UAB
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Spanish Phonetics and Phonology

Code: 100587
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Spanish and Chinese Studies: Language, Literature and Culture	OB	3
English and Spanish Studies	OB	2
Catalan and Spanish Studies	OB	3

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the end of this
document.

Prerequisites

The student must have acquired the essential language skills to effectively express themselves in Spanish, both orally and in writing.

It is essential to emphasize that any spelling or expression errors made by the student will result in a deduction of points from the final grade (a deduction of 0,25 per error in evaluation assessments).

In this course, originality holds great significance, and it is strictly forbidden to engage in complete or partial plagiarism of external materials published in any medium. Failure to appropriately attribute non-original content will automatically lead to a failing grade (0).

Furthermore, it is assumed that the student is familiar with the general guidelines for presenting academic work. However, if the professor deems it necessary, specific instructions may be provided, and it is expected that the student will comply with them accordingly.

Objectives and Contextualisation

- Familiarize students with the fundamental concepts of phonetics and phonology, including theoretical principles and practical applications.

- Enable students to describe in detail the phonetic system of Spanish, identifying and classifying sounds according to their articulatory and acoustic features.
- Provide the necessary knowledge to analyze the phonological system of Spanish, understanding the relationships and functions of phonemes within the linguistic system.
- Prepare students to apply the acquired knowledge in the study and research of phonetics and phonology, using transcription and data analysis techniques.
- Offer a solid foundation that allows students to delve deeper into these disciplines in subsequent courses, such as "Phonetic Studies of Spanish: Perspectives and Applications," facilitating a deeper and more applied understanding of the subjects.
- Contextualize the knowledge of phonetics and phonology within a broader framework of linguistic and interdisciplinary studies, highlighting its relevance to other fields, such as sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics and applied linguistics.

Competences

Spanish and Chinese Studies: Language, Literature and Culture
- Analyse the phonetic, phonological, morphological, syntactic, lexical and semantic properties of the Spanish language and the Mandarin Chinese language.
- Describe the linguistic foundations on which the standards of Spanish and mandarin Chinese are based.
- Make changes to methods and processes in the area of knowledge in order to provide innovative responses to society's needs and demands.
- Students must be capable of applying their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional way and they should have building arguments and problem resolution skills within their area of study.
- Students must be capable of communicating information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
- Use techniques for compilation, organisation and use of information and documentation with precision.

Learning Outcomes

1. Analyse linguistic structures in Spanish.
2. Carry out predictions and inferences abut the content of a text.
3. Construct texts according to the established rules.
4. Describe and identify the phonetic and phonological system of the Spanish language.
5. Identify errors of rules, style or argument in a text.
6. Identify situations in which a change or improvement is needed.
7. Use digital tools for collecting, classifying, interpreting and analysing relevant data.
8. Use the adequate terminology in the construction of an academic text.
9. Use the necessary resources, both digital and non-digital (data bases, text repositories, dictionaries, reference works), for the analysis of any document, spoken or written, from a linguistic point of view.

Content

The subject is formed by the following thematic blocks.

1. Articulatory description of vowels and consonants

Articulatory parameters for the classification of the vowels: oral opening and tongue position. Articulatory parameters for the classification of consonants: mode of articulation, place of articulation and sonority.

2. Acoustic description of vowels and consonants

Acoustic parameters for the classification of sounds: periodic and aperiodic sounds. Relationships between articulatory and acoustic characteristics.

3. The phonetic transcription

The phonetic alphabets: the alphabet of the Journal of Spanish Philology (RFE) and the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

4. Prosodic phenomena

The accent. The intonation. Junctions and pauses.

5. The phonological system of Spanish

From sound to phoneme. Phonemes and allophones. Contexts and distributions. Variation factors.

6. Characterization of Spanish Phonemes through Distinctive Features

Physical description and distinctive features. Types of feature systems and their application to Spanish.

7. The syllable

The syllable as a phonological unit. Syllabic division and structure. Nucleus and margins. Vocalic and consonantic groups.

8. Phonological processes of Spanish

The sounds in contact. The representation of the phonological processes of Spanish.

