Teaching Pronunciation to Adult Speakers of Spanish in Business English Lessons: Two Aspects to Consider[1]

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Abstract

Knowledge of the target specialized language should be of use to English for specific purposes teachers who teach pronunciation. Knowledge of the target learners' first language (L1) should also be useful when these teachers use contrastive analysis, error analysis or interlanguage theory. However, as far as teaching the pronunciation of the language of Business English (BE) to speakers of Spanish is concerned, the researcher observed that the study of the interrelationship between these two types of knowledge may be somewhat unexplored after surveying 1,452 abstracts or introductions from four specialized journals. Owing to this, to differences between English pronunciation and Spanish pronunciation, and to previous research showing that adult speakers of L1 Spanish may have difficulty in pronouncing English vowels, the researcher has explored two aspects of the language of BE (word length and word transparency) and discussed the implications of both aspects for teaching two pronunciation features (vowel sound sequences and word stress) in BE lessons. This has been done by referring to previous research and corpus data, and by contrasting the pronunciation of English with the pronunciation of Spanish. This exploratory study provides some reflections that it is hoped will be useful for teachers who use any of the three above-mentioned theories and want to know more about differences between the pronunciation of English and Spanish to teach the pronunciation of the language of BE to adult speakers of L1 Spanish.

Resumen

El conocimiento de la lengua meta será útil para el enseñante de inglés para fines específicos que enseña pronunciación. El conocimiento de la lengua materna de los aprendices también será útil cuando estos enseñantes usan el análisis contrastivo, el análisis de errores o la teoría de la interlengua. Sin embargo, en relación a la enseñanza de la pronunciación del inglés de negocios a los hablantes de español, el autor observó que la relación entre estos dos tipos de conocimiento podría ser poco explorada después de examinar 1.452 resúmenes o introducciones de cuatro revistas especializadas. Debido a esto, a diferencias entre la pronunciación del inglés y la pronunciación del español y a investigaciones previas que muestran que los hablantes adultos cuya lengua materna es el español pueden tener dificultad al pronunciar las vocales de la lengua inglesa, el autor ha explorado dos aspectos del inglés de negocios (la longitud de las palabras y la transparencia de las mismas) y ha discutido las implicaciones de ambos aspectos en la enseñanza de dos variables de la pronunciación (la secuencia de sonidos vocales y la acentuación de las palabras) en lecciones de inglés de negocios. Esto ha sido realizado haciendo referencia a investigaciones previas, a datos de corpus, y contrastando la pronunciación del inglés con la pronunciación del español. Este estudio exploratorio ofrece algunas reflexiones que se espera serán útiles para aquellos enseñantes que usan cualquiera de las tres teorías arriba mencionadas y que quieren informarse más sobre las diferencias entre la pronunciación del inglés y del español para enseñar la pronunciación del inglés de negocios a hablantes adultos cuya lengua materna es el español.

Introduction and Research Objective

While going through the freely available abstracts or introductions (1,452 abstracts or introductions in total) of three journals of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and one journal of Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP), the researcher observed the following. None of these abstracts or introductions seemed to focus on a useful subject when teaching Business English (BE): A systematic analysis of the aspects of the language of BE and the bearing of these aspects when teaching BE pronunciation. This observation may be indicative of the existence of research gaps in the exploration of the language of BE and of the ways in which the features of this language may affect teaching pronunciation to adult speakers of Spanish as a first language (L1 Spanish speakers) in BE contexts. Nevertheless, the use of contrastive analysis, error analysis and/or interlanguage theory when teaching BE pronunciation to L1 Spanish speakers requires some knowledge of the language of BE, of the Spanish language, and more specifically, of the language of Business Spanish (BS).

Owing to these research gaps, to this requirement, and to research showing that adult L1 Spanish speakers may have difficulty in pronouncing English vowels, the researcher has decided to write this paper. The objective of this paper is to explore two aspects of the language of BE, i.e., word length and word transparency, and to discuss why they should be considered while teaching vowel sound sequences and word stress to adult L1 Spanish speakers in BE lessons.

