

29 Teaching Pronunciation in Second Language Spanish

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29.1 Introduction

Elsewhere in this volume, others have shed light on what is currently understood about what can, and perhaps cannot, be acquired with respect to second language sound systems. The purpose of this chapter is not to repeat that work but rather to consider those issues from a different perspective – that of the classroom. In other words, here we explore the acquisition of Spanish phonetics and phonology in the context of explicit classroom instruction. In doing so, we aim to answer the perennial questions that face language teachers of all levels: Should we teach pronunciation? Is there an advantage to explicit instruction when it comes to issues of pronunciation? What, when, and how should we teach? And why?

Section 29.2 begins with a brief overview of trends in the explicit teaching of Spanish phonetics and phonology, in order to situate the present investigation. We then examine instructor and student attitudes toward the inclusion of pronunciation in the classroom. Section 29.3 reviews the empirical research that has been carried out in Spanish classrooms, touching on a variety of factors that can impact second language pronunciation. The concluding section, 29.5, addresses the strengths and weaknesses of the previous work, and proposes a number of avenues for continued research into explicit phonetics training in second language (L2) Spanish classes.

29.2 Do We Teach Spanish Pronunciation?

Many Spanish teachers will readily admit that, though they deem it important, pronunciation is often not the focus of their classroom activities. Their reasons for excluding it from instruction may range from lack of time to accomplish all they need to do in a given period to insecurity about their own linguistic understanding of the Spanish sound system. Some believe that L2 learners will never be able to achieve native-like

pronunciation, so time spent teaching it could be better spent on other skills; at the other end of the spectrum, others believe that correct pronunciation will naturally emerge with sufficient input and exposure. The reality is that teachers are prepared for their classroom roles as teachers of grammar, vocabulary or culture more explicitly and more thoroughly than they are as teachers of pronunciation. As various authors have pointed out over the years, teachers simply don't know how to handle the teaching of pronunciation (e.g., Arteaga 2000; Alley 1991; Azevedo 1978; Derwing, Munroe, and Wiebe 1998; Jenner 1989; Lipski 1976; Prator 1971, among others), and we lack clear guidelines for incorporating it, as well as a clear motivation for doing so. Alley (1991) likened teaching pronunciation at beginning levels to paying taxes, since while we may recognize the need for it, "no one is particularly fond of it" (73).

A number of investigations over the past several decades have examined the place of pronunciation in popular textbooks. Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter to carry out a detailed review of current texts and their treatment of pronunciation, some previous studies do reveal interesting trends. Azevedo (1978) noted that pronunciation tended to be treated in a cursory manner, and that there was a general lack of pronunciation exercises and almost complete omission of information about suprasegmental features. He notes that the then-developing focus on communicative skills should have embraced the opportunity to teach pronunciation explicitly, although textbooks were not doing so. A decade and a half later, Wiczorek (1991) carried out a similar review of the leading Spanish textbooks to determine how they represented phonetic information; he too argued that the description of pronunciation in these texts was incomplete and lacking in discussion of important phonetic elements of different Spanish dialects. More recently, Arteaga (2000) followed suit, reviewing pronunciation instruction in ten popular textbooks of the time. She also found that in most cases the pronunciation sections were incomplete and even inaccurate. Further, she contended that they lacked the necessary opportunities for student self-monitoring and contained no recycling of material. Although no recent studies have reexamined the treatment of pronunciation in Spanish textbooks, our own experience, along with anecdotal evidence collected from our colleagues, would indicate that the situation has remained relatively unchanged.

