Memòries del Programa de Xarxes-I³CE de qualitat, innovació i investigació en docència universitària. Convocatòria 2016-2017

Rosabel Roig-Vila (Coord.)
Jordi M. Antolí Martínez, Asunción Lledó Carreres & Neus Pellín Buades (Eds.)

Memorias del Programa de Redes-I³CE de calidad, innovación e investigación en docencia universitaria. Convocatoria 2016-17
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ice@ua.es
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ABSTRACT

In the current educational framework and with the new Plurilingual Programmes, there is a tendency to introduce L2 instruction at early ages along with increased exposure to L2 by teaching non-linguistic areas in English. For this reason, the introduction of literacy in English makes more sense in this new context since it allows an approach to teaching, writing and reading English at an earlier age and it is also necessary to have a good reading comprehension and writing expression abilities in order to succeed when learning other areas of the curriculum in English. This work intends to conduct a compilation of methodologies, from the most traditional ones to the very latest to provide the practical results with (a) a theoretical framework which enables us to define the methodologies that could be more efficient in the Spanish university context; and (b) an empirical analysis of the methods and its related or corresponding implementation in the Spanish educative context. Furthermore, it tries to ascertain if our “Literacy in English Language” course gathers all the epistemological and practical knowledge our Degree in Education students’ need to know about English literacy to help them succeed in their future task as English Teachers.

Palabras clave: English Literacy, English Phonetics, pronunciation, Teaching Literacy, Literacy Methods

1. INTRODUCTION

In the current educational framework and with the new Plurilingual Programmes established by the “Conselleria d’Educació”, there is a tendency to introduce L2 instruction at early ages (4 years old) along with a greater exposure to L2 achieved not only by increasing the number of hours of English lessons (“Decreto 108/2014”) but also by teaching non-linguistic areas in English (“Decreto 9/2017”). The understanding of the English phonological system is not enough ‘to echo’ their correct pronunciation patterns. A full understanding of phonics-based approaches should enable teachers to gather enough evidence to count on the right methodology that ensures overall literacy development. A prompt introduction of English literacy by means of a suitable phonics program makes more sense in this new context, since it allows an approach to teaching English writing and reading skills at an earlier age. Likewise, good reading comprehension and writing expression abilities are a prerequisite for success when learning other areas of the curriculum in English. As these are the skills our future teachers will need to achieve in order to be successful in their task as English teachers, it is also necessary for them to master teaching English literacy when teaching English or in English.

2. OBJETIVES

The present research aims to describe the current trends in the literacy teaching, especially in the subjects related to Phonology and Phonetics, determining which Phonetics knowledge is necessary to teach English Literacy as well as deciding how to teach English Phonetics in a meaningful, rapid and
efficient way. Finally, getting students not only be able to know how to pronounce the 44 phonemes but also how to teach them in pre and primary school.

3. METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for this experimental research is a descriptive correlational study, in which the Pretest-Posttest design is applied. To carry out the present study, two global research stages have been established: (a) a description of the two major literacy teaching trends, i.e. analytic and synthetic methods; and (b) an adaptation of these Anglo-Saxon approaches to the current Primary Teaching educational curriculum. This two-step analysis is of great importance to have a better understanding of the teaching needs and to provide Primary teacher with adequate phonics tools to enhance the reading and writing skills. Besides, this methodology allows us to determine, assess and evaluate the validity of the contents of the course and the efficacy of the implementation of the Synthetic Phonics methodology in the English Literacy course taught in the Preschool and Primary Education Undergraduate Programs.

4. FINDINGS

The use of a phonics-related questionnaire has been of great help to comprehend the importance of Phonology and Phonetics in the implementation of updated literacy approaches. This questionnaire has been distributed among Primary teaching students before and after the subject of Phonology and phonetics in their degree, showing that their awareness and knowledge on English phonetic system has increased abruptly after the one-term subject. This enables to confirm one of primary premises: the importance of this phonetic system is crucial to have an effective implementation of literacy tools in Primary Education.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The most outstanding finding is precisely the importance of English Phonology and Phonetics courses in Primary Teaching degree, shown in the questionnaire-based results of Primary Teaching students. The significance of this subject relies on the understanding of how the English phonetic system works and to enhance our students’ capability to determine, analyze and comprehend the most efficient literacy teaching methodologies which are thought to be useful to them to teach English literacy in the future.

The revision of the research materials has suggested that Spanish educational system has been more inclined to analytic methods, which might have repercussions on the levels of English writing and reading skills. However, synthetic method is becoming more and more accepted especially because of its success in Anglo-Saxon countries. In order to teach our students English phonetics and phonology we have focused on the Synthetic Phonics methodology, as most practical activities carried out in class were taken from this approach. Therefore, we can agree with Stuart (1999), Johnson and Watson (2005), Bowyer-Crane et al. (2007), Dixon, Tooley and Hunt (2005), Naeem, Aftab, Zaidi and Naheed (2016), Farokhbakht (2015), Ekpo (2006), Shepherd, (2013) and Motsch, (2016) about the effectiveness of this method to learn English literacy by the results obtained by our students in the Pre-Test and Post-Test.

6. TASKS DEVELOPED IN THE ‘RED’
RED PARTICIPANTS | TASKS DEVELOPED
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Cristina Férriz Sánchez | • Research phase coordination and timing.  
• Final memory writing
Mirian Cherro Samper | • Test making  
• Study results analysis
Javier Fernandez Molina | • Test making  
• Test to four-year Pre-school and Primary education students  
• Study results analysis
Beatriz Ortín Pérez | • Test making  
• Revision y correction of the Final memory
Jose Antonio Sánchez Fajardo | • Test making  
• Revision and correction of the Final memory
Manuel Sánchez Quero | • Test making  
• Test to four-year Pre-school and Primary education students

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