PROFESORES DE ENSEÑANZA SECUNDARIA · INGLÉS · JUNTA DE EXTREMADURA

TEMA

09

The Phonological System of English III: Stress, Rhythm and Intonation. Comparison with the Phonological System of Spanish

Sistema fonológico de la lengua inglesa III: Acento, ritmo y entonación. Comparación con el sistema fonológico de la lengua o lenguas oficiales de la Comunidad Autónoma correspondiente.

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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.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Take six words: "I didn't say he stole it." Every word is correct and the grammar is flawless, yet the sentence can carry several different meanings, depending on which word the speaker makes prominent. Put the weight on "I" and you suggest that somebody else said it; put it on "stole" and you imply that he merely borrowed it. Nothing changes in the vocabulary or the syntax. What changes is stress, rhythm and intonation, and this is why a learner who masters every phoneme can still be misunderstood. Welcome to Topic 9: The Phonological System of English III: Stress, Rhythm and Intonation, and its comparison with the phonological system of Spanish, the official language of our Autonomous Community, Extremadura.

In order to address this topic, I will divide it into four main sections. Firstly, I will examine stress, at word level and at sentence level. Secondly, I will analyse rhythm and the connected-speech processes that shape it. Thirdly, I will explore intonation, its components and its functions. Fourthly, I will compare the three systems with the Spanish ones and describe the typical errors of Spanish-speaking learners. Finally, I will reflect on the pedagogical and didactic implications of this content within our current educational framework, before drawing some conclusions.

Before moving on, I would like to mention the sources consulted for the preparation of this topic. These include: Peter Roach's English Phonetics and Phonology: A Practical Course (Cambridge University Press, fourth edition), Alan Cruttenden's Gimson's Pronunciation of English (Routledge, eighth edition, 2014), J. C. Wells's English Intonation: An Introduction (Cambridge University Press, 2006), Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin's Teaching Pronunciation: A Course Book and Reference Guide (Cambridge University Press, second edition, 2010), and, for the Spanish side of the comparison, José Ignacio Hualde's The Sounds of Spanish (Cambridge University Press). I have also drawn on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and its Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2020), on the LOMLOE (Organic Law 3/2020), Real Decreto 217/2022 and Real Decreto 243/2022, and on Decreto 110/2022 and Decreto 109/2022 of the Autonomous Community of Extremadura.