

Teaching perspectives

Spanish

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Perspective 1: Danielle Daidone

1. Tell us about yourself.

My name is Danielle Daidone, and I am an Assistant Professor of Spanish in the Department of World Languages and Cultures at the University of North Carolina Wilmington.

2. What type of pronunciation course do you teach? What are the goals of that course?

I teach an upper-level course on Spanish phonetics. The goals of this class are for students to be able to talk about basic principles of phonetics and phonology with appropriate terminology, explain how Spanish sounds are articulated and how they are different from English sounds, describe and recognize regional and social variation in Spanish pronunciation, recognize and apply sound-spelling correspondences in their own pronunciation and listening comprehension, use Praat to analyze their own speech and that of others, and recognize features of non-native pronunciation and apply strategies to reduce them.

3. What textbook do you use to teach pronunciation? How do you use it? What are its strengths and weaknesses in your opinion?

I use *Sonidos en contexto* by Terrell Morgan. Students read the relevant chapter and answer comprehension questions targeting the most important concepts before we discuss them in class. I like the descriptions of phonetic realizations and phonological processes, and the explanations of how these differ from English. I also appreciate the inclusion of suprasegmentals, dialectal variation, and orthographic conventions for each phoneme, the explicit connections to real-life Spanish, and many of the practice activities. I often use these practice activities to check students' understanding of the concepts. However, since none of the activities necessitate interaction, I have

also created various information-gap tasks to ensure that intelligible pronunciation is task-essential when students practice applying these concepts. Another strength of the book are its audio resources, which I often play in class and use in their homework, although a wider variety of examples with more speakers would be useful. In terms of additional weaknesses, the book lacks any discussion of acoustic phonetics, such as how to interpret spectrograms, so I add my own explanations and practice with Praat in class. I also prefer to teach the chapters in a different order than they are presented in the book. For example, I think it is best to have students learn the content about vowels before they learn about stress and accent mark placement, since this often depends on whether two sequential vowels form a diphthong or exhibit hiatus.

4. What additional resources do you use to supplement the textbook? Why do you use those resources and how do you use them?

I show students the videos from the [Sounds of Speech](#) website from the University of Iowa to illustrate how sounds in Spanish are articulated. Since the textbook recordings only include a few speakers, I pull short recordings by speakers from different regions from [Audio Lingua](#). These are useful for in-class activities in which students need to identify the dialect and point out what dialect features they hear. In addition, I use [Forvo](#) to find examples of spoken words for perception or transcription activities in class.

5. What is an activity that has worked especially well for you?

I created a map task to practice various Spanish sound-spelling correspondences that can be difficult for English speakers. For this task, the class is divided between Group A and Group B students. Each student has a map with half the blocks unlabeled and a list of places with unknown locations; these unknown locations are the opposite for Group A and Group B. The students are put into pairs with someone from the other group, and they must use street names to explain to their partner where places are located. These street names are minimally different to force students to pay attention to pronunciation, such as *Calle Guede* and *Calle Güede*. Students enjoy doing this task, and it is immediately obvious to me as well as the students themselves what sound-spelling correspondences they need to work on. This task is available from my [website](#), along with an IPA battleship game that I made to practice phonetic symbols and their descriptions.

6. How do you approach pronunciation assessment?

Students are graded on production, perception, and their analyses and reflections on their own speech. For production, these assignments are shadowing tasks, in which students are given a list of words or sentences and a recording of these (which both come from the book), and they must record themselves

speaking at the same time as the native speaker. This provides them with a model and also forces them to speak at a native-like pace. They are then graded on the feature that we have been working on in class; for example, the first recording focuses on having correct sound-spelling correspondences, such as <gi> pronounced as /xi/ and not /gi/. For perception, students do High Variability Phonetic Training (HVPT) exercises on difficult contrasts we cover in class. These assignments require them to listen to a word and choose what they heard from two orthographic options (e.g. hear [kara] and choose between <cara> and <cada>). Each training takes 6–8 minutes to complete, and they receive written and auditory feedback after each trial. They have to reach at least 90% accuracy on the training to receive full credit for the assignment, and the training repeats if they did not reach this threshold. Finally, students do an initial recording at the beginning of the semester, and throughout the semester they analyze their recordings with Praat and compare their speech with the range of productions found for native Spanish speakers. For example, students measure the voice onset time (VOT) for their productions of words beginning with /p t k/ and compare this to the ranges reported for native Spanish speakers of different dialects, including bilingual speakers. At the end of the semester, they do a final recording and analyze and reflect on how their pronunciation has improved over the course of the semester.

