Early Childhood teachers argued that at this young age, it is important for students to put words in their emotions and experiences, which is why this is their prime goal. EFL teachers supported this claim saying that, although sometimes it is believed that EFL classrooms consider other aspects, their goal was also that students were able to express their needs in this language. Moreover, both of these types of teachers agreed that the fluency when speaking the target language was also a priority to them. Contrary to what teachers in Couper's (2017) research mentioned, the accuracy of the speech was not the main priority for any of these teachers. What was found was that Early Childhood teachers considered the intelligibility of the speech to be more important than EFL Primary teachers.

A small difference found in the research was the types of strategies that Early Childhood teachers and EFL teachers used in their classrooms. While Early Childhood teachers promoted a lot the use of phonological awareness activities, EFL teachers thought that working with songs was better. This relates to one of the aspects previously mentioned. EFL teachers sometimes feel uncertain about their own pronunciation, which is one of the prime reasons teachers mentioned to support doing extra training on pronunciation, so the resources they use are because they want to offer native-like models, so students achieve a good pronunciation and have another model apart from their own. However, the strategies and materials also revealed that although their strategies might be a bit different, these teachers find different techniques to approach this aspect of the language and they try to offer a wide range of materials so that all of these can be adequate to the needs of the children. Something mentioned various times during this final dissertation is that teachers were not able to name a specific material or publisher in most of the cases and most of them confessed that they created their materials to work on pronunciation depending on the needs of the children and what they believed was more convenient for them. As Derwing and Munro (2005) pointed out, some teachers can effectively help students with these materials, but some others might not. Although some strategies and materials were mentioned in more than one answer and this allowed to analyse data qualitatively, I believe there is no common ground on which resources are best to use and in which cases to use them. Along the same line, Levis and Grant (2003) mentioned that pronunciation should be incorporated into a speaking curriculum and teachers in this study thought

so too. There were some Primary EFL teachers and some Early Childhood teachers that explained that although they felt pronunciation was an important aspect of the language, they thought that if the curriculum did not take that into consideration, pronunciation would continue being overlooked in language classrooms.

This study also revealed a variation on how pronunciation was evaluated. However, it did not depend on whether the teachers were Early Childhood teachers or EFL specialists, it depended mostly on their beliefs. And in this case, their beliefs were different. On the one hand, a repetitive reason as to why pronunciation evaluation is important for Early Childhood teachers, is that through evaluation they could see and detect if pupils had any speech problems, and that the evaluation provided them with data to ask for possible speech therapists intervention. Contrary to this, though, Early Childhood teachers who believed that evaluation was not necessary they argued that children were too young to determine if they had any speech problems, that pupils were in constant evolution and that more time was required to see if an intervention was needed. Although Primary EFL teachers did not express why they chose to evaluate their students, Primary EFL teachers who did not evaluate their students agreed with Early Childhood teachers when they said students were too young to start evaluating them. Moreover, since some teachers explained that pronunciation was not something that they considered to be a goal for them, evaluation was not necessary. Additionally, some teachers (both regular and EFL) expressed that since pronunciation was not something considered in the curriculum, they believed that they should not consider evaluating it either.

Something about the research that stood out again was the types of materials that teachers were using to evaluate their students. As previously stated, when commenting on the materials, although they coincided with some of the resources used, again, there was not a general idea on which were the most appropriate and effective pronunciation evaluation tools.

All things considered, throughout this final dissertation I found that the answers to the questions were more complex than what I firstly believed. However, now that I am concluding this final dissertation, I believe that contrary to some teacher's beliefs, the way of teaching pronunciation in Catalan language classrooms in L1 and English language classrooms as an L2 is not so different. Teachers tend to have the same objectives when teaching pronunciation and their goals line up. They believe that before starting to work on pronunciation, student's comprehension on what will happen and what they'll need to do is their main goal. After that, they find strategies (which in this case are a bit different) to overcome possible struggles that students can have. Furthermore, teacher's perceptions about teaching pronunciation are quite similar. Although almost all of them recognize its importance, they believe other priorities come before teaching pronunciation. What I believe is most important is that teachers manage to find ways to implement pronunciation into their classroom, even if this is not something that is considered in the actual curriculum.

One of the aspects that was crucial for me to discover was if the practices and beliefs of teachers were very different depending on what they taught. As previously mentioned, a lot of teachers believe that EFL teachers have other priorities when teaching English and that these priorities do

not line up with the ones they set in their own classroom. This research proved that language specialists should work together, find strategies that they could combine in their classroom because their beliefs and strategies are very similar.

