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Trabajo de Fin de Grado

PRONUNCIATION RESOURCES FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS AND LEARNERS

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1. Abstract /Resumen.

This project addresses the problem of a widespread inadequate pronunciation of English in Spanish primary schools. Teachers do not receive enough guidance in matters of pronunciation as undergraduates, but they will be the models of their future students. Therefore, this project aims at providing useful and easily accessible resources for would-be primary school teachers with a view to improving their pronunciation. These resources include: the familiar online dictionaries or textbooks, conversation exchange websites, and instructions to learn how to record audio files. For the sake of clarity, the resources are illustrated with different images. As most of these websites can be freely accessed on the net, the reader of this research project can look them up while reviewing it. Additionally, the resources here included are meant as exercises in the classroom that teachers can put into practice with their students. For that purpose, a brief description of each of these activities will be provided.

KEY WORDS: Teaching, Primary School, learners, teachers, resources, pronunciation.

Este trabajo de fin de grado está dirigido a un problema que existe en los colegios de Educación Primaria españoles: la pronunciación inglesa es inadecuada. Los profesores, los cuales no reciben una guía mínimamente suficiente en materias de pronunciación durante su carrera, serán los modelos de pronunciación para sus alumnos. Por eso, este trabajo tiene como objetivo ofrecer recursos útiles y de fácil acceso a futuros profesores con vista a mejorar su pronunciación. Estos recursos van desde los ya conocidos diccionarios online o libros de texto hasta las páginas web de intercambios de conversación o el aprendizaje de grabación de archivos de audio. Los recursos están acompañados de distintas imágenes que los ilustran. La mayoría de ellos están disponibles en la red, por lo que se pueden visitar durante la lectura del trabajo. Además, los recursos aquí incluidos también contienen algunas ideas acerca de cómo podrían llevarse al aula. Con ese fin, se incluye una breve descripción de cada una de esas actividades.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Enseñanza, Educación Primaria, alumnos, profesores, recursos, pronunciación.
2. Introduction

A correct pronunciation is fundamental in all languages, but more so in English, because its sound system greatly differs from languages such as Spanish. English is taught at schools through grammar, vocabulary, reading, writing, use of English, listening comprehension, etc. However, Spanish people are not often fluent in English and our Spanish accent may cause misunderstandings when communicating with a native speaker. This might be so because the teaching of pronunciation is not given allotted much time when compared to other parts of the language such as grammar, vocabulary, or reading. I think that this should change: pronunciation should become an important part of learners’ education.

Nowadays, nursery teachers and Primary School teachers are the first teachers of English for most children. Every teacher is a pronunciation model for 25 pupils per class, so the stress, rhythm, and intonation that teachers use to be the best example for their students. It is for this reason that teachers have to change the way of teaching English in order to improve their learners’ pronunciation. The first step to reach this objective is to improve our teachers’ pronunciation. If our children’s models are better, our kids will hear a better spoken English in the classroom.

Due to this fact, in this essay I have included resources for Primary School teachers and for learners. Apart from the abstract, introduction, and methodology; the main contents of this work are sections five, six, and seven; which correspond to the relationship between Spain and the English Language, resources for Primary School teachers, and resources for learners of English in Primary School. After that, I have drawn the main conclusions and I have included a list of references.

Finally, it is important to say that I chose this topic because, as a fourth-year-student of Primary School Degree, I thought this essay could be useful not just in order to improve my pronunciation skills but also to practise my writing skills. In addition, this was my last chance of writing an English essay and of increasing my knowledge about the English language.
3. Objectives

The objectives of this essay are mainly four. First, to detect some of the barriers of English pronunciation in Spanish schools. Second, to collect and analyse a number of resources conductive to improving the pronunciation of English of children at primary schools. Third, to collect and analyse a number of resources conductive to improving the pronunciation of English of teachers at primary schools. And fourth, to comment how teachers can use the different resources for improving their pronunciation skills.
4. Methodology

The method I have pursued to carry out this project has been mainly practical. I have examined a number of websites, textbooks, and other kind of material in order to find out to what uses they can be put in the classroom when teaching English pronunciation. After that, I have done a selection of certain kinds of information and resources so that I could choose the ones that were more useful, enjoyable, and interesting for teachers and learners. Thus, this essay contains an array of internet resources, – most of them available and free– and other activities based on some ideas that I have learnt through courses taken in the degree of Primary Education degree. I have analysed all the exercises I have proposed in this essay in order to make sure that they work, how they work, and if they are useful or not. My main goal was to find out whether or not they are reliable and relevant.

I have also included a bit description of each of these resources so that I could identify their advantages and drawbacks with a view to offering Primary School teachers ideas and guidance -at an introductory level- on how to tackle the teaching of English pronunciation to children.
5. A comparison between English and Spanish

It is widely recognised that English is a very popular language. Therefore, one of the objectives of Primary School teachers of English in Spain should be to teach oral skills. Because of historical reasons, there is a discrepancy between English spelling and English pronunciation (they evolved in a very different way). For the spelling of English words, English is difficult to learn as a second language.

It seems that in Spain most of the families of primary school children do not speak English proficiently. This is a problem for teachers because if children do not have a supportive environment at home, teachers are alone in their task of helping learners to develop English proficiently. So most Spanish children only learn English in the classroom. The International Statistic Studies\(^1\) (INE) has worked out that only 35.48% of Spanish people are able to speak English (but it doesn’t include their proficiency level). Furthermore, the English Proficiency Index\(^2\) has also carried out an international survey and 55.89% of Spanish people speak an intermediate level of English. According to an INE calculation, Spain position is the 18\(^{th}\) in this classification.

It is strongly recommended to learn English in order to communicate with other English speakers in our country or in foreign countries. English is also a lingua franca in this globalised world, due to this fact it is important to learn English since it is used in business, medicine, investigation, technology, etc. If every family knew English, all the students would learn English too. However, now we can see that this is not happening.

\(^1\) For the sake of clarity, the complete references for websites will be indicated in the footnotes rather than in the bibliographic section.
http://www.ine.es/ (Accessed 1 July 2013)

Moreover, as it is established on the BOE 08/12/06\(^3\), learners are only 105 hours in the English classroom during both first and second years of Primary School; 140 in third and fourth years; and 140 in fifth and sixth years. So, for example, if some children are studying in the second year of Primary School Education, they are two hours and thirty minutes per week learning English language, which is only a 1.5% of a week.

Furthermore, Primary School new teachers of English have only four different courses in their degree from the rest of teachers at university. Sport teachers, teachers of music, and teachers of English are studying the same degree with the same contents. Are four courses enough for learning English proficiently? Obviously not. Therefore, teachers of English should study English outside their university in order to reach a proficiency level of English.

On the other hand, it’s widely recognised that teaching other subjects in English is a good activity in order to improve Primary School learners’ English skills. There are not enough classes devoted to teaching English in schools, so this is a good idea in order to teach English more hours. This idea was called Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL).

Coyle, Hood and Marsh (2010: 1-2) give this definition of CLIL: “is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language.” If we apply CLIL to the Spanish learning context, the additional language these scholars talk about will be English. Thus, teachers should be proficient in English and in the subject they teach in order to use CLIL in the classroom. They also explain that CLIL’s history dates back to Roman times, how teachers should use it in the classroom, what are the reasons to use CLIL, etc.