Perspective 2: Charlie Nagle

1. Tell us about yourself.

My name is Charlie Nagle. I am an Associate Professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at The University of Texas at Austin.

2. What type of pronunciation course do you teach? What are the goals of that course?

I teach an upper-division Spanish pronunciation course, which has several objectives: to raise students' awareness of their pronunciation and help them improve it; to guide students toward an appreciation of the difference between intelligibility, comprehensibility, and accentedness and the pronunciation features that are most likely to map onto each dimension of speech; and to introduce students to regional variation in Spanish pronunciation.

3. What textbook do you use to teach pronunciation? How do you use it? What are its strengths and weaknesses in your opinion?

I use *Fonética y fonología españolas* by Schwegler and Ameal-Guerra. The book gives an in-depth description of Spanish sounds and prosody, comparing them to English, which makes it a good reference for students. I assign a

chapter and a short comprehension check for each class period. Part of class time is spent on recapping important information from the book, but most of the class is spent on application and pronunciation practice.

The structure of the book has worked well for me. It has three major sections: one on vowels, one on consonants, and one on prosody and variation in the Spanish-speaking world, including Spanish in the US. It also has chapters on phonetic transcription and phonetics and phonology. I appreciate these stand-alone chapters because they create space in the course for us to discuss important linguistic concepts. I introduce phonetic transcription slowly throughout the semester, starting first with vowels because they are relatively simple to transcribe compared to consonants. Then, before we move to consonants, I ask students to read the chapter on phonetic transcription, which presents International Phonetic Alphabet symbols for all Spanish consonants. I make it clear to students that we will learn these symbols slowly over time, but the chapter gives students a sense of where we are going and allows them to study and learn the symbols at their own pace. Another aspect of the book that I like is that it includes images of waveforms. I talk about these images in class and toward the end of the semester I ask students to use Praat to analyze their stop consonant production in Spanish following Olson's (2014a, 2014b) model.

The book goes into a lot of detail, which students can sometimes find overwhelming, so I find it important to have a conversation with students about how they should use the book. The practice activities are a mix of transcription and controlled production exercises. There are also accent-detection activities where the goal is to pick out the pronunciation that is targetlike, according to the standards presented in the book. These activities are certainly useful, but more open-ended, communicative practice activities are missing. Furthermore, the book has a traditional focus, which means that it does not include discussion of the role pronunciation plays in shaping the intelligibility and comprehensibility of Spanish speech.

4. What additional resources do you use to supplement the textbook? Why do you use those resources and how do you use them?

I use [Forvo](#), a pronunciation dictionary where users can upload their pronunciation of a word or phrase, and [YouGlish for Spanish](#), which scrapes YouTube content for a word or phrase and returns a list of video clips with that word or phrase. I use these two resources to showcase variation in pronunciation and to help students improve their own pronunciation. For instance, I have students look up words with syllable- or word-final /r/ on Forvo (e.g., *carta*, 'letter,' *cantar*, 'to sing'), which can be produced as either a tap or trill, and document how the speaker produces it. YouGlish is especially useful for prac-

ticing connected speech phenomena. I ask students to search for words or phrases, find a few models they like, and shadow them. I also source short video clips from YouTube for in-class use (e.g., analyzing pauses and filler words in extended discourse), and I rely on pronunciation learning activities that have been shared and published as teaching tips through the Current Approaches to Spanish and Portuguese Second Language Phonology conference ([2020 materials](#), [2018 materials](#)).

Another important resource I use is Levis' short article on accent, which is freely downloadable from of the [Pronunciation for Teachers website](#). I assign this reading for the first day of class to spark discussion on accent, intelligibility, and comprehensibility, and we return to these concepts throughout the semester.

