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Exploring the Views of Spanish Pre-Service Teachers on Phonics From a Quantitative Research Perspective

Javier Fernández-Molina

University of Alicante, Faculty of Education, ESP-03690 San Vicente del Raspeig, Alicante, Spain, javierfmolina@ua.es

Annotation. English is especially demanding for Spanish speakers due to the greater number of sounds, the complex letter-sound relationship, and prosodic features. English phonics programmes may offer clearer, more comprehensive instruction. 84 pre-service teachers completed a questionnaire on the use of phonics in Spanish EFL preschool and primary classrooms. Results show that specific training is needed, not all participants favour this method, and a more eclectic approach to early literacy is advocated.

Keywords: *synthetic phonics, decodables, pronunciation, primary, pre-primary, literacy.*

Introduction

Three aspects from a long-established definition of language (Sapir, 2004) need to be highlighted for the purposes of this paper. First, it becomes essential in the fields of linguistics and pedagogy to acknowledge that languages are systems of symbols, the components of which can be researched, learnt, and taught. Second, the arbitrary nature of these symbols is recognised by an increasing body of literature. Third, the oral character of those symbols is central not only to the more specialised phonetics and phonology, but also to the educational disciplines (Burns, 2016; 2019; Goh, 2017).

Research has consistently shown that similar to the manner by which children acquire their first languages (Byers-Heinlein et al., 2017; Orena et al., 2015; Werker & Byers-Heinlein, 2008), a sound pedagogical approach to the learning of foreign languages should initially commence with the oral part, to smoothly introduce, at a

later stage, the written symbols representing those sounds (Department for Education, 2022; Renandya & Nguyen, 2022). Even now, in the current educational paradigm, in Spain as well as in other countries, all four traditional skills are being worked on in an intertwined fashion (Sadiku, 2015). When this occurs at the earliest stages, the combination of skills with such a complex dual system (oral and written) may lead to confusion. The traditionally alleviating 'this is pronounced like this, but it is written like that', may no longer come to the rescue of English teachers.

As regards the comparison of oral English and oral Spanish, the first comprises 44 sounds in its Southern idiolect, known as Received Pronunciation (RP) (Roach, 2004), far more than the 23 Castilian Spanish sounds (when considering the broad issue of '*yeismo*'), a few less in Southern Spanish and in American idiolects (Salcedo, 2010). Whilst not all English phonemes differ from the Spanish ones and a number of them can be recognized, all sounds of English need to be properly taught to avoid confusion and misunderstandings (Lillo, 2009). Despite the positive results of Mompean and Fouz-González (2022) on using IPA symbols to improve pronunciation among Spanish speakers learning English, introducing these symbols at early stages (primary and pre-primary) may well be counterproductive. At these levels, using only Roman alphabet letters in alignment with phonics instruction seems advisable to avoid potential confusion for young learners

Concerning the 24 consonant sounds of RP English, 16 of them are indistinguishable from Spanish, and just 8 are unalike. From those different ones, 3 are recognisable, and only 5 sound distinct to Spanish speakers. According to Cherro et al. (2020), with respect to the vowel sounds, the deviation between English and Spanish is enormous: the Spanish vowel system does not distinguish between long and short vowels, one of the most important features of RP English. Equally, the vowel sounds of RP English demand a greater effort from the articulatory organs involved in the pronunciation, taking the muscles and bones (jaw, tongue, and lips) further front, back, up and down within the vocal cavity. As for the sound schwa /ə/, the most common sound of English, present in many unstressed syllables (Roach, 2009), it is both difficult to hear by Spanish speakers and quite arduous to reproduce. This sound, the starting and end position when speaking in English (Underhill, 2005), is far more relaxed than any sound in Spanish. Recapitulating, when Spanish speakers remain unaware of the oral contrasts in both languages or untrained, in their attempt to communicate, the result becomes hard to understand for natives (Fernández & Mateo, 2021).

The other aspect causing a similar degree of struggle among Spanish speakers with regard to oral production and oral comprehension are particular prosodic features of English, particularly, stress in simple words and sentences (Lillo, 2009). In English, unstressed syllables often contain short phonemes /ɪ/, /ʊ/, and specially /ə/ which accounts for 60% of vowel sounds. Unstressed syllables are much shorter and less distinct than in Spanish, suffering a reduction, being purposely reduced to the minimum

(Underhill, 2005). Diphthongs and even consonants may be weakly pronounced or not articulated. This makes unstressed syllables extremely difficult for the non-native and untrained listener to perceive. By contrast, long vowels and diphthongs (more frequent in stressed syllables) are easier to hear. Stressed syllables are louder, longer, and usually higher in pitch with more clearly articulated sounds, in particular the vowels. English stressed vowels require so much energy resulting in unstressed syllables being hardly pronounced (Underhill, 2005). Importantly, even in words similar to Spanish, it is still difficult to recognise the vowel sounds, as the stress is frequently placed on a different syllable than in Spanish. Thus, for pedagogical purposes, it is as important to teach to stress some syllables in English as to un-stress others (Cherro et al., 2020).

