

Cuerpo de Profesores de Enseñanza Secundaria

Inglés



TEMARIO
VOLUMEN I



OPOSICIONES



Tema 9

**Sistema fonológico de la lengua
inglesa III: acento, ritmo y ntonación.
Comparación con el español.**

Tema 9. Sistema fonológico de la lengua inglesa III: acento, ritmo y entonación. Comparación con el español.

I. Introduction.

II. Stress.

II.1 Definition

II.2 Stress at word level: Primary and Secondary stress.

II.3 Word stress: Rules for placement at stress

II.4 English and Spanish stress patterns

III. Rhythm

III.1 Definition

III.2 Types

III.3 Rhythmic stress

III.4. Comparison of English and Spanish Rhythm

III-4.1 Rhythmic foot in Spanish

III.-4.2 Rhythmic foot in English

IV. Intonation

IV.1 Definition

IV.2 Patterns of English intonation

IV.3 Analysis of intonation

IV.4 Functions of intonation

I. Attitudinal

II. Accentual

III. Grammatical

IV. Discourse

IV.5 Intonation in English and Spanish

V. Conclusion.

VI. Bibliography.

I. Introduction.

The content of this unit is related to the study of one aspect of English phonology, namely, the analysis of the prosodic features of English (stress, rhythm and intonation). We understand that the goal of phonology is to study the properties of the sound system

that speaker of a given language must learn in order to use such language for communication purposes. Due to this, our analysis of the phonological aspects of English under consideration will include a comparison with Spanish, a comparison that will pay special attention to the problems that Spanish speakers face when learning English in a classroom context.

II. Stress.

II.1. Definition

Stress is the means whereby a syllable is made to stand out in a word and, in stress-accent languages like English, the means whereby a word is made to stand out in an utterance.

At sentence level, stress always entails the occurrence of a strong accentuation on the relevant syllable of the accented word. In addition, when this word contains the nucleus of the word group, stress is also shown by a change in pitch or by a sustention of pitch.

In this section we are concerned with stress at word level. Stress at sentence level will be dealt with in the next two sections, where we will be analysing both rhythm and intonation.

II.2. Stress at word level: primary and secondary stress.

At word level, the accentuated syllable may have either primary or secondary stress. The only other possibility is for the syllable to be unstressed. In what follows we will present some important cases related to primary and secondary stress in English.

a) Primary stress is marked by a vertical stroke placed on the upper left hand side of the stressed syllable:

e.g. ap`ply

- vocalic groups will only remain together if they form a diphthong or triphthong in English (e.g. ´radio), otherwise they will be divided if an accent is placed on them:

e.g. bi´ology, not ´bio-lo-gy

- the consonantal groups “-sp –st –sk” are added as part of the next syllable. They are not separated as in Spanish. Therefore the stroke is placed before them when they are part of the tonic syllable.

e.g. di´sputable

e´scape

mini´s terial

b) Secondary stress is marked by a vertical stroke on the lower left hand side of the affected syllable:

i.e. gene´rosity
after´noon

- it is necessary for the placement of the secondary stress that between this and the primary stress there should be at least two syllables of distance in the same word (rhythmic reasons prevent the two being together)
- in the few words with double accent, like ´con´cave, the second one will be considered the primary accent.

i.e. ,con´cave

- when several secondary accents precede the primary one, the nearest to the latter is uttered weakly, more weakly than the others (e.g. ,in,spensa´bility). This is the reason why some authors call this accent tertiary, or unstressed, marking it by an inferior “o”.

i.e. INDESPENSABILITY

2 = secondary
1 = primary
0 = unstressed

/ ,in-di-,spen-sa-´bi-li-ty /
2 0 2 0 1 0 0

- those syllables in derivative forms have secondary stress when they have it primarily in the original form:

pro, nunci´ation	pro´nounce
gene´rosity	´generous

II.3 Word Stress: rules for placement of stress

It is possible to make a couple of general rules about stress placement such as the following:

“English non-derivative words formed by two syllables have the stress placed on the first syllable if the second one is weak. Syllables are weak in the following cases:

- a) when they finish in /i/ or /u/, followed or not by only one consonant (e.g. happy, curfew).
- b) when they consists of a syllabic consonant (e.g. ribbon, /ribn/).
- c) when they feature the schwa (´teacher, after, about)”

Probably the most realistic attitude toward the problem of the placement of stress in English is to recognise from the start that it is extremely variable and to a certain extent

unpredicable. This will be appreciated all the more keenly by those who have attempted to understand the admirable work of Monroy Casas on the subject (as quoted above); his rules may well be true, but they are so complex and difficult to apply as to be of little use to all but the most committed and patient scholars.

