# ECHO

ECHO: An international e-journal concerning communication and communication disorders within and among the social, cultural and linguistically diverse populations, with an emphasis on those populations who are underserved.

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***National Black Association for Speech-Language and Hearing***

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# About the Editor

**Ronald Jones, Ph.D., CCC-A**, *ECHO* Editor, is a professor in the Department of English and Foreign Languages at Norfolk State University. He is also Coordinator of the Communication Sciences and Disorders program and Director of the University's Speech, Language, Hearing and Literacy Center. Dr. Jones received his Bachelor of Science in Education degree and Master of Arts degrees from Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL and his Ph.D. degree from the University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH. He has written and presented extensively in his primary area of scholarly interest: Auditory Rehabilitation service delivery, Dr. Jones served as Chair of the Board for the National Black Association for Speech, Language and Hearing (2006-2008). Dr. Jones was the former managing editor for ECHO. He is also a past editor (of Letters) for the former ASHA magazine. E-mail address: rjones@nsu.edu.

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- Use of the World Health Organization's International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF) framework to describe communication use and disorders among the world's populations.
- Communication disorders in underserved or marginized populations around the world
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- Evidence base practice research with culturally and linguistic diverse populations
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- Provision of communication services in middle income/resource countries
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- Education/training issues in serving diverse populations
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# Current Issue

ECHO

# *CONSONANT VARIABILITY OF CARIBBEAN SPANISH*

**Silvia Martinez, EdD, CAS, CCC-SLP**
*Howard University*
*Washington, DC*

## ABSTRACT

There is great diversity among the Spanish speakers in the United States. Broad descriptions of these variations have previously been offered, nevertheless, narrower descriptions and the processes involved have been for the most part relegated to linguistic literature. To facilitate better understanding of the phenomena and processes of Caribbean Spanish (Cuban, Dominican, and Puerto Rican), descriptions that may facilitate modifying assessment procedures and treatment approaches are offered for speech-language pathologists.

**KEY WORDS**: Caribbean Spanish, Language Diversity, Linguistic Varieties

ECHO

# CONSONANT VARIABILITY OF CARIBBEAN SPANISH

**Silvia Martinez, EdD, CAS, CCC-SLP**
*Howard University*
*Washington, DC*

## INTRODUCTION

The vast number of Spanish speakers in the United States requires speech-language pathologists to study the linguistic varieties of Spanish populations. The United States receives Spanish speakers from all Spanish-speaking countries, including Mexicans (58.5%), Puerto Ricans (9.6%), Cubans (3.5%) and Dominicans (2.2%). The latter three are identified as Caribbean. Central Americans (4.8%), South Americans (3.8%) and Others (17.8%) complete the demographics (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2006). Not surprisingly, each country/region comprises variations inherent in their linguistic communities. Above and beyond the "standard-broadcast" Spanish, different populations will exhibit a number of linguistic features they may or may not share. This rich diversity of features of Spanish-dialectal features must be described to reduce bias when carrying out assessment procedures, such as contrastive analysis procedures (McGregor, Williams, Hearst, & Johnson, 1997). For example, Goldstein and Iglesias (2001) demonstrated that the number of errors in consonants and sound classes, as well as the percentage of occurrence, were reduced when accounting for the Puerto Rican dialectal features in children.

The speech-language pathology literature (Brice, 2002; Goldstein, 2000; Kayser, 1995, 1998; Roseberry-Mckibbin, 1995) has presented descriptions of variations of Spanish. While useful, these descriptions have been quite broad, capturing major dialectal features commonly shared by several populations. Nevertheless, they may not sufficiently respond to questions about the behaviors observed by speech-language pathologists. Martinez (2010) expanded these descriptions by illustrating more variations from countries, such as Puerto Rico and Mexico, already available in the literature, and by also addressing Central American regions, which have for the most part been under-reported. Furthermore, expanding on broad descriptions of variations offers the opportunity to understand the different nuances of phonological differences between populations, as well as the intra-individual differences observed in clients. Gathering from the sciences of Spanish linguistics, the phonology of Caribbean Spanish (CS) will be described in this article to further clinical understanding about the processes and surface realizations of CS allophonic variations.

### Origins of Spanish in the Caribbean

The Caribbean islands of Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic have been identified as having similar phonological features. These three islands share a historical background that unites them linguistically, as in other cultural ways. The dialect or dialects, as will be explained here, have been identified as Caribbean Spanish (CS).

While there are various reasons for the distinct features of CS speakers, the major influences depart from Andalusian dialects in Spain and the Canary islands spoken by settlers during colonial times. Spanish settlers were either speakers of Castilian Spanish—a more formal language used mainly by those who settled in the highlands of Latin America—or speakers of Andalusian Spanish. The latter were from the Andalusian southern peninsula of Spain or from the Canary Islands, which is highly influenced by the Andalusian culture. The Andalusians settled in lowlands, including the Caribbean islands as well as the northern coasts of South America, such as Venezuela (Canfield, 1981; Cotton & Sharp, 1988; Hualde, 2005; Lipski, 1994; Penny, 2000). Therefore, many of the phonological variations in the Caribbean islands are observed in Andalusia.

Lipski (n.d., a) and Hualde (2005) offer comprehensive descriptions and historical perspectives of the Andalusian dialect. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the many influences that developed into this dialect, Lipski states that by the late medieval period, the two more salient variations were evident. First, different than the Castilians, the Andalusians started to use the /s/ and the /θ/ interchangeably. To explain, the Castilians have the distinction /s/-/θ/; the /θ/ corresponding with the written letters "z," and "c" (before "e" or "i"). This distinction offers the opportunity to discriminate between the minimal pairs "casa" (home) /kasa/ - "caza" (hunt) /kaθa/. However, the Andalusians, depending on the region, either used the single phoneme /s/ (known as seseo), or used the single phoneme /θ/ (known as ceceo). But for a few places in Latin America, most use seseo—case in point is the Caribbean. The second salient variation mentioned by Lipski is the neutralization and/or loss of syllable- and word-final consonants, for example, the final word /s/ deletion as in "damas" (ladies) /damas/→[dama]. As for the

Canary Islands, Lipski (n.d., b) states their contribution was that of a supporting role. That is, the Canary Islands were mostly populated by Andalusians and had a history of continued communication between them. They followed the Andalusians in the colonization stages of the Caribbean and served to cement the dialect. Their dialect is very similar to speakers in Cuba, Panama, and Venezuela; and at times, may be even indistinguishable from each other. The principal features of Andalusia and Canary Island Spanish, found in the Caribbean, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 **Andalusian (A) and Canary Islands (CI) Phonological Features Present in Caribbean Dialects**