In the matter of stress in the sentence, English is a stress-timed language as opposed to Spanish, a syllable-timed language in which all syllables have more or less the same length. In English, some syllables are long and some are really short. English stressed syllables are uttered at approximately regular intervals of time regardless of the number of unstressed syllables in between (Cherro et al., 2020). Hence, the amount of time it takes to say a sentence does not depend on the number of syllables but on the number of stressed syllables (Underhill, 2005).

Having explored the complexities of English pronunciation for Spanish speakers in the process of learning the language, the final paragraphs of this section address the manner in which England has approached the issue of literacy instruction in the last decades. Ample is the literature unveiling the issue of what is perceived by non-scholars as a fortuitous relationship between sounds and letters. Yet, authors such as Hepplewhite (2012, 2014, 2016) have led the efforts to display the spelling norms of English: at least 189 different rules (plus exceptions) which explain how English represents the 44 sounds with 26 letters (Hepplewhite et al., 2011). The many dissimilar ways of spelling the same sound, often resorting to 2, 3 or even 4 letters are, undoubtedly, a defining feature of English. This is a quite striking aspect for teachers of English not fully acquainted with the phonics methodology. As an example, the case of the sounds /ɔː/, /s/, and /iː/, with 12, 10, and 9 possible spellings respectively provide an overview of the issue.

Lloyd et al. (1998, 2000) by the turn of the century were accompanied almost synchronically by Hepplewhite (2006), Hepplewhite and Sayers (2006), and Miskin (2005, 2006), and nowadays the work of this triad can be considered as the foundations of the new phonics wave: the modern synthetic phonics approach. The skills these authors share consist of learning to write (fine motor skills training), relating the sounds and the letters that represent them (phoneme-grapheme correspondence), adding sounds to form words (blending), splitting words into their constituent sounds (segmenting), and irregularly spelled words, or, 'tricky words', that need to be memorized before their rule is explained.

Phonics programmes in the past decades have been incorporated into the English educational system (Department for Education, 2022) and to the National curriculum tests (Standards & Testing Agency, 2023), to the extent that a National examination on phonics knowledge, the Phonics Screening Check (PSC), is compulsory in England, the materials and training for which are also provided by the Standards & Testing Agency (STA). This examination, nonetheless, has for long had followers and detractors among scholars (Fernández & Tabuenca, 2023).

Objective

This paper aims to make visible the appreciations on the phonics methodology of prospective teachers of English in pre-primary and primary schools after taking a 150-hour specially-designed module on English literacy (6 ECTS). The course tackles the most significant concerning literacy instruction, namely: (1) English phonetics/phonology, (2) the history and evolution of the English language, (3) research supporting and criticising the phonics methodology, and (4) a brief introduction to phonics instruction and materials. As the last assignment, weighing 40% of their final marks, students taking the course create their own phonics materials and employ them to teach phonics to an audience of pre-primary and primary students from a number of collaborating schools.

There are several relevant areas where this study can make an original contribution to the existing literature. From a critical thinking perspective (Kellner, 2003; Fleming, 2010), it attempts to explore the discernment of pre-service teachers towards a methodology which has remained unknown to most prior to taking the Literacy Skills course, as well as the degree to which phonics is deemed to help improve pronunciation. In addition, this research aims to foresee to what extent the participants perceive the methodology might be of use in their forthcoming careers. Lastly, their prospective use of children literature in general, and decodables (phonics-specific literature) in particular, is similarly explored.

Recent research has obtained results suggesting pre-primary and primary prospective teachers' lack of sufficient reading habits and text knowledge (Tabuenca & Fernández, 2022), which leads to believing their capacity to select appropriate texts in their fore coming teaching practice may somehow be limited. Hence, this paper encompasses three main hypotheses: (i) first, that participants will positively receive their training in pronunciation as it was new to most, (ii) second, that similarly phonics will be perceived as a useful resource, although doubts may be raised on whether participants feel sufficiently trained to resort to it in actual classrooms, (iii) third, that both decodables and children literature could be discerned as sound assets.

Method

Description of the Context and of theParticipants

This investigation opted for a mixed-methods research approach (Creswel et al., 2003; Bryman, 2016), as it was deemed it would be the finest method to help triangulate the findings, resulting in a more robust study. Triangulation, understood as the process by which findings are cross-checked, when data is obtained from both qualitative and quantitative research. Following Silva and Wright (2008), the qualitative inquiry was designed with the aim to "check and correct the quantitative data, thus, ensuring the reliability of the survey data" (p. 53).

