

Zsuzsanna Bárkányi

Lecturer in Spanish
School of Languages and Applied Linguistics

Introduction

The ultimate goal of foreign language learning is mostly speaking.

Pronunciation is important

- self-esteem
- active during other language skills

Lack of pronunciation teaching

- automatically acquired [4]
- lack of teacher training [3]
- lack of teacher confidence [2]
- myth of having to sound native [1]

Benefits of explicit pronunciation teaching proven [4, 5]

Course: *Teaching Spanish pronunciation*



The screenshot shows the OpenLearn course interface. It includes a 'Free course' badge, the course title 'Teaching Spanish pronunciation', and a 'Free statement of participation on completion' icon. Below this is a photo of a restaurant named 'Cruzcampo'. To the right, there is a sidebar with course details: 'About this free course' (15 hours study, Level 1: Introductory), 'Ratings' (5 out of 5 stars), and 'You're enrolled!' with a 'View your profile' button. At the bottom, there is a 'Become an OU student' section with a book icon and the text 'Spanish studies 2: language and culture of the Spanish'.


OpenLearn Create then OpenLearn: 15k visits

Content

1. Why teach pronunciation?
2. The building blocks of pronunciation
3. Stress, rhythm and intonation
4. Spanish and English vowels contrasted
5. Spanish and English consonants contrasted

Critical evaluation (three trained Spanish teachers) ✓

- well-structured, clear and convincing
- explains complex phonological topics in an accessible way
- allows for better informed pronunciation activities

Ways to go 

- more audio files for illustration
- more ideas for exercises
- refer to other languages as well as an increasing number of OU students are non-native speakers
- put more emphasis on the variety of accents
- more pronunciation teaching methods
- more pronunciation error correcting techniques

Workshop



Most participants think:

- pronunciation should be taught
- explicit instruction is effective
- students learn pronunciation unconsciously

Teaching techniques in our modules

- automatic repetition and imitation ✓
- ear-training ✓
- phonetic instruction ✗
- raising phonological awareness ✗
- real-time interactive activities with focus on pronunciation ✗

Perceived barriers 

- student anxiety
- lack of personal contact due to GTS
- lack of training in pronunciation error correction
- choice of target language model

Recommendations

Teaching pronunciation is beneficial

- detailed pronunciation syllabus
- create a module specific pronunciation correction checklist
- targeted listening tasks (e.g. phoneme identification, connected speech phenomena, varieties)
- contrasting target language and other familiar languages

Strategies to cope with anxiety related to speaking and pronunciation is helpful.

References

- [1] Derwing, T. M., & Munro, M. J. (2009). "Putting accent in its place: Rethinking obstacles to communication." *Language Teaching* 42, 476–490. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S026144480800055>
- [2] Henderson, A. et. al. (2012). "The English Pronunciation Teaching in Europe Survey: Selected Results." *Research in Language* 10 (1). Doi: 10.2478/v10015-011-0047-4
- [3] Kirkova-Naskova, A. (2019). Anastazija Kirkova-Naskova: *Second language pronunciation: a summary of teaching*.
- [4] Rao, R. (Ed.). (2019). *Key Issues in the Teaching of Spanish Pronunciation*. London: Routledge, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315666839>
- [5] Thomson, R. I., & Derwing, T. M. (2015). "The effectiveness of L2 pronunciation instruction: A narrative review." *Applied Linguistics*, 36(3), 326–344. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amu076>