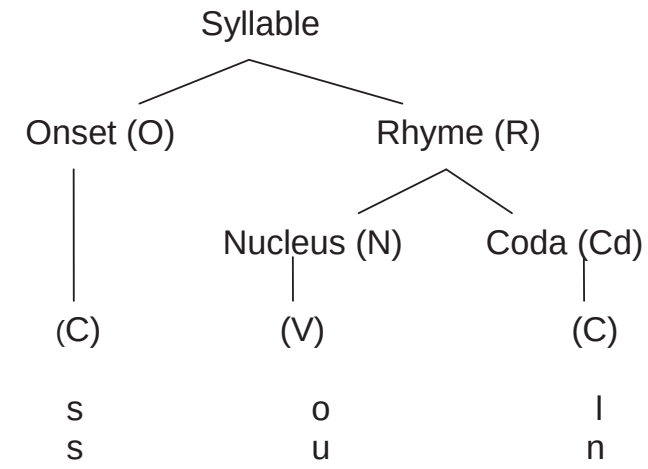
| Feature | Region | Example |
|---|---|---|
| Aspiration or elision of syllable-final /s/ | A, CI | las matas (the plants) /las matas/→[lah matah] |
| Neutralization of sibilants to /s/ (seseo) | A, CI | celda (cell) /θɛldɑ/→[sɛldɑ] |
| Velarization of word and phrase final /n/ | A, CI | son (are) /sɔn/→ [sɔŋ] |
| Weak aspiration of posterior fricative /x/ to [h] | A | caja (box) /kɑxɑ/ → [kɑhɑ] |
| Elision of word-final and intervocalic /d/ | A, CI | armado (armed) /ɑrmɑdɔ/ → [ɑrmɑɔ] |
| Neutralization of word-internal preconsonantal /l/ and /r/ | A | verdad (truth) /vɛrdɑd/ → /vɛldɑd/ |
| Loss of /ʎ/ (yeismo) | A | llanta (tire) /ʎɑntɑ/ → [dʒɑntɑ] |
| Nasalization of vowels not in contact with an etymological nasal consonant | A | ven (come) /vɛn/ → [vɛ~] |
| Voicing of prevocalic voiceless stops | A | porque (why) /pɔrkɛ/ → [pɔrgɛ] |
| Affrication of /tʃ/ to [ʃ] | A | chakra (farm) /tʃɑkrɑ/ → [ʃɑkrɑ] |
| Neutralization of /l/ and /r/ in onset plosive consonant clusters | A | platano (banana) /plɑtɑnɔ/ → [prɑtɑnɔ] |
| Reduction or neutralization of syllable or word final liquids /r/ and /l/ | CI | sol (sun) /sɔl/ → [sɔ] |
| Voicing of intervocalic/word initial /p/, /t/ and /k/ | CI | la tela (the cloth) /lɑtɛlɑ/ → [lɑdɛlɑ] |
| Fronting variant of affricate /tʃ/ to [t̪] (palatized) | CI | chaqueta (jacket) /tʃɑkɛtɑ/ → [t̪ɑkɛtɑ] |

Sources: Lipski (n.d., a; n.d., b); Hualde (2005)

**Conservative and Radical Dialects**

Dialectal variations coexist with the "standard" variations closely related to Castilian Spanish. They may be used by different social groups identified by education and or income level. But the variations may also be present in individuals as lects (Guitart, 1996, 2005). In the case of the Caribbean, Guitart identifies two lects: the conservative (or the standard, formal, similar to the Castilian) and the radical (informal, similar to Andalusian). As expected, the conservative is considered the high lect (and more prestigious), and the radical the low lect. The distinction between both is that the conservative lect will: (1) try to maintain stability, therefore phonemes will not vary between the deep-intended structure and the surface-produced structure (Guitart, 1996, 2005); or (2) try to "remain relatively close to spelling" (p. 50, Chela-Flores, 2000). One must keep in mind that in Spanish, with few exceptions, there is a direct correspondence between the written letters and phonemes. Radical lects tend to weaken and/or lose phonemes. In particular, Guitart has looked at the consonants assigned to the syllable rhyme—the Coda (Cd)—the "post nuclear consonant behavior" (p. 51, Chela-Flores, 2000; see Figure 1).

Figure 1 **Syllable Structure**



Guitart (1996) states that (examples Martinez):

"A radical Spanish lect is one in which every class of rhyme consonants is affected by the following processes" (p. 152):

1. absolute final segments are deleted (e.g., /s/ deletion), as in *salas* (rooms) /sɑlɑs/ →[sɑlɑ];
2. preconsonantal fricatives are realized as laryngeals (e.g., /s/ aspiration), as in *salas* (living rooms) /sɑlɑs/→[sɑlɑh];
3. preconsonantal stops are realized in either laryngeal or velar, as in *Pepsi* /pɛpsi/→[pɛksi];
4. /n/ is realized as nasalization of a preceding vowel or as velar [ŋ], even before nonvelars, as in the case of *van* (they go) /vɑn/→[vɑŋ];
5. liquids (/l, r/) are phonetically neutralized (e.g., /l/ is rhotacized or /r/ is lateralized, or both may be realized as a non-liquid), as in *barco* (ship) /bɑrko/→[bɑlko].

Piñeros (2007) identifies the following processes, among others:

1. debuccalization (e.g., *masca* (chew) /mɑskɑ/→[mɑhkɑ);
2. nasal absorption (e.g., *dan* (they give) /dɑn/→[d ]);
3. vocalization (e.g., *salta* (jumps) /sɑltɑ/→[sɑitɑ]);
4. deletion (e.g., *mesas* (tables) /mɛsɑs/→[ mɛsɑ]); and
5. velarization (e.g., *son* (are) /sɔn/→[sɔŋ]).

Despite the presence of this dichotomy in CS, in reality, speakers use both lects. In general, the radical is learned at home and the conservative is learned in schools. The conservative lect is rarely completely controlled by Caribbean speakers (Guitart, 1996), with common intralingual switching (similar to code-switching) occurring. Nevertheless, these behaviors—better known as variabilities—are exhibited while using both the conservative and the radical forms. As explained by Guitart (1997),

> Variability in phonology refers to the fact that a word may be pronounced differently on different occasions, even though the segments of the word are always in exactly the same phonetic environment (p. 515). It is possible to observe a speaker produce the following phrase "las salas son (the living rooms are)" /lɑs sɑlɑs sɔn/ → [lɑs sɑlɑh sɔn] in one sentence. The speakers are considered as having two phonologies (but one phonemic inventory), therefore rendering them bilectals. Nevertheless, "Speakers who are schooled become bilectal in different degrees and those bilectals who have no absolute control over the conservative lect speak an interlect [sic] version (Guitart, 1996, p. 156).

"Their use is constrained by how much control or knowledge they have of them, as well as socio-pragmatic factors" (Guitart, 2005, p. 16). (Note that Guitart, 2005, presents the construct of "subphonologies" that contain ranked constraints to help code switchers make decisions about which phonetic form to use and not use when speaking either a conservative or radical styles. When both forms are used simultaneously, the speakers are rank switching.)

The coda position, as expressed previously, may be used to characterize radical dialects, such as the Andalusian, the Canarian, and Caribbean Spanish (Guitart, 1996, 1997, 2005). The CS speaker may speak the conservative lect without coda changes (nonsimplified), the radical no-coda lect, and a third lect, which is one that has phonetic neutralizations, with some coda constraints (simplifications). Therefore, some may consider that the speaker has at his or her disposal three different phonologies (or subphonologies), the formal nonsimplified conservative lect being the hardest to control.