With that being said, I believe the responsibility of doing what is mentioned should not only lie on teachers. Moreover, there are some aspects that should be followed upon this research, which is that teachers, with their practices and experiences, should come together with researchers to find some common ground on this relevant aspect of the language.

6. Limitations

Previously stated, one of the main goals of this final dissertation was to collect enough representative data to understand how pronunciation is being taught around Catalonia in both regular and EFL classrooms. I believed (and still do) when I started my research that focusing just on a certain county or school would not be representative of what was going on in the different settings mentioned because I understood that teaching, in all its forms, depends not only on the practices, beliefs, and will of teachers. The sociocultural context of the school, the students, curriculum pressures, and a long list of other things, sadly sometimes, come before what teachers want or need. Despite all of this, obtaining answers to the questionnaire was not easy, and although 60 participants took part in the study, which I believe represents a bit of how pronunciation is being taught in schools, it cannot provide the full picture of how (from my point of view) this key aspect of the language is being instructed. Though the questionnaire was sent a few times, and to different schools, I believe that most of the time, participating in these types of studies is not a priority for teachers. Despite this, I think one of the reasons is that teachers believe their practices are being evaluated, which is not at all the case. If more teachers participated in these types of studies, maybe their voices could be heard, and probably more research would be conducted.

Another aspect that was challenging and limiting for this study was the fact that, though I wanted to investigate how pronunciation instruction was conducted in Early Years (which I believe is crucial for students at this very young age), a lot of schools choose not to implement English as an L2 until children are in Primary which caused a lot of the responses obtained to be from Primary EFL teachers, and though their point of view, beliefs, and experiences are of great value, the results obtained in the study can be altered because of this.

Starting this dissertation and deciding on the topic of pronunciation, I found that little research has been done to investigate this aspect of the language. The literature can be a bit outdated, and sometimes it is difficult to understand how this literature can apply to our classrooms nowadays. Furthermore, some of the recent studies that have been published talk about the problems students encounter when they learn pronunciation, the difficulties that teachers have when instructing this skill, and a long list of other challenges. However, since limited research has been done, there are not a lot of answers on how to tackle these difficulties, which can be frustrating for teachers. Additionally, what I found in my study was that the materials and strategies that teachers used to work on pronunciation were not always the same, there was not a general agreement on how these materials should be, and, therefore, a lot of teachers were left to create them on their own intuition and experience. This is one of the reasons why I truly believe that the topic of pronunciation in both regular classrooms and EFL classrooms should keep being investigated. Not because teachers' experience and practice are not enough, but because teachers who do not dare to teach pronunciation would have resources available that would make them feel more comfortable with this practice. Moreover, if there was a general agreement on how to teach pronunciation, a lot of teachers might incorporate it into their daily classrooms.

To finish with, I never thought that conducting this study would take this much time. I realized that research is something that can't be done in just one day and that, therefore, needs to be something done over time. Seeing the perceptions and the beliefs of teachers, I realized that doing a research like this could be complex. However, as mentioned before, I believe that it should be done in order to help both teachers and students.

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8. Appendices

Appendix 1: The questionnaire

1. Gender

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. Non-binary
- d. I rather not answer

2. Age

- a. 23-30
- b. 30-40
- c. 40-50
- d. 50-60

3. Choose the territorial province where your school is located.

- a. Baix Llobregat
- b. Barcelona Comarca
- c. Catalunya Central
- d. Girona
- e. Lleida
- f. Maresme-Vallès Oriental
- g. Tarragona
- h. Terres de l'Ebre
- i. Vallès Occidental
- j. Consorci d'Educació de Barcelona

4. Degree

- a. Early Childhood teacher
- b. Early Childhood teacher with English speciality
- c. Early Childhood technician
- d. Primary teacher
- e. Primary teacher with English speciality