In the next section, the researcher will refer to previous literature on teaching pronunciation in ESP contexts, and on contrastive analysis, error analysis, and interlanguage theory. The researcher will also deal with adult L1 Spanish speakers' difficulty in pronouncing vowel sounds and with two aspects of the

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language of BE, i.e., word length and word transparency. Afterwards, there will be references to the methodology used, the results will then be presented and the pedagogical implications of word length and word transparency for teaching two pronunciation features (vowel sound sequences and word stress) to the target learners will be discussed. Furthermore, throughout the discussion, the researcher will analyze the pronunciation of a word that may be used in business contexts, which illustrates the concepts discussed therein, and that, according to the researcher's teaching experience, L1 Spanish speakers may find difficult to pronounce: *comfortable*. Finally, conclusions concerning teaching BE pronunciation are presented.

Review of literature

Teaching pronunciation in ESP contexts

After surveying 1,452 freely available abstracts or introductions of the journals *English for Specific Purposes World, ESP Today—Journal of English for Specific Purposes at Tertiary Level, English for Specific Purposes* and *Revista de Lenguas para Fines Específicos*, the researcher observed that there were references to pronunciation issues in a wide range of ESP areas. Some of these areas were general ESP, medical English, English for conferences, academic speech and public speaking, English for engineers and BE. In this survey, it was found that one article made explicit reference to the linguistic analysis of the target specialized language, of the learners' first language and of the implications of these analyses for teaching pronunciation as well. It is Jabbour-Lagocki's (1992) article which looks into the pronunciation of medical terminology and the analysis of the word-stress patterns of English medical terms and German cognates. However, in my survey, no reference to the simultaneous analysis of these three variables, i.e., pronunciation, the target specialized language, and the learners' first language, was observed in the area of BE. Indeed, there were references to other aspects of learning pronunciation in BE contexts, such as learners' needs analysis (Fethi & Feriel, 2016) and digital learning (Sanguanngarm, 2018). Nonetheless, knowledge of both the learners' first language (in this paper, Spanish) and of BE may be relevant to teaching pronunciation in BE courses or lessons. The next section will provide justification for this assertion.

Contrastive analysis theory, error analysis theory, and interlanguage theory in teaching BE pronunciation

Riney and Anderson-Hsieh (1993) describe two versions of contrastive analysis (a strong version and a weak version) while discussing Japanese pronunciation of English. The former lies in the assumption that by comparing the learners' first language (in this paper, Spanish) and the target language (in this paper, BE), one would be able to predict all the errors the learners would make. In the latter, by contrast, this comparison is carried out after the errors have been made with a view to explaining some of them. As regards error analysis, Rustipa (2011) shows that a series of steps is involved in the use of this analysis in language teaching, but it may be argued that the key element that differentiates error analysis from the strong version of contrastive analysis is the idea that the learners' first language is no longer the only variable that may account for learners' mistakes. As regards interlanguage, Song (2012) explains that it is related to the idea of transitional competence developed by Corder (1967), and that "interlanguage is neither the system of the native language nor that of the target language, but instead falls between the two" (p.778).

Whether teachers decide to use the methods of contrastive analysis, error analysis or interlanguage or a combination of them when they plan lessons or conduct action research to teach BE pronunciation to adult L1 Spanish speakers, some knowledge of Spanish and of the language of BE is required. If the methods of contrastive analysis are used, this knowledge is required to predict what problems these learners may encounter while they learn to speak in BE contexts. In contrast, if teachers employ the methods of error analysis, they may find this knowledge useful in identifying the pronunciation features these learners should work on to be able to communicate in BE contexts successfully after their performance in a given BE lesson is assessed. With respect to interlanguage, this knowledge should help teachers to identify aspects of language learning, such as overgeneralization of rules and language transfer (Selinker, 1972, as cited in Mahmood & Murad, 2018), that may affect the learners' production in BE interaction.

In the following section, the researcher will discuss one aspect of adult L1 Spanish speakers' pronunciation of English, and then will refer to how this relates to BE pronunciation.