In the next section, teachers will find a number of resources to improve their pronunciation and their pupil’s pronunciation too.

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\(^3\) Find this BOE on http://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2006/12/08/pdfs/A43053-43102.pdf (page 43102) (Accessed 12 April 2013)
6. Resources for Primary School English teachers

Although Primary School English teachers have the responsibility of teaching English in Primary School Education, the following resources can be used by Primary School teachers of other subjects (Maths, Spanish Language, Sciences, Music, PE…). Here they can find some of the resources I have found and the most interesting ways of using them for learning or teaching English.

6.1. Online dictionaries

The web provides a wealth of translators. However, there are far too many, so it is sometimes difficult to know what dictionary is the best. There are a lot of options in every dictionary. However, focusing on pronunciation, the most important dictionaries represent it using the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

Hewins (2007: 12) directs his attention to the importance of the IPA in the dictionaries. He points out that IPA helps us to know how to say a word: “From this you can find out about the sounds that make up a word and how it is stressed […] It is useful to spend some time learning the IPA symbols so that you can make use of pronunciations shown in dictionaries”.

Nevertheless, there are different characteristics in every dictionary. In this section I will provide some examples of different online dictionaries (Cambridge Dictionaries Online, WordReference, Collins English Dictionary and Merriam-Webster’s Learner’s dictionary) and how teachers can use them for learning English pronunciation.

The first example, Cambridge Dictionaries Online⁴, is one of the most important English dictionaries on the net. There are seven dictionaries on this website: British English, American English, Business English, Learner's Dictionary, English-Spanish, Español-Inglés⁵ and English-Turkish. As well as it is a very good translator as well as an excellent dictionary.

First of all, in Cambridge Dictionary teachers can read the phonemic symbols. This is a good way of knowing how to pronounce a word. Moreover, teachers can also listen to the words they search in two accents: British English (UK) and American English (US). Finally, some words are classified according to Cambridge Levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 or C2), which is really interesting for teachers who want to find the difficulty level of a word.

⁴ http://dictionary.cambridge.org/ (Accessed 13 April 2013)
⁵ Translated: Spanish-English
wicked

_definition adjective (UK) /wɪd/ (US) /wɪk/id/

Definition

- morally wrong and bad:
  - C2: Proficiency level. English Vocabulary Profile symbols
  - A1-C2 show which words and phrases learners know at each level.
- a wicked grin
- a wicked sense of humour

Figure 2: Cambridge Dictionaries

Wordreference is another online translator and dictionary. According to Alexa\(^6\), it is one of the most visited webpages (44 in the rank in Spain, 346 in the world rank), so it is likely one of the most used websites for Primary School teachers or students. In Wordreference, teachers can find the phonetic symbols of the words they search and also audio recordings in UK and US English, in a similar manner to the previous dictionary. The main difference between those two dictionaries is that the latter offers a forum discussion for obscure meanings of words which are not in the website or which need a more precise explanation.

[WordReference.com Online Language Dictionaries]

![WordReference.com Online Language Dictionaries](https://www.wordreference.com)

Figure 3: Wordreference

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Furthermore, *Wordreference* has different ways of searching words: English definition, English synonyms, English-Spanish, Spanish-English, and other translation dictionaries (English-French, English-Italian, etc.).

A third example is *Collins English Dictionary*\(^7\). This dictionary is similar to *Wordreference* and to *Cambridge Dictionaries*. After searching a word, *Collins* also includes a phonetic transcription and its recording.

![Collins English Dictionary](http://www.collinsdictionary.com/)

Figure 4: Collins English Dictionary

This dictionary is quite useful for classrooms with students from different countries, because they can look up a word and, below the English explanation, they can find “the word in other languages”. So, after listening to the English world, they can listen to the word in other languages: Arabic, Brazilian Portuguese, Chinese, Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, European Spanish, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese. Such is the number of languages with audio recordings that teachers can show the pronunciation of the searched word in the mother tongues of the learners of their class in order to motivate them. On Figure 5 there is an example of this:

Moreover, *Collins English Dictionary* has a frequency indicator of the searched word. Therefore, when a teacher or student looks for a word, he/she sees its frequency too. In spite of the fact that this dictionary is highly practical, it has one disadvantage. When we want to translate a Spanish word into English, this dictionary can successfully do it but we will only find the Spanish recording of the word, as well as in the rest of the languages mentioned before in the website section “in other languages”. However the recording of the word in English it is not provided. So the main disadvantage of *Collins English Dictionary* is that the only way to find the English recording of a word is searching it in English.

And finally, *Merrian-Webster’s Learners’ Dictionary* is an American English dictionary with more than 3,000 words. It is supposed to be a dictionary for learners, especially for who are studying ESL, EFL and the TOEFL Test. It works in a similar way than the previous online dictionaries. It shows the IPA phonetic symbols and teachers can also hear the words they search in American English because every word contains an audio file. It also includes a section called “Word of the day”, where the

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most searched word during the previous day appears; and “Ask the editor”, where learners can ask doubts about the meaning of some idioms, sentences, or words.

![Merriam-Webster Learner's Dictionary](image)

Figure 6: Merriam-Webster’s Learners’ Dictionary

What makes it especial is the section entitled “Perfect Pronunciation exercises”. Users only have to click on “Practice” and then click on “Perfect Pronunciation exercises” to know more about it or start practicing. There, learners or teachers can find fourteen lessons about pronunciation with five exercises everyone (seventy exercises in total). Every exercise has a goal: to explain some content about pronunciation. They are easy to do but every teacher should do them for revising.

For instance, the first exercise in the first lesson explains the difference between /f/ and /v/ sounds. First of all, teachers will hear two sentences with words which contain /f/ or /v/ sounds. Then, they will listen to some words with /f/ or /v/ sounds one after the other. After this, teachers will listen to a word and they will have enough time to repeat it. Finally, they will find an activity where they will hear some words and they will have to click on /v/ if they listen to a word with a /v/ sound and to a /f/ sound if they listen to a word with a /f/ sound.

Therefore, “Perfect Pronunciation exercises” are a really enjoyable way of practising pronunciation and teachers can view some phonetic lessons without difficult explanations.

After this brief description of four of the best online English dictionaries there is a main question than needs to be addressed: how can Primary School teachers use them?
First of all, teachers can search the pronunciation of every word they need in order to know how to say it correctly. Secondly, they should practise that pronunciation by repetition. After this, they may be able to use those words in the classroom. Teachers have to pronounce every word proficiently in the classroom; therefore, regular use of the online English dictionaries is the first and most basic exercise to avoid mispronunciations and to achieve their pronunciation skills.

6.2. Pronunciation sites

The most relevant pronunciation sites that I have found are mainly four: Forvo, Inogolo, Sounds Familiar?, and Howjsay.

To begin with, Forvo\(^9\) is a website owned by a Spanish company: Forvo Media SL. In this site every user can browse a word and listen to its pronunciation. It is probably the website which contains the largest number of words with audio recordings on the net. The most interesting point is that Forvo’s users are the creators of the audio files. So the more people who upload audio files, the more different accents will be available in this site. It is supposed that all the updated files are recorded by native speakers. There are more than 127,000 English speakers in Forvo and more than 100,000 recorded words.

