



TRABAJO DE FIN DE GRADO

**«A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE
ENGLISH AND SPANISH PHONETIC
SYSTEMS WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS
ON ANDALUSIAN ACCENT FEATURES»**

Autor: DIANA VELÁZQUEZ LÓPEZ

Tutor: DAVID LEVEY

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Abstract

This dissertation will analyse the sounds and pronunciation of two of the most prominent languages in the world: English and Spanish. English and Spanish, together with Chinese, are currently the most spoken languages worldwide although the former ones are perhaps the most influential languages in the world. These two languages are considerably different regarding diverse aspects but for Spaniards, at least, the most complex aspect of learning English is its pronunciation. Being a native Spanish speaker myself and a student of English, my aim here is to explore the main differences of English and Spanish pronunciation through a contrastive analysis of the phonetic alphabets of these two languages in their standard forms (RP and standard Spanish) with the purpose of identifying the main problems that Spaniards have in order to produce English sounds and to identify those characteristics of the Spanish accent that English native speakers can easily recognise. Furthermore, in order to identify the specific difficulties that certain Andalusians encounter when speaking English, the local accent spoken in my hometown, Cádiz, will be analysed.

Key words: English phonetics, Spanish phonetics, contrastive phonetics, Andalusian accent in Cádiz.

Resumen

Este trabajo analizará los sonidos y la pronunciación de dos de las lenguas más importantes del mundo: el inglés y el español. El inglés y el español junto con el chino son actualmente las tres lenguas más habladas a nivel mundial aunque las dos primeras son quizá las lenguas con más influencia en el mundo. Estas dos lenguas son muy diferentes en muchos aspectos pero para los españoles, al menos, el aspecto más complejo a la hora de aprender inglés es la pronunciación de esta. Al ser yo hablante nativa del español y estudiante de inglés, mi objetivo aquí es explorar las diferencias más destacadas entre la pronunciación del inglés y del español a través de un análisis contrastivo de los alfabetos fonéticos de estas dos lenguas en sus formas estándares (RP y español estándar) con la intención de identificar los principales problemas que tenemos los españoles para producir sonidos ingleses y esas características del acento español que los hablantes nativos del inglés pueden reconocer fácilmente. Además, para identificar las dificultades específicas que los andaluces encontramos a la hora de hablar en inglés, el acento de mi ciudad natal, Cádiz, será analizado.

Palabras claves: fonética inglesa, fonética española, fonética contrastiva, acento andaluz de Cádiz.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, both English and Spanish are two of the languages with most speakers worldwide. While the former has been influential for many years and can be said to be the international language, the latter has increased in importance in the past few years. In the Instituto Cervantes' report (2015) on the situation of the Spanish language in the world, we can learn that foreigners are increasingly interested in learning Spanish and, as we can see from the table below, millions speak it:

Figure 1. Spanish speakers in the world.

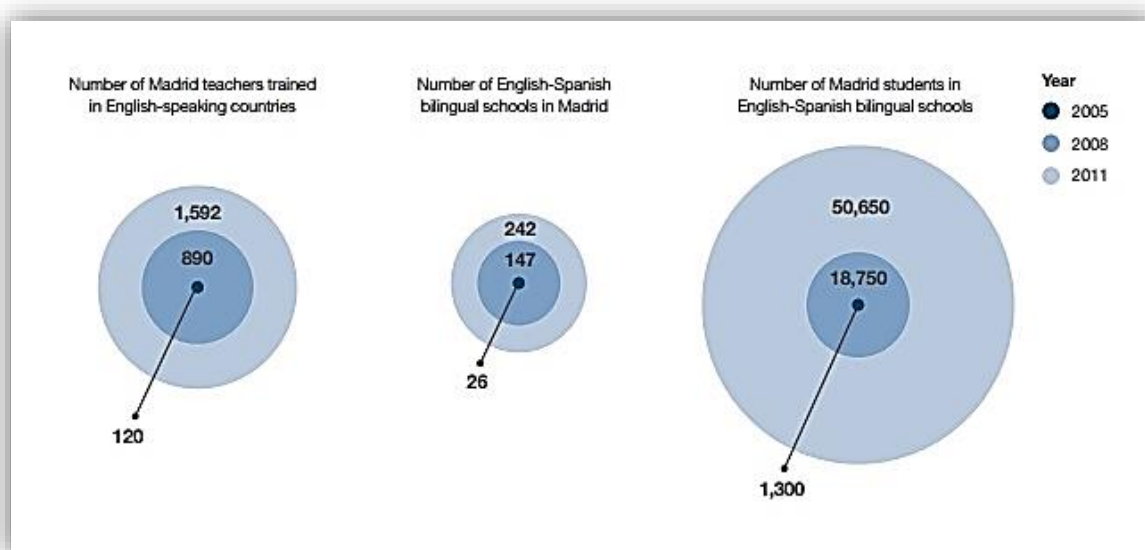
	Mundo hispánico	Fuera del mundo hispánico	Totales
Grupo de dominio nativo (GDN)	423.252.042	44.549.410	467.801.452
Grupo de competencia limitada (GCL)	24.082.973	45.840.021	69.922.994
Grupo de aprendices de lengua extranjera (GALE)			21.252.789
Grupo de usuarios potenciales			558.977.235

Source: Instituto Cervantes' report 2015.

Although these two important languages share various significant features, they differ in many aspects. To understand their differences and influence, we should start from the beginning, briefly learning a little about the origin of both languages. The Spanish language is a Romance language, which means that Latin is its ancestor. Latin was spoken in Spain after the Romanisation that started in 218 BC (Penny, 2002: 8), and later, it would lead to Spanish. As Torres Torres (2013) affirms, the Spanish language has its origin in Cantabria and it is in the Middle Ages when it was first used as a means of communication, although its formalisation would not occur until Alfonso X starts his reign in 1252. Currently, the Spanish language is rapidly spreading over the world in such a way that it is now the second language in international communication (Torres Torres, 2013: 215). In terms of mother tongues, Crystal emphasises that it "is growing [even] more rapidly than English" (2003: 19) and Torres Torres (1013) adds that after Chinese, it is the second most spoken native language in the world.

In contrast to Spanish, English is not a Romance language, but an Indo European one. More specifically, its ancestors are the Celtic languages which were established in Ireland and Britain in the last millennium BC (Trask, 2010: 89-90). The Germanic and Scandinavian influence was also important to the development of the English language (see Trask, 2010: 90-98). Thus, we can conclude defining English as an Indo European language that belongs to the West Germanic branch. According to Crystal (2003), English itself appears in the fifth century in Wales and later spreads throughout the island reaching Scotland after the Norman invasion in 1066. In 1600 English was just spoken in the British islands; it was never an important language in Europe, with Spanish instead the “leading European language” (Trask, 2010: 84-85) and it was not until the Industrial Revolution when the English began to gain more importance. According to Crystal (2013: 4-5), as a consequence of the worldwide expansion of the English language, countries like “the USA, Canada, Britain, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, several Caribbean countries and a sprinkling of other territories” speak it as their mother tongue, over seventy countries have it as an official language and it is taught as a foreign language in over one hundred countries. Furthermore, due to economic and political factors, English today is the main lingua franca used for inter and intra-national communication. Therefore, each country has its characteristic English accent since everyone is influenced by their respective native languages. Spain is not one of the countries with the highest level of English, however, it has been noticeable during the economic crisis that it has achieved more importance among young people and so, the number of learners and speakers of English has increased in the past few years in Spain. As the third report of EF English Proficiency Index (EPI) (2012) shows in the following graph, the importance of teaching English has become increasingly noticeable since 2005:

Figure 2. Explosion of English-Spanish bilingual education in Spain.



Source: EF EPI's report 2013.

The differences between English and Spanish are multiple in many respects, but I will focus here only on the phonetic differences of these influential languages. Furthermore, due to time and extension limitations, this particular study is confined to segmental features, and prosodic features (stress, intonation and rhythm) will not be dealt with here. The main aim of this dissertation is to compare the English and Spanish phonetic systems in order to outline the main problems and difficulties that Spanish native speakers encounter when they speak English. Due to the multiple accents that both languages have, it is necessary to focus on determined accents to carry out this contrastive analysis. To describe the English phonetic alphabet, the Received Pronunciation (RP) will be taken as a model and the analysis of the Spanish one will be based on standard Spanish which, according to the Real Academia Española (RAE), corresponds to “la pronunciación de los hablantes educados de Madrid y el norte de Castilla, incluyendo ciudades como Burgos y Valladolid” (Hualde, 2014: 22). However, as a native Spanish speaker from Cádiz (Andalusia) and a student of English, I will highlight the most characteristic phonetic features of the Andalusian accent, and specifically that of Cádiz. These may prove advantageous or disadvantageous. The Andalusian accent is one of the most distinctive accents of the Spanish language and whose origins come from “la evolución del castellano que hablaban los descendientes de los repobladores del siglo XIII” (Ariza Viguera, 1997: 124). As Ariza Viguera states, it was between the 16th and 17th centuries when “la evolución diferenciadas del andaluz” occurred (1997: 126).