What emerges from these reviews is that not only does pronunciation often receive less treatment than other aspects of language in textbooks, but the methods for presenting and teaching pronunciation have changed very little over the years. The general trend among textbooks is to follow the same audiolingually based sequence: present information through teacher-led discussion and examples, then drill sounds through choral repetition and oral exercises. Even while other areas of language teaching have seen modifications and improvements over the past decades, classroom pronunciation techniques have remained somewhat stagnant (Alley 1991; Foote, Holtby, and Derwing 2011). At higher levels of instruction, classes devoted to Spanish phonetics or phonology delve deeper into the specific issues of pronunciation. However, there is also great variability in these courses, as some are essentially corrective pronunciation classes while others are linguistics content classes, and many are a combination of the two. Both the basic and higher levels of instruction will be addressed in the sections that follow.

In general, instructors seem to recognize the importance of including pronunciation instruction (e.g., Cortés-Moreno 2002; Morin 2007), even if they remain unsure of the

best methods for doing so. In Harlow and Muyskens' (1994) survey of priorities for intermediate-level language instruction, they polled learners and instructors on the factors that each deemed important to teach and learn. Overall, instructors ranked the importance of pronunciation relatively high (10 out of 14, where a higher number indicates more importance) while students placed less emphasis on pronunciation (5/10); instructors ranked the importance of carrying out pronunciation activities as 13/19, while students only rated them at 3/19. A later survey (of language instructors, Foote *et al.* 2011) also found that their respondents wished for more, and more developed, materials to help them include specific pronunciation instruction and practice in the classroom. There seems to be general consensus then, at least among instructors, that some degree of pronunciation ought to be included in language instruction.

29.2.1 (Why) should we teach pronunciation?

Faced with the contradictory facts that teachers seem to want to include pronunciation in their classes but don't know how and don't have the proper materials to do so, the question that must be confronted before moving on is if, after all, we really should teach pronunciation? Often, successful communication may not in fact hinge on the correct segmental and suprasegmental articulations of the learner, so one might argue that it is simply not a necessity. At the same time though, we know that there is more to communication than just making sure the learner's message is understood; we want to provide our students with the tools to articulate the sounds of the Spanish language correctly, just as we want them to conjugate verbs correctly and use agreement on nouns and adjectives correctly. Oyama (1982) noted that, "although it is doubtful that perfection of pronunciation should be made the major goal of training, there are several reasons for serious attention to this question. The social penalty, first of all, that may be paid by accented speakers is sometimes serious" (35). In other words, there are sociopragmatic consequences tied to pronunciation, beyond the question of comprehensibility, and learners with notable foreign accents may be treated differently to a native speaker. Scarcella and Oxford (1994) also argue that pronunciation needs to be an integral part of language instruction; they assert that while "teaching pronunciation is not easy" they also believe that "teachers can do much to help students improve their pronunciation" (Scarcella and Oxford 1994, 223).

However, an examination of the documents that generally inform the prevailing methodologies for foreign language instruction offers little guidance in terms of where and how to teach pronunciation. For example, the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL¹) 2012 Guidelines for Speaking Proficiency repeatedly talk about fluency and accuracy, but fail to define those constructs in any particular terms. The definitions and descriptions given lead us to believe that these are largely with respect to lexical, morphological, and syntactical structures used. Pronunciation and phonology, or accent, are mentioned infrequently and only in the negative: when they will cause problems. At the Novice Low level (i.e., the lowest level of proficiency), for example, ACTFL notes that speakers "... have no real functional ability and, because of their pronunciation, may be unintelligible." Novice High and Intermediate Low levels continue to be marked by pronunciation that is "strongly influenced by [the] first

language,” although by Intermediate Mid level learners may suffer from “limitations in their vocabulary and/or pronunciation and/or grammar and/or syntax” but “are generally understood by sympathetic interlocutors accustomed to dealing with non-natives.” ACTFL does not mention pronunciation elsewhere in the Guidelines, although it does point out that even at the Distinguished level, the highest level, pronunciation errors may still be persistent: “a non-native accent, . . . and/or an occasional isolated language error may still be present.”

Similarly, the Standards for Foreign Language Learning in the 21st Century (ACTFL 2009, revised from 1999) place remarkably little emphasis on pronunciation, accent or phonology. The Standards revolve around the five “C”s: Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities; each with its own standard and correlates. The Communication Standard, presented in (1) below, is the one that most directly relates to linguistic skills.

