

Research article

The presence of pronunciation activities in English textbooks for Primary Education: A mixed-method study

La presencia de actividades de pronunciación en los libros de texto en Educación Primaria: Un estudio mixto

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Abstract

Introduction: A careful analysis of the market for English textbooks for Primary Education in Spain reveals that, despite its breadth and variety, pronunciation teaching does not receive significant attention. In fact, it has often been neglected in favour of more traditional skills. **Methodology:** This mixed-method study employed a concurrent design, using a ten-question questionnaire developed by the researcher and validated by several experts. The sample consisted of textbooks from eight publishers, half Spanish and half international. The main objective was to identify how different publishers approached pronunciation activities in their textbooks. **Results:** The researcher conducted a Kruskal-Wallis test of the ten questions, analysing the results from the eight publishers for each question. The null hypothesis assumed that there was a normal distribution of data, while the alternative hypothesis posited that the means were different for each question. **Discussion:** The findings of this study confirm the research hypothesis, demonstrating that the publisher's place of origin influences how pronunciation is treated in the textbooks. **Conclusions:** We examined how publishers included

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pronunciation in the textbooks. The study shows a clear relationship between the publisher's country of origin and the emphasis placed on pronunciation in the textbooks.

Keywords: English; Kruskal-Wallis test; mixed study; Primary Education; pronunciation; publishers; questionnaire; textbooks.

Resumen

Introducción: Una mirada atenta al mercado de libros de texto de inglés para Educación Primaria en España revela que, aunque el mercado es amplio y variado, la enseñanza de la pronunciación no destaca por su tratamiento. De hecho, se ha descuidado en favor de otras destrezas más tradicionales. **Metodología:** Este estudio ha sido de carácter mixto, realizando una investigación de diseño concurrente mediante un cuestionario de diez preguntas elaborado por el investigador y validado por varios expertos. La muestra examina ocho editoriales, la mitad españolas y la otra mitad internacionales. El objetivo era identificar cómo trataban las editoriales las actividades de pronunciación en sus libros de texto. **Resultados:** El investigador realizó una prueba de Kruskal-Wallis de las diez preguntas y los resultados de las ocho editoriales para cada pregunta. La hipótesis nula afirmaba que existía una distribución normal de los datos, mientras que la hipótesis alternativa afirmaba que las medias eran diferentes. **Discusión:** Los resultados de este estudio confirman que el lugar de origen de la editorial influye en el tratamiento de la pronunciación en los libros de texto examinados. **Conclusiones:** Hemos examinado cómo las editoriales incluyen la pronunciación en sus libros de texto, afirmando que existe una relación directa entre el país de origen y el tratamiento dado a la pronunciación en sus libros de texto.

Palabras clave: Inglés; prueba de Kruskal-Wallis; estudio mixto; Educación Primaria; pronunciación; editoriales; cuestionario; libros de texto.

1. Introduction

Although pronunciation is essential for effective oral communication and plays an important role in learners' social lives, it has often been relegated to the background in English language teaching, especially in Primary Education. While the communicative approach has shifted its objectives, English language teaching remains largely literacy-focused, often neglecting pronunciation in the classroom.

In many cases, teachers do not know how to integrate pronunciation into their lessons and lack the necessary methods, strategies, and training to effectively teach it. As a result, teachers base their classes on developing other skills, such as reading or writing, while often neglecting pronunciation, a key element for clear communication.

In this way, we can detect certain deficiencies in the oral expressions of students who consider pronunciation one of the most problematic areas in language acquisition. Thus, various studies have highlighted that, in general, teachers feel unprepared to teach pronunciation because of insufficient knowledge or experience in English phonetics (Beltrán, 2017; Fernández, 2009).

This study examined the presence of pronunciation activities in English textbooks for Primary Education in Spain. We selected this topic because, despite the importance of phonetics in English language learning, pronunciation teaching remains an overlooked area in Primary Education classrooms in our country.

Despite innovations and changes implemented in foreign language teaching and the importance currently placed on the communicative approach, pronunciation has yet to gain a solid presence in the classroom. As mentioned earlier, this may be partly due to teachers' uncertainty about how to integrate it into their lessons, and partly due to the lack of appropriate tools for introducing it into the classroom. Furthermore, very few teaching methods available on the market specifically address pronunciation development in Primary Education students, with a couple of exceptions (Beramendi & Cosentino, 2019).

Consequently, the general objective of this study was to assess the inclusion and treatment of pronunciation activities in some of the most widely used English textbooks in Primary Education in Spain. To achieve this, eight representative textbooks, one from each publisher, were randomly selected and examined using a questionnaire based on a dichotomous scale (yes/no).

1.1. Theoretical framework

Even at the risk of omitting some important studies, we made a representative selection of the scientific literature on the subject matter under study. In a mixed-methods study, the theoretical framework tends to be broader, incorporating multiple approaches and perspectives to achieve a deeper understanding of the research phenomenon.

To this end, we focused on scrutinising the existing scientific literature by Spanish authors, as they have explored the role of English textbooks in Primary Education in Spain. Our review included not only journal articles and book chapters, but also doctoral theses, final degree projects, and master's dissertations to create a diverse and comprehensive selection.

The inclusion of phonetics, rhythm, stress, and intonation in Royal Decree 157/2022 on 1st March, which establishes the minimum teaching standards for Primary Education in Spain following the approval of the LOMLOE, alongside the attitudinal shift towards a more communicative approach in English teaching, is gradually increasing the presence of pronunciation in English classrooms at the Primary Education level.

