

Teaching English Consonants to Spanish Speakers **Universidad de Guayaquil**

MSc. Jorge Humberto Tapia Celi

MSc. Wilmer Oswaldo Guerrero Aguilar, MSc. Carlos Valle Navarro, MSc. Jacqueline Astudillo Calderón

ABSTRACT: *Like many other languages, English also has a wide variation in pronunciation, which not only marks its differences from other languages but also indicates the deviations observed among English speakers of dissimilar backgrounds. The uses of stress, pitch as well as syllables apparently vary among native as well as non-native English speakers. The variances observed in the use and the pronunciation of each syllable in English becomes more apparent when depending on the use of the phonemes as well as the dialect. In English speaking, the pronunciation of vowels also differs from the pronunciation of the consonants depending on their uses. Change in the pronunciation, when speaking English, is observed to be a major characteristic of the language. On a wider note, English pronunciation is not always predictable depending on the spellings, which also vary from one region and culture to the other, as in the case of British English and American English. Depending on the use of rhythm and syllables differently, the pronunciation changes, making it difficult for the learners to grasp each word separately. However, the uses of the vowels are quite different from the use of the consonants. Pronunciation of consonants usually changes with the change in its positioning. Spanish speakers have been observed to be quiet similar to the English speakers. However, the Spanish languages have been observed to be a bit different from the English speakers in respect to the use of the vowels and consonants. It is owing to these variations that the meaning of each word changes with the change in its pronunciation. Accordingly, the research paper elaborates the use of the consonants and place along with their manner of articulation. Detailed description of the use of consonants has also been provided in the discussion henceforth, comparing the changes involved with their uses.*

Keywords: *pronunciation, stress, pitch, syllable, phoneme, dialect, spelling, rhythm.*

I. INTRODUCTION

English language constitutes of 20 consonants. All the alphabets, other than the vowels A, E, I, O, U are consonants. However, the letter Y is often considered a vowel. The rules regarding the use of Y specify that when any word starts with the letter, such as Yak, Yacht or Yogurt, it is considered a consonant. Similarly, when a word ends with Y, the letter is classified as a vowel, such as in the case of Apology, Apostasy, Ancestry and Ideology among others. Mostly, all the words in any English alphabet begin with a consonant when being pronounced. Apparently, as the usage varies in writing and speaking, students get confused with the use of the consonants and vowels, as they sound more or less similar. The pronunciation of the consonants usually blocks the flow of the air through the mouth either partially or completely and therefore, becomes prominent when speaking. However, depending on the mode of pronunciation, 24 consonants represent different sounds. It is noteworthy in this context that the pronunciation of consonants has been hugely different among the communities who speak English. The pronunciation of English language also includes the use of different phones. These phones refer to the different pronunciation styles that elucidate the detectable differences in pronunciation of a single consonant. This difference of consonant pronunciation is done by the ‘distinctive unit of sound’ that helps to isolate each component from the others. This ‘distinctive unit of sound’ is called phonemes (P. Coxhead 1-13).

Contextually, phonetics or phonology is identified to be a very complex process involved with the skills of speaking. This complexity gets multiplied when the skills of speaking needs to be adapted of a different language, other than the mother tongue as noted in the case of non-native speakers. The accurate identification of phonological practices of a different language is an even more difficult task. Such a variance becomes much apparent when studying the differences between native English speakers and the Spanish speakers. While teaching English to the Spanish speakers, major attention needs to be provided to the use of different parts of the mouth to pronounce the consonants clearly. Combinations of the movement of different articulators need to be clearly identified to understand the differences in pronunciation of the consonants. The movements of the mouth, lips and teeth modify the airstream into producing different sounds, which are traditionally divided into vowels and consonants. The major difference that can be identified in between the consonants and the vowels are that the vowels are pronounced without any obstruction in the mouth; whereas consonants resemble the sounds that are produced following the different obstruction or restriction of the air passage (Allen “Pronunciation Difficulties for Students with L1 Spanish”).

Consonants are categorized following a place as well as the manner of articulation. This manner usually refers to the nature of obstruction that is created on the path of the airflow. Usually, consonants are produced with a permanent feature representing a particular sound created by an obstruction to the flow of the air. It can be ascertained in this context that until and unless the consonant is used with a separate meaning as an allophone, the sound produced does not change. Moreover while pronouncing a consonant, aspects like word stress, intonation as well as the rhythm needs to be considered. Accordingly, the use of ‘parts of speeches’ in English literature have often influenced the pronunciation of different languages. However, at the segmental level, problems related with the pronunciation of vowels are asserted to be more complicated than the consonants (Allen “Pronunciation Difficulties for Students with L1 Spanish”).

THESIS STATEMENT

This research paper focuses on the use of various articulation manners for the pronunciation of consonants. The different obstructing factors that affect the pronunciations of the consonants have also been elaborated in the discussion henceforth. The different intonations, rhythm and word stresses have been identified accordingly, in order to enhance the quality of pronunciation. These differences observed in the use of consonants for the Spanish language has been analyzed to enhance teaching abilities when imparting a better understanding related to the problems faced for pronunciations. The production of sounds has also been analyzed with the use of the different allophones, phoneme and phones. The production of sound that helps in enhancing the level of the pronunciation has also been analyzed in this section to enhance the quality of the pronunciation. With this regard, the paper identifies the segmental level of the production of different sounds with the use of consonants. Identification of the major differences between the English and Spanish languages has also been emphasized in order to rule out the major discrepancies that blocks the path of the proper training.

