



Use of Technology to Improve Pronunciation in Adult Language Learners of Spanish

By Lorena Monje y Mariela Arrieta O.

Outline

- Importance of pronunciation for language learning
- Pronunciation: a forgotten topic in adult education
- Effective techniques
- The multimedia platform
- How our students feel about it

Importance of Pronunciation

1

The correct pronunciation and accentuation of words make it easy for others to understand what we say.

2

Incorrect pronunciation can cause awkward situations when we want to convey an idea but what we pronounce has a different meaning.

3

In a professional environment it is important to be accurate in the meaning we convey to avoid misunderstandings.

4

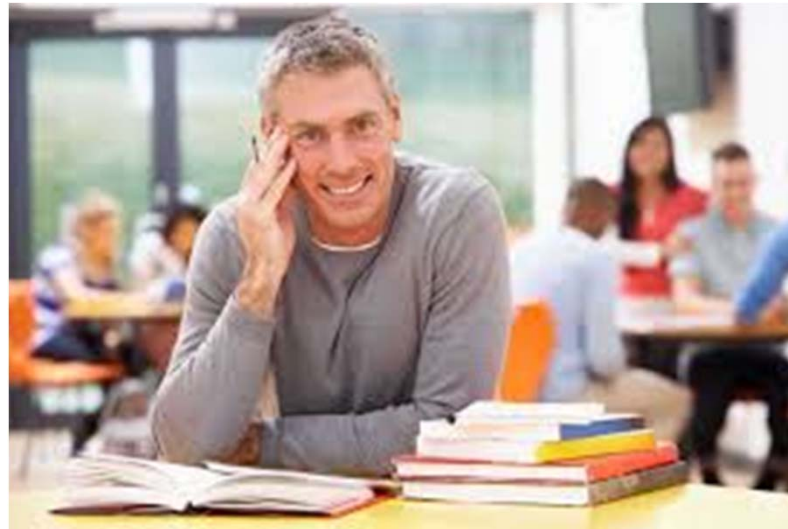
It helps to improve students' self-esteem and confidence (snowball effect).

5

It helps students to develop awareness of the common ground that English and Spanish sounds share.

Pronunciation: A forgotten topic

Strong syntax



Strong literacy

Strong
vocabulary

No native-
like accent

Effective Techniques

Working with segmentals to improve accuracy

Association of sounds

- Spanish diphthongs

ie = (yeh) e.g: tamb*ie*n, *si*ete

ai = (eye) e.g: *ai*re, *ai*slado

eu = (eh-oo) eg: *Eu*ropa, *eu*ro

- Spanish “d” sound = *th* in wea*th*er e.g: ayu*d*e, pue*d*e, per*d*ido, to*d*o.
- Spanish single “r” sound = *d* in bo*d*y, Neva*d*a, mo*d*el, e.g: Ma*r*i, pa*r*a, mi*r*e

Effective Techniques

Working with suprasegmentals to improve intelligibility

Intonation/Accentuation

- Syllable separation (cv) (cvv)

bio-gra-fí-a / *bi-og-ra-phy* i-ti-ne-ra-rio / *i-tin-er-ar-y*

- Accentuation and change of meaning

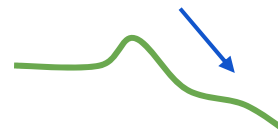
público (*the public*) publico (*I publish*) publicó (*he published*)
diálogo (*the dialogue*) dialogo (*I discuss*) dialogó (*he discussed*)

- Interrogative and affirmative sentences

¿Está loco?
Is he crazy?



