# FINAL PROJECT REPORT

## An approach to how pronunciation is taught in "Les Pinediques" school

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this report is to give an overview of how English pronunciation is taught in "Les Pinediques" school. For this purpose, methodological aspects will be analysed and discussed, as well as the factors and beliefs that may condition the choice of the school methodologies and approaches in this field.

Key words:

Pronunciation instruction – Approaches – Methodologies - Language models

L'objectiu d'aquest treball és aportar una visió general sobre com s'ensenya la pronunciació de l'anglès a l'escola "Les Pinediques". Amb aquest propòsit, es comentaran i analitzaran aspectes metodològics, així com també aquells factors, idees i creences que podrien condicionar la tria de les metodologies i enfocaments de l'ensenyament en aquest camp.

Paraules clau:

Ensenyament de la pronunciació – Enfocaments – Metodologies – Models de llengua

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The present document is a Final Project Report, submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Primary Education Teacher with specific learning in the teaching of English as a Second Language.

This report will focus on the pronunciation component in the Second Language instruction. Choosing a topic was not an easy task. In the end I decided to ask for some advice to a person I trust and I was given some suggestions and guidance to help me choose.

Right after starting reading some authors on this topic, I realized it was very extensive. For this reason, in the beginning I had some doubts and I even tried to change the focus of my project. However, I was told that I had to stick to my first decision and so I did.

Defining the topic was very helpful since it allowed me to focus in more specific aspects of pronunciation instruction. The focus of the project has actually changed throughout the process of its writing. One aspect that I had to define was what the research and data collection would be about, so only then I decided to observe second language lessons in order to determine how pronunciation is taught in a particular educational institution.

In the end, however, I realized this topic had many implications in my future job as a teacher, since it gave me a totally new and broader perspective of pronunciation instruction and its methodology or the factors that may affect it.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In teaching English as a Second Language the pronunciation component has a very significant role, both because it is a key factor in effective communication and also because of the importance it is given by the learners themselves as has been shown in the literature on this field. In this regard, for example, Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (1996) state that: "there is a threshold level of pronunciation for non-native speakers of English; if they fall behind this threshold level, they will have oral communication problems no matter how excellent or extensive their control of English grammar and vocabulary might be." Moreover, with regard to learners' attitudes towards pronunciation, many authors like Derwing (2003), Harlow & Muyskens (1994) or Timmis (2002) have presented studies concluding that learners are concerned with reducing the accentedness of their speech (as cited in Kissling, 2013).

Thus, pronunciation teaching is undoubtedly a question of debate. However, it is a matter of controversy as well, since a lot of questions arise when discussing what to teach and how to do it in terms of pronunciation. In this sense, there are many different opinions and points of view from different authors, which discuss issues such as whose English should be taught in terms of regional or socioeconomic varieties, or what the goal of pronunciation courses should be, what attitudes towards accentedness are or even if pronunciation should actually be taught at all.

In the following lines, I wish to give an overview of the literature that addresses the issues about pronunciation teaching. The models of language that should be pursued in pronunciation teaching, the factors that may affect it, the effects that its teaching may have on learners and the approaches and methodologies that have conditioned the way it has been taught within the years will be included in this theoretical framework section.

2.1.Whose English should be taught?

Defining the ESL language model that should be the goal and focus of pronunciation programmes may be a problematic issue because as Dziubalska-Kolaczyk & Przedlacka (2008: 17) state: "What constitutes a feasible model in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pronunciation teaching can become a

contentious issue. There are a number of choices to be made: firstly which accent to use as a target". In this regard, many authors agree with the idea that there is no single regional or socioeconomic variety of the English language that should be taught. For example, Rubdy and Saraceni (2006: 127) claim that: "English no longer belongs to any one culture". Moreover, Kirkpatrick also discusses this issue and highlights the idea that one variety is not superior to another (as cited in Abdullah Coskun, 2011).

In addition to the controversy caused by choosing a particular native variety of the language to be taught, there are other factors that make this choice a complex one. One of the most important is the changing use of English, which is gaining more and more importance as a bridge language between people who do not share a common native language. English has a large number of non-native speakers, and thus some authors believe these varieties should also be included in pronunciation courses and programmes, so the controversy would not only be limited to native varieties but also to many others. In this sense, recent research has reflected this changing status of the langue and its uses. For example, as Jenkins (1998: 119) claims:

> "The recent growth in the use of English as an International Language (EIL) has led to changes in learners' pronunciation needs and goals. The acquisition of a native-like accent is no longer the ultimate objective of the majority of learners, nor is communication with native speakers their primary motivation for learning English. Instead, what they need above all is to be able to communicate successfully with other non-native speakers of English from different L1 backgrounds".

Other authors support this idea. For example Seidlhofer (2011: 46) states that in the past few years the English language has adopted a new role as a tool for communication mostly between speakers that do not share a common mother tongue. This author also highlights that English non native speakers may outnumber its actual native speakers, making it more evident that English has become an international language.

This notion of English as a *lingua franca* has generated a new model which considers English as an International Language (EIL), and this in turn has had effects on the field of pronunciation as mentioned before. In this regard, Bryam claims that EIL research has changed pronunciation instruction aims. In this sense,

foreign language learners should not focus on standard pronunciation (as cited in Coskun, 2011: 52). However, some authors do not completely reject the concept of a model when teaching pronunciation. This is the case of Jenkins (1998: 124), who differentiates between models and norms:

> "Instead of treating a native norm as the goal for production, as has generally been the case hitherto, teachers should be made aware that this is neither a desirable nor, in fact, a likely outcome. They can be shown how to use a native model as a point of reference to prevent local non-native varieties from moving too far apart from each other, as well as to promote receptive competence in interaction with native speakers".

So, the consequences of considering English as a *lingua franca* (EIL) in pronunciation teaching are numerous. It changes the requirements of the learners and their objectives and focuses. One of the aspects of pronunciation teaching that has been widely discussed and questioned in research is accentedness and native-like pronunciation. In this regard, Coskun (2011 :47) argues that these new tendencies "[...] challenge the traditional assumptions that ELT pedagogy should be informed by native speaker models". Furthermore, Jenkins also suggests that learners of EIL do not need a near-native accent but "a way of speaking English reflecting the linguistic and cultural identities of non-native speakers of English [...]" (as cited in Coskun, 2011). Also, setting native-like pronunciation goals can have negative consequences in terms of motivation as Lewis suggests: "Achieving a target-like accent may even be an unrealistic and de-motivating goal for learners" (as cited in Kissling 2013: 28). However, regarding accentedness, Jenkins found that non-native teachers who participated in an interview associated native accents with the adjectives *good, perfect, competent, fluent, real* and *original* while non-native accent was associated with words such as *wrong, incorrect, not real, fake, deficient* and *strong* (as cited in Coskun, 2011). Very similar results were found by Timmis, who evaluated attitudes of non-native English learners in 14 different countries. Most of them preferred a native-like variety of the language according to the author (Future English teachers' attitudes towards EIL pronunciation, 2011). So, despite research on this issue, most learners have not yet changed their attitudes toward accentedness.

Thus, if native-like pronunciation should no longer be the goal of pronunciation teaching, what model do teachers and students need to focus on when learning

English? Current perspectives mostly defend an intelligible and comprehensible model of language. In this sense, Atli (2012: 2) claims that many researchers are now giving priority to intelligible and comprehensible models over native accents. Since today's perspectives and approaches aim at intelligibility, it is important to define and limit its meaning. According to Derwing (2009) intelligibility can be defined as "the degree to which listeners understand a speaker" and comprehensibility as "a judgment of how easy or difficult an individual's pronunciation is to understand". Similarly, Morely (1991: 489) also supports a model that fosters intelligibility.

> "With an increasing focus on communication, has come a growing premium on oral comprehensibility, making it of critical importance to provide instruction that enables students to become, not "perfect pronouncers" of English [...], but intelligible, communicative, confident users of spoken English for whatever purposes they need".

Apart from the models that have been proposed promoting this intelligible and comprehensible model of language as a goal for pronunciation programmes, Jenkins suggests that students should at least "be given the choice of acquiring a pronunciation that is more relevant to EIL intelligibility than the traditional pronunciation syllabuses offer" (Future English teachers' attitudes towards EIL pronunciation, 2011). In addition to this, Celce-Murcia (1996: 21) claims that after setting the goal of an intelligible and comprehensible speech, the next focus should be methodological, which means discussing how an English teacher can improve the pronunciation of students in order to achieve intelligibility.

2.2.Pronunciation teaching approaches (historical review)

Pronunciation is a component of foreign language learning, whether one places great importance on it or not. For this reason pronunciation teaching effects and methodologies have been long investigated and studied. The purpose of including a historical review of the approaches and methodologies that have shaped and modified the way pronunciation has been taught since then is to help understand current perspectives and the status its teaching and learning has today. Literature in this field has been available for a long time and as Atli and Su Bergil (2012: 3665) state: "pronunciation emerged as a field of systematic study towards the end of the

19th century when the International Phonetic Association was established in 1886". This review will cover pronunciation instruction practises since then.