In summary, Guitart (1997) states the following about CS speakers:

1. Any Caribbean speaker who shows variability in the pronunciation of coda consonants has acquired more than one phonological system.
2. Caribbean speakers do not normally display equal control over the different phonological systems that underlie their pronunciation.
3. Uneven control is the cause of the variability observed and is manifested in the imperfect match between allophones and styles, a situation similar to that observed among second language speakers and second language users who have fossilized.
4. Uneven control leads the average Caribbean speaker to switch from one phonological system to another in the course of speech, even midword, accounting for the variability observed for a given segment (p. 515).

**The Coda and Caribbean Spanish**

A review of Spanish phonotactics will guide the reader to a better understanding of CS. Phonotactics constraints are "restrictions on the distribution of sound sequences in the words of any given language" (Roca & Johnson, 2000, p. 209). In other words, these rules, determine the appropriateness of phonemes appearing in different onset, nucleus, and coda syllable segments.

The syllable structure of Spanish is basically canonical (consonant-vowel [CV]; Schnitzer & Faraclas, 2008), although other syllable structures such as CVC and CCV are present. Hualde (2005) and Shepherd (2003) offer thorough descriptions of Spanish consonant phonotactics (see Table 2). Sixteen consonants are present in the language accompanied with five vowel sounds. The /w/ (the seventeenth consonant) may not be considered a Spanish phoneme since it is usually used with English loan words. Nevertheless, regions have started to own the phoneme /w/ as they use proper names, such as "Washington" and "Wilma" and other words in their daily lives. For example, in Puerto Rico the exclamation "wepa" (wow) [wɛpɑ] is used constantly. Therefore, it has been included as part of the consonant repertoire. The most frequent codas are /s, n, l, r/ in medial position and /d, s, n, l, r/ in the final position. Spanish uses some loan words with different codas, such as in

the English word club (nightclub) /klub/ with the /b/ in the coda position, but these are very rare. English words with the coda /k/ will be expressed with a voiced /g/ as in "bistec" (beefsteak) /bifstɛk/→[biftɛg]. French words with the coda /t/ will be expressed as the voiced /d/ such as in *carnet* (ID card) /kɑrnɛt/→ [kɑrnɛd]. In the examples, the codas may also be absent (Shepherd, 2003).

Table 2 **Spanish Consonant Phonotactics**

| Syllable Position | Rule | Phoneme |
|---|---|---|
| Onset | • optional-consisting of one consonant,<br>or | /p, b, t, f, k, g, f, s, x, tʃ, m, n, ɲ, l, r, j, w[1]/ |
| | • (maximally) an obstruent followed by a liquid | • obstruents: /p, t. k, b, d, f/<br>• liquids: /r, l/ |
| Coda | • optional – consisting of one consonant**<br>or | • medial position: /**s, n, l, r,** g, f, p, b, t, d, k/[2]<br>• final position: /**d, s, n, l, r**/[2]<br>• final position from loan words: /b, t, k, m/[3] |
| | • optional coda of two consonants /_+s/ | • medial position: /b, /d, /k, n, r/<br>• final position: /p, t, k, f, n, r/ |

Sources: Shepherd (2003); Hualde (2005)

Notes:
1. The /w/ is not included by Shepherd or Hualde. This phoneme presents itself debatable since some consider it a loan phoneme from English. Nevertheless, Spanish speakers use it mainly for proper names, loan words, and others; and therefore, it is considered a Spanish phoneme for the present purposes.
2. Red font indicates the most common codas.
3. Due to English and French loan, the coda phonemes indicated in green have been included.

As can be seen in Table 3, Guitart (1997) has described the CS variations in the coda position in terms of dropping (or deletion) and neutralization. A deletion may be expressed at the end of a word, as for example, in the word *month* /mɛs/, where It may present itself as [mɛ]. Neutralization refers to the use of one phonetic realization for two phonemes that are in the same class. From a pair of phonemes, one may become the allophone for both (e.g., /r/, /l/→ [l]), or from a pair of phonemes, another allophone is used in their place (e.g., /s/, /f/→ [h]). Also, a phoneme may assimilate to the following onset (e.g., /n/→/ŋ/ before /g/), or nonvelars phonemes may become velarized in final positions (e.g., /n/→/ŋ/). For both deleted and neutralized expressions, Hualde (2005) explains that the etymological consonant or original intent is actually preserved in the individual's phonological repertoire. This is demonstrated by pluralizing "mes" /mɛs/ (month). Even though as a singular noun it may appear as [mɛ], when pluralized the deleted consonant /s/ reappears, as in [mɛsɛs]. Also, because of the variability explained previously, speakers have been observed to use both forms simultaneously.

Table 3 **Caribbean Spanish (CS) Coda Variations**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Deletions** | | | | |
| | Phonemes | Realization | Comment | Example |
| | /s/ | →[ø] | | *dos* (two) /dɔs/→[dɔ] |
| | /d/ | →[ø] | | *sed* (thirst) /sɛd/→[sɛ] |
| | /n/ | →[ø] | Preceding vowel is nasalized | *son* (are) /sɔn/ → [sɔ~] |
| | /ɾ/ | →[ø] | Infinitival morpheme | *bailar* (to dance) /bɑilar/→[bɑilɑ] |
| | /k/ | →[ø] | Word internal, others may also be deleted. | *doctor* (doctor) /dɔktɔr/→[dɔtɔr] |
| **Neutralization Processes** | | | | |
| | /s/ & /f/ | [h] | Aspiration | *do* (two) /dɔs/→[dɔh]<br>*fiesta* (party) /fiɛstɑ/→[fiɛhtɑ]<br>*fue* (was0 /fuɛ/ → [huɛ] |
| | /l/ & /r/ | [y] | Vocalization (or liquid gliding) | *verdad* (truth) /vɛrdɑd]→ [vɛidɑd]<br>*maldad* (badness) /mɑldɑd/→ [mɑidɑd] |
| | /r/ | [l] | Lateralization | *doctor* (doctor) /dɔktɔr/→[dɔktɔl] |
| | /l/ & /r/ | | Assimilation of following onset | *pulga* (flea) /pulgɑ/→[puggɑ]<br>*sortija* (ring) /sɔrtiha/ → [sɔttiha] |
| | Nonvelars stops and nasals | | Velarization | *ven* (come) /bɛn/ → [bɛŋ] |

Source: Guitart (1997)

Note:
Only one process is shown at a time per word even though several processes would be expected (e.g., for vocalization, the word *verdad* (truth) /vɛrdɑd]→[vɛidɑd] may actually be spoken as [bɛidɑh].

**Variations by Island**

The tables in this section present variations for the islands of Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. These tables are based on an exhaustive literature review (Martinez, 2010) of work by Bjarkman and Hammond (1989), Canfield (1981), Cotton and Sharp (1988), Goldstein (1995, 2000), Guitart (1980), Hammond (2001), Harris (1980), Hualde (2005), Jorge Morel (1978), Lipski (1994), Penny (2000), Saciuk (1980), and Scavnicky (1980).