The very nature of the social phenomenon observed, that is, whether the introduction of a phonics methodology in the pre-primary and primary EFL classroom may be perceived as successful by the contestants, seemed to convey an enormous complexity. To a certain degree, their predictions stand largely based on the knowledge gained during the course, as much as on their actual, yet limited, teaching practice and experience. In order to ascertain the success in the research methodology, the accounts of the partakers: the students' narratives (qualitative), were deemed suitable to complement the statistically significant data obtained from the responses of the questionnaire (quantitative). Due to time constraints, this paper explores solely the results of the quantitative, as no conclusions have for now been drawn from the qualitative, which is currently being explored in-depth.

The study was conducted with a convenient sample (Jager et al., 2017) of 84 undergraduate students taking the elective subject Literacy Skills. They belonged to three groups, from which 32, 28, and 24 responses were gathered for analysis. The Literacy Skills course is traditionally selected by those graduating as experts in English (English mention). However, a minor number of students choose the course for other reasons, basically to attain the required number of credits to graduate.

Data Collection Method

The quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously by a single questionnaire, which encompassed a 5-point Likert-scale combined with yes-no questions and an additional sub-section, by which the contributors could develop an in-depth narrative (short text). Concerning the Likert-scale share, contestants were asked to rate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each statement. The questions posed inquired about three categories, namely their perception towards the importance of the teaching of pronunciation, the applicability of phonics, and lastly, the use of decodables and traditional children's books in primary and pre-primary classrooms.

The tool used to collect the data was Google Forms, which was presented to them digitally, as the "advantages of online data collection techniques" (Granello & Wheaton, 2004, p. 388) were strongly considered. Instructions on how and when to fill the questionnaire were provided in class to all three groups.

Research Process

Between February 2021 and May 2023, during their second semester, students engaged in the Literacy Skills module (6 ECTS), a course with an average of 4 sessions per week of tutoring and workshops on pronunciation and phonics. Simultaneously, the partakers performed their third period of apprenticeship in schools. During this period of supervised teaching practice, pre-service teachers specifically joined the English class with their school's English specialist as a tutor, observing and putting into practice English teaching methodologies, techniques and materials. The other module most of them took during the research period, that may affect the results and narratives, was the Final Degree Dissertation, a 5.000-word academic paper written in English tackling aspects of the English class in pre-primary and primary classrooms. A thick description of the events (Lincoln & Tierney, 2004) is intentionally provided.

Ethics in the Research Process

While conducting the investigation, ethical procedures prioritized anonymity and data protection. The Google Forms questionnaire was provided to 251 students of the literacy skills modules, out of which 84 completed it on the last day of class, after exams and assignment deadlines, coinciding with a Jolly Phonics workshop by Coral George. Participation was voluntary, with clear instructions that only those envisioning themselves as future English teacher experts should take part. Respondents were assured they could withdraw at any time if uncomfortable. No personally identifiable information was collected, ensuring data anonymity and security throughout the research process.
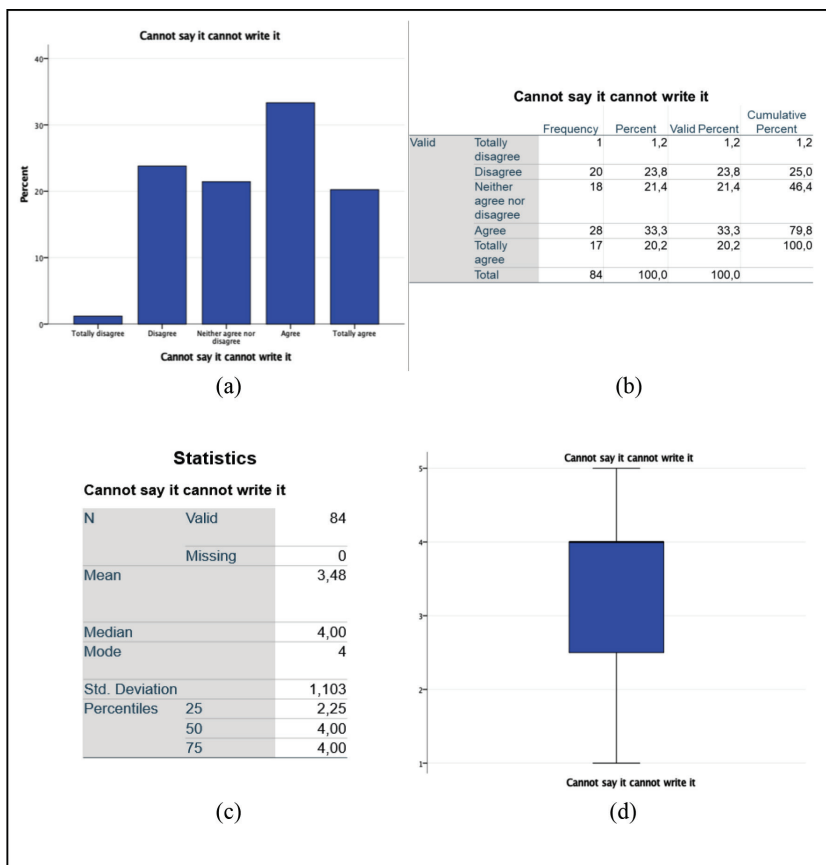
Results