To understand the role of pronunciation in recent years, it is important to notice that in the beginning of the 20th century the prevailing approach to second language learning was the *grammar translation* method, which did not encourage pronunciation teaching since the focus was on translation. As Ayan claims (2008: 4-7), it was not until the *Reform Movement1,* which considered the spoken language the heart of language teaching, that this focus changed to place more importance on speech and, thus, on oral skills. It was due to the *Reform Movement* and the development of the IPA alphabet (an internationally recognized set of phonetic symbols) that important changes in the pronunciation field occurred. In this sense, and as Celce-Murcia (1996: 5) states "for the first time there was a consistent one-to-one relationship between a written symbol and the sound it represented" and the new findings in phonetics were applied to the teaching and learning of languages.

This fact had a big impact on the teaching of pronunciation. Celce-Murcia (1996) also claims that after these changes the idea that "teachers must have solid training in phonetics, learners should be given phonetic training to establish good speech habits" was established. An approach to language teaching that was developed under the influence of these changes was the *direct method,* which argued that pronunciation should be part of language learning programmes and that it should be taught "through intuition and imitation" (Celce-Murcia 1996). In addition to these innovations, and due to military needs during the Second World War, the American Army designed specific programmes to teach languages in the 1940's. As Ayal (2008) explains, this situation "[...] resulted to new approaches to language teaching". He also explains that a native speaker was the model of language and that no text books were used. Students learned through imitation and repetition and great importance was placed on pronunciation, which was taught explicitly from the start.

However, the role of pronunciation instruction in language courses significantly changed and pronunciation played a secondary role again. One approach developed under these new trends was the *cognitive approach,* which gained importance during the 1960's. As Celce-Murcia (1996) claims, it "viewed language as rule-governed behaviour rather than habit formation. It deemphasized pronunciation in

favour of grammar and vocabulary because native-like pronunciation was an unrealistic objective and could not be achieved (Scovel, 1969)". During the next decade, and under the influence of the *silent way* approach, pronunciation regained its status in language teaching. The focus now was placed on accuracy of production of the sounds as well as on the language structures, as explained by Celce-Murcia (1996). However, as the same author explains, the explicit teaching of pronunciation that this last approach fostered was again questioned by another methodology called the *community language learning* approach, which was developed during the 1970's. Finally, under the influence of the *communicative approach* during the 1980's great importance was given again to pronunciation. Celce-Murcia (1996) explains that this approach was based on the idea that "since the primary purpose of language is communication, using language to communicate should be central in all classroom language instruction".

If changes in Second Language Learning pronunciation approaches are examined in more detail, one can easily realize that one factor that varies considerably from one methodology to another is the importance given to pronunciation. The numerous approaches have set particular goals, some of them including pronunciation and oral skills and others rejecting them. In this sense, Hişmanoğlu (2006: 102) claims that "there have been many differences of opinion over the years about the role of pronunciation in language teaching and about how best to teach it". According to this author, some streams such as the *grammar translation* method and reading-based approaches have considered the teaching of pronunciation irrelevant while in others great importance is given to pronunciation, as for example in the case of the direct method or in the audio-lingual approach, even though they may differ in methodological aspects (2006:102). Thus, pronunciation has not always been considered in all language learning programmes, and this fact is reflected in the literature. Other examples of approaches that neglected pronunciation can be found in the works of Hişmanoğlu (2008: 103). This author argues that during the 1960's and 70's the prevailing idea was that native-like pronunciation could not be fully achieved anyway, and thus "the cognitive code approach de-emphasized pronunciation in favour of grammar and vocabulary". In the same way, Hişmanoğlu (2006) also claims that pronunciation programmes until the 1960's were "viewed as

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1. The *Reform Movement*: this movement took place in Europe during the 20th century. It was influenced by the new science of Phonetics which showed dissatisfaction with current language teaching practices. It fostered a change in language teaching that would place more importance in spoken language than in grammar or literature.

meaningless non-communicative drill and exercise gambits" (Teaching Pronunciation: A Critical Approach 2008: 7).

Another aspect that would be important to comment on is the double focus of approaches that do include pronunciation. These approaches basically follow two main trends: one that obeys the principles of a communicative approach and one that focuses on accuracy. These differences have been reflected in the literature. In this sense, Ayan (2008: 4) states that "for almost two hundred years, one method has replaced another by introducing new approaches; [...] Sometimes the focus was on grammar and translation targeted skills, and sometimes on oral based skills". In the same way, other authors also supported this idea. For example Morely (1991) claims that the implementation of communicative approaches shaped the aims of pronunciation instruction and thus it brought significant changes (as cited in Hişmanoğlu 2006: 104). Current perspectives seem to be closer to the communicative approach when it comes to the teaching of pronunciation. In this sense, Morely (1991) suggests that "a move from specific linguistic competencies to broader communicative competencies has emerged as goals for teachers and students" (Current Perspective on Pronunciation Learning and Teaching 2006: 104). Another author that holds this idea is Otolowski (1998), who claims that today's research and currents of thought support the idea that pronunciation instruction should be taught in parallel to the communicative practices (as cited in Hişmanoğlu 2006: 105). So today's tendencies are moving towards the idea of incorporating the teaching of pronunciation in foreign language learning programmes under the principles of a communicative approach. This idea is logically related with other current trends such as considering a good model of English in terms of pronunciation to be one that can be easily understood and comprehended. As a goal, this model is more feasible than trying to achieve a native-like accent. Accordingly, Morely (1991) states that "the goal of pronunciation has changed from the attainment of 'perfect' pronunciation to the more realistic goals of developing functional intelligibility, communicability, increased self-confidence, the development of speech monitoring abilities and speech modification strategies for use beyond the classroom" (Current Perspectives of Pronunciation Teaching and Learning 2006: 103).

Closely related to this idea, and as Celce-Murcia (1996: 2) mentions in her work, there are "two general approaches to the teaching of pronunciation: an intuitive/imitative approach and an analytic-linguistic approach". So there are again two major trends regarding how to treat pronunciation, whether to do it explicitly or implicitly. A relation between these two currents and the idea of a communicative approach or a focus on accuracy can be established. In this way, a communicative approach would seek for an intuitive imitative methodology and an approach focused on accuracy would seek for more explicit activities. In this regard Weeren and Theunissen (1968), Suter and Purcell (1980) and Ur (2006) have argued that pronunciation should be taught implicitly since "teaching pronunciation is redundant because learners could acquire it automatically over time as long as they are exposed to sufficient input or foreign language" while Wong (1993), Otlowski (1998) and Rajadurai (2001) opted for explicit teaching. (Teaching Pronunciation: A Critical Approach 2008: 1-2). However, it is important to say that for some authors these two tendencies do not necessarily have to be incompatible or exclusive, but complementary. This is the case of Celce-Murcia (1996: 3) who argues that the aim of the analytic-linguistic approach was to complement the intuitive-imitative approach since it was not developed as an alternative.

In addition to this, it is important to say that some authors argued that each method might be more suitable for a particular target group of learners. For example, Ur (2006) suggests that "imitation is more successful with younger learners, while older learners appreciate the more descriptive approach" (as cited in Ayan 2008: 17).

So, to sum up, the teaching of pronunciation has undergone many changes over the years. It is safe to say that today's main tendencies are close to incorporating the teaching of pronunciation in Second Language Learning programmes under the principles of a communicative approach. According to Atli and Su Bergil (2012: 3665) "contemporary methods value pronunciation" because they consider it important for effective communication, one of the main aims of current language learning programmes. Regarding future tendencies, Hişmanoğlu (2006: 106 - 108) has summarized the leading current trends. For this author, one of these tendencies is to approach the teaching of pronunciation from a more holistic perspective. In this sense this author states that:

"In recent years, the idea of approaching pronunciation teaching from different modalities (i.e. auditory, visual, kinesthetic, tactile) has become very popular within the field of foreign language teaching. [...] Whether there is a sound relationship between effective foreign language pronunciation teaching and Howard Gardner's (1983) Multiple Intelligences Theory has been the primary concern of some researchers".

Other changes that are taking place in this field are seeking for a more reflective approach, in which both teachers and learners give feedback to their colleagues (Hişmanoğlu 2006: 107). Another trend is to approach pronunciation instruction in a more autonomous way thanks to the use of technology, which has also contributed to the changing methodologies in pronunciation instruction. Ayan (2008: 2) also claims that technology and its use have had a great impact in the teaching of pronunciation and that the developments in this field have allowed the appearance of innovations in its teaching methodologies. In addition to this, Hişmanoğlu (2006: 108) also claims that the interest in computer-assisted pronunciation instruction is on the rise.

Finally, it is also relevant to add in this section that for some authors such as Menzel et al. (2001) developing a single methodology might be counterproductive given the variety of target learners that may use it (as cited in Ayan 2008: 1).

So in conclusion, pronunciation instruction has not always played the same role in Second Language Teaching approaches and thus not all programmes have contemplated it or have treated it in the same way. Different approaches and methodologies have been developed with the aim of covering this component of language teaching. The reasons behind these changes are complex to define; some of them may be the reaction to an older method and some of them may have been developed out of historical circumstances: some may also be the answer to renewed needs and language use or the consequence of a changing in pronunciation instruction beliefs. It is difficult to establish a very specific temporal correlation between them and it is important to notice that some of them may have coexisted and can still be in use today.