Contrastive studies of the English and the Spanish phonetics have already been carried out by experts like Sánchez Benedito (2001) and Quilis and Fernández (2003), nevertheless, there is a need to constantly revise and reflect on languages and accents since they are constantly changing. I have already spoken a little bit about the historical background and development of Spanish and English but as Levey claims, “languages do not only change over centuries, they may change relatively quickly, with developments noticeable within the lifetimes of their speakers” (2014: 385). However, while some English phoneticians, such as Mott (2005), have commented on some peculiar Andalusian features, there are no complete contrastive studies of Andalusian Spanish and English. In addition, with the exception of the text *La Pronunciación del Español en Cádiz* by Payán Sotomayor (1988) there is not much written about the accent of Cádiz in terms of phonetics. Consequently, we cannot find a contrastive analysis of the English sounds and the typical sounds of the Spanish of Cádiz to date. Furthermore, Payán Sotomayor’s analysis of people from Cádiz’s pronunciation may be slightly dated as it includes many old and false stereotypes.

In order to carry out the comparative study between both languages and identify the main problems Spaniards have when speaking English in terms of pronunciation, this dissertation will be divided into three main sections. The first section will provide a descriptive analysis of the English phonetic system followed by a second section that will include a descriptive-contrastive analysis of its Spanish counterpart that will highlight the Spaniards’ difficulties to pronounce English sounds and the reasons for this. Finally, the third and last section will analyse the special difficulties that the Andalusian accent from Cádiz presents when speaking English, taking as a starting point the main characteristics that make the accent different from the standard. All the phonetic symbols and transcriptions included in this dissertation will be graphically represented according to the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) to facilitate the comparison between both languages, nevertheless, as Pierrehumbert, Beckman and Ladd (2001) point out, “cuando comparamos lenguas no podemos hablar casi nunca de sonidos exactamente idénticos, sino solo de sonidos análogos” (in Hualde, 2014: 18).

2. Analysis of the English phonetic system

2.1. Consonants

The English phonetic alphabet is formed by twenty-two consonants (twenty-four if the semivowels are included, but we will see them separately) which can be classified by the manner of articulation, the place of articulation or if they are fortis or lenis, or voiced or voiceless. According to the manner of articulation, we have the plosives /p, b, t, d, k, g, ʔ/, the fricatives /f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h/, the affricates /tʃ, dʒ/, the nasals /m, n, ŋ/ and the liquids /l, r/. But if we classify them determined by the place of articulation, we have the bilabials /p, b, m/, the labio-dentals /f, v/, the inter-dentals /θ, ð/, the alveolars /t, d, s, z, l, n/, the post-alveolars /ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ, r/, the velars /k, g, ŋ/ and the glottals /ʔ, h/. And according to the last category, we find the fortis /p, t, k, f, θ, s, ʃ, tʃ/, the lenis /b, d, g, v, ð, z, ʒ, dʒ/, the voiced /l, r, m, n, ŋ/ and the voiceless /ʔ, h/ (Sánchez Benedito, 2001: 57-58). The consonants will be classified and explained here according to their manner of articulation.

➤ Plosives:

The plosives go through a process of three stages: the first one is the approach stage where “the articulators come together and form the closure” (Collins & Mees, 2008: 81), then, in the hold stage, the air is held by the closure and finally, the release stage where the air is released in the form of a plosion. Thus, the descriptions of the plosives are as follow:

/p/: fortis bilabial plosive, as in ‘perfect’ /'pɜ:fɪkt/

/b/: lenis bilabial plosive, as in ‘beer’ /bɪə/

/t/: fortis alveolar plosive, as in ‘talk’ /tɔ:k/

/d/: lenis alveolar plosive, as in ‘dad’ /dæd/

/k/: fortis velar plosive, as in ‘keep’ /ki:p/

/g/: lenis velar plosive, as in ‘grant’ /grɑ:nt/

/ʔ/: voiceless glottal plosive, as in ‘seat belt’ /si:ʔ belt/

➤ Fricatives:

In order to produce the fricatives, the air is released through a narrow opening of the mouth which produces a friction (Sánchez Benedito, 2001: 79). The fricatives, in contrast to the plosives, are continuant consonants (Roach, 2009: 39), this means that we can produce these consonants for a while without making a stop. These are the descriptions of the fricative consonants:

/f/: fortis labio dental fricative, as in 'foot' /fʊt/

/v/: lenis labio dental fricative, as in 'vein' /veɪn/

/θ/: fortis inter dental fricative, as in 'think' /θɪŋk/

/ð/: lenis inter dental fricative, as in 'with' /wɪð/

/s/: fortis alveolar fricative, as in 'sell' /sel/

/z/: lenis alveolar fricative, as in 'zoo' /zu:/

/ʃ/: fortis post alveolar fricative, as in 'wash' /wɒʃ/

/ʒ/: lenis post alveolar fricative, as in 'pleasure' /'pleɪʒə/

/h/: voiceless glottal fricative, as in 'hello' /hə'ləʊ/

➤ Affricates:

The affricates follow the same process as the plosives but when the air is released it is with friction instead of with plosion (Collins & Mees, 2008: 81). There are just two affricated phonemes which are:

/tʃ/: fortis post alveolar affricate, as in 'watch' /wɒtʃ/

/dʒ/: lenis post alveolar affricate, as in 'June' /dʒu:n/

➤ Nasals:

The main characteristic of the nasal consonants is that the air is not released through the mouth but through the nose. The nasal consonants are three:

/m/: voiced bilabial nasal, as in ‘mum’ /mʌm/

/n/: voiced alveolar nasal, as in ‘nun’ /nʌn/

/ŋ/: voiced velar nasal, as in ‘song’ /sɒŋ/

➤ Liquids:

The liquids are defined by Cruttenden as the phonemes that are produced when “the airstream escapes through a relatively narrow aperture in the mouth friction but with voice” (2008: 214).

There are just two liquids consonants and are described as follow:

/l/: voiced alveolar lateral liquid, as in ‘less’ /les/

/r/: voiced post alveolar approximant liquid, as in ‘rain’ /rem/

2.2. Semivowels

The phonemes that form this category are /j/ and /w/. They are called semivowels because “they are phonetically like vowels but phonologically like consonants” (Roach, 2009: 50). Therefore, because of their characteristics as vowels they cannot be considered consonants. However, they are used like consonants. As Roach says, “they only occur before vowel phonemes; this is a typically consonantal distribution” (2009: 50).

The semivowels are considered approximants and they are never at the end of a word. The semivowel /j/, which is called yod, is a voiced palatal approximant and it requires spread lips (Sánchez Benedito, 2001: 118). We identify it with the following orthographic representations:

u: duty /'dʒu:ti/, cute /kju:t/, university /ˌju:nɪ'vɜ:səti/, tune /tju:n/, pure /pjʊə/

y: yet /jet/, yes /jes/, yesterday /'jestədeɪ/, youth /ju:θ/, your /jɔ:/

ew: few /fju:/, new /nju:/, dew /dju:/, ewe /ju:/, hew /hju:/, view /vju:/

eu: euro /'jʊərəʊ/, feud /fju:d/, neuron /'njʊərɒn/

other cases: opinion /ə'pɪnjən/, beauty /'bju:ti/, queue /kju:/

The semivowel /w/ is a voiced bilabial approximant which is produced with rounded lips (Sánchez Benedito, 2001: 119). Its orthographic representations are as follow:

w: went /went/, wet /wet/, wok /wɒk/, wake /weɪk/, twin /twin/

u: quit /kwɪt/, quick /kwɪk/, queen /kwi:n/, queer /kwɪə/, quill /kwɪl/

wh: what /wɒt/, which /wɪtʃ/, when /wen/, where /weə/

2.3. Allophones

Allophones are defined by Roach as the “different realisations of phonemes” (2009: 33). These variations occur when the same phoneme is pronounced differently in different words. In English, the phonemes which have allophones are all the plosives /p, b, t, d, k, g/; the fricatives /s, z/ and the liquids /r, l/ (Sánchez Benedito, 2001: 60-116).

The most remarkable allophones are the ones produced by the aspiration of the fortis plosives /p, t, k/. Aspirations occur in stressed syllables where the fortis plosives are followed by a vowel. The allophones of these phonemes are represented as [p^h, t^h, k^h]. In contrast, another phenomenon happens in the case of the lenis plosives /b, d, g/ which is called devoicing (Giegerich, 1992: 222). These phonemes are partially or completely devoiced when they are at the beginning and at the end of words, and also right before fortis plosive consonants like in the word vodka /'vɒdkə/. These allophones are represented with the symbol [◌̚] (Giegerich, 1992: 222). However, these are not the only phonemes which are devoiced; all the lenis and voiced obstruent phonemes can be devoiced (Giegerich, 1992: 222). This includes the phonemes /v, ð, z, l/.

In the case of the phoneme /l/, we may find two main allophones which are the clear l [l] and the dark l [ɫ]. According to Giegerich, the difference between both allophones is that “in the former the back of the tongue is lowered while in the latter it is raised towards the velum or retracted towards the uvula” (1992: 211). The clear one occurs before vowels while the dark one is found before consonants or pauses.

2.4.Vowels

The English phonetic alphabet is made up by a total of twelve vowels. A way of classifying them is according to their length; as Mott explains, “the English vowel system has both phonologically long and phonologically short vowels” (2005: 98) so the vowels can be divided into these two categories: long vowels: /ɔ:, u:, ɜ:, ɑ:, i:/ and short vowels: /e, ɒ, ə, æ, ɪ, ʊ, ʌ/. Furthermore, every long vowel has a short vowel pair due to “their proximity in articulation” (Mott, 2005: 98), thus we can notice five pairs: /ɑ:, æ/, /i:, ɪ/, /ɔ:, ɒ/, /ɜ:, ə/ and /u:, ʊ/.