In the following examples we will attempt not to demonstrate that stress in English conforms to any strict set of rules, since this task is incredible laborious and probably not particularly useful, but rather simply to demonstrate the variety of stress patterns which exist within individual words in English. The following symbols will be used, as per Ortiz Lara:

A = primary
B = unstressed
C = prominent
D = secondary

2 –syllabled words

a+b: teacher, apple
a+c: female, empire
c+a: brunette, canteen
b+a: remark, again
d+a: Chinese, unknown
a+d: concave, Nobel

3 –syllables words

a+b+b: lunatic, seventy
a+b+c: corridor
a+c+b: subtitle
b+a+b: important
c+a+b: ambition
b+a+c: tobacco
d+b+a: seventeen

4- syllabled words

a+b+b+b: category, secretary (según Ortiz Lara. But these can be considered 3-syllabled words)
a+b+c+b: centimetre
a+b+b+c: capitalise
b+a+b+b: geography
b+a+b+c: preoccupied
c+a+b+b: authority
d+b+a+b: variation
d+c+a+b: acceptance

5 –syllabled words

a+b+b+b+b: capitalism

b+a+b+b+b: inevitable
 b+a+b+b+b: accelerator
 d+b+a+b+b: possibility
 d+b+a+b+c: decontaminate
 b+d+b+a+b: continuation
 d+b+b+a+b: classification
 d+d+b+a+b: predisposition

6 –syllabled words

d+b+a+b+b+b: unexceptionable
 d+b+b+a+b+b: irritability
 b+d+b+a+b+b: availability
 b+d+b+b+a+b: electrification
 d+b+d+b+a+b: differentiation

7 –syllabled words

b+d+b+b+a+b+b: intelligibility
 d+b+d+b+a+b+b: irresponsability

Conclusion of all of this? Obvious, really. That the pronunciation of a word is an integral part of it, the stress being as important as the spelling or the realisation of individual phonemes (vowels or consonants). Little attention is paid to this in traditional vocabulary learning, but it is as much a part of a word as the spelling or the phonemes. Demonstration of the fact that you never learnt this side of words when you were at school; you can't pronounce "Empire", although you know how to spell it and transcribe it phonetically. Similarly "pronoun" or "Catholicism" etc. It's not that you don't know how to write or that your pronunciation is bad, it's just the stress. Implications for the classroom are that somehow we must get away from the traditional point of view that is enough to know how to spell a word, and encourage our students to pronounce words correctly. This is difficult, as you all know.

So, we can definitely say that this is difficult. Well, great. But are there any rules we might follow? Well, luckily, yes. But I warn you before we start that they are not easy. Ready?

- Suffixes

-ion causes stress to be placed on the penultimate syllable: decapi'tation, ammu'nition, fru'ition, organi'sation

-ic in adjectives also causes stress to fall on the penultimate syllable: pho'nemic, disyl'labic, Ju'rassic

-ity causes the stress to fall on the antepenultimate syllable: i'dentity, an'nuity, etc

-ite and ism do not cause change in the stress pattern of the root to which they are added; 'Darwinism, et.

-able never takes stress.

- Prefixes

Anti-, arch-, dis-, ex-, half-, joint-, in-, inter-, mal-, mis-, non-, out-, pre-, re-, sub-, ultra-, under-, vice-, ...these prefixes give rise to two stresses appearing in the word.