Forvo also allows users to ask for recording a word which is not found in the site. Consequently, we can see the list of words which have been asked by other users and record one or more words of that list. Furthermore, teachers can download the audios in a mp3 format file if they log in before searching a word.

How can teachers make a proper use of this website? If they want to use it, they have to write the word in Forvo’s searcher and some results will appear. They will have to select between the different pronunciations found and listen to the audio files they want. Therefore, they can listen to the pronunciation of a word through the voices of different people. It is useful for listening to words which teachers may not be familiar or for having more examples about how to pronounce a word.

The drawback is that the quality of the recordings depends on the user who has uploaded the file. Teachers can find files with good quality (recorded with microphones, sound studios, good recorders…) or with bad quality (mobile phones, compressed files…). It is widely recognised that low quality audio files are more difficult to

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\(^9\) http://forvo.com/ (Accessed 5 April 2013)
understand than good or high quality audios. Depending on the users, not only teachers will find a different quality but also different varieties of English (Jamaican, British, American…). They have to know what variety of English is suitable for them and for their students. Fortunately, this website also provides information about the users’ nationality, so we can know the accent we are going to hear before listening to recordings.

![Forvo image](https://example.com/forvo.png)

Figure 7: Forvo

Apart from Forvo, Inogolo[^10] is a website where teachers can find how to pronounce names of people, places and other proper names. In this site every user can write a name in the searcher and find: first, one or more audios about the name; and second, an explanation about how to pronounce the word.

Inogolo can be used by teachers who want to know how to pronounce some difficult names. For example, if some teachers do not know how to pronounce Arthur Schopenhauer in English, they can search it in the browser. Consequently, they will find the name and some information about some famous people with that name (in this case, they will find -in case they did not know- also that Schopenhauer was a German philosopher), the phonetic pronunciation, the origin and a link with the audio file. This

is really useful in order to learn how to pronounce some cities, villages, or names which cannot be found in a conventional dictionary.

In spite of these advantages, there are some gaps: not all proper names, cities, and villages, and its phonetics pronunciation are written with phonetic symbols. The first reason can be a problem when teachers try to look for a particular village. Additionally, the lack of IPA transcriptions makes learning and memorization more difficult. Precisely for these reasons, this website is too limited for Primary School teachers who are looking for a specific name of a person or place.

The third important pronunciation dictionary is Sounds familiar?\(^{11}\). It is a website inside the British Library\(^{12}\) where teachers can listen to different English accents. Every user can choose between different speakers who are from Scotland, Northern Ireland, or England. Furthermore, in this website schoolteachers can also select different regions, accents, and dialects. Although children only need to know how to pronounce Received Pronunciation, teachers should know different accents and dialects. Consequently, this website is really interesting for discerning Received Pronunciation from minority ethnic, new dialects, and old dialects.

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\(^{12}\) [http://www.bl.uk/](http://www.bl.uk/) (Accessed 10 April 2013)
Sounds Familiar? has also a summary of every listening. So teachers can also read the new vocabulary they have listened to and learn how to write it. It also has a section with some activities too that users can do. There are exercises on grammatical variation lexical, change lexical, variation phonological, change phonological, variation social and variation methodology activities.

![Sounds Familiar?](image)

**Figure 9: Sounds Familiar?**

For teachers, Sounds Familiar? can be an appropriate website for improving their English skills. Listening different varieties of English will help them to improve their oral skills as well as to discern different accents.

And finally, Howjsay\(^{13}\) is an online talking dictionary with which teachers can listen to more than 150,000 English words. In order to be able to hear a word, they just have to write it in the Howjsay’s browser and they will listen to it automatically. If users want to listen to the word again they just have to place the mouse over the word. That word (or groups of words) will appear in pink. It’s really simple and easy to search.

In short, *Howjsay* is an extremely useful tool for the teacher, it is user friendly and it covers a wide range of recorded lexicon.

To conclude, these four pronunciation dictionaries are good resources that teachers can use to improve their oral skills.

### 6.3. Talking with native speakers

It is widely recognised that the best way of learning English is to practise it. People who learn English as a first language (L1) have the best pronunciation. So, what would happen if every teacher could speak with English speakers?

Not everyone can afford private classes by a native speaker. However, we live in the digital area and, in computers; we can find a range of resources that allow speaking with native speakers for free. Teachers who know some native English speakers can talk with them through online platforms and social networks. But the main problem for a lot of Primary School teachers or student is how to meet those speakers.

On the internet there are opportunities to meet native English speakers: forums, social networks (Facebook, Google +, etc.), and also to speak with them (Line, Skype, Google Talk, Viber for mobile phones, etc.). Nevertheless, it is difficult to find English people in social networks who want to speak with us by pleasure.

Fortunately, we do not need to spend a lot of money or search on social networks in order to practise our English. The best idea may be a conversation exchange. There is
a website called *Conversation Exchange*\(^{14}\) where everybody can meet native English speakers. This is a useful webpage because Spanish teachers can find English speakers who want to learn Spanish. So Spanish teachers can practise their English and help with Spanish in return.

These are the practicalities of this facility. First of all, everybody who wants to use *Conversation Exchange* has to sign up because the emails are hidden for unregistered people. In order to register in this website, teachers only have to write their name, surname, country, e-mail, the language they would like to practise and their interests (music, sports, cooking, etc.). After this, users can either wait until they receive an email or they can look for a person with their interests. There are three options: face to face conversation, correspondence (pen-pal), and text and voice chat. The first one is the most interesting for people who live in the same city, but maybe the third option is the most appealing for teachers from Spain. The second option is good for improving writing skills. Figure 11 shows the Conversation Exchange explanation about these three ways of language exchange.

![Conversation Exchange](image)

Figure 11: Conversation Exchange

When teachers look for people in *Conversation Exchange* they will have to click on “Find a chat partner” or “conversation partner” and select the language of the

\(^{14}\) http://www.conversationexchange.com/ (Accessed 17 June 2013)
speakers they are looking for, the language they want to help with in return and the chat software they will use. After that, they will find different people with the characteristics they have selected. At the same time, users will be able to see other users’ profile if they want to correspond through e-mail. Figure 12 shows an example of a user’s profile.

When a user finds another person and he or she decides to engage in conversation, they only have to share the necessary information and to select the speaking method they have decided to use.

Furthermore, there are more websites similar to Conversation Exchange. One example is My Language Exchange15 (shown in figure 13), which enables teachers to find more English speakers. In order to become a user of this website, teachers will have to sign up, search people, and select the characteristics of their language exchange partner. In this website, they will find the name, country (city), native language, practicing language, and a description of every user. As in Conversation Exchange, in My Language Exchange teachers will have to be logged in in order to send messages to other users.

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In addition to these two resources, Italki\(^\text{16}\) (which comes from eye - talk – eye) is another website where we can find English speakers. It works similarly to Conversation Exchange and My Language Exchange. You can create an Italki account with a Facebook account or with your e-mail (as with previous websites). This is the newest site that I have come across so far and its connection with Facebook is an advantage because everybody can videocall their friends, and therefore teachers can speak with native speakers by Facebook.

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6.4. Getting started in phonetics

There are a lot of books, articles, and online resources which try to explain phonetics, rhythm, intonation, etc. Learning all those skills is a difficult and boring task for some teachers. However, they have to be learnt in order to speak English as a second language proficiently.