Nevertheless, this is not how vowels are classified in the English phonetic alphabet. There are two main factors that determine the vowels’ classification and description which are the place of articulation (determined by its backness and frontness), the manner of articulation (determined by the tongue height) and the lip-position (determined by its roundness and spreadness). By taking into account these elements, we can draw the definition of the vowels:

Vowel no. 1 - /i:/: front, almost fully close, slightly spread.

Vowel no. 2 - /ɪ/: front, almost half-close, slightly spread.

Vowel no. 3 - /e/: front, between half-close and half-open, slightly spread.

Vowel no. 4 - /æ/: front, between half-open and open, slightly spread.

Vowel no. 5 - /ɑ:/: almost fully back, fully open, neutral.

Vowel no. 6 - /ɒ/: back, almost fully open, rounded.

Vowel no. 7 - /ɔ:/: back, between half-open and half-close, rounded.

Vowel no. 8 - /ʊ/: between back and central, almost half-close, rounded.

Vowel no. 9 - /u:/: almost fully back, almost fully close, rounded.

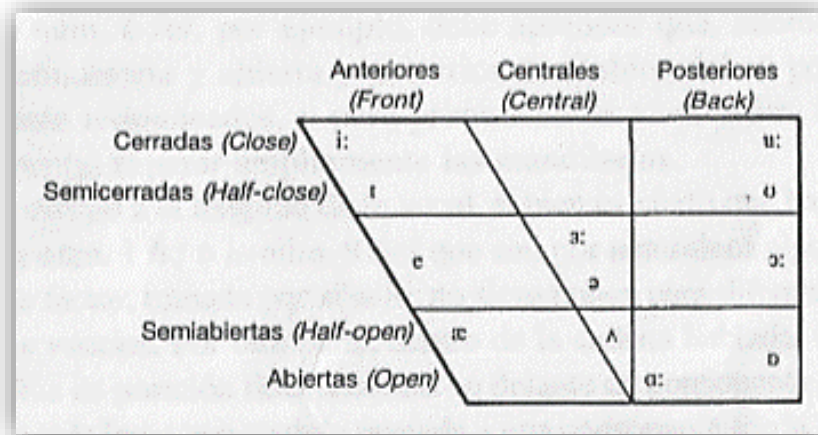
Vowel no. 10 - /ʌ/: central, almost half-open, neutral.

Vowel no. 11 - /ɜ:/: central, between half-open and neutral.

Vowel no. 12 - /ə/: central, almost half-open, neutral.

These definitions can be illustrated in the following diagram which follows the recommended shape according to the International Phonetic Association (IPA):

Figure 3. English vowels.



Source: Sánchez Benedito (2001)

Now that the vowels have been defined and illustrated, let's analyse them in detail by showing some examples:

➤ Vowel no. 1: /i:/

Besides the place of articulation, the manner of articulation and the lip-position that we have already seen, Sánchez Benedito (2001) adds another factor to the description and production of the sounds of the vowels which is the opening of the jaws. For the vowel number 1, we need a narrow opening of the jaws. Also, we have already classified it as a long vowel. This characteristic is more noticeable when it is at the end of a word or just before a voiced consonant (Sánchez Benedito, 2001: 17). This vowel can be represented orthographically in several ways:

ee: see /si:/, indeed /m'di:d/, bee /bi:/, keep /ki:p/

ea: cheap /tʃi:p/, tea /ti:/, peace /pi:s/, meat /mi:t/

e: delete /dɪ'li:t/, complete /kəm'pli:t/, Peter /pi:tə/

i: machine /mə'ʃi:n/, police /pə'li:s/

ei, ey: key /ki:/, perceive /pə'si:v/, receive /ri'si:v/

ie: thief /θi:f/, field /fi:ld/, piece /pi:s/, priest /pri:st/

oe: Oedipus /'i:dɪpəs/, foetus /fi:təs/, oestrogen /'i:stɹədʒən/

It is important to consider Mott's consideration of some cases when this vowel is unstressed: "when the vowel is unstressed (and prevocalic), it is noticeably shorter and therefore usually represented in transcription today as [ɪ]" (2005: 100). This transcription corresponds to the happy vowel. This vowel /ɪ/ is the choice of a new generation and we may find it in words such as happy /'hæpi/, sadly /'sædli/, coffee /'kɒfi/, Wednesday /'wenzdi/, yesterday /'jestədi/, hurry /'hʌri/, epicentre /'epɪsɛntə/, bilious /'bɪliəs/, cereal /'sɪəriəl/ and venereal /və'nɪəriəl/. The happy vowel can also be noticed in the unstressed pronouns she /ʃɪ/, he /hi/, we /wi/ and me /mi/ as well as the verb be /bi/ or the article the /ði/ when it is followed by a word beginning with a vowel.

➤ Vowel no. 2: /ɪ/

For this vowel, it is required a narrow to medium opening of the jaws. It is a short vowel, especially if it is followed by a voiceless consonant. When it is at the end of a word, it is usually pronounced as a happy vowel /ɪ/ (Sánchez Benedito 2001: 19). It is a way of neutralising the difference between /ɪ/ and /i:/ that some speakers use, as we saw with the vowel number 1. Nonetheless, some speakers prefer to keep pronouncing words like body /'bɒdi/ or city /'sɪti/, where the sound is at the end of the word, using /ɪ/ instead of /i/. It also may depend on the accent of the speaker, for instance, as Mott states, "while Birmingham, Liverpool, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Scunthorpe use [ɪ], Manchester and Leeds have [ɪ]" (2005: 100).

The orthographic representations that we can find for this vowel are as follow:

i: sib /sɪb/, hill /hɪl/, sit /sɪt/, pick /pɪk/, pink /pɪŋk/

y: pity /'pɪti/, synonym /'sɪnənɪm/, cymbal /'sɪmbl/

e: wanted /'wɒntɪd/, pretty /'prɪti/, buses /bʌsɪz/, pocket /'pɒkɪt/

There are other cases where we may find it such as lettuce /'letɪs/, minute /'mɪnɪt/, women /'wɪmɪn/, orange /'ɒrɪndʒ/, busy /'bɪzi/, again /ə'geɪn/, biscuit /'bɪskɪt/, build /bɪld/, business /'bɪznəs/, forfeit /'fɔːfɪt/, circuit /'sɜːkɪt/, fountain /'faʊntən/, mountain /'maʊntɪn/, sovereign /'sɒvrɪn/ and sieve /sɪv/ (Mott, 2005:101). Furthermore, it is used in some endings like -ace, -age, -ate and -ness: “bitterness /'bɪtənəs/, furnace /'fɜːnɪs/, palate /'pælɪt/, private /'praɪvət/, savage /'sævɪdʒ/” (Mott, 2005: 101).

➤ Vowel no. 3: /e/

This vowel is produced with a medium opening of the jaws. It is characterised by the absolute absence at the end of words and it is especially short right before a voiceless consonant (Sánchez Benedito, 2001: 21). Vowel no. 3 is just represented orthographically in two different ways:

e: men /men/, sell /sel/, shell /ʃel/, set /set/

ea: bread /bred/, wealth /welθ/, dead /ded/, head /hed/

In addition, we have to consider other cases which do not have a classification: again /ə'geɪn/, friend /frend/, any /eni/, many, /'meni/, Thames /temz/, said /sed/, bury /'beri/.

➤ Vowel no. 4: /æ/

The vowel no. 4 requires an opening of the jaws from medium to wide. It has some similarities with vowel no. 3 /e/. For instance, both of them never occur at the end of words and they are especially short before a voiceless consonant. However, /æ/ is more open. Orthographically speaking, there is only one category for this vowel which is represented by ‘a’. Some examples are back /bæk/, cat /kæt/, pack /pæk/, bad /bæd/, magic /'mædʒɪk/, fat /fæt/. However, there are some exceptions and we can find this sound in words such as “maidan /mæ'dɑːn / ~ /maɪ'dɑːn/, plaid /plæd /, plait /plæt/, Plaistow /'plæstəʊ/, reveille /rɪ'væli/” (Mott, 2005: 102).