L1 Spanish speakers' pronunciation

In this section, there will be references to three studies. In Kolesnikova's (2012) study, teaching English vowel sounds to adult Mexican Spanish speakers was examined, while Vera Diettes's (2014)

study dealt with the production of one English vowel sound by adult Colombian Spanish speakers. A third study investigated teaching English vowel sounds to adult Spanish speakers of English (Calvo Benzies, 2013).

In the first study, Kolesnikova (2012) compares the vowel sound systems of American English and Mexican Spanish "to predict specific articulation and recognition difficulties which may be experienced by Mexican Spanish ELT learners" (p. 114) and with a view to developing a "Computer Assisted Pronunciation Training System (CAPT System) for teaching American English pronunciation to adult Mexican Spanish speakers" (p. 113). One of the observations made by Kolesnikova (2012) is that the schwa (/ə/) sound in *above* is expected to be substituted by the Mexican Spanish /e/ sound used in *este*. However, the author explains that "practical research is necessary to confirm, clarify, adjust or correct the theoretically predicted errors" (p. 121).

Nonetheless, in the study conducted by Calvo Benzies (2013), in which ten advanced Spanish university students were asked to describe a set of pictures that told a story and to read a text taken from a textbook aloud, the largest group of mistakes regarding English vowels (29.66%) was related to the schwa sound. Furthermore, the most frequent mistake was the pronunciation of this sound as /e/, which matches one of Kolesnikova's (2012) predictors. It has to be pointed out that, when referring to the mother tongue of the participants of this study, the author explains that they were bilingual in Castilian Spanish and Galician. The author also argues that "it can be claimed that almost all the mistakes made by the students were due to the influence of their L1 (or L1s) on their pronunciation" (p. 52), and goes on to exemplify this point by saying that mistakes reflected problems that stemmed from the fact that some English sounds cannot be found in Spanish or Galician. To illustrate this, Calvo Benzies (2013) mentions the schwa sound, and when dealing with the way the subjects in her study pronounce this sound, the author adds that "Spanish learners of English tend to pronounce it as a full vowel, with a tendency to adopt a vowel sound corresponding to the spelling of the word" (p. 51). Vera Diettes (2014) comes to a similar conclusion when studying ten adult Colombian L1 Spanish speakers' pronunciation of this sound. Indeed, the author concludes that the spelling of the target words, i.e., of the words the subjects had to read in the experiment, affects the speakers' pronunciation of the schwa sound. For example, in her study, the production of schwa when it is spelt as the letter *a* or the letter *e* poses more difficulties to the speakers' production than when it is spelt as the letter *i* or the letter *o*.

Word length and word transparency in BE

Wells (1990) explains that the vowel /ə/ is always weak, which means that it cannot be used in stressed syllables since these "must always contain a strong vowel" (p. 778). Therefore, taking into account the research presented in the previous section, one may assume that the larger the number of long words a specialized language contains, the harder it will be for L1 Spanish speakers to pronounce specialized words accurately. The reason for this is that long words are expected to be composed of sequences of strong vowels and weak vowels. Having taught BE to adults himself, the researcher has observed that there are plenty of long words in BE contexts, and that this may lead to a lot of attention being paid to teaching pronunciation. The researcher has also observed that there are many BE words and BS words that are transparent, and that different stress patterns of transparent words may make BE words even more difficult to pronounce. Indeed, to be able to know which syllables in a given BE word contain a weak vowel, one needs to be familiar with its stress pattern. As a result, the combination of long BE words and BE transparent words may be a challenge for adult L1 Spanish speakers' pronunciation. For example, in Calvo Benzies' (2013) study, one of the subjects stressed the second syllable instead of the first syllable of the adverb *comfortably* and, as a result, did not use the /ə/ sound or elide it in the second syllable.

Because of these observations, as advanced in the introduction, the objective of this study is to explore two aspects of the language of BE, i.e., word length and word transparency, and to discuss why they should be taken into account while teaching vowel sound sequences and word stress to adult L1 Spanish speakers in BE lessons. The following section will explain how this was done.

