Instructing rhythm and other suprasegmentals in the Spanish class in Australia

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Acknowledgements

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Spanish in Australia

- 117,498 people in Australia speak Spanish as a L1 (0.5% of the population) (ABS Quickstats 2011).
- Spanish is taught at
  - 265 pre-university establishments (~16,000 students) (MECD 2012:58-59).
  - 20/39 Australian universities (MECD 2012: 60).
- Growth language at university (MECD 2012: 61).
- Part of the second block of languages for the New National Curriculum for pre-university studies. *Development for the National Curriculum: Languages policy* (January 2011 - ACARA)
The situation of pronunciation teaching and learning

- **Neglected area**
  - (Aurrecoechea 2002; Elliott 2003; Llistterri 2003; Morin 2007; Usó 2009; MacDonald 2002; Derwing and Munro 2005; Celce-Murcia et al. 2010).

- “Learners ... tend to consider pronunciation instruction as very beneficial”
  - (Barrera 2004: 12; Lord 2005: 565; Steed and Delicado Cantero 2014b).

- Teachers agree, but have other difficulties (Delicado Cantero and Steed 2014b)
  - Lack of appropriate materials.
Some known obstacles for Spanish

Aurrecoechea (2002); Poch (2004); Usó (2009); Orta (2009), Delicado Cantero and Steed (2014 b):

1. **Misconceptions:**
   1. Spanish pronunciation is ‘easy’.
   2. Prioritisation of grammar and vocabulary.
   3. Pronunciation is spelling, reading, not suprasegmentals.
   4. Teaching pronunciation needs phonetics.
   5. Pronunciation is learned just by speaking, not explicit teaching.
   6. Pronunciation is learned best visiting a Spanish-speaking country or with native speakers.

2. **Lack of:**
   1. Materials.
   2. Integration in the curriculum.

3. **Fear of frustration.**
Error classification

1. Sounds not occurring in either L1 or L2
2. Contrasting phonemes in one language are allophones in the other
3. Distributional differences (position or combinations)
4. Slight differences in articulation
5. Suprasegmental differences - rhythm, stress and intonation

(See Mellado 2012: 32-33)
Goals

- Intelligibility and comprehensibility (Derwing and Munro 2005: 385)

Comprensibility: “The extent to which a listener actually understands an utterance”.
Intelligibility: “A listener’s perception of how difficult it is to understand an utterance”.
No to nativism: the main goal is not to be sound exactly like a native.

- Mellado (2012: 19) (see Underhill 1994; Chun 2002):

“una producción sonora inteligible, dentro de lo correcto (con valores escalares y no absolutos), próxima a la de una variedad nativa, socialmente aceptable y tolerada sin dificultad por parte de los interlocutores nativos”.

“an intelligible oral production, within the limits of correctness (with scalar rather than absolute values), close to a native variety, socially acceptable and tolerated without difficulty by native interlocutors” [My translation, MDC].
### Assessment

#### PHONOLOGICAL CONTROL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>As C1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Can vary intonation and place sentence stress correctly in order to express finer shades of meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Has acquired a clear, natural, pronunciation and intonation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Pronunciation is clearly intelligible even if a foreign accent is sometimes evident and occasional mispronunciations occur.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Pronunciation is generally clear enough to be understood despite a noticeable foreign accent, but conversational partners will need to ask for repetition from time to time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Pronunciation of a very limited repertoire of learnt words and phrases can be understood with some effort by native speakers used to dealing with speakers of his/her language group.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Users of the Framework may wish to consider and where appropriate state:

- what new phonological skills are required of the learner;
- what is the relative importance of sounds and prosody;
- whether phonetic accuracy and fluency are an early learning objective or developed as a longer term objective.

*CEFR, p. 117*
Steed and Delicado Cantero (2014a)

## Fair Dinkum L2 Spanish in Australia by the book

### The problem:
1. **Spanish in Australia**: While Spanish teaching in the United States is a well-established field, it is still maturing in Australia. Due to the absence of materials aimed at the Australian English-speaking market, problems arise immediately addressing L2 Spanish pronunciation in a pronunciation course, as the models and examples are aimed at an audience with a different language background.
2. **The role of prosody**: Prosodic information is not always present in the textbooks as thoroughly as current research (e.g., Gil 2007, 2012) deems necessary for appropriate L2 proficiency and comprehensibility.

### Approaching a solution:
This study reviews five well-known textbooks for pronunciation courses in order to measure the appropriateness to the Australian university classroom context (not their quality). We focus on two main aspects:
1. **Phonological and phonetic content (segmental and suprasegmental):**
2. **Level appropriateness for Australian university learners of Spanish:**

#### Results:
1. Coverage is good in most segmental aspects but is insufficient in suprasegmentals. The use of US English as model creates issues.
2. **Difference in background - Australian students would benefit from a less technical textbook.**

### Table of Pronunciation Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Segment</th>
<th>Vowel</th>
<th>Place of Articulation</th>
<th>Palatalization</th>
<th>Nasalization</th>
<th>Voice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Front</td>
<td>Back</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Silent</td>
<td>voiced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilabial</td>
<td>Alveolar</td>
<td>Palatal</td>
<td>Postalveolar</td>
<td>Voiced</td>
<td>voiceless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dento-alveolar</td>
<td>Postpalatal</td>
<td>Postalveolar</td>
<td>Voiced</td>
<td>voiceless</td>
<td>voiceless</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Diagram