In any case, all the changes in the approaches and the incorporation of new tools and findings on this field have brought pronunciation teaching to the point it is today and future tendencies seem to be very conditioned by the increasing use of

technology and disciplines such as psychology or sociology according to Hişmanoğlu (2006: 106).

2.3.Effects of pronunciation teaching

The objective of this section is to give an overview of the findings and discoveries in the literature that reflect either positive, negative or no effects after specific kinds of pronunciation instruction. According to the review of the many trends and methodologies that have dealt with oral skills over the last century, pronunciation can be approached from numerous perspectives. This section which reviews the results and effects of pronunciation instruction practises is important because it can complement the preceding sections, by testing the effectiveness of previously mentioned approaches and methodologies that were designed for improving pronunciation in English as a Second Language and to test their current validity according to their objectives.

Firstly, the effects of programmes including pronunciation instruction in general in comparison to programmes that lack this kind of instruction will be examined. In this regard, it is important to notice that there are divergences between researchers. While some of them strongly believe in the benefits of pronunciation instruction, others question its effectiveness and utility. For example, some arguments supporting the idea that pronunciation instruction is beneficial for L2 learners are presented by Neufield (1977) and Piske et al. (2001) who claim that "pronunciation instruction has been shown to improve L2 production accuracy" (as cited in Kissling 2013: iii). One specific benefit that its instruction might offer is that it raises learners awareness of the target language sounds according to Atli and Su Bergil (2012: 3669). However, Kissling (2013: 21) refers to the limited benefit of pronunciation instruction on communicative skills in her work and states that:

> "[...] based on the generally positive effects found in literature, it was hypothesized that phonetics instruction would prove beneficial for learners production on the target phones. However, the data did not suggest that the phonetics instruction provided any advantage in the production test".

This author also claims that phonetic instruction may have less impact than expected (Kissling 2013: 71). So the question whether instruction on phonetics and pronunciation might or might not be beneficial seems a complex one because of the

different conclusions authors draw from their studies. Derwing et al. (1997) also comment on this ambiguity and inconsistency of results in literature on the demonstrated beneficial effects of pronunciation teaching and explain that:

> "some studies have reported that pronunciation instruction has little to no effect on learners' pronunciation accuracy (Purcell & Suter 1980. Suter 1976. Tominaga, 2009). Others have concluded that instruction improves segmental production but not comprehensibility" (as cited in Kissling 2013:16).

One important detail that may be affecting these results is contemplated by Kissling (2013: 68) who states that "instruction did not affect all target phones in equal measure" suggesting that instruction may be more effective in particular phones and less effective in others. Another variable to be taken into account when considering the benefits of pronunciation instruction are the types of tasks learners are asked to carry out since, according to Venkatagiri and Levis (2007), "instruction might assist learners in gaining explicit knowledge to support their performance on certain types of tasks, such as reading words from a list, but it may be less useful for spontaneous speech outside the classroom" (as cited in Kissling: 2013:4).

Results from studies on the effects of pronunciation teaching in language learning are complex and some of them seem to be contradictory. In addition to this, in any case, there is more to analyse in this field. If explicit instruction is considered specifically, some arguments supporting its beneficial effects are presented by Lord (2005) who claims that it has demonstrated positive results in language learning (as cited in Gordon, Darcy and Ewert 2013: 195). Saito and Lyster (2012) also agree on the idea that explicit corrective feedback can be beneficial and argue that research has reported positive effects of feedback in pronunciation teaching (Effects of Explicit Phonetic Instruction in the L2 classroom 2013: 200). Gordon, Darcy and Ewert (2013: 201) also claim that, after conducting a study on explicit instruction, results showed a general positive effect on learners which confirmed previous results from other authors. Another author that supports explicit instruction on pronunciation and compares it in detriment of implicit instruction is Wipf (1985) who suggests that it is much more helpful to work on phones directly rather than intuitively and claims that

"Drawing learners' attention to particular acoustic features of the L2 system, even briefly, seems more expedient than merely exposing them to L2 sounds in hope that they will discover those particular relevant acoustic features for themselves" (as cited in Kissling 2013: 2).

Gordon, Darcy and Ewert (2013: 201) also support this idea of better results after explicit instruction rather than with implicit instruction. Another argument that authors supporting explicit phonetic instruction have given is that it may be more beneficial in the long-term. It has been suggested that after a long period of time learners who have received implicit instruction are more likely to forget what they have been working on than if they had been given explicit instruction. In this line, Chung (2008) conducted a study comparing explicit and implicit instruction and the results showed that "all groups improved equally on the posttest, but the explicit group was significantly better in the delayed posttest" (as cited by Kissling 2013: 7). For some authors explicit instruction may better suit some particular phonetic cases than the implicit instruction. Such cases are the ones that can condition meaning and thus can create miscommunication problems, which are known as distinctive features. In this sense, Gordon, Darcy and Ewert (2013: 200) claim that "directing learners' attention to linguistic features that often obscure meaning improves production [...]" and that explicit instruction should be included in the communicative classes, suggesting that it would be a good option to combine explicit and implicit instruction, selecting the kind of instruction that will better suit each pronunciation aspect of the curriculum with this criteria.

However, and contrary to this, some pronunciation programmes argue for a non-explicit way of approaching its instruction. One reason for this might be the fact that according to Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (2010) and Bowen (1972) research and literature seem to support the idea that second language learners will not necessarily apply the knowledge they have learnt in explicit pronunciation controlled activities when they are communicating in more unplanned and natural activities (as cited in Gordon, Darcy and Ewert 2013: 195). Other arguments in favour of a more intuitive and imitative approach and thus a more implicit instruction are presented by Ur (2006) who claims that learners acquire language pronunciation essentially through imitation (as cited in Ayan 2008: 14). It is important to add that Kissling (2013: 8) makes a call in her work for a change in the approaches of pronunciation teaching in a kind that will be "[...] better integrated

into communicative activities (Isaacs 2009)". However, this intuitive approach has also received some criticism. For example, Lyster and Ranta (1997) claim that this kind of instruction might result in benefiting fluency to the detriment of accuracy (Effects of the Explicit Phonetic Instruction in the L2 classroom 2013: 200).

Apart from these considerations, the literature also contains many discussins about whether it is best to focus on segmental features (including phonemes as individual sounds) or suprasegmental features (including stress, intonation, pitch, rhythm or tone of speech).

The authors supporting the idea that suprasegmental instruction is beneficial are numerous. Gordon, Darcy and Ewert (2013: 194) conducted a study with two groups, one of which received explicit suprasegmental instruction while the other received explicit segmental instruction. These authors concluded that "Pretest and posttest recordings indicate that only the explicit group trained on suprasegmentals improved its comprehensibility scores significantly from pretest to posttest". This statement may seem quite reasonable if the theories of Field (2005) and Kang et al. (2010) are taken into account. These authors suggest that non-native speakers' speech is more conditioned by suprasegmental features than by segmental features and that the latter seem to be less detrimental than suprasegmentals (Effects of Explicit  Phonetic Instruction in the L2 classroom 2013: 195). Other authors that also contribute to these beliefs are Pennington and Ellis (2000) who demonstrated in their studies that making learners focus on suprasegmental features of the target language made them gain more comprehensibility of input (as cited in Gordon, Darcy and Ewert 2013: 195). However, the teaching of suprasegmental features has had its detractors too and has received some criticism. Some examples of these are presented by Kissling (2013:7) who argues that the discoveries of the previously mentioned studies might be biased because "the experimental designs of these studies likely predisposed them to finding positive effects of instruction". In addition to this, Castino (1996) and Lord (2005) criticised the studies because they did not include a control group (as cited in Kissling 2013: 7). Finally, it is important to add that Jenkins (2000) claims that a common mistake in most pronunciation programmes is giving over-importance to items that do not contribute to, or interfere with, communication. In these items that are not essential for communication she includes some suprasegmental features such as word stress, pitch or stress timing.

The author argues that although these features seem to be unnecessary for effective communication, they are repeatedly taught in English pronunciation programmes (as cited in Coskun 2011: 52).

Regarding the arguments in favour of the explicit teaching of segmental features, it has to be said that they are less numerous in the literature than the ones in favour of working on suprasegmentals. For example authors such as Cohen (1977) state that "research has revealed that the teaching of segmental phonemes isn't enough for intelligibility in communication" (as cited in Hişmanoğlu 2006: 104) so there is a need to expand the focus of pronunciation instruction rather than limiting it to the teaching of segmental features. In the same line, Kissling (2013: 3) states that although "suprasegmental features may contribute more to accentedness than segmentals (e. G. Derwing, Munro, & Wiebe 1997. Derwing & Rossiter 2003. Missaglia 2007) pronunciation instruction has traditionally emphasized segmentals (Jenkins 2004)".

In conclusion, the literature analysing the effects of all these kinds of pronunciation instruction is abundant and the authors' opinions differ considerably from one to another. It is also clear that a more explicit pronunciation approach will usually be linked and associated with a more traditional approach, whereas a methodology that is more intuitive and imitative and deals with pronunciation in a more implicit way will be linked to a communicative approach. Finally, it is important to state that even though both implicit and explicit approaches of pronunciation instruction and focuses on segmental and suprasegmentals were separately analysed, this does not imply they cannot be complementary to each other in a pronunciation programme.