➤ Vowel no. 5: /ɑː/

For this vowel a wide opening of the jaws is required. It is a long vowel, especially when it is at the end of words or just before a voiced consonant. We relate this vowel with the following spellings:

ar: car /kɑː/, bar /bɑː/, far /fɑː/, party /'pɑːti/, charge /tʃɑːdʒ/

ass: pass /pɑːs/, glass /glɑːs/, grass /grɑːs/

a + l/st/nt/th: half /hɑːf/, balm /bɑːm/, past /pɑːst/, can't /kɑːnt/, grant /grɑːnt/ bath /bɑːθ/, path /pɑːθ/

other cases: aunt /ɑːnt/, clerk /clɑːk/, heart /hɑːt/, laugh /lɑːf/, raft /rɑːft/, staff /stɑːf/, sergeant /'sɑːdʒənt/

➤ Vowel no. 6: /ɒ/

This vowel presents a wide opening of the jaws. As all of the short vowels, it is noticeable shorter when it is followed by a voiceless consonant. In addition, it is not possible to find it at the end of words. We identify this vowel with these orthographic representations:

o: lorry /'lɒri/, sorry /'sɒri/, lot /lɒt/, hot /hɒt/

au: because /bi'kɒz/, Austria /'ɒstriə/, sausage /'sɒsɪdʒ/, Australia /ə'streɪliə/

a (preceded by 'w' or 'qu'): wasp /wɒsp/, was /wɒz/, want /wɒnt/, warrior /'wɒriə/, quality /'kwɒləti/

other cases: cough /kɒf/, yacht /jɒt/, knowledge /'nɒlɪdʒ/, trough /trɒf/

➤ Vowel no. 7: /ɔː/

To produce this sound correctly, it is required a wide opening of the jaws. We can notice that this vowel is a bit longer when it is at the end of words and when followed by a voiced consonant. It has multiple orthographic representations:

or: forth /fɔːθ/, for /fɔː/, horse /hɔːs/, corn /kɔːn/

al: call /kɔːl/, fall /fɔːl/, talk /tɔːlk/, false /fɔːls/

aw: saw /sɔː/, law /lɔː/, flaw /flɔːn/, yawn /jɔːn/

ou: thought /θɔːt/, bought /bɔːt/, brought /brɔːt/, ought /ɔːt/

au: faucet /'fɔːsɪt/, daughter /dɔːtə/, fault /fɔːlt/, pause /pɔːz/, taught /tɔːt/

ar: warm /wɔ:m/, war /wɔ:/, quarter /kwɔ:tə/

our: pour /pɔ:/, course /kɔ:s/, four /fɔ:/, your /jɔ:/

oar: board /bɔ:d/, boar /bɔ:/, roar /rɔ:/

ore: bored /bɔ:d/, before /bɪ'fɔ:/, store /stɔ:/, shore /ʃɔ:/

oor: poor /pɔ:/, moor /mɔ:/, door /dɔ:/, floor /flɔ:/

other cases: broad /brɔ:d/, water /'wɔ:tə/

➤ Vowel no. 8: /ʊ/

It is a short vowel that needs a medium opening of the jaws for its correct production. Vowel no. 8 does not occur at the end of words and it is noticeably shorter when it is just before a voiceless consonant. This sound is identified with the following spellings:

u: put /pʊt/, push /pʊʃ/, bull /bʊl/, cookie /'kʊki/

oo: look /lʊk/, foot /fʊt/, took /tʊk/, book /bʊk/, good /gʊd/

ou: should /ʃʊd/, could /kʊd/, would /wʊd/, bouquet /bu'keɪ/

o: woman /'wʊmən/, wolf /wʊlf/, bosom /'bʊzəm/

➤ Vowel no. 9: /u:/

For the production of this vowel, it is required a narrow opening of the jaws. It is principally long when it is at the end of a word or when it is followed by a voiced consonant. In contrast, if it is unstressed and prevocalic, it is a little shorter (Mott, 2005: 106). Furthermore, it is very frequent to find it after the semivowel /j/, as we are going to see in the following examples of its orthographic representations:

oo: boot /bu:t/, food /fu:d/, pool /pu:l/, moon /mu:n/

o: who /hu:/, move /mu:v/, do /du:/, lose /lu:z/

u: truth /tru:θ/, rude /ru:d/, nude /nju:d/

ew: new /nju:/, few /fju:/, blew /blu:/, grew /gru:/

ue: blue /blu:/, true /tru:/, due /dju:/, glue /glu:/

ui: fruit /fru:t/, juice /dʒu:s/, suit /su:t/, bruit /bru:/

ou: through /θru:/, group /gru:p/, youth /ju:θ/, soup /su:p/

other cases: shoe /ʃu:/, queue /kju:/, beauty /'bju:ti/, argue /'ɑ:gju:/, two /tu:/

➤ Vowel no. 10: /ʌ/

To pronounce this short vowel we need a wide opening of the jaws. Due to its condition as a short vowel, it cannot be found at the end of a word. Its orthographic representations are as follow:

u: pub /pʌb/, cup /kʌp/, but /bʌt/, uncle /'ʌŋkl/, luck /lʌk/

o: mother /'mʌðə/, brother /'brʌðə/, among /ə'mʌŋ/, above /ə'bʌv/

ou: cousin /'kʌzn/, double /'dʌbl/, enough /ɪ'nʌf/, young /jʌŋ/

other cases: does /dʌz/, blood /blʌd/, flood /flʌd/

➤ Vowel no. 11: /ɜ:/

Vowel no. 11 is especially long when it is at the end of the word or when it is right before a voiced consonant. In order to produce this sound we open our jaws narrowly. We may identify it with these spellings:

er: perfume /'pɜ:fju:m/, person /'pɜ:sn/, service /'sɜ:vɪs/

ir: bird /bɜ:d/, shirt /ʃɜ:t/, skirt /skɜ:t/, third /θɜ:d/

ur: burn /bɜ:n/, fur /fɜ:/, turn /tɜ:n/, burst /bɜ:st/, hurt /hɜ:t/

or: word /wɜ:d/, work /wɜ:k/, world /wɜ:ld/, worst /wɜ:st/

ear: learn /lɜ:n/, heard /hɜ:d/, earth /ɜ:θ/, search /sɜ:tʃ/

other cases: were /wɜ:/, journey /'dʒɜ:ni/, colonel /'kɜ:nl/

➤ Vowel no. 12: /ə/

This short vowel is called schwa, it is very recurrent in English words and it requires a narrow opening of the jaws for its production. Mott defines it as “the reduced form of any English vowel or diphthong in unstressed syllables” (2005: 108). This means that the schwa can be represented orthographically for any English vowel and diphthong. Moreover, it can appear either at the beginning of words, at the end or in the middle:

At the beginning: petition /pə'tɪʃn/, afraid /ə'freɪd/, upon /ə'pʊn/, perfection /pə'fekʃn/

In the middle: sensible /'sensəbl/, observation /,ɒbzə'veɪʃn/, disparity /dɪ'spærəti/

At the end: paper /'peɪpə/, better /'betə/, actor /'æktə/, devil /'devəl/

2.5. Diphthongs

Roach gives a perfect definition of diphthongs: “sounds which consist of a movement or glide from one vowel to another” (2009: 17). A diphthong is composed by the union of two vowels which together, have the same length as the long vowels described above. However, the first vowel of a diphthong is longer and stronger, the second and last vowel of a diphthong is just like a kind of weaker and shorter partner for the first one. Therefore, when diphthongs are pronounced, the emphasis always falls on the first part of it. Because of its similar length to long vowels, they also share the characteristic of being noticeable longer when they are at the end of words or followed by a voiced consonant (Sánchez Benedito, 2001: 40). Thus, we can notice how the same diphthong is a bit longer in the word eyes /aɪz/ than in ice /aɪs/. Additionally, Sánchez Benedito (2001) adds another characteristic shared by all the diphthongs: they never occur right before the phoneme /ŋ/.

With all of this, there are eight diphthongs in the English language, which are /ɪə/, /eə/, /ʊə/, /eɪ/, /aɪ/, /ɔɪ/, /əʊ/, /aʊ/. Also, Mott points out an extra diphthong /ɔə/ used by “some conservative and Cockney speakers” (2005: 113) but it is replaced by most speakers for the long vowel /ɔ:/ in words such as board /bɔ:d/ and bored /bɔ:d/ which were mentioned earlier. The same happens with the diphthong /ʊə/, most people tend to substitute it for the vowel no. 7 /ɔ:/ like in the word sure /ʃʊə/ ~ /ʃɔ:/. The diphthongs may be divided into two categories: closing diphthongs and central diphthongs. The latter, is formed by /ɪə/, /eə/ and /ʊə/. These diphthongs are in this category because when we pronounce them, the “tongue moves towards the central vowel [ə]” (Collins & Mees, 2008: 102). The closing diphthongs receive this name

because the “tongue rises, thus closing the space between the tongue and the roof of the mouth” (Collins & Mees, 2008: 102). This category has at the same time other two categories: fronting (/eɪ/, /aɪ/, /ɔɪ/) and backing (/əʊ/, /aʊ/). Some examples of the diphthongs are:

/ɪə/: tear /tɪə /, dear /dɪə /, near /nɪə /, beer /bɪə /, cheer /tʃɪə/, here /hɪə /, weird /wɪəd/, theatre /'θɪətə/, pier /pɪə/, period /'pɪəriəd/, serious /'sɪəriəs/

/eə/: fear /feə/, there /ðeə/, pear /peə/, tear /teə/, hair /heə/, bear /beə/, share /ʃeə/, wear /weə/, care /keə/, their /ðeə/, mayor /meə/

/ʊə/: poor /pʊə/, sure /ʃʊə/

/eɪ/: gate /geɪ/, plate /pleɪ/, plain /pleɪn/, wait /weɪ /, rain /reɪn/, pain /peɪn/, play /pleɪ/, stay /steɪ/, great /greɪt/, eight /eɪt/, game /geɪm/, tray /treɪ/

/aɪ/: idea /aɪ'dɪə/, guy /gaɪ/, my /maɪ/, buy /baɪ/, rice /raɪ/, time /taɪm/, right /raɪt/, nice /naɪs/, height /haɪt/, lie /laɪ/, die /daɪ/, sky /skaɪ/, dye /daɪ/, try /traɪ/

