2013

MATERIALES Y RECURSOS PARA TRABAJAR LA TÉCNICA DE "PHONICS" CON ALUMNOS/AS DE EDUCACIÓN PRIMARIA

Trabajo Fin de Grado
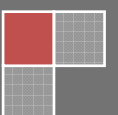
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RESUMEN:

La lectoescritura es la capacidad de leer y escribir. Para adquirir la lectoescritura en una lengua extranjera como el inglés, es necesario adquirir las habilidades comunicativas oportunas. El conocimiento fonológico es de gran importancia en la adquisición de la lectoescritura. Uno de los principales enfoques para la enseñanza de la lectoescritura en inglés es la técnica de "phonics". Ampliamente utilizado en el Reino Unido, el método conocido como "synthetic phonics" es recomendado para la enseñanza-aprendizaje de la lectoescritura. Además, este método está siendo desarrollado en las escuelas españolas para enseñar la lectoescritura del inglés. Existen en el mercado varios recursos didácticos interesantes para trabajar con "phonics" en Educación Primaria.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Lectoescritura, Conocimiento fonológico, "Phonics", "Synthetic phonics", Recursos didácticos.

ABSTRACT:

Literacy is the ability to read and write, whatever the language would be. To be able to read and write in English as a foreign language, it is essential thus to acquire the communicate skills of reading and writing. Phonological awareness has a great important in literacy acquisition. One of the main approaches to teach literacy in English is 'phonics'. Widely used in the United Kingdom, the synthetic phonic focuses on the letter-sound correspondence and it is consider as a recommended way to teach literacy. Furthermore, that method is being developed in the Spanish schools when teaching English literacy. Some interesting educational resources are available in the market to work with 'phonics' in primary education.

KEY WORDS: Literacy, Phonological awareness, Phonics, Synthetic phonics, Educational resources.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In Spain, English is widely learnt as the first foreign language. The Spanish educative system stresses the significance of the acquisition of some basic competences at the end of the compulsory education, like the information and digital competence, the social and citizen competences, the mathematics competence, etc. One of these competences is the linguistic communication competence, both in Spanish and in a second language, usually English. The ultimate aim of the language will be the development of the skills the learner needs in order to be communicatively competent within the community. The English subject area is in charge of this task. Moreover, since the creation of the bilingual programmes in a wide range of schools within the country, other subject areas of the curriculum contribute to the achievement of the linguistic communication competence.

It cannot be denied that one of the most important parts of communication is literacy. However, it is not sure which is the best method to use while teaching literacy. It would be up to each teacher to decide which one he/she finds more suitable for his/her students. An ongoing debate appears when talking about the two main approaches for teaching literacy in English: 'whole language' and 'phonics'. Following the 'phonics' approach, we will get into one of the more used methods for literacy teaching, and the available educational resources within that method.

Therefore, this study is going to approach the previously mentioned ideas, trying to understand some important concepts such as literacy or phonological awareness, and its relation to the teaching-learning process of the English language for Spanish Primary students, focusing on the available educational resources to use the technique of 'phonics'.

2. MOTIVATION BEHIND THE STUDY

As set out in the 'Guía para el Diseño y Tramitación de los Títulos de Grado y Máster de la UVa' (2011), students of the Degree of Primary Teaching should acquire a list of specific skills during their studies. Referred to the Foreign Language (English) subject, it includes:

1. Linguistic communication competence in a foreign language, which will enable to:

a. Acquire linguistic knowledge (phonetic-phonological, grammatical and pragmatic) and sociocultural of the foreign language.

b. Learn the cognitive, linguistic and communicative basis of the language acquisition.

2. Planning what will be taught and assessed in relation to the foreign language, as well as selecting, designing and developing teaching strategies, different types of activities and teaching resources.

The previous information shows the skills that a student of the Degree should achieve at the end of his/her studies. They are included both the phonological knowledge and the selection of teaching resources, of which importance will be supported throughout this work.

Concerning the topic of this project work, i.e. 'phonics', I find it quite difficult to identify when it has been carried out throughout the Primary Teaching Degree. I can only figure out that while being in the 'Didáctica de la Lengua Extranjera (Inglés)' subject, we were introduced to it. One of its blocks of contents was called: 'Developing the communicative competence'. It explained the strategies to develop the oral and written communication skills. In particular it specified how to teach the reading and writing skills, i.e. literacy, so 'phonics' was obviously mentioned. We were given some interesting materials, such as videos or worksheets to work with. On the other hand, neither the basic subjects of the Degree nor the elective ones, named the topic of 'phonics'. Maybe because it was not considered to be relevant for the current Degree.

What is relevant is the possibility I faced when I had to choose between a range of different topics, in order to fulfill the final project. So there it was the opportunity to dig into an almost unknown issue for me: 'Phonics'.

In the meantime I carried out the internship in the school. Although I was expecting to have some first-hand experience regarding 'phonics', I faced that in my assigned school,

they did not work with that method while teaching English literacy. Due to that fact, I was not able to try 'phonics' out.

Above all, I consider that the topic of 'phonics' is essential to any language teacher. We all should be aware of the enormous importance that literacy has in anyone, understanding it as, "The ability to read and write" (Cambridge Dictionaries Online website)[1]. Teachers are in charge of teaching those abilities to the learners: Castilian language teachers will help the students with the Spanish language, and English language teachers will do so as far as English language is concerned.

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[1] In: http://dictionary.cambridge.org/

3. SETTING THE SCENE

The previous section has tried to clarify different aspects regarding the Primary Teaching Degree, focusing on the 'Foreign Language: English' mention.

It is well known that a foreign language subject area is included in the Spanish educational curriculum. There is no doubt then, about the duty to teach at least a foreign language (generally English) in every single school within the Spanish territory. As far as the 'Castilla y León' region is concerned, the 'Junta de Castilla y León' has promoted the integration of the bilingual education, creating different bilingual programmes developed in a total of 305 schools. That leads us to two particular programmes which are being run nowadays in Primary and Secondary Education, regarding the Spanish-English models: the 'Integrated Curriculum Hispanic-British' from the MEC/BC ('Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia' / British Council) agreement (model 1) along with the 'Bilingual English-Spanish section' promoted by the 'Castilla y León' region (model 2). Both of them are explained below.

- Model 1

The 'ORDEN de 5 abril de 2000', establishes the integrated curriculum MEC/BC as well as the integrated curriculum for Infant and Primary Education. This integrated curriculum should be taught in both languages, so at the end of the compulsory education, students will be able to express themselves both in English and Spanish correctly. The MEC adds one of the specific objectives of the project, which is to promote the acquisition and learning of both languages through an integrated content-based curriculum.

The MEC/BC bi-lingual project was initiated in 1996 within the Spanish state education system. The 'REAL DECRETO 717/2005', established that the formal agreement between the MEC/BC states that the aim of the project is to provide children from the age of three to sixteen with a bi-lingual, bi-cultural education through an integrated Spanish/English curriculum based on the Spanish National Curriculum and aspects of the National Curriculum of England and Wales.

- Model 2

Once the first model has been introduced, it is the turn of the second school programme which is the 'Bilingual English-Spanish section'.

It is established in the 'ORDEN EDU/1141/2005' that there may be bilingual sections in Primary Education schools. The schools with these sections may teach some part of the curriculum in the chosen language and may organise the complementary activities in order to achieve the linguistic objectives. At the same time, it is regulated the procedure and it is set out the requirements for the creation of bilingual programmes in schools of the 'Castilla y León' region. Bilingual sections will be those schools that, once authorized, use a foreign language for teaching specific content of non-linguistic subjects. As it happens in the previous model, this model 2 argues about the integrated Spanish/English curriculum, saying that in the schools, some part of the integrated curriculum teaching will be held in English.