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Master classes	26.5	1.06	4
Resolution of exercises	26	1.04	4, 7, 6, 9
Type: Supervised			
Preparation of evaluation activities	5	0.2	4, 7, 9
Supervision and review of exercises	10	0.4	4, 7, 6, 9
Type: Autonomous			
Extension of knowledge	15	0.6	4, 7, 6, 9
Preparation of exercises	15	0.6	4, 7, 6, 9
Preparation of reading comprehension activities	15	0.6	4, 7, 9
Preparation of written production activities	15	0.6	4, 7, 9
Search for bibliographical references	15	0.6	4, 7, 9

The learning of this subject by the student is distributed as follows:

(1) 35% of guided activities
(2) 10% Supervised activity

(3) 50% Autonomous activities

(4) 5% Evaluation activities

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Phonetic transcription test of a file audio, analysis of the speaker articulations	10%	2.5	0.1	4, 7, 6, 9
Written test of the theoretical contents about Phonology: Practice and Theory	25%+20%	2.5	0.1	1, 3, 4, 8, 7, 5, 2, 9
Written test of the contents about Phonetics: Practice and Theory	25%+20%	2.5	0.1	1, 3, 4, 8, 7, 5, 2, 9

The assessment activities are as follows:

- Phonetic transcription test of an audio file, including commentary on the speaker's articulations (10%)

- Written test on contents of phonology: Practical exercises (25%) and theory (20%)

- Written test on contents of phonetics: Practical exercises (25%) and theory (20%)

To pass the course, the final grade must be at least a 5, once the weighted percentages have been applied.

The student will receive a "Not assessable" grade if they have submitted less than 30% of the assessment activities.

Any student who has completed or taken part in more than 30% of the assessment activities will be evaluated, with the corresponding weightings applied in each case.

Resits

According to the regulations, students who have completed at least two-thirds of the assessment activities are eligible for resits. To qualify for a resit, students must have obtained a minimum weighted grade of 3.5 or higher. The resit procedure will consist of repeating the failed tests.

Remarks

In the case of written expression, it is expected that students write complete paragraphs and texts. Spelling mistakes, punctuation errors, and poor discourse structure will be penalised (-0.25 per mistake).

It is assumed thatstudents are familiar with the general rules for the presentation and submission of academic work.

Irregularities in assessment activities

If a student commits any irregularity that could significantly affect the grade of an assessment activity, that activity will be graded with a 0, regardless of any disciplinary action that may follow.

If multiple irregularities occur in assessment activities within the same course, the final grade for that course will be 0.

Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies

The use of AI technologies is permitted in this course as part of the learning process, provided that the final result reflects a significant personal contribution by the student in terms of analysis and critical reflection. When submitting work involving these tools, the student must: (i) identify which parts were generated using AI; (ii) specify the tools used; and (iii) include a critical reflection on how these tools influenced the process and final result. Lack of transparency in the use of AI in an assessable activity will be considered academic dishonesty and will result in a grade of 0 for that activity, which cannot be resat, or more serious sanctions in severe cases.

Single assessment

Students who choose the single assessment option must complete the following tests on the date announced during the first week of the course:

- Phonetic transcription test of an audio file, including commentary on the speaker's articulations (10%)

- Written test on contents of phonetics: Practical exercises (25%) and theory (20%)

- Written test on contents of phonology: Practical exercises (25%) and theory (20%)

The same resit system as for continuous assessment will apply.

Note: Exchange students who wish to take an exam earlier must present the lecturer with a written document from their home university justifying the request.

Bibliography

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Harris, James Wesley. (1983). *Syllable Structure and Stress in Spanish: A Nonlinear Analysis*. MIT Press. (Traducció castellana: Olga Fernández Soriano, *La estructura silábica y el acento en español*, Visor, 1991).

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Román Montes de Oca, Domingo. (2011). *Manual para el análisis fonético acústico*. Pfeiffer.

Sosa, Juan M. (1999). *La entonación del español: Su estructura fónica, variabilidad y dialectología*. Cátedra.

Learning resources

- Video series: Formación en descripción acústica de los sonidos del español (FADES), Aguilar, Lourdes & María J. Machuca (2024) https://ddd.uab.cat/search?f=series&p=Formaci%C3%B3n%20en%20descripci%C3%B3n%20ac%C3%B
- *Guía multimedia de la prosodia del castellano*. Aguilar, Lourdes; de-la-Mota, Carme; Prieto, Pilar (coords.) (2009-2014). Updated 2024: < https://guies-prosodia.upf.edu/es >

Software

- Audacity (https://www.audacityteam.org)
- Praat: doing phonetics by computer (https://www.fon.hum.uva.nl/praat)

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this link. To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(PAUL) Classroom practices	1	Spanish	first semester	morning-mixed
(PAUL) Classroom practices	2	Spanish	first semester	morning-mixed
(PAUL) Classroom practices	3	Spanish	first semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	1	Spanish	first semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	2	Spanish	first semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	3	Spanish	first semester	morning-mixed