

LESSON PLAN
Perception and Production of the Spanish Vowel System
Elementary Spanish I
Phonetics/Pronunciation Series - Lesson #1

PLANNING PHASE

I. CONTENT

- A. Context:** Spanish Vowel System v. English Vowel System
- B. Objectives:** Students will be able to:
 - 1. Identify key articulatory descriptors of Spanish vowels
 - 2. Identify acoustic correlates related to Spanish/English vowel contrasts
 - 3. Produce static Spanish vowels clearly in isolated words
- C. Vocabulary/Structures:** alta, media, baja, anterior, central, posterior, labios, lengua, boca, cuerdas vocales, vibración, redondo, frecuencia, formantes, transiciones, estático, dinámico

II. RESOURCES and MATERIALS

Praat Software, Powerpoint, vowel charts, example words (from Morgan's book), mini-whiteboards/dry-erase markers/erasers, laser pointer, vowel pronunciation site (Kuczun Nelson), and UIowa Spanish Phonetics Website

TEACHING PHASE

III. Activities

A. Setting the Stage

- 1. Students will examine a list of adopted loan words in Mexican Spanish that originate in English. In groups of two, they will brainstorm a list of observations about the formation of these loan words and the vowels they contain.
- 2. The students will share their observations with the class and the teacher will draw emphasis to the changes that are made to the vowels to make the words more 'Spanish-sounding'.
- 3. Students will posit generalizations about the Spanish vowel system.

B. Providing Input/Engaging Learners

- 1. Students will watch the animations from the UIowa pronunciation site and imitate the actions and sounds they perceive.
- 2. Students will engage with a partner and then the whole class (via drawing the chart on whiteboards) in the categorization of the 5 Spanish vowels according to the 3x3 vowel chart.
- 3. Students will be quizzed on the pronunciation of the vowels in a rapid manner (the teacher points the laser at the vowels in random order until the students can make the correct sound accurately as a group)
- 4. Students will listen to the list of Spanish/English contrasted words from the Kuczun Nelson site and will then write the word said by the teacher on the whiteboard.

5. Students will be shown Praat spectrographs of the English/Spanish word pairs with formants and voicing pulses marked. The teacher will explain how to read the basics of a spectrogram, including frequency and formants, as well as the transitions involved in dynamic vowels.
6. A few students will volunteer to attempt a word pair recording. Other volunteers will examine the spectrograph to give constructive feedback to the students.
7. Students will produce one half of a word pair to a partner and the partner guesses which language it belongs to (number of correct guesses will be recorded on the whiteboards to find out who ‘wins’).

C. Closure

1. The students will work as a class to pronounce the words in the 5-vowel-word list and the list of cognate animals with native-like vowels. Students will begin by only producing the vowels to eliminate the tendency of certain consonantal segments to impede the use of the newly acquired static vowels (to decrease interference from English cognate sounds). Later as the consonantal segments are added, the students try to maintain the purity of the static vowels.
2. As homework, students must record themselves producing 10 of the words with static vowels, to be submitted via email as part of the chapter homework grade.
3. In subsequent lessons, students will begin to connect words through the learning of syllabification and synalepha for Spanish.

REFERENCES

Boersma, P., & Weenink, D. (2006). Praat software. *Amsterdam: University.*

Fonética: Los sonidos del español. (n.d.). Retrieved October 4, 2013, from

<http://www.uiowa.edu/~acadtech/phonetics/spanish/frameset.html>

Kuczun Nelson, B. (n.d.). Spanish Language & Culture | La Pronunciación | Las vocales. Retrieved

October 4, 2013, from http://www.colby.edu/~bknelson/SLC/pronunciacion_vocales.php

Morgan, T. A. (2010). *Sonidos en contexto: una introducción a la fonética del español con especial referencia a la vida real.* Yale University Press.

RESOURCES

las vocales

las vocales de español e inglés
descripción articulatoria de las vocales
análisis de las vocales en Praat
práctica

1

identifica la(s) palabra(s) en inglés...

- tréiler
- tiví
- espiche
- Santa Clos
- blaf
- taun
- suimimpul
- suiche
- sinque
- lonche
- ricés
- sonababiche

2

<http://www.uiowa.edu/~acadtech/phonetics/spanish/frameset.html>

3

las vocales contrastadas

4

las vocales en español

alta	i		u
media	e		o
baja		a	
	anterior	central	posterior

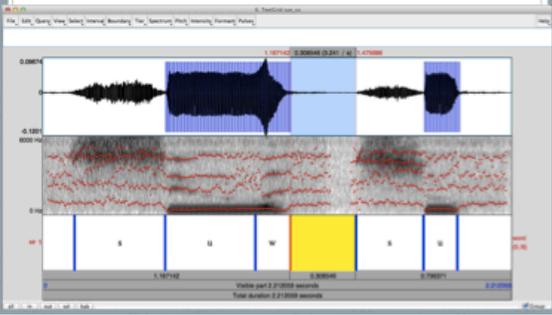
5

pares contrastivos

inglés	español
• all	• al
• say	• se
• sole	• sol
• may	• me
• tea	• ti
• low	• lo
• sue	• su
• sea	• si
• know	• no

6

Sue v. su



7

las vocales

¡Palabras pentavocálicas! Cada palabra contiene las cinco vocales españolas.

ec otarista	sub ordinante	dentic ulado
rep ublicano	ineduc ado	turr onería
com unicable	nebul osidad	resuc itado
educ ativo	centrifug ado	etnom úsica
unip ersonal	reconstr uctiva	multilá tero
reluná tico	imperturb ado	luteran ismo

8

las vocales

*¡Animales del zoológico! Casi todas estas palabras también tienen cognados en inglés.
Reconoce todos los animales?*

el hipopótamo	el elefante	el avestruz	el perezoso	el tiburón
el rinoceronte	los pájaros	el pingüino	el armadillo	la iguana
la jirafa	el cocodrilo	las serpientes	el oso polar	la tortuga
el gorila	los moluscos	el manatí	el leopardo	el chimpancé
los reptiles	el escorpión	el canguro	el orangután	el omítorrinco

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