In “Teach Yourself English Pronunciation”, Vilaplana (2009) explains phonetics in a very simple way. She divides her book into eight chapters, teaching the different vowels, consonants, assimilation, and stress among others. The best advantage of this book is that it contains exercises about the explanation, so it is a good way of learning phonetics.

In a different way, in “Materials for a Course in English Phonetics and Phonology”, Mateo, Pérez, García and Alvarez (1999) explain phonetics and phonology in a traditional way. They classify vowels and consonants in different groups according to how are they produced.

Furthermore, Emmitt, Komesaroff, and Pollock (2006: 138-150) summarise phonetics and phonology. They also give reasons to their readers for studying phonology and letter-sound knowledge and they include a figure about where the sounds are produced in our mouth. In order to explain this, The University of Iowa created an excellent resource called Phonetics. In its American English version teachers can find all the classification of English vowels and consonants. In order to listen to the different English sounds, we can click on the different buttons.

Figure 15: Phonetics: The Sounds of American English

For example, if we click on “place” and “lingua-alveolar” we can see the different lingua-alveolar consonants. After this, we can click on a consonant, for example /dʒ/, and listen to it and at the same time we see how to pronounce it. Every sound has a simulator of the mouth and a video. There is also a step-by-step description about how to pronounce this sound.

The British Council, as we can see on figure 16, have also created a site\(^{18}\) where teachers and learners can learn the phonemic chart. It is very simple because they only have to click on the phonetic symbol they want to listen to or select one word (which are on the top right of every symbol) with that symbol.

![Figure 16: British Council- Phonemic Chart](http://teachingenglish.britishcouncil.org.cn/activities/phonemic-chart)

Finally, there are some appropriate books for pronunciation and phonetics. Hancock (2007) and Hewings (2007) offer a lot of units about pronunciation and phonetics. They try to develop learners’ pronunciation from intermediate to advanced, but their books are also useful for teachers. In addition, teachers can find some resources in order to learn more about pronunciation. As we can see on figure 17, these books can teach phonetics and pronunciation to learners who do not know anything about phonetics and also have interesting resources for teachers. However, the more we advance in the book, the more level we have to reach. Furthermore, Hancock (2007) and Hewings (2007) always illustrate a theoretical explanation with examples, and after this,

learners can do some exercises about the chapter. Therefore, these are two books who can guide the pronunciation of teachers in a different way.

Figure 17: The phonemic alphabet. (Hancock 2007: 130)
6.5. How to record audios

There are a lot of people who have visited English websites or dictionaries. But some people do not know that apart from those dictionaries there are other resources they can use to improve their English pronunciation, as for instance recording pronounced words as audio files. There are several ways of doing it and in this section teachers will find one of them.

Audacity, Cubase, Sourceforge are some of the programmes we can use for recording audio files and editing them. For the purpose of this essay, I have chosen Audacity because it is free and easier to use than other programmes.

First of all, teachers have to change their sound configuration for recording the output sound. In Annex 1 I provide the information in order to do it. After this, teachers will have to download and install a free audio editor and recorder called Audacity\(^{19}\). In order to install the programme, they only have to click on next over and over.

\(^{19}\) http://audacity.sourceforge.net/ (Accessed 26 June 2013)
To record audio files with Audacity, teachers will have to launch it. Then they have to click on the red circle button for recording what they want. The main idea is to click on the red circle button (record), to play the video, song or any audio they want to record and to press the brown square (stop) in order to stop the recording. Then they can play their recording clicking on the green triangle and edit the audio, but this is not our current goal.

For the purpose of saving the recordings, teachers only have to click on “File”, “Export” and select the audio format they want. WAV audio format, which is an uncompressed format with the best sound quality, is chosen by default. Then they will be able to play the audio files offline in their computer or in other devices.

Recording audio is interesting for teachers because they can record everything they listen to in their computer. It can be an interview they cannot download, a song, the audio of a video, some vocabulary words, etc. In this way teachers expand their possibilities of owning audio resources in order to improve their own pronunciation or to use them with their learners.

6.6. Recording our voice with Audacity

Recording our voice is a useful resource for learning English. We can listen to a word or sentence before saying it, but it is difficult to compare our pronunciation with the pronunciation of a native speaker. Nevertheless, recording ourselves speaking English makes us aware of our level of English, our fluency, and our mistakes.

We have seen that Audacity is a free audio editor and recorder. Apart from recording everything we listen in the computer, it can also record our voice if we enable the “Microphone” and disable the “Stereo Mix” (on Annex 1 there are more explanations about this issue). Therefore, we can record our voice with Audacity following the same steps than in the section before.

Furthermore, Audacity allows teachers to see the sound waves. With these sound waves it is easier to detect the differences between our pronunciation and the native speaker pronunciation. On figure 19 we can see two pronunciations of the word “experience”. Although it is the same word, we can notice several differences between the two recordings. The higher is the wave, the more intense the sound; and the longer is the wave, the longer the sound is. Thus, in the first one we can see that the /ks/ and the /ns/ sounds are higher than in the second one.
This resource can be effective for a lot of activities. We can listen to a word or to a sentence in a pronunciation dictionary and record our imitation as many times as we need. In this way, we will improve our own pronunciation of that word or sentence. We can also read a text aloud or sing a song at the same time we record our voice in order to listen to our recording after reading or singing.

To sum up, Audacity is a programme which can be used for recording everything we listen to in our computer or in order to record our voice. With these two actions and imagination teachers can design a lot of activities for them or for their learners.

Figure 19: Audacity: “Experience”
7. Resources for learners of English in Primary School:

In this part of the essay teachers can find resources they can use to improve their students’ English pronunciation. These resources are made for Primary School learners, but teachers should try them before using them in the classroom because they have to choose the best resource for every moment. Therefore, although here there are some ideas, teachers must adapt these activities to different classroom contexts, including interest, age and skills. Furthermore, teachers should also have some aims concerning pronunciation and they should focus the proposed activities on only these aims.

7.1. The arrangement of the classroom: what to do and what not to do

The arrangement of the classroom is crucial for a good learning. Teachers have to select the furniture arrangement in order to reach their goals. In a classroom there are different ways of organise a classroom, but every teacher should devote some time to analysing what kind of environment their classroom is. There are a number of factors to consider apart from the age, number of students, and their previous knowledge of the subject. Some of these are: gender, ethnicity, attitude, skills, allotted time, physical characteristics of the room, etc. Classrooms are complex learning spaces and, each academic year, conditions change and the teacher should pay attention to certain changing circumstances.

Dörnyei and Murphey (2009: 74-89) note that teachers should look for ways to make classrooms more suitable for learning. Bringing a real object, an animal, or a plant to the classroom can make the learning process better. These scholars (2009: 76) also point out that a teacher should “be able to overcome many physically debilitating characteristics with good skills and enthusiasm”. Furthermore, Dörnyei and Murphey refer to interaction as “the principal mediational means of learning for any group”, being able to “be helped or hurt by environmental factors” (2009: 76). So it is very important for teachers to take into account “the impact of size, temperature, lighting, noise and furniture arrangement” (2009: 77).