Keep in mind that the nature and use of the different variations by clients are also influenced by a number of sociolinguistic variables which are not reflected in the tables. First, there are geographical constraints. For example, the velarization of the /r/ and the intervocalic /d/ are found most often among the "jíbaros" (highly influenced by Spaniards and Taino Indians) living in the mountains of Puerto Rico (Lipski, 1994). The lateralization of /r/ is found mostly in the south in the Dominican Republic (Canfield, 1981). Second, historical linguistic influences have been noted when identifying populations. Other than what has been described about influences from Spain, (Lipski, 1994) notes that in the Dominican Republic isolated communities with African influences will exhibit /d/ → /ɾ/ more frequently, while in Puerto Rico, the velarized /r/ will be seen less frequently in areas with more African influences, such as Loiza Aldea. Gender differences have been described in Cuba, where the /tʃ/ → [ʃ] and /r/→ [r] are mostly observed in women (Canfield, 1981). The latter, a recent phenomena, is also observed in Puerto Rico as well as the reduction of the final /d/ (Lipski,
1994). Fourth, generational differences may be seen, as with the elision of the intervocalic /d/, which occurs more frequently in older populations (Lipski, 1994). Fifth, social class plays a difference, as explained before by Guitart (1996, 2005), with those most educated presenting the formal forms more frequently. Sixth, and final, individuals have at their disposal, a number of lects, which may be used depending on the social context. The more informal the situation, the more informal forms will appear in the speech of individuals (Guitart, 1996, 2005).

These tables demonstrate in a more clinically usable manner the many variations that occur in CS. Following Guitart's emphasis on the syllable level, the allophonic variations at the syllable level for both Onset (O) and Coda (Cd) positions are presented. Only those positions reported in the literature or observed by the author are included in these tables. Furthermore, some realizations are accompanied by context rules. Processes that have guided the allophonic variations are included as well as examples to illustrate these variations. For example, in Table 4 the following transformation occurs: /j/ → [ø]. It occurs on the onset (O) position within the following context: M: V_V (the medial position: intervocalic). The process (deletion) and examples (humillar (humiliate) /umijɑr/ → [umiɑr]) are offered. The tables also illustrate more processes than those previously described (see Table 3) by Guitart (1997) and Piñeros (2007)

**Cuba**

The literature and author observations in Table 4, note that there are thirteen consonants which present variations in the Cuban dialect: /p, t, d, k, tʃ, s, j, x, n, l, ɾ, r, w/. Thirteen processes accounted for the variations. The phoneme with the most allophonic variations is /x/. This phoneme is actually nonexistent in CS, and therefore is obliged to change. Variations occur in both Onset (O) and Coda (Cd) positions although they occurred more at the Coda (Cd) position. Only four phonemes showed variations in both Onset (O) and Coda (Cd) positions.

Table 4 **Dialectal Variations of Consonants in Cuba**

| Phoneme | Phonetic Realization[1] | Syllable Position[2] and Context[3] | | Process | Example[4] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Onset (O) | Coda (Cd) | | |
| Plosives | | | | | |
| /p/ | → [$p_v$] | M | M | Voicing | *apto* (able) /ɑptɔ/ → [ɑ$p_v$tɔ]<br>*opina* (opines) /ɔpinɑ/ → [ɔ$p_v$inɑ] |
| /t/ | → [$t_v$] | M | M | Voicing | *atleta* (athlete) /ɑtlɛtɑ/ → [ɑ$t_v$lɛtɑ]<br>*atender* (tend to) /ɑtɛndɛr/ → [ɑ$t_v$ɛndɛr] |
| /d/ | → [ø] | M: V__V | F | Deletion | *cerrado* (closed) /sɛrɑdɔ/ → [sɛrɑɔ]<br>*bondad* (goodness) /bɔndɑd/ → [bɔndɑ] |
| /k/ | → [$k_v$] | M: V__V | M, F | Voicing | *actual* (actual) /ɑktuɑl/ → [ɑ$k_v$tuɑl]<br>*ocupa* (occupies) /ɔkupɑ/ → [ɔ$k_v$upɑ]) |
| Affricate | | | | | |
| /tʃ/ | → [ʃ] | I. M | | Deaffrication | *choza* (hut) /tʃɔsɑ/ → [ʃɔsɑ] |
| Fricatives | | | | | |
| /s/ | → [h] | | M, F: __C | Debuccalization | *las casas* (the houses) /lɑs kɑsɑs/ → [lɑh kɑsɑh]<br>*damas* (ladies) /dɑmɑs/ → [dɑmɑh] |
| | → [ø] | | M, F | Deletion | *cisne* (swan) /sisnɛ/ → [si:nɛ]<br>*copas* (wineglass) /kɔpɑs/ → [kɔpɑ] |
| /j/ | → [dʒ] | I, M | | Stopping | *llave* (key) /jɑbɛ/ → [dʒɑbɛ] |
| | → [ø] | M: V__V | | Deletion | *humillar* (humiliate) /umijɑr/ → [umiɑr] |
| /x/[5] | → [ø] | I, M | | Deletion | *angel* (angel) /ɑnxɛl/ → [ɑn:ɛl] |
| | → [ɦ] | I, M | | Debuccalization | *joven* (young) /xɔbɛn/ → [ɦɔbɛn] |
| | → [h] | I, M | | Debuccalization | *joven* (young) /xɔbɛn/ → [hɔbɛn] |
| | → [χ] | I, M | | Voicing | *gente* (people) /xɛntɛ/ → [χɛntɛ]] |
| | → [ɣ] | I, M | | Affrication | *mago* (magician) /mɑgɔ/ → [mɑɣɔ] |
| Nasals | | | | | |
| /n/ | → [ŋ] | | M:__C [+Velar] | Velarization | *hincha* (to swell) /intʃɑ/ → [iŋtʃɑ] |
| | → [ŋ] | | M:__C [+Palatal]<br>F: __ ‖ or __V | Velarization | *ven* (come) /vɛn/ → [bɛŋ] |
| | → [ø] | | M, F | Deletion + Nasal Absorption | *son* (are) /sɔn/ → [sɔ~] |
| | → [m] | | M:__C[+Labial] | Fronting | invierno (winter) /inviɛrnɔ/ → [imbiɛrnɔ] |
| Liquids | | | | | |
| /l/ | → [r] | | M, F | Rhotacized | *homiga* (ant) /ɔrmigɑ/ → [ɔlmigɑ] |
| | → [ɬ] | | M, F | Velarization | *sal* (salt) /sɑl/ → [sɑɬ] |
| | → [ø] | | M: __C<br>F | Deletion | *el sol* (the sun) /ɛl sɔl/ → [ɛl sɔ]<br>*sueldo* (salary) /suɛldɔ/ → [suɛdɔ] |
| /r/ | → [ø] | | M: __C<br>F | Deletion | *el mar* (the sea) /ɛl mɑr/ → [ɛl mɑ]<br>*sortija* (ring) /sɔrtihɑ/ → [sɔtihɑ] |
| | →[*ř] | | F | Shortened | *par* (pair) /pɑr/ → [pɑ*ř] |
| | → [l] | | F:__C | Lateralization | *mar grande* (big sea) /mɑr grɑndɛ/ → [mɑl grɑndɛ] |
| /r/ | → [$χ_o$] | I, M | | Velarization | *carro* (car) /kɑro/ → [kɑ$χ_o$ɔ] |
| | → [$r_o$] | I, M | | Devoicing | *carro* (car) /kɑro/ → [kɑ$r_o$ɔ] |
| | → [h] | | M: __C<br>F | Debuccalization | *carta* (letter) /kɑrtɑ/ → [kɑhtɑ/ |
| | → [ø] | | M: __C<br>F | Deletion | *porque* (because) /pɔrkɛ/ → [pɔkɛ] |
| | | | | | |
| Glides | | | | | |
| /w/ | → [gw] | I | | Epenthesis | *Wanda* (Wanda) /wɑndɑ/ → [gwɑndɑ] |

