Research on HERITAGE SPANISH PHONETICS and PHONOLOGY: pedagogical and curricular implications

OBJECTIVE
Establishing a dialogue between the recent research works on the phonetics and phonology of Spanish as a heritage language with the pedagogical notions and the teaching programs for this language variety, and making sure that Spanish courses pay due attention to the system of sounds acquired by heritage.

Heritage speaker
Type of bilingual speaker who has grown up with a certain degree of exposure to a minority language at home, or to a heritage language. They constitute a highly heterogeneous group and have different needs in educational environments when it comes to enlarging the knowledge about their language.

54 million
Spanish speakers

RESEARCH WORKS ON THE PHONETICS AND PHONOLOGY OF SPANISH AS A HERITAGE LANGUAGE

CONSONANTS
The basic differences between the systems of heritage and native users perhaps stem from the mastery in English and Spanish or in the original dialectal variety spoken by users of Spanish as an inherited language. The features which become visible at a suprasegmental level or in segment chains such as intonation, accentuation, or rhythm.

VOWELS
Heritage language speakers have specific educational needs which distinguish them from native speakers and from L2 students. Adapting teaching to students' individual needs.

PROSODY
Prosody in users of Spanish as an inherited language shows individual variations and differences with other groups of Spanish speakers. They could be explained by the influence of English and by the combination of both linguistic systems.

PEDAGOGICAL AND CURRICULAR IMPLICATIONS

1st
1º
Heritage language speakers have specific educational needs which distinguish them from native speakers, and from L2 students. Adapting teaching to student's individual needs.

2nd
2º
A number of variables were identified as reasons for a pronunciation that differs from that of native speakers in some consonants, and the differences sometimes highlighted the influence exerted by the English language.

3rd
3º
Heritage language speakers tend to behave like native speakers with regard to pronunciation.

4th
4º
Creating a receptive and relaxed classroom environment which fosters students' confidence and cultural pride

5th
5º
Knowledge about the phonetic-phonological systems of inherited languages

6th
6º
Improvement in pronunciation

Heritage speaker

MORE teaching programs

Better training

Fewer studies

Heritage

Native

Books

Native and Heritage Spanish speakers

they specifically focus on phonetics and phonology

pronunciation is mentioned as part of the skills on which work is developed

Spanish for Heritage Learners (SHL) of Arizona University, one of the oldest and most comprehensive programs.

The syllabuses and educational materials for classrooms must take into account the different language mastery levels shown by students, and most importantly, the most commonly problematic areas (difficulties with the understanding of the correlation between spelling and phonology, and with the correct accentuation, etc.), and oral production needs to be encouraged.

Creating a receptive and relaxed classroom environment which fosters students' confidence and cultural pride

Didactic materials

Tasks adapted to levels and skills

Suited to students' needs

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Editors: Dra. Rosabel Roig Vila and Dr. Santiago Mengual Andrés

Paper design and adaptation: Àngel Vilaplana Camús

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