Methodology

Data from the Business English Corpus (BEC), a BE corpus created by Nelson (n.d., 2000) was used. This corpus has over 1 million words, and it is composed of real BE (Nelson, 2000) written and spoken text.

In order to find out about the number of long words in BE, the percentage of "clearly *business-related* words" (Nelson, 2000, *Positive key words in the BEC* section) which are amongst the top 100 words whose frequency is significantly higher in the BEC than in a corpus of General English (GE), the British National Corpus, and which may have three or more syllables was calculated. The percentage of the

words that are only adjectives and the percentage of the words that are only nouns which occur significantly more frequently in the BEC than in GE and which may contain three or more syllables were also worked out. Finally, the percentage of the words that are only adjectives and the percentage of the words that are only nouns which occur significantly less frequently in the BEC than in GE and which may have three or more syllables were reckoned. These calculations allowed the researcher to see if BE is rich in long words by contrasting it with GE.

As regards the transparency of business-related words, the percentage of the "clearly *business-related* words" (Nelson, 2000, *Positive key words in the BEC* section) which are amongst the top 100 words whose frequency is significantly higher in the BEC than in GE and which contain the same sequence of four or more consecutive letters as a related BS-related word was computed. It needs to be explained that double consonants in English counted as one consonant in Spanish. For example, if the word *associate* were on this list, it would share six consecutive letters with the verb *asociar*. In addition, if the related BS-related word was in the bilingual dictionary used (see Footnote 3), but it was not in the *Diccionario de la lengua española* by *Real Academia Española* or it was there but it was related to English according to this dictionary, it was not counted. If the word *marketing* were on this list, for example, it would be a case in point. This calculation would provide some notion of transparency between BE and BS.

Finally, through the discussion of the results, the researcher referred to the analysis of the pronunciation of a word that can be used in BE contexts and that the researcher has observed L1 Spanish speakers may find difficult to pronounce. This word is *comfortable* and was used to illustrate concepts and pedagogical implications.

Discussion of results and pedagogical implications

First aspect: Long business-related words and vowel sound sequences

The number of words that are composed of three or more syllables in BE is noticeable in some of the findings presented by Nelson (n.d., 2000) and resulting from his analyses of the BEC. Indeed, it has been observed that 38% of the "clearly *business-related* words" (Nelson, 2000, *Positive key words in the BEC* section) which are amongst the top 100 words whose frequency is significantly higher in the BEC than in the corpus of GE, the British National Corpus, may have three or more syllables.[3] What is more, 78% of the words that are only adjectives and 64% of the words that are only nouns and that occur significantly more frequently in the BEC may contain three or more syllables. By contrast, 14% of the words that are only adjectives and that occur significantly less frequently in the BEC and 19% of the words that are only nouns and that belong to the same group may have three or more syllables.

Because of the relatively high frequency of some long words in BE and of the importance of long business-related words in certain BE fields, it may be assumed that it can be really useful for learners of BE whose first language is Spanish to be trained to notice sequences of strong and weak English vowel sounds. This assumption results from the research that was discussed in the review of literature, and particularly from the fact that there are differences in the spelling-to-sound relationship between English and Spanish. An example of these differences is that different vowel letters appearing in the same business-related English word may be pronounced by using the same weak vowel sound, whereas this is not possible while saying a transparent and/or equivalent Spanish word using standard Spanish pronunciation.[4] Table 1 illustrates this difference: Some of the underlined vowel letters in each of the three business-related English words are different, but they may be pronounced with a schwa