- Double stress and Stress Shift

Some words, when isolated have double stress:

ˈaˈmen, ˈhelˈlo, ˈsɪksˈteen, ˈkɒnˈcave, ˈprɪnˈcess

In connected speech, these words often undergo a shift in the stress pattern:

ˈSixteen ˈTons (Tennessee Ernie Ford, 1956)

ˈAfternoon ˈtea

,Princess Vicˈtoria ,royal ˈPrincess

- Word Class

Many orthographically identical words change their stress according to the word class to which they belong:

ˈrecord, reˈcord; ˈimport, imˈport, ˈobject, obˈject

Also : absent, combine, compress, concert, conduct, contract, contrast, convict, desert, frequent, perfect, permit, present, proceeds, produce, progress, project, protest, rebel, refuse, segment, subject, finance.

This phenomenon also occurs in words of three syllables as such as : alternate, compliment, envelope, reprimand, etc.

- Phrasal/Prepositional Verbs

Turn ˈon, ˈturn on.

- Compounds

Stress falls on the first element in the following cases:

- when the 2nd element is the performer of an action: dishwasher, car-dealer, shock absorber, (exceptions; stage manager, town crier)
- verb + prepositional particle: pick-up, make-up, flashback (exc. set-to)
- academic subjects/skills: maths teacher, medical school, history book
- 1st noun is type 2nd noun: deposit account, record collection
- long-established compounds. Blackberry, blackboard, greenhouse
- -ing+noun for help. Scrubbing brush, washing machine

Stress falls on the second element in the following cases:

- first element is material: apple tart, chicken soup, silk stockings
- first is location: Cathedral Road, St Peter's Square, Mysore Road (exc. with Street)
- names of towns, geographical features, etc: Milton Keynes, Wyre Piddle, Land's End, Ben Nevis
- position: Front door, left wing, church clock, (exc. bedroom, etc)
- time: winter sports, April showers, May Ball, etc.
- food: mind sauce, Ploughman's lunch, fruit salad (exc.-bread, -cake, -paste, -juice)
- publications: Daily Star, Radio Times
- Noun ending -er/-ing + preposition: hanger-on, passing out
- -ing + noun when a characteristic is suggested: running water, leading lady
- -adj + noun ending -er: free-thinker, loudspeaker, outsider
- -adj + participle: cold-blooded, downhearted, good-looking
- noun + adv working as adj/adv: head-on

- Optional

Some words have two acceptable realisations, eg. Adult, contact(v), decade, weekend, cigarette, research (n), caviar, souvenir, controversy, kilometre, television, momentarily, necessarily, etc.

To include this section, remember the warning: these rules are difficult, in fact so difficult as to be of little practical use to normal students in our classrooms. In addition, many of them have exceptions, as noted above, and the reality is that the stress pattern of each word forms part of the word and is therefore part of the spoken vocabulary that each learner has to learn. How the second language learner might set about learning it is a difficult issue, but it is obvious that the more he/she uses or hears the word, the more likely it is that this learning will be accomplished.

II.4. English and Spanish stress patterns

Without going into too much detail, allow me to show you some percentages according to Ortiz Lara:

	2 syllables		3 syllables			4 syllables			
	1	2	1	2	3	1	2	3	4
English	74	26	55	39	6	33	36	29	2
Spanish	78	22	6	74	20	0	11	80	9

The above preferences clearly demonstrate the Spanish tendency to place stress on the penultimate syllable, making other patterns difficult to produce for Spanish learners of English as a foreign language.

III. Rhythm

III.1 Definition

Rhythm is formed by a combination of stressed syllables interspersed with unstressed ones. The notion of rhythm involves some noticeable event happening at regular intervals of time. The theory that English has stress-timed rhythm implies that stressed syllables will tend to occur at relatively regular intervals, whether they are separated by unstressed syllables or not.

III.2 Types of Rhythm

When we speak of rhythm, we have to differentiate between rhythmic stress and lexical stress.

If we accept the principle of isochrony and the fact that English is a stress-timed language, then we would expect the stress pulses to be separated by intervals of time which are perceived to be approximately equal. The next example, “This is the house that Jack built”, has four stresses, as marked, and consequently four “feete” of equal length. The fact that it is the stresses and not the syllables which are isochronous has a number of important consequences for English rhythm:

(i) If rhythmic feet are to be approximately the same length, it follows that the length of a given syllable in a foot will depend on how many other syllables are in the same foot with it;

/This is the / house that / Jack/ built
 3 2 1 1

Since each foot is approximately the same length, the syllables “Jack” and “built”, which stand alone in their respective feet, will be longer than “this”, “is”, “the”, “house” and “that”, which share their respective intervals. This could be represented perhaps more appropriately as:

This is the/house that/ JACK/ BUILT/.