Once both models have been briefly described, I would like to highlight some relevant features of both curriculums, but not before an important term has been described. This is the term 'competences' that, in the words of the Common European Framework for Languages (CEF), it refers to the combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes that underlie the use of a language in a particular communicative situation, rather than the degree of efficiency with which that language is handled.[2]

According to the Spanish National Curriculum for the Primary Education, the school should enable the development of communication skills. That is said in the first of the 'Basic Competences' which is entitled: Linguistic communication competence. Specifically, some interesting ideas are mentioned, such as:

- The use of the language as a communicative tool.

- The knowledge, skills and attitudes of this competence allows to express oneself and to have a conversation.

- The reading and writing skills, in order to discover other languages and cultures.

Regarding the foreign languages, it is specified that with different levels of domain, especially in writing, this competence means being able to communicate in some of them and thus, to enrich social relationships and to get along in different contexts. In short, the

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[2] Own translation.

development of the linguistic communication competence at the end of the compulsory education involves the command of oral and written language in many contexts, as well as the functional use of at least one foreign language. It can be seen the importance given to the communication, not only in the mother language, Spanish, but in a foreign language.

Regarding the language and its requirements of use, it is said that children can begin developing a basic conceptual system and a metalanguage. These items facilitate the communication in the classroom during the learning process and they can be used as a support to learn other languages. In short, one important idea of language education in the Spanish curriculum is to develop oral and writing skills.

It can also be found the relevancy of the reading skill: Reading is an essential factor for the development of basic skills. The schools, when planning their teaching, must ensure a daily reading time, not less than thirty minutes, throughout all grades of the stage.

As it can be appreciated later on, the British National Curriculum does not differ so much in its goal from the Spanish one. Regarding the English subject, the statutory programme of study specifies that teaching should guarantee the integration of speaking, listening, reading and writing.

The programme is divided at Key Stages 1 and 2.

- During the first one, "Pupils learn to speak confidently and listen to what others have to say. They begin to read and write independently (...)"[3]. Pupils' prior experience of literacy includes: the symbolic nature of writing, the sounds and names of letters and how to write them.

- Regarding the second Stage, "Pupils learn to change the way they speak and write to suit different situations, purposes and audiences. They read a range of texts (...). They explore the use of language in literary and non-literary texts and learn how language works"[4].

In the National Curriculum of England it is also said, regarding the 'Use of language' section, that students should be taught to express themselves properly and correctly and to read accurately and with understanding. They also should be taught to recognise and use standard English.

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[3] In The English National Curriculum website:
   http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/primary?page=2
[4] Op. cit.

Meanwhile, and as to conclude this section, it is exposed a quick glance at the CEF[5] ideas about the linguistic teaching in Europe. Bravo Carnicero (2007), explains in an article that the CEF is a common basis on which it is articulated the languages teaching and learning throughout Europe. It describes what the language students have to learn in order to use a language to communicate. In other words, the use of the language as a communication tool, exactly the same aspect taken into account in both Spanish and British Curriculums. The article affirms that the focus in the foreign language teaching has been changing and developing. Nevertheless, the term competence is also used.

As it can be appreciated, it is meanly all about communication, since that will be the ultimate aim in any language: to develop the communicative competence, that is, the knowledge and ability the learners need to be communicatively competent in a speech community.

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[5] Common European Framework for Languages.

4. LITERACY IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

The Cambrigde Dictionaries Online[6] defines the term literacy as, "The ability to read and write". Meanwhile, Kimhag & Lindmark (2009, p.9) say that, "Literacy is an important part of communication. It gives an individual access to language, self-expression, critical thinking and social and cultural attainment". Consequently, there can be no doubt that literacy has to be included within the educational curriculums. However, Ager & Solli (2009), talking about the National Curriculum and the syllabus for Swedish, emphasise that, the curriculum does not have rules for how to teach language and literacy, so t is up to the schools to decide what methods they would like to use. Even so, the teachers can find guidelines which should be applied in all of the subject areas. Some of these guidelines advise the teachers to give support to the students while developing the language and the communication skills. Thus one more time, it can be appreciated the enormous teacher's responsibility while teaching literacy. Actually, Kimhag & Lindmark (2009) are of the opinion that, despite the methods used for literacy teaching differ among schools, teachers have to bear in mind that the way they applied their literacy pedagogy is going to affected the children's literacy skills both within and outside of school.

The same idea is extracted from the Spanish legislation when saying that the schools play an active role in determining the curriculum, since those schools must develop and complete the established curriculum. This reflects the principle of academic freedom, organizational and management that the law assigns to the schools so that the curriculum is a valid instrument to respond to the characteristics and the educational reality of each school. Therefore, literacy is affected too.

Concerning methodology, the 'ORDEN de 5 de abril de 2000' in which the Agreement between the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) and the British Council is settled down, it is explained that this methodology has to:

- Be communicative, participative, active and motivating.

- Care the planning of contents and resources within the appropriate approach to the English language subject, not limited to traditional and inadequate methods.

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[6] In: http://dictionary.cambridge.org/

- Develop grammatical reflection within the literacy teaching as a tool to develop the communicative competence in the foreign language.

Let see how the Spanish curriculum manages the literacy teaching in the following part.

4.1. LITERACY TEACHING IN SPANISH SCHOOLS

"Literacy is much more than just the teaching of the mechanics of reading. Literacy involves the four skills of language: understanding, speaking, reading and writing" (MEC, 2006, p. 69). A balance of the four mentioned skills are required in order to get the chance of survival in English. These skills will help the child to encourage his/her self-esteem, self-identity and emotional development. Since the child becomes more confident and literate, his/her control and knowledge of the language become more personalised. Moreover, bi-literacy gives the child access to different socio-cultural worlds.

This appealing article also clarifies some interesting questions such as how literacy should be developed within a whole-school context, where literacy should be taught, or how it should be organised in a classroom context. Regarding the first question, it is uttered that, "Being able to read and communicate with fluency and enjoyment in English are skills which need to be developed throughout Primary. A whole school policy on Literacy must be established" (MEC, 2006, p. 69) including careful planning and co-ordination between levels and cycles.

As it was previously said, it is the Primary teacher the person in charge of the teaching of the necessary literacy skills to encourage the students to become more confident and independent readers and communicators. Then, the teaching of literacy skills should be designed to make sure that the four skills, i.e. speaking, listening, reading and writing, keep a balance in the lessons. It is strongly necessary to bear in mind that a daily focus on literacy is essential. Nevertheless, it does not have to be limited to 'The Literacy Hour', since language and literacy should also be developed in geography, history, science and art.

The previously mentioned source is accompanied by an 'introduction to the teaching of literacy in primary years'. In that section, it is explained how teachers can encourage listening and speaking. Later on, it describes how to teach reading and writing, and provides some Resources Pages on Language and Literacy. Despite those contents are not going to be summarize here, I find relevant to this project work the ideas regarding how

knowledge about the language should be taught. Firstly, "The teaching of phonics and spelling needs to be done systematically and should whenever possible, come from work on a text rather than be studied in isolation" (MEC, 2006, p. 71). In this way, the school would agree on the targets for each year and check them from time to time. The chosen order to teach the phonemes and spellings will depend on several factors, such as the children's previous knowledge, the others curriculums regarding language, and the available reading material of the school.

4.2. PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

According to Kimhag & Lindmark (2009), phonological processing is an important aspect of both spoken and written language. This process is made up of four components:

- Phonological production: it is the ability to produce words properly.

- Phonological representations: it is the cognitive manifestations of speech sounds.

- Phonological working memory: it is the temporary storage of verbal and phonological information.

- Phonological awareness, which is explained below.