Sources: Bjarkman & Hammond, 1989; Canfield, 1981; Cotton & Sharp, 1988; Goldstein, 1995, 2000; Guitart, 1980; Hammond, 2001; Harris,1980; Hualde, 2005; Jorge Morel, 1978; Lipski, 1994; Martinez, 2010; Penny, 2000; Saciuk, 1980; Scavnicky, 1980

Notes:

1. Diacritics: [ *ř] shortened, [$χ_o$] devoiced, [$p_v$] voiced, [ɑ:] elongated, [ɔ~] nasalized
2. I (initial), M (medial), F (final)
3. Context symbols: __ (realization), C (consonant), V (vowel), ‖ (pause).
4. Examples only demonstrate the exemplified variation even though the same word would include other variations simultaneously.
5. /x/ is nonexistent in CS and for the most part will appear as [h].

**The Dominican Republic**

Table 5 illustrates the thirteen phonemes containing allophonic variations in this island. The phonemes are: /b, d, g, tʃ, s, f, x, j, n, l, ɾ, r, w/. The number of processes accounting for the variations is also 13. The phonemes with most variations are /n/, /l/, and /r/. Variations occur in the onset (O) and the coda (Cd) positions, with most occurring at the latter position. Only one phoneme (/d/) has been observed to have processes in both positions.

Table 5 **Dialectal Variations of Consonants in the Dominican Republic**

| Phoneme | Phonetic Realization[1] | Syllable Position[2] and Context[3] | | Process | Example[4] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Onset (O) | Coda (Cd) | | |
| Plosives | | | | | |
| /b/ | → [β] | I, M | | Affrication | *beso* (kiss) /bɛsɔ/ → [βɛsɔ] |
| /d/ | → [ø] | M:V__V | F | Deletion | *armado* (armed) /ɑrmɑdɔ/ → [ɑrmɑɔ]<br>*sed* (thirst) /sɛd/ → [sɛ] |
| | → [ɾ] | M | | Rhotarization | *cada* (each) /kɑdɑ/ → [kɑɾɑ] |
| /g/ | → [ø] | | M:__C [+Stop] | Deletion | *signo* (sign) /signɔ/ → [sinɔ] |
| | → [ɣ] | I, M | M | Affrication | *mago* (magician) /mɑgɔ/ → [mɑɣɔ] |
| Affricate | | | | | |
| /tʃ/ | → [ʃ] | I, M | | Deaffrication | *chofer* (driver) /tʃɔfɛr/ → [ʃɔfɛr] |
| Fricatives | | | | | |
| /s/ | → [h] | | M:__C<br>F | Debuccalization | *los dos* (the two) /lɔs dɔs/ → [lɔh dɔh] |
| | → [ø] | | M, F | Deletion | *casas* (houses) /kɑsɑs/ → [kɑsɑ] |
| /f/ | → [ɸ] | I, M | | Fronting | *sofa* (sofa) /sɔfɑ/ → [sɔɸɑ] |
| /x/[5] | → [ħ] | I, M | | Debuccalization | *caja* (box) /kɑxɑ/ → [kɑħɑ] |
| | → [h] | I, M | | Debuccalization | *lejos* (far) /lɛxɔs/ → [lɛhɔs] |
| /j/ | → [dʒ] | I, M | | Stopping | *lluvia* (rain) /juviɑ/ → [dʒuviɑ] |
| Nasals | | | | | |
| /n/ | → [ɲ] | | M:__C[+Velar] | Palatization | *mancha* (stain) /mɑntʃɑ/ → [mɑɲtʃɑ] |
| | → [ŋ] | | M:__C[-Velar or +Palatal]<br>F:__V or __‖ | Velarization | *ven* (come) /vɛn/ → [vɛŋ] |
| | → [ø] | | F | Deletion | *son* (are) /sɔn/ → [sɔ̃] |
| | → [m] | | M:__C[+Labial]<br>F:__C[+Labial] | Labialization | *son buenos* (are good) /sɔn buɛnɔs/ → [sɔm buɛnɔs] |
| Liquids | | | | | |
| /l/ | → [r] | | M, F | Rhotarization | *falda* (skirt) /fɑldɑ/ → [fɑrdɑ] |
| | → [ɬ] | | M, F | Velarization | *dulce* (sweet) /dulsɛ/ → [dułsɛ] |
| | →[ø] | | F | Deletion | *la sal* (the salt) /lɑ sɑl/ → [lɑ sɑ} |
| | → [i] | | M, F | Vocalization | *alcalde* (mayor) /ɑlkɑldɛ/ → [ɑikɑidɛ] |
| /ɾ/ | → [ø] | | M:__C<br>F | Deletion | *mármol* (marble) /mɑɾmɔl/ → [mamɔl]<br>*dar* (give) /dɑɾ/ → [dɑ] |
| | → [l] | | F:__C | Lateralization | *martillo* (hammer) /mɑɾtijɔ/ → [mɑltijɔ] |
| | → [i] | | M, F | Vocalization | *jardín* (garden /hɑɾdin/ → [hɑidin] |
| /r/ | → [χ$_o$] | I, M | | Velarization | *carro* (car) /kɑrɔ/ → [kɑχ$_o$ɔ] |
| | → [r$_o$] | M | | Devoicing | *tierra* (earth) /tiɛrɑ/ → [tiɛr$_o$ɑ] |
| | → [h] | | M:__C<br>F | Debuccalization | *marco* (frame) /mɑrkɔ/ → [mɑhkɔ] |
| | → [ŋ] | | M:__C[+Velar] | Velarization | *virgen* (virgin) /virhɛn/ → [viŋɛn] |
| Glides | | | | | |
| /w/ | → [gw] | I | | Epenthesis | *watt* (watt) /wɑt/ → [gwɑt] |

Sources: Bjarkman & Hammond, 1989; Canfield, 1981; Cotton & Sharp, 1988; Goldstein,1995, 2000; Guitart, 1980; Hammond, 2001; Harris, 1980; Hualde, 2005; Jorge Morel, 1978; Lipski, 1994; Martinez, 2010; Penny, 2000; Saciuk, 1980; Scavnicky, 1980

Notes:
1. Diacritics: [*ɾ] (shortened), [χ$_o$] (devoiced), [ɑ:] elongated, [ɔ~] nasalized
2. I (initial), M (medial), F (final)
3. Context symbols: __ (realization), C (consonant), V (vowel), ‖ (pause)
4. Examples only demonstrate the exemplified variation even though the same word would include other variations simultaneously.
5. /x/ is nonexistent in CS and for the most part will appear as [h].

**Puerto Rico**

The number of phonemes with variations are in Table 6. The table contains 12 phonemes that are open to changes. Most processes are exhibited by /n/ and /ɾ/. In overall, the phonetic realizations in Puerto Rico are based on fourteen processes. The syllable positions affected by these processes included both the Onset (O) and the Coda (Cd). Nevertheless, as in the Dominican Republic, only one phoneme exhibited changes in both syllable positions: /d/.