In other words, the syllables in a foot must either be stretched out (if they are a few) or squeezed together (if they are many) in order to maintain the rhythm of the phrase. This adjusting of syllable length occurs independently of vowel length. Thus, in:

/four/ large/ black/ dogs/

The third foot is judged to be as long as the first, second and fourth, although it contains a so called “short” or “lax” vowel.

(ii) Secondly, the length of a syllable is not wholly determined by the number of syllables with which it must share a time interval. In feet with 2 syllables, for instance, the time interval may be divided in two different ways between the syllables in it. This can be seen by comparing two examples of the phonemic sequence /teɪk greɪ tɒ l ɒ n d n/. The same succession of phonemes with identical syllable division and stress can become one of the two following utterances-

a) Take/ Grey to/ London

b) Take/ greater/ London

The difference is that the rhythmic pattern of the second foot differs. In a), the first syllable of the second foot is perceived as approximately twice as long as the second syllable, whereas in b) the two syllables are perceived as having more or less the same length. The first one has a long-short rhythmic pattern. The second has an equal-equal rhythmic pattern. Another rhythmic pattern exists, and it can only be heard in di-syllabic feet with words such as “shilling”, “never”, “atom”, “cuckoo”. This is a short-long rhythm, at least in one variety of RP English.

(iii) A third consequence of the stress-time nature of English is the phenomenon of so-called weak forms. Since it is typically content for words (rather than grammatical words that are given prominence in the utterance, it follows that grammatical words will tend to be unstressed. The consequence is that grammatical words are most likely to undergo “squeezing” in order to fit into the constant time interval between two stressed syllables or words. This is such a common occurrence in English that many grammatical words in English are said to have two forms:

- a full or strong form (full phonemic realisation) used on occasions when the word is stressed or accented.
- One or several weak forms, used on occasions when the word is unstressed and must be fitted into a pre-determined rhythmic pattern.

The notions of isochrony and stress-timed rhythm play an important part in the differentiation between lexical and rhythmic stress.

III.3.Rhythmic stress

Rhythmic stress is determined not by the number of words but by other conditions. For example:

My jacket is under the table (two stresses)

My jacket is on the table (the stress results from the emphasis on the word)

The view of stress-as-rhythm claims that we perceive syllables as stressed when they coincide with a rhythmic beat. Thus, for Abencrombie, a salient syllable is “the syllable on which the beat of stress-timing falls”.

Viewing stress in this way has a number of advantages. To start with, it provides us with a convincing explanation of the distinction between pairs such as (i) $\text{ˈlight ˈhousekeeper}$, and (ii) $\text{ˈlighthouse ˈkeeper}$.

1) If stress is viewed rhythmically, then given the basic rhythmic patterns of isochrony, according to which beats come at approximately equal intervals in time, the difference between the members of this pair can be described wholly in terms of stress: in (i) the interval between the stresses on “light” and “house” is lengthened to maintain the proper spacing between the two stress beats, whereas in (ii) the same interval requires no significant lengthening since the stress beats on “light” and “keep” are separated by “house”.

2) A second advantage of viewing stress rhythmically is that it provides a principal account of the phenomenon of stress shift, which in other approaches must be treated as an exception. By way of illustration consider the word “un $\text{ˈ}known$ ” in the following contexts:

- a) a $\text{ˈ}quite un $\text{ˈ}known ef $\text{ˈ}fect$$$
- b) a $\text{ˈ}largely un $\text{ˈ}known $\text{ˈ}land$$$

Whereas in a) “unknown” maintains lexical stress on the second syllable, in b) it shifts the stress from the second to the first syllable. If we view stresses as rhythmic beats, then this accounts for this shift by applying a basic rhythm principle of English, i.e that stressed syllables alternate regularly in speech. The stressing of “unknown” and of other similar words can be said to depend systematically on the rhythmic pattern in which they occur.