- **Segments**: Most important difficult consonants are covered, except syllable coda /r/. Important vowel contrasts covered, except /e/ as /i/ (from /e/ deletion). Only some comparison of diphthong realizations are present.
- **Suprasegmentals**: Almost all cover intonation and lexical stress to a degree, but not all in detail. Australian students have less exposure to Spanish, so they need more specific instruction, particularly on /b/ and /v/ clarification, /\j/ and /\j/ lowering, /\n/ and /\r/ assimilation, rhythm, etc.
- **Linguistics background**: Some (e.g., Piléros) assume more metalinguistic awareness than Australian students without specific linguistic instruction. Varying levels of American focus in examples.
- **Assumed knowledge of Spanish**: Typically higher than that of Australian students, who have a shorter major than North American students. Textbook is not in depth enough.
See Steed and Delicado Cantero (2014a)
Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)

Knowledge of content
Knowledge of students
Knowledge of pedagogy

Ideal teaching

Shulman (1986)
Context

- Thematic course, monographic
- Sounds of Spanish
- 3 contact hours per week
- Open to students with at least 3 semesters of Spanish (Continuing Spanish I at ANU)
- Materials for Australian students
- Previous analysis of AUS English to find negative transfer (esp. v US English); different types of errors, with different effect on intelligibility
Resources for creation and development of teaching materials for Spanish


cvc.cervantes.es
# Praat: doing phonetics by computer

## Download Praat:
- Macintosh
- Windows
- Linux, FreeBSD
- SGI, Solaris, HP/UX
- the source code

## Information on Praat:
- Introductory tutorial: choose Intro from Praat's Help menus.
- Extensive manuals and tutorials: in Praat's Help menus.
- Beginner's manuals by others.
- Paul Boersma's publications on algorithms and tutorials.

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## Questions, problems, solutions:
1. Many problems can be solved by upgrading to version 5.4 of Praat.
2. Make sure you have read the Intro from Praat's Help menu.
3. If that does not help, use the Search button in Praat's manual window.
4. Or consult the Frequently Asked Questions directly.
5. There is a user group on the Internet: the Praat User List.
6. If none of the above helps, you may send mail to paul.boersma@uva.nl.
Steps

1. Sensitization
2. Explanation
3. Perception training
4. Imitation
5. Controlled practice
6. Free practice

(Mellado 2012: 34)
Segmental model

-Production of the /r/ phoneme in the syllable coda
Steps

1. Sensitization, explanation and perception training
2. Imitation of controlled samples
3. Practice in controlled dialogues
4. Free practice – generalization into conversation
Perception + imitation

- Perdón
- Porque
- Quiero
- Ardilla
- Hermoso
- Parque
- Guardar
- Comer
- Comeremos
- Armar
Perdón, pero no quiero comer carne hoy porque estoy a dieta.
Controlled practice

1. Exaggeration
   poRRRRRRRque
   aRRRRRRte
   caRRRRRta

2. Artificial contexts to “force” the target sound
   por-i-que ... porque
   ar-i-te ... arte
   car-i-ta ... carta
   per-i-dón ... perdón

See Gil (2007)
Controlled practice – maintain the contrast

- Parto - pato
- Termo - temo
- Portable - potable
- Sur - su
Semi-controlled practice

1. Reflexive listening: listen to your recording at the beginning of the class. What do you notice now?
   Awareness raising

2. Let’s record the same text again paying special attention to [ɾ] in the coda. What differences do you notice now?
Free practice

1. Think of activities you like to do:
   * leer novelas de misterio
   * ver series

2. Find someone in the class, etc.
   - ¿Qué te gusta hacer?
   - Me gusta...
   - ¿Por qué?
   - Pues porque...
   - Y a ti, ¿te gusta...?
   ...

Suprasegmentals:

- Rising intonation of Australian English
- Duration and rhythm
Steps

1. Sensitization, explanation and perception training
2. Imitation of controlled samples
3. Practice in controlled activities
4. Free(r) practice - manipulation and generalization into conversation
Sensitization/explanation/perception - Me llamo Manuel, ¿o no?
Controlled practice - Continue the utterance
Freer practice - Praat

Recording:
1. *Me gusta el español*
2. *Vivo en Australia*

Manipulation if necessary:
- *Manipulate-* > To Manipulation > Ok > View&Edit > Pitch > Stylize Pitch (2st)
Duration and rhythm
Steps

1. Sensitization, explanation and perception training
2. Imitation of controlled samples
3. Practice in controlled activities
4. Free(r) practice - manipulation and generalization into conversation
Sensitization/explanation/perception
Long tonic vowels

- Estoy en esta clase para mejorar mi pronunciación
See Lahoz (2012)
Imitation/controlled practice

Fue indiscutiblemente delicioso
Controlled practice

Ramón de Campoamor

En este mundo traítor
nada es verdad ni es mentira.
Todo es según el color
del cristal con que se mira.
Freer practice - Praat

Record + manipulation

Para mejorar mi español
Manipulation
Conclusions

• Attention to specific issues in response to needs of Australian students.

• Segments and suprasegmental content

• Important skill which is commonly ignored in many current L2/FL programs, as research has proven.

• Integration at all levels and with different goals.

• We need to create more activities and work on other languages.
The teaching and learning of pronunciation is undergoing a revival. After years of neglect, a number of scholars in different countries are reclaiming the importance of socially comprehensible pronunciation among all the other necessary skills of a student of any foreign or second language, with attention to segmental and also supra-segmental components, affective and attitudinal issues, new technologies, etc. We want to highlight the importance of this vibrant area and its presence in this part of the world.

This research group combines the efforts and expertise of scholars teaching and working in a variety of languages other than English in Australia – especially European and Asian languages – with the aim of creating the necessary tools to help Australian students to meet the demands of a global, multilingual world.
Our research


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2014 Delicado Cantero, M., W. Steed & A. Herrero de Haro: Pronunciación boca abajo: el español/L2 en Australia, annual conference of the Asociación Española de Lingüística Aplicada (AESLA), UPO, Seville, Spain. 3-5 April.


Selected references

Muchas gracias

Thank you very much!