(1) Communication Standard: Communicate in Languages Other Than English

- Standard 1.1: Students engage in conversations, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, and exchange opinions
- Standard 1.2: Students understand and interpret written and spoken language on a variety of topics
- Standard 1.3: Students present information, concepts, and ideas to an audience of listeners or readers on a variety of topics.

This description makes no mention of the role that accurate pronunciation may play in the accomplishment of the standard, although we have seen above that pronunciation is an integral part of the communication process. As the role of the Standards was, in part, to move away from a classroom focus on the language exclusively and toward language as it is used in interaction and communication, the lack of explicit mention of phonological accuracy can be understood to some extent; after all, nor is there explicit mention of grammar constructs, and instructors rarely question the need to teach those (although of course the methods by which we teach them are a constant area of debate, but well beyond the scope of this chapter). The ongoing lack of clarity with respect to pronunciation’s role in the L2 classroom leaves instructors unsure whether or how to incorporate such pronunciation training into class time. Furthermore, the lack of clarity results in little incentive or motivation for instructors to learn how to teach pronunciation or to try to incorporate more pronunciation into their class time.

29.3 Instructed Spanish Pronunciation

While there may not be clear direction, the fact that instructors and researchers alike have been investigating how pronunciation fits into our curriculum tells us that these issues have been and continue to be relevant to Spanish language teachers. True enough, a variety of classroom approaches, tools, and technologies have been discussed over the past several years, with an increasing emphasis in the last decade or so.

This section reviews the empirical work that is available documenting the effects of explicit phonological instruction on learner pronunciation in a Spanish language class setting. Compared to second language syntax or morphology, studies in this area are scarce; this is a field that is only now beginning to receive recognition and respect among second language researchers.

Several factors influence a learner's ability to acquire native or native-like pronunciation, and explicit instruction is just one of them (see Elliott 2003 for an overview of such factors, as well as a review of previous work on this topic). Other aspects of the learning process – such as context of learning or individual differences – undoubtedly come into play as well, and these are addressed briefly in Section 29.4.3; it is beyond the scope of this chapter to go into a detailed discussion of each factor; rather they will be discussed with respect to explicit instruction. This section breaks down the studies into those concerning beginning Spanish instruction (defined here as first- and second-year courses) and those concerning more advanced levels of instruction (third year and beyond). This division is made primarily because the nature of classes at the two levels is inherently different: basic language classes tend to focus on the traditional four skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) plus culture, and more often than not have a communicative emphasis. Beyond basic language, though, the classes are content based and can focus specifically on pronunciation, as in the case of an upper-level phonetics or phonology course for Spanish majors. In other upper-level courses, even if the focus is not on pronunciation, instructors may be able to focus more on pronunciation than they would with a first-year course that has to cover all the grammar and vocabulary associated with beginning-level textbooks.

The works reviewed here are limited for the most part to those that offer empirical data on the effects of explicit instruction, rather than anecdotal accounts of pedagogical implementations or exhortations to include more instruction without the backing of any particular data. Further, we focus exclusively on studies that examine the acquisition of Spanish in a classroom setting, as opposed to other languages. These decisions were made primarily due to our desire to focus singularly on the acquisition of Spanish pronunciation in this particular context, but also in consideration of space limitations.