However, this shift has not yet resulted in a significant increase in the inclusion of pronunciation activities in Primary Education textbooks. One possible reason is that publishers may not have had sufficient time to incorporate all the necessary modifications. Similarly, although some national studies on English textbooks for Primary Education exist, very few have specifically focused on the inclusion of pronunciation. Therefore, in this section, we analysed previous studies on Primary Education English textbooks, with a clear focus on the inclusion and treatment of pronunciation activities.

One of the first studies was conducted by Bazo and Peñate in 1999, with the aim of analysing English textbooks for Primary Education. These authors were pioneers in examining the organisation of the contents in textbooks. In this sense, they noted that, in terms of oral production of simple messages, students were not expected to engage in communication beyond scenarios that had already been practised with the teacher and classmates. Given the publication date of the article, while they addressed oral expressions, they did not focus on the inclusion of pronunciation in the textbooks.

Studies from 2000 to 2010

Another noteworthy article, although applied to a different educational stage, was published by Jiménez in 2003, who presented the results of an evaluation of a corpus of English textbooks for Early Childhood Education. The author analysed 14 textbooks from five publishers using an evaluation model that did not include pronunciation.

As the author mentioned, “our model of analysis is inspired by the proposal of McDonough and Shaw, who recommend two phases: external evaluation and internal evaluation, in addition to a final global assessment” (Jiménez, 2003, p. 239). We observed that Jiménez’s comparative study focused on the analysis of content and the appropriateness of materials, without addressing the presence of pronunciation in the textbooks.

The study conducted by Criado and Sánchez in 2009 aimed to analyse whether the textbooks they selected aligned with the methodological regulations of the period. They were the first to examine a finite sample of textbooks, although their focus was primarily on their communicative nature. Moreover, they included textbooks from various educational stages but examined only one randomly selected unit from each book, rather than the entire book. As they noted: “All the activities in these units have been analysed and contrasted against the communicative feature specified” (Criado & Sánchez, 2009, p. 7).

Studies from 2010 to 2020

A few years later, an article by Leganés and Pérez (2012) evaluated Primary Education English textbooks from a musical perspective. The authors conducted a historical review of different teaching methods, highlighting how music could enhance English learning by offering a more holistic education. Unlike our study, Leganés and Pérez focused on English textbooks from only three publishers, specifically targeting 3rd Primary, rather than 1st Primary as in our case. As they stated, “the aim of this study is to find out how music is used in Primary English textbooks to promote English language learning” (Leganés & Pérez, 2012, p. 116).

This was also the first study we consulted that addressed the inclusion of pronunciation. In their discussion of results, the authors noted that musical activities were employed to reinforce learning in each unit, particularly in terms of vocabulary and pronunciation. A final degree project developed by Lisbona in 2014 examined the inclusion of basic skills in Primary Education English textbooks. In this case, the author analysed four different textbooks, focusing on the types of tasks and the number of skills included. However, pronunciation was not one of the parameters under observation.

One year later, González (2015) published an article in which she assessed the suitability of textbooks for teaching and learning English, although her focus was on adult education. The author selected three pre-intermediate English textbooks for adults, stating that “the main criterion for their selection lies in the representativeness of the material from the last two decades” (González, 2015, p. 346). However, her study did not evaluate the presence of pronunciation as one of the parameters.

In 2016, two articles analysing textbooks were published in the same journal, though only one focused on English language teaching. Malla’s article examined the role of material selection in the teaching-learning process, specifically at the secondary level. However, she acknowledged the inclusion of phonics, stating: “The course should be as varied as possible, including the teaching of vocabulary, grammar, phonics, functions, and promoting the integrated use of the four skills” (Malla, 2016, p. 715).

The author also emphasised the evaluation of how skills were presented, ensuring an equitable distribution of all skills, and analysed whether they were integrated or taught separately for pedagogical purposes.

Additionally, in 2016, Laorga's master's dissertation conducted a comparative analysis of textbooks in the area of English as a foreign language, although at a different educational level, Early Childhood Education. The author examined seven different textbooks across various parameters (design, method, activities, content, assessment, and curriculum), including pronunciation, although the focus on pronunciation was not explored in depth.

An article specifically analysing Primary Education English textbooks was published by Menescardi et al. in 2017. The authors examined five collections of English textbooks from five publishers for the third cycle of Primary Education in Spain, covering the period between 2006 and 2014. However, the study focused exclusively on analysing 1,774 images related to body stereotypes, without addressing linguistic elements, including pronunciation.

In 2018, a final degree project similar in nature to this study was completed by Herrero. He compiled information on English textbooks for Primary Education from different periods to explore how their methodological principles evolved and explain the reasons for this evolution.

Using qualitative methodology, the author analysed the changes in textbook methodology through content analysis. Unlike our study, Herrero's research did not solely focus on the types of activities, including pronunciation, unit procedures or material, but also examined the roles of teachers and students.

More recently, in 2019, Gris published an article that established a clear relationship between skills and activities in Primary Education textbooks, a topic closely aligned with our study. The author analysed nearly 2,000 activities extracted from ten widely used English textbooks for Primary Education in Spain, aiming to assess the pedagogical nature of these activities. However, his research did not specifically address the inclusion of pronunciation activities but instead focused on the typology of those activities.