Está loco.
He is crazy



Effective Techniques

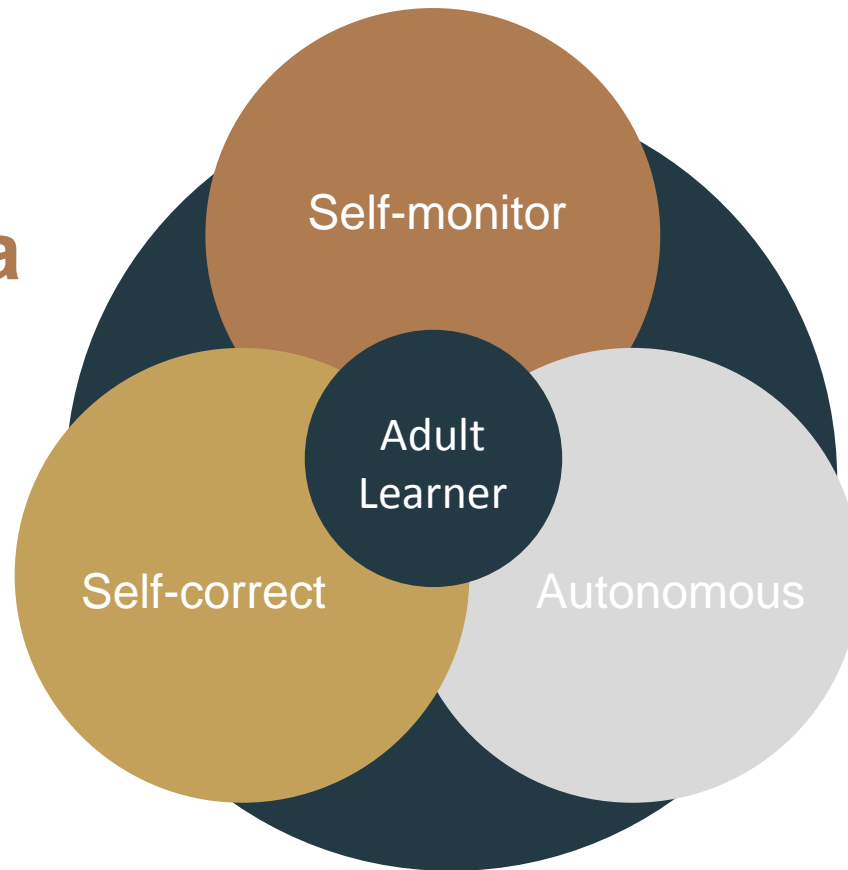
Communicative context (highlight sounds in context)

- Frequent words aligned with the curriculum
- Use of words in complete sentences and paragraphs to improve fluency.

Example activity Spanish “j”= English “h”

El **j**ueves próximo tengo que **v**iajar a la **e**mbajada de **J**amaica para comenzar mi nuevo **t**rabajo. Mi **j**efe, el **e**mbajador **J**uan **J**iménez, va a explicarme los **o**bjetivos de mi **j**ornada de **t**rabajo. Antes de **t**rabajar en **J**amaica, estuve **t**rabajando en Mé**x**ico **j**unto al **h**ijo de mi **m**ejor amigo.

The Multimedia Platform



It was important to
keep in mind adult's
characteristics

The Multimedia Platform

- 1 Vowels
Explanation of common pronunciation difficulties
- 2 “t” and “d”
Communicative approach
- 3 A B C
It contains audiovisual and kinesthetics activities