29.3.1 *Basic language instruction*

Work in this area prior to the last decade is by no means prolific, although a handful of studies show that interest in instructed pronunciation has been consistent, if not at the forefront of Spanish SLA studies. These earlier works tend to view pronunciation as a side-effect of other skills, such as speaking or reading, and thus treat the teaching of pronunciation through these other skills. For example, Guymon (1978) investigated the effects of reading instruction on beginning Spanish students' pronunciation and found improvement in overall pronunciation as well as in the students' ability to pronounce previously un-encountered lexical items. It is not entirely clear to what extent the reading instruction focused on the articulation of specific sounds or on the decoding process of reading, but the improvement is nonetheless encouraging. Crucially, Guymon also found that pronunciation abilities correlated with general language aptitude scores, a finding that was confirmed by Ganschow and Sparks (1995) when examining the effects

of pronunciation instruction on students diagnosed with learning disabilities. They found that specific tailored instruction benefitted those students with disabilities, but that their language aptitude scores remained below those of students without diagnosed disabilities. In other words, we cannot expect general aptitude to change, of course, but there are aspects of language that are teachable, such as pronunciation.

A fairly common approach to second language pronunciation instruction has been to use contrastive analysis as a starting point, focusing on the differences between the first language phonological system and the second. Hammerly (1982), for example, tested beginning learners' ability to imitate words and phrases and found that contrastive analysis with English was a useful predictor for problem areas. Zampini (1994, 1998b) also found that students in first- and second-year language classes showed interference from English when acquiring certain sounds; additional problems seemed to be related to orthography.² Later, Arroyo Hernández (2009) proposed a plan of instruction based on the differences between Italian and Spanish, in order to learn the suprasegmental features of Spanish as a second language. None of these studies, however, provides evidence on the effects of such pedagogical interventions.

In the late 1990s, interest in pronunciation expanded beyond first language (L1) and L2 contrasts, and researchers began to examine the outcomes of specific instruction on Spanish pronunciation. González-Bueno (1997) examined English speakers enrolled in third-semester Spanish classes, looking specifically at their ability to produce Spanish-like Voice Onset Time (VOT) in voiced and voiceless stops (/p, t, k, b, d, g/) in pre- and post-treatment oral interviews. Her treatment consisted of supplementing regular instruction with a brief period of explicit instruction regarding articulation of the sounds, followed by sound discrimination and oral practice, at the beginning of each class period; the control group received only regular instruction with no explicit instruction on pronunciation. Her results revealed that the experimental group were able to reduce their VOT values on all sounds, resulting in more native-like articulations (although voiceless /p, t/ and voiced /g/ experienced the greatest improvements), and significantly more than the control group. She concludes that explicit instruction can indeed have a beneficial impact on L2 Spanish pronunciation.

Elliott (1995, 1997) examined 66 students enrolled in third-semester Spanish courses, in which an experimental group received explicit instruction on place and manner of articulation of a variety of problematic sounds for English learners. The data came from word-level and sentence-level repetition tasks, as well as isolated word reading and spontaneous communication. Based on judges' ratings, he found significant overall improvement in the experimental group's pronunciation, as opposed to a control group that received no additional instruction in phonetics. Significant improvement occurred in isolated word reading as well as word-level and sentence-level repetition tasks but improvement on the spontaneous communication task failed to reach significance.

Similarly, Elliott (1999, cited in Elliott 2003) compared two groups of native English speakers learning Spanish at university level, one of which received instruction on particular sounds that teachers considered to be the most problematic or that contributed most to foreign accent. He found no significant change in the order of acquisition of those phones among either group, although the experimental group made significant

improvements over the control group. Elliott concluded that although we may not be able to change the order in which sounds are acquired, instruction may be beneficial in speeding up or helping along the process.

In a study on the effects of peer teaching, Rodríguez-Sabater (2005) investigated the Spanish acquisition of 183 learners across four semesters of language instruction. These learners participated in regular tutoring sessions with more advanced learners. Although the focus of the investigation was on overall language skills, as opposed to exclusively examining pronunciation, Rodríguez-Sabater reported that the peer-tutoring program afforded students more opportunities to speak Spanish and thus enabled them to feel more comfortable and confident with their skills, including pronunciation. Virtually all participants reported noting an improvement in their pronunciation across all four semesters of instruction, although unfortunately Rodríguez-Sabater's data offer no independent confirmation of these gains.