Rohl & Baratt-Pugh (2008) (in Kimhag & Lindmark., 2009, p. 8) define phonological awareness as, "The ability to recognise the sound units of language and to manipulate them". Among others, this skill has been found to be crucial in literacy acquisition. It also works the other way around, as children while learning how to read, develop advanced forms of phonological awareness. This includes different knowledge and abilities such as how to segment words into their units and put them together, how to isolate and delete sounds from words, and how to recognise syllables and rhymes. For developing the phonological awareness, it is necessary to be able to consider the sound structure of words separate from their meaning. This would help the children to begin developing more advanced levels of literacy. In fact, children could have difficulties in learning to read when they find the reflection on sounds in words awkward, as well as dividing spoken words into separate sounds. "Some researchers agree that the greatest single predictor that a learner will become a proficient reader is his/her phonological awareness at the beginning of school" (Adams, 1990 (in Kimhag & Lindmark., 2009, p. 8)).

A curious fact is that phonological awareness is also important for non words, that is to say words that have no meaning but present the same structure as real words. An example of non words could be: "ina" and "tsa". Actually, having a correct phonological processing skills to process non words is an important issue. "Since non words have no semantic form the children has to rely on their phonological processing skills only" (Ericson, 2007 (in Kimhag & Lindmark., 2009, p. 8)).

4.3. PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS AND LITERACY LEARNING

"Phonological awareness is supposed to be the best way to anticipate reading skills. This can be shown from over 30 years of worldwide research" (Rvachew & Savage, 2006; Stahl & Murray, 1994 (in Ager & Solli, 2009, p. 4)). It is believed that there is a strong connection between phonological awareness and reading and spelling ability. Ager & Solli (2009) suggested that the relationship between literacy learning and phonological awareness is reciprocal. That is to say that, basic phonological skills are essential so as to learn the alphabetic code, i.e. the phonemes for the written English. From then, the level of phonological awareness will be improved.

One of the first steps in becoming literate is the learning to connect sounds to symbols. In an alphabet, the graphemes represent the phonemes. The Wordrefence website[7] explains that, "A grapheme is one of a set of orthographic symbols (letters or combinations of letters) in a given language that serve to distinguish one word from another and usually correspond to or represent phonemes"[8]. Sometimes one grapheme represents only one phoneme (for example /f/ in fun), and other times one grapheme represents more than one phoneme (for example /ks/ in six). Therefore, Ager & Solli (2009) adds that, to become literate in an alphabetic language, the person needs to develop the skills of expliciting, analysing and commanding the phonemic segments of spoken language and knowingly control these units in different ways. This knowledge would enable the children to receive literate access to the words they already can achieve through their spoken language. Once the children realise that the phonemes are the units of the spoken language, and that those phonemes can be represented in graphemes, the alphabetic orthography becomes a logical way to symbolise the language. The learning to connect sounds to

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[7] In: http://www.wordreference.com/
[8] In: Wordrefence Online Language Dictionaries http://www.wordreference.com/

symbols (letters) depend on the ability to think about sounds in spoken words. As it was said in a previous section, a child could have difficulties in learning to read when he/she finds the reflection on sounds in words awkward, as well as dividing spoken words into separate sounds.

In 2009, Kimhag & Lindmark stated that, there was an ongoing debate talking about literacy, which is still going on. It was argued about the effect of phonological awareness for literacy development. Some researchers agree about it is the training in phonological awareness the reason to improve literacy skills. On the other side, there are those who argue that it is the other way around. Let us face some examples.

Some researchers share a common view among that the children need reading instructions to develop phonemic skills. However, it was showed that, "Preschool children could develop their phonemic awareness without regular reading instructions" (Lundberg et al., 1988 (in Ager & Solli, 2009, p. 4)). In order not to use regular reading instructions, they invented a programme with daily exercises during one school year. That programme included different activities such as listening games, playing with sentences and words and at the end of the course, learning to segment words into phonemes. The results showed that the children who had taken part on that programme, improved in their phonemic skills. Consequently, Ager & Solli (2009) came to the conclusion that it was possible for preschool children to develop the phonemic skills while using not just regular reading instructions with graphemes (letters). A similar study was carried out, finding positive short-term effects on preschool children's phonological awareness. It concluded that, "Early and intensive training of the phonological awareness had positive effects regardless of language" (Schneider et al., 1997 (in Ager & Solli, 2009, p. 4)) Its results supports the belief that phonological skills develop before the children get in contact with formal reading in the school. Ball & Blachman (1991) (in Ager & Solli, 2009) strengthen Lundberg et al.'s (1988) (in Ager & Solli, 2009) discoveries with their research, when indicating that a child who receives phonemic awareness intervention will show a superior ability in both spelling and reading and will be more able to match phonemes and graphemes compared to children who do not get the same training regarding phonemic awareness.

4.4. PHONEMIC AWARENESS VS PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

I have considered relevant to make a distinction between those two similar, and at the same time different, terms in order not to confuse them. In fact, some researchers differentiate them as well. According to Kimhag & Lindmark (2009), the phonemic awareness is a more narrow term than phonological awareness and means that listeners are able to identify and manipulate phonemes.

The definition of phoneme is: "One of the smallest units of speech that make one word different from another word" (Cambridge Dictionaries Online). An example is also given: "The difference between "pin" and "pan" depends on the vowel, i.e. the different phonemes /ɪ/ and /æ/" (Cambridge Dictionaries Online). In the words of Häggström, (2007) and Ehri et al. (2001)[9], the phonemes in spoken English are combined into bigger units, making syllables and words. They can be found some words consisting of only one phoneme, such as 'a'. However, most of the words consist of two or more phonemes, for instance two phonemes like 'go' and three phonemes like 'cat'.

According to Lundberg (2006) and Ehri (2001) (in Ager & Solli, 2009), it may be hard to distinguish the different phonemes in spoken language as the phonemes are co-articulated with no breaks in between. As a result, a learner might need specific instructions in the pronunciation of words, to be aware of and concentrate on the separate phonemes.

Once the term phoneme is clear enough, I am able to outline both easily confused terms. On the one hand, phonological awareness is a more extensive term which includes the ability to recognise, identify and manipulate units of spoken words, both larger and smaller, such as syllables, rhymes and phonemes. On the other hand, phonemic awareness only focuses on the ability to distinguish, manipulate and recognise the sequence of individual phonemes in words.

In their article, Ager & Solli (2009) quotes that:

> There is an apparently universal sequence of development from awareness of larger language units (syllables, onsets, rhymes) to awareness of smaller language units (phonemes). Of course there are cross-language differences in this universal sequence of development depending on variations in phonological structure and orthography. (p. 3)

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[9] In: Ager & Solli, 2009.

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4.5. PHONEMIC AWARENESS IN THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM OF ENGLAND

The National Curriculum of England[10] explains some of the strategies which include phonemic awareness. It divides them into reading and spelling strategies, as it can be seen in the following chart:

	Reading strategies	Spelling strategies
Key Stage 1	They should be taught phonemic awareness and phonic knowledge to decode and encode words, including to: hear, identify, segment and blend phonemes in words in the order in which they occur. (...)	Pupils should be taught: to use their knowledge of sound-symbol relationships and phonological patterns [for example, consonant clusters and vowel phonemes]. (...)
Key Stage 2	To read with fluency, accuracy and understanding, pupils should be taught to use: phonemic awareness and phonic knowledge. (...)	Pupils should be taught: to sound out phonemes. (...)

Figure 1: Some used strategies of the National Curriculum of England.

Either at both Stages, the programme of study for English and the National Literacy Strategy Framework for teaching are closely related. The framework provides a detailed basis for implementing the statutory requirements of the programmes of study for reading and writing.

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[10] In: http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/teachingandlearning/curriculum/primary?page=2

4.6. LITERACY TEACHING IN ENGLISH

Once some important concepts such as literacy or phonological awareness have been established, it is time to move on. While teaching literacy in English, there are two main opposed approaches known as: whole language and phonics. Let us start with explaining them.

Different definitions have been enumerated in order to clarify the term 'phonics':

- Phonics is the "application of phonetics to the art of reading" (Cordts, 1965 (in Kuo, 2011, p. 45)).