3) A third advantage of a rhythmic theory of stress is that it can incorporate the phenomenon of silent stress. Abercrombie first introduced this term to refer to “a pause where a beat, according to the timing already established, might be expected to come, a pause which fills a gap which otherwise would be filled by a stressed syllable”. For example:

“boys $\text{^}stop$ here” (a command) versus “boys stop here” (a statement)
 “making the green $\text{^}one$ red” versus “making the green one red”

Such phonological pauses are not discontinuities, but part of the utterance. They cannot be avoided or the rhythm would be amiss, or misrepresent the rhythmic phrasing. However, if stresses are rhythmic beats, then there is nothing contradictory about the claim that some are realized as pauses.

The rhythmic beats in the utterance will be referred to as stresses; those rhythmic beats which are additionally prominent through some unspecified combination of loudness, pitch and length will be called accents.

III.4. Rhythm in Spanish and English

III.4.i Rhythmic foot in Spanish

Rhythm in Spanish is marked by the contrast between accentuated and non-accentuated syllables. There is a contrast between tone and intensity accent.

A combination of tone plus intensity is what makes rhythm possible in Spanish, while syllable length in English is rhythmically meaningful.

III.4.ii. Rhythmic foot in English

According to Abercrombie, a foot is the space in time from the incidence of one stress-pulse up to, but not including, the next. There has to be one stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable.

A foot consists of ictus+remiss. The remiss is the rest of the foot made up of unstressed syllables. The ictus is compulsory and always comes first. The remiss is not compulsory, and may be zero or indefinite:

Quíte/possibly/nó/réal/háppiness/can be fóund/.

In English there is a tendency to make each different foot have the same length. English rhythm is structural in terms of derivation of the feet.

Isochrony does not exist from the phonetic point of view. It exists as a phonological reality. The isochronic rhythm in English is based on phrases while in Spanish it is based on syllables.

In English, any word in isolation, and all one-syllabled words take a stress. This stress may be lost in a rhythmic pattern, while in Spanish the stress of the words remains invariable, despite their rhythmic pattern.

IV Intonation in English.

IV.1 Definition.

Intonation is the rising and falling of voice (or pitch) during speech. It is very important to realize that native speakers react to intonation. If the wrong kind is used, the listener may misinterpret the speaker's intention. He will certainly be confused, and he may even be insulted. Intonation, for example, can signify that the speaker is making a statement, or that he/she is asking a question, or that he/she has not finished speaking. Before we analyse in depth different aspects of English intonation, let us mention three.

There are basic general rules that learners of English should follow:

a) Voice should fall to its lowest pitch at the end of statements and at the end of a question beginning with one of the wh-words:

When are you leaving?
I'm off at 8.

b) Voice should rise to a high pitch at the end of a yes-no question:

Has he gone?
Is it raining?

c) Voice should stay on a middle pitch if a pause is made before finishing a sentence:

I bought a table...a chair...and a bookcase.

IV.2 Patterns of intonation in English.

The word we use for the overall behaviour of pitch is tone (level tone, falling tone and rising tone). Speakers are said to select from a choice of tones according to how they want the utterance to be heard.

As an example, there are three simple possibilities for the intonation used in pronouncing the one-word utterances “yes” and “no”. It will often be necessary to use symbols to represent tones, and for this we will use marks placed before the syllable in the following way:

Level: -yes, -no
Rising: ´yes, ´no
Falling: `yes, `no

Intonation is of course a crucial part of oral communication. We all make use of it all the time, but before moving on to analyse it in any depth it should be pointed out that there is a very high level of variation depending on individual speakers, to whom they are speaking (when talking to babies or young children intonation tends to become exaggerated, perhaps in an automatic attempt to communicate with people who might not understand the words being uttered), and on the attitude of the speaker (bored, sceptical, neutral, enthusiastic, ironic, angry, etc). Therefore any rules must be taken as no more than guidelines.

In general the uses of some intonational patterns are as follows:

-Falling: statements, question tags with assertive meaning (see unit 24), comment clauses, wh- questions, dual alternative questions.