Other researchers have investigated the role of perception in the instruction of Spanish pronunciation, as many models (e.g., Flege's (1995) Speech Learning Model) posit perception as a necessary precursor to production. For example, Kissling (2012) set out to specifically determine the effect of instruction on perception and production skills among 95 first-, second- and third-semester Spanish students. Her experimental group used the *Tal Como Suena*³ online phonetics instruction modules to receive explicit instruction in articulation, perception, and production of target sounds, while the control group received comparable input but no instruction. The learners' perception and production of the target phones were measured during a pre-test, a post-test, and a delayed post-test using a discrimination task, an identification task, and a word-list reading production task. She found that learners in both groups improved their pronunciation equally, but explicit phonetics instruction afforded learners an advantage in terms of discrimination and identification of the target phones.

Beyond these empirical studies, others have discussed how instructors can include pronunciation in their language classes, although they do not offer empirical results to substantiate their claims. For example, Alley (1991) discusses the importance of including pronunciation at all levels of instruction, and suggests using a technique called fluency squares, or story squares, which he claims have benefits to improving pronunciation. This type of activity involves contextual supports and extralinguistic aids and is generally used when teaching decoding skills. Alley maintains that the use of these techniques encourages meaningful interaction and communication while also allowing for a focus on specific aspects of pronunciation. Similarly, Stringer (1998) recommends that first- and second-year Spanish students focus on language as it is used in everyday life (Everyday Language Performance, ELP), with procedures rooted in oral communication. Students listen to dialogues of naturally occurring conversation, repeat them and learn from them, and then perform these. Stringer's claim is that such a technique can be used to improve pronunciation as well as grammar and fluency, and the judges he used to rate his participants' overall language skills confirmed their improvement. Both studies provide convincing arguments but, again, lack empirical data to support their claims. Similarly encouraging reports are also obtained from studies of pronunciation instruction at higher levels of proficiency, as we discuss in Section 29.3.2.

29.3.2 *Intermediate or advanced content courses*

Generally speaking, more advanced courses offer a potentially greater opportunity to investigate the effects of phonetic instruction on pronunciation, given that students at upper levels have higher proficiency and can afford (in terms of attentional resources, e.g., Skehan 1998) to focus more of their efforts on pronunciation. At the same time, studies at these levels must be considered cautiously as they almost exclusively focus on upper-level Spanish phonetics courses, which represent an admittedly self-selected group of students. Therefore, it is difficult to generalize findings from these groups to lower levels. Nonetheless, various researchers have recognized the value at this level of including more specific phonetics instruction. Mantini (1980) encouraged students at higher levels to work autonomously in their development of second language prosody, stress, rhythm, and intonation in Spanish, and supplemented standard pronunciation lessons with perception and production practice, helping students realize that they were capable of addressing pronunciation issues on their own. Stokes (2004) likewise discusses strategies for focusing on meaning, communication, and culture while simultaneously focusing on phonetic form in an upper-level phonetics course.

Unfortunately, only a small number of studies have provided data on the effects of instruction in these phonetics classes. Castino (1992) examined 40 students enrolled in a Spanish phonetics course and compared their pre- and post-test pronunciation scores on a reading task and a spontaneous communication task. His treatment consisted of traditional instruction regarding point, place, and manner of articulation of the Spanish sounds. Castino found that students in the phonetics course did indeed improve their pronunciation over the course of the semester. Likewise, Zampini (1998a) examined students in a similar class, looking specifically at VOT. She too found that students in the phonetics class made significant gains over the course of the semester, approaching native-like abilities in their VOT production.

Lord (2005) examined English speakers also enrolled in a Spanish phonetics course in order to examine the benefits of certain instructional techniques on pronunciation gains. Her investigation considered a variety of sounds (/p, t, k, b, d, g, r/ and diphthongs within and between words), which were assessed on a reading task at the beginning and end of the course. The instruction in the phonetics class was traditional in its presentation and description of Spanish phones, but was supplemented with student self-analysis and consciousness-raising techniques using voice analysis software. Data were analyzed through acoustic measures of the target sounds, and revealed significant improvements on almost all areas. However, due to the lack of a control group, it is impossible to say whether these benefits were a result of instruction in general or of this particular type of instruction.

