REVIEW OF *PRONUNCIACIÓN Y FONÉTICA*, VERSION 2.1

Name of Product	Pronunciación y Fonética, version 2.1
Creators	Patricia V. Lunn, Michigan State University (program author)
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Distributor	Instructional Media Center
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System Requirements	MacIntosh PowerPC or Windows95/98/NT
	no installation required
Support Offered	Support available from CLEAR staff at (517)-432-2286 or clear@msu.edu
Target Language	Spanish
Target Audience	Majors or minors with at least a high-intermediate level of Spanish
	proficiency; teachers of Spanish phonology and phonetics
Price	$25 + s/h

Reviewed by Phillip Elliott, Southern University

The program contains 10 lessons, written in Spanish, on Spanish pronunciation and phonetics. As mentioned in the program, the student learns how Spanish sounds differ among themselves and how such differences may serve to distinguish one word from another. She also learns to recognize Spanish sounds and produce them (the program allows the student the opportunity to record her voice during certain exercises). The student studies some of the dialects of Spanish and learns how the study of phonetics can facilitate the comprehension and the classification of Spanish dialects. The 10 lessons are as follows, their length indicated by the number of screens they entail:

Syllable (25 screens)	Consonants: description (15 screens)
Stress (20 screens)	Consonants: pronunciation (27 screens)
Phoneme (13 screens)	Orthography (13 screens)
Vowels: description (9 screens)	Dialects (23 screens)
Vowels: pronunciation (10 screens)	Review (18 screens)

The lessons are organized on a menu screen with color-coded buttons. For example, *la sílaba* (syllable) is written on a red button. Clicking on the button takes one to the lesson on the syllable, which entails 25 screens of explanation and practice. Navigation arrows on the right of each screen allow the student to move from one screen to another. Also on the right of the screen are a *menu* button and an *exit* button.

DETAILED LESSON: THE SYLLABLE

The first lesson on the Menu screen, *la sílaba*, is reviewed in detail, to give the reader a sense of what a student or teacher sees and does when completing an entire lesson. Summaries for the other nine lessons appear below. The description of this lesson's content and procedures is organized screen by screen.

Screen 1

Rhythm is said to be the basis for pronunciation. Each language has its own rhythm. When an English speaker speaks Spanish with English rhythm, she has a foreign accent. Spanish rhythm is examined.

Screen 2

Spanish rhythm is based on the syllable. Each syllable has a vowel nucleus. A vowel constitutes a syllable, and it may also constitute a word. Sentences with the five vowels used as words are given in bold, indicating they have a sound file (e.g., *No voy a clase*).

Screen 3

A vowel may be accompanied by another vowel in the syllable or by a preceding or following consonant. Monosyllabic words exemplifying this fact are given in bold for the student to click on and listen to (e.g., *rey, tres, ay, lo*).

Screen 4

A distinction between a letter (orthography) and a sound (phonetics) is made. Three words in bold exemplify the difference between spelling and sound representation: *casa* [kása], *hora* [óra], *voy* [boj].

Screen 5

Consonants and vowels may combine in several ways to form a syllable. The prototypical combination in Spanish is consonant-vowel (CV), which may be repeated productively to create more lengthy words. Examples of this process are given in bold for students to listen to (*la, bebé, mañana, mejorado, mitológico, delicadísimo,* etc.).

Screen 6

The prototypical CV in Spanish determines Spanish syllabification at both the word and phrase level. Three example words are listed for students to hear: *a-ma-re-mos, la-va-do,* and *a-ma-ri-llo.*

Screen 7

Consonants generally appear in syllable final position only if not followed by a vowel: *con, mal, mes.* In longer words, this CVC combination will be divided as CV-C: *co-no-ce, ma-le-ta, me-se-ro.* All of these words are in bold and have sound files.

Screen 8

One of the main differences between Spanish and English pronunciation is that in English a consonant need not accompany the next vowel to form part of the following syllable. Six Spanish proper names and their English cognates are given in bold to illustrate this: *Ana, Julio, Laura, Paula, Roberto,* and *Tere.*

Screen 9

The six Spanish proper names of screen 8 are repeated in bold for students to listen to. Next to each word are two buttons: one for the student to record herself saying the word, the other to play back the recording.

Screen 10

The consonant groups *ll, qu, rr,* and *ch* all represent one sound and therefore belong in the same syllable.

Screen 11

Eight words in bold are presented for the student to hear. The student is asked to write in a text bar each word's syllable division. The student may then click on a check mark to check her answer. Example words include *saqué, finito,* and *jamón,* among others.

Screen 12

Because consonants tend to form the inital position of a syllable, consonant groups also tend to form the same syllable-initial position, with the proviso that only consonant groups that may begin a word in

Spanish are allowed to form the initial part of a syllable. Otherwise, they will be divided into separate syllables (e.g., *a-pren-der*).

Screen 13

Eight bold-faced words are listed and the student is asked to listen to the words then choose, among three options, the correct syllable division of each word.

Screen 14

There are two kinds of vowels in Spanish. The first is the strong vowel, which always forms the vowel nucleus of a syllable. They are *a, e,* and *o.* In general, when two strong vowels are juxtaposed, each will require its own syllable. The word *teatro* is bold-faced and the student can hear how the *e* and *a* are in hiatus (*hiato*); there is a syllabic boundary between them: *te-a-tro.* Example words are *caos, feo, maestro, boa,* and *Noé.*

Screen 15

The vowels *i* and *u* usually lose their syllabic quality when they combine with an adjacent vowel. They are called *weak* vowels. Six words illustrate various vowel combinations containing *i* and *u*, including *Juan, fuego,* and *traición.*

Screen 16

When two vowels combine and one is a weak vowel, they form a diphthong (*diptongo*). When three vowels that are combined contain weak vowels, they form a triphthong (*triptongo*). The word *Uruguay* is bold-faced and given as an example of a triphthong.

Screen 17

In Spanish, all syllables are pronounced more or less with the same duration, giving the language its characteristic repetitive rhythm. Two columns of seven words, written in bold and paired off as minimal pairs, illustrate the fact that the weak vowel of a diphthong, though brief, is still audible. Among the minimal pairs the student listens to are *dio/do* and *fue/fe.*

Screen 18

Eight bold-faced words are listed. Students listen to the words then choose from three choices the correct syllable division of each word. Words in the list include *ciencia, cuidado, reaccionar,* and *traición.*

Screen 19

Because syllable-initial position tends to be occupied by consonants and syllable-final position by vowels, glides can be divided into two groups: semi-vowels that end a syllable (e.g., *a-fei-tar*), and semi-consonants that begin a syllable (e.g., *pa-tio*). Four bold-faced words exemplify each type of glide.

Screen 20

The student listens to eight bold-faced words containing diphthongs. Then she is asked to write in the text box next to each word whether the glide is a semi-vowel (semi-V) or a semi-consonant (semi-C).

Screen 21

Syllabification in Spanish occurs the same way in a phrase as it does in a word: a consonant will combine with a following vowel to form a syllable. There are no phonetic boundaries between words in a sentence. This is known as *linking* (*enlace* or *encadenamiento*). The bold-faced sentence *"El inglés es un idioma"* is given as an example: *e-lin-glé-se-su-ni-dio-ma.*

Screen 22

A Spanish couplet is bold-faced and serves as an example of *linking.* Linking between words in the couplet is indicated by the ^ symbol. The student is then given each line of the couplet separately to listen to. She next records herself saying the verse and then plays back the recording.

Screen 23

The student listens to six bold-faced sentences, then divides each sentence into syllables in the text box that appears below each sentence.

Screen 24

The same six sentences of screen 23 are listed and the student is asked to read them aloud, attempting to repeat each sentence with the correct syllable divisions.

Screen 25

This is a summary screen of the lesson.

LESSON SUMMARIES

Table 1 summarizes many of the points discussed in the other nine lessons of the program. These lessons utilize a variety of exercises similar to those found in the Syllable lesson.

Table 1. Lesson Summaries for Nine Lessons

Stress	Phoneme	Vowels: Description
*It is contrastive. *Most words do not have a written accent mark. *A written accent mark identifies the stressed syllable. *Words ending in a vowel or -n, -s have stress on next-to-last syllable. *Words ending in a consonant (except -n, -s) have stress on the last syllable. *4 word stress categories.	*Phonemes are a class of sounds that have a contrastive function. *One must learn a different system of contrasts when learning a second language. *Minimal pairs help identify phonemes. *Allophones are realizations of phonemes. *Differences between phoneme, allophone and letter.	*Mouth, lips, and tongue produce the characteristic sound of a vowel. *Vowel identity based on tongue movement and position (high, mid, low/front, central, back); degree of mouth aperture (open, closed) and position of lips (tensed, rounded).
Vowels: Pronunciation	**Consonants: Description**	**Consonants: Pronunciation**
*English vowels may vary from syllable to syllable but Spanish vowels retain their basic characteristic, whether in stressed or unstressed syllable. *Some allophonic variation with unstressed vowels in Spanish. *Care needed to maintain the speech organs in correct position when producing vowels.	*Consonants may be divided into 2 types, depending on whether airflow is constricted. *Obstruent consonants may be voiced or unvoiced. *Non-obstruent consonants are all voiced. *Consonants identified by three features: point and mode of articulation, and voicing.	*/p/, /t/, and /k/ have only one allophone that is unaspirated. *The distinction between nasal sounds is sometimes neutralized before consonants. */l/ is not velarized as in English. */b/, /d/, and /g/ have fricative and occlusive allophones. *Distinction between /r/, /rr/ occurs in intervocalic position.

Orthography	Dialects	Review
*u not pronounced between *g_e* or *g_i*. **ü* indicates pronunciation of *u* between *g_e* or *g_i*. **[x]* corresponds to *g, j,* and *x.* **[y]* corresponds to *ll* and *y.* **[s]* corresponds to *c, s,* and *z.* **[rr]* corresponds to *r* and *rr.* **[k]* corresponds to *k, c,* and *qu.* **h* is silent but may indicate hiatus. **b* and *v* have the same allophones.	*Three universal generalizations are that some dialects have more phonemes than others; pronunciation of consonants will vary according to their syllabic position; stressed vowels are more stable than unstressed vowels. *Consonants may be altered or lost in syllable-final position. *Unstressed vowels may be reduced, especially before [s]. *Dialects reviewed are Mexican, Castillian, Argentinian, and Dominican.	*Division of words and phrases into syllables *Stressed and unstressed syllables *Word stress categories *The phoneme and minimal pairs *Allophones and phonetic contrasts *Vowels *Consonants *Voicing, point, and mode of articulation *Orthography

DISCUSSION

This program is valuable for both advanced students of Spanish and Spanish teachers. It introduces the user to important concepts in phonetics, allows her to practice pronunciation, clarifies significant differences between Spanish and English pronunciation, and presents the user with interesting features of several regional dialects. I have used the program when teaching Spanish phonetics and it has been a great supplement to our course textbook.

The program was updated in 2002, which helped rid the program of some of its procedural problems (de-bugging issues). For instance, with the 1999 version 2.0, on a frequent basis it was hard to find the right spot to click to hear a word or sentence, or to check a response. This has been improved with version 2.1. Still, some minor distractions were missed in the update. For example, not all bold-faced words have audio files as is suggested. There are also still some spelling mistakes, such as *los consonantes* for *las consonantes*. On occasion, an activity is misleading. For instance, in the Syllable lesson, English and Spanish cognates are given to show a difference in syllable division. The names *Robert* and *Roberto* are used to show this difference, among others. However, although *Robert* may be divided in the dictionary as *Rob-ert*, in actual practice most people say *Ro-bert*, which is similar to the syllable division of its Spanish cognate *Ro-ber-to*. Thus, some of the examples chosen to illustrate a difference between English and Spanish syllabification may actually confuse the students.

Having a dictionary with entries for its capitalized phonetic terms would have also aided the program's user. An activity testing the student on the meanings of such terms would have also been useful. In addition, I would suggest that audio files to accompany portions of the main text of each lesson would benefit students. On many occasions, my students have asked me how to pronounce particular words in the main texts of the program's lessons!

Although out-dated in some respects, the program remains a useful tool for introducing Spanish phonetics to majors and minors. If future updates are considered, I hope careful attention will be given to the content issues outlined here.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Phillip Elliott is an Associate Professor in the Department of Foreign Languages at Southern University-Baton Rouge, where he teaches Spanish and Mandarin Chinese. He holds a PhD in Second Language Acquisition and Teaching from the University of Arizona (SLAT Program).

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