2.4. Factors affecting pronunciation learning

It is important to take into consideration the factors that may affect positively or negatively the learners' performances in pronunciation tasks because they may be responsible for the learners' improvements or failures in the learning of English pronunciation. These factors may also condition studies such as the ones analysed in the previous section which tested the validity of different methodologies and approaches of pronunciation.

The significance of the influence that these factors may have on pronunciation learners' performances is reflected in Al-Najjar's work (2012: 77). This author claims that in pronunciation instruction it is crucial to consider the target learners that will attend pronunciation courses. For these reason, there are many authors that have explored the components, circumstances and elements that can condition students' evolution in pronunciation learning. For Al-Najjar (2012: 77) a combination of factors may affect the attainment of pronunciation courses goals. These factors can be classified into five categories: biological, linguistic, psychological, emotional and socio-cultural. Hişmanoğlu (2006: 105) also believes that the affective component has a major role in this field since "pronunciation is very sensitive to emotional factors and that its nature is strongly related to students' ego, identity and the level of self-confidence". This is the reason why this author believes that new trends in the teaching of pronunciation are giving growing importance to emotional aspects in contrast with more traditional approaches which only focused on intellectual learning (2006: 105). Hişmanoğlu (2006: 105) argues in his work that:

> "research findings show that a relaxed frame of mind and a degree of confidence pave the way for a correct production of target language sounds. Hence, establishing a non-threatening student-friendly environment is amongst main concerns of modern pronunciation instruction"

However, other authors do not only describe and consider learner factors, but also teacher and curricular factors in pronunciation instruction. This is the case of Baker and Murphy (2011: 40-41) who define how these three categories may affect learners' performances in pronunciation courses. Regarding learners, Baker and Murphy (2011: 40) explain that many factors may influence their capacity to both learn and produce oral features in a second language. When referring to curriculum factors, Baker and Murphy (2011: 41) suggest that factors such as the target pronunciation model and a wide variety of models offered in the class (Pickering 2006 and Wennestorm et al. 2006), as well as setting feasible objectives (Goodwin 2001), can all have an impact on the results of a pronunciation course. Finally, and regarding factors related to teachers, Baker and Murphy (2011: 41) claim that it has been argued in the literature that it is of key importance for teachers to have great knowledge of both phonology and its pedagogy (Celce-Murcia et al. 2010; Morely 1991; Murphy 1997 and Parish 1977).

In addition to this, when considering which aspects may have a beneficial effect Tominaga (2009: 135) summarizes them into enjoyable learning, learners having good learning strategies, having a role model and a good teacher intervention. The study carried out by this author also concluded that learners had better results when they were given choice and their interest was fostered (Tominaga 2009: 135) so motivation might be a key element in successful pronunciation programmes as well.

In terms of negative factors that have an influence on pronunciation instruction, Kanokislapatham (2014: 2) highlights the interference from the learners' first language, their age, their predisposition and attitude, the classroom environment, materials, inadequate support systems and poor knowledge of the English phonemes.

## 2.5. Pronunciation in the curriculum and in the Catalan Primary Education Curriculum

The presence of pronunciation instruction in the curriculum has been analysed by many authors. Atli and Su Bergil (2012: 3670-3671) claimed that it is of great importance to dedicate time and attention to pronunciation in Second Language instruction and that it is even more important to train future teachers in this field.

Authors are divided on whether current curricula tendencies seem to include or reject pronunciation instruction. On one hand, Atli and Su Bergil (2012: 3665) claim that "pronunciation is neglected in the majority of language classrooms" while, on the other hand, Ayan (2008: 2) argues that methodologies and approaches regarding pronunciation instruction have changed over the years and that "curricula have been mostly designed according to these perspectives", so according to this author, it may be assumed that current curricula include the teaching of pronunciation. However, it is difficult to analyse all the curricula that have been designed all over the world so both hypotheses may be correct since they may not apply to all contexts.

Another aspect that actually contradicts Ayan's idea that most curricula have been adapted to new tendencies is the belief that theory is not linked with actual practices but that they are rather disconnected. In this regard, Derwing and Munro (2005) and Levis (1999) claim that there is a gap between real practices of pronunciation instruction in classrooms and the discoveries of research in this field (Effects of

Explicit Pronunciation Instruction in the L2 classroom 2013: 195). In the same line, and because of this, these authors also claim that:

> "more research that integrates the findings from laboratory studies into real, time-constrained L2 pronunciation instruction - within a communicative methodology - is necessary, given the potential benefits it could bring to learners in the development of comprehensible L2 speech" (2013:195).

The best moment to introduce or to work on phonetics and pronunciation has been a matter of debate too. The main tendency, according to Kissling (20013: 2), is to give training in phonetics to learners that are at advanced levels. Despite this main tendency, Higgs and Clifford (1982) claim that pronunciation instruction mostly benefits overall language learning during early and advanced levels, and it is less significant in intermediate levels, describing the evolution of pronunciation positive influence as a U-shaped curve (as cited in Kissling 2013: 8). In addition to this, Kissling (2013: 9) also supports the introduction of pronunciation instruction in early stages of Second Language programmes against the prevailing trend to introduce it later on in more advanced. The author justifies her preference by stating that "if instruction leads to short-term improvements in pronunciation, then perhaps instruction is best provided early in the curriculum and then revisited in advanced courses" (2013: 9).

Literature has also reviewed whether current curricula focus on segmental or suprasegmental features. Celce-Murcia et al. (1996: 30) argues that "today's English curriculum [...] seeks to identify the most important aspects of both the segmentals and supresegmentals, and integrate them appropriately in courses that meet the needs of any given group of learners" so curricula incorporate the findings of literature and are designed according to them.

Regarding the Catalan Primary Education Curriculum, its analysis will help determine the status given to pronunciation instruction. It will be a good chance to also check whether it has been designed under the principles of a particular approach or not and whether it has incorporated current trends in second language pronunciation instruction collected in the literature.

When analysing the Catalan Primary Education Curriculum, it is easy to identify the presence of pronunciation instruction in the second language subject (Curriculum

2008: 30-74). Thus, one may conclude that the Catalan Curriculum does place importance to pronunciation.

Through the analysis and revision of the Curriculum, one may also conclude that it was designed under a communicative approach and in agreement with its principles. To be more specific, this document is based on different competencies that Catalan primary school pupils must achieve by the end of their schooling period, and one of these is the communicative competence. This competence is given a major role in the Curriculum (Curriculum 2009: 16-19). Apart from that, further evidence that the Curriculum is close to a communicative approach can be found in the fact that the oral competence is also one of the main competences contemplated in the more specific competencies of each area, in this case, the area of languages (Curriculum 2009: 32). In addition, the communicative dimension of the document (Curriculum 2009: 34) includes objectives to be achieved at the end of each Cycle that are classified in two categories: "speaking and conversing" and "listening and understanding".

Regarding the issue of when to introduce and work on pronunciation to get the best results in its instruction, the Catalan Curriculum (2009: 44-59) sets different objectives for three graded levels, including Initial Cycle (Year 1 and 2), Middle Cycle (Year 3 and 4) and Upper Cycle (Year 5 and 6). These objectives also include the oral dimension and thus pronunciation. In this regard, it is important to note that in the First Cycle objectives the pronunciation component is not named explicitly. However, since pupils will be working with the language orally, one can imagine that they might acquire English phonemes implicitly regardless of the fact that it is not a specific objective of the Curriculum for this group of learners (Curriculum 2009: 44). With respect to the Middle Cycle, it is relevant to highlight that pronunciation does appear among the specific objectives (Curriculum 2009: 53) since pupils are expected to take part in oral communicative activities and use correct pronunciation, as well as other phonological features such as intonation or rhythm. Finally, and with regard to the Upper Cycle, through the analysis of the objectives set for this group of pupils one can realize that pronunciation becomes more important since its explicit appearance increases. In this sense, pupils are expected to generate their own oral productions with previous preparation and by adapting phonological aspects such as intonation or tone. Moreover, pupils are also

asked to show interest and participate in conversations, where they express themselves clearly and with good pronunciation (Curriculum 2009: 59). So, after the analysis of the Catalan Curriculum, it can be stated that pronunciation is given great importance towards the end of Primary Education. Thus, pronunciation instruction is emphasized amongst more advanced learners rather than in the early stages of language instruction, contrary to what has been argued for Kissling (2013).

If one considers the methodology that the Catalan Curriculum fosters, there is no specific guidance on whether to focus on segmental or on suprasegmentals. Another methodological aspect that is not included in the Curriculum is whether pronunciation instruction should be approached explicitly or implicitly. However, and since the Curriculum is closer to a more communicative approach, it seems reasonable to assume a preference for an implicit approach.

Finally, if we take into consideration the model of English that should be achieved in second language lessons according to the Curriculum, it has to be said that there is no specific information about it. There is also a lack of instructions on the importance to offer different varieties of the language. However, the Curriculum does contemplate the necessity to boost motivation to learn other languages and cultures as well as a positive attitude towards them. In addition to this, the Curriculum also promotes a critical attitude against linguistic stereotypes (Curriculum 2009: 45).