[3] "A semantic field is…a paradigmatically and syntagmatically structured subset of the lexicon" (Mansouri, 1985, p. 39) that revolves around a concept (Gao & Xu, 2013). As regards the semantic field of BE, in the analyses of the positive key words of the BEC, for example, Nelson (2000) refers to "pure business-related lexis, e.g. *business, company, market* and *customer*, and also lexis that could be intuitively expected to be found in a Business English environment, e.g. *order, contract, mail* and *rate*" (*BEC Key words*, para. 1). To ensure that all the business-related terms that have been used in this paper are so, I have checked that they appear in at least one of the following sources: the positive key words in Nelson's (2000) study, the word list of the *Cambridge English: Business Preliminary Examination* or a business-related and/or an economy-related entry of the online *Cambridge Dictionary* (https://dictionary.cambridge.org) or the online *Oxford Learner's Dictionaries* (https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com). The second has been chosen because, in the introduction to this list, it is explained that "it includes vocabulary from the Council of Europe's Threshold (1990) specification and business-related vocabulary which corpus evidence shows is high frequency" (Cambridge English Language Assessment, 2006, p. 2).

[4] While discussing transparent words, Gunnemark (1996) argues that "even if one has never seen or heard them before, one can often work out what words of a foreign language mean if they are similar to words in one's own language" (p. 165). However, the author also refers to false friends as transparent words: "They look or sound as if they must mean the same as words in other languages, but in fact they do not" (p. 177).

(ə) sound in English (Wells, 1990).[5] By contrast, those underlined vowel letters which are different in each transparent and/or equivalent Spanish word are pronounced differently in standard Spanish.

ENGLISH	SPANISH
OPERATION	OPERACIÓN
COMMUNICATION	COMUNICACIÓN
DEVELOPMENT	DESARROLLO

Table 1. Vowel letters whose pronunciation shows differences in the spelling-to-sound relationship between English and Spanish

But how can learners of BE whose first language is Spanish be trained to notice the sequences of strong and weak vowel sounds in long business-related English words?

There can be many different answers to this question. The researcher has found that starting by identifying and marking the stressed and the unstressed syllables of business-related English words that contain two syllables can be a good strategy. This is because it may allow learners to become familiar with three notions.

The first notion is that in unstressed syllables they may find either a strong vowel sound, e.g., *finance* as in /ˈfaɪnæns/, or a weak vowel sound, e.g., *market* /ˈmɑːkɪt/ (Wells, 2011). The second notion is that different vowel letters may be pronounced by using the same weak vowel sound, e.g., *market* /ˈmɑːkɪt/ and *credit* /ˈkredɪt/. The third notion is that a given vowel letter may be pronounced differently, e.g., *finance* as in /ˈfaɪnæns/ and *finance* as in /fəˈnæns/.

It could be thought that relating these three notions to the pronunciation of longer words is a key factor in the process of uncovering sequences of strong and weak vowel sounds. For example, when learning the pronunciation of the word *comfortable*, the following observations would emerge. Since *a* in *table* does not rhyme with *a* in *comfortable* (third notion), the sequence of *table* (Strong vowel—Weak vowel, i.e., /ˈteɪbəl/) differs from that of *table* in *comfortable* if both vowel sounds are pronounced (Weak vowel—Weak vowel, i.e., /təbəl/). In addition, *for* and *ta* rhyme (/fə/ and /tə/; second notion) if both vowel sounds are pronounced. Actually, all the unstressed syllables carry the same weak vowel sound (first notion). These three observations lead to a sequence if all the vowel sounds in *comfortable* are pronounced, i.e., Strong vowel—Weak vowel—Weak vowel—Weak vowel (/ˈkʌmfətəbəl/), that differs from one that may be assumed to be standard, i.e., Strong vowel—Weak vowel—Strong vowel—Weak vowel (/ˈkʌmfəteɪbəl/).

Second aspect: Word transparency and word stress

It is known that the English language and the Spanish language contain words that have a similar spelling (Stockwell et al., 1965). For example, as far as BE in particular is concerned, at least 48% of the "clearly *business-related* words" (Nelson, 2000, *Positive key words in the BEC* section) which are amongst the top 100 words whose frequency is significantly higher in the BEC than in the corpus of GE, the British National Corpus, contain the same sequence of four or more consecutive letters as a related BS-related word. It may be claimed that it is important for BE learners whose first language is Spanish to work on the stress of business-related English transparent words. This is due to the fact that the stress pattern of transparent English words and Spanish words (whether these are false friends or not) may differ and to the need to be familiar with stress patterns to be able to know which syllables in a given BE word contain a weak vowel. Table 2 shows some examples of differences in stress patterns between English and Spanish business-related transparent words. In this table, the stress pattern is shown between brackets after each word. I shall use three broad patterns. In *FS*, the stress (primary, in English) is on the first syllable. In *LS*, the stress (primary, in English) is on the last syllable. In *MS*, the stress (primary, in English) is somewhere in the middle.