Concerning the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample: the sex of the individuals surveyed comprised 78.6% females and 21.4% males, with no participants identifying as non-binary or preferring not to disclose their gender. Although 80% of the sample were between 21 and 22 years old, there was also one younger participant aged 20, and 15 participants aged between 23 and 40. The sample included individuals from the two undergraduate degree programmes targeted in the study, namely primary and pre-primary education with 66 and 18 future teachers participating respectively. The working experience considered relevant for this study was divided into two pre-established categories: the years working with children in general (91.7% of the students who participated in the research reported some sort of experience, such as tutoring, working in schools, or summer camps) and the years of experience specifically devoted to teaching (59 participants reported working or having worked as teachers).

The questionnaire then proceeded to investigate partakers' perception regarding the importance of teaching and learning pronunciation as part of the teacher

training for pre-primary and primary classrooms. Although the matter may seem settled or minor, English teaching in Spain has traditionally focused on written skills and grammar, hence, to what degree literacy depends on previous oral knowledge remains unknown to many teachers (Ehri & Flugman, 2018). A majority (78 contestants, 92.9% of the total) deemed it essential.

Continuing with the issue of pronunciation as the foundations for teaching and learning literacy, the next question attempted to explore the extent to which Underhill's statement 'if you cannot say it, you cannot write it', largely agreed on by scholars, was shared by the participants. The underlying assumption was that, perhaps, prospective teachers may not be fully aware of the complex relationship between letters and sounds in an opaque language as English is, and, thus, may lack the specific required training (Ehri & Flugman, 2018). The figure next illustrates the statistics drawn from their responses:

Figure 1

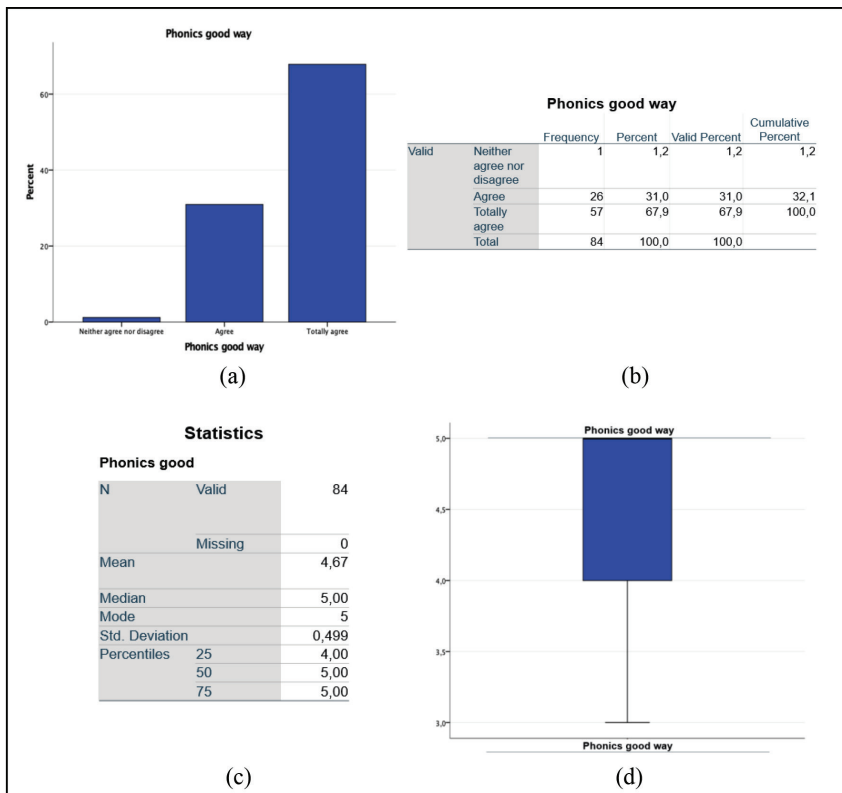*Statistics With Respect to Pronunciation: If You Cannot Say It, You Cannot Write It*

Source: the author

As shown in Figure 1, participants' answers reveal a great deal of hesitation with regard to the query posed. In spite of the median being 4 (Fig. 1 c), which would anticipate a positive result, the mean: 3.48 clarifies the neutral perception towards the sentence affirmed by Underhill (2005). A percentage of 21.4 and 23.8 of neither agree nor disagree and disagree options respectively counterbalance the 17 interviewees who totally agreed (Fig. 1 b).

