
REVIEWS

Eva Núñez Méndez. *Fundamentos de fonología y fonética española para hablantes de inglés: Manual práctico de español como lengua extranjera*. Munich: Lincom, 2005. 132p.

SCOTT M. REX
SOUTHERN OREGON UNIVERSITY

Fundamentos de fonología y fonética española para hablantes de inglés provides the English-speaking student with an introduction to the sound system of Spanish with special emphasis on improving pronunciation. The book is comprised of nine chapters, a bibliography, a glossary of linguistic terms, and an appendix of relevant phonetic symbols. At the end of each chapter are well written exercises to test the reader's comprehension of the chapter. Certain chapters include also a comparison section that outlines the most important differences between English and Spanish. Writing a book on Spanish phonetics and phonology in only 132 pages is a daunting task, but the organization of this book makes it a welcome addition to the existing literature.

One of the strengths of this book is the generous introduction to linguistics provided in the first three chapters. Most books on Spanish phonetics and phonology provide little context for the reader, generally assuming some familiarity with the various subfields of linguistics and the place of phonology within those subfields. Dr. Núñez Méndez's book, however, offers a basic introduction to the field of linguistics. Perhaps the most interesting of the first three chapter is the third, which provides the reader with a history of linguistic perspective, starting with 19th-century comparative linguistics and ending with the neurolinguistic advances of modern technology. It should be noted that each of the first three chapters is relatively brief, and a teacher using this book as a text may want to flesh out some of the discussion to provide a more complete picture.

The fourth chapter addresses orthography and written accents, and it includes an introduction to the concept of the phoneme. The explanation of the written accent should be particularly accessible to the advanced student of Spanish. This topic is often touched upon only briefly in introductory and intermediate texts, and this book provides the complete, clear explanation that many students need. There is one minor drawback to some of the exercises at the end of the chapter. The student is presented with words and asked to add a written accent where necessary. However, the author does not indicate which of the vowels in the word receives

the spoken stress. Thus, if a student is unfamiliar with the word he will be unable to determine whether the word requires an accent.

The fifth and sixth chapters present the concepts most closely associated with a text on phonetics and phonology: phonemes, allophones, basic transcriptions, etc. The chapters are clearly written but rather brief. This brevity may require the teacher to clarify or expand on certain points for students unfamiliar with linguistic terminology. The exercises for each chapter are appropriate and challenging. However, a student may wish to have more opportunity to work with the concepts than is provided in the exercises. Generally, the details of transcription require a fair amount of repetition and practice, and therefore the teacher may need to supplement the exercises to chapters five and six.

Chapter seven introduces the basic concepts of phonological variation, such as assimilation, dissimilation, and metathesis, and discusses the most common dialectical variation found in the Spanish-speaking world, such as the use of the interdental fricative in part of Spain and the various realizations of the 'll' in the River Plate region. The chapter also provides an explanation of the difference between phonological and phonetic transcription and provides appropriate exercises. Once again, the teacher may want to provide supplementary exercises to give the student more practice on a difficult topic.

Chapter eight gives the reader an overview of Spanish dialectology and offers a description of the characteristics of the major dialects of Spain, Latin America, and the United States. The section on Spanish in the United States provides many interesting examples of the result of contact between English and Spanish. The exercises at the end of the chapter require the student to demonstrate a complete knowledge of the topics.

The final chapter examines some of the most problematic areas of Spanish pronunciation for English speakers and offers suggestions and practice for improving one's pronunciation. If the reader has understood the previous chapters well, the observations in this chapter will make a significant difference in one's awareness of one's own pronunciation difficulties.

Fundamentos de fonología y fonética española para hablantes de inglés differs significantly from other works in the field in that it places Spanish phonetics/phonology in a broader linguistic context. Although, as mentioned, the teacher may find the need to supplement to provide added practice for the students, this book would fit well in a Spanish curriculum in which many students take a phonetics/phonology class as one of their first linguistics courses because the book will allow the teacher to give the students a solid grounding in linguistics along with a deeper examination of Spanish phonetics and phonology. ✱