The figure that follows *FS* or *MS* shows on which syllable the stress falls starting from the space after the end of the word in question (which is 0, i.e., no stress). For example, the stress pattern of *industry* is *FS:-3* as the primary stress falls on the first syllable, and this syllable is the third syllable before the

[5] I have used Wells's (1990) *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary*, the online *Cambridge Dictionary* (https://dictionary.cambridge.org) and the online *Oxford Learner's Dictionaries* (https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com) as sources of English pronunciation throughout this paper. This pronunciation may then be adapted to the variety of English taught according to the teaching/learning context. I have also used the online *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* (https://www.rae.es/) by *Real Academia Española* and the *WordReference.com* dictionary (https://www.wordreference.com) to look for transparent business-related Spanish words that were related to the BE words in the calculation of the percentage that appears in the next section.

end of this word. However, *LS* will never be followed by a figure because its stressed syllable is *-1* by default.

ENGLISH	SPANISH
EXECUTIVE (MS:-3)	EJECUTIVO (MS:-2)
LOCATION (MS:-2)	LOCACIÓN (LS)
PRIVATE (FS:-2)	PRIVADO (MS:-2)
COMMUNICATE (MS:-3)	COMUNICAR (LS)

Table 2. Different stress patterns in some English and Spanish business-related transparent words

After looking at Table 2, one may conclude that, since there are more business-related words belonging to the stress patterns that this table contains, it can be really important for the learners in question to work on word stress systematically and repeatedly. This would help them to become aware of the existence of commonalities and differences in stress between words and, as a result, would enable them to group them. For example, they may learn that the verbs *communicate* (*comunicar*; *LS*) and *co-operate* (*cooperar*; *LS*) have the same stress pattern (*MS:-3*), the same number of syllables (four), and the same ending (*ate*). By contrast, they may find out that the verbs *communicate*, *co-operate*, *educate* (*educar*; *LS*) and *indicate* (*indicar*; *LS*) share the same ending (*ate*), that they are stressed on the same syllable (*-3*), but that the pattern of the last two (*FS:-3*) differs from that of the first two (*MS:-3*). However, this group of words should not pose many problems for L1 Spanish speakers. This is because there are many transparent verbs that end in *-ar* in Spanish and in *ate* in English, which makes it easy to internalize the rule that if a business-related Spanish verb ends in *-ar* and its stress pattern is *LS*, the English transparent verb could end in *ate* and be stressed on *-3*. By contrast, there are words that cannot be classified so easily and, owing to this, it could be argued that they deserve careful attention. *Comfortable* is a good example.