Furthermore, Dörnyei and Murphey (2009: 80-82) classify the arrangement of the classroom furniture in five different groups:

The first one is the “traditional teacher-fronted seating structure”, where students have their independent seats. It is useful when teachers are explaining and the students have to pay attention to them. However, it seems that there are differences between the children who sit close to their teacher and those who sit far from him or her. It also
appears that this arrangement increases the dependence of students on their teacher. Furthermore, this arrangement is not appropriate for learners’ interaction; therefore this structure is not appropriate to teach English.

The second one is named “to have or not to have desks”. Desks separate one student from another. They can be seen as “private territories” and they are not interesting for interaction. If a classroom does not have desks, learners will be free to interact. However, students may feel vulnerable and they will have difficulties when it comes to writing. Therefore, it is better not to have desks for practicing pronunciation if there are oral activities in the classroom and the students do not have to write during the exercises.

The third one is called “semi-circular seating structure”. It is often used for small groups. The teacher sits “in the middle of the open end of the U-shape” (Dörnyei and Murphey 2009: 81). These authors (2009: 81) point out that “this arrangement allows students to have direct visual contact with each other to increase communication”. For this reason, this arrangement is really useful for communication since children are close to one another. However, it reinforces the status of the class leaders because most of the students will attempt to communicate with them. Moreover, teachers can close the circle “to increase the self-organising ability of the group” (Dörnyei and Murphey 2009: 81).

The fourth one is named “circular seating structure”. In this arrangement, the teacher is included in the group and it avoids leadership. According to these scholars, “the circle seating structure fosters interpersonal attraction and involvement” (Dörnyei and Murphey 2009: 81). Nevertheless, learners are anxious because of not having their
desks. Some investigations have found that this kind of imposed intimacy can be negative for the feelings of students, besides they usually try to speak with the learners who are opposite to them. Furthermore, learners who are sitting close to teachers try to interact more than learners who are far from them. For this reason, teachers who use this arrangement should change the location of their students or change their own position in the circle.

The last one is called “ad hoc cluster of chairs/desks”. This arrangement is useful “for building student autonomy and responsibility”. Students are divided in different small groups and interaction is produced inside these groups. Furthermore, teachers are not present in the small groups, so they do not interfere in the students’ primary communication networks. However, this arrangement also needs movable furniture and a lot of space for its best use.

Moreover, Dörnyei and Murphey (2009: 83) notes that students’ interaction is worse with extreme temperatures, dark and dull colours, poor lighting, and ugly aesthetics in the classroom. Besides this, teachers should also create a movement policy in the classroom, because learners who are sitting in the same seat for a long period of time start to think that they own their seats. In this way, students are only comfortable if they are in their own seats. However, if they change their seats every day or with every activity, they will feel comfortable anywhere in the classroom, having a good relationship with their classmates and a more relaxed atmosphere will be created. Furthermore, the students’ proximity with their teachers is important for their interaction, so this mobility would improve communication and sociability (Dörnyei and Murphey 2009: 83-84).
Finally, teachers should think about the organization of the classroom. This is also a resource that teachers have to use, and not only does it include the classroom but also the students. In order to improve students’ pronunciation there are a lot of possible activities. So teachers should change the classroom layout depending on the activities they are doing. If an activity requires the teacher as a model, it appears that the “semi-circular seating structure” or the “traditional teacher-fronted seating structure” are the most appropriate arrangements because all students can see their teacher. If the activity demands an interaction among the students, the “ad hoc cluster of chairs/desks” seems to be the best option because small groups allow the students to communicate efficiently.

7.2. Reading aloud

There is no doubt that speaking English is really difficult for Spanish Primary School students. When students try to speak, either they cannot think of what to say or they cannot find the grammatical structures they need. However, if a student is reading aloud, he only has to focus on understanding the text and in pronouncing well.

Liangguang Huang (2010: 149) examines this issue in his “Reading Aloud in the Foreign Language Teaching”:

Reading aloud is a kind of comprehensive practice of pronunciation. The material for reading aloud is the passage with certain content and circumstances. Not only should we pronounce every word properly, but we should divide the meaning groups correctly, arrange the pause based on the content. Meanwhile, we should apply suitable stress, intonation and rhythm. Therefore, reading aloud is a very good pronunciation practice. Our students come from many places of the country, some of them have strong local accent. Reading aloud can help them correct their dialect effectively.

Although this text refers to Chinese learners, from this information teachers can draw general conclusions about reading aloud. Teachers should use this resource in some activities because pronunciation is easier for students if they do not have to think about anything else. Furthermore, a proficient pronunciation can help students to understand the text better if they apply the stress, the intonation, and the rhythm suggested.
In “How to Teach Speaking”, Thornbury (2005: 70) points out that reading aloud “is the natural ‘next step’ between writing and speaking” and that “learners can focus on lower level features of talk, such as pronunciation, without the added pressure of always having to plan the next utterance”. He (2005: 70) also notes that it is a form of scaffolding and it “should gradually be dismantled so that learners are finally having to cope on their own without the security of the written text”. However, Thornbury also explains that people do not need reading aloud in real life, so it is not a reflected activity in children’s lives. Nevertheless, he concludes that it is useful for improving speaking skills such as pronunciation. He also points out that reading aloud can improve stress and intonation. Finally, Thornbury (2005:70) refers to a useful technique, called “sound scripting”, which was created by Mark Powell with a view to preparing scripts that has to be read aloud:

1. Give the learners a short text to ‘chunk’ - i.e. to decide where pauses would naturally fall, and with what effect. What is important is knowing at what point in a run to pause. Powell argues that pausing after the key content words in a text can be very effective.
2. Learners then highlight the stressed words in each chunk, especially where these serve to mark a contrast.
3. Learners then indicate the sequences of words which could be emphasized by a slower, more deliberate delivery [...].
4. Learners practise delivering the prepared text and then perform the same operations on a text of their choice.

Furthermore, reading aloud is a good way of learning how to pronounce new words. When people speak a language they usually say words they know. Nevertheless, when a person reads aloud he finds new words and he has to ask his teacher (or look up the word in a dictionary) in order to find the proper pronunciation. Therefore, teachers and students of Primary School Education can use this resource in order to improve their pronunciation skills and to practise without having to interact with other people. Moreover, teachers should provide students feedback while they are reading aloud in the classroom and correct them during or after doing the activity. Besides different books and stories, children can also read nursery rhymes or poems aloud which help them to improve rhythm and intonation.
7.3. Textbooks

Textbooks are used in most classrooms. It is widely recognised that they have a lot of resources for students and they are reliable and user friendly, but they are inadequate for some learners because they are not adjusted to the level and interests of every student.

After studying some textbooks for learning English in Primary School, I have decided to analyse the series of textbooks called Bugs World illustrated by MacMillan.

Read and Soberón (2009) designed two different books for the first two grades, one was with black and white photographs and the other one in full colour pictures and drawings. Both have six units with seven lessons about animals, colours, food, actions, etc. They also have a review story every two units. These review stories have vocabulary about these previous units. Furthermore, they have three special units for Halloween, Christmas, and Easter, in addition to a Picture Dictionary, a CD with some listening and songs, and some cut-outs. These textbooks also provide teachers with some materials: flashcards and wordcards about the vocabulary, story cards, teacher’s notes, the two textbooks converted in electronic books, and a DVD with stories, and extra material. The activities of these books are really big and enjoyable for children. Furthermore, below every page, teachers can find some extra activities.