Table 6 **Dialectal Variations of Consonants in Puerto Rico**

| Phoneme | Phonetic Realization[1] | Syllable Position[2] and Context[3] | | Processes | Examples[4] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Onset (O) | Coda (Cd) | | |
| Plosives | | | | | |
| /b/ | → [g] | I, M | | Velarization | *bueno* (good) /buɛnɔ/ → [guɛnɔ]<br>*abuelo* (grandfather) /ɑbuɛlɔ/ → [ɑguɛlɔ] |
| /d/ | → [ø] | I:V__V | F | Deletion | *pescado* (fish) /pɛskɑdɔ/ → [pɛskɑɔ]<br>*sed* (thirst) /sɛd/ → [sɛ] |
| Affricate | | | | | |
| /tʃ/ | → [ʃ] | I | | Deaffrication | *chalina* (tie) /tʃɑlinɑ/ → [ʃɑlinɑ] |
| | → [tʲ] | M | | Palatalization | *leche* (milk) /lɛtʃɛ/ → [lɛtʲɛ] |
| Fricatives | | | | | |
| /s/ | → [h] | | M:__C<br>F | Debuccalization | *postre* (dessert) /pɔstrɛ/ → [pɔhtrɛ]<br>*las manos* (the hands) /lɑs mɑnɔs/ → [lɑh mɑnɔh] |
| | → [ø] | | M, F | Deletion | *dos* (two) /dɔs/ → [dɔ]<br>*pescado* (fish) /pɛskɑdɔ/ → [pɛ:kɑdo] |
| | → [ʔ] | | F:__V | Glotalization | *las ollas* (the pans) /lɑs ɔjɑs/ → [lɑʔ ɔjɑs] |
| /f/ | → [ɸ] | I, M | | Labialization | *sofá* (sofa) /sɔfɑ/ → [sɔɸɑ] |
| /x/[5] | → [ħ] | I, M | | Debuccalization | *jabón* (soap) /xɑbɔn/ → [ħɑbɔn] |
| /j/ | → [dʒ] | I, M | | Stopping | *llave* (key) /jɑbɛ/ → [dʒɑbɛ] |
| | → [ø] | I, M | | Deletion | *milla* (mile) /mijɑ/ → [mi:ɑ] |
| | → [ɲ] | I | | Palatalization/ Nasalization | *llama* (calls) /jɑmɑ/ → [ɲɑmɑ] |
| Nasals | | | | | |
| /n/ | → [ɲ] | | M:__C [+Velar} | Palatization | *concha* (shell) /kɔntʃɑ/ → [kɔɲtʃɑ] |
| | → [ŋ] | | M:__V [+Velar]<br>F:__ ‖ or C [+Palatal] | Velarization | *mango* (mango) /mɑngɔ/ → mɑŋɔ]<br>*son* (are) /sɔn/ → [sɔŋ] |
| | → [ø] | | F | Deletion + Nasal Absorption | *son* (are) /sɔn/ → [sɔ~] |
| | → [m] | | M:__C [+Labial] | Fronting | *inferior* (inferior) /infɛriɔr/ → [imfɛriɔr] |
| Liquids | | | | | |
| /l/ | → [ɬ] | | M, F | Velarization | *sal* (salt) /sɑl/ → [sɑɬ] |
| /ɾ/ | → [*ɾ] | | F | Shortened | *par* (pair) /pɑr/ → [pɑ*ɾ] |
| | → [ø] | | M:__C<br>F | Deletion | *marco* (frame) /mɑrkɔ/ → [mɑ:kɔ] |
| | → [l] | | M:__C<br>F | Lateralization | *sartén* (frying pan) /sɑrtɛn/ → [sɑltɛn] |
| | → [i] | | M, F | Vocalization | *sartén* (frying pan) /sɑrtɛn/ → [sɑitɛn] |
| /r/ | → [χ$_o$] | I, M | | Velarization | *carro* (car) /kɑrɔ/ → [kɑχ$_o$ɔ] |
| | → [ɬ] | | M, F | Velarization | *mar* (sea) /mɑr/ → [mɑɬ] |
| | → [l] | | M, F | Lateralization | *carta* (letter) /kɑrtɑ/ → [kɑltɑ] |
| Glides | | | | | |
| /w/ | → [gw] | I | | Epenthesis | *watt* (watt) /wɑt/ → [gwɑt] |

Sources: Bjarkman & Hammond, 1989; Canfield, 1981; Cotton & Sharp, 1988; Goldstein,1995, 2000; Guitart, 1980; Hammond, 2001; Harris,1980; Hualde, 2005; Jorge Morel, 1978; Lipski, 1994; Martinez, 2010; Penny, 2000; Saciuk, 1980; Scavnicky, 1980

Notes:

1. Diacritics: [*ɾ] = shortened, [χ$_o$] devoiced, [ɑ:] elongated, [ɔ~] nasalized
2. I (initial), M (medial), F (final)
3. Context symbols: __ (realization), C (consonant), V (vowel), ‖ (pause)
4. Examples only demonstrate the exemplified variation even though the same word would include other variations simultaneously.
5. /x/ is nonexistent in CS and for the most part will appear as [h].

**Clinical Implications**

Serving clients with Spanish-speaking backgrounds imposes on speech-language pathologists (SLPs) the need to acquire more knowledge and skills to be able to deliver state of the art services. Unsurprisingly, the need to continue to learn the linguistic nature of the languages used by our clients becomes quite relevant as more and more speech-language pathologists are addressing the needs of Hispanic populations. As with other world languages, Spanish contains a number of dialects which are distinct from each other in many parameters. One of those parameters is phonology, as described in this article. Therefore, it is incumbent on the SLP to make efforts to obtain data regarding the systems used by their clients. In their seminal article, McGregor, Williams, and Hearst (1997), pointed out how speech-language pathologists can best obtain information about their client's dialects. They suggested that to become familiar with the client's patterns, SLPs must search the literature in the field of speech-language pathology that contains comparisons between the standard and dialects. This information, they caution, must be used with the understanding that descriptions tend to be broad and may not identify social, gender, and geographical distinctions, among others. Dialectal knowledge may also be obtained by comparing the clients to their peers, by collecting norms, and by interviewing "expert" native dialect speakers. Therefore, the information contained in the tables elaborated with respect to CS will serve SLPs in their quest to obtain more elaborate information about the phonological systems of their clients.