It could be maintained that there are at least four reasons that may explain why *comfortable* may be a difficult word for the target learners to pronounce as far as word stress is concerned, particularly when these learners have not received much pronunciation training. The Spanish word *confortable* and the English word *comfortable* have four syllables (if all the vowels in *comfortable* are pronounced), but they have different stress patterns: *MS:-2* and *FS:-4* respectively. Therefore, it would not be illogical to apply the Spanish stress pattern (*MS:-2*) to the pronunciation of the English word. In addition, *table* belongs to one of the semantic fields that L1 Spanish speakers may become familiar with first in GE courses: *home furniture*. Owing to the possible prevalence of this word in these learners' lexicon and phonological baggage, it would not appear erroneous to place the primary stress of *comfortable* on *-2* (assuming that all the vowels of *comfortable* are pronounced). One should not dismiss the stress pattern of the English word *comfort* and that of the Spanish word *confort* either. Whereas the former is *FS:-2*, the latter is *LS*, which could be a good reason to stress the *-3* syllable of *comfortable*. Finally, it should be pointed out that, as compared with the above-mentioned words that end in *ate* and that share a feature of their stress pattern, i.e., the stress may fall on *-3*, there is less regularity in the stress pattern of long business-related words ending in *able*, which, as a result, may make it more difficult to group these words together. For example, the adjectives *available* (as in /əˈveɪləbəl/) and *affordable* (as in / əˈfɔːdəbəl/) have four syllables and the same stress pattern (*MS:-3*). Nonetheless, there are other long adjectives that also end in *able*, but that do not belong only to this group when all the vowels are pronounced. A case in point is *comparable* (as in /ˈkɒmpərəbəl/): It has four syllables, but it belongs in a different stress pattern (*FS:-4*). Like *comparable*, *transferable*, may belong in different stress patterns: *FS:-4* (/ˈtrænsfərəbəl/) and *MS:-3* (/trænsˈfɜːrəbəl/). And this complexity does not end here. *Recoverable* (as in /rɪˈkʌvərəbəl/), by contrast, has five syllables and its stressed syllable is also *-4*, though *MS:-4*.

Before moving on to the conclusions, the researcher would like to address two points briefly.

It is true that learners can be taught a reduced pronunciation of *comfortable*, say /ˈkʌmftəbl/. However, the first point is that the possibility of starting with its full pronunciation form and then moving onto the reduced ones should be considered for three reasons: It can be fun, it may help learners to learn to read phonetic symbols (if this is one of the goals of the BE lesson), and it may familiarize them both with English speakers' preferences as far as pronunciation is concerned and with the dynamics of English pronunciation. Indeed, the second point is that phonetically difficult business-related English words are very useful tools for learning pronunciation features of English. Optional

sounds (Wells, 2010) is an example of these: Whereas /ˈkɒmpərəbəl/ can be reduced to /ˈkɒmprəbl/, the pronunciation of the Spanish word *comparable* cannot in standard Spanish.

Conclusion

In the researcher's survey into the coverage of pronunciation features in three journals of ESP and one journal of LSP, it has been observed that there is a research gap concerning a systematic analysis of aspects of the language of BE in relation to teaching pronunciation features to L1 Spanish speakers. Owing to this observation, to the assumption that the use of contrastive analysis, error analysis, and/or interlanguage theory when teaching BE pronunciation to L1 Spanish speakers requires some knowledge of the language of BE and BS, and to previous theory showing L1 Spanish speakers may find it difficult to pronounce English vowels, as expressed in the introduction, the objective of this paper was to explore two aspects of the language of BE, i.e., word length and word transparency, and to discuss why they should be taken into consideration while teaching vowel sound sequences and word stress to adult L1 Spanish speakers in BE lessons. In so doing, vowel sound sequences were related to long business-related words and word stress was related to word transparency.

As regards the former relationship, the researcher can conclude that, because a high percentage of words which are significantly more frequent in BE than in GE may have three or more syllables and because research has shown that L1 Spanish speakers may have difficulty pronouncing the schwa sound, dealing with sequences of strong and weak vowel sounds while teaching pronunciation to these learners in BE lessons should be useful. As for the second relationship, it was observed that, at least, almost half of the business-related words which are amongst the top 100 words whose frequency is significantly higher in the BEC than in the corpus of GE contain the same sequence of four or more consecutive letters as a related BS-related word. Owing to differences in the stress pattern of transparent English and Spanish words and to the relationship between stress patterns of BE words and the position of weak vowels in them, it can be concluded that the study of stress patterns should not be ignored in the BE lessons in question.

Nonetheless, even though vowel sound sequences were paired with long business-related words, so could word stress. Likewise, even though word transparency was paired with word stress, so could vowel sound sequences. Indeed, it is hoped that far from suggesting a rigid framework for teaching BE pronunciation, this paper has provided food for thought for teachers involved in teaching the pronunciation of business-related terms that L1 Spanish learners may find difficult to produce accurately, e.g., *comfortable*.

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