Another final degree project (Caviedes, 2019) analysed the presence of cultural elements in English textbooks for third-year Primary Education students, based on a set of criteria. Furthermore, the author examined only four textbooks from different publishers, but did not include pronunciation in the analysis.

Studies from 2020

A book chapter published in 2021 by Sánchez evaluated textbooks for Primary Education based on a series of principles chosen by the author: learnability, utility, engaging/disposable content, thematic continuity, and objectives.

A unique aspect of this study is that it involved undergraduate students analysing four textbooks, with the researcher responsible for collecting and analysing all the data. The study primarily focused on the correlation between the textbook and the students' level, rather than on the inclusion of pronunciation activities.

Viscarolasaga's master's dissertation (2021) also examined Primary Education English textbooks through the CLIL approach. The author developed a rubric to assess general and CLIL aspects but did not include pronunciation in the analysis of four different textbooks.

This omission may have been due to the nature of the subjects being non-language topics taught through the foreign language, where the main focus was on content acquisition rather than correct pronunciation.

The study by Fernández Sesma et al. (2023) evaluated an experimental program that implemented podcasts as supplementary material outside the classroom, with an emphasis on promoting vocabulary and pronunciation learning. The results revealed a significant improvement in pronunciation and vocabulary acquisition among students in the experimental group, who significantly outperformed those in the control group.

We must mention a doctoral thesis presented by Guerra at the University of La Rioja in 2023. The author analysed and compared the contents of English textbooks for Primary Education, highlighting possible quantitative and qualitative differences in the vocabulary used. Therefore, the inclusion of pronunciation in the analysed books was not considered.

Finally, it is worth including a study closely related to this one, conducted by Caleffi (2023), which deals with the teaching of English pronunciation in the primary classroom and is based on several key premises. First, the global status of English has prompted a shift in pronunciation teaching from the attainment of a native accent to the achievement of mutual intelligibility. Second, the school population is characterised by a growing number of multilingual pupils and of non-native teachers of English.

The study analyzes three English coursebooks used in primary education to examine the types of pronunciation-focused activities they suggest, the support they provide to teachers for effectively implementing these activities, and whether they reflect a trend toward the early inclusion of ELF-aware pronunciation pedagogy.

2. Methodology

The review of the theoretical framework has revealed a wide variety of studies on the use of textbooks across different educational stages. However, not all of them focus specifically on Primary Education. Moreover, few studies have examined the inclusion of pronunciation in English textbooks. This study aims to address this gap, as it remains an unresolved issue. Therefore, in this section, we outline the research design, objective and hypothesis, sample, instruments, and procedure for data collection and analysis.

2.1. Methodological design

The research design serves as a strategy to achieve the research objectives. Therefore, Creswell (2021) defined mixed research as a methodology in which the researcher combines quantitative (closed) and qualitative (open) data, integrating both to draw inferences that offer a broader perspective than type of data alone. A fundamental premise of this approach is that merging statistical trends (quantitative data) with personal experiences (qualitative data) enhances understanding of the research problem compared to using a single dataset.

Ortega (2023) also argued that mixed research naturally complements both qualitative and quantitative research, recommending the combination of these methods to leverage their strengths while minimising their weaknesses. This allows the researcher to gain a more comprehensive view of the research problem.

In our research, we employed a concurrent design within the mixed methods framework, according to the classification made by Hernández Sampieri et al. (2018). This design enables the integration of multiple perspectives and approaches in the same research, facilitating the simultaneous collection of qualitative and quantitative data for a more complete and enriching understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

The independent variable was the selection of eight textbooks, one for each publisher, while the dependent variable consisted of the ten items or questions included in the questionnaire. Moreover, ethical considerations are fundamental in any research, including mixed methods studies. Therefore, key ethical considerations for this research included privacy and confidentiality, data protection, transparency, and honesty (Arnal et al., 1994).

2.2. Objective, Research Question, and Hypothesis

The main objective of this study was to determine how different publishers incorporate pronunciation activities in their textbooks, following a framework established by the researcher. To frame this research objective, it is essential in mixed research to consider the subject matter of the study and use a combination of approaches. Based on this objective, we formulated the following research question: “Which publishers place the most emphasis on pronunciation in their textbooks?”. The concurrent design facilitated the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data to identify the factors influencing the treatment of pronunciation.

Our research hypothesis posits a direct relationship between the publisher’s country of origin and the treatment of pronunciation in English textbooks. The concurrent approach we used enabled a deeper exploration of the relationship between these two variables. After conducting a normality test of the instrument and subsequent validation, we established both a null hypothesis and an alternative hypothesis to determine the validity of our findings. In this context, the null hypothesis states that the obtained data have a normal distribution, with equal item means indicating no relationship between the variables. Conversely, the alternative hypothesis asserts that the data do not follow a normal distribution, the item means are not equal, and there exists a relationship between the variables.

2.3. Participants

According to Hernández Sampieri et al. (2014), the population is defined as the entire set of units of study. In mixed research, both the population determination and the sampling process are crucial for ensuring the representativeness and validity of the results obtained. Population determination involves identifying the group of elements that are the focus of the study, based on the predefined research objective and question. The sampling process entails selecting an adequate sample that accurately represents the study population.