For evaluation purposes, SLPs must engage in contrastive analysis procedures described by McGregor, et al (1997). This process entails obtaining information about the different dialects spoken by the client and contrasting the variations or "errors" to the standard and to the dialect. This method helps to separate those variations that are consistent with the dialects spoken by the client and those variations that may be considered true pathological errors. However, CS speakers will not be completely proficient in the formal forms and will almost always present variability. Therefore, clinicians are directed to consider all the acceptable variations and interpersonal variabilities in spite of the assumptions that may be prevalent with regard to the speech of certain CS populations. For instance, while it may be assumed that the highly educated will present with only formal standard forms, the literature notes that very few CS speakers are completely competent in the standard form and, therefore, there are high probabilities that these speakers will always present some nonstandard forms, even in formal conditions. With regard to identifying and/ or developing appropriate stimuli for obtaining samples, the SLP must be knowledgeable of the phonotactic rules governing the language(s) and/or dialect(s) of the client. For example, Guitart and others have identified where variations may occur in CS, such as in the Dominican Republic where /l/ → [ø] in the context of final coda position. Therefore, presenting a picture of a "sol" (sun) /sɔl/ may not elicit the phoneme. In this instance, it is imperative that the sample include words with the /l/ in initial or medial onset position, such as "luz" (light) /lus/ or "pala" (shovel) /pɑlɑ/. Furthermore, as described by Guitart, if the final coda /l/ is still in the client's phonological system, the final coda /l/ should reappear when presented with the word in the plural form "soles" (suns) /sɔlɛs/. This may be part of stimulability testing procedures.

Treatment goal considerations may be a challenge to clinicians. Because the natural tendency is not to have complete control of the conservative form, clinicians must make decisions about appropriate goals and criteria for phonological treatment. In presenting phonemes, clinician has several options: a) present solely the formal form (which the client may never have used but is important for academic and work success), b) present only the dialectal variations without consideration of the formal form (even though the majority of clients may actually be bidialectal), or c) present both the conservative and radical forms simultaneously during treatment. In considering these options Seymour and Seymour (1977) have offered a model for intervention practices with African American English speakers. They propose that features deviating from both the formal and dialect variations should be addressed. Intervention goals should focus on competencies that enable the client to be proficient in both forms, offering the client the opportunity to choose which form to use depending on the educational, social, and occupational demands.

**Conclusions**

Speech-language pathologists find great challenges when addressing the needs of Spanish-speaking clients. This challenge is mostly amplified by the lack of information on Spanish linguistics available to both bilingual and monolingual clinicians. As more Spanish-speaking clients are received in clinical settings, competencies in the assessment and remediation of phonological disorders must be augmented. The many Spanish varieties in the United States compound the work and point to a need to go beyond the broad descriptions available in the literature. As demonstrated, the phonological varieties of three islands known as Caribbean Spanish (CS) are many and must be considered in order to modify assessments and treatment approaches. Nevertheless, more information is needed. For example, one area of inquiry is the phonological development of children who use different varieties. Another area of inquiry is to identify how the treatment of one variety affects the competencies in a second variety. Finally, further information must be gathered as to the specific rules governing dialectal variations not only in CS but also in other varieties used in Central and South America.

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## *EDITOR'S CHOICE*

From time to time articles submitted to ECHO may not fit comfortably into a prescribed mode for general publication. Yet, they merit consideration because of the timeliness or poignancy of the issue being raised. Such articles, particularly those submitted by students, will be given special consideration for publication. Applying to and succeeding in graduate school: A multicultural perspective by Forde et al met the Editor's Choice criteria for this issue of ECHO.

# *APPLYING TO AND SUCCEEDING IN GRADUATE SCHOOL: A MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVE*

**Carrie Forde, Brittany Carroll, Elizabeth Omaivboje, and Colleen M. O'Rourke**
*Georgia State University*
*Atlanta, Georgia*

## ABSTRACT

There is an ever increasing need for a diverse group of professionals to serve the multicultural population of individuals with communication and swallowing disorders. Graduate programs are seeking to increase minority student enrollment and address the unique needs of these students. This article reviews the issues of selecting a graduate program and the challenges of graduate school from the perspective of minority students. The article also highlights ways graduate programs can promote cultural diversity to inform and encourage students of cultural and ethnically diverse backgrounds to consider the field of CSD as a career option.

**KEY WORDS**: minority students, graduate school, recruitment, retention

ECHO

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**Carrie Forde, Brittany Carroll, Elizabeth Omaivboje, and Colleen M. O'Rourke**
*Georgia State University*
*Atlanta, Georgia*

## INTRODUCTION

The profession of communication sciences and disorders (CSD) continues to be an appealing choice for career seekers. An exceptionally high employment rate for speech-language pathologists (SLPs) and audiologists as documented by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) in 2011 and an on-going shortage of professionals in most work settings (ASHA, 2009, 2010) draw both undergraduate CSD majors as well as individuals changing careers to graduate CSD programs. There also is an ever increasing need for a diverse group of professionals to serve the multicultural population of individuals with communication and swallowing disorders. Based on ASHA membership data (ASHA, 2011) 27.6% of the U.S. population are members of a racial minority while only 7% of ASHA members and certificate holders are racial minorities.

Choosing to pursue graduate degree can be a stressful objective for interested individuals. *What schools should I apply to? What scores will I need? When I am accepted into several schools, how should I decide where to go? How will I pay for graduate school? What do I need to do to ensure I am successful in graduate school?* These are just a few of the questions that a tentative applicant might have when trying to decide whether to pursue a graduate degree. As a minority student, there are unique issues that may arise during this complex and sometimes confusing process. After minority students are admitted to a graduate program they often face additional issues that majority students do not. How can graduate programs increase minority student enrollment and address the unique needs of these students? The intent of this article is two-fold. First, it is to provide a glimpse into the thought processes and experiences of culturally and ethnically diverse students who are currently in a Communication Disorders graduate program. Through these accounts the reader will hopefully have a better understanding of the questions and concerns minority students encountered when applying to graduate schools and pursuing this degree and how this might differ from the typical applicant. Second, this article highlights the importance of promoting cultural diversity within graduate programs in hopes of informing and encouraging students of cultural and ethnically diverse backgrounds to consider the field of CSD as a career option.

## SELECTING A GRADUATE PROGRAM

The first decision individuals must make is *"Which schools should I apply to?"* For all applicants it is important to consider both the school's academic reputation as well as the social climate when choosing a CSD program. For minority students; however, the racial and ethnic diversity of current students in a CSD program, the student body at-large, faculty members, clinical supervisors, and clients also can be an important consideration. Diversity in a CSD program is typically not the sole deciding factor in applying to a graduate program, but it should be evaluated along with other issues such as the location of the university (rural, urban, suburban), the ethnic/racial makeup of the community in which the university is located, and the opportunities for financial assistance.

> *"I wanted to come to a city where I could easily access a variety of cultures. I needed to escape the monotony I experienced in undergrad and I was ready to meet people who come from backgrounds similar to my own."* – Rosalina

A graduate program can be more enticing to minority students if it offers minority scholarships and makes efforts to highlight multicultural features of both the campus and community during campus tours and/or orientation. Added benefits would include programs offering multicultural classes for all incoming students as well as internship placements and/or clinical practicum experiences with a diverse population. The above features would likely bridge the gap between minority students and non-minority students by providing all students, not just the minority group, with a culturally enriched experience during their graduate program. Such experiences would minimize ostracization or stereotyping and maximize tolerance and openness in a collaborative learning environment.