The research continued exploring phonics, the methodology by which in England literacy is instructed. The first question posed enquired about the perceived suitability by the partakers of the phonics methodology in pre-primary and primary classrooms in Spain. The results are presented in Figure 2:

Figure 2

Statistics as Regards Perceived Usability of Phonics: Phonics is a Good Way for Teaching Pronunciation and Literacy

(a)

Phonics good way

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neither agree nor disagree	1	1,2	1,2	1,2
	Agree	26	31,0	31,0	32,1
	Totally agree	57	67,9	67,9	100,0
	Total	84	100,0	100,0	

(b)

Statistics

Phonics good

N	Valid	84
	Missing	0
Mean		4,67
Median		5,00
Mode		5
Std. Deviation		0,499
Percentiles	25	4,00
	50	5,00
	75	5,00

(c)

(d)

Source: the author

The results obtained from the questionnaire show no dither. All variables obtained, an alike mode and median of 5, the mean 4.67 almost identical to the previous two

(fig. 2 c) lead to conclude that the methodology is well perceived by those surveyed in the study (57 totally agree and 26 agree) (Fig. 2 b). Nonetheless, the questionnaire was designed to explore plausible drawbacks detected by the interviewees. To that aim the next two questions attempted to grasp whether the perception was either that phonics can be utilised only in pre-primary and first of primary education, when literacy tends to be introduced in schools, or, contrariwise, whether the methodology was considered suitable for later educational stages as well.

The responses to the questions 'Phonics can only be taught (resorted to) in pre-primary and the first year of primary', and 'Phonics can be used in later stages' display an ample level of disagreement: a median and mode of 2 (disagree), and an even lower mean of 1.76. As for the absolute figures and percentage, 30 contestants totally disagreed while 45 respondents (53.6%) disagreed. Interestingly, at this stage the first missing partaker appears, and, by the same token two participants (respondents 63 and 40) fall off the scale.
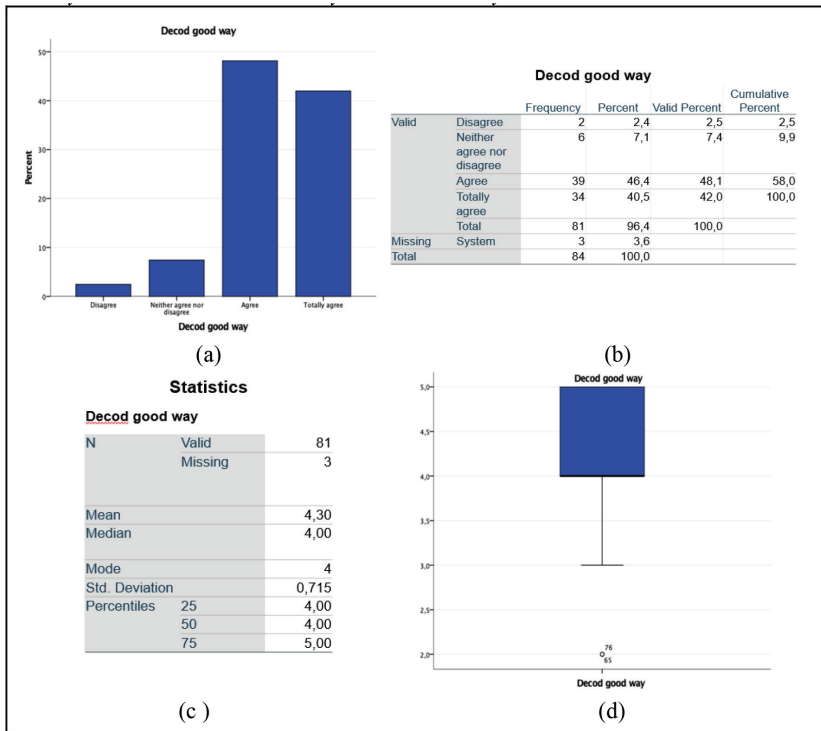
As regard the usability of the phonics methodology beyond the first year of primary education, what is interesting is that in spite of the general agreement with regards to the affirmation that phonics can be used at later stages: median and mode 4, and an even higher mean (4.12), the number of opinions against the mainstream increase: individuals 2, 26, 44, 57 and 75. Comparably, the number of missing answers augments, both of which seem to indicate the matter is less clear.