Later, in an effort to continue to refine instructional techniques for phonetics classes, Lord (2008) investigated how podcasts can help English speakers improve their pronunciation. In this case, students participated in a group podcast project that involved read and spontaneous oral assignments, followed by self-analysis and evaluation of classmates' podcasts. Students also took a survey to assess their attitudes toward pronunciation (Pronunciation Attitude Inventory, Elliott 1995). Data analysis consisted of rater judgments of all oral samples on a 5-point Likert scale to assess their overall

pronunciation. Lord found significant improvement on learners' overall pronunciation, although again, the lack of a control group makes generalization difficult. A follow-up study (Lord and Harrington 2012) remedied that flaw by implementing a control group that participated in the same tasks individually as opposed to through an online community. Preliminary findings from that study, based on acoustic analysis of particular segments, indicate that both control and experimental groups made improvements, with the experimental group outperforming the control group but not significantly so.

Also with a view to investigating the effects of a phonetics course on learner pronunciation, Ausín and Sutton (2010) incorporated a pronunciation grammaticality judgment test with which they sought to determine the impact of the phonetics class on the linguistic competence of the learners. The judgment task required learners to rate target sounds (which were recorded in both native-like and non-native-like manners) as acceptable or not acceptable. The pre- and post-semester findings indicated significantly less acceptance of non-native like productions for /z, b, d, g, l, / and "v," "h" at the end of the semester. Learners' perception of /p, t, k/ did not change, and their acceptance of /r, / had pre-tested at ceiling levels and thus also failed to change. Although their study lacked a control group, these findings suggest that the phonetics course can help learners both perceive and produce L2 sounds.

Counselman (2010) also chose to focus on the effects of phonetics instruction on students' perception rather than production in his study of 28 learners of Spanish. He supplemented two sections of an intermediate-level conversation class with pronunciation instruction; the control group received the more traditional production-based instruction while the experimental group focused on fine acoustic perception and production. He acoustically analyzed production of the vowels /e, o/ in single-word recordings from pre- and post-test assessments, and found significant improvement on both vowels for the experimental group, although the control group evidenced no improvement. He interpreted these findings to mean that focusing learners' attention on forms through perception exercises is at least as beneficial as traditional production exercises.

A related study by Lord (2010) also probes the effects of phonetics instruction in advanced learners. Her study investigated two groups of advanced learners on the same summer study abroad program, one of which had received phonetics instruction prior to their experience abroad. She found that all of the learners improved their pronunciation of [β, / over the course of the program, but those with prior phonetics instruction improved significantly more. Like Counselman (2010), she interprets her findings in light of cognitive approaches involved in language use: those with prior knowledge from the phonetics class seemed to have been unable to make use of that knowledge until the abroad experience enabled them to automatize other functions (lexical, morphosyntactic, etc.) and thus allot more attention to their phonetic articulations.

Taken as a whole, these findings show that explicit instruction is indeed beneficial in the process of acquiring the Spanish sound system. The final section of this chapter pulls these findings together to establish where the field is now with respect to our understanding of instructed Spanish pronunciation, and proposes areas of research that remain to be addressed.

29.4 The Future of Teaching Spanish Pronunciation

29.4.1 Summary of findings

The studies reviewed in Section 29.3 have almost unanimously found that learners improve as a result of explicit phonetics teaching, at least to some extent, at various levels and through various instructional approaches. (Elliott 2003 concluded much the same thing in his review of earlier work in the area.) However, this picture is far from complete and many areas remain largely unexplored. Section 29.4.2 discusses some of the limitations encountered in previous studies and Section 29.4.3 proposes remedies and future areas of investigation.