## 3. DATA COLLECTION

In order to comprehend how English pronunciation is taught in "Les Pinediques" school I did some observation and collected relevant data which served as a means to discover what the role of this component of second language teaching was in this particular environment.

### 3.1. Methodology

The data collection tools I used for this purpose were chosen taking into consideration the circumstances of my observation. In this regard, since the data I wanted to get from "Les Pinediques" school was how pronunciation is taught there, and also what the teachers and pupils beliefs and assumptions on this topic are, my observation had a double focus on methodology and opinion.

In order to determine the school methodology regarding the teaching of pronunciation, I decided to observe and record a total of 16 sessions (45 minutes each) of English lessons delivered by three different teachers in three different levels (Year 4, 5 and 6). This would allow me to see what methodological practices are actually carried out in the classroom in their daily lessons. To be more systematic and precise, I designed an observation grid, which I planned to use during the observations. In this grid I included different categories, each corresponding to one methodological practice. These categories were carefully chosen in order to determine whether teachers approach pronunciation explicitly or implicitly, whether they use a communicative approach or not, whether they work on pronunciation spontaneously or in a more planned way, and also whether they focus on the teaching of segmental or suprasegmental features. The resulting observation grid was the following:

| YEAR....... SESSION........ | |
| --- | --- |
| Mistakes correction Recasting (segmentals) | |
| Mistakes correction Recasting (suprasegmentals) | |
| Mistakes explicit correction (segmentals) | |
| Mistakes explicit correction | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (suprasegmentals) | | | |
| Mistakes that are not corrected | | | |
| Explicit exercises on pronunciation (segmentals) | | | |
| Explicit exercises on pronunciation (supraegmentals) | | | |
| Implicit work on pronunciation (segmetals) | | | |
| Implicit work on pronunciation (suprasegmentals) | | | |
| Spontaneous pronunciation instruction (segmentals) | | | |
| Spontaneous pronunciation instruction (suprasegmentals) | | | |
| Feedback on pronunciation | | | |
| Other mention to pronunciation | | | |

The idea was to add comments on each category anytime that particular methodological practice occurred in the class, specifying the kind of correction or exercise that the teacher did. However, it was easier for me to collect this information in a notebook and later on classify it in the grid. The oral recordings were useful in case I missed any of the corrections and in order to have easy access to the data. This method was initially intended to be used to collect qualitative data although these grids also provided me with some quantitative data because all the information in each grid was then brought together in a grid including all 3 years' results and which showed the overall frequency of each pronunciation instruction kind of practice.

I also would like to add that the participants of this observation, both teachers and pupils, were told that they would be observed and what the purpose and focus of my observation were.

Finally, the reasons behind my choice are that this kind of observation would be feasible to conduct in terms of time and accessibility since I did my placement there and I was already familiar with the school. Another reason is that the grid would allow me to be more systematic and organized. The use of a voice recorder allowed me to analyse the English lesson whenever I needed to. A video recorder was not used because some of the pupils' legal tutors did not give permission to record them and, so its use would infringe image rights. Lastly, the fact that I could extract some quantitative information from the grid was reassuring for me because I am not used to dealing with qualitative information and because it made it easier for me to get an idea of the results and to analyse the data.

Apart from these observations, and in order to discover what the teachers and pupils beliefs and assumptions were about pronunciation instruction and their opinion on its methodology, I conducted an interview with each of the 3 English teachers and carried out a survey of 105 pupils from Year 4, 5 and 6. In these interviews and surveys, I also added a section including a chart which they were asked to complete according to their opinion. These charts included some statements and teachers and pupils were asked to state whether they agreed or disagreed with them. Because a yes/no answer is sometimes difficult to give, there were 4 degrees of agreement and disagreement (strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree). However, when analysing the data, I basically collapsed the data into two categories, one in agreement with the statement and another that would disagree with it, although sometimes these degrees of agreement also provided relevant information.

In the case of the pupils, they had two different charts, one about pronunciation beliefs and the other about methodological aspects. The statements in both charts were adapted so that they could understand them. The statements were designed so as to provide information about particular aspects of the status of pronunciation (including the role of pronunciation teaching in language learning; their opinion on pronunciation teaching approaches and on its presence in the curriculum; their opinion on what models of English should be taught and provided to them and their opinion on their own accent) and information about their opinion on methodological aspects (including approaches and practices in pronunciation instruction and factors affecting its learning). The resulting charts were:

| | Molt d'acord | D'acord | No d'acord | Gens d'acord |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| La pronunciació de l'anglès és molt important per poder-nos comunicar en aquesta llengua | | | | |
| Dedico suficient temps a treballar la pronunciació a l'escola | | | | |
| És possible aconseguir un nivell nadiu o gairebé nadiu treballant la pronunciació | | | | |
| M'agrada conèixer les diferents varietats geogràfiques de l'anglès (accent australià, americà...) | | | | |
| També m'agrada conèixer altres varietats d'accents no natives (per exemple l'accent d'anglès d'un xinès o d'un italià) | | | | |
| Els accents nadius són millors, més bons, correctes i competents | | | | |
| Els accents no nadius són incorrectes, falsos, no reals i deficients | | | | |
| L'objectiu de treballar la pronunciació hauria de ser aconseguir tenir un accent el màxim semblant al dels nadius possible | | | | |
| L'objectiu de treballar la pronunciació hauria de ser poder produir un discurs que fàcilment entendria qualsevol parlant d'anglès | | | | |
| Valoro positivament el meu accent i la meva pronunciació de l'anglès | | | | |

| Afirmació | Molt d'acord | D'acord | No d'acord | Gens d'acord |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valoro positivament que la mestra faci la classe d'anglès sobretot en aquesta llengua | | | | |
| A vegades em sento més segur quan dóna explicacions en la meva llengua materna | | | | |
| Quan es tracta de pronunciació, m'agrada primer conèixer la norma i després practicar-la | | | | |
| M'agrada descobrir les normes de pronunciació per mi mateix | | | | |
| M'agrada que em corregeixin tots els errors de pronunciació que cometo | | | | |
| Només m'agrada que em corregeixin els errors de pronunciació si aquests m'impedeixen comunicar el missatge que volia | | | | |
| M'agrada que em corregeixin els errors de pronunciació al moment encara que em tallin la frase que dic | | | | |
| M'agrada que em corregeixin els errors de pronunciació després d'acabar la frase | | | | |
| Quan sóc corregit m'agrada que em donin tota l'explicació de l'error de pronunciació que he comès | | | | |

Regarding the teachers' charts, they were designed in a very similar way. In this case, however, the statements were not adapted and were more specific. Two charts were included in their interview, one concerning the role of pronunciation (which was thought to determine their beliefs regarding the status of pronunciation, its presence in the curriculum and on the models of English language they should foster and include in their lessons), and the other one concerning methodological aspects

(including the approaches and methodologies they use and their opinion on them).

The resulting charts were the following:

| Afirmacions | Molt d'acord | D'acord | No d'acord | Gens d'acord |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| En l'aprenentatge d'una segona llengua, la pronunciació és un factor clau per a una correcta comunicació | | | | |
| És important incloure aspectes de pronunciació en el currículum de primària a l'àrea de llengua estrangera | | | | |
| A l'aula és important que els infants puguin estar en contacte amb diferents varietats geogràfiques natives de l'anglès (accents australians, americans, irlandesos...) | | | | |
| A l'aula és important que els infants també estiguin en contacte amb models de llengua no nadius diferents del seu (accents xinesos, italians...) | | | | |
| Els accents nadius són correctes, perfectes, competents, reals i originals | | | | |
| Els accents no nadius són incorrectes, no reals, falsos i deficients | | | | |
| Em preocupa el fet de tenir un accent no nadiu | | | | |
| Assolir una pronunciació nativa és possible i hauria de ser l'objectiu dels cursos de pronunciació | | | | |

| Afirmació | Molt d'acord | D'acord | No d'acord | Gens d'acod |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| És important utilitzar l'anglès durant tota o gairebé tota la sessió de llengua estrangera | | | | |
| A vegades és bo donar explicacions en la llengua materna | | | | |
| És necessari sistematitzar l'ensenyament de la pronunciació (per exemple cada setmana treballar un so determinat) | | | | |
| És necessari seleccionar els elements de pronunciació a treballar en funció dels errors més recurrents i en funció de les majors dificultats per a catalanoparlants | | | | |
| Quan treballem pronunciació prefereixo explicar la norma i practicar-la després | | | | |
| Quan treballem pronunciació prefereixo que els alumnes descobreixin la norma per si sols | | | | |
| L'objectiu de l'aula en termes de pronunciació hauria de ser aconseguir un discurs intel·ligible més que no pas gairebé nadiu | | | | |
| El focus de l'aula hauria d'estar en la comunicació més que no pas en la correcció | | | | |
| Només corregeixo la pronunciació dels alumnes si el seu error interfereix en la comunicació | | | | |
| A l'aula és important tenir en compte factors que poden afectar l'aprenentatge de la pronunciació com l'autoestima dels infants, un ambient relaxat... | | | | |
| És important fer ús de material (àudio...) per tal que els infants tinguin varietat de models de llengua | | | | |
| És important fer un seguiment i avaluació de l'aprenentatge de la pronunciació a l'escola | | | | |

28

All these charts were given to the teachers. They were asked to give the pupils charts to them so that they could complete them. The teachers were also given some explanations about their own charts as well as the pupils charts, so that they could explain every statement to the children in case they did not understand it by themselves.