To the question whether participants knew about the existence of decodables for literacy instruction purposes, 65 of them replied negatively (77.4%), and 2 did not provide an answer. In the paragraphs that follow an insight is provided with regards to decodable's perceived utility by the respondents, the extent to which partakers deem they should be used in pre-primary and first of primary or, whether they can be useful at later stages. The results obtained from the questionnaire are detailed below, after Figure 3.

According to the data gathered, decodables were well received: mode and median 4, and a mean of 4.30 (Fig. 3 c). Only individuals 65 and 76 responded dissimilarly, an issue also reflected in the standard deviation (0.715). The form continued further enquiring about the perceived best timing for the usage of decodables. The matter of resorting to decodables only at early stages in schooling does not raise great enthusiasm: median and mode 2, mean 2.18, accompanied with an enhanced hesitation, percentile 75 which reaches 3 (neither agree nor disagree). Even though a timid uncertainty is perceived, the overall result is that of disagreement with the assertion posed.

Figure 3

Statistics Dealing With the Manner Students Perceive Decodables for the Instruction of Literacy: Decodables are a Good Way to Teach Literacy

(a)

Decod good way

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	2	2,4	2,5	2,5
	Neither agree nor disagree	6	7,1	7,4	9,9
	Agree	39	46,4	48,1	58,0
	Totally agree	34	40,5	42,0	100,0
	Total	81	96,4	100,0	
Missing	System	3	3,6		
Total		84	100,0		

(b)

Statistics

Decod good way

N	Valid	81
	Missing	3
Mean		4,30
Median		4,00
Mode		4
Std. Deviation		0,715
Percentiles	25	4,00
	50	4,00
	75	5,00

(c)

(d)

Source: the author

The questionnaire moved on to the issue of decodables with older students in an attempt to achieve sound English literacy. Quite strikingly, although the data obtained would suggest a general acceptance of the use of decodables at a later stage: median and mode 4, mean slightly below, namely 3.93, and all percentiles in 4, SPSS displayed a box-and-whisker-plot where visually such smooth results cannot be grasped. Perhaps 22.6% of replies in 5 (totally agree) and 16.7% in 3 (neither agree nor disagree) produced such unexpected results.
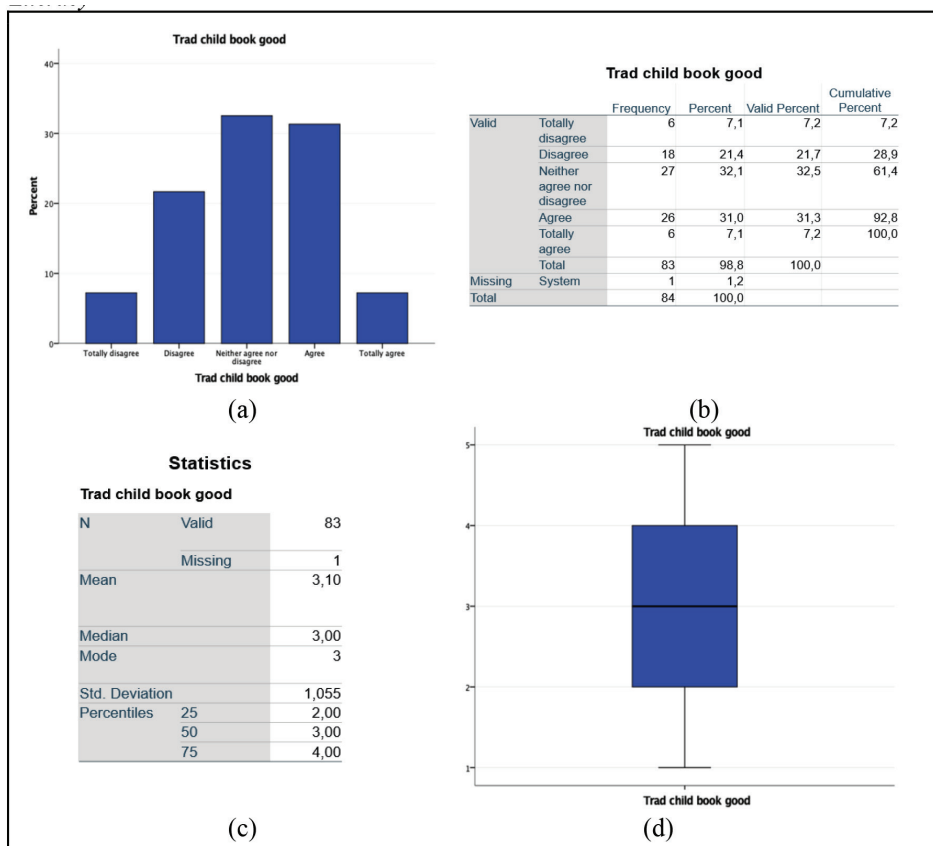
In the final part of the survey, respondents were asked to provide their thoughts with reference to the exploitation of traditional children's books as a resource to enhance students' English literacy. Once again, as it had happened when enquired about the use of decodables, informants provided a wide range of responses which reflect on the statistics. At a glance (Fig. 4 d, below), it can be effortlessly perceived that the opinions of the group are rather open and neutral. Median, mode, and mean almost exactly at 3 (Fig. 4 c), and the highest percentage of replies (32.1%) in 'neither agree