Concerning pronunciation, there are also some pronunciation activities teachers can use in class. There are mainly activities in which children have to “listen, sing and point” or listen and say. In these activities students should listen to the songs several times in order to imitate the pronunciation. Teachers should ask their students to listen to the songs at home in order to learn them. Teachers can find approximately about four songs or chants per lesson plan. There are also activities (for instance, “What’s my word”) where children have to play with their classmates pointing at some drawings about the vocabulary and saying the words.

Although there are not many pronunciation activities, teachers can create their own materials thanks to the extra material that is included in the textbook for this purpose. For example, teachers can use flashcards for presenting the words. In this activity, teachers say all the different words two or more times while students listen to them. After that, teachers say the words and they ask their learners to say the word the flashcards illustrate. Students can also use the minibook, which is a cut-page with the unit’s story, in order to say the story to their teacher. Finally, at the end of every unit,
teachers can use the Picture Dictionary for revising the vocabulary; students say the vocabulary items and teachers correct them.

Papiol and Toth (2009) designed eight units per grade for the third and fourth grade books. Every lesson plan has also seven lessons. The pictures are smaller and every exercise contains more information than the previous ones. There are three extra lesson plans: Christmas, Pancake Day, and Wold Book Day in the third-grade book; and Bonfire Night, Christmas, and Easter in the fourth grade. They also include a CD, some stickers, a Picture Dictionary, a *minibook*, some cut-outs, and other resources similar to the previous books.

Regarding pronunciation, Papiol’s and Toth’s books include more activities than Read and Soberon. Every lesson plan has about two songs which can be learnt by students. There are also exercises where learners have to describe actions or vocabulary, listen to and read a story (they can also read aloud it,) and ask their classmates about it. Reading and listening to a story is a good activity because children can listen to it before reading aloud, so they can try to imitate it and consequently improve their pronunciation. Activities where children have to ask their classmates or say actions are really interesting. Firstly, learners can listen to the CD, listen to their teacher, and then say the words or sentences.

However, the most appropriate activity about pronunciation is “Bug Phonics”, where students have to listen to some words and repeat them. It is located in the sixth lesson of every unit in both books (Pupil’s book and Activity book). Phonemes are highlighted within the words. On figure 24 there is an example of “Bug Phonics”, where learners learn to say the /ɛə/ diphthong.  

Figure 24: Example of a “Bug Phonics” activity (Papiol and Toth 2009: 31)

The fifth grade book- Read and Soberón (2009) - and the sixth grade book - Papiol and Toth (2009) - contain eight lesson plans each one, besides the three extra lesson plans: Halloween, Christmas and Carnival in the fifth-grade books and Christmas, and New Year, Valentine's Day and April Fool's Day in the sixth-grade
book. Pictures and exercises are also smaller than the previous books and contain extra material similar to them. The most remarkable difference is that the book also includes a grammar booklet with grammar explanations because there is a grammar point in every unit called "Grammar Bug” with some exercises before and after.

Concerning pronunciation, every lesson plan has about three songs per unit. Students have to listen and read one story per lesson plan, where teachers can ask their learners to read it aloud. Some units have activities or games where they have to ask, guess, and answer. There are more activities where learners have to listen and read too. They also have an activity where pupils have to ask something using the grammar point and another where students have to read a conversation after listening to it in the CD. Finally, they have a “Bug Phonics” exercise every unit and some activities where learners, have to answer some questions orally.

There are also books for teaching other subjects in English, such as science. One example is Macmillan Natural and Social Science. Sanderson (2011) designed twelve units with the contents of Science subject. There are a lot of big pictures to illustrate every concept, some modelling ideas, and different writing activities. It has a lot of exercises to learn words and some CDs.

When it comes to pronunciation, it can be improved through some activities. Although it is a science book, it contains about four chants or raps per unit (for example, the Nutrients chant, the Food chant, or the Digestive system chant). Students should listen to these songs a lot of times in order to learn new words and how to say them. Furthermore, by singing, they can improve their pronunciation through practice. In this textbook there are some listening comprehension exercises and speaking exercises, where these books give ideas to learners for their explanations.

As I have shown in this section, textbooks include pronunciation activities for the learners. However, teachers have to be aware that there are more resources for improving pronunciation apart from the ones included in textbooks and that learners usually find textbooks boring and part of a routine. Therefore, if teachers use different resources in the classroom, it is probable that learners will find the learning process more attractive.
7.4. Songs and nursery rhymes

It is widely recognised that music can help to teach English to young learners. The use of music in the English Second Language classroom is not new, but it is difficult to find a book which benefits from the study of music.

First of all, it seems that music has psychological benefits. One example is the article on the BBC entitled “The Psychology of Workout Music,” by Tom Stafford, where he explains the benefits of music when people are running. Focusing on education, English Club music claims that music increases motivation in learners because it is stress-free; it alleviates self-consciousness because everyone in the class sings, and errors are unimportant for them. So teachers should ask their learners not only to listen but also to sing. Luckily, songs contain repetitions, so teachers should use them in order to make progress their students’ pronunciation. Repetitions are also stimulating for children because they feel more confident when they know something, finding easier to pronounce a word when they sing. Furthermore, a song is a good context for saying words, for listening to new vocabulary and for using those words before doing it in their life. Besides this, music is good for memorising words because of its structure, tune, rhyme, and rhythm.

Music and language have strong connections such as literature and language. Nevertheless, as Engh (2013) notes there is a disparity between theoretical support and practical application in the classroom. According to Candlin (1992:ix) songs are important in language learning:

To be sure, songs have a place in the classroom for helping create that friendly and co-operative atmosphere so important for language learning, but they can offer much more. They offer insights into the culture and especially the stories and myths of different societies, providing a window into the frames of reference and values of the peoples whose language we are learning.

So these authors consider that music can enhance the learning process in the classroom, they claim that music conveys a variety of cultural issues. Additionally, Engh points out music’s benefits concerning linguistic and communicative competences.

Moreover, nursery rhymes are traditional poems and songs. According to *Cambridge Dictionaries* a nursery rhyme is “a short and usually very old poem or song for young children”. There are some websites about them and teachers will find some examples on the next paragraphs.

On the other hand, sometimes songs change the stress of words. Teachers should be aware of this when it comes to selecting a corpus of songs. There is no doubt that there are a lot of websites with songs for English lessons. The question is which ones are valid and which ones are not. Every song is not useful for every classroom; so teachers have to find different songs for their classrooms because they depend on their students’ interests, vocabulary, level, age... In the following paragraphs teachers will find different websites that include a number of English songs.

One example of websites where teachers can find songs for children is the *British Council*. In its *Learn English Kids* section teachers and children can listen to different songs in “Listen and watch”[22]. All these songs are simple and contain a lot of repetitions. Besides, songs also contain video clips, so children can watch cartoons while they sing. In this website they can also find different stories to listen to.

The *British Council* has also an account on YouTube[23] where it uploads different videos and playlists with songs and nursery rhymes, such as “Old McDonald” or “We’re going to the zoo”.

*Songs for Teaching*[24] is a website with a lot of songs organised around topics: action songs, alphabet, animals, calendar, weather and seasons, categories, clothing, colours, etc. Teachers have to click on the title of a song to go to the lyrics of that song, and after that they have to click on “Listen to This Song”. Songs have a good audio quality and they are easy to understand and learn.