The information that these charts could provide was mainly quantitative. Again, this kind of research is reassuring to me because I can work with objective and clear results after implementing it. This data collection tool was especially useful with the pupils group because it allowed me to have a wider sample of pupils, since other methods such as personal interviews would have taken too much time and would not have been feasible. However, the pupils chart also contained two brief questions, which will be commented on later on.

Lastly, the third tool that was used to collect data were questionnaires with teachers and pupils. In the case of the pupils, they were asked two questions that had a brief answer, one that would reflect their opinion on their own accent and another one regarding their view of English as a *lingua franca* and the uses they would make of this foreign language outside the school ("Com valoraries el teu accent de l'1 al 10?" and "Quin ús creus que faràs de l'anglès en un futur fora de l'escola?"). in the case of the teachers, they had to answer a longer interview, that would provide me with useful information about the methodologies that they use to teach pronunciation as well as their opinions on them (their questions regarding pronunciation teaching believes included "Quin model o varietat lingüística d'anglès predomina a l'aula quan no es tracta del discurs del mestre (CD, DVD...)?"; "Creus que és important i positiu introduir varietats de llengua diverses a l'aula? Les no natives també?"; "Com valoraries la teva pronunciació en una escala de l'1 al 10?"; "Quin ús creus que els alumnes faran de l'anglès en un futur i fora de les aules?" and "En quin grau estaries d'acord amb l'afirmació:

> "Jenkins (2005) found that non-native teachers who participated in an interview "perceived native accents as good, perfect, competent, fluent, real and original English while non-native accent is not good, wrong, incorrect, not real, fake, deficient and strong"""

The questions about methodology included "Inclous l'ensenyament de la pronunciació en la teva programació planejada o prefereixes treballar-la de manera

esporàdica en funció de com es desenvolupen les sessions?"; "En cas que es treballi de manera programada, amb quina freqüència?"; "Quins criteris de prioritat utilitzes a l'hora de seleccionar allò que es treballarà a l'aula?"; "Quan un infant comet un error de pronunciació en fas una correcció al moment, quan acaba la frase o simplement no ho corregeixes?"; "En cas que es corregeixi, ho fas de manera explícita acompanyant la correcció d'una explicació o simplement repeteixes la paraula? Depenent de l'error que es comet* canvies l'estratègia?"; "Quan es tracta de pronunciació, creus que té la mateixa importància tractar cadascun dels fonemes de la llengua que altres aspectes com entonació, síl·labes tòniques...?"; "Creus que el treball de la pronunciació té efectes positius en l'aprenentatge de la llengua?" and "Quina manera de treballar la pronunciació té més beneficis, de manera planejada o esporàdica? I fent correccions explícites amb explicació o només repetint i modelant l'error?").

The data provided by the interviews was qualitative and it was especially helpful with the teachers, since it presented new and more specific information about their methodologies and practices as well as opinion on the pronunciation instruction in the school.

3.2.Results

The following grid contains the results and quantitative information obtained from the observation I carried out in "Les Pinediques" school during April and May 2016. In this chart the frequency of different pronunciation instruction practices that occurred during the observations is contemplated.

| Pronunciation instruction practices in the classroom Year 4, 5 and 6 – 16 sessions (720 minutes) | Prevalence |
|---|---|
| Mistakes correction Recasting (segmentals) | 42 |
| Mistakes correction Recasting (suprasegmentals) | 0 |
| Mistakes explicit correction (segmentals) | 3 |
| Mistakes explicit correction (suprasegmentals) | 1 |
| Mistakes that are not corrected | 48 |
| Explicit exercises on pronunciation (segmentals) | 9 |
| Explicit exercises on pronunciation (supraegmentals) | 1 |
| Implicit work on pronunciation (segmetals) | 5 |
| Implicit work on pronunciation (suprasegmentals) | 0 |

| Spontaneous pronunciation instruction (segmentals) | 9 |
|---|---|
| Spontaneous pronunciation instruction (suprasegmentals) | 1 |
| Feedback on pronunciation | 1 |

CHARTS

The following graphs show what the teachers' beliefs and assumptions about pronunciation instruction are:

**In language learning, pronunciation is a key factor for effective communication**

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**It is important to include pronunciation instruction in the second language section of the Catalan Primary Education Curriculum**

1

2

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**It is important for pupils to be in contact with geographical native varieties of English (E. g. Australian, American or Irish accents)**

1    1

1

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**It is important that pupils are familiar with non-native models of language other than their own (E.g. Chinese or Italian English accents)**

1

2

- Strongly agree
- Agree

**Native accents are correct, perfect, competent, real and original**

1

2

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**Non-native accents are incorrect, not real, fake and deficient**

1

2

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree

**I am concerned about the fact that my accent is not native**

1

2

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**Achieving a native-like pronunciation is a feasible objective and it should be the aim of pronunciation programs**

1    1

1

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree

The following graphs contain information regarding teachers' practices and opinions about pronunciation teaching methodology:

**It is important that the lesson is conducted mainly in the English language**

■ Strongly agree
■ Agree

3

**In some specific cases it is good to provide pupils with some explanations in their mother tongue**

1

■ Strongly agree

2

**It is necessary to include pronunciation instruction systematically (E. g. working on one phoneme each week)**

1

■ Strongly agree

■ Agree

2

**It is necessary to select the pronunciation features that will be covered in class according to the pupils' most common mistakes and major difficulties for Catalan…**

■ Strongly agree
■ Agree
■ Disagree
■ Strongly disagree

1

2

**When working on pronunciation I prefer to show pupils the rules and practice them later on**

1

■ Strongly agree

■ Agree

2

**When working on pronunciation, I want pupils to find its rules by themselves**

1

■ Strongly agree
■ Agree
■ Disagree
■ Strongly disagree

2

**In terms of pronunciation, an intelligible and comprehensible speech should be the class objective rather than native-like pronunciation**

■ Strongly agree
■ Agree
■ Disagree

1

2

**Communication should be the lesson's focus rather than accuracy**

■ Strongly agree
■ Agree
■ Disagree

3

In the next graphs, pupils' beliefs and assumptions on pronunciation instruction are presented:

**English pronunciation is very important for communication in this language**

- 27%
- 73%
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**Native accents are better, correct and competent**

- 10%
- 12%
- 35%
- 43%
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree

**I spend enough time in school to work on pronunciation**

- 15%
- 1%
- 29%
- 55%
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**Non-native accents are incorrect, fake, not real and wrong**

- 3%
- 16%
- 41%
- 40%
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree

**It is possible to achieve a native or native-like accent by working on pronunciation**

- 11%
- 1%
- 20%
- 68%
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**The aim of pronunciation instruction should be to achieve a native-like accent**

- 9%
- 1%
- 46%
- 44%
- Strongly agree
- Agree

**I like to know different geographical varieties of native English (E. g. Australian or American accents)**

- 15%
- 2%
- 41%
- 42%
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**The aim of pronunciation instruction should focus on producing a speech that would be easily understood by any…**

- 6%
- 2%
- 52%
- 40%
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

**I like to know other non-native varieties of English (E. g. Chinese or Italian English accents)**

- 31%
- 3%
- 18%
- 48%
- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree

**I value my accent and English pronunciation**

- 1%
- 42%
- 57%
- Strongly agree
- Agree

Finally, in the following graphs, information about pupils' opinions on pronunciation methodology and practices is included:

**I like it when the teacher delivers the English lesson mostly in this language**

Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

29% 1% 70%

**I feel more confident when the teacher gives instructions in my language**

Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

4% 34% 62%

**I only like to be corrected in pronunciation when my mispronunciations may interfere with communication**

Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

17% 22% 31% 30%

**When I speak, I like to be corrected in pronunciation at that same moment, even if communication is interrupted**

Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

15% 32% 29% 24%

**Regarding pronunciation instruction, I like to know a rule first and then practice it**

Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

26% 2% 32% 40%

**I like to discover pronunciation rules on my own**

Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

6% 24% 31% 39%

**I like to be corrected in pronunciation only after I have finished my speech**

Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

14% 6% 50% 30%

**When I am corrected, I like the teacher to give me a full explanation of the mistake I have made**

Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

31% 2% 1% 66%

**I like the teacher to correct all mispronunciations I may produce**

Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

11% 2% 23% 64%

3.3.Data analysis

CLASS OBSERVATIONS

When analysing the data provided by the observations in the school the first thing that comes to mind is the fact that, given the number of English sessions observed (16 sessions), there was not many mentions during English lessons to pronunciation. However, this fact itself gives us information about pronunciation instruction practices in the school too.