-Rising: yes-no questions, polite requests, protest, surprise, echo-questions..

-Falling-Rising (´ `): contrast, warnings, threats.

Another complex tone, less frequently used, is the rise-fall, in which the pitch follows the opposite movement. This is used, for example, when doubts are resolved:

Where are my glasses? Ah, there they are.

Each speaker has his or her own normal pitch range, but in ordinary speech the intonation tends to take place within the lower part of the speaker’s pitch range. However, in situations where strong feelings are expressed it is usual to make use of extra pitch height.

In what follows we will deal with some functions of these English tones, and in which circumstances they are applied to the very limited context of the words “yes” and “no” in isolation.

Falling `yes. `no: this is the tone which is usually regarded as more or less “neutral”. If someone is asked a question and this tone is used in reply, it will be understood that the question is now answered and that there is nothing more to say. The fall could be said to give an impression of finality.

Rising: ´yes. ´no: this tone conveys an impression that something more is to follow;

- a) wishing to attract the listener’s attention: excuse me!
- b) questioning ´yes (?)

Fall-Rise: `´yes. `´no: the fall-rise tone is widely used in English and has some special functions, the most common being limited or agreement or response with reservations, or expectation of more information:

A: I´ve heard that it is a good school

B: `´yes (reservation or hesitation) (or: ¿y qué?)

Rise-Fall: ^yes, ^no: this intonation is used to convey stronger feelings of approval, surprise or disapproval. It is important to be able to distinguish it from other tones;

A: Isn´t the view lovely?

B: ^yes(!)

Level: -yes, -no: this tone is used in English, but in rather restricted context. It almost always (in single syllable utterances) a feeling of something routine, uninteresting or boring. For example if the teacher calls the register of a class, the pupils will respond “-yes” in a flat, level tone.

IV.3 Analysis of intonation.

As previously stated when dealing with stress, the syllabic division in English is made according to pronunciation, so the unit of this measure is called the tone-unit (in Spanish the tone unit is called the syllable).

In its smallest form the tone-unit may consist of one syllable, so it would be impossible to say that it is always composed of more than one syllable.

Like the syllable, the tone unit has a clearly defined internal structure, so we should speak about tonic syllable, or the syllable which carries a tone. Each simple tone-unit has only one tonic syllable, so it means that the tonic syllable is an obligatory component of the tone unit. For example;

´Give `those,

in which the tonic syllable is “those”, and the rest of this tone-unit is called the head.

Notice that the first syllable has a stress-mark; this is important. A head is all that part of a tone unit that extends from the first stressed syllable up to (but not including) the tonic syllable. It follows that if there is no stressed syllable before the tonic syllable, there cannot be a head:

In an `hour (there is no head)

The syllables “in an” form a pre-head, the component of the tone-unit composed of all the unstressed syllables in a tone-unit preceding the first stressed syllable.

The pre-head appears when:

- a) there is no head (“in an hour”)
- b) there is a head like “in a `little `less than an `hour”.

In the above example the pre-head consists of “in a”, the head is “little less than an” and the head is “hour”.

Finally, the tail: any and all syllables between the tonic syllable and the end of the tone-unit are called the tail:

`Look at it.

In this example, “at it” is the tail.

IV.4. Functions of Intonation

i. Attitudinal Function

Intonation enables us to express emotion and attitudes as we speak, and this adds a special kind of “meaning” to spoken language. Here Roach identifies three types of factors related to intonation and how attitudes are conveyed:

- (i) Sequential: these are elements such as heads, pre-heads, tails, tonic syllables, pause and ton-unit boundaries.
- (ii) Prosodic: these are elements such as width of pitch range, key, loudness, speed and voice quality.
- (iii) Paralinguistic: these include body language, facial expression, non-linguistic vocal sounds such as laughs, sobs, etc.

These elements are clearly difficult to learn in a language classroom, and have to be acquired by exposure to oral language. Obviously, native speakers acquire these aspects of the system naturally, perhaps before any real linguistic competence.

ii. Accentual Function.