/ɔɪ/: boy /bɔɪ/, toy /tɔɪ/, enjoy /ɪn'dʒɔɪ/, voice /vɔɪs/, point /pɔɪnt/, oil /ɔɪl/, annoy /ə'nɔɪ/, destroy /dɪ'strɔɪ/, join /dʒɔɪn/, coin /kɔɪn/, joy /dʒɔɪ/, decoy /dɪ'kɔɪ/

/əʊ/: so /səʊ/, flow /fləʊ/, boat /bəʊt/, coat /kəʊt/, old /əʊld/, slow /sləʊ/, know /nəʊ/, road /rəʊd/, soul /səʊl/, toe /təʊ/, home /həʊ/, although /ɔ:l'dəʊ/

/aʊ/: house /haʊs/, town /taʊn/, loud /laʊd/, cloud /klaʊd/, lout /laʊt/, rout /raʊt/, down /daʊn/, gown /gaʊn/, brown /braʊn/, douse /daʊs/, pound /paʊnd/

2.6. Triphthongs

Some do not consider the triphthongs as so, for example, Collins and Mees refer to them as “vowel sequences with /ə/ termination” (2008: 104). Nevertheless, I will treat them as triphthongs. There are five triphthongs in the English language which are formed by the closing diphthongs and the vowel schwa. Therefore, the English triphthongs are as follow:

/eɪə/: player /'pleɪə/, payer /'peɪə/, layer /'leɪə/

/aɪə/: fire /'faɪə/, liar /'laɪə/

/ɔɪə/: loyal /'ləɪəl/, royal /'rɔɪəl/, employer /ɪm'plɔɪə/

/əʊə/: lower /'ləʊə/, mower /'məʊə /

/aʊə/: power /'paʊə/, tower /'taʊə/, hour /'aʊə/

3. Analysis of the Spanish phonetic system compared to the English one

3.1. Consonants

In the Spanish phonetic alphabet we can find a total of nineteen consonants, in contrast to the twenty-two English consonants. These nineteen consonants may be classified by their manner of articulation, their place of articulation and by voiced or voiceless. According to their manner of articulation, we have the plosives /p, b, t, d, k, g/, the fricatives /f, θ, s, ʃ, x/, the affricate /tʃ/, the nasals /m, n, ɲ/, the laterals /ʎ, l/ and the vibrating consonants /r, r̄/. In terms of their place of articulation, they are classified as the bilabials /p, b, m/, the dentals /t, d/, the labio-dental /f/, the inter-dental /θ/, the velars /k, g, x/, the alveolars /s, n, l, r, r̄/, and the palatals /j, tʃ, ɲ, ʎ/. And finally, we can divide them into the voiced /b, d, g, ʃ, m, n, ɲ, ʎ, l, r, r̄/ and the voiceless /p, t, k, f, θ, s, x, tʃ/ (Quilis & Fernández, 2003: 75-129). As in the section of the English phonetics, the consonants will be classified by their manner of articulation and analysed here:

➤ Plosives:

The plosives are produced in a process of two stages; the first one is the occlusive stage where the air finds an obstacle to be released and the second one, the short plosive stage where the air is finally released (Fernández Planas, 2005: 97). The definitions of the plosive consonants are:

/p/: voiceless bilabial plosive, as in ‘papa’ /papa/

/b/: voiced bilabial plosive, as in ‘bebe’ /bebe/

/t/: voiceless dental plosive, as in ‘tener’ /tener/

/d/: voiced dental plosive, as in ‘dado’ /dado/

/k/: voiceless velar plosive, as in ‘casa’ /kasa/

/g/: voiced velar plosive, as in ‘gato’ /gato/

At first sight, it seems that the Spanish plosives and the English plosives are similar, however, there are many differences between them. First, the Spanish plosives /b, d, g/ are fricatives when they occur in the middle of a word and plosives when they are found at the beginning of a word or right before a nasal, while the English /b, d, g/ are always plosives. Furthermore, the English

/p, t, k/ are usually aspirated in contrast to their Spanish counterparts which, according to Sánchez Benedito (2001), are never aspirated. However, they actually may have aspiration but far weaker than in English. It is hard for Spaniards to get used to the English aspiration so it is a very common mistake among Spaniards to not aspirate /p, t, k/ or do it too weak.

Additionally, the English /t/ and /d/ are alveolars while in Spanish both of them are dentals. Another important issue is the orthographic representations of the Spanish phoneme /b/; it can be represented by the letter 'b' or the 'v' while in English the phoneme /b/ is always represented by the letter 'b' and the letter 'v' represents a very different phoneme. Due to the influence of the mother tongue, Spaniards tend to pronounce in English the letters 'b' and 'v' the same way creating some problems in communication; for example, the mixture of the words 'very' /'veri/ and 'berry' /'beri/. On the other hand, when the phoneme /v/ is the last sound of a word, Spaniards tend to pronounce it like /f/. This creates more potential problems in communication like the misunderstanding between 'leaf' /li:f/ and 'leave' /li:v/ although they can usually be distinguished by context.

Nonetheless, the most problematic matter for Spaniards is when the plosives in English are in the final position in a word. Words of Spanish do not tend to end with plosives, however, there are some such as the imperative forms 'venid' or 'cantad' and loanwords like 'pub', 'iceberg', 'robot', and so on. The final sound /g/ is the most problematic for Spaniards since it will be pronounced like the voiceless velar fricative /x/. In words ending in '-d' like 'Madrid', the phoneme /d/ usually becomes the voiceless inter dental fricative /θ/. Therefore, the English words 'phoned' /fəʊnd/ or 'dog' /dɒg/ are really complicated for Spaniards to pronounce correctly. The endings with the phonemes /p, b, t, d, k/ are a bit less problematic because standard Spanish speakers will pronounce them but in a much weaker way than an English speaker.

➤ Fricatives:

The fricatives are characterised for being continuous sounds (Iribarren, 2005: 169). When a fricative consonant is being produced, the organs of articulation cause a narrowing in the mouth

though it does not cause a complete closure (Quilis & Fernández, 2003: 91). The fricatives' definitions are the following:

/f/: voiceless labio dental fricative, as in 'feo' /feo/

/θ/: voiceless inter dental fricative, as in 'zorro' /θoro/

/s/: voiceless alveolar fricative, as in 'soso' /soso/

/j/: voiced palatal fricative, as in 'mayo' /majo/

/x/: voiceless velar fricative, as in 'jota' /xota/

The Spanish and English sounds /f, θ, s/ are very similar so that they should not present any problem for Spaniards (Sánchez Benedito, 2001: 80-89). The only problem with the phoneme /θ/ is that it is orthographically represented by the letter 'z' in Spanish while said letter represents the phoneme /z/ in English. Moreover, the sound /z/ is especially complicated for Spaniards as this phoneme cannot be found in standard Spanish, it just may be present as an allophone in certain voiced environments. Hence, Spaniards tend to pronounce the phoneme /z/ as [s] making very complicated the distinction of words such as 'rice' /rais/ and 'rise' /raiz/.

In addition, the fricatives /j, x/ do not exist in RP English. Spaniards identify the phoneme /x/ with the English /h/ although they are very different since the former is a velar and the latter a glottal. Consequently, when Spaniards pronounce /h/, it may sound too strong and rough. For beginner students of English, it can bring another problem; as the phoneme /h/ is orthographically represented by the letter 'h' and this letter is silent in Spanish, they may pronounce the English /h/ as silent. The complete absence of the English fricatives sounds /v, ð, ʒ, ʃ/ causes many difficulties to Spanish people in order to produce them.

➤ Affricates:

There is just one affricate consonant in the Spanish phonetic alphabet which is /tʃ/. This phoneme is defined as a voiceless palatal affricate and can be found in words like 'muchacho' /mutʃatʃo/. This affricate consonant is produced in two steps; first of all, there is occlusive stage and then, the air is released by a friction (Fernández Planas, 2005: 100).

Although the Spanish /tʃ/ is a palatal and the English /tʃ/ is a post alveolar, they are quite similar and Spanish people should not have any problem to produce it. This is, as Sánchez Benedito (2001) states, except when it is the last sound in a word. In this case, the English post alveolar fricative /ʃ/ may cause some difficulties. Since it does not exist in the Spanish phonetic alphabet, Spaniards tend to pronounce it like the affricate /tʃ/ and this provoke some misunderstandings in communication like the difficult distinction between watch /wɒtʃ/ and wash /wɒʃ/. This difficulty is different in Andalusia where the phoneme /ʃ/ is an allophone and the phoneme /tʃ/ is not used. Nonetheless, this will be explained in the next section. The lack of the affricate sound /dʒ/ makes Spaniards to pronounce it like the lateral /ʎ/.