nor disagree' (27 informants), escorted by 'agree' with 26 answers (31%) and 'disagree' with 18 responses (21.4%).

The last issue explored the theme of utilising traditional children's books as the only means for English literacy instruction purposes. The majority of informants expressed their disagreement with the assertion yielded: 76 participants responded 'totally disagree' or 'disagree' (53.6% and 36.9%, respectively), having a median and mode of 1, in spite of a slightly higher mean (1.6), and a 75 percentile of 2.

Figure 4

Statistics Gathering Participants' Views Towards the Appropriateness of Traditional Children's Books for English Literacy Purposes: Traditional Children's Books are a Good Way to Teach Literacy

(a)

(b)

Trad child book good

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Totally disagree	6	7,1	7,2	7,2
	Disagree	18	21,4	21,7	28,9
	Neither agree nor disagree	27	32,1	32,5	61,4
	Agree	26	31,0	31,3	92,8
	Totally agree	6	7,1	7,2	100,0
	Total	83	98,8	100,0	
Missing	System	1	1,2		
Total		84	100,0		

Statistics

Trad child book good

N	Valid	83
	Missing	1
Mean		3,10
Median		3,00
Mode		3
Std. Deviation		1,055
Percentiles	25	2,00
	50	3,00
	75	4,00

(c)

(d)

Source: the author

Discussion

The main goal of the current study was to gain an understanding of the students' perception about the significance of pronunciation in the context of EFL at the levels of pre-primary and primary education. The investigation correspondingly explored the perceived possibilities of phonics with regard to the teaching of literacy at said levels. In addition, the investigation set out to explore participants' views on decodables and traditional children's books as valuable resources for literacy instruction.

The most obvious finding to emerge from this investigation is that participants estimate pronunciation is essential, as the results from question 1 of the form reflect: it is the opinion of 92.9% of the informants (no figure has been provided). This outcome is in line with the findings of authors such as Lázaro-Ibárrola (2007), López-Cirugeda, and López-Campillo (2016), and Rendón et al. (2021), amongst others, whose studies support the convenience of specific phonological training to achieve sound literacy skills in the L2. In addition, this finding matches with Fonseca-Mora and Fernández-Corbacho (2017), who state that explicit teaching of sounds can help develop phonological awareness. They highlight that phonological skills are crucial for the reading process, and assessing these skills could help identify English language students who might in the future struggle with reading. In this context, while the Phonics Screening Check (PSC) in England remains a controversial issue (Carter, 2020; Darnel et al., 2017; Wyse & Bradbury, 2022), testing phonological awareness abilities and understanding in pre-primary and primary EFL learners could potentially prevent future reading difficulties.

Question 2, in accordance with the second hypothesis and including Underhill's (2005) assertion 'if you cannot pronounce it, you cannot write it,' provoked contradictory thoughts (responses) among the interviewees. This, along with details perceived in the following 3 questions, namely: 'Phonics is a good way for teaching pronunciation and literacy', 'Phonics can only be taught in pre-primary and the first year of primary,' and 'Phonics can be used in later stages', lead the researcher to believe that the question of phonics, its whole conceptualisation, and its distinct character in the teaching of English literacy in EFL contexts, are not wholly favoured by the participants. Phonics appears to be a new methodology for many, leading to hesitation regarding its usability. This could be primarily due to the fact that literacy instruction based on phonics should require a significant amount of specific training beyond the 150-hour course offered at our university, as well as extensive practice. Besides, the availability of phonics materials, including self-made resources, cannot easily replace the simplicity of following a specific textbook commonly adopted by schools when future pre-primary and primary teachers begin their careers, or even the usual home-made materials traditionally resorted to by experienced teachers.