Considering the concurrent mixed design employed, we opted for mixed sampling, which includes selecting a representative sample through random sampling (a sample from each publisher) and specific cases through purposive sampling (based on the most recent publication date criteria). Therefore, we randomly selected a representative sample according to the following criteria:

- Textbooks intended for the first year of Primary Education, as methods are more clearly and effectively implemented at this initial level. This is probably because the complexity and difficulty of the language taught are lower than those at more advanced levels.

- The representativeness of textbooks was a key consideration in the selection process. To meet this criterion, we gathered information from the publishers and syllabi. Our sample was, by necessity, a convenience sample chosen randomly given the high number of textbooks available in the market. Thus, we selected one textbook from each publisher based on the publication date.

However, we believe that the sample selection process reasonably reflects the teaching material used for Primary Education. The selected sample included, therefore, the following titles (n=8): “Be Curious” (Cambridge University Press), “I Wonder New” (Edebé), “Bright Academy Stars” (MacMillan), “All About Us Now” (Oxford University Press), “I Can Shine” (Pearson), “Go Far” (Richmond), “English for Plurilingual Schools” (SM), and “Young Star Plus” (Vicens Vives). Most of these titles were published in 2022, with the exception of the last two titles.

We did not apply Fischer and Navarro’s (1997) formula for sample selection, as our criterion was not for inclusion, but for creating a representative random sample. However, as Gómez-Núñez et al. (2020) state, the number of participants is not inherently linked to their representativeness but rather to the potential information they can provide. Had we used such a formula or considered the sample size for a proportion of a finite population (30), we would have needed to examine 28 textbooks, which was clearly not feasible.

2.4. Data collection instruments

Selecting the appropriate research instrument was crucial for gathering the necessary information to achieve the objectives outlined at the beginning. In this study, the instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire, which García defined as “a system of rational questions, ordered in a coherent way expressed in a simple and understandable language” (2015, p. 29).

For this study, the questionnaire was developed by the researcher in three distinct phases. In the first phase, items were crafted to facilitate various analyses regarding the relationship among different questions. The initial phase comprised 15 items/questions.

The second phase focused on assessing the characteristics of the questionnaire and establishing the external validity of the instrument. For this purpose, validation was conducted by three experts in the field, who provided quantitative ratings on a Likert scale ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) for the following aspects: clarity of the questions, appropriateness of the terms used, relevance of the items, and pertinence of the questions. In addition, qualitative feedback was requested from the experts to gather their insights on each item, as such assessments are essential for validating and adjusting an instrument (Bulger & Housner, 2007) as shown in table 1.

Table 1.*Evaluation Criteria followed by experts*

Question	Quantitative Criteria				Qualitative Criteria
	Clarity	Appropriateness	Relevance	Pertinence	Comment
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					

Source: Expert-validated questionnaire (Juan Rubio & García Conesa, 2023).

In the third and final phase of the questionnaire design, an analysis of the various contributions from the experts was conducted. Based on their suggestions and feedback, appropriate modifications were made to the instrument, which was finally structured into ten items. This final structure adhered to the content validity ratio (CVR) model proposed by Lawshe, a statistical method used to assess whether an item is essential in a questionnaire. As a result, the questionnaire was designed in an eclectic manner to collect dichotomous data, offering only two response options (where Yes=1 and No=0) as follows:

Table 2.*Questionnaire*

QUESTIONS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Does the book include a pronunciation section?								
2. Is there a pronunciation section in the table of contents?								
3. Does the teacher's book include pronunciation didactics?								
4. Does the book include pronunciation activities in each unit?								
5. Does it include pronunciation activities at the end of the book?								
6. Is pronunciation given the same importance as other skills?								
7. Does the method include extra material to work on pronunciation?								
8. Are segmental aspects worked in each unit?								
9. Are suprasegmental aspects worked in each unit?								
10. Are pronunciation activities included in the exams?								

Source: Own Elaboration. Legend: 1- Cambridge University Press. 2- Edebé. 3- MacMillan. 4- Oxford. 5- Pearson. 6- Richmond. 7- SM. 8- Vicens Vives.

To mitigate any potential negative effects of the questionnaire application, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was employed to assess the internal consistency of the instrument, resulting in a value of 0.79. This indicates that the instrument demonstrates a high level of reliability, suggesting that the questionnaire possesses strong internal consistency and stability in its measurements. The following table provides a summary of the reliability assessment of the questionnaire.

Table 3.

Reliability of the questionnaire

Number items	Sum of item variance	Total instrument variance	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
10	0.84375	2.25	0.79444

Source: Own Elaboration.

2.5. Data collection procedure

The data collection procedure consisted of three phases: exploratory, fieldwork, and information processing. The exploratory phase involved preliminary research aimed at clarifying the research procedure to establish the foundation for fieldwork. In this phase, we defined the objectives of our research and conducted a theoretical and methodological review. Additionally, we selected the instrument to be used and identified the sample for examination. The second phase was entirely focused on conducting fieldwork.

Here, we implemented the theoretical framework developed in the previous phase, allowing sufficient time for data collection. This phase involved completing the questionnaire based on data from the eight randomly selected textbooks. To facilitate this, we created a template for entering the data obtained from each publisher, which was subsequently transferred to an Excel spreadsheet.

Finally, the third phase involved the evaluation, understanding, and interpretation of the empirical data in conjunction with the theoretical framework underlying our study. This analysis took place after all data had been obtained. In this phase, we performed a descriptive analysis of the variables, expressed in terms of frequency.

