

CARLOS BENITEZ-BARRERA, Ph.D. '20

Carlos Benitez-Barrera did not expect to develop a career in communication disorders. But when he finished his undergraduate work in psychology in Spain, he was granted a scholarship from a private institution that was trying to promote the development of the field of early intervention in deaf education and pediatric audiology in his country. This scholarship allowed him to obtain a master's degree in deaf education. From that point, communication disorders became his passion. He applied to Vanderbilt's Ph.D. program in Hearing and Speech Sciences and graduated in 2020. He is now a post-doctoral fellow at Callier Center for Communication Disorders at the University of Texas.

Asked about his most memorable experience at Vanderbilt, Dr. Benitez-Barrera said, "It is hard to decide one. But the first one that comes to my mind is my very first statistics class in my first year as a PhD student. I was very intimidated because I had never taken a stats class before. Dr. Ashmead started the class by talking about "R" and how we were going use actual code to run our statistical analyses. I thought that I was not going to be able to graduate, it was going to be hard! Interestingly enough, I ended up TAing for that class later on my PhD, but that day it felt like I was shooting for the moon. However, everybody at Vanderbilt helped me to land where I wanted to be."

Dr. Benitez-Barrera is on the editorial board of one section of the "Perspectives" ASHA journal and the Spanish Journal of Audiology (Auditio). He is also treasurer and board member of the Spanish Association of Audiology. His current research focuses on how auditory experiences impact children's ability to listen to speech in noise and their language development.