Apart from that, *Eslcafe*[25] is another website where teachers can find some ideas for using different songs. This website, which is run by teachers, is one of the most innovative websites about music and English as a second language. The main idea for *Eslcafe* is to teach English through music. It avoids the typical activities with songs, using other tasks. However, not all the activities are designed to improve learners’ pronunciation. *Eslcafe* has only ideas, therefore teachers will have to look for the songs on the Internet in order to use it.

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Teachers can find some examples of nursery rhymes on a website called Nursery rhymes\textsuperscript{26}. Their nursery rhymes are uploaded on YouTube as video files and organized in playlists, but children and teachers can listen to them in the website at the time they follow the lyrics. Those lyrics are organised in the same order in which they appear in YouTube and it is easy to follow these songs. These videos have different cartoons in order to illustrate the nursery rhymes. One example from this website is the popular song “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star”, which has been played a 40,000,000 times.

Another example of nursery rhymes and songs is Mother Goose Club\textsuperscript{27}, where there is another YouTube playlist with different videos. Below the playlist, teachers can find a lot of titles of songs and nursery rhymes and one, two, or three different options. All the songs have the option of clicking on “Kids Page”, where children can listen to the song they have selected. When they click on this option, they will automatically listen to the song and they will find the lyrics. Those lyrics are enjoyable because they are inside a digital book.

Furthermore, some songs and nursery rhymes in Mother Goose Club have two more options. If teachers click on “Parents Page” close to the song they have selected, they will find the lyrics for the recorded song and sometimes other versions of the lyrics. They will also find the historical background of the song, so they can know more about it. The last option, “Sheet Music” is included in most of the songs. Those music sheets include the title, the main voice, the two accompaniment piano voices, the different guitar chords, and the lyrics of the songs. Teachers, who know music, especially piano and guitar, can create different games with songs thanks to this sheet music. So this may be the most complete website about songs and nursery rhymes.

\textsuperscript{26} \url{http://www.nurseryrhymes.com/} (Accessed 19 June 2013)
\textsuperscript{27} \url{http://www.mothergooseclub.com/} (Accessed 19 June 2013)
Another website about nursery rhymes is *Mama Lisa’s World,*\(^{28}\) where teachers can find a lot of traditional songs which are sung around the world. Teachers can look for songs from the USA or from the United Kingdom. For example, if they look up songs from the UK they will also find four options: England, Scotland, North Ireland, and Wales. There are a lot of nursery rhymes in every country, having 330 songs from the USA and 97 from England. Apart from lyrics, this website provides users with scores, a Midi tunes, a MP3 recording, and video recordings.

However, older kids (10-12) have different tastes in music. There is little doubt that they prefer pop or rock songs to children songs. These songs are easy to find, but teachers have to make a selection in order to choose their didactic activities. On *ESOL courses*\(^{29}\) teachers can find different songs with listening and comprehension activities. *Someone like you, What a Wonderful World, I Will Always Love You or Don’t Worry, Be Happy,* are some of the songs which can be found in this website.

The last option is to look for songs directly on YouTube, where teachers can find a number of nursery rhymes for children. “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes”\(^{30}\) or “Old MacDonald Had a Farm”\(^{31}\), are some examples of all the videos teachers can find on YouTube.

Nevertheless, it does not matter how many songs or websites teachers know, the most important thing is how teachers use these songs in order to improve their learners’ pronunciation. First of all, it is important to choose meaningful songs for the children, that is, songs that are related to their experiences. A 6-year-old child likes different songs from an 8-year-old child or a 10-year-old child because their interests change as they grow up. Furthermore, songs should be listened to a lot of times if teachers want to use them as a pronunciation tool. The main reason is that people who do not know music have to listen to a song before being able to sing it. And when pupils are listening to a song, the main model is the song. Learners will try to imitate the pronunciation of the singer.

Generally, when teachers introduce a song, they do pre-listening activities with different tasks. One of these activities is to teach some vocabulary items which are in the song. Thus, teachers should focus on the pronunciation of these words too and ask their learners to repeat them (drilling). Students from 10 to 12 years old will be able to

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\(^{30}\) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_D-kBCmUew (Accessed 20 June 2013)

\(^{31}\) http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O4RNIUrLLH0 (Accessed 20 June 2013)
read the lyrics aloud before or after listening to the song. However, if learners read the lyrics aloud before listening to the song, they will understand the song before listening to it. Thus, after this, they will not be able to do a listening comprehension activity.

After that, learners should listen to the song and identify its sentences and its meanings. This is not easy for young learners. They should also complete a task per listening. Finally, learners should sing the song. This is possible only if the song has been listened to several times, because they should sing it with their best pronunciation. They can also read the lyrics aloud after listening to the song.

However, teachers usually use more songs with young learners (6-9 years old) and it is more enjoyable to sing different songs. There are websites which explain how to teach pronunciation through songs. For example, Rock On ESL\(^{32}\), gives teachers advice about what to teach with different songs: vowels, different consonants, etc.

Another example is On Between Us Bilingual\(^{33}\), where teachers can find five steps for teaching pronunciation with songs: 1. Find what the song reminds you of and link the song to a personal experience; 2. Read the lyrics’ translation while you listen to the song and analyse it; 3. Read the lyrics at the same time you listen to the song; 4. Read the lyrics aloud imitating the original song and correct yourself listening to the song; and 5. Read the text with the same rhythm as the singer. Although these five steps may be useful for adult beginners, they probably do not work with Primary School students. It is an excellent example of a resource which is not valid for a Primary School classroom. Having seen this example, it appears that not only teachers have to select their songs in order to do their lessons, but they also have to think about the tasks and resources they will use with these songs.

Another way of presenting a song to young children in order to improve their pronunciation is to listen to a song two or three times. After that, teachers should sing a part of the song (it can be, for instance, a line) and ask their learners to repeat them. In this way, pupils will pay more attention to their teacher’s pronunciation. When they have done it with the verse and the chorus, they will be able to read the song aloud or to sing it. Certainly, the better pronunciation the teacher has, the more effective this activity will be.


Finally, learners can read poetry as well as songs. J. Whitehead recommends teachers in *English Without Accent*\textsuperscript{34} to read poems aloud because they often have the same rhythm and words have identical sounds to other in terminal sounds. J. Whitehead also advises learners to follow eight steps in with poems:

1. Read and listen to the poem.
2. Check with your dictionary any words that you do not know and learn.
3. Make a note of words which sound alike but are spelt differently.
4. Listen to the poem for the second time, but quietly say aloud the words yourself as you go through it. Practice any words which were difficult to say.
5. Listen for the third time the poem, reinforcing everything which you have learnt.
6. Listen to the poem without looking at the words this time.
7. Read the poem yourself without hearing the words.
8. You can download the poem and listen to it at other times and it is a good idea to learn the words and say them as you hear them, remembering the spellings of the words.

To sum up, songs, poetry, and nursery rhymes are good resources in order to teach pronunciation because they motivate learners. They are also useful for the purpose of listening to some vocabulary words in a context, and they can be a way to learn how to pronounce some words and sentences. Nevertheless, words in songs sometimes have a different stress and intonation because of the tone and rhythm of the music. Therefore, teachers should use songs where stress and intonation are right in order to use them as reliable pronunciation resources.