5. What is an activity that has worked especially well for you?

I run an activity I call *rincón de palabras* ('word corner'). Several times throughout the semester, I ask students to record a response to a question or a prompt. I listen to their response and take notes on words and stretches of speech that I find difficult to understand. I incorporate these words into the word corner activity, where I ask students to break the word or phrase into syllables, transcribe it, look it up on YouGlish, and practice producing it several times. Students like this activity because it is based on what they have produced and gives them a chance to work on individual problem areas.

6. How do you approach pronunciation assessment?

I assess students' pronunciation and offer feedback using several assignments, but I do not grade students based on their pronunciation. I ask students to submit several recordings each semester, and I offer them feedback on their speech using a diagnostic assessment tool. I adapted my version of the tool from a model provided by Mari Sakai, who teaches pronunciation and speech courses in the Legal English program at Georgetown University Law Center.

Supplementary materials for teaching perspectives: Spanish

Sample rincón de palabras ('word corner')

A continuación, hay algunas palabras y frases de su primera grabación que no entendí muy bien la primera vez que las escuché (palabras y frases que presentan problemas de comprensibilidad). Divídelas en sílabas y pronúncialas. Si hay secuencias vocálicas, determina si se debe formar un diptongo o no, y si se forma diptongo, indica la semivocal.

Palabra	División silábica	Notas/corrección
1. La agricultura		
2. Los cultivos		
3. La oportunidad		
4. El futuro		
5. Sanitario		
6. Aunque		
7. Australia		
8. Los koalas		
9. Los ciudadanos		
10. La identidad		
11. Haití		
12. La sociedad		

Elige una de las palabras de la lista de arriba (la que más problemas te cause) y búscala en forvo.com, un diccionario de pronunciación. Escucha los modelos de Forvo y repite la palabra varias veces, intentando imitar la pronunciación de los modelos.

Ahora, busca la misma palabra en YouGlish.com para español. YouGlish te permite buscar una palabra o frase en los videos de YouTube. El buscador rastrea todos los videos en español y te lleva al momento en que se produce la palabra o frase que has buscado. Te ofrece la posibilidad de practicar la palabra en frases o contextos discursivos más amplios.

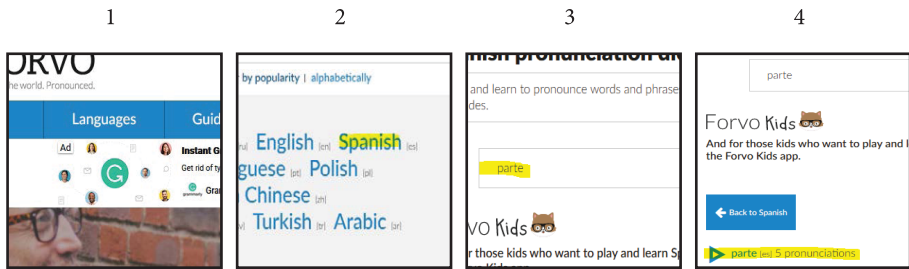
Escucha por lo menos 10 ejemplos de la palabra en YouGlish. Escoge dos de los ejemplos y escríbelos abajo. Repite los ejemplos intentando imitar la pronunciación de la persona.

1. _____
2. _____

Sample activity for the mini-linguistic analysis of the Spanish tap and trill

Pequeño análisis lingüístico de las vibrantes en posición final de sílaba/palabra

Quiero que analices algunas grabaciones de Forvo para descubrir si los hablantes nativos prefieren usar la vibrante simple o múltiple en varios contextos fonéticos. Ve a www.forvo.com, haz clic en la pestaña “Languages” y después en “Spanish”. Busca las siguientes palabras pronunciadas por cada uno de los usuarios a continuación. Ve las imágenes para saber dónde hacer clic.



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The screenshot shows the Forvo website interface for 'parte pronunciation in Spanish'. The page is organized into sections based on accents:

- Latin American**
 - Pronunciation by DonQuijote** (Male from Mexico): 2 votes, Good, Bad, Share.
 - Pronunciation by Pablo2012** (Male from Argentina): 0 votes, Good, Bad, Share.
- Spain**
 - Pronunciation by mayorcatorce** (Male from Spain): 0 votes, Good, Bad, Share.
 - Pronunciation by Milu** (Female from Spain): 0 votes, Good, Bad, Share.
- Other**
 - Pronunciation by martaxugux** (Female from United Kingdom): 0 votes, Good, Bad, Share.