By looking at the grid, it is also quite evident that there were mainly two reactions when a pupil made a pronunciation mistake: the teacher either repeated the word in order to make the pupil and the rest of the class aware of the mistake (recast) or the teacher ignored it. It is also important to add that only mistakes in segmental features were corrected. During my observation there was only one correction of suprasegmental features (stressed syllable), so there was a clear focus on segmentals.

Regarding segmental correction, it is also relevant to highlight the fact that it was approached mainly through recasts with no explanations (42 times), while little explicit correction and explanation was given to the pupils (only 3 times). Another significant piece of information on this topic is that 2 out of these 3 corrections with explicit explanation were on distinctive words, in the sense that if not pronounced correctly, it would interfere with communication (the correction corresponded to the words beer – bear and man – men and explanations on their different meanings were given to the pupils). It is important to also add that I could observe that even though mistakes were recast, some of them even many times since they were recurrent mistakes, pupils kept making these same mistakes. In one case it was especially interesting to see that in one class the vast majority off pupils pronounced the word *endangered* correctly, while in the other class most pupils mispronounced it. It can be deduced from this fact that apart from teachers and audio materials, their peers are also a model of language for pupils as well as a source of input which can have a considerable impact on their performances.

If we focus on the pupils' pronunciation mistakes that were ignored, it has to be said that 31 out of the total amount of 48 ignored mistakes were actually ignored during

evaluations tasks, so this might be the reason why the teacher decided not to correct them in any way. It is equally important to add that the remaining 17 mistakes that were not corrected corresponded mostly with non distinctive pronunciation mistakes. One may think this might be the justification for not approaching those mistakes, however not all 43 mistakes that were corrected were distinctive, so this may not be the reason. Another reason behind it might be the focus of the lesson, since most of the mistakes that were corrected corresponded with the vocabulary they were working on at that moment, although this was not true in all cases. Finally, a third reason that I could observe was that when the focus of the activity they were doing was on communication (for example during an oral comprehension activity) mistakes were ignored most of the time.

Apart from spontaneous correction, other pronunciation practices were observed. In this regard, whether it was taught explicitly or implicitly was also another focus of the research that was taken into consideration. The results were that explicit practices (10) doubled the number of implicit practices (5). However, neither of them had a significant role in the classroom during my observation period. These observations also helped me determine whether they worked on pronunciation systematically with planned exercises, or whether instruction was prompted by the spontaneous emerge of a need for correction. Results suggest that explicit instruction prevails (15 times) in the classroom, although some instruction exercises were also included in the lesson spontaneously (10 times). Nevertheless, if we add mistake correction to this list, spontaneous instruction was clearly dominant in this school during my observations in Year 4, 5 and 6. The planned practices included exercises on rhymes, on dictionary use, and memorizing chants and songs. Other practices focusing on pronunciation that occurred during my observations were the repetition of certain words by teachers to reinforce their pronunciation, especially with new words. Also positive feedback after a recurrent mistake correction was acquired by a pupil was a source of spontaneous implicit pronunciation instruction.

Another aspect that I noticed during my observation was the fact that spelling had a great influence on pupils pronunciation and thus the teachers included some clarifications and specific explanations regarding spelling and pronunciation.

The observation also allowed me to check whether they used English throughout the lessons or not. In this regard, I have to say that English was used most of the time, and this situation also fostered implicit instruction on pronunciation since it represented a source of input. The cases that I could register of situations in which English was not used were during the explanation of a test and also when a pupil had to be scolded.

Regarding the models of English that were used during my observation, they can be classified into two categories: native models or non-native Catalan models. The second one corresponded to the English teachers' accent as well as their peers' accent. Native models were included in their lessons through the use of the CD and DVD, which contained standard native models of English, as well as by incorporating guests in the classroom. During my observations a guest from Australia attended some of the lessons as an oral language assistant.

CHARTS COMPLETED BY TEACHERS AND PUPILS

Regarding the teachers' and pupils' assumptions and beliefs on pronunciation instruction, and by analysing the charts they completed, it seems that both teachers and pupils agree with the idea that pronunciation is very important and they see it as a key factor for effective communication, just like most of the literature in this field. Teachers also believe that pronunciation instruction should be an essential part of the curriculum regardless of the methodology and kind of practices used for this purpose, which may seem logical given that they place great importance on it. Regarding the pupils, most of them believe they spend enough time practising pronunciation. Thus, it seems that both groups, the teachers and the learners, give pronunciation the same importance and they are satisfied with the amount of time dedicated to practising it.

Regarding the models of English language, both groups agree with the association of native like accents with words such as perfect and original. However, and surprisingly, non-native accents are not associated with these words' antonyms by either group. Thus, it seems that tendency among learners and teachers to consider non-native accents negatively, described in the literature, is starting to change. However, the belief that the best accents and the original ones are native accents still prevails, so this change in tendencies may be slow and it may still have a long way

to go. Because of this last point it is not surprising that teachers are not concerned about having a non native accent and most of the pupils are happy with their English pronunciation and accent.

Moreover, 2 out of 3 teachers claimed that it is important to include geographically diverse native accents in their programmes and the same percentage believe that non-native accents other than Catalan should also be part of the class. However, during my observation other non-native varieties of English were not included in the classroom, so their opinion and beliefs on this topic were not reflected in their daily lessons as far as I could observe. In these lessons, pupils were offered either native accents or their peers' and teacher' Catalan accent. Pupils also like the idea of knowing different varieties too. However the percentage of pupils supporting non-native varieties is lower than the percentage supporting native varieties, which may respond to prejudices that are the result of the idea that prevailed for so long that non-native accents are not correct.

Regarding the objective of pronunciation instruction programmes, achieving native-like accents seems an unfeasible goal to 2 out of 3 teachers. Pupils seem to differ in this aspect since most of them believe it is possible to achieve such goal. Accordingly, for the teachers this should not be the goal of pronunciation programmes. Since pupils believe it would be possible to achieve native-like pronunciation, they consider that this should be the goal of pronunciation courses. However, they also believe that the goal of pronunciation programmes should focus on the production of intelligible speech. Even though the two goals are not contradictory or mutually exclusive, they belong to 2 completely different approaches (one focused on communication and the other on accuracy) so these results may seem confusing.

In addition to this information, these charts were also helpful in providing information on pronunciation instruction methodology. In this regard, all 3 teachers believe that pronunciation is better taught under a communicative approach and, thus, the objective to achieve in their lessons should focus on communication and on comprehensible speech.

In addition, all teachers and most pupils agree with the idea that English lessons should be delivered in this language, which was not surprising according to the

observations I carried out since English is the language used in their lessons most of the time. Teachers, however, also believe it is beneficial to give some information in the pupils' mother tongue and pupils also claimed that they felt safer and more confident when they were given explanations in Catalan. The criteria to choose in which particular situations it would be better to use their first language should be examined in more detail.

Regarding the issue of practising pronunciation spontaneously or in a more systematic way, 2 out of 3 teachers stated that they do not want to work on it systematically, which can be related with their preference for a more communicative approach to language.

Regarding explicit instruction, 2 out of 3 teachers prefer to limit it to recurrent mistakes and features that may be difficult for Catalan speakers. Pupils seem to be divided (50% and 50%) on whether they should only be corrected when their mistakes lead to miscommunication or not. Surprisingly more than 50% of them do not mind being interrupted when speaking to be corrected in pronunciation. This seems to run counter to the communicative approach teachers are fostering. However, and in contradiction with this idea, more than 80% of pupils would only like to be corrected after finishing their speech. In addition, pupils share the idea that they should and want to be corrected whenever they make a mistake, regardless of the kind of mistake and the kind of correction they are given (80%). What is clear is that most of them like to be given explicit explanations of their pronunciation errors whenever they are corrected, so again this does not seem to be compatible with the communicative approach teachers are fostering.

Pupils seem to provide contradictory results regarding the choice of a more explicit or implicit approach to pronunciation. Almost two thirds of them prefer to discover pronunciation rules by themselves yet two thirds of them also claim that they prefer to be given the rule first.

INTERVIEWS

The interviews that teachers answered in most of the cases confirmed the information on the charts. However, because of its format, they also added some new information on it.

Regarding the models of language that are present in their lessons, they claimed that, since they mainly use the text book CD and their own model of language, pupils are exposed basically to Catalan accents and standard British native accents. One of the teachers commented in an informal conversation that she sometimes she felt like she was "the girl with the CD" referring to the many times it is used during lessons. However, and as one of the teachers argues in the interviews, native speakers guests are also invited to join the lessons every once in a while. For example, during my placement in this school an American and Australian students joined our lessons.

Regarding the teachers' opinion on the benefits of having a variety of accents in the class, they mostly agreed with the idea that it is beneficial and positive, confirming what had been stated in the charts. One of the teachers also suggested that it is positive as long as the models are correct, regardless of being native or non-native.