- "Phonics describes the relationships between letters and sounds" (Torgerson et al., 2006 (in Ager & Solli, 2009, p. 6)).

- "Phonics is based on relationships between the patterns and systems of oral and written language, not between individual letters and sounds, and thereby chose to emphasize the complex relationship between phonology and orthography that is the subject of 'phonics instruction' " (Kuo, 2011, p. 45).

Since terms such as graphemes and phonemes have already been explained, there will not be any problem to comprehend the following definition, which is in fact, the most widely-used and well accepted:

- "Phonics is a system that maps sounds (phonemes) to letters (graphemes/symbols)" (Hinson & Smith, 1993 (in Kuo, 2011, p. 45)).

In other words, "the term phonics refers to a method of teaching how to combine sounds with letters" (Rohl, 2008 (in Kimhag & Lindmark, 2009, p. 9)).

At this point, I would like to clarify something. As far as English language is concerned, it is necessary to distinguish between British English and American English while talking about phonemes.

The British Council in cooperation with the BBC,[11] provides a phonemic chart with forty-two phoneme symbols, as it can be seen in the next page:

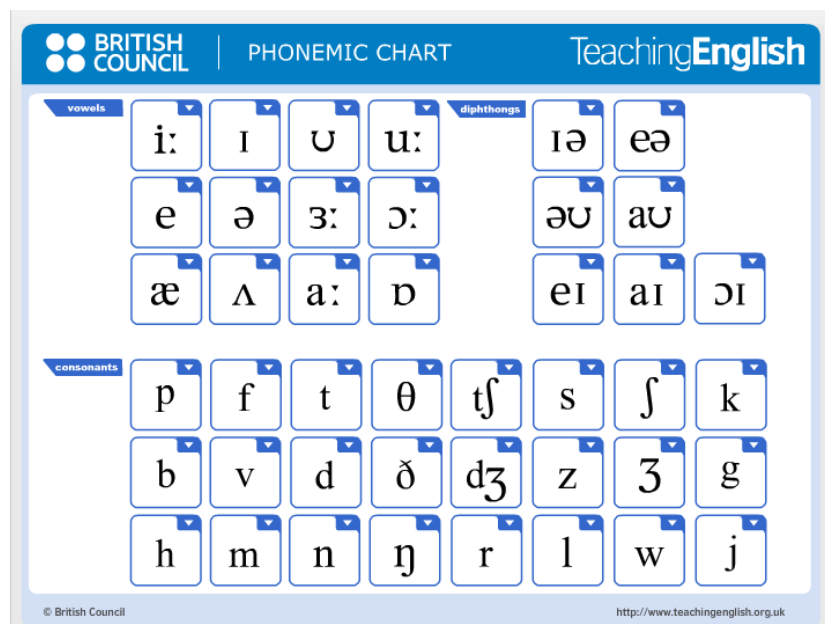[11] In: http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/activities/phonemic-chart

Figure 2: Phonemes of British English.

This interactive chart enables the students to hear sample words including the sounds of English by clicking on the symbols.

However, there can be found just forty-one phoneme symbols in American English, represented in K.K. phonetic symbols. K.K. is an adaptation of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). It was adapted by two American linguists, J. Kenyon and T. Knott; hence the name K.K. The phonemes are listed in the following chart:

Vowels	vowels	double-vowels
	[i] [ɑ] [ə] [ɪ] [ɔ] [ʌ] [e] [o] [ɚ] [ɛ] [ʊ] [ɝ] [æ] [u]	[aɪ] [aʊ] [ɔɪ]
Consonants	voiceless consonants	voiced consonants
	[p] [t] [k] [f] [s] [θ] [ʃ] [tʃ] [h]	[b] [d] [g] [v] [m] [n] [ŋ] [z] [ð] [ʒ] [dʒ] [l] [r] [w] [j]

Figure 3: Phonemes of American English (Kuo, 2011, p. 133).

"Because K.K. phonetic symbols represent phonemes in American English, they are, in effect, phonemic symbols" (Kuo, 2011, p. 22). Thus the terms are used interchangeably.

Therefore, there are not the same phonemes in American English than in British English. Despite this fact, I will follow the British English, since it is this one the English taught at Spanish schools nowadays.

Coming back to the topic at hand, Johnston & Watson (2005) (in Kimhag & Lindmark, 2009) utter that some studies showed that children, in an early stage, are able to learn how to read at the phoneme level. The researches also explains that focusing on phonics, helps the children to become more effective and independent readers.

In his thesis, Kuo (2011) says that supporters of phonics instruction believe that early alphabetic reading instruction has to include some explicit training regarding letter-sound correspondences and orders. It also has to enable the powerful self-teaching mechanism inherent in an alphabetic language. Stanovich (1991) and Sweet (1997) (in Kuo, 2011, p. 46) maintain that:

> Children must learn the general principle that spellings correspond to sounds and that letter-sound cues are more important in recognizing words than either semantic or syntactic cues. In general, reading acquisition is seen as a linguistic information processing sequence. (p. 46).

They agree on the importance of systematic skills instruction, and they focus on making easier for the learners the letter perception, the phonemic awareness, and the word decoding skills.

On the contrary, the thesis mentioned before, confirms that whole language advocates believe that children can acquire the sound-letter system through immersion in print-rich environments, as well as supplying them with several opportunities to write with invented spelling.

No one would dispute the fact that English orthography is irregular, so does pronunciation. So, although that is obvious, the efficacy of phonics instruction in English as a first language learning, is still a controversial issue. Nonetheless, there are some researches which support the efficacy of phonics instruction for the acquisition of some of the literacy skills in English as a mother language learners. Even though, foreign language learning is quite different, so the results of those researches cannot be used to the learning of English as a foreign language. For instance, it diverges regarding the cognitive process and the socio-cultural inputs. That is explain by Kuo (2011) when words that the literacy learning is a numerous skill, and the investigation of the efficacy of phonics instruction in English as a

foreign language instruction requires insight into the learning context, particularly in the mother language background and the practices and dispositions that the students bring to the foreign language classroom.

Despite the debate, Kuo (2011) reckons that both approaches to teaching literacy, i.e. the phonics and the whole language, share the same ultimate objective of enabling the learners to produce meaning from text independently and, opposing to some claims, hardly ever supporters of phonics recommend teaching only phonics nor do defenders of whole language disagree with the importance of letter-sound relationships.

To conclude this item, it is just mentioned a brief analyse of the development of the literacy teaching in the United Kingdom. Following the teaching of early reading in British schools process, Rose (2006) (in Ager & Solli, 2009) says that it has been developed in three main steps:

1. Before 1989, the common way of literacy teaching was by using 'the searchlights model of reading'. This model contains four strategies, or searchlights, which refer to sources of knowledge when decoding a text. They are: phonic knowledge (sounds and spelling), grammatical knowledge, graphic knowledge and word recognition, and knowledge of the context.

2. Between 1989 and 1998 the British National Curriculum had few impact on improving the standard of reading among the students. Although working with phonics in literacy teaching was a fixed component, it was known that it had a small influence in literacy teaching.

3. In 1998, the National Literacy Strategy was rebuilt. Thus, schools were in charge of developing a structured literacy teaching programme that could describe what and how should phonics be taught. Rose (2006) (in Ager & Solli, 2009) recommended all early literacy teaching to include 'synthetic phonics'. This method is going to be explained afterwards.

5. SYNTHETIC PHONICS

In this section I talk about one of the widely known methods used for literacy teaching, as it is the synthetic phonic.

According to a research carried out while using a communication device for early literacy, it was said that, "The Synthetic phonic method is an approach using systematic phonic literacy instructions, where children learn letter-sound correspondence in an organised way" (Kimhag & Lindmark, 2009, p. 11). And continues saying that the method focuses on the sounds of the letters, not on the letter names, and how these sounds can be blended together to form words. Blending is understood as "the process of saying the individual sounds in a word and then putting them together" (Lloyd, 1998 (in Kimhag & Lindmark, 2009, p. 12)). Therefore, the child is not introduced to letter names at the beginning of the process.