2.6. Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted using Microsoft Excel, a statistical data processing software offered by Microsoft. The procedure involved preparing an Excel spreadsheet, entering data from each publisher, and subsequently processing the data statistically. For our study, we employed descriptive statistics to calculate the means and standard deviations.

To determine which hypothesis was valid (null or alternative), we performed a normality test of the instrument. For this purpose, we applied the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test, which assesses the degree of agreement between the distribution of the data set and a specific theoretical distribution. The calculated Kolmogorov-Smirnov value (Ks c-value) was 0.3252, while the Kolmogorov-Smirnov table value (Ks t-value), representing the maximum permissible error, was 0.2869. The standard deviation was 1.6035, and the p-value obtained was 0.0159. Since the Ks c-value exceeded the Ks t-value, and the p-value was lower than the significance level, we rejected the null hypothesis, indicating that the data did not follow a normal distribution. Consequently, we opted to use a non-parametric test.

These data were also corroborated by the Ryan-Joiner test. With the same standard deviation of 1.6035 and a p-value of 0.0135, the calculated Ryan Joiner value (RJ c-value) was 0.8363, while the Ryan Joiner table value (RJ t-value) was 0.9029. In this case, since the RJ c-value was lower than the RJ t-value, and the p-value remained below the significance level, we again rejected the null hypothesis.

The significance level was set at 0.05 for both tests. Therefore, our research hypothesis was validated: there is a relationship between the publisher's country of origin and the treatment of pronunciation in their textbooks, as the data obtained did not follow a normal distribution.

Table 4.

Kolmogorov-Smirnov & Ryan-Joiner tests

Value	t-value	p-value	Test
0.3252	0.2869	0.0159	Kolmogorov-Smirnov
0.8363	0.9029	0.0135	Ryan-Joiner

Source: Own Elaboration.

Second, to conduct an inferential analysis and assess the differences among the eight publishers, we applied the coefficient of variation (CV) to the different items. The following table presents the variance of each item along with the calculated coefficient of variation for the entire instrument:

Table 5.

Coefficient of variation

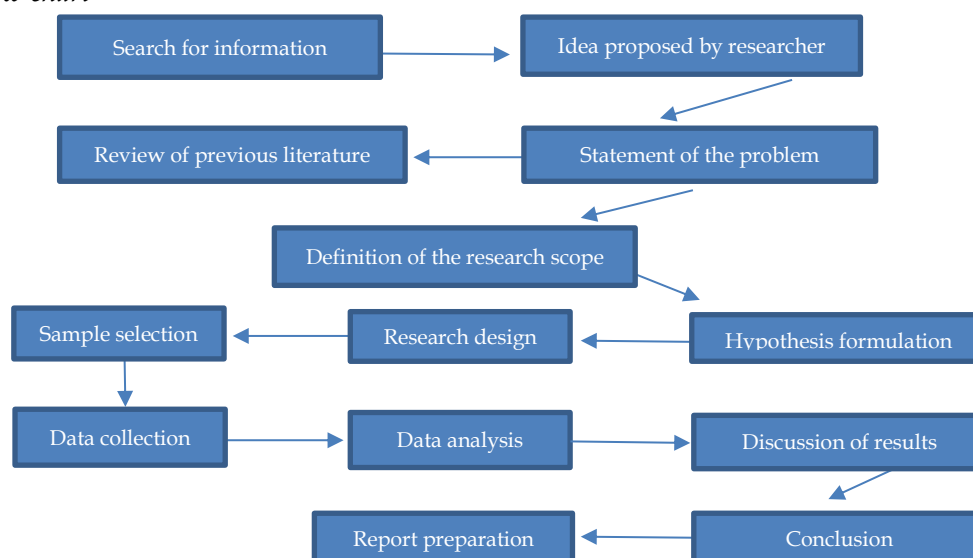
Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6	Item 7	Item 8	Item 9	Item 10	CV
0	0.109375	0.25	0	0	0.25	0.234375	0	0	0	0.904534

Source: Own Elaboration.

Finally, since the p-values obtained from both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Ryan-Joiner normality tests were lower than the significance level (0.05), we employed a non-parametric test for further analysis of the results. Therefore, we conducted an inferential analysis using the Kruskal-Wallis test, a rank-based method suitable for assessing statistically differences between the items or questions. The entire research process can be summarised in the following flowchart.

Figure 1.

Research flow chart



Source: Own elaboration (2024).

3. Results

The results derived from the analysis of the questionnaire used for this research are presented by analysing each question individually. For each question, in addition to the quantitative data, we also focused on the conclusions regarding how each publisher addresses pronunciation. The eight publishers examined were those currently offering English books for Primary Education, consisting of four Spanish publishers (Edebé, Richmond, SM, and Vicens Vives) and four international ones (Cambridge, Oxford, MacMillan, and Pearson).

To conduct the analysis of the material, we considered the entire package, which included not only the students' textbooks but also all the teacher's material. It is also important to note that we did not infringe upon copyright in any way, as we did not reproduce the books in whole or in part, and the analysis was conducted strictly for research purposes. Then, we performed a cluster analysis, beginning with the overall results and then focusing on each item individually. A checklist was created to generate a score for the analysis of each publisher. The scale used to evaluate the dichotomous questions was 0-1, where 0=No and 1=Yes.