Intonation helps to produce the effect of prominence in syllables that need to be perceived as stressed, and in particular the placing of tonic stress on a particular syllable highlights the word to which it belongs as being the most important. This is related to emphasis (see unit 24) and contrast (unit 26) among other things. It is also related to the newness of the information- normally the tonic syllable will be placed on new information within an utterance.

iii. Grammatical Function.

The use of different tones, patterns of pitch for grammatical purposes. The division of longer utterances into grammatically relevant word groups.

This is often related to the representation of pauses which in written English are shown by commas. Examples include the difference between defining and non-defining relative clauses, the focus of negation (unit 23), and potentially ambiguous sentences, e.g.;

Those who study often pass

This could mean that those who study everyday pass, or that it is frequent for those who study to pass. Read it yourselves, you'll see the difference. In addition, the relationship between certain intonational patterns and grammatical structures already pointed out in section IV.2 is of relevance here.

iv. Discourse Function

Looking at the act of speaking in a broader way, we can see that intonation can signal to the listener what is to be taken as "new" information and what is already "given", can suggest when the speaker is indicating some sort of contrast or link with material in another tone-unit, and, in conversation, can convey to the listener what kind of response is expected. Similarly, interlocutors are normally aware of each other's prior knowledge, and this is signalled not only by grammatical devices (pronominalisation) etc but also by intonational subordination or the amount of intonational prominence given to items.

IV.5 Intonation in English and Spanish.

The intonation contours for neutral elements in English and Spanish are one of the few major differences. There are, of course, many differences, and transferring them will produce a foreign accent, but it does not frequently cause misunderstanding.

In English neutral statements, the pitch tends to rise to the main sentence stress. In Spanish neutral statements, the pitch tends to fall to the main sentence stress. In a statement perceived as neutral by the listener, the intonation does not signal any additional information other than that conveyed by words and grammatical constructions. In the same way, when a non-neutral intonation pattern calls attention to itself, the listener becomes aware of the presence of some kind of additional information and tries to identify it from the linguistic or social context. When a speaker unconsciously transfers a neutral intonation pattern from his own language into a L2, he may be signalling unintended messages, such as negative attitudes or emotions. For

example, if the Spanish intonation pattern for neutral statements is transferred to an English statement, the speaker will give the impression that he is somewhat bored, disgusted, annoyed or impatient:

I don't
 wánt
 it!

In a similar fashion, if the English intonation pattern for neutral statement is transferred to a Spanish statement, the speaker will give the impression that he is surprised, excited or that he is insisting:

 quíe
¡ No lo
 ro!

Given that the listener reacts automatically to intonation and may easily misinterpret a non-native speaker, the use of the wrong intonation pattern could be a serious communication problem. This goes to add further weight to the old saying "It's not what you say but how you say it".

As with stress and rhythm, English and Spanish differ with respect to intonation patterns. The Spanish learner of English has to bear in mind the importance of melodic curve (rising and falling tones) of statements, questions and exclamations. In English, however, there is less need for some intonational patterns to be distinguished, since the fact that an utterance is a question is denoted by the structure of the sentence (hence wh-questions frequently have falling intonation).

In Spanish this is not necessarily the case, as in "Estás despierto todavía, tras leer 17 páginas", which, to be converted into a question, does not need to undergo any structural alteration.

VI. Conclusion

This topic deals with aspects of a language which, as native speakers, we tend to forget, but which cause enormous difficulty for foreigners trying to speak or understand our language. Spoken language is produced without the care and consideration which go into written texts (see units 5, 6. 39, 31) and as a result the correct interpretation of spoken language will often depend on the appropriate production and understanding of the elements considered in the course of this unit. These are immensely complex areas where rules are notoriously difficult to make, especially as regards intonation, but it will be necessary for learners to be aware of them if the English he or she acquires is to be truly communicative.

VII. Bibliography.

Thomas Lee Crowell. J. R (1961) Modern Spoken English, McGraw-Hill Company.

Nash, Rose (1977), Comparing English and Spanish: patterns in Phonology and Ortography.

Gimson, A.C (1980) An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English, Edward Arnold.

Roach, P. (1983) English Phonetics and Phonology. A Practical Course.C.U.P