29.4.2 Limitations of previous work

Major (2001) proposed that one can examine the acquisition of L2 sound systems at four different levels of investigation:

- (1) individual segments
- (2) combinations of segments
- (3) prosodic/suprasegmental features
- (4) global accent

For the most part, the work carried out thus far has limited itself to (1) and (4), investigating either specific individual phonemes or assessing overall accent and pronunciation ability. Some studies investigate vowel combinations or individual segments in a larger context, but less has been done on consonant clusters, for example, and very little work exists regarding the instruction of suprasegmental features. (This is not entirely surprising, given that suprasegmental features are often less investigated from an acquisition perspective too, perhaps due to the relative difficulty of quantifying them.)

Further, as with any study, those reviewed here suffer from a variety of limitations that have the potential to undermine some of the positive findings we have seen. Many studies (e.g., Lord 2010; Nibert 2005; Rose 2010; Zampini 1994, 1998b) were not designed to measure the effect of instruction *per se* but rather examined acquisition processes that, along the way, were impacted by explicit instruction. The conclusions we draw from these studies, then, must be interpreted carefully, given that we cannot be sure that the gains witnessed were in fact due to the instruction itself. Additionally, many studies failed to incorporate a control group (e.g., Lord 2005, 2008; Stringer 1998; Zampini 1998a), which makes generalizing the results problematic. In many cases (e.g., Elliott 1995; Guymon 1978; Lord 2008; Rodríguez-Sabater 2005), assessment of pronunciation is based on judges' holistic impressions or learners' self-reported impressions; such assessments may be necessary to examine global accent, but may also be less reliable than acoustic measures. (In English as a second language, work by Munro (1993) and others has attempted to compare these holistic ratings with acoustic measures, and strive to determine which may be more beneficial to researchers and educators; however, to

our knowledge no such work exists in Spanish to date.) These limitations help point us toward potentially beneficial areas of future work in this field, both to remedy methodological flaws and to deepen our understanding of the questions themselves.

29.4.3 *Avenues for continued research*

When considering where we are now, what we know about the teaching of pronunciation, and what remains to be learnt, a number of possibilities present themselves as avenues for continued research into the role of explicit instruction in Spanish pronunciation. In our opinion, the question of whether or not Spanish pronunciation instruction is beneficial seems no longer to be the one we need to be asking. We have long assumed that it is beneficial, and for the most part we have confirmed that assumption empirically. More appropriate and fruitful inquiries may be: What types of instruction are most beneficial? At what point in the learning process should instruction be introduced? Should we focus on perception or production? Perception⁴ has been touched on in a number of studies (Ausín and Sutton 2010; Counselman 2010; Kissling 2012; Nibert 2005; Rose 2010; Zampini 1998a), and we have seen potentially interesting relationships between perception and production skills, as well as the benefits of teaching one or both.

We should also continue to investigate different learning environments and varied interactional patterns for learners, taking advantage of new technologies and possibilities. Computer Assisted Language Learning environments (e.g., Kissling 2012; Lord 2008; Lord and Harrington 2012) offer new possibilities to explore in terms of expanding our methods of instruction. Lord (2010) pointed out that study abroad may interact with pronunciation instruction in ways that we have not considered. This should come as no surprise, given that research on study abroad in general has been shown to have beneficial effects on various aspects of the acquisition process, and other work (e.g., Díaz-Campos 2004; Lord 2006; Simões 1996) has shown that immersion may be beneficial in second language phonological acquisition as well.

Similarly, we also need to know more about student attitudes toward pronunciation and how they are related to perception and production. Does a learner need a positive attitude, or need to want to sound native-like, in order to acquire accurate articulation? Elliott's (2003) and Lord's (2008) work tell us that positive attitudes can be related to eventual success, but we know very little about the nature of that relationship. Further, what role do attention and noticing (e.g., Ellis 2005; Ortega 2005; Schmidt 1995; Skehan 1998) play in the process of explicitly learning Spanish pronunciation? Studies such as Counselman (2010) and Lord (2010) indicate that the relationship warrants further investigation. Additionally, it would be useful to understand instructor attitudes toward the inclusion of explicit instruction.