The steps that a child follows while learning through this method are:

- The establishment of the sound.

- The learning of how to write the letter. In this step, there are two periods. Firstly, the phonemes (sounds) are matched with graphemes (letters), pronounced in isolation. Secondly, they are synthesised or blended together.

- The learning of how to divide spoken and written words into its smaller units or elements.

- The learning of how to use their knowledge of phoneme-grapheme (letter-sounds) correspondence to code new, unfamiliar words when both reading and writing.

In a similar study than the previously mention, it was found that, "Systematic literacy instructions based on phonics had a significant positive effect on reading accuracy". (Torgerson et al., 2006 (in Ager & Solli, 2009, p. 6)). Moreover, Bowey (2006) (in Ager & Solli, 2009) affirms that, systematic synthetic phonics is the most effective approach in literacy learning.

Of course, there are those who cannot find the synthetic phonics as a superior approach as far as early literacy teaching is concerned. They argue that there is no any evidence to confirm that thought. They consider that, "Early literacy teaching should consist of a variety of instructions in phonics combined with print exercises" (Ager & Solli, 2009, p.6),

so they do not think that synthetic phonics is the best approach in literacy teaching. Goswami (2005) (in Ager & Solli, 2009) discusses that, since English has got an inconsistent letter-sound correspondence, the synthetic phonics method is not working properly. He also considers that literacy teaching in the English language needs other complementary approaches in addition to synthetic phonics.

All things considered, it is probably true to say that synthetic phonics is one of the chosen methods used to teach literacy to children from the age of about five.

5.1. JOLLY PHONICS

Jolly Phonics is one common literacy teaching approach based on the previously introduced method, the synthetic phonics.

Developed in the United Kingdom in 1987, it is currently a programme broadly used in that country. This fact is confirmed by Ager & Solli (2009), while saying that in the UK, synthetic phonics is a suggested way to instruct literacy and the Jolly Phonics is a familiar approach within that method.

Kimhag & Lindmark (2009) consider the aim of the Jolly Phonics programme as the placement of the basis for reading and writing skills. The synthetic phonics method is used, when teaching the sounds of the letters in a multi-sensory way. That is to say that it focus on directing teaching of sound-letter relationship. This author also names the five basic skills for reading and writing according to the programme, which are the following: Learning the letter sounds, learning letter formation, blending, identifying sounds in words and spelling tricky words.

The teaching centers on "the regularly spelled graphic word and how to break it into parts which can be immediately related to speech" (Adams, 1990 (in Kuo, 2011, p. 45)). The programme focus on not learning the names of the letters but the sounds, in order to help in the blending action.

The children are supposed to learn the forty-two main phonics of English. The sounds are divided in seven groups of six sounds each, carefully selected to help the learning process.

These are the letter sound groups followed in the programme:

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1. s, a, t, i, p, n
2. c k, e, h, r, m, d
3. g, o, u, l, f, b
4. ai, j, oa, ie, ee, or
5. z, w, ng, v, oo, oo
6. y, x, ch, sh, th, th
7. qu, ou, oi, ue, er, ar
```

Figure 4: Letter sound groups follow in the Jolly Phonics programme. (Kimhag & Lindmark, 2009, p. 12).

The children are taught all those forty-two phonics in the English language in intervals and following a specific order so as to blend sounds into words and after some time, reading words. Since one phonic is introduced a day, the forty-two phonics are taught in around 9 weeks.

Owing to the Jolly Phonics presents a multi-sensory approach, which involves body movement, visual ability, hearing and speech, it is much easier to the children to learn the sounds and connect them to letters, bearing in mind that these letters must be introduced by sounds, not by names. Moreover, as it is said in the Ager & Solli's article (2009), by identifying the sounds in words and connecting these sounds to letters, children are able to understand the alphabetic code. Therefore, this knowledge would help them learn literacy, i.e. to read and write.

This method uses small letters, rather than capital ones. Furthermore, similar letters such as 'd' and 'b' could confuse the learners, so they are not put too close to each other. Lloyd (1998) (in Kimhag & Lindmark, 2009) pointed out a curious fact while affirming that the first introduced group of phonemes (s, a, t, i, p, n) can be used to form simpler words of three letter than any other group. Lloyd (1998) (in Kimhag & Lindmark, 2009, p. 6) also considers that:

The approach is based on the assumption that knowing letters is superior to a whole-word approach when learning to read and write, and that pupils become fluent readers

faster when using the synthetic phonics approach. Pupils who use the synthetic phonics approach also start to write independently and spell accurately earlier than pupils taught with the whole word approach. (p. 6).

It is also believed that when this approach is used in literacy teaching, the total of pupils with reading problems is almost non-existent.

Later on, specifically in 2005, the same idea was repeated. A report called 'The teaching of early reading review' focused on the synthetic phonic method in early settings and primary schools, among other issues. It was highlighted by Kimhag & Lindmark (2009) that a high quality work regarding phonic was an essential way to avoid reading difficulties, so it should be taught to children methodically. The mentioned report exposed that good systematic phonic programmes were those in which the tasks and learning were supported carefully on a daily basis. Those tasks were multi-sensory most of the times, for instance, they can manipulate magnetic letters to form words, or they can involve physical movement to represent the sounds and shapes of letters.

6. MATERIAL VS RESOURCE

The educational materials and resources is a topic of great importance since it deals with an aspect that, more or less, determines the teacher work: the material.

To start off with, I would like to make a clarification in order to use the terminology in an accurate way.

Teachers are forced to use many synonymous terms which are quite confusing: resources, educational materials, teaching aids, technological resources, curriculum materials, etc.

Firstly, focusing on the two words of this section, i.e. material and resource, and looking up in several dictionaries, it can be found the following definitions. Regarding <u>material</u>, two similar definitions arise: "Things needed for an activity" (Cambridge Dictionaries)[12] and "The equipment necessary for a particular activity" (Collins Dictionary)[13].

Meanwhile, the term <u>resource</u> is explained by The Free Dictionary[14] as: "Something that can be used for support or help". Macmillan Dictionary[15] goes further in its definition: "Something that you can use to help you to achieve something, especially in your work or study". Another definition specifies that this term is usually found as 'resources', which are, "A stock or supply of (...) materials, staff, and other assets that can be drawn on by a person or organization in order to function effectively" (Oxford Dictionaries)[16].

Talking about the classification of the materials and resources, there is a huge disagreement within the scientific community. For this reason, I have considered necessary to focus on just one of the available classifications. This one is going to be used in the following section of this dissertation, to classify the materials and resources to use the technique of 'Phonics'.

The MEC (1991) will be the chosen source in order to make the classification. It estimates that the term **educational resources** encompasses all the others and can be defined as: All the tools that teachers and students use in the development of the teaching-learning

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[12] In: http://dictionary.cambridge.org/
[13] In: http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english
[14] In: http://www.thefreedictionary.com/
[15] In: http://www.macmillandictionary.com/
[16] In: http://oxforddictionaries.com/es

process[17]. Therefore, the educational resources would help the teacher and the student in their own tasks.

In this way, educational resources are understood as the overall name of aids. The MEC (1991) in its report writes that, those educational resources are formed by three types of resources, which are: Curriculum materials; materials and resources; and facilities. Before getting into them, here it is shown a diagram to better understand the next description.
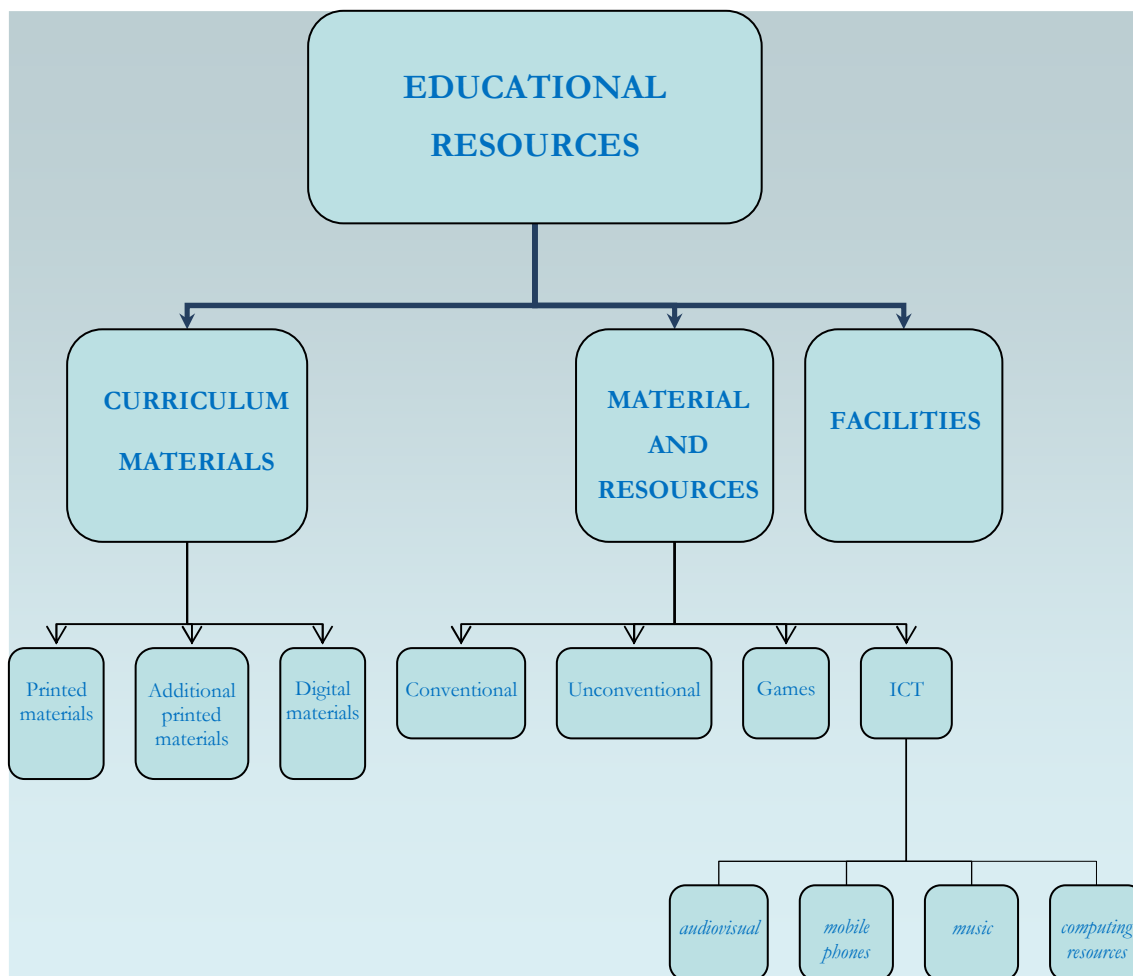
Figure 5: Classification of the educational resources.

Following the MEC (1991), the three types of educational resources are:

1. The **<u>curriculum materials</u>** help to develop the curriculum. The teachers use it to teach and the students to learn. There are several types:

a) <u>Printed materials</u> (books on the subject area; books on teaching and learning the subject area; lesson materials such as exercises, worksheets, notebooks, and so on).

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[17] Own translation.

b) <u>Additional printed materials or reference materials</u> (magazines, newspapers, atlases, etc.).

c) <u>Digital materials</u> (CD included in the textbooks).

The most classical curriculum materials for students are the textbooks. The Spanish legislation considers that, regarding its use and monitoring, the textbooks and other curricular materials must be adapted to scientific rigor, be appropriate to the ages of the students and adjust to the curriculum, reflecting and promoting respect for the principles, values, freedoms and constitutional duties. Meanwhile, Kuo (2011), relating textbooks with phonics, specifies that:

> Teaching materials, (...) are essentially tools of sociocultural mediation. The design of textbooks reflects the values of the society in general and the aims of the policy maker, therefore in examining the impact of textbooks on the efficacy of phonics instruction to young (…) learners, it is important to take into account the culturally embedded nature of the textbooks. (p. 39).

2. The **materials and resources** are made up of: <u>Conventional</u>, <u>unconventional</u> (built by the learner, waste, etc.), <u>games</u>, and <u>ICT</u> (Information and Communications Technology). Within the ICT group, they can be found: audiovisual (TV, DVD, video, youtube), mobile phones (camera-video-player ...), music, computing resources (laptops, Internet, Webquest, etc.).

3. Despite educational resources seem to just refer to the previously introduced groups, the **facilities** are also an important part of them. In fact it is inside the classrooms of the school where the lessons are carried out. The REAL DECRETO 132/2010 establishes the minimum requirements for primary education schools. It explains that primary education schools must have, at least, a classroom by each unit with a suitable surface to the number of students enrolled authorized and in any case, with a minimum of 1.5 square meters per school place. In its third article, it words that all the facilities arrangements in which educational actions are developed, will have access to ICT in quantity and quality suitable to the number of school places, ensuring the access to digital environments for students with any kind of capacity. So that information and communications technology can be used too, within the teaching-learning process.

Once the classification has been established, I would like to point out some of the characteristics suggested by the MEC (1994) that teachers have to bear in mind, when choosing the educational resources. These features are: current, accessible, maximum practical use, contextualisation, congruence relationship (with the objectives and with the basic competences), and variety. In addition to this, teachers should not forget that they have the freedom to create their own educational resources. In fact, the ORDEN EDU/6/2006, which regulates the creation of bilingual programs in schools of 'Castilla y León', establishes that teachers of non-linguistic areas will have specific functions within the bilingual project. One of these tasks is the development of specific curriculum materials. There can be no doubt that producing own materials is a time-consuming process. Nevertheless, this process seems extremely necessary in certain cases, when either the available material is not enough or there are not any materials at all to be used in the teaching and learning process. Then, a teacher will need to create his/her own material at some point of his/her career.

7. EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES TO USE THE TECHNIQUE OF 'PHONICS'

This section pretends to provide a list of materials ready to be used in the teaching of English literacy in the primary schools of Spain, using the technique of 'Phonics'. As it was previously said, this programme is widely used nowadays in the English as a first language literacy development.

Straightaway, they are shown some of the interesting educational resources that can be developed in primary education using 'Phonics'. Each of them is included in a separate chart, in order to make it clearer.

The current list is enumerated according to the classification of the educational resources provided in the previous section, in order to remain faithful to it.

I will start for the group called **'materials and resources'**. Most of them are **computing resources**, because they are the most accessible ones. Moreover, the following websites supply also with printed materials, such as worksheets.

JOLLY PHONICS	
Educational resource:	Website: http://jollylearning.co.uk/overview-about-jolly-phonics/
Ages:	+3 years old.
Description:	- It is a fun and child centred approach to teaching literacy through synthetic phonics. - With actions for each of the 42 letter sounds, the multi-sensory method is very motivating for children and teachers, who can see their students achieve. - It teaches children the five key skills for reading and writing.
Stages:	- The letter sounds are split into seven groups. - The sounds are taught in a specific order (not alphabetically). This enables children to begin building words as early as possible.

Kits:	- Activity books.
	- Finger Phonics Big Books.
	- Finger Phonics Books.
	- Pupil & Teacher Books.
	- Jolly Phonics Extra.
	- Jolly Phonics Readers.
	- Jolly Phonics Workbooks.
	- The Phonics Handbooks.
	- Word book.
	- Flashcards.
	- Posters.
	- Books with CDs.
	- CDs.
	- DVDs.
	- Jolly Phonics Sofware.
	- Home and school kits.
	- Puppets.

DEBBIE HEPPLEWHITE	
Educational resource:	Website: http://www.syntheticphonics.com/information.html
Ages:	From +3 years old to adults.
Description:	- Debbie' website links to other sites of the same author. In all of them several educational resources are provided. - Her programmes are: · Phonics International: It is the online systematic synthetic phonics programme that has been designed to teach reading, spelling and writing for all ages. It has a huge number of free resources, and free information including video clips of the 'sounds' and 'graphemes' of the English alphabetic code. · Oxford Reading Tree - Floppy's Phonics Sounds and Letters Programme (Oxford University Press): This is a very comprehensive synthetic phonics programme for infants which includes beautifully produced hardcopy resources and includes two interactive CD-ROMs. It is being very well-received across the world.
Stages:	· In Phonics International: - Stage 1 'The Communication, Language and Literacy Curriculum (beginners / special needs)' (Units 1-5): Beginners are not required to read books independently which are beyond their level of Alphabetic Code knowledge and blending skill, but they do have free access to any books and share books with adults in a variety of ways. The teacher identifies the precise learning intention for activities. For example, the teacher would not worry about teaching letter/s-sound correspondences whilst reading a story book to the children or demonstrating how an information book can be used.

	- Stage 2 'Progression to the complex Alphabetic Code and integration with the wider curriculum' (Units 6-12): Once the learners know to automaticity at least one version of letters and letter groups (graphemes) to represent the sounds of speech (phonemes), they then need to learn further common spelling variations of the phonemes. The learner needs to be knowledgeable about letter/s-to-sound correspondences for reading and pronunciation variations. Teachers and learners need to know and understand the reversibility of The Alphabetic Code and the complexities of the code.
Kits:	- Worksheets with alphabet. - Alphabetic code charts. - English alphabet code. - Building up the English alphabet code. - Assessment worksheets. - Etc.

DEEP SEA PHONICS	
Educational resource:	Website: http://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/ks1/literacy/phonics/play/
Ages:	5-7 years old.
Description:	- It is a fun activity to help children learn about phonics.
Stages:	There are three steps: - Medium. -Hard. - Really hard.
Kits:	- Interactive games. - Worksheet.

PRIMARY RESOURCES	
Educational resource:	Website: http://www.primaryresources.co.uk/english/english.htm
Ages:	6-12 years old.
Description:	- It is a site with varied materials to be used in phonics, as well as in other subject areas.
Stages:	- Spelling & Phonics (Part 1): Early Phonics & Alphabet Work, Blends, Vowel Phonemes, Other Phonics) . - Spelling & Phonics (Part 2): Prefixes, Suffixes, Double Consonants, Silent Letters, Other Word Groups. - Spelling & Phonics (Part 3): Plurals, Compound Words, Common Words, Spelling & Rhyme, Spelling Strategies, Anagrams, Word Searches & Games, Useful Spelling Resources.
Kits:	In each of the stages, there can be found loads of materials (worksheets, powerpoint presentations, an so forth).

PHONICS BUILDER KITS	
Educational resource:	Website: http://www.englishraven.com/Phonics_builderoverview.html
Ages:	7-12 years old.
Description:	- It is for students who have learned the sequence of the alphabet and can associate some basic vocabulary with most of the letters. - It adds more vocabulary for the alphabet's consonants and short vowel sounds, reviewing and consolidating Phonemic awareness for these sounds and introducing the concept of "first", "last" and "middle" letter. - Consonants and short vowels start combining to create simple monosyllabic words, some additional words employing long vowel sounds are introduced, and common "sight words" are also included. - Developing basic reading skills is a big issue. - Various discovery learning techniques are featured. The most prominent of which is represented by word-finds that illustrate the vocabulary chosen for the various sounds and require the students to locate the written forms. These word-finds also incorporate all the previously studied and about to be studied words, so that students can relocate them and recycle their recognition skills peripherally.
Stages:	Stage 1: Motor Skills; Alphabet letters/sequence. Stage 2: Consonant Sounds; Short Vowels. Stage 3: Long Vowels; Long vs Short Vowels. Stage 4: Consonant Blends; Consonant Digraphs. Stage 5: R-controlled Vowels; Vowel Digraphs/Diphthongs. Stage 6: Parts of Speech; Prefixes and Suffixes; Syllables/Word Stress; Tone/Intonation; Compounds/Homophones; Synonyms/Antonyms; Contractions.

Kits:	There are 6 kits, each containing 5 lessons of 3 pages, 90 pages in total of downloadable material.

PHONICS SKILLS CHART	
Educational resource:	Website: http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/teach-phonics-skills-chart
Ages:	4-13 years old.
Description:	- It divides the key phonics skills into different groups, according to the approximate age most children are able to master them. - It shows some examples of that mastery for each group of children. - It provides some activities for each skill level.
Stages:	Stage 1: (Preschool) Child can recognize letters by name. Stage 2: (Preschool) Child can recognize a few letters by sound. Stage 3: (Kindergarten) Child can recognize rhyming sounds and alliterations in simple words. Stage 4: (Kindergarten) Child can identify when the first letter sound of a word is different from the first letter sound of another word. Stage 5: (Kindergarten) Child can blend simple word parts together to form a word. Child can also distinguish a lower-case letter from an upper-case letter. Stage 6: (Kindergarten/First Grade) Child can blend individual letter sounds together to form a word. Stage 7: (First Grade: Mid – to – late) Child can segment, or separate, a word sound by sound. Stage 8: (First Grade: Mid – to – late) Child understands how changing letters in a word changes the sounds and the meaning.

	Stage 9: (First Grade: Mid – to – late) Child can sound out one-syllable words with short and long vowel spellings.
	Stage 10: (Grades 3–6) Child can sound out multisyllabic words.
	Stage 11: (Grades 3–6) Child can use prefixes, suffixes, and Greek and Latin roots to sound out and define new words.
Kits:	- Alphabet Tree (PDF) from *Overhead Teaching Kit: Easy Phonics Lessons for the Overhead.*
	- Which Letter? (PDF) from *201 Thematic Riddle Poems to Build Literacy.*
	- Picture Dominoes from *Fun With Phonics: Beginning & Ending Consonants.*
	- Oral Segmentation from *Interactive Phonics System.*
	- Blending, Oral Blending, and Dictation/Spelling from *Interactive Phonics System.*
	- Blending from *Interactive Phonics System.*
	- Worksheet (PDF) from *Teaching with Phonics Tiles.*
	- Worksheet (PDF) from *Teaching with Phonics Tiles.*
	- Syllabication Activities (PDF) from *Teaching Phonics and Word Study in the Intermediate Grades.*
	- Syllable Spelling Patterns (PDF) from *Teaching Phonics and Word Study in the Intermediate Grades.*
	- Prefixes (PDF) and Suffixes (PDF) from *Teaching Phonics and Word Study in the Intermediate Grades.*

PHONICS WORKSHEETS FOR BEGINNERS	
Educational resource:	Website: http://genkienglish.net/phonicsws.htm
Ages:	From children to adults.
Description:	- Most of the resources are printable worksheets. However there are some interesting videos with useful explanation for teachers to use it.