Starting with the overall questionnaire results, we conducted a Kruskal-Wallis test on the ten questions, analysing the results from the eight publishers for each question. The Kruskal-Wallis H-test is a non-parametric, rank-based test used to determine whether there are statistically relevant differences between groups of an independent variable on an ordinal or continuous dependent variable.

It is a generalisation of the Wilcoxon rank-sum test, allowing the comparison of more than two samples to assess whether the results of a test are significant in rejecting the null hypothesis or accepting the alternative hypothesis. The null hypothesis stated that the data followed a normal distribution, with equal means for each question. On the other hand, the alternative hypothesis proposed that the means were different for each question, as expected. The following table shows the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test.

Table 6.*Kruskal-Wallis Test*

Question	Total	Sum	Error	Deviation	Sum of Ranks	Ranks Squared
1	8	8	0	0	468	27378
2	8	7	0.125	0.35355339	428	22898
3	8	4	0.18898224	0.53452248	308	11858
4	8	8	0	0	468	27378
5	8	0	0	0	148	2738
6	8	4	0.18898224	0.53452248	308	11858
7	8	5	0.18298126	0.51754917	348	15138
8	8	8	0	0	468	27378
9	8	0	0	0	148	2738
10	8	0	0	0	148	2738

Source: Own elaboration.

Similarly, this method also allows for comparing means to determine whether differences exist between pairs. If the calculated H-value exceeds the critical value, it indicates a significant difference between pairs, supporting the alternative hypothesis that not all mean scores are equal. In this case, the calculated H-value was 38.6666667, while the critical value was 16.9189776, indicating a significant difference in how pronunciation is treated by publishers based on their place of origin, as predicted by our research hypothesis. Other relevant test values included a sum of ranks (3240), and a sum of ranks squared (152100).

Moving into the analysis of each question individually, the first question asked whether the book included a pronunciation section. This was one of the few questions in the questionnaire where all eight publishers responded affirmatively, as shown in the table.

Table 7.*Question 1 Statistical Differences*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mean	1	0.875	0.5	1	0	0.5	0.625	1	0	0
Sample difference	-	0.125	0.5	0	1	0.5	0.375	0	1	1
Result	-	<	>	<	>	>	<	<	>	>
Evidence	5 significant differences, 4 non-significant differences									

Source: Own elaboration.

The second item asked whether a pronunciation section was included in the table of contents. For almost all publishers, regardless of origin, the answer was affirmative, except for the Spanish publisher, Edebé, where the response was negative. The following table presents the results for the second question.

Table 8.*Question 2 Statistical Differences*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mean	1	0.875	0.5	1	0	0.5	0.625	1	0	0
Sample difference	0.125	-	0.375	0.125	0.875	0.375	0.25	0.125	0.875	0.875
Result	<	-	<	<	>	<	<	<	>	>
Evidence	3 significant differences, 6 non-significant differences									

Source: Own elaboration.

The third question asked whether the teacher's book included didactic materials for pronunciation. This item revealed a clear distinction in responses based on the origin of the publisher. In this case, the four international publishers answered affirmatively, while the four national publishers responded negatively.

Table 9.

Question 3 Statistical Differences

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mean	1	0.875	0.5	1	0	0.5	0.625	1	0	0
Sample difference	0.5	0.375	-	0.5	0.25	0	0.125	0.5	0.5	0.5
Result	>	<	-	>	>	<	<	>	>	>
Evidence	6 significant differences, 3 non-significant differences									

Source: Own elaboration.

The fourth question was another where all publishers agreed on the answer. When asked whether the book included pronunciation activities in each unit, all publishers responded affirmatively. However, there was a noticeable difference in the extent of inclusion. For the national publishers, the inclusion of pronunciation activities was tokenistic, whereas the international publishers provided more comprehensive pronunciation activities.

Table 10.

Question 4 Statistical Differences

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mean	1	0.875	0.5	1	0	0.5	0.625	1	0	0
Sample difference	0	0.125	0.5	-	1	0.5	0.375	0	0.5	0.5
Result	<	<	>	-	>	>	<	<	>	>
Evidence	5 significant differences, 4 non-significant differences									

Source: Own elaboration.

For the fifth question, which asked whether the book included pronunciation activities at the end, we received the same response from all publishers, although this time it was negative. None of the eight publishers, regardless of origin, included pronunciation activities at the end of the book.

Table 11.

Question 5 Statistical Differences

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mean	1	0.875	0.5	1	0	0.5	0.625	1	0	0
Sample difference	1	0.875	0.5	1	-	0.5	0.625	1	0	0
Result	>	>	>	>	-	>	>	>	<	<
Evidence	7 significant differences, 2 non-significant differences									

Source: Own elaboration.

The sixth question asked whether pronunciation was given the same importance as other skills. This item highlighted a clear division between the national and international publishers. None of the Spanish publishers gave pronunciation the same importance as other skills, whereas the international publishers showed a more balanced inclusion of pronunciation.

Table 12.*Question 6 Statistical Differences*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mean	1	0.875	0.5	1	0	0.5	0.625	1	0	0
Sample difference	0.5	0.375	0	0.5	0.5	-	0.125	0.5	0.5	0.5
Result	>	<	<	>	>	-	<	>	>	>
Evidence	6 significant differences, 3 non-significant differences									

Source: Own elaboration.

For the seventh question, we obtained an unexpected result. When asked whether the method included extra material to work on pronunciation, the four international publishers responded positively, as anticipated. However, one of the national publishers, Edebé, also included extra pronunciation materials in its manual, which was surprising. In contrast, the other three national publishers did not provide such materials.