➤ Nasals:

The Spanish nasals, as the English ones, have as their main feature the release of the air through the nose instead of through the mouth. The air finds the path through the mouth completely blocked so the soft palate allows the air to go to the nose (Iribarren, 2005: 171). The Spanish nasals are defined as follow:

/m/: voiced bilabial nasal, as in ‘moto’ /moto/

/n/: voiced alveolar nasal, as in ‘nadie’ /nadie/

/ɲ/: voiced palatal nasal, as in ‘caña’ /kaɲa/

The Spanish and the English /m/ are virtually the same although in English it can be found as the last sound of a word like in ‘mum’ /mʌm/ and it can be problematic for Spaniards. Both Spanish and English /n/ are also very similar so it should not be problematic. On the contrary, the English and Spanish nasals /ɲ/ and /ŋ/ may cause some problems. The palatal /ɲ/ does not exist in English as a phoneme, however, in words such as ‘nuclear’ or ‘news’ a similar sound occurs although it is represented as /nj/. The English velar /ŋ/ occurs in Spanish in words like ‘ancla’ or ‘tanga’ though, as Roach affirms, the English /ŋ/ “is a different matter. It is a sound that gives considerable problems to foreign learners” (2009: 46). Indeed, the English /ŋ/ is very peculiar and it provokes many difficulties to Spaniards; for example, Spaniards, in words like ‘meaning’ /'mi:nɪŋ/, ‘singing’ /'sɪŋɪŋ/ or ‘song’ /sɒŋ/ would always tend to pronounce the letter ‘g’ after the sound /ŋ/.

➤ Laterals:

The laterals present a lie similar to the vowels (Fernández Planas, 2005: 101). As Iribarren (2005) describes, during the production of the laterals, the tongue reach the alveoli but it does not completely block the air, it just complicates the release of the air. Like their name indicates, the air goes through the lateral sides of the tongue. Thus, the laterals are described as:

/ʎ/: voiced palatal lateral, as in ‘lluvia’ /ʎubia/

/l/: voiced alveolar lateral, as in ‘luna’ /luna/

The sound /ʎ/ is differentiated from the fricative /j/ because the air escapes from a side of the mouth instead of from the middle of the mouth (Quilis & Fernández, 2001: 122). The fact that the orthographic representation of the palatal lateral is ‘ll’ may guide Spanish beginner learners of English to mistakes in the pronunciation of words such as ‘cello’ /'tʃeləʊ/. With regard to the phoneme /l/, both the Spanish and the English are alveolar lateral sounds so it is not a problematic phoneme for Spaniards at all, as long as it is clear. When it is dark [ɫ], it is problematic for Spaniards as that allophone is not in the Spanish phonetic alphabet. Hence, Spaniards would tend to pronounce the letter ‘l’ as a clear l [l] in all cases.

➤ Vibrating:

The vibrating consonants are characterised by the production of brief interruptions while the air is being released (Quilis & Fernández, 2003: 129). The definitions of the vibrating consonants are as follow:

/r/: voiced alveolar simple vibrating, as in ‘pero’ /pero/

/r/: voiced alveolar multiple vibrating, as in ‘perro’ /pero/

In English there is just one phoneme /r/ which is alveolar and can be said to be similar to the Spanish simple vibrating /r/. However, the English /r/ still sounds more free-flowing. This and the influence of the Spanish /r/ make Spaniards’ pronunciation of the English /r/ a bit hard and abrupt.

3.2. Allophones

In the Spanish phonetic alphabet we can find a total of thirty-two consonantal allophones. The number of allophones is so extensive because they show the different productions of one phoneme in different contexts (Frías Conde, 2001: 9). The Spanish phonemes which have several allophones are the plosives /b, d, g/, the fricatives /f, s, x, θ, j/, the laterals /ʎ, l/, the nasals /m, n, ɲ/ and the vibratings /r, r̄/. Among these allophones we can find some similarities to the English phonetics; for instance, the English phoneme /ð/, as it has been already said, does not exist in Spanish as a phoneme but it does exist as an allophone of /d/ (Sánchez Benedito, 2001: 86). This allophone occurs when the phoneme /d/ is in the middle of a word like ‘dedo’. However, the Spanish consonants are not the only phonemes which have multiple allophones. The vocalic phonemes /i/ and /u/ have three different allophones each one of them (Iribarren, 2005: 183).

3.3. Vowels

The Spanish vowels are characteristic for being the nucleus of the syllables while the consonants are the “margen silábico” (Quilis & Fernández, 2003: 47). However, the main characteristic of the Spanish vowel system is its simplicity; there are just five Spanish vowels while we find twelve vowels in the English phonetic system. The great number of English vowels causes a large number of difficulties to Spaniards in order to pronounce so many different vowels correctly. For example, an important difference between the two languages’ vowels is that in Spanish there are no long vowels. Quilis & Fernández (2003) point out that in Spanish there are some vowels a bit longer than others, but still they are not as long as the English /ɔ:, u:, ɜ:, ɑ:, i:/. Hence, the Spanish vowels are all considered as short. This is one of the main problems that Spanish people find on the English vowel’s alphabet. A Spaniard would tend to pronounce the words cheap – chip, fool – full, sport – spot, the same way so it would obviously create a noticeable problem in communication with English native speakers. Nevertheless, the two vowel alphabets also have some similarities such as the way of classifying them and some characteristics like the fact that all the vowels are voiced and none language has nasal vowels (Sánchez Benedito, 2001: 13).

The Spanish vowels, like the English ones, can be classified by their place of articulation, their manner of articulation and the lip position. With regard to the place of articulation, there are two front vowels /e, i/, one central vowel /a/ and another two back vowels /o, u/. According to their manner of articulation, we find two close vowels /i, u/, two half-open vowels /e, o/ and one open vowel /a/. Thus the definitions of the Spanish vowels are as follow:

/a/: central back vowel with neutral lips

/e/: front half-open vowel with neutral lips

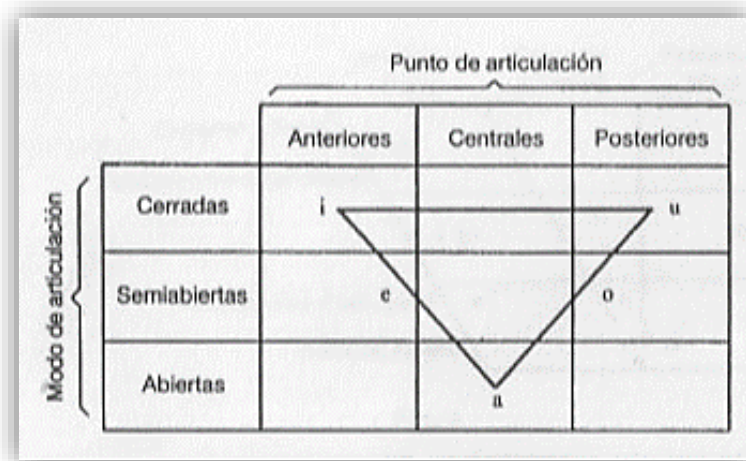
/i/: front close vowel with neutral lips

/o/: back half-open vowel with rounded lips

/u/: back close vowel with with rounded lips

The best way to illustrate the Spanish vowels is using the triangle of Hellwag (Sánchez Benedito, 2001) which is also very convenient to see the Spanish vowel alphabet's simplicity against the English vowel alphabet's complexity:

Figure 4. Spanish vowels.



Source: Sánchez Benedito (2001)

Another important difficulty that Spaniards use to encounter to speak English is the confusing link between English vowels' phonemes and their orthographic representations. The Spanish

vowel phonemes and their orthographic representation are always exactly the same, so that the sound /a/ is going to be always represented by the letter ‘a’, the sound /e/ by the letter ‘e’, the sound /i/ by the letter ‘i’, the sound /o/ by the letter ‘o’ and the sound /u/ by the letter ‘u’. This provokes that when Spaniards see, for example, the word ‘cut’, they say /kut/ instead of /kʌt/. In any case, the best way to notice the difficulties caused by the difference in amount of vowels is to compare the Spanish vowels to the English one in detail:

➤ Vowel /a/:

Spaniards tend to identify this vowel with the English vowels /ɑ:/, /æ/, /ʌ/ and even with the schwa /ə/. The Spanish /a/ is not exactly the same as any of those English vowels although they share some features. The vowel /ʌ/ and the /a/ are both central vowels and that make them similar. However, the Spanish /a/ is more open than /ʌ/. As Sánchez Benedito claims (2001), the vowel /æ/ is halfway between the Spanish vowels /a/ and /e/. The /æ/ is closer than the /a/ and it needs slightly spread lips instead of neutral lips like the vowel /a/. Regarding the vowel /ɑ:/, it is much more different from the Spanish /a/ since it is a front vowel and the /ɑ:/ is a back one and requires a wider opening of the jaws. Moreover, the English /ɑ:/ is much longer than the Spanish /a/.

The schwa /ə/ is a very special vowel in English and it is quite complex for Spaniards. It is a central vowel like the Spanish /a/, but it is closer. When the schwa occurs at the end of a word such as ‘computer’ /kəm'pjʊ:tə/, it tends to be more open so that it sounds more similar to /ʌ/ (Sánchez Benedito, 2001: 37). This is one of the reasons why Spaniards relate the sound /ə/ to the Spanish /a/. The problem with the identification of /a/ with the English schwa /ə/ is that it is only similar to /a/ when it is at the end of words, therefore, it sounds different when it is at the beginning or in the middle of words like ‘police’ /pə'li:s/ and ‘family’ /'fæməli/.

➤ Vowel /e/:

This vowel is identified with the English vowels /e/ and /ɜ:/ by Spaniards. The Spanish /e/ and the English /e/ are very similar though they are not the exact same sound. Both vowels are front but the English one is a bit less close than the Spanish (Iribarren, 2005: 144). The English vowel

/ɜ:/ does not exist in the Spanish phonetic system so in order to produce that sound, Spaniards tend to pronounce the Spanish /e/ making it longer and more open with rounded lips.