### 7.5. Drills

Drills are good resources for learning English Pronunciation. Tice writes on *Teaching English: Drilling 1*\textsuperscript{35} from BBC Council that *drilling* “is a technique that has been used in foreign language classrooms for many years. It was a key feature of audio lingual approaches to language teaching which placed emphasis on repeating structural patterns through oral practice”.


\textsuperscript{35} http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/articles/drilling-1 (Accessed 12 June 2013)
As Moon (2005: 1) claims in *Children Learning English* “both first and second language children are not just imitating what they hear like parrots, but are working out how the language system operates”. Tice also writes that “nowadays we know that language learning is not like this - it is a far more complex and creative process - and language is a lot more than just a list of structures to be memorized”. Therefore, teachers have to know that *drilling* isn’t a method, it is just a technique to practise the language, but it does not mean that the language is being understood.

However, if teachers are teaching how to pronounce a word or a sentence, this is a good way of doing it. Another author, S. Thornbury (2005: 63-64) claims, for example, that:

Gaining control of the speaking skills involves practicing that control. But the notion of practiced control need not rule out the value of some mechanical and repetitive practice activities of the type traditionally associated with drilling. Drilling - that is imitating and repeating words, phrases, and even whole utterances - may in fact be a useful noticing technique […]. Drilling may also function to move new items from working memory into long-term memory, just as we tend to memorize new pin codes or telephone numbers by repeating them a number of times.

For this reason, drilling is a good resource in order to learn the pronunciation of words or sentences, but teachers should also show the utility of the word or sentence which students are learning. If a teacher is teaching the first ten numbers by drilling, students will have to repeat and repeat all of them as many times as they need. Nevertheless, students must know what do the numbers mean, where can they use them. It is not useful to learn something without knowing in which contexts they can use it. *Teaching English*\textsuperscript{35}, gives this other definition of drilling:

[…] drilling means listening to a model, provided by the teacher, or a tape or another student, and repeating what is heard. This is a repetition drill, a technique that is still used by many teachers when introducing new language items to their students. The teacher says (models) the word or phrase and the students repeat it.

Hence, drilling can be a good way for providing new vocabulary to children. *Teaching English* also explains that drilling can be useful for learners. It provides “a
focus on accuracy” because repetitions improve the pronunciation of the words, “provide learners with intensive practice in hearing and saying particular words or phrases” and “provide a safe environment for learners to experiment with producing the language” just by repeating they cannot make a mistake in the language, which is really relaxed for students. Drilling also helps “students notice the correct form or pronunciation of a word or phrase” because the repetitions make the student distinguish the word better and provides “an opportunity for learners to get immediate feedback on their accuracy in terms of teacher or peer correction”. It aids “memorisation and automisation of common language patterns and language chunks” in consequence of the number of repetitions; and meets “student expectations” too.

How can teachers use all this knowledge about drilling? Drilling may be boring for children, so a good way of using drilling is through games or through other resources.

Drilling can be used with flashcards. When teachers are going to present new vocabulary, they should say the word at the same time they show the picture of the flashcard. After this, teachers can use drilling, asking their students to repeat the vocabulary words. In this way, children will link new lexicon with their meaning and their pronunciation as the same time. Drilling can also be used after listening to songs, after reading a text, or after any activity which has some interesting words or sentences to learn.
8. Conclusions

First, it is important to take into account that English is usually a difficult language to learn due to the fact that words are pronounced in a different manner than they are written. This is why it is important to take a thorough look at what teachers and learners can do to improve their pronunciation.

Second, for that reason, I have included some resources for teachers in order to improve their pronunciation. Nowadays, it is easy to find attractive and useful resources on the net and there are a lot of websites with resources about pronunciation. Teachers should learn phonetics and phonology through books and websites in order to analyse English pronunciation and to be able to improve their own. Online dictionaries and pronunciation dictionaries can also help the teachers’ performance when they do not know how to pronounce a word because dictionaries include audio recording of most words. However, teachers who know phonetics and phonology can read phonetic transcriptions and they can make the most out of dictionaries.

Furthermore, teachers have to select these resources depending on their needs because every resource has its own function. However, such is the number of resources on the Internet that teachers have to accept that there are some useless and misleading materials. It is important to check out well-known websites (BBC, the British Council, etc.) because they have reliable online resources.

Luckily, nowadays teachers have better opportunities than ever because we live in a digital era and they can find native people to speak with in English for free without being on the United States, the United Kingdom, or another English-speaking country. This is possible thanks to conversation exchange websites and videocalls.

Furthermore, teachers can record their own voice and listen to it if they use audio editor programmes. These programmes also allow recording the sound we listen to in our computers. These two ideas can inspire teachers to do a number of activities.

Third, there are several pronunciation resources for learners as well. They can either be used in the classroom or as extra materials outside the classroom. Nevertheless, these resources have to be extremely reliable if we aim at learning pronunciation. This is the same as to say that teachers have to be sure that their resources are appropriate for their learners and they have to practise them themselves before, if possible. This is extremely important for teachers because they are responsible for their learners’ knowledge.
Moreover, it is important to note that textbooks which contain some pronunciation activities are reliable but they are not the only resources that can help learners to improve their pronunciation. Teachers can easily find songs, poetry, and nursery rhymes in websites. In this way, they can choose songs depending on their learners’ interests and they can select some stories in order to read them aloud. They can also use drillings in order to teach how to pronounce some common words or sentences, without forgetting that there are other factors such as the arrangement of the classroom or motivation, which have to be taken into consideration when children are learning pronunciation.

And finally, teachers and learners need to practise in order to achieve a correct pronunciation. All the teachers who teach English or other subjects in English should have a proficient level of English because they are models for their learners. Therefore, teachers should do their best in order to achieve this goal. If teachers do not have a good pronunciation it is almost impossible for their Primary School learners to reach it by themselves.

To conclude, teachers have to improve their own pronunciation in order to improve, in turn, that of their young students.
9. References


Annex 1: Audio configuration

For recording the output sound (which is to say the sound you listen to in your computer) you have to change your sound configuration.

If you have Windows XP, you should follow the instructions explained in Pixel Metrics\textsuperscript{36}.

\textsuperscript{36} \url{http://pixelmetrics.com/Tips/AudBlank/index.php}

Figure 26: Control Panel
If you have Windows Vista or Windows 7, you have to open your Control Panel (“Panel de control”) and click on Sounds and audio devices (“Sonido”). You also can do it going down to the audio icon. After this, as you can see on figure 27, click on “Recording” (“Grabar”). Then, right-click on the window area and notice if you can “view disabled devices” (“mostrar dispositivos desconectados”).

Figure 27: Devices (I)
By default, the “Microphone” (“Micrófono”) is enabled and the “Stereo Mix” (“Mezcla Estéreo”) disabled. Right-click on “Microphone” and disable it, then right-click on “Stereo Mix” and enable (“Activar”) it (see figure 28).

Figure 28: Devices (II)
Finally, as you can see on figure 29, you should have the “Stereo Mix” enabled, so your output sounds will be able to be recorded by Audacity or other softwares.

Figure 29 Devices (III)

For recording our voices, we only have to do the same process disabling the Stereo Mix and enabling the Microphone.