Para la pronunciación de cada palabra, indica lo que percibes, vibrante simple o vibrante múltiple. Si crees que has percibido otro sonido que no sea ni la vibrante simple ni la múltiple, toma nota de esa variante para que la podamos comentar entre todos.

Final de sílaba

Busca “parte”

1. mayorcatorce (España) _____
2. DonQuijote (México) _____
3. Milu (España) _____
4. Pablo2012 (Argentina) _____

Busca “verde”

1. maribe (Argentina) _____
2. gmaranca (Argentina) _____
3. BrujaCarter (España) _____
4. tenpao (España) _____

¿Qué prefieren usar los hablantes nativos en posición final de sílaba? _____

Final de palabra

Busca “ver”

1. DonQuijote (México) _____
2. Steveo4 (Colombia) _____
3. randomlino (Perú) _____

Busca “flor”

1. camilorosa (Chile) _____
2. musaranha (España) _____
3. klinpo (Colombia) _____

¿Qué prefieren usar los hablantes nativos en posición final de palabra? _____

¿Crees que tenemos suficientes datos (suficientes muestras) para nuestro análisis, o debemos buscar más ejemplos?

Recording diagnostic (adapted from a version provided by Mari Sakai)

How I use this diagnostic:

- I first listen to the recording and take general notes on both content and linguistic features. I also pause the recording when I am not sure what the speaker said or am having trouble understanding what the speaker is saying. I list those intelligibility and comprehensibility issues in the corresponding section using timestamps so that the speaker and I can refer back to it and diagnose the issue together (e.g., 2:11 = 2 minutes and 11 seconds). I do not do this for every issue, but I try to include a representative sample of issues, depending on the length of the recording.
- I then go back and listen again, focusing on the speaker’s production of individual sounds and prosodic features. I highlight problems with individual sounds on the consonant and vowel grids, and I describe problems with prosody and give examples.
- This process can be time-consuming, so I do this 2 times per semester typically. I return a copy to the student and keep a copy so that in our individual meetings we can review the diagnostics together.

Recording diagnostic

Name:

Date of Recording:

General Notes

Intelligibility and Comprehensibility Issues (pronunciation-based and otherwise)

Individual Sounds

Consonants

Sound	Letter(s)	Sample Word
p	p	p asa
t	t	t oca
k	k, c, qu	k ilo, c asa, q ueso

Sound	Letter(s)	Sample Word
tʃ	ch	ch oca
b	b, v	b esa, y aso
d	d	d ar
g	g, gu	g ota, gu erra
β	b, v	la b oda, a ve, l ayar
ð	d	la d o, la d ama
ɣ	g, gu	la g o, la g uerra
j	ll, y, hi	ha ll a, ma y o, h ielo
f	f	f aro
s	s, z, ci, ce	so p a, ca z a, c ine
x	j, x, gi, ge	aj o , Mé x ico, g ente
l	l	la l ata, pa p el
r	r	r aro
r	r, rr	ca rr o, r oca, hon r a
n	n	n ota
m	m	m apa

Vowels

Sound	Letter(s)	Sample Word
i	i	pi s o
e	e	pe s o
a	a	pa s o
o	o	po s o
u	u	pu s o

Problematic diphthongs:

Stress, Intonation, and Rhythm

Stress issues

Location of stress or prominent syllable

Example

Last syllable (agudas)

Do not end in vowel, -n, -s, unless written: pa-**pel**,
To-**más**

Location of stress or prominent syllable

Example


Penultimate or second to last (llanas)	End in vowel, -n, -s, unless written: ha- blan , fá-cil
Antepenultimate or third to last (esdrújulas)	Esdrújulas always bear a written accent: lá-gri-ma

Pausing (particularly between words) and resyllabification


Example

Ayer --- [pause] --- comimos --- [pause] --- legumbres
Buscaban a Matías por todo el río = bus-ca-**ba-na**-ma-tí-as-por-to-**doel**-rí-o
Mañana es otro día = ma-ña-na-**e-so**-tro-dí-a

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