➤ Vowel /i:/

Spaniards relate this vowel with the English vowels /i:/ and /ɪ/. Because of this relation to a single sound, it is quite complex for Spanish people to make noticeable the difference between /i:/ and /ɪ/. The Spanish /i/ and the English /i:/ are very alike in the matter of place and manner of articulation, however, the sound /i:/ requires spread lips. Regarding the phoneme /ɪ/, Sánchez Benedito (2001) states that it is between the Spanish /i/ and /e/; the /ɪ/ is more open than the /i/ but not as open as the /e/. Iribarren also mentions the fact that in order to produce the sound /ɪ/, the tongue does not go as high as when the Spanish /i/ is pronounced: “Esto hace que, al articularse la [ɪ] inglesa, el espacio entre la lengua y el velo del paladar sea relativamente amplio, mientras que en español se reduce a un mínimo” (2005: 145).

➤ Vowel /o:/

Spanish people tend to identify this vowel with the English /ɒ/ and /ɔ:/. The three sounds /o, ɒ, ɔ:/ share the characteristic of being back vowels. The English /ɔ:/ and the Spanish /o/ has another feature in common: the need of rounded lips for their correct production. Nonetheless, they are still different; besides the fact that the /ɔ:/ is a long vowel, it also is a bit deeper (Sánchez Benedito, 2001: 28). With regard to the English sound /ɒ/, it is more open than the /o/ and the lips are not rounded, they are neutral. Furthermore, the /ɒ/ requires a wider opening of the jaws (Sánchez Benedito, 2001: 26).

➤ Vowel /u:/

This vowel is related to the English vowels /ʊ/ and /u:/ by Spaniards. Both English vowels are indeed very similar to the Spanish /u/. The differences between /u/ and /ʊ/ are that the former is closer and the lips need to be more rounded. With respect to the sound /u:/, it is much longer and tenser than the Spanish /u/ (Sánchez Benedito, 2001: 32).

3.4. Diphthongs

In contrast to the eight English diphthongs, in Spanish there are a total of fourteen diphthongs. As in English, the Spanish diphthongs are formed by two vowels and one of them is the nucleus; it is more open and it is pronounced more energetically. Therefore, the other vowel works just like a support for the nucleus (Quilis & Fernández, 2003: 65). The vowel-nucleus of the diphthongs may be at the beginning or at the end of it, thus it can be distinguished two different groups of diphthongs: rising and falling. The former receives this name because the nucleus-vowel is at the end of the diphthong so our tongue goes from a close position to an open one. Unlike the rising diphthongs, the nucleus-vowel the falling diphthongs is found at the beginning of it, hence the tongue goes from an open position to a close one (Quilis & Fernández, 2003: 65-67). In the group of the rising diphthongs, we can find eight diphthongs which are: /ia/, /ie/, /io/, /iu/, /ua/, /ue/, /uo/, /ui/; and in the group of the falling diphthongs we find six: /ai/, /ei/, /oi/, /au/, /eu/, /ou/ (Iribarren, 2005: 155-156).

Some examples of these diphthongs are:

/ia/: seria /seria/, diana /diana/, mediana /mediana/, rabia /rabia/, sucia /suθia/, hacia /aθia/, odiar /odiar/

/ie/: siete /siete/, diente /diente/, siente /siente/, tiempo /tiempo/, pierde /pierde/, pieza /pieθa/

/io/: pionero /pionero/, radio /radio/, odio /odio/, idioma /idioma/, labio /labio/, biología /bioloxia/, Mario /mario/

/iu/: ciudad /θiudad/, viudo /biudo/, triunfo /triunfo/, diurno /diurno/

/ua/: suave /suabe/, guarda /guarda/, agua /agua/, cuatro /kuatro/, guapo /guapo/

/ue/: suelo /suelo/, cuerda /kuerda/, rueda /rueda/, puesto /puesto/

/uo/: antiguo /antiguo/, asiduo /asiduo/, arduo /arduo/

/ui/: muy /mui/, ruido /ruido/, ruina /ruina/, huiste /uiste/

/ai/: baile /baile/, fraile /fraile/, aire /aire/, paisaje /paisaxe/, caiga /kaiga/,

/ei/: seis /seis/, ley /lei/, peine /peine/, treinta /treinta/, reina /reina/

/oi/: hoy /oi/, soy /soi/, voy /boi/, doy /doi/, boicot /boikot/

/au/: Paula /paula/, aula /aula/, causa /kausa/, auto /auto/, aura /aura/, caudal /kaudal/, paulatino /paulatino/

/eu/: Europa /europa/, deuda /deuda/, feudal /feudal/, neurona /neurona/

/ou/: Rouco /rouco/, bou /bou/

The main difference between Spanish and English diphthongs that we can find is their role in the language. English diphthongs are a way of making the first and strong vowel longer. Moreover, depending on the accent some diphthongs may be changed for a long vowel like the word either which can be pronounced like /'aɪðə/ or /'i:ðə/ (Iribarren, 2005: 162). Both pronunciations are completely correct and they do not affect to the meaning of the word. However, in Spanish, a change like that would produce a complete change on the meaning of the word; for instance, peine - pene, miedo - mido, liana - lana, tuerca- terca, cuota - cota. Furthermore, in Spanish, the vowel which is not the one that forms the nucleus is not as weak as in English. This provokes some trouble in Spaniards' English pronunciation since we tend to pronounce the English diphthongs like if both vowels were strong.

In addition, as I mentioned in the previous section, Spaniards find a big problem on the orthographic representations of the English vowels' sounds. This problem is linked to diphthongs since Spanish people are not able to identify some English diphthongs when they are represented by just a vowel. For example, 'a' in take /teɪk/ and 'o' in go /gəʊ/. Almost all the Spanish diphthongs, like the vowels, are represented orthographically exactly the same way as their phonemes. The only exceptions are the diphthongs /ui/ and /oi/ whose spelling may be 'uy' and 'oy' respectively, like in the words 'muy' and 'soy'. Additionally, the fact that both languages share very similar diphthongs such as /eɪ/ and /ei/ is problematic especially because /eɪ/ is rarely orthographically spelt by 'ei'. There are more cases of trouble caused by the difference between phoneme and orthographic spelling like the word 'die' /daɪ/. As in Spanish there is a diphthong spelt 'ie' and its phoneme is exactly the same, beginner students of English would read 'die' as /die/.

3.5. Triphthongs

In Spanish, there is no doubt about the existence of triphthongs. The Spanish triphthongs occur when three consecutive vowels are part of the same syllable. They are formed by a strong vowel which is in the middle surrounded by two weak vowels (Frías Conde, 2001: 6). Some examples of the triphthongs are:

/iai/: cop*í*ai*s* /kopi*a*i*s*/, habitu*á*i*s* /abitu*a*i*s*/, fi*a*i*s* /fi*a*i*s*/

/iei/: copi*e*í*s* /kopi*e*i*s*/, habitu*e*í*s* /abitu*e*i*s*/, fie*i*s /fie*i*s/

/uai/: Parag*u*ay /parag*u*ai/, Urug*u*ay /urug*u*ai/, guay /guay/

/uei/: buey /buei/, amortig*ü*eí*s* /amortig*ü*e*i*s/

/uau/: guay /guay/

/ioi/: dioico /dioico/

4. Special Andalusian (of Cádiz) Features

In the previous section, the standard Spanish phonetic system was analysed in comparison to the English one in order to identify the main problems that Spaniards in general have to deal with when learning and speaking English. In this section, I will analyse the very characteristic Andalusian accent. Since the Andalusian accent is very varied and its characteristics are quite wide, this section will focus on the special features of the accent of Cádiz and the concrete problems that people from Cádiz find to pronounce English words.

In the two previous sections, a separation between consonantal and vocalic characteristics is made. Nonetheless, in terms of the people from Cádiz's difficulties to speak English, the consonantal characteristics are the most relevant. In eastern Andalusia, we can notice a significant vowel system which is formed by ten phonemes in contrast to the five phonemes of the standard Spanish (Mondéjar, 2001: 129). However, in Cádiz and in the rest of western Andalusia, according to Mondéjar (2001), we may find the exact same amount of vocalic phonemes. Nevertheless, there are some differences between the western Andalusian vowels and the standard Spanish vowels such as the lengthening of the vowels at the end of words, among others (Payán Sotomayor, 1988: 28). People from Cádiz will pronounce 'recoger' lengthening the final 'e' due to the elision of the 'r'. But characteristics like this one do not really affect to pronunciation of English. Therefore, the most significant and noticeable consonantal phenomena of the Andalusian accent of Cádiz will be analysed that may complicate or facilitate the pronunciation of English. These main phenomena are the aspiration, the seseo and ceceo, the contrast between /ʃ/ and /tʃ/, and finally, consonant elision.

4.1. Aspiration

Aspiration is a phenomenon that is manifested in Cádiz mainly as allophones of two phonemes, the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ and the voiceless velar fricative /x/. The aspiration of the phoneme /s/ can be explained by the substitution of the phoneme /s/ with the voiceless glottal fricative [h] (Núñez Cerdeño et al., 2014: 344). Payán Sotomayor (1988) adds that the aspiration of the phoneme /s/ in Cádiz is a result of a more relaxed articulation and the use of a softer breathing strength. According to Mondéjar (2001), this aspiration occurs when the letter 's' is found both in an intervocalic position and in an absolute final one. However, it is also aspirated

right before consonants; for example, words such as ‘riesgo’ or ‘este’ will be pronounced like [riehgo] and [ehhte] respectively, instead of like their standard ways /riesgo/ and /este/. This aspiration of the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ may be a handicap when pronouncing English. Above all, it is a problem when the ‘s’ is in a final position since final –s’s in English indicate plurals and more importantly, are used in the third person singular (he, she, it) of the simple present tense and its omission is an ungrammatical mistake. Consequently, an aspiration of a final /s/ may lead to misunderstandings in oral communication.

With regard to the voiceless velar fricative /x/, its production in Cádiz and in Andalusia in general is really smooth and is very similar to the English voiceless glottal fricative /h/. So in Cádiz the pronunciation of the word ‘jazzmín’ will be pronounced like [haθmin] instead of /xaθmin/. Therefore, this feature of the Spanish of Cádiz is an advantage to pronounce English words correctly in contrast to the standard Spanish that, as I said in the section 3, makes the English /h/ sound too strong and rough.

4.2. Seseo/ceceo

Payán Sotomayor defines these two phenomena as “la desfonologización de la oposición s/θ, dando lugar a un monofonema /s/ realizado como [s] (*seseo*) o como [θ] (*ceceo*)” (1988: 33). Therefore, the *seseo* is identified with the sole use of the voiceless alveolar fricative /s/ and the *ceceo* with the sole use of the voiceless inter-dental fricative. This means that people who do *seseo* will pronounce words such as ‘procesión’ like [prosesion] instead of its standard form /proθesion/, while people who do *ceceo* will pronounce it like [prθeθion].

Both phenomena are very common all through Andalusia and both of them can be noticed in the province of Cádiz. The *seseo* is the least common of the two in the province since it just occurs in Cádiz, the capital (Payán Sotomayor, 1988: 33). In the capital, as Payán Sotomayor (1988) states, although there are some cases of *ceceo*, we mainly may notice *seseo*. In any case, those who have *seseo* do not have particularly difficulty in pronouncing the sound /θ/ in English. On the other hand, *ceceo* is a phenomenon that occurs in all the other cities and towns in the province of Cádiz and it contrast to what Payán Sotomayor (1988) affirms, it is not a characteristic of people who are scarce of culture. The *ceceo* does cause some problems to the

Spanish speakers who have it since it is an unshakable characteristic of their accent. Consequently, people from Cádiz may pronounce, for example, the word ‘sequel’ /'si:kwəl/ like ['θi:kwəl].

4.3. /ʃ/ and /tʃ/

In section 3, I explained the difficulty that speakers of standard Spanish have in order to pronounce the phoneme /ʃ/ and differentiate it from the phoneme /tʃ/. Now, in Cádiz, it is the other way around. People from Cádiz also find some problems to make the phonemes /ʃ/ and /tʃ/ sound different but here the problematic phoneme is the voiceless palatal affricate /tʃ/ rather than the English fortis post alveolar fricative /ʃ/. Although the phoneme /ʃ/ does not exist in the Spanish phonemic alphabet it is the allophone that people from Cádiz produce when they pronounce the spelling ‘ch’ and it is virtually the same as the English sound /ʃ/. While speakers of standard Spanish will pronounce the word ‘muchacho’ like /mutʃatʃo/, the speakers from Cádiz will pronounce it as [muʃafo].

The pronunciation of the English fortis post alveolar fricative /ʃ/ instead of the voiceless palatal affricate /tʃ/ may be the most distinctive aspect of the accent of Cádiz phonetically speaking, though this characteristic can be noticed in some more places around Andalusia such as Huelva and some places in Sevilla.

4.4. Elision

The aspiration of final –s’s that I mentioned before can be considered a cause of the phenomenon of elision as well, according to Payán Sotomayor (1988). Apart from this aspiration, in the Spanish of Cádiz we can notice the elision of the phonemes /d, t, r, l, b, g/. The pronunciation of all those letters are omitted though not always and each elision has its own characteristics. The elision of the sound /d/ is the most frequent one and it can be omitted when it is in an intervocalic position or when it is the final sound of the word. This elision is common even in the rest of Spain when words have as their ending –ado (Payán Sotomayor, 1988: 52). Consequently, words like ‘cantado’ or ‘cansado’ will lose the intervocalic /d/ and will be pronounced [kantaɔ] and [kansao] respectively. Nevertheless, the elision of /d/ in Andalusia and in Cádiz particularly, goes beyond the ending –ado; for instance, words such as

‘todo’, ‘lado’ and ‘Cádiz’ will be affected by the elision of the intervocalic sound /d/. When the voiced dental plosive /d/ occurs in an absolute final position like in the word ‘Madrid’, it is omitted as well. While in northern Spain the phoneme /d/ will be substituted by the voiceless inter-dental fricative /θ/, in Cádiz it will just disappear. The voiceless dental plosive /t/ is also omitted when it occurs in an absolute position like in the words ‘boicot’, ‘argot’ or ‘habitat’. The same happens with the elision of the voiced alveolar lateral /l/ and the voiced alveolar simple vibrating /r/, they tend to disappear when they are the last sound of words. As I mentioned before, the ‘r’ is omitted in words such as ‘recoger’ causing a lengthening of the vowel ‘e’. Other examples are the words ‘innovar’, ‘recibir’ and ‘monitor’. In the case of the phoneme /l/, we can notice its elision in words like ‘final’, ‘abril’ or ‘azul’. And finally, we have the elisions of the voiced velar plosive /g/ and the voiced bilabial plosive /b/, though these elisions are not as common as the other ones. Both plosives are omitted when they are between vowels like in the words ‘aguja’ and ‘pobrecito’ (Payán Sotomayor, 1988: 61). The voiced bilabial plosive, in addition, may also be omitted when it occurs at the beginning of words. For example, in ‘vámonos’ whose standard pronunciation is /bamonos/ and people from Cádiz will pronounce it like [ámono] (Payán Sotomayor, 1988: 61).

All of these cases of elision affect to people from Cádiz’s pronunciation of English when the phonemes are in an absolute final position in words. In section 2 I mentioned the difficulty that Spaniards have to pronounce final sounds such as /b, p, t, d, k/ and in Cádiz the difficulty is bigger because of the elisions. This is a big problem in oral communication since most of the past forms of verbs in English are differentiated from their present form by a final /d/ or /t/. And it is even worse when some consonants occur together at the end of words such as ‘asked’ /ɑ:skt/. The consonants ‘-skt’ form a cluster which is really complicated to pronounce properly for Spaniards in general. Mott claims that Spanish “has no groups of consonants in final position at all” (2005: 248) but it is even more complicated for people from Cádiz due to the elision and the aspiration explained before. With regard to the elision of the final /l/, in section 3, I commented on the difficulty for Spaniards to produce the dark ‘l’ [ɫ] since speakers of standard Spanish will pronounce a final /l/ as a clear one. But people from Cádiz will simply omit the phoneme /l/, this is the reason why the production of the allophone [ɫ] is more complex for speakers of the Spanish of Cádiz. On the other hand, as British English is a non-rhotic accent, the elision of the final /r/ does not have any negative impact on people from Cádiz’s pronunciation of English.

5. Conclusions

As has been repeatedly shown, Spaniards, in general, encounter plenty of difficulties in order to pronounce many sounds of English and, therefore, to pronounce English words. We can affirm that the English vocalic sounds are the most problematic due to their complexity (twelve vowels) in contrast to the simplicity of the Spanish alphabet (five vowels). The number of consonantal sounds in both languages are more similar, Spanish having nineteen consonantal phonemes and English twenty-two. Nonetheless, in spite of the similar number of consonants that the two languages have, they are not the same consonants. Several consonantal English sounds are truly difficult for Spaniards, we may conclude considering the most difficult ones the lenis labio dental fricative /v/, the lenis alveolar fricative /z/, the lenis inter-dental fricative /ð/, the lenis post alveolar fricative /ʒ/, and the voiced velar nasal /ŋ/.

With regard to the specific Andalusian accent spoken in Cádiz, these general difficulties can be applied too. In any case, we have seen that people from Cádiz have to face other problems which arise from the special features of their accent. As a result of these specific characteristics, the fortis alveolar fricative /s/ can be turned into a fortis inter dental fricative /θ/ and the fortis post alveolar affricate /tʃ/ is problematic while, unlike the rest of Spain, the fortis post alveolar fricative /ʃ/ is not a new sound at all. However, speaking with an Andalusian accent from Cádiz also has some advantages such as the presence of aspiration of the Spanish voiceless velar fricative /x/, for example, which is practically identical to the English voiceless glottal fricative /h/.

On the whole, this contrastive study has aimed to identify the phonetic differences between these two languages and also in outlining the Spanish difficulties and the reasons why English native speakers can rapidly recognise Spaniards when they speak English. Personally, this contrastive analysis has been very useful to revise and extend my knowledge of English phonetics and phonology acquired during my degree. Furthermore, it has helped me to reflect on and realise what my limitations as a native Spanish speaker from Cádiz are when speaking English and, moreover, to determine which sounds that I need to work on and practise most to improve my pronunciation of English. And, as a final reflection, contrastive studies of this kind are very useful manuals for students of foreign languages and even more useful for those like

me who would like to become a teacher of their native language in a foreign country with a different mother tongue.

6. Bibliography

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