Stages:	Not stated.
Kits:	- Phonics worksheets. - Phonics workbook. - Poster book. - Phonics Posters. - Games. - Mini phonics cards. - Videos.

MAKING SOUNDS INTO WORDS	
Educational resource:	Website: http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/Question/Index/3
Ages:	Not stated. Could be suitable for +6 years old.
Description:	- One can ask some questions to the phonics experts, who answer and provide several tips. - There are as well, an interactive chart to make sound into words.
Stages:	Nonexistent.
Kits:	- Interactive chart.

PROGRESSION IN PHONICS GAME	
Educational resource:	PowerPoint presentation.
Ages:	5-7 years old.
Description:	- This game is a reproduction using PowerPoint of the Progression In Phonics (PIPS) Full Circle Game 1, taken from the NLS PIPS publication. It supports PIPS Step 4. The instructions of the game are: - Throughout the file, you have to click on an ear to hear a recording of a word. - The letter which is no longer needed in the existing word must be removed before being replaced. - Clicking on the letter will remove it. - Clicking on the new letter which is required to replace it will move the letter into the empty space.
Stages:	Nonexistent.
Kits:	- PowerPoint presentation (see attached CD). It can also be found in the website: http://www.bgfl.bridgend.gov.uk/Teachers/Resources/English/KS1/powerpoints/Full%20circle.ppt)

Some examples of **audiovisual** educational resources would be:

BABYBIT EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMME
Educational resource:	- DVD (Website: http://www.babybit.com/en/Programa.asp)
Ages:	0-6 years old.
Description:	- It is based on the BITS method. These have been created to stimulate the child's brain at the most receptive stage of its development. - This programme uses the term BIT to refer to any simple fact that the brain can store and which comes through the senses. It classifies the bits into three types of bits: mathematics bits, reading bits and encyclopaedic bits. The latter two must be used together for quicker acquisition of comprehensive reading. - The effectiveness of the programmes lies in the sequencing of its content, and the brevity of the presentation of the bits, meaning that the child's attention is maintained throughout the entire session. - Furthermore, in order to make learning even easier, each session is structured in two main parts: Reader-encyclopaedic programme and Mathematics programme. - In the Reader-encyclopaedic programme, the bits are repeated for a week, but presented in a different order in each session. The factor of surprise is thereby maintained, and consolidation of learning is achieved with this necessary repetition.
Stages:	- Volume 1: The child can make a start in the world of reading by learning complete words and the image that goes with them, thereby reinforcing their assimilation. - Volume 2: The child continues to see complete words, and pairs of words will also be introduced, with the image to go with them. - Volume 3: The child will learn simple phrases using known words.

	- Volume 4: A major step forward in reading takes place, with the presentation of the first stories.
Kits:	- It is made up of four DVDs. Each DVD is approximately, 6 hours and a half. Some of them can be watched in its website. - Each babybit DVD contains 15 weeks of programming. One week of programming consists of 15 sessions and viewing of 3 a day is recommended, from Monday to Friday, with rests at weekends. - With the four DVDs (volumes 1, 2, 3, and 4) adults will therefore have more than a year of the early learning programme prepared, and their children will receive the basis for all teaching while they play and have fun.

PHONICS HAND ACTIONS	
Educational resource:	Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqaP19rUwz4
Ages:	Not stated. Could be suitable for 3-6 years old.
Description:	- In this video two ladies make several hand actions for each sound, in order to learn the sounds.
Stages:	Nonexistent.
Kits:	- Video.

It cannot be denied that the **'curriculum materials'** are also really useful in school teaching. The different publishing houses are aware of that, so several publications can be found on the market, including books, workbooks, CDs, and so forth. Since the publishing houses have their own website, it is shown afterwards the different materials that can be purchased, in order to work 'phonics'.

DK	
Educational resource:	Website: http://us.dk.com/nf/Search/QuickSearchProc/1,,phonics,00.html?id=phonics
Ages:	+1 years old.
Kits:	- Funny Phonics. - Very Silly Sentences. - Jungle Babies.

SCHOLASTIC EDITORIAL	
Educational resource:	Website: http://www.scholastic.com/home/
Ages:	4-13 years old.
Kits:	The editorial provides a wide range of materials and resources for teaching phonics such as: worksheets, books, programs for teachers, lesson plans, computer-based assessment, and so on.

USBORNE PUBLISHING	
Educational resource:	Website: http://www.usborne.com/catalogue/catalogue.aspx?cat=1&s=1&searchText=phonics
Ages:	2 -7 years old.
Kits:	- Phonics flashcards. - First phonics words. - Big phonics workbook. - Phonics workbook (levels 1 to 4). - Different stories.

OXFORD	
Educational resource:	Website: http://www.oup.com/oxed/primary/literacy/phonics/
Ages:	3-11 years old.
Kits:	- Project X Phonics collection (40 books). - Oxford Owl website (http://www.oxfordowl.co.uk/Reading)

KEY EDUCATION	
Educational resource:	Website: http://www.keyeducationpublishing.com/cgi-bin/search.pl
Ages:	3-11 years old.
Kits:	- Big Box of Little Word Puzzles. - Little Books of Blends and Digraphs. - Color Photo Games: First Phonics. - Big Box of Alphabet Knowledge. - Word Family Stories. - The Biggest Book of Reproducible Books. - Building Alphabet Knowledge. - Sound Out and Sort. - Big Box of Easy-to-Read Words - Early Learning Games. - Phonemic Awareness: Blends and Digraphs Photographic Learning Cards. - Get Ready, Read! - First-Grade Fun, Fitness & Learning.

The last publishing house has an incredible quantity of printed materials.

CARSON-DELLOSA	
Educational resource:	Website: http://www.carsondellosa.com/cd2/SearchCatalog.aspx?k=PHONICS
Ages:	5-11 years old.
Kits:	There are a wide range of printed materials such as: - Phonics Resource Book (for several ages). - Phonics Workbook (for several ages). - Word Study and Phonics Workbook (for several ages). - Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Resource Book. - Engaging Activities to Teach Phonics and Phonological Awareness Resource Book. (for several ages). - Month-by-month Phonics (for several ages). - Jump Into Phonics Resource Book (for several ages). - Alphabet Resource Book. - Phonics & Vocabulary Skills Resource Book (for several ages). - Spelling & Phonics Resource Book (for several ages). - Basic Phonics G.A.M.E.S. Resource Book. - Phonics Chart. - Phonics Flash Cards. - Phonics Manipulative.. - Phonics File Folder Games. - Time to Rhyme Board Game. - Opposites Attract Board Game. - Etc.

8. CONCLUSION

The present study has tried to approach one of the most widespread ways of teaching literacy in the United Kingdom, i.e. 'phonics', contextualising it in the Spanish educative system, in particular within the English subject area. Whereas in the primary education we part from a still elementary competence in the foreign language, we have to keep in mind that the limited presence of the foreign languages in the environment makes that the majority of the opportunities of learning are given in the school context. In addition to this, the Common European Framework for Languages demands a multilingual competence of the citizens, adding that the bilingual education is stated as an emerging movement in the European Union. All these evidences suggest that society in general, and teachers in particular, have a lot of work to do in order to fulfill the ultimate aim of any foreign language, which is to gain the communication competence.

Literacy acquisition is an extremely relevant start point within the teaching-learning process of a language, and the method of 'phonics' contributes to it. Although this method is being developed in Spanish schools, it is not yet as scattered as it is in the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, it is probably one of the most commonly used methods of English literacy teaching, from infant education to higher levels. Another research could be performed to find out whether the teaching of 'phonics' in Spanish schools has advantages that outweigh the disadvantages of an extra investment of time and effort. After all, if 'phonics' is worthy when English literacy teaching within the Spanish educative system.

Regarding the list of educational resources which were provided to use within the technique of 'phonics', I would like to highlight that teachers would be the ones in charge of considering several aspects such as the appropriate timing according to the ability, needs and progress of their individual students. They also would be able to increase the use of 'phonics' in the teaching process, without changing the structure of their teaching. For instance, 'phonics' could be incorporated into the lessons, when presenting new words. Later on, it could be studied which of the different educational resources provided, better works in Spanish schools.

To conclude, it has not been mentioned in this study anything about how to use 'phonics' with students with specific educational needs. A future study would be desirable in order to

find out about this aspect, as well as if 'phonics' would be a proper method to help children who are struggling to read and write in the foreign language.

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