Along similar lines, the role of individual learner differences⁵ on the effect of teaching Spanish phonetics must be more fully explored. To our knowledge no studies specifically address factors such as attitude and motivation with respect to explicit phonetic instruction, but some have found that oral performance can be affected by perceptions of native-like speech and social pressures to fit in or not (e.g., Lefkowitz and Hedgcock 2002, 2006). One must also consider the role of dialectal differences when discussing these issues, as the question of which dialects to teach always arises in the Spanish

classroom (e.g., Guitart 1978; Lipski 1976; Saralegui 1998; Wiczorek 1991) although, again, studies have failed to address this issue with respect to explicit instruction.

From a methodological perspective, investigations into the effects of explicit pronunciation instruction should strive to employ more controlled designs to enable comparison across studies. Investigations need to ensure the presence of a control group, not to determine if instruction is more effective than no instruction, but rather to quantify the benefits of one kind of instruction over another, or to determine the ideal time to incorporate such instruction. We also need to move beyond the snapshot datasets that examine one group of learners at a particular point in time and instead explore longitudinal studies to investigate long-term effects of instruction. Kissling (2012) is one of the few studies to incorporate a post-test and delayed post-test design; more such studies are called for. This issue is also complicated by our almost exclusive focus on beginning language classes and phonetics classes. Can learners between these levels or at more advanced levels be taught to perceive or produce segments more accurately? If so, why? And if not, why not? The type of data collected is also important. We have seen studies that use acoustic measures of individual segments, and studies that have used holistic ratings of overall pronunciation. Both are valid, but we have no real way to compare the two. Additionally, work on the perception of foreign accent (e.g., Flege, Munro, and MacKay 1995) could inform our methodologies, allowing us to examine both holistic and individual production in terms of overall acquisition.

Looking further into the future, the findings of the research discussed here should be used to inform pedagogical materials, as well as to train instructors. Some moves have been made to remedy the lack of preparation that many instructors feel hampers their work: Carrera de la Red and Sainz García (2001) discuss a teacher training course project designed to aid instructors in incorporating more pronunciation training; Lord's (2007) *Tal Como Suena* online modules were created precisely to allow for the inclusion of basic phonetic instruction for students, even if the instructors lacked training; and Morin (2007) discusses ways to develop pedagogical materials to implement phonetics instruction in the FL classroom. However, more needs to be done to combine empirical findings with classroom practices. The more we as researchers understand about what sounds are important to acquire for L2 learners to be intelligible and communicatively proficient, and how we can help our students acquire them, the better equipped we will be as educators to pave the way for our students' success.

NOTES

- 1 To be sure, not all instructors agree with or abide by the ACTFL Standards or Guidelines, and we recognize that they can be polemic, especially when used as evaluation criteria (see Chastain 1989). However, as the leading US organization on the teaching of foreign languages, ACTFL is referenced here as illustrative of the general focus in language pedagogy, and the 2012 guidelines are referenced as a benchmark (<http://actflproficiencyguidelines2012.org>).
- 2 In a study of German speakers acquiring Spanish, Eggenesperger (1999a, 1999b) also noted the potentially detrimental effect of orthographic L1 interference.

- 3 Lord, Gillian. 2007. "Tal Como Suena: Explorando la Pronunciación Española." <http://talcomosuena.spanish.ufl.edu/>.
- 4 See Chapter 8 for a more complete discussion of the role of perception in second language Spanish.
- 5 See Chapter 21 for further discussion on affective factors and individual differences.

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Queries in Chapter 29

- Q1. We have removed the affiliation text of this chapter author for consistency with other chapters. Please confirm if this is fine. 

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