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NUCLEAR PLACEMENT TRANSFER IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH:
A DESK-BASED RESEARCH STUDY

TESIS PARA OPTAR AL GRADO DE MAGÍSTER EN LA ENSEÑANZA-APRENDIZAJE DEL INGLÉS
COMO LENGUA EXTRANJERA (TEFL)

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Abstract

The main aim of this research is to analyse and identify possible nuclear placement transfer patterns between English and Spanish. From the results of this research, a second objective emerges: to provide evidence for future teaching of English suprasegmentals, based on the absence of these language aspects in the National Curriculum. For this purpose, Desk-based research model is used, which analyses systematically existing literature and post-lexical accentuation patterns in different types of sentences in both languages, especially nuclear placement. The data used are obtained from a qualitative literary review, which comprehends the selection and classification of multiple references. It is hoped that the results reveal positive nuclear accentuation patterns along with the analysis of the intonation group, as well as the similarities and differences present in both languages. Although this research does not contemplate a proposal, it is an approximation to the teaching of English suprasegmentals and a challenge for further research.

Keywords: *Nuclear placement, Suprasegmentals, Pronunciation teaching*

Introduction

Learning a second language implies different processes ranging from preproduction to advanced fluency, and as teachers, we need to be aware of that. We also need to bear in mind that we have our mother tongue and when learning a target language, there is specific brain activity which can involve both languages. This activity is called transfer, which can be positive and negative, and it can be present in different aspects of language such as Lexis, Syntax or Pronunciation.

This research will go further than the articulation of the sounds of English; I will study and analyse the accentual patterns of this language contrasted with Spanish with a special focus on nuclear accentuation patterns. The latter provides a perfect scenario in which both languages possess similarities, but they can also have differences sometimes. Still, we can take advantage of these possible transfer issues and provide accurate nuclear accentuation patterns in the English language considering there will be exceptions to the rule.

The purpose of this research is to discuss and analyse literature regarding the possible transfer present in English post-lexical accentuation patterns for Spanish speakers, especially nuclear ones. It also considers the similarities and differences between these two languages, in which contrastive investigation has been done by Chela-Flores (2003), Ortiz-Lira (1994, 2000) and Veliz (2001, 2009).

However, TEFL teacher reality at Chilean schools can show something quite different. Even though there is a special concern in this matter as the main factor in speaking production, there is no further focus on English prosody, just on sound articulation. Moreover, the Ministry of Education programme aims at intelligibility, which tends to focus on oral production without considering a specific model of pronunciation such as Received Pronunciation or General American, among others.

1.1 Research Objectives

The main aim of this research is to analyse and identify possible nuclear placement transfer patterns between English and Spanish. Considering the aim of this study, two subsidiaries objectives are set out:

- to contrast English and Spanish suprasegmentals, especially nuclear accentuation, in order to use positive transfer for TEFL purposes.
- to provide evidence for future teaching of English suprasegmentals, based on the absence of these language aspects in the National Curriculum.

1.2 Research Questions

Following the purpose of this research and its objectives, two questions are aimed to be answered:

- Is Spanish transfer positive in English nuclear accentuation patterns? If so, What Spanish nuclear accentuation patterns would be suitable for English nuclear ones?

Literature review

In this section, I present, analyse and discuss the points of view from different authors to set a background for an investigation. In the beginning, the first notions of transfer and interference are presented. Then, an explanation of the fundamental elements of post-lexical accentuation in English and Spanish with a special focus on nuclear placement.

2.1 Transfer

When it comes to language acquisition of a non-native language, the concept of ‘transfer’ may appear. This one refers to the influence of the learner’s native language. When learning a target language, we must be aware of the activity that both L1 and L2 present. This activity considers that there can be similarities and differences between the native language and the target language. This influence can have two main forms: negative or positive transfer. Both forms consider the influence of the native language on the target language. When we talk about negative transfer, we refer to errors present in the acquisition process. This one can also be called ‘interference’. When we talk about positive transfer, we refer to the evidence in the language acquisition of the target language based on the native language. This one can also be called ‘facilitation’ (Bardovi-Harlig & Sprouse, 2017:1).

Brown’s perspective (2014:95) indicates that transfer is a general term when a learner carries previous knowledge to subsequent learning. Positive transfer when prior knowledge benefits the learning task. On the other hand, the negative transfer occurs when previous knowledge alters the performance leading to errors and mistakes. This one is also called interference, in which previously learned items are incorrectly transferred to the target language. Thus, we could say language transfer influences the acquisition of a target language. This process can inhibit the proficiency of the target language or it can facilitate the process as a straightforward task.

Language transfer can be considered as an essential factor in the learning of a second language. Ellis (1990, cited in Lu, 2010) indicates that linguists have realized that first language acts as a major factor in the acquisition of a second language. According to Lu (2010:4), there are many aspects of the L1 that influence the interlanguage present in L2, such as lexicon, syntax,

phonetics and phonology among others. The last phenomenon is also described by Brown (2014:215) as the separateness of a second language which is a structurally intermediate status between the native and target language.

It is important to mention that there is a tendency present in interference patterns. This one is related to overgeneralization. In this case, learners infer or derive a law or rule of the language based on observation of particular instances (ibid:95).

2.1.1 The evolution of transfer

The following section describes the evolution of transfer through time. In this description, we can see an overview to transfer in different learning perspectives from different decades. This account ranges from behaviourist views to the new approaches to transfer starting in the 1990s.

Lu (2013:5) establishes that during the 1940s and 1950s, behaviourism and structuralism were iconic points of view in terms of language acquisition. These two were based on habit formation as a process of stimuli-responses. During this time, it was believed that repeated response to stimuli would facilitate language learning. It was also believed that the correction of errors and mistakes would improve language learning. Moreover, behaviourists believed that difficulties in language learning depended on the similarities and differences between the native and target language. As a result, if there were similarities present, the positive transfer would improve the acquisition of a second language, whereas differences would obstruct the second language acquisition. These ideas started the theory of Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) by Lado (1957). Moreover, Pavlenko & Jarvis (2008:3) indicate that this phenomenon was considered an unavoidable feature of the language learning process which could be considered linguistic, psycholinguistic or sociolinguistic.

During the 1960s, the theory of mentalism appeared. This one was put forward by Noam Chomsky. His beliefs were related to language properties which are present in the human mind. This idea gives rise to the concept of 'Universal Grammar'(UG). This one establishes that particular rules in a language can be applied to all grammars (Cook, 1985:3). Although 'Universal Grammar' sets the limits of language acquisition, these may vary and leave certain parameters open. This particularity is present in the following example by Cook (1985):

A native speaker of English knows that the sentence 'The train is arriving' is grammatical but 'arrives the tram' and 'arrives' are not; the native speaker of Spanish knows that not only is 'el tren llega' (the train arrives) grammatical, but so also are 'ha llegado un tren' (arrives a train) and 'han llegado' (arrives). (p. 3)

As can be observed, languages may share different characteristics, but they also have differences. In terms of the open parameters, there is one present in the UG theory: Pro-drop parameter. This one concerns the connection between subjects and verbs. In languages such as English, there is no pro-drop parameter. Thus, the subject is required in every sentence and cannot be inverted. In languages such as Spanish, there is a pro-drop parameter in which there can be sentences with 'empty' subjects which can also be inverted (ibid). This feature is possible to the ellipsis of the subject. For examples and discussion about this particularity, see chapter 4.

During the 1970s, the mentalist view of language acquisition was contrasted by the cognitive approach. This theory believes that language learning involves different cognitive systems such as perception, memory, information processing among others (Lu, 2013:5). In that period, linguistics focused on the usage of the native language in the process of language acquisition. As a result, researchers considered that there are some factors that caused language transfer. These ones can be linguistic or social. In linguistic terms, a transfer can be present in phonology, syntax, pragmatics, among others. In social factors, language transfer can be present depending on the influence of the learning environment (ibid).

During the 1980s, new ideas and research appeared in regard to the concept of transfer. According to Pavlenko & Jarvis (2008:10-13), we can identify at least fourth landmarks in transfer research:

1. Transfer is not a synonym of errors. It can also lead to positive cases which are part of conventional language use. Even, a positive transfer could be considered as an accelerated language acquisition process.
2. Transfer may affect the acquisition of a second language. This can take place within different stages of the learning process until learners acquire proficiency in the target language.
3. Differences between the native and target language do not lead to learning difficulties or to transfer. In fact, difference awareness would promote a better acquisition of the target

language. In addition, similarities would help learners through mental association, also called interlingual identification.

4. Language transfer can occur in different ways. If the transfer is from an L1 to L2, it is called forward transfer. It can also be possible to transfer from an L2 to an L3, which is called lateral transfer. There is also a possibility in which the transfer is present from an L2 to an L1, which is called reverse transfer.

From the 1990s onwards, there is a new era in the studies of transfer. Nowadays, transfer has evolved to Crosslinguistic influence (CLI). This brand new name provides a new definition of the transfer phenomenon as ‘the influence of a person’s knowledge of one language on that person’s knowledge or use of another language’. For study purposes, terms such as transfer and cross linguistics can be used interchangeably. However, some scholars suggest that crosslinguistic influence may not be an appropriate term to refer to this phenomenon. This is due to the fact that this influence may be considered an outcome of an integrated multicompetence of two separate languages (Pavlenko & Jarvis, 2008:xi-4).

2.1.2 Transfer in Suprasegmental Phonology

Beyond the segmental aspects of the language in which transfer can be present, we have the CLI effects in suprasegmental phonology. We start with the assumption provided by Pavlenko & Jarvis (2008:67) which states that ‘cross-linguistic influence in phonology is clearly not limited to matching and substitutions between the segmental inventories of L2 and L1’. Considering this, we can say that transfer can be present in syllable structures and suprasegmental features of the language such as intonation, stress and rhythm. The author also states that this phenomenon had barely been studied before the 1990s. These studies indicate that listeners are unable to hear L2 intonation objectively most of the time. Instead, learners tend to perceive L2 intonation in reference to internalized L1 intonation patterns. Moreover, the perception of the L2 suprasegmental phonology has been confirmed by the work of Leather (1987,1997, cited in Pavlenko & Jarvis, 2008:67). These studies show that non-tonal language speakers rely on L1 pitch patterns in the perception of L2 tones.

Not only production has been studied in transfer in suprasegmental phonology. In terms of production, this phenomenon can take place as pitch range in L2 learners, as well as stress and

prominence in oral production. Celce-Murcia et al (1996:25-26) describes a study in which Backmann (1977), used Spanish-speakers to measure their outcome in English. The results showed that advanced Spanish-speakers of English had modified their flatter two-tone intonation. The non-proficient Spanish-speaker transferred Spanish intonation patterns to English. However, the author points out that proficient speakers can acquire a near-native outcome regardless of transfer patterns. This particularity is also described in a study carried by Chela-Flores (1993), in which Spanish-speakers improve their English rhythm outcome. This was possible by the teaching of English rhythmic patterns beginning with lexical items to phrases and sentences. She also concluded that extended practice would help the learner to automatize new rhythmic patterns.

2.2 English suprasegmentals

Intonation plays an important part in terms of the flow of discourse. It is also important to mention that this characteristic is present in every language. This one will vary from language to language, which makes them unique. Intonation provides metafunctional characteristics to the language such as the meaning in textual, interpersonal, experiential and logical terms. A broad generalization can be done in terms of its function, which can be valid for English and other languages. Intonation has three main divisions described as follows. Tone can be presented in different ways such as fall, rise, fall-rise and rise-fall, which provide interpersonal meanings. Tonality is the division of tone units such as in the case of:

- (1) || I 'need some 'apples, | 'pears, | and `oranges ||.

Tonicity deals with the prominence of the elements inside a tone unit, such as:

- (2) || 'what are you `doing? ||.

Both tonality and tonicity provide textual meanings. There is also another aspect to consider, Tone sequences, which are composed of the sequential choices of tone in a succession of tone units. These provide logical meaning in terms of the flow of discourse.

It is also important to mention that it is necessary to distinguish between intonation and the general concepts of tone and tone languages. The last one deals with pitch movement and pitch level, which can provide different meanings in lexical terms. In the case of tone, it deals with the distribution of pitch contours throughout the tonic unit. Thus, the English language is considered an intonation language rather than a tone language such as Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai, among others.

2.2.1 Tonality

As has been previously mentioned, tonality deals with the division of tone units. It can also be described as a system in which choices are made in a succession of units of information. The last one also covers the notions of the organization and the configuration of given and new material. Tonality can be simply exemplified in the following sentence:

(3) || I 'want to 'visit my 'parents in Los `Angeles ||

In example 3, double bars have been used to indicate the beginning and the end of a tonic unit, which can also be called an intonation group. It could also have a single bar in order to indicate a pause, but it is not necessary unless there was a physiological pause intended by a speaker. It is also quite important to mention that tonic units do not necessarily coincide with an information unit. These ones deal with lexicogrammar aspects in comparison to intonation, which deals with a whole grammatical unit realised by one tone unit. The division of the information unit and its relation to the tonic unit is not clearly defined.

In terms of structure, there are different elements that form the intonation group. According to Roach (2009:131-133), we can identify four elements: Head, Prehead and Tail.

The head

This element extends from the first stressed syllable to the tonic syllable --also called the nucleus--. This extension does not include the tonic syllable.

(4) 'give me `those

In example 4, the tonic syllable is **'those'** and the head is composed of **'give me'**. It is important to mention that if there are no stressed syllables preceding the nucleus, there is no head such as in **'in an hour'**. In this case, **'hour'** is the nucleus and **'in an'** forms the pre-head which is described in the following point.

Prehead

This element is composed of all the syllables preceding the first stressed syllable.

(5) in an **hour**

(6) in a 'little less than an **hour**

Example 5 shows an intonation group without the head. In this case, the pre-head is formed by **'in an'**. Example 6 shows the pre-head in an utterance which includes the head, which is formed by **'little less than an'**. In both examples, we can see that the nucleus is on **'hour'**.

The tail

This element is composed of all the syllables following the nucleus. This unit extends to the end of the tone unit.

(7) 'take your **shoes** off

(8) **look** at it

(9) 'What did you **say**? Bill asked John

Example 7 shows a tail can be composed by one syllable after the nucleus. Example 8 and 9 show that this unit can be composed of more than one syllable. Example 9 shows a tail which can be typically found in reporting clauses, event sentences and final adverbials discussed in chapter 4.

As a result, the complete intonation group with its elements is presented based on example 3.

I	'want to 'visit my 'parents in Los	`An	geles
Pre-head	Head	Tonic Syllable (nucleus)	Tail

2.2.2 Tonicity

At the beginning of this section, it has been stated that tonicity deals with the prominence of the elements inside a tone unit. This unit can also be called an intonation group. According to Halliday & Greaves (2008:101), Tonicity refers to the internal organization of the tone unit and the location of the tonic syllable i.e the most prominent portion of the tone unit (Halliday & Greaves, 2008:101). We need to consider that each intonation group has a nucleus, which is the most prominent pitch accent. This nuclear tone is formed by a syllable which has a prominent change or movement in the pitch. It can also start the pitch movement. The nucleus bears the tone which can be a fall, rise or fall-rise in English. Within the intonation group, we can also have more than one accent. In that case, the nucleus is the last accent in the intonation group (Wells, 2006:93). This particularity is also known as the last lexical item rule (LLI), which is described in the following examples:

(10) I 'want to buy a `lemon

(11) 'What are you `waiting for?

Example 10 shows the nucleus as the last lexical item in the intonation group. Whereas example 11 shows the nucleus on one word prior to the end of the tone group.

It is important to mention that this LLI rule has exceptions i.e the nucleus is not placed in the last word of the utterance. This particularity is described by Ortiz-Lira (1994), Cruttenden (1997) and Wells (2006). In this matter, we can find exceptions such as event sentences, final adverbials, vocatives, among others. Some of these are also discussed in Chapter 4.

2.3 Spanish suprasegmentals

Spanish intonation works with a sentence frame. This group is formed by different words which establish a syntactic unit. These words create syntactic and semantic patterns. In order to comprehend Spanish intonation features, it is necessary to understand the concepts of ‘sirrema’ and intonation groups. ‘Sirrema’ can be understood as ‘a group of two or more words which constitute a grammatical unit and tonic unit. It can also form an intermediate syntactic unit between the word and the phrase’ (Quilis, 1993:372)

2.3.1 Intonation group

A sentence can be composed of one or more intonation groups. This unit can be considered as a semantic, syntactic or phonetic. In terms of semantic view, this group is related to the information unit. In terms of syntactic view, this group makes reference to a whole sentence or parts of it such as a nominal phrase, verbal phrase or a modifier. In terms of phonetic view, this group is related to the end of a breath. The division of intonation groups is considered a tonic margin. The intonation group is a combination of different words in semantic and syntactic units which precede a tonic margin. This intonation group can also be composed of a single word. (Clegg & Fails, 2018:467)

There are three possibilities in order to compose an intonation group. First, it is possible that an intonation group is composed of a single ‘sirrema’, which there is a correspondence between the ‘sirrema’ and the intonation group such as the case of ‘Mi casa’ (My house). Second, it is also possible that the intonation group is composed of two ‘sirremas’ or more such is the case of ‘La calle esta mojada’ (the street is wet). Third, there is a possibility in which an intonation group is composed of a fragment or a single word. In this case, a single word can be the whole sentence, a nominal phrase or a verbal phrase e.g. ‘Llueve’ (It rains).

There might be differences between an intonation group and a ‘sirrema’. An intonation group always ends in a tonic margin, while ‘sirremas’ do not necessarily end in a tonic margin. Considering this, there can be more than one syntactic unit group within an intonation group. When an intonation group has more than one ‘sirrema’, there is no tonal margin between them. There