Table 13.*Question 7 Statistical Differences*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mean	1	0.875	0.5	1	0	0.5	0.625	1	0	0
Sample difference	0.375	0.25	0.125	0.375	0.625	0.125	-	0.375	0.625	0.625
Result	<	<	<	<	>	<	-	<	>	>
Evidence	3 significant differences, 6 non-significant differences									

Source: Own elaboration.

The eighth question asked whether segmental aspects were addressed in each textbook unit. All publishers responded positively. However, similar to the fourth question, the treatment was uneven. While the national publishers worked on segmental aspects, their approach was more oblique compared to that of the international publishers.

Table 14.*Question 8 Statistical Differences*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mean	1	0.875	0.5	1	0	0.5	0.625	1	0	0
Sample difference	0	0.125	0.5	0	1	0.5	0.375	-	1	1
Result	<	<	>	<	>	>	<	-	>	>
Evidence	5 significant differences, 4 non-significant differences									

Source: Own elaboration.

Finally, we obtained the same results for the last two questions. For both the ninth question, which asked whether suprasegmental aspects were addressed in each unit, and the tenth question, which inquired whether pronunciation activities were included in the examinations, all publishers responded negatively to both questions, as shown in the following tables.

Table 15.*Question 9 Statistical Differences*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mean	1	0.875	0.5	1	0	0.5	0.625	1	0	0
Sample difference	1	0.875	0.5	1	0	0.5	0.625	1	-	0
Result	>	>	>	>	<	>	>	>	-	<
Evidence	7 significant differences, 2 non-significant differences									

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 16.*Question 10 Statistical Differences*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mean	1	0.875	0.5	1	0	0.5	0.625	1	0	0
Sample difference	1	0.875	0.5	1	0	0.5	0.625	1	0	-
Result	>	>	>	>	<	>	>	>	<	-
Evidence	7 significant differences, 2 non-significant differences									

Source: Own elaboration.

4. Discussion

After validating the ten items of the questionnaire, following the recommendations of the three experts, and applying Lawshe's content value ratio (CVR) model based on the experts' assessments, and after entering the data from the textbooks of the eight publishers, this section presents the analysis of the results obtained.

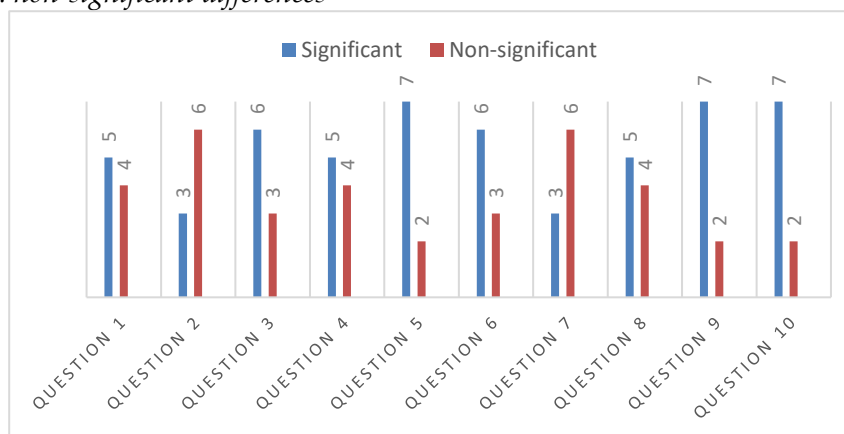
When evaluating a textbook, a distinction has traditionally been made between predictive and prospective evaluations. The former aims to evaluate teaching materials *a priori* to determine whether they are fit for purpose, while the latter is conducted after the materials have been used to assess their suitability for the specific teaching-learning process.

However, since the objective of our study was to determine how publishers considered pronunciation activities in their textbooks, not whether they were fit for purpose, we only applied a predictive evaluation, as the materials have not yet been used in the Primary Education classroom. Therefore, we limited ourselves to collecting data from the eight publishers based on our direct participant observations from the questionnaire.

The findings of this study confirm our research hypothesis. The place of origin of the publisher, whether national or international, influences the treatment of pronunciation in the textbooks examined. We not only examined the inclusion of pronunciation activities in the textbooks but also, more specifically, the importance given to them and how they are approached in the method. Almost all the questions in the questionnaire showed significant differences in the statistical analysis, as illustrated in the figure.

Figure 2.

Significant vs. non-significant differences



Source: Own elaboration.

Similarly, from a descriptive point of view, all the textbooks included a pronunciation section in each unit, focusing on segmental aspects (vowels or consonants). However, none of them featured pronunciation activities at the end of the book, nor did they address suprasegmental aspects (stress, rhythm, intonation). This omission may be explained by the educational stage we are dealing with, where attention is typically not given to suprasegmental aspects, which are more often addressed in Secondary Education.

However, the key difference between publishers lies in the remaining questions in the questionnaire. These questions revealed variations in treatment according to the origin of the publisher. International publishers tend to place greater emphasis and importance on pronunciation, whereas national publishers remain hesitant to give pronunciation equal weight compared to other skills.

This distinction becomes particularly clear in questions that specifically address how pronunciation is treated rather than its mere inclusion. Thus, for example, when asked whether the teacher's book included teaching resources on pronunciation, we found that all international publishers did, while none of the national publishers offered such resources. Similarly, when asked whether the textbooks gave pronunciation the same importance as other skills, all international publishers did, but none of the national publishers did.