The definitive choice of which school to attend can be a difficult one and it is important that prospective applicants adequately research their top program choices. Often prospective applicants are primarily concerned with how they can present themselves as the best applicant for the programs to which they apply and may not have done sufficient research of their own. Applicants can, and should, learn more about a program beyond what is available on the program's website to ensure that the program is

the best fit for them. Strategies to learn more about a graduate program include: speaking to current students and recent alumni; researching both the school's and community's demographics; visiting the campus and touring the speech-language-hearing clinic prior to applying; attending graduate school fairs or department information sessions to speak with program representatives; and seeking advice from faculty members at the applicant's undergraduate university. Students may choose to pursue opportunities to speak with other minorities currently working in the field by contacting minority organizations such as the National Black Association for Speech-Language and Hearing (NBASLH). Members of the organization who have graduated or are currently enrolled in graduate programs will likely be able to provide meaningful insights about what their graduate programs offered them as minority students.

For minority students there are other unique issues to consider during the program selection process. Specifically, questions will arise regarding the number of other minority students enrolled in the program as well as the amount of experience the program faculty has in teaching minority students or working with minority clients. When applicants tour universities, speak to current students and alumni, and consider their program choices they should seek information about: student and client diversity; reputation of the program and faculty; student outcomes (employment, research experience, awards, etc.); faculty experiences with clients of diverse backgrounds; faculty attitude towards minority students; ethnic/racial makeup of the community in which the university is located; and availability of financial aid.

*"I chose my current graduate program because I knew attending school in the city would provide me with a diverse clientele. In my short time in my program, I have already observed clients from different cultures and diverse backgrounds. Not only am I thankful that my graduate school has provided me with the opportunity to be a part of the program, but I am also excited for my future as a speech-language pathologist."* – Kellsie

**MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF GRADUATE SCHOOL**

Enrolling in a graduate program can be a hurdle for all students; however, it is not the final challenge. Enrollment does not equal success in graduate school. CSD graduate programs incorporate intense academic experiences with a demand for immediate application of theoretical knowledge to clinical settings. Success in these programs requires organization, dedication, and the intellectual capacity to make information functional. The transition from undergraduate to graduate school can be a challenge for all students. The academic and clinical expectations instructors have for graduate students are typically much higher than those they have for undergraduate students. Graduate students who were "A" students as undergraduates find the bar has been raised regarding their assignments, exams, and performance. In addition they may hold graduate assistantships that require significant amounts of time and energy. Graduate students find themselves spending many more hours on course work and clinical assignments than in the past. The time management and study skills that were adequate for their undergraduate classes may not be sufficient for them to do their best in graduate school.

Minority students may not have the same support systems as other students to aid them in making a successful transition to the expectations of graduate school (Dumas-Hines, 2001). The authors and other minority students have found the following strategies helpful in making that transition: attend each and every class session to be sure not to miss important announcements and information; take more comprehensive notes in classes; work with classmates to compare notes and study for tests; manage time for clinical assignments and course material by creating to-do lists organized by importance or deadline date; use peer and professional advice to prepare for clinic work; do not be afraid to ask questions; and seek opportunities to participate in clinical and scholarly enrichment seminars beyond what is required.

**FINDING A SUPPORT SYSTEM**

A support system is essential for anyone enrolled in a rigorous graduate program. With regard to minority students in particular, it is not uncommon for them to be the first member in their family to attend graduate school, or one of only a few minority students in the program, and/or the only one of their friends pursuing this level of education. Their family and friends may not understand the time commitment of classes and clinical assignments in graduate school and may unwittingly make unreasonable demands on the student's time and energies. Some minority students also may have limited financial resources which will increase the stress on them while enrolled in the graduate program. Locating other individuals (or organizations) that can assist in the journey through the graduate program may alleviate some of the competing demands and stresses these students encounter. For minority students, there are resources and organizations that not only provide academic assistance and support, but also offer opportunities for professional networking and mentoring. These resources include formal and informal mentorship programs through NBASLH, ASHA, state associations, and speech-language pathologists in the local community; scholarships, grant funding, and assistantships; and peer support from classmates and alumni.

**ADVICE TO COMMUNICATION DISORDERS PROGRAMS**

Having a diverse group of students adds great value to the quality of a graduate program and promotes scholarship among all individuals interested in the field of CSD. Why are some CSD programs more successful than others in recruiting and retaining culturally and ethnically diverse students? Programs will advertise the extensive clinical and academic resources that they provide; however, it is imperative that they also promote the multicultural aspects of their CSD program.

Specifically, information regarding how the program embraces diversity amongst their faculty, students, and clientele should be highlighted to all applicants. Doing so will increase the likelihood of attracting the interest of students from various cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

The following are suggestions that minority students have for graduate programs to increase the number of minority applicants: provide easy access to information about the demographics of the program, the university, and the community; ensure the curriculum addresses cultural and ethnic diversity; inform applicants about minority scholarships and programs on campus; be certain that program brochures and websites include pictures of minorities; represent your CSD program at Historically Black College fairs; and conduct community outreach programs in culturally diverse communities and workplaces to increase awareness of careers in CSD.

*"Graduate programs can be more appealing to minority students by simply marketing themselves to areas where minority students live. There is a lack of exposure within the communities that younger students grow up in. I had never heard of speech pathology until I attended college, and I'm constantly explaining my field to others. SLPs should volunteer at Career Days and conduct seminars to audiences that we serve. Once students see the benefits of the graduate program and the multiple opportunities within the field, the decision to enroll would be easy."* – Andrea

Once minority students enroll, CSD graduate programs need to ensure that those students feel welcome and supported. It is important to avoid stereotyping students and not refer to the minority students for generalized information about their race, culture or ethnicity. Graduate programs should provide opportunities for minority and non-minority students to socialize. This can be achieved in a number of ways including: encouraging students to branch out from typical social groupings by randomly assigning students for group assignments and class projects, and having students engage in social discussions within the classroom setting. For some minority and non-minority students, this may be one of only a few experiences during which they learn and work alongside students of a different racial or ethnic background. Accordingly, opportunities to network across groups promote multicultural awareness and subsequent academic and social interactions.

It is important that CSD programs inform students of the minority programs on campus, as well as the resources available for academic support if needed (e.g., tutoring, career services, counseling center, test prep assistance, study skill training). Having peer and/or faculty mentors can assist students in the transition to graduate school. However, it is important to remain mindful that each student is an individual, not a stereotype, and what one minority student wants or needs may be very different from that of another student.

*"I think there could be more emphasis on how culture could influence planning of therapy. From my experience, culture has always just been a side note, but there has been no direct instruction or resources given to help in that area."* – Lydia

Increasing the number of minorities who choose to pursue the profession of speech-language pathology requires the efforts of both the CSD programs and the students. Graduate programs can benefit from locating and recruiting minority students and responding to their specific needs as discussed above. When programs value diversity and demonstrate an appreciation for the presence of minority students, these students are in turn more likely to select, remain, and ultimately succeed in that program.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Carrie M. Forde, BS,** is a graduate student in the Communication Disorders program at Georgia State University in Atlanta, GA. Email: cforde1@student.gsu.edu

**Brittany N. Carroll, MEd, CF-SLP,** is a speech-language pathologist at Baker Elementary School in Acworth, GA. Email: bncarroll85@gmail.com

**Elizabeth Omaivboje, MEd, CF-SLP,** is a speech-language pathologist at Partee Elementary School in Snellville, GA. Email: temi5363@gmail.com

**Colleen M. O'Rourke, PhD, CCC-A,** is an Associate Professor in the Communication Disorders Program at Georgia State University in Atlanta, GA. E-mail: corourke@gsu.edu