Regarding their pronunciation instruction methodology, teachers explained that most of the time pronunciation exercises and instruction are included spontaneously. They also stated that they usually focus on the most difficult aspects if they decide to work on pronunciation items in a more planned and systematic way. One of the teachers stated that pronunciation instruction is included in their planning as an objective, so it is also assessed at the end of the lessons. In accordance with what the graphs show, they explained that the majority of practices on pronunciation in the classroom are prompted by spontaneous needs. Most of the time these practises correspond to the modelling of pupils' mistakes and errors. Thus, recasting is one of the most used techniques to improve pupils' pronunciation in this school, which confirms what the observation grid showed again. It is also relevant to add in this section that one of the teachers commented that, at the beginning of her teaching career, she used to add pronunciation instruction in their planning in a systematic way by following the exercises offered by a text book. However, she argued that when she gained more experience and after some trials she decided to work on pronunciation instruction in a more unplanned way, focusing on the class needs and on the most difficult features for them. However, this last piece of information was not obtained through the interviews but in an informal conversation.

The teachers were also asked whether their focus was on communication or on accuracy. Their answer was that depending on the moment they would encourage communication or would ask for more accurate speech. In this regard, they stated that they would correct pupils' mistakes at the moment they made them when the focus was on accuracy, while the mistakes would be ignored if they wanted the pupils to communicate and express themselves in English. During my observation, however, I noticed that sometimes mistakes were also corrected when the activity was communicative and the other way round.

Finally, in terms of the use pupils will make of English in the future, it is relevant to add that the teachers agreed with the idea that it would be useful basically for 3 categories: their work opportunities, their studies and personal life. Pupils were also asked about it and most of them stated that they would use English to travel and to get a job. However, this fact is relevant because some of them argued that "they could travel to all foreign countries" or that they would use it if "I wanted to go abroad since English is spoken everywhere", so their answers suggest they view English as a *lingua franca.* Nevertheless, not all the pupils had the same vision of the language since one of them also stated that they would use it "to travel to English countries".

3.4.Discussion

The research and the data collection I carried out had some limitations and determining factors that may have conditioned the results obtained. For this reason it is important to include them in the report and to take them into consideration when going back to the initial question in search of an answer.

Regarding the observations, the main limitation was the time dedicated to them (16 sessions of 45 minutes each) and the number of teachers and classes observed (3 teachers and 3 different Years, each year divided into 2 classes). Because of the limited number of lessons observed, and the limited number of teachers delivering the lessons, it is difficult to treat the results obtained from the observations as conclusive and clear answers on how pronunciation is taught in the school. These results should not be generalized but should be taken as the results of that particular period of time since the sample and the time dedicated to observing classes was not significant enough.

Another determining factor was the fact that both the teachers and the pupils knew they were being observed and recorded so they might not have acted naturally. They knew specifically what the purpose of my observation was and that my focus was on pronunciation instruction, so they may have tried to exaggerate their performance and activities in this field or, conversely, may have felt too shy to show them.

Regarding the teachers' questionnaire and interviews, again the limited sample of teachers was a conditioning factor, since I only had the opinion of 3 people. However, I have to add that there are only 4 teachers of English in that school so I was able to get an idea of what the general opinion of the English teachers is.

In addition to this, another limitation that this data collection tool may have is the fact that they might not be completely honest because they may feel assessed or threatened or may want to please me with their answers

Similarly, the pupils' questionnaire and interview also had a very limited sample. I only got the answers from Year 4, 5 and 6A. They may also be biased and answer questions trying to please me or just answering them without much thought because of their age since they might be too young for certain demands.

When I defined the focus of this report I did not expect there would be so many determining factors conditioning my data collection and that would make it so difficult to obtain a clear and complete answer to my initial question (How is pronunciation taught in "Les Pinediques" school?). I have not found such an answer yet because of the many different responses that could be given to the question. So I would suggest my research and observation did not lead me to a clear and unambiguous answer to such a broad question.

However, what I have been able to do is to immerse myself in the literature on pronunciation instruction. It allowed me to get to know this topic in more depth and to realize answers in this field are difficult to find, because it is a very complex component of language teaching, and one which has many factors affecting it. There are also many different views from authors regarding methodologies and approaches, and studies and research also do not seem to give a clear-cut answer on the effectiveness of these methodologies either.

Another thing I was able to do during the report research process was to observe the role of the pronunciation component in language instruction in the school as well as the specific practices that were used for this purpose in three different years, by three different teachers and in 16 sessions of 45 minutes each. During this period of time I was also able to interview these teachers as well as their pupils about pronunciation instruction in the school and their general beliefs on the topic, so that I could contrast it with the actual practices that I saw during my class observation.

If I go back to the original question, as I have said before, I am only able to give a partial answer because of the limitations of the study and because of the fact that this kind of question does not allow a precise specific answer. However, and through the previously mentioned research, I got a notion of the main practices used for pronunciation instruction during the sessions I was able to observe. I also got a notion of the teachers' beliefs and assumptions in this field, as well as their preferences for some approaches and methodologies. Apart from that, I also got to know some beliefs and opinions of the Year 4, 5 and 6 pupils that take pronunciation lessons in this school.

In this regard, the first thing I noticed was that pronunciation was considered an important component of language teaching and a key factor for oral communication by both the pupils and the teachers. I also noted that the idea that non-native accents can also be correct is widely accepted, although there seems to be a general preference for native varieties. Regarding geographically diverse native accents, I could observe that during my time in this school the standard British varieties were the dominant models of native English even though some others were sporadically included. In addition to this, by analysing the interviews I got the notion that both the teachers and most pupils consider English as a language for international communication which they will use as a *lingua franca*.

Methodologically speaking, while I did was observing I realized that English was used all through the lessons, except for specific cases which did not last longer than a few minutes. I also got the sense that for most teachers and pupils achieving a comprehensible and intelligible speech is a feasible objective. After revising the practices and exercises on methodology, I would also suggest that during my observation in the school the most common approach to the English language and to

pronunciation was a communicative approach. However, I would not take that as a clear-cut answer since sometimes the focus was placed on accuracy too. The exercises on pronunciation were mostly spontaneous. However, since during my observations in Year 6 they were working on rhymes, there were also specific and planned exercises that included pronunciation instruction. This fact also conditioned my research. Apart from that, most of the time that there was a planned exercise on pronunciation it was related to a pronunciation feature that seemed especially difficult for that particular group of learners. Regarding the question of whether they teach pronunciation explicitly or implicitly I would say that I did not find enough significant information to give an answer. And finally, regarding the correcting of mistakes, the criteria behind choosing to ignore them, recasting them or giving a complete explanation of the error still seem unclear to me, because the data provided does not give a clear answer on this issue either.

Lastly, I also wanted to add that in no case my intention to judge the way pronunciation is taught in "Les Pinediques", but to get to know how it is approached and the main practices and methodologies that are used there. Although I did not get the clear and certain answer I was looking for at the beginning of the research process, I did get some answers that helped me get an idea of the way pronunciation is included in second language teaching in "Les Pinediques" school.

4. REFLEXIONS

During the development of this report, I realized that there was a lot more to it than I had imagined when choosing the topic, which was pronunciation instruction. The reading of articles and relevant authors on this topic often confused me more and opened new questions rather than answering existing ones. So one of the biggest difficulties I had to face was to limit the topic and to produce a very specific question to be answered. It was also very difficult for me to choose the right time to stop reading and start writing about it because I felt insecure since there was always more to know.

I also realized I like to feel safe and that I like clear facts and certainty. This is the reason why I struggled a little bit, because the literature review made me question everything that was argued by some authors, since others worked in order to refute it and so on. The data collection process was no exception, since I realized I had also included some quantitative data because it made it easier for me to analyze the information and it made me feel reassured. However, I learned to deal with quantitative data as well, which I was not very used to, and I realized it provided me with some relevant data. Another difficulty which I had to deal with while collecting data in the observations was the fact that not having much information on a specific pronunciation practice was already giving me some information, but because of the same reason as before, it was not easy for me to understand it like this from the start.

The writing process also made me aware of the fact that having a solid theoretical background is more important than I had previously thought. It helped me build my own ideas and opinions on topics such as the models of language that are included in a pronunciation programme or my beliefs about its instruction, which would condition the methodologies I would prefer to use in a particular case.

After this process of analysing literature and observing actual practices I have not found a specific approach or methodology that would work for me as it is, since I believe there is no consistent evidence of a clear prevalence of one over another. I learnt that there are many factors that affect the teaching and learning of pronunciation and it depends on many variables such as age, target group or the course objectives. However, what I am certain about is that it is important to know that there are many models of language and the implications of each of them, so that

an informed choice can be made with a specific target group of learners. It is equally important to know about approaches and methodologies, so choices are not unconsciously made but well reflected. After this research I would not dare say that one choice would be better than another but I would like to know exactly why I am making one decision or the other in a specific situation of pronunciation instruction, and do it fully aware of its implications and consequences.

After writing this report I have also improved the way I see my own accent, since I have to admit I had some concerns about it in the beginning. However, my view of the different models of English, especially the non-native models, has also evolved during this research process.

In terms of what I would have done differently if I had to repeat this research process, I would definitely choose an even more clearly delimited topic, such as focusing only on the models of language that are present in the school or only on affective factors that might influence pronunciation learning for example. I would also adapt even more the pupils' questionnaire and interview since when I carried it out I realized it still was difficult for them to understand some parts of it. I would also try to analyse more quantitative data since I found that, considering the focus of my research, it provided a lot of relevant information. And finally, I would also try to improve my time management, so that I would not have to worry about deadlines.

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6. APPENDICES