Regarding the method, the results can be extrapolated to questions such as whether the method provided extra materials for teaching pronunciation, or whether it included pronunciation activities in the proposed exams. In all these cases, the results were consistent: all the international publishers included these elements, while none of the national publishers did. Therefore, the publisher's origin is a key variable in the treatment of pronunciation in textbooks.

To further triangulate the validity and reliability of this study, we compared our results with those of previous studies. After analysing eight Primary Education textbooks from eight different publishers, this study found that the publisher's origin, whether national or international, influenced the treatment of pronunciation in the method.

Gris' study shared some items with ours in determining the importance given to pronunciation in textbooks, as well as the inclusion of pronunciation activities. The author classified pronunciation activities according to their cognitive components as explicit, implicit, or mixed. The main difference with our study was that Gris did not focus on a single primary school year but examined the entire stage, and pronunciation activities were not the primary focus of the study. The author concluded that Primary Education English teachers should not overlook the unique characteristics of different types of activities.

Laorga's study also considered the inclusion of pronunciation activities in textbooks, though it was not the sole focus. Pronunciation was analysed alongside other parameters such as design, method, content, and assessment. Moreover, with a sample size similar to ours, the author focused on the Early Childhood Education stage. Nevertheless, the author acknowledged that the emphasis on phonics was crucial, as it supported children's future pronunciation, one of the foundations for speaking the language correctly. Besides, the inclusion of pronunciation activities was a feature our study shared with Malla's. However, her study focused on establishing appropriate criteria for the correct selection of textbooks, particularly for Secondary Education.

Finally, another element of our questionnaire, which asked whether suprasegmental aspects were addressed in textbooks, related to the study by Leganés, who explored the relationship between music and English learning. Leganés argued that music enhances and accelerates English learning by integrating both segmental and suprasegmental aspects. Among her conclusions, she noted that when children sang songs to learn the English alphabet, they were not only memorising words but also incorporating melody, thereby engaging with suprasegmental aspects.

5. Conclusions

Several significant conclusions can be drawn from the review conducted in the theoretical framework. First, most of the publications focused on the Primary Education stage, which is also the focus of our research, although five studies examined other educational stages. Second, more than half of the publications reviewed were articles or book chapters from scientific journals, while the remainder were master's dissertations, final degree projects, or doctoral theses. Finally, we found that only four studies specifically addressed pronunciation, although none focused on its inclusion in textbooks. This fact lends validity to our study because of its originality, among other aspects.

In our study, the objective was to determine how different publishers approached the treatment of pronunciation activities in their textbooks. To address this objective, we selected a random sample of eight textbooks from different publishers. The answer to this objective came with the establishment of our research question, where we examined how publishers included pronunciation in their textbooks, with our research hypothesis that there was a direct relationship between the publisher's country of origin and the treatment of pronunciation in their textbooks.

To conduct this research, we applied a concurrent design within a mixed-methods approach, which allowed us to combine different perspectives and methodologies to comprehensively identify the main factors influencing the treatment of pronunciation. We also used a mixed sample type, in which the final sample was randomly selected.

The instrument used was a questionnaire consisting of ten dichotomous questions (YES=1 and NO=0), developed by the researcher and validated externally by three experts, following Lawshe's content validity ratio model. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was also tested after obtaining Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which indicated high consistency of the instrument based on the descriptive data.

Subsequent data analysis using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test led us to conduct a non-parametric statistical test. We selected the Kruskal-Wallis test (H-value), which provided sufficient data to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. This analysis demonstrated that the hypothesis was valid, the publisher's country of origin influences the treatment and inclusion of pronunciation in the textbooks.

To teach English pronunciation in Primary Education, it is essential to create a fun and motivating learning environment. It is recommended to use songs, rhymes, stories, games, and interactive activities to help children become familiar with the sounds of English in a natural and enjoyable way. Additionally, repetitive practice, language immersion, and exposure to native speakers through various resources are key to improving pronunciation. Songs, rhymes, and nursery rhymes are particularly effective for introducing children to English sounds, as they are often repetitive and easy to remember.

One of the most effective methods for teaching pronunciation is repetitive practice. This technique, widely used in language instruction, is ideal for reinforcing the correct pronunciation of words and phrases. Repetition aids memorisation, helping students internalise and automate accurate pronunciation patterns.

Frequent exposure to spoken English is also crucial for improving young learners' pronunciation. Hearing the language regularly is the only way to train the ear and become accustomed to sounds that may differ significantly from those in the learner's native language. English contains many consonant clusters that can be initially challenging, but the key to mastering them is to hear them pronounced correctly multiple times. When these sounds are heard in meaningful, exciting, or entertaining contexts, learners are more likely to retain the phonological patterns and apply them effectively in their own speech.

However, there are two main limitations to this study. On the one hand, in the analysis of the theoretical framework, we limited our review to studies published by Spanish researchers focused on English textbooks for Primary Education in Spain. In the future, this approach could be expanded to include studies from a wider range of countries. On the other hand, due to spatial limitations, the representative sample of English textbooks was restricted to eight out of the 30 currently available textbooks on the market. If we were to apply the sample size formula for a finite population, we would need to analyse 28 books, which would be unfeasible for a single study. Therefore, a larger sample of textbooks should be examined in future research to further corroborate our hypothesis.

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