ROLE OF CONSONANTS IN ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION

Major Rules of Pronunciations. Consonants play a major role in English pronunciation, especially in determining the organs involved in the production of sound. Since the consonant sounds are created through a few obstructions in the mouth organs during articulation, the major requirement is to understand the involvement of the organs. The involvement of the organs to produce sounds can emerge as a major requirement while pronouncing consonants. Notably, there are certain consonants in English alphabets having sharing features with the vowels. In contrast to the vowels, the consonant sounds are produced by compressing the flow of air at the various level of pronunciation. This creates a unique set of sounds that are identifiable and creates an expected sound every time it is pronounced (Oh 1-9).

It has often been noted that the use of certain consonants in a particular word makes it sound like a vowel when spoken by Spanish speakers. This creates confusion in pronouncing a consonant, as it gets linked with a vowel. Moreover, when pronouncing two consecutive words with the first ending with a consonant and the second starting with vowel the consonant is pronounced at the beginning of the second word. For example, when writing the words are written as “turn off” but when speaking the two consecutive words it is generally pronounced as “tur noff”. Observably, the consonant “N” of the word “turn”, gets shifted to the beginning of the word “off”, starting with a vowel. Moreover, while speaking certain words, the position of the mouth, lips and tongue plays different roles. Certain consonants are pronounced using the movement of the tongue only, whereas the other follows the articulation of all the three organs. With the different linkups, the pronunciation of the consonant, changes creating different obstructions at places of articulation in mouth (Oh 1-9). For example, the letter “L” is a consonant that is produced by pressing the “tip of the tongue” on the upper jaw. Any word beginning with the consonant “L” is produced following the same phenomena (Oh 1-9).

Unlike the vowels, the consonant sounds are usually produced with a comparatively open vocal track. The major articulation of the consonants is produced with the use of dental, palatal, nasal and velar in common instances. The consonants are classified under 24 consonants depending on their pronunciation. The differences are also classified by the manner of the constriction or obstruction that influences the sound while being pronounced. Illustratively, the sounds produced by the constriction of the bilabial, i.e. between both lips will be identifiably different from the sound produced with the help of the alveolar, i.e. the obstruction between the tongue and the alveolar ridge. Depending on the voicing status of the consonants, the consonants can be segregated in different ways, as their sounds do not match with each other owing to the involvement of the phonics that is typically involved in the production of the sounds. With the major role that consonants play in order to make the speech easier to understand, it becomes necessary to use the consonants properly (Roach 1-50).

Psychological & Cultural Effects of Pronunciation. There are the different use of intonation and rhythm of pronunciation of English in the different sectors as well as in the different regions. The different regions that speak English as first language use separate modes of pronunciation of the consonants. These differences in the phones make it difficult to adapt to the new languages and the intonations. The tendency of

the human brain in accepting the known and rejecting the unknown further blocks the path of proper adaptation to the changes. The major difficulty that leads to the improper learning of the pronunciation is observed to be the psychological factors rather than the physiological factors. Thus, the consonant sounds that are anticipatory, changes with the alterations in the manner of articulation. Through proper explanation of the manner of articulation through articulatory organs, good pronunciation can be taught. This also needs to familiarize the use of articulatory organ as required for the proper pronunciation of the word to enhance the perfection (Gomez “Pronunciation of American English Consonants”).

Cultural differences even block the path of the development of a proper understanding of the pronunciation system that needs to be followed while pronouncing consonants. The cultural blockage and inclination towards a particular mode of pronunciation even blocks the grammatical implication on the pronunciation at often instances. Particular consonants are also found difficult in pronunciation need to be pronounced through better use of the intonation that needs to be modified without inhibition (Gomez “Pronunciation of American English Consonants”).

Importance of the Consonant Characteristics in Speech. Consonants have a very important role to play in framing speeches. The sounds produced while pronouncing certain vowels and consonants can become quite tricky, which needs to be identified properly. The uses of the consonants have also been observed to be a bit complex than the use of the vowels when speaking. All the vowels are pronounced through open vocal tracks. However, the consonants, even when they are produced with the same manner of articulation the sounds produced are different from each other. These characteristics need to be observed while pronouncing the consonants to enhance the clarity of the speeches. The characterization of the consonants is further observed through the following table.

	Voicing	Place of Articulation							
	v v	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Palato-Alveolar (Post Alveolar)	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Manner of Articulation	Plosive	p b			t d			k g	ʔ
	Fricative		f v	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ		ŋ	h
	Affricate					tʃ dʒ			
	Nasal	m			n				
	Lateral				l				
	Approximant	w				r	j		

Figure 1: Characteristics of Consonant
(Source: Gomez “Pronunciation of American English Consonants”)

From the above table, different characterization of consonants and their manner of articulation could be easily observed. Moreover, the different manner of articulation also involves the differences in the pronunciation of consonants. Observably, the sounds produced by the consonants under the affricates are harder than the stops as well as the fricatives forms of the consonants. In addition, the words those involve the consonant through the bilabial and alveolar are difficult to be pronounced simultaneously. The voice planning is of prime importance in this context while producing consonant sounds. Additionally, the pronunciations of the consonants have been observed by several language pathologists to be a set of complex planning. The presence and absence of the voicing even has a pivotal role in proper planning of the pronunciation of the consonant (Gomez “Pronunciation of American English Consonants”).