These results align with those of Wyse and Goswami (2008), both of whom are influential and prolific in their research. They argue that there is a need to acknowledge subgroups when addressing the issue of English literacy instruction, which may require different or even eclectic approaches. In addition, these authors believe that instruction is needed at levels beyond the phoneme, a notion previously discussed in this paper when the suprasegmental level was introduced. Lastly, they emphasize the importance of conducting long-term research, as they find most current literacy research to be short-term.

Hence, phonics as a suitable means for teaching both pronunciation and literacy in the context of Spanish primary and pre-primary classrooms requires additional research. Certainly, once the qualitative results are obtained, they shall triangulate those obtained in the quantitative, enhancing the reliability and trustworthiness of the results displayed here. More importantly, a step beyond, inquiring in-service teachers with a degree of expertise or experience in the use of phonics for English literacy instruction seems to be the most logical next step.

Continuing with the third hypothesis set at the beginning, the evidence from this piece of research suggests that neither decodables nor traditional children's books are deemed definitive tools for achieving English literacy instruction. The hesitation perceived derives from the following two sets of questions. The first set: 'Decodables are a good way to teach literacy', 'Decodables are only useful to teach literacy in pre-primary and the first year of primary', and 'Decodables can be used at a later stage', inquired about this phonics-specific type of literature. The second set: 'Traditional children's books are a good way to teach literacy' and 'Traditional children's books should be the only means for literacy instruction', focused on traditional children's books as a resource for English literacy instruction. With relatively erratic replies, participants' responses provide additional grounds for the researcher's belief that at this stage, more research is needed on pre-service teacher's perception (the qualitative). In this vein, another group of significant scholars in the field of literacy instruction, Ehri et al. (2001), while acknowledging phonics positively, raised concerns about the suitability of decodables for instructional purposes. Although their research is a bit outdated, it may still apply to the Spanish context. They questioned the optimal duration of phonics instruction and emphasized the necessity of including ESL learners in research samples, a practice that is only beginning to emerge in the context of Spanish classrooms.

Conclusion

To conclude, this study set out to examine pre-service teachers' perception of the significance of pronunciation in EFL contexts at pre-primary and primary levels. It

similarly explored the potential of phonics in literacy instruction, as well as the participants' attitudes towards decodables and traditional children's books.

The findings underscored the critical role of pronunciation, aligning with prior research advocating for phonological training in second language literacy. However, the study revealed hesitations and conflicting viewpoints regarding phonics, highlighting its perceived novelty and complexity, as well as the necessity of extensive training beyond the English literacy course they had just finished. The research also pinpoints ongoing debates on the efficacy of decodables and traditional children's books in literacy instruction, indicating a need for tailored approaches to meet the needs of diverse learners.

The main weakness of this investigation, nevertheless, was the small sample size, as well as the fact that the participants are pre-service teachers. Despite their completion of a 150-hour intensive training on literacy and pronunciation and their teaching experience, these factors may limit the generalizability of the study findings. Considerably more work needs to be done to determine whether the efficacy of phonics equals what research has proven in English-speaking contexts. Similarly, further exploration on the suitability of children's traditional books and decodables is required.

Acknowledgement

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Ispanijos būsimųjų mokytojų požiūrio į foniką tyrimas: kiekybinio tyrimo perspektyva

Javier Fernández-Molina

Alikantės universitetas, Pedagogikos fakultetas, San Vicente del Raspeig, ESP–03690 Alikantė, Ispanija, javierfmolina@ua.es

Santrauka

Ispanams, besimokantiems kalbų, anglų kalba kelia nemažai sunkumų, nes anglų kalboje daugiau garsų, kurie reikalauja didesnių artikuliacinių pastangų, sudėtingas raidžių ir garsų santykis, daug taisyklių ir išimčių, skirtingi prozodiniai aspektai. Besimokantiesiems gali padėti sudarytos anglų kalbos fonikos mokymosi programos, kuriose pateikiami 44 anglų kalbos standartinio britiško tarimo (RP) garsai. Šiame tyrime dalyvavo 84 būsimieji mokytojai, baigę 6 kreditų kursą, skirtą anglų kalbos raštingumo mokymui. Tyrimu siekta išsiaiškinti tyrimo dalyvių požiūrį į galimybes, susijusias su fonikos taikymu ispanakalbių mokinių ikimokyklinio ir pradinio ugdymo pamokose. Rezultatai rodo, kad nors specialus mokymas yra būtinas, ne visi tyrimo dalyviai palankiai vertina fonikos metodiką ir siūlo eklektiškesnį požiūrį į ankstyvąjį anglų kalbos fonikos mokymą.

Esminiai žodžiai: *mišri fonika, iššifruojamieji tekstai, tarimas, pradinis ugdymas, ikimo-kyklinis ugdymas, raštingumas.*