PROFESORES DE ENSEÑANZA SECUNDARIA · INGLÉS · JUNTA DE EXTREMADURA

TEMA

08

The Phonological System of English II: Consonants. Phonetic Symbols. Comparison with the Phonological System of Spanish

Sistema fonológico de la lengua inglesa II: Las consonantes. Símbolos fonéticos. Comparación con el sistema fonológico de la lengua o lenguas oficiales de la Comunidad Autónoma correspondiente.

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NOVIEMBRE DE 2026

Material de elaboración propia a partir de las fuentes oficiales que se citan al final del tema. No es un temario oficial ni sustituye a la normativa publicada.

Índice

1. INTRODUCTION

2. BASIC CONCEPTS: PHONETICS, PHONOLOGY AND THE CONSONANT

- 2.1. Phonetics and phonology
- 2.2. What a consonant is
- 2.3. The three-term label

3. THE PHONETIC SYMBOLS

4. THE CONSONANT SYSTEM OF ENGLISH

- 4.1. Plosives
- 4.2. Affricates
- 4.3. Fricatives
- 4.4. Nasals
- 4.5. Approximants

5. CONSONANTS IN CONTEXT: ALLOPHONES, CLUSTERS AND CONNECTED SPEECH

- 5.1. Allophonic variation
- 5.2. Clusters and syllable structure
- 5.3. Connected speech

6. THE CONSONANTS OF SPANISH

- 6.1. The Spanish system
- 6.2. Variation within Spanish

7. COMPARISON BETWEEN THE ENGLISH AND THE SPANISH CONSONANT SYSTEMS

- 7.1. Shared sounds
- 7.2. English sounds absent from Spanish
- 7.3. Differences in the system and in the distribution

8. PEDAGOGICAL AND DIDACTIC IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. Place in the curriculum
- 8.2. Methodological principles
- 8.3. Three classroom proposals

9. CONCLUSION

Fuentes

1. INTRODUCTION

A Spanish teenager who says "I sink so" when she means "I think so" has not made a grammatical mistake, and her vocabulary is perfectly adequate. She has simply replaced one consonant with another, and yet the listener may hear a different sentence altogether. This small example expresses the central idea of the topic: consonants carry a great deal of the meaning of English words, and the consonant system of English differs from that of Spanish in ways that are systematic and therefore predictable and teachable.

This topic deals with the consonants of English, the symbols used to transcribe them and their comparison with Spanish, the only official language of Extremadura. I will first set out the basic concepts of phonetics and phonology that are needed to talk about consonants. Secondly, I will describe the phonetic symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet used for English. Thirdly, I will present the inventory of English consonants by manner and place of articulation. Fourthly, I will examine how consonants behave in context: allophones, clusters and connected speech. Then I will describe the Spanish consonant system and compare it with the English one, paying special attention to the errors typical of Spanish-speaking learners. Finally, I will consider the pedagogical and didactic implications for Secondary Education and Bachillerato.

Before moving on, I would like to mention the sources consulted. For the description of English I have relied on Peter Roach's English Phonetics and Phonology, published by Cambridge University Press, and on Alan Cruttenden's Gimson's Pronunciation of English, published by Routledge. For a practical approach to teaching I have used Beverley Collins and Inger Mees's Practical Phonetics and Phonology, also published by Routledge, and for the Spanish system José Ignacio Hualde's The Sounds of Spanish, published by Cambridge University Press. I have also checked the transcription conventions in the Oxford Learner's Dictionaries pronunciation guide and the educational framework in Organic Law 3/2020, of 29 December (LOMLOE), which amends Organic Law 2/2006, of Education, in Royal Decree 217/2022, of 29 March, for Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO), in Royal Decree 243/2022, of 5 April, for Bachillerato, and in the Extremaduran Decrees 110/2022 and 109/2022, both of 22 August, as amended by Decrees 242/2023 and 243/2023, both of 12 September.