Private classes

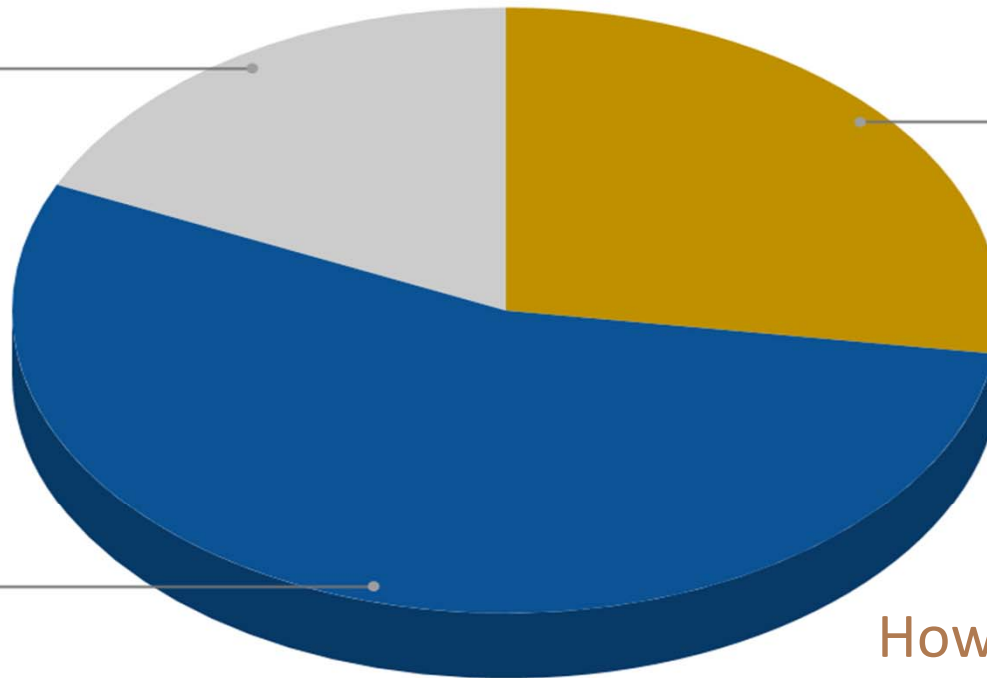
18.2%

No interested

27.3%

Interested

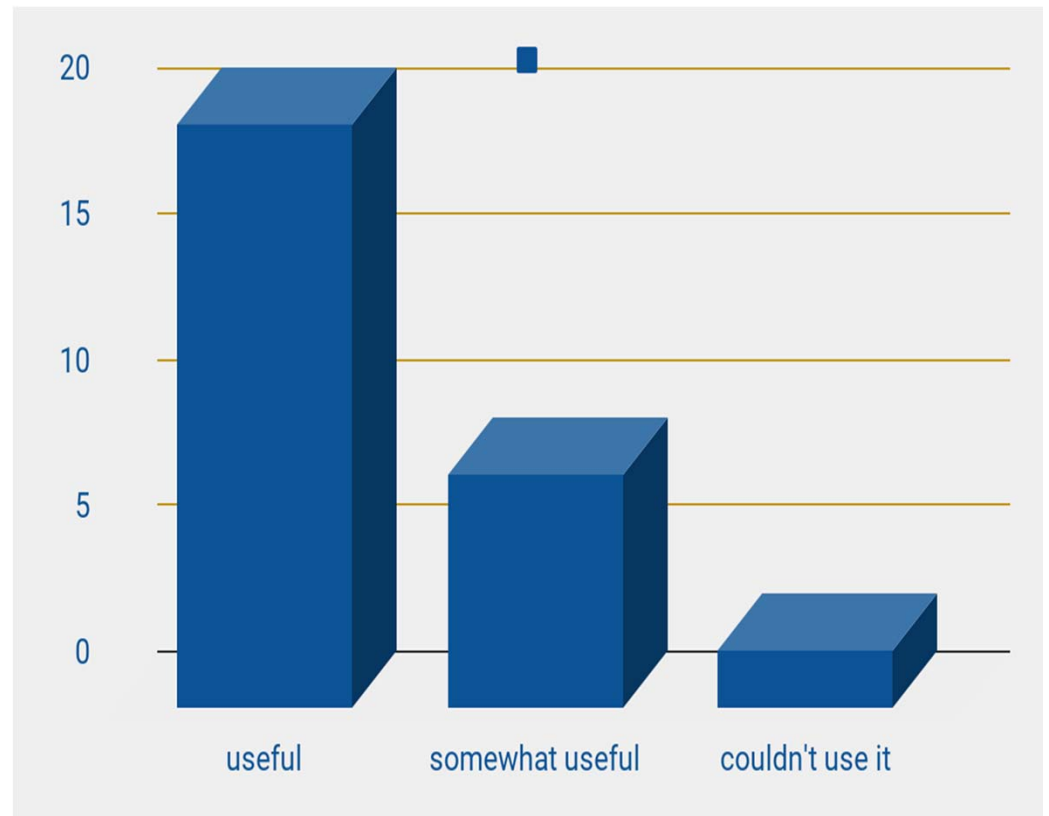
54.5%



How our students
feel about
Pronunciation

Students Using the Platform

- Students who couldn't use the multimedia platform were physically impaired and needed special accommodations.
- All students who participated in pronunciation activities have improved their language skills and their self-esteem.



Conclusion

- The increasing focus on The Communicative Approach to teaching a second language highlights new important learning perspectives
- Students need more opportunities to identify the use cases for important special features of pronunciation, e.g. accentuation, analogous sounds between languages
- Enable students to become, not 'perfect pronouncers' of the Second Language but intelligible, communicative, confident and motivated users of the SL for any purpose
- Adult learners can self-monitor and self-correct through online activities.