5. Have you got any official certificate in English? If the answer is yes, can you specify which one?

- a. Yes
- b. No

6. Have you done any special training to specialize in the teaching of the pronunciation of the language?

- a. Yes
- b. No

7. If your answer in the last question was yes, can you specify where you conducted this training and why?

- 8. Which is your current teaching year?**
- a. I3
 - b. I4
 - c. I5
 - d. I do not have a regular classroom but I'm the specialist of English as a foreign language in the stage of Early Childhood.
 - e. I do not have a regular classroom but I'm the specialist of English as a foreign language in the stage of Primary.
 - f. I do not have a regular classroom but I'm the specialist of English as a foreign language of the school.
 - g. Other options
- 9. Which language do you use in the classroom? (Only teachers from the regular classroom)**
- a. Catalan
 - b. Spanish
- 10. Which language do you use in the classroom?**
- a. English at all times
 - b. English and Catalan
 - c. Catalan at all times
 - d. English and Spanish
- 11. If you have answered either English and Catalan or Catalan at all times, explain the main reason as to why is that. (English teachers)**
- 12. Do you think teaching pronunciation in the classroom is important?**
- a. Not important at all (1,2,3,4 or 5) Very important
- 13. From your perspective as an educator, which are the main objectives you set for your teaching when teaching a target language?**
- a. Fluently when speaking the target language.
 - b. The capacity of communicating the ideas efficiently.
 - c. The capacity of maintaining a perfect grammatic speech.
 - d. The intelligibility of the speech.
 - e. The accuracy of the speech
 - f. Others
- 14. From your perspective as an educator, do you believe that pronunciation needs to be considered when teaching a language?**
- a. Yes, it's the most important aspect of the language.
 - b. Yes, but there are other more important aspects.
 - c. No
 - d. No, it's an irrelevant aspect when teaching a language.

15. If you have answered NO to the last question, which is the reason why you believe that teaching pronunciation is something not considered when teaching a language? Choose the options you believe are more accurate.
- Lack of resources.
 - Lack of time – there are other aspects of the language more important than pronunciation.
 - Lack of instruction and uncertainty when teaching this aspect of the language.
16. If you have answered YES to the last question, which strategies do you use in your classroom to better the pronunciation of the language and at the same time, promote phonological consciousness?
17. Do you evaluate the pronunciation of your students?
- Yes
 - No
18. If you have answered YES to the last questions, how do you evaluate the pronunciation of the students?
19. If you have answered NO to the question: *Do you evaluate the pronunciation of your students?* What is the reason as to why you do not evaluate the pronunciation of the students?
20. Which types of materials do you use to work pronunciation?

That's the end of the questionnaire. I thank you for your time and dedication when answering the questions. If there's anything that you'd like to add, I'm offering the space to do so.

Appendix 2: Data collected through the questionnaire

Answers to the question why and where teachers took the pronunciation training program

- The level that university offers is not enough.
- External resources are very few and it's difficult for a student to access it.
- To better my own pronunciation (2pp)
- Learn strategies to teach pronunciation to my students (3pp)
- Because I'm interested in teacher training programs (2pp)
- To help students with needs when they arrive new in the classroom to help them with their language (CREDA)
- It's important to be a good model for students. / It is necessary to teach children properly
- Academy in Palafolls
- Master at University of Vic
- Department of Education of Catalonia (3 pp)
- EIO (3pp)
- Pronunciation training at University Collage of London
- Post grau in speech and language

Answers to the question why EFL teachers choose English at all times or English and Catalan in their classrooms

- It's impossible to talk English at all times, children don't understand you and they end up getting frustrated. You have to find the balance between Catalan and English
- Sometimes, Catalan just slips if I see that a child is not following me.
- NOT EFL teacher: In the first question I answered Catalan, because it's the language that I almost always, but to help to integrate children and their comprehension of what I'm saying, with some students I use Spanish or English along with Catalan.
- Depending on the context and the level (understood as economic/cultural) of the school, there are some schools where you can perfectly speak English at all times and there are others that you have to mix Catalan and English because if you talk to them in English, it's as if it was Chinese.
- Because children do not follow 100% the lessons.
- I only use Catalan in situations where I have to stop the class and deal with disruptive conducts.
- I use English the vast majority of the time, but when I have to solve a problem/conflict or I have to clarify something so students understand better what I'm saying, I speak in Catalan. In terms of clarification, I only use one word when doing it.
- I try to use English at all times but sometimes I clarify something in Catalan.

- Because once I have repeated many times something and they still don't understand me, I tell them in Catalan, but only depending on the reason of the explanation.
- I use Catalan when there are complex explanations or when having to deal with discipline/conducts/behaviour.
- I speak Catalan or Spanish when students are not able to follow a lesson and all the other communicative resources are not working.
- Because I'm working in a school with maximum complexity and if I want to make sure that all the students understand me, I have to translate it.
- Sometimes, students need learn certain things that are very specific and if this information is explained in English, students get lost.
- I use English at all times, but in the event of important conflicts I use Catalan to solve them. Even sometimes I translate some instructions in Catalan for those students that don't understand English at all, and they get frustrated/irritated if they don't know what they have to do.
- I believe that I have to offer the maximum quality input in English, but that communication with students has to be my priority goal.
- In Early Years it's important to create a comfortable setting; the attention span of children in this stage is very fragile and, talking from experience, it's better to combine the two languages. If you do so, you are also taking into consideration the great diversity of the classroom. In Early Years, there's pupils that don't talk their own language properly. How can you engage them in an activity if you only use the foreign language?

Answers to the question of which strategies and materials teachers use to instruct pronunciation

- I try that my speech is clear, that I use specific words and that I don't talk more than necessary. I use gestures as a visual support to accompany everything that is explained.
- Games, repetitions, and songs
- Vocalize a lot and do phonological awareness games.
- I divide the group and we do phonological awareness games; we have conversations, and we mix the groups to play with phonological awareness games.
- I try to be a good model for the children.
- I use active conversation and phonological awareness.
- I speak clearly and slowly; I talk in front of them because communication is better if I do it like this. I try to be a good model and not use diminutives when talking.
- I use flashcards and voice modulation.
- I try to be a good dictation model and vocalize a lot when talking. I do lots of phonological awareness activities.

- I work on oral expression which is essential in this stage. I also use rhythm games, songs, poems, and riddles.
- I use the phonological alphabet, I clap syllables.
- Repeat vocabulary that children have said incorrectly.
- Phonological awareness games without letters
- Conversations, phonological awareness activities and exercises
- Concrete activities and pronunciation modeling
- Weekly sequenced practices and phonological awareness activities
- We work phonological awareness systematically and we also do vocabulary games, songs, stories with repetitive dialogues, riddles, tongue twisters, chanterelles, etc.
- Repetition through a good teacher model, through vocabulary, songs, games, etc. I make sure that they pronounce words correctly.
- Specific activities with reduced groups
- Watch and listen real videos with native people. We repeat vocabulary and we work on certain structures that we always repeat these sentences.
- I try to be a good linguistic model for children. I offer them a wide range of vocabulary regarding different semantic fields. I also do a lot of storytelling. We do a lot of activities regarding phonological awareness such as auditory discrimination games, oral praxis, and games to do the sound-phoneme correlation.
- Videos, songs, modeling...
- Games
- Conversation, games with words, rhythms, songs, stories...
- We work on phonological awareness mainly in Early Years and the first grade of Primary.
- We promote conversation as well as listening. Also, phonological awareness through concrete activities. However, we lack human resources (staff) to split up the groups and work harder on this such an important part of language, as expression is.
- We have to guarantee the MALL hours with students with greater difficulties. Another option could be using the figure of the godparents (older children) to promote conversations and spontaneous dialogue.
- I always try to make them talk and conversate and I tell them that I consider it as a big part of their evaluation.
- Modeling
- Providing a good model of the speaker and praxis
- Native speakers in the classroom as conversation auxiliars and phonics as well
- Phonics, imitation, and recordings
- Readings, sight words or high frequency words
- We do songs of Jolly Phonics and I make them repeat some of the target vocabulary.

- I use different songs; stories and I help them correct mispronunciation of some words. I record them and I make them listen to them. I sometimes do this activity with small groups, so they observe each other/their interventions.
- Lots of input and feedback
- I do auditions of the contents depending on the age of the students.
- Modeling
- Practice the difference between b/ i /v/; which are different and also /t/ which is different from Catalan.
- Language modeling, talk about aspects of double phonemes and do a lot of oral activities. There are also lots of activities regarding listening such as videos, platform from the book and songs that are key.
- Participate in dialogues with linguistic support, sing songs and rhythms.
- I conduct small phonetic exercises related with different sounds.
- We do role-plays of small dialogues.
- I pay lots of attention to play songs and let children learn them.
- We look for videos on YouTube related to the vocabulary of each unit and I send it to them through Classroom.
- Offer them native pronunciation models through songs and make children repeat a lot since their pronunciation is as similar as the “original”. This is not something you can do in one session, it’s something that you have to consider day by day.
- Songs, chants, poems...