SPANISH LANGUAGE AND CONSONANT

Overview. Spanish is one of the commonly spoken languages around the world. Several factors focus on the resemblance of the language with English. Spanish language is spoken by near about 470 million people across the world, with 410 million people speaking Spanish as their first language (Frederick 1-2). Spanish language constitutes of 24 phonemes constituting five vowels and nineteen consonants. However, there are certain differences in the degree of stress given on pronunciation of the consonants. Around 15 phonemes are present in both the languages. Out of the 15 phonemes, 5 phonemes appear in Spanish only whereas, 9 appear in English only. Moreover, there is a huge difference in the manner of articulation observed between the two languages. The pitches, syllables, ascents and dialects depict a significant difference between the two languages. Additionally, the stress on the words while pronouncing has also been creating a huge amount of confusion

among the Spanish students learning to speak English. At several illustrations, it has been perceived that voicing for the different consonants was done incorrectly owing to the misjudgement of the intonation (Frederick 1-2).

Articulation variances between Spanish and English. It is also observed that there are certain consonants in the Spanish language that produces different sounds when being pronounced, without changing the meaning. However, the general pronunciation practices in the English language follow the rule that the change in the pronunciation of consonants changes the meaning of the word. For instance, the letters “Ch” and “Sh” are the two different phonemes and are pronounced separately. However, a student of native Spain will pronounce the two letters interchangeably without any alteration to the meaning of the word. Accordingly, certain consonant letters, such as “v” and “b” as well as “s” and “z” are pronounced as two different phonemes. However, in Spanish languages the use of vibration, while pronouncing a word, is not used. Hence, the words “v” and “b”, though used separately while writing, are pronounced as “b” due to the lack of vibration required while pronouncing the consonant “v”. Similarly, in the cases of both “s” and “z”, the consonants appear separately while writing, but are pronounced “s” while speaking. These allophonic variations prevalent in the Spanish language create confusions for the students learning to speak English. Spanish students, due to their mismanagement of proper voicing, fail to identify the differences between the pronunciations of the letters (Frederick 1-2).

To be mentioned in this context, a significant percentage of differences between the uses of syllables in the English and Spanish languages. Spanish language, unlike English, is a syllabic language. The Spanish language follows a special syllable for the use of vowels and stresses in between sentences. The pitch of pronunciation in the Spanish language does not vary with the use of separate consonants like that in English language. Moreover, in English language, the use of double consonants is prevalent, which, on the contrary is found missing in the Spanish language. Due to the lack of pitch usage among the Spanish students, words may sound monotonous while speaking English. However, since both the languages use roman alphabets, it supports to build phonemic and phonological foundations. Since both the languages has a similar basic structure of forming sentences as well as the use of the parts of speeches, it also helps the students to ensure that they can easily adapt to the changes. Moreover, since 30%-40% of the words used in both languages are similar, it becomes easier for the Spanish students to adapt with the new [English] language easily. In addition to the above, the learning processes of both the languages follow the same fundamentals, enhancing the affluence of learning and development of fluency in the new language (Frederick 1-2 Batzarov “Phonology and Spelling”).

Difference between the Uses of Consonants. The difficulty faced by the Spanish students in learning English is the phoneme related with the use of vowels and consonants. There understanding about the phoneme use of vowels in the word “seat” or “sit” is far different from the English. Notably, for consonants, there are a few basic differences amid the two languages. For example, the major difference is observed in the use of consonants, as these are observed to be related with the letters like “v”, “ll”, “h”, “j”, “r”, “rr”, “z”, “ñ” and “x”. The use of the above-mentioned consonants varies apparently amid the two languages (Colorado “Capitalizing on Similarities and Differences between Spanish and English”).

However, these above mentioned consonants are not easily identifiable by the Spanish students. The difference in the stress and pitch of every consonant is prevalent in the English language, which however is absent in Spanish. Moreover, the double words are not used in Spanish language, making it a bit difficult for the students to understand the use of the phones and stress to pronounce the same. The use of different intonation between two words, as used in the Spanish language, affects the pronunciation of English and the fluency while speaking. Observably, the use of the voicing before and after a consonant is absent in the Spanish language. Again, the use of vibration in the English language to pronounce certain words is absent in others. Another major difference that could be identified in the English language is the rhythm of holding and releasing of air before and after a consonant is pronounced. This affects the pronunciation of the word in a larger context for the non-native English speakers (Colorado “Capitalizing on Similarities and Differences between Spanish and English”).

Major Confusions Faced By Spanish Students when Learning English. The use of the consonant digraphs are absent in the Spanish language that creates a difficulty in the pronunciation of the end consonants. In addition, the use of the consonant “u” is absent in the Spanish alphabet, which even confuses the students while learning English. Additionally, the use of the end consonants and the plurals are usually pronounced differently in the English languages, which even creates a difficulty in proper pronunciation of English words, as the use of stress is missing in the Spanish language. Another constraint could be identified regarding the use of the consecutive consonants i.e. “qu” (Colorado “Capitalizing on Similarities and Differences between Spanish and English”).

For example, the words “que” and “qui” are pronounced in the Spanish language keeping “u” silent wherein the consonant “u” remains silent until it is written as “ü”. This makes it difficult for the Spanish students to identify the phoneme of the English words like “queen”, “quilt”, “query”, “quick”, “quiet” etc. Owing to the voiceless pronunciation of the consonant “u” in the Spanish languages, the learners face

substantial difficulties to identify the differences in intonations of the English language. The similar problems could be identified with the use of two consecutive consonants at the end of the word makes it difficult for the Spanish students to differentiate between the intonations and pitch. The beginning and end consonants of the English language make it difficult for Spanish students to pronounce the words properly (Colorado “Capitalizing on Similarities and Differences between Spanish and English”). Illustratively, the Spanish pronunciation does not identify the following sounds.

Characteristics	Letters	Words
Consonant digraphs	sh, th, wh, ph etc.	shoot, thought, what, phone etc.
Consonant blends	sl, sm, scr, spr, str etc	sleep, smell, screen, spring, string etc.
Initial sounds	kn, qu, wr, sk etc	know, quick, wrong, skin etc.
Final sounds	ck, ng, gh	check, bring, enough etc.

As can be observed from the above discussion, the word ending with “ed”, pronounced as /d/ or /t/ are absent in Spanish language, which creates a backlog for the students to grasp the proper stress for pronunciation. Moreover, the abrupt use of the suffixes and prefixes in the English language makes it difficult for the Spanish students to identify the actual pronunciation style. It has also been observed that the pronunciation of certain consonants is different in the two languages. Furthermore, the use of the contraction is also absent in Spanish, which makes it even difficult for the students to identify the differences (Colorado “Capitalizing on Similarities and Differences between Spanish and English”).

Knowledge for Learning. The basic differences between the two languages need to be identified to enhance the pronunciation of the words properly. In this context, the major area that creates a problem to learn English is the difference between the pronunciations of the syllable of the Spanish language. Spanish language follows a pattern of syllable-timed language, which again creates an impact on the pronunciation, when they speak English. The strong correspondence between pronunciation of a particular word and spelling that is found in Spanish language is however missing in English language. Moreover, Spanish language has only three double lettered words namely, “ll”, “rr” and “cc” in comparison to the English language, which has a lot more use of the double letter words. This makes it difficult for the Spanish students to adapt the complexity of the new language. Furthermore, the use of the contractions like “don’t”, “isn’t” and “weren’t” are absent in the Spanish language, which creates confusion among the English learners at often times. The suffixes, prefixes as well as the use of the punctuations also create a problem for the Spanish students to grab the correct use of intonation of English speaking. The use of the proper stress and vibrations while pronouncing certain consonants also needs to be observed to ensure a correct approach towards the pronunciation. Additionally, the use of the various manners of articulation needs to be identified in order to enhance the fluency of speaking (Colorado “Capitalizing on Similarities and Differences between Spanish and English”; Teflnet “Pronunciation Problems for Spanish-Speaking Learners of English”).

WAYS OF PRONOUNCING CONSONANT

The pronunciation of the consonants involves a lot of obstruction while being pronounced. The intonation, stress and pitch of the words need to be properly judged to make the pronunciation clear. Moreover, it has also been observed that the consonant sounds are produced by completely or partially stopping breathe. The pronunciations herewith need to be clear with the use of vibrations of the vocal track to make the sounds significantly different from the others. The stress on the beginning and end of the consonants are observed to help in identifying the differences between two consonants. The proper pronunciation of the letters is provided in the following table (Colorado “Capitalizing on Similarities and Differences between Spanish and English”).

Letters	Pronunciation	Letters	Pronunciation
B	/bee/	P	/pee/
C	/cee/	Q	/cue/
D	/dee/	R	/ar/
F	/ef/	S	/ess/
G	/gee/	T	/tee/
H	/aitch/	V	/vee/
J	/jay/	W	/double-u/
K	/kay/	X	/ex/
L	/el/	Y	/wy(e)/
M	/em/	Z	/zed/
N	/en/		

(Colorado “Capitalizing on Similarities and Differences between Spanish and English”)

The consonants pronunciation dependent on several factors the use of the voiced and voiceless. The soft and hard consonants are also differentiated depending on their pronunciation. The proper pronunciation of the consonant is dependent majorly on the place and manner of articulation as well as the way they are pronounced. The consonants used with the vowels further helps in enhancing the quality of the sentences. However, use of the various consonants need to be analyzed in such a way that the pronunciation related with the consonants can be differentiated effectively. The pronunciations of the consonants are also elaborated in details in the following sections (Indiana University and Michael Gasser “Consonants in other languages”). It is in this context that mouth, throat and lips play a major role in pronunciation, as elaborated in the sections below.

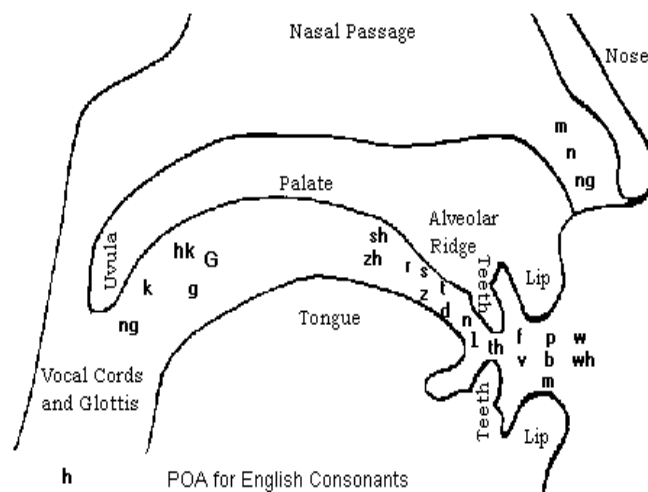


Figure 2: Places of Articulation for English Consonants
(Source: Tun “Properties of Consonants”)

Manner of Articulation. The manner of articulation defines the six ways, which are involved in the production of the consonant sounds. They are plosive, approximant, affricate, fricative, lateral as well as nasal, as illustrated below.

Plosive

The term ‘plosive’ is derived from explosive, meaning an outburst of air. The word refers to the burst of air felt while pronouncing certain consonants. This happens while pronouncing certain consonants that stop the flow of the air causing the pressure create inside the mouth that leads to the outburst of the air (P. Coxhead 1-13). This can easily be understood by a small experiment.

Experiment:

Put a palm in front of the mouth and try pronouncing the letters “p” and “b” simultaneously. One would feel a burst of air on the palm while pronouncing these letters consecutively, whereby a puff of air released creates a mini explosion on the palm.

Fricative

The consonants that are produced by creating an obstruction on the flow of air through the oral cavity are called fricative consonants. The word ‘fricative’ has its origin from the word friction. The friction is created by the two articulators of the oral cavity like the lips, lower teeth, alveolar ridge or tip of the tongue that creates a block in the flow of the air. This blockage compels the air to flow through very small opening of the mouth creating turbulence (P. Coxhead 1-13). The following experiment illustrates the pronunciation of the fricative words:

Experiment:

Try pronouncing the letters /v/ and /s/ simultaneously there will be a hissing sound followed by the pronunciation. The hissing sound is created through the block created by the lower teeth or by tip of tongues allowing the air to pass from the alveolar ridge.

Affricate

There are only two affricate consonants in English alphabets. The affricates are an arrangement of the fricative and plosive consonants. These consonants are pronounced by completely blocking the path of the air from the oral cavity, like the plosives, followed by gradual release of the air like fricative (P. Coxhead 1-13).

Experiment:

Pronounce the letter “t” and “f” simultaneously. The letter “t” would block the flow of the air completely, which will be gradually released by the word “f”. The other affricate of the English alphabet is “d” followed by “z”.

Nasal

The consonants that are pronounced by the release of the air from the nasal cavity other than the oral cavity is called the nasal consonant. This phenomenon occurs as the tongue blocks the alveolar ridge compelling the air to pass from nasal cavity (P. Coxhead 1-13).

Experiment:

While pronouncing the letters “n” and “m” the tongue touches completely blocks the flow of the air through oral cavity. This compels the air to flow through the nose creating a nasal sound while pronouncing the letters.

Lateral

English alphabets have only one lateral letter “l” as the letter “l” is the only consonant that is pronounced by the tongue tip touching the back of the tip. This allows the air to pass from the sides of the tongue (P. Coxhead 1-13).

Experiment:

Try uttering the word “love”, “light”, “lock” etc. it will be observed that the air passes from the side of the tongue and the tip of tongue blocks the flow of air from the oral cavity.

Approximant

The consonant that are produced by the movement of the lips but the lips, without touching each other, is called the approximant consonants. These articulators are involved to produce the sound related with pronouncing the consonants that creates an approximate sound.

Experiment:

Pronounce the letter “w” and “r” or the words like “red” or “wait” the upper and the lower lips moves towards each other but does not touch each other.

(P. Coxhead 1-13)

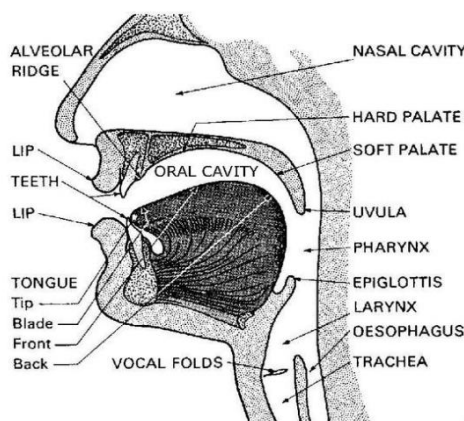


Figure 3: Places of Articulation

(Tangient LLC “Learning English! - Consonants, Vowels & Diphthongs”)

Place of Articulation. Mouth, lips, tongue and the other parts of the facial cavity has a great involvement in the production of the sounds. The places of articulation involved with pronouncing of the words are performed with the different parts of the mouth and throat. These “places of articulation” are explained below.

Bilabial

The word ‘bilabial’ is derived from two words “bi” meaning two and “labia” meaning lips. Thus, the term bilabial refers to the two lips. The bilabial consonants are pronounced by carrying the two lips together (P. Coxhead 1-13). For example, the letters “p”, “b”, “w”, “m” etc. are produced by bringing the two lips together. The upper lip herewith plays a comparatively passive role than the lower lips while pronouncing the words.

Labiodental

The letters that are produced by the use of the teeth and lips are classified under the labiodental consonant. These words are usually produced by the involvement of the articulators namely the lower lips and the teeth (P. Coxhead 1-13). Illustratively, pronouncing the letters like “f” and “v” involves the use of the lower lips and the upper teeth. These sounds are produced when the upper teeth are brought near the lower lips.

Dental

The dental reverberations are produced when the tongue tip is placed between the “upper and lower teeth”. The lower teeth as well as the tongue act as an active articulator in these words whereas the upper teeth play a passive role (P. Coxhead 1-13). For Example, while pronouncing the words like “that” and “think” the tip of the tongue comes in between upper teeth as well as lower teeth.

Alveolar

The sounds produced by the use of the alveolar ridge are termed as the alveolar consonant. These words that are produced by the tongue being brought near the “alveolar ridge” are classified under this group (P. Coxhead 1-13). The words as “den” and “net” are produced by the tongue are taken near the alveolar ridge. People can even pronounce the words placing the tongue on the alveolar ridge.

Post-Alveolar

The words that are formed by employing the tongue behind the alveolar ridge are called post-alveolar consonants (P. Coxhead 1-13). For example, the words like “jungle” are produced by placing the tongue behind the alveolar ridge that is tongue tip gets rolled over the alveolar ridge to produce the sound.

Palatal

The sound produced when the tongue body moves near the hard palate is called the palatal consonants (P. Coxhead 1-13). Illustration of these words can be identified as “yet”, which are produced by the active articulation of the tongue over the hard palate.

Velars

The sounds that are produced by the movement of the tongue and the velum are called the ‘velar consonant’ (P. Coxhead 1-13). For example, the word “kite” is produced by the back of the tongue raised towards the velar, allowing the velar to play as an active articulator for pronouncing the word.

Glottal

The consonant that are produced by the different states of glottis are called glottal consonants. Examples of this consonant can be identified with the production of sounds related with the letter “h” hat involves the movement of the vocal cords to create the sound (P. Coxhead 1-13).

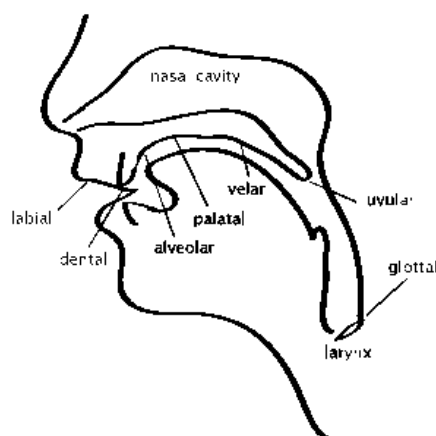


Figure3: Places of Articulation

(Source: Rosenfelder “The Language Construction Kit”)

Voiced and Unvoiced Consonants. The simple definition of the voiced consonants is the ones that use the voice while being pronounced. These voiced consonants create a vibration on the vocal track while being pronounced while the unvoiced consonants do not create any such stress on the vocal track while being pronounced. Notably, the differences amid the voiced as well as unvoiced consonants can be observed from the buzzing sound created while pronouncing a consonant. The difference between certain consonants can be identified by the use of stress on each alphabet. For example, pronunciation of the consonants varies between “s” and “z”. While pronouncing the letter “z” from the English alphabet, it can be observed that the local cords vibrate. It can be easily observed by putting a hand on the throat and pronouncing “z”. Similarly, the letters “b” and “v” is pronounced as voiced and unvoiced consonants. Between these two letters, the unvoiced consonant is “b” and voiced consonant is “v”. This is because of the same phenomena that a vibration of the local vocal cord is felt while pronouncing the letter “v” (British Council “Voiced and unvoiced consonants”).

On a larger context, certain words ending with the letter “s” is pronounced like the letter “z”. Likewise, the voiced and the unvoiced consonant of the English alphabet even changes depending on their application in a word. The use of the consonants consecutively even changes the phoneme of the consonants and creates a separate sound when being pronounced. Observably, there are several other letters, which are otherwise unvoiced consonants but turn to be voiced when used in the beginning of a word (British Council “Voiced and unvoiced consonants”). To be illustrated, the letter “b” is used as an unvoiced consonant when it is pronounced in the word “bat”. However, it becomes a voiced consonant when it is used in the word “bed”. Similarly, several other letters, when used at the beginning of a word or at the end of a word, changes from being a voiced to an unvoiced consonant. This could be easily observed from the illustration below.

/s/	/z/
cups	pens
speaks	reads
gets	goes
puts	cars
tents	sees
plants	hears
looks	learns
stops	rose
rice	rise
place	plays

This signifies that the letter “s”, which is an unvoiced consonant, converts into a voiced constant when being used as an ending consonant at several cases. Observably, the pronunciation of “stops” follows a pronunciation of /s/ whereas “pens” is provided as /z/. The use of different consonants at the beginning of words is considered to be voiced to unvoiced consonants (British Council “Voiced and unvoiced consonants”).

Voiced	Unvoiced
Ben	pen
do	to
gone	con
van	fan
gin	chin
zoo	Sue

(British Council “Voiced and unvoiced consonants”)

PRONOUNCING DIFFICULT CONSONANTS

For Spanish students, the major problem that they face while learning English pronunciation is the change in the use of pitch and stress. The differences in the syllables even create a problem for the Spanish people in understanding the variations persisting between the use of different words and pronunciations related with the same. However, the use of certain consonant simultaneously has been observed to be quite tricky. The “hiccough” though ends with “gh” sounds like the consonant “p”. Again, in the word “rabbit”, the use of the double “b” is replaced by single “b” when being pronounced by the Spanish language. The following sections will elaborate on the major problems that are faced while pronouncing a particular consonant.

Approximant Sounds of Consonants. The consonant of English alphabet has majorly four approximate sounds namely ‘L’, ‘R’, ‘W’ and ‘Y’. These four words are considered approximant because the sounds produced while pronouncing these words can easily be separated from the other alphabets (Tangient LLC “Learning English! - Consonants, Vowels & Diphthongs”).

For example, while pronouncing the letter “L” in the word “lot”, it is observed that the sound is achieved by pressing tongue tip behind the upper front teeth. However, the gap allows the sound pass from beside the tongue creating a unique sound. Similarly, for letter R, as used in the word “rip”, the sound is produced by the back of the tip bunching towards the velar, creating a rolling sound. This sound is identifiable among all other sounds produced while pronouncing a consonant (Tangient LLC “Learning English! - Consonants, Vowels & Diphthongs”). Correspondingly, the other letters that has been mentioned above provides a same phenomenon and consonants that becomes easily identifiable among all other consonants. These four consonants are pronounced neither like open sounds pronounced directly from the trachea nor are

they produced with closed lips. This unique manner of articulation makes the letters segregated easily from the others creating a separate approximate sound identifiable at the time of pronunciation. Moreover, the rhotic and the non-rhotic pronunciation vary with the use of “r”. To be mentioned in this context, Americans pronounce “r” in “rhotic” style while the others pronounce in the non-rhotic style. However, the major differences that could be identified are that “r” is pronounced clearly when used at the beginning of the word, whereas the same is not pronounced when it is used in between (British Council “Voiced and unvoiced consonants”).

Stopped Sounds. Certain consonants are produced by creating a stop in the airflow and then slowly releasing the air. These words usually demand proper movement of places of articulation creating an effect on the manner the word as produced. The Spanish speakers learning English pronunciation faces problems in this regard, to follow the correct use of the places of articulation to articulate the proper pronunciation. Moreover, the stop in pronouncing the words having “m” in their end, which requires the closing and opening of lips at the same time, creates a severe problem for the Spanish people as often observed. This phenomenon of obstructing the flow of air creates an obstacle for the learners to grasp the correct pronunciation of the words. For example, the words like “dream”, “fame” and “William” is not clearly pronounced by the Spanish people, as they fail to close their lips to pronounce letter “m” towards the end of the words. Instead, the learners roll their tip towards the upper alveolar ridge instead of closing the lips creating a sound similar to “n” (Tangient LLC “Learning English! - Consonants, Vowels & Diphthongs”).

In order to enhance their pronouncing abilities, the Spanish learners must be managing their articulation movements correctly to enhance their abilities to pronounce. Another major problem faced by the Spanish people while pronouncing English is the use the letter “n” at the beginning or at the middle of a word. Spanish speakers are commonly observed to use the tongue in between their teeth to pronounce the letter “n”. This however does not disturb the sound but creates a delay in pronouncing the following words, creating monotone. Similarly, with the use of the letter “t” and “d”, the Spanish learners usually pronounce the letters by placing their tongue between their teeth. This creates a separate sound for the letters, making it difficult for them to be pronounced (Allen, “Pronunciation Difficulties for Students with L1 Spanish”).

Spanish speakers are also observed to use their tongue in between their teeth to stop the flow of air. However, this wrong practice makes it difficult to pronounce the word correctly. Moreover, this even creates a major problem in pronouncing the words at the beginning or towards the end of a word. The other problems faced by the Spanish speakers while pronouncing the letters “r” and “l” the exact articulation of the tongue is not identified by the Spanish learners and instead of pronouncing the correct accent of “r” they pronounce it with a slight vibration. This happens as the Spanish learners bring the tongue tip too close to the alveolar ridge creating a vibration sound instead of the normal pronunciation of the American “r”. This makes the pronunciation incorrect, creating a separate sound than the one that should be pronounced while pronouncing “r”, as used in the American pronunciation (Allen, “Pronunciation Difficulties for Students with L1 Spanish”).

Stressed & Unstressed Syllables. The use of syllables are usually absent in the Spanish languages making it difficult for the Spanish learners to understand the use of words to pronounce it correctly. The sentences used in the Spanish languages have stress in between two words that further creates a gap between pronouncing a word in English and in Spanish. When pronouncing the stressed syllables it was often observed that the Spanish speakers have problems with pronunciation. Certain word like “birthday” that has a secondary stress in the middle of the word and the word more or less sounds like “BIRTHday”. The stress of the word is often miscalculated by the Spanish learners making it difficult for them to identify the correct pronunciation of the words. The intonation and the phonological implication of the language are often misjudged by the speaker, which creates a severe backlog for them to grasp the correct form of pronunciation related to English (Allen, “Pronunciation Difficulties for Students with L1 Spanish”).

For example, the word “organization” is pronounced with a slight stress on the first and the middle syllables. This illustration suggests the use of the stress at the different syllables of single words, which ensures proper pronunciation of these words. The Spanish speakers also face problems with the different syllables and the stress that is implacable to a certain degree. This has also been observed that in order to enhance the pronunciation among the Spanish speakers, the use of the syllables needs to be identified to enhance their ability to pronounce properly (Allen, “Pronunciation Difficulties for Students with L1 Spanish”).

IDENTIFYING THE MEASURABLE TOOLS

Once imparting the knowledge of pronunciation, the improvement of the students needs to be measured. This is to be done in order to ensure that the studies are being imparted in the correct direction and the students are developing properly. The measurement of the development further needs to be conducted to ensure that the Spanish students are learning proper implications of English language efficiently. The proper measurement of the development of the students enhances their level of commitment towards the training. Moreover, with the issues like pronunciation, the ethical requirement to ensure proper development of the students becomes a mandate. To be argued in this context, with the differences in the background, culture and

ethnicity, the learning ability of the students vary largely. These effects need to be nullified to ensure that the overall developments of the students are ensured. Hence, the requirement for an adaptive test becomes a necessity. The adaptive tests also ensure the proper appraisal of the students' development has been analyzed. Several scales can ensure proper measurement of the students' appraisal when undergoing the tests. On this note, the Kentworthy measures ensure proper testing of the students' pronouncing abilities. This enhances the ability to judge the intelligence of the Spanish students. Kentworthy English pronunciation also ensures the correct measurement of Spanish students' speaking ability. This makes it efficient to measure the attitude of the students. The question-based analysis of the pronunciation further ensures that the mindset of the students can be easily judged. Certainly, this would also help to judge the weak students and thereby, provide them with better care to enhance their ability of English speaking. The regular motivation to speak more would also help the students to adapt to the new language. This would also enhance the fluency of the students and ensure that the students speak correct English. Accordingly, the students should be provided with extensive tutorial assistance to enhance their pronouncing skills further. The activities, like playing videos that depicts the different use of the places of articulation, as well as the manner of articulation to make the students proficient in pronouncing exactly (Allen "Pronunciation Difficulties for Students with L1 Spanish")

Suggestively, several audiovisual activities should be arranged so that the Spanish students can efficiently judge the movement of the lips and other articulators that would help them in learning and speaking English perfectly. Through audiovisual activities, the difference in the pronunciation of consonants needs to be detailed properly. The use of the stress of syllables also needs to be measured so that its correct application can be understood by the students. Moreover, it should also be observed that the students can leave behind their inhibitions related to their native languages and pronounce properly. Thus, to enhance the pronunciation of the basic words correctly, rigorous speaking sessions should be conducted to develop the fluency of the students along with ensuring that they speak correctly. The different discrepancies while speaking must also be effectively dealt with, so that the correct pronunciation of English words can be ensured among the Spanish student (Allen "Pronunciation Difficulties for Students with L1 Spanish").

Systematic measures of assessing the proficiency of English speaking are highly dependent on self-reporting of the proficiency. However, it has been often noticed that this reporting style, as followed by the Spanish speakers, involves many inhibitions and are usually incorrect. Proper tests can only be conducted by testing the students individually. The use of individual letters and their change with the pronunciation can easily be identified. The rectification can be duly made and the development can be ensured likewise through the suggested measures. A detailed testing of the students would further ensure that the objectives of training Spanish students to speak English properly are duly met. Observably, the testing would also help in identifying the major loopholes in the training process if any, and further ensure helpful steps in modifying the training process to improve the quality of training. The validity of these measures adapted to develop the linguistic skills need continuous monitoring and refining that can only be done through the continuous monitoring of students. Additionally, the acculturative studies can have systematic errors, which might create backlog for providing proper training. Testing would also ensure that the systematic errors are not repeated and rectified at the initial level so that the quality of the training process can be made increasingly effective (Allen, P. "Pronunciation Difficulties for Students with L1 Spanish").

II. SUMMARY

English is one of the most commonly spoken languages, particularly owing to the global identification of the language that has made it quite important for all individuals to learn to speak proper English. Proper speaking of any language involves the use of the words and letters related with the language. Like all other languages, apparent variety in the use of different alphabets and words in the English language is also noteworthy. The use of consonants is also quite complex in the English language. Specifically, the use of the consonants in the different words varies with their implications, which is observed to cause confusions among non-native English speakers. The changes involved with the use of consonants makes pronunciation even more complex. The consonants and their implications become even more complex, depending on the use of stresses and syllables. This diversity of the use of alphabets makes it difficult for the students to adapt to the language easily. This demands a proper framework that would enhance the quality of teaching involved with pronunciation.

Emphasizing the differences and imperfections in the English spoken by Spanish students, this paper elaborates different uses of consonants and their variations when pronounced by this group. The discussion hereby concludes that the "manner of articulation" plays a major role in pronouncing consonants. Depending on the syllables of the word and the stress on the syllables makes it furthermore difficult for the learners to pronounce it properly. Moreover, the "place of articulation" ensures that the word is spoken clearly. The change in the pronunciation can be noted abruptly thereto, depending on the use of the wrong place of articulation. Notably, the basic idea involved with pronouncing words can be duly observed by analyzing the manner as well

as the place that is involved with the process of articulation. Similarly, changes in the meaning of the word with the changes in pronunciation form a unique feature of the English language that makes it differentiated from the other languages. Conversely, the Spanish languages use certain dialects that are different from the English language, which makes it difficult for Spanish students to adapt to the changes.

Correspondingly, different uses of these consonants in both the languages make it difficult for the Spanish students to identify changes when speaking English. The framework provided in the chapter helps to identify the major loopholes of the students that would ensure a better understanding and enhance the level of the teaching, with this objective. Notably, the differences between the use of consonants in the Spanish and English languages make it difficult for the Spanish students to adapt with the changes in the use of consonants between the two languages. The chapter also elaborated on the differences in the pronunciation related with the use of certain consonants, which further revealed that these changes in the pronunciation related with the use of consonants and their positions needs to be identified and pronounced accordingly, demanding a rigorous training process. The different training schedules that need to be provided to the students have been elaborated in this chapter, with the notion that it would help in enhancing the pronunciation as well as the fluency of speaking English by Spanish students. Moreover, the different measuring tools needs to be identified in order to observe the development of the students, which would also help to justify the efficiency of the training as well as would facilitate the development of a better standard of training.

WORKS CITED

- [1]. Allen, P. "Pronunciation Difficulties for Students with L1 Spanish". Consonants, 2011. Web. 10 Sep. 2014.
- [2]. Batzarov, `Zdravko. "Phonology and Spelling" Consonants (n.d.). Web. 10 Sep. 2014.
- [3]. Coxhead, P. "Natural Language Processing & Applications Phones and Phonemes" Phonemes, 2006: 1-13. Print.
- [4]. Colorado, Colorin. "Capitalizing on Similarities and Differences between Spanish and English". Phonemic and phonological differences between Spanish and English. 2007. Web. 10 Sep. 2014.
- [5]. Frederick, Melanie. "Common Articulation Variations between English and Spanish". *General Articulation Variances between English and Spanish* (2005): 1-2. Print.
- [6]. Gomez, Escrito por Paco "Pronunciation of American English Consonants." American English Consonants, 2012. Web. 10 Sep. 2014.
- [7]. "Consonants in other languages". Indiana University and Michael Gasser. Consonants. 2006. Web. 10 Sep. 2014.
- [8]. Oh, Kwang-Young. "The Phonological Role in English Pronunciation" Difficulties (n.d.): 1-9. Print.
- [9]. Roach, Peter. "A Little Encyclopedia of Phonetics." *English Phonetics and Phonology* (2009): 1-50. Print.
- [10]. Rosenfelder, Mark. "The Language Construction Kit." Place of Articulation. 2012. Web. 20 Sept. 2014.
- [11]. "Pronunciation Problems for Spanish-Speaking Learners of English" Teflnet. Points That Spanish-Speaking Learners of English Find Difficult. 2012. Web. 10 Sep. 2014.
- [12]. Tun, U Kyaw. "Properties of Consonants." Consonants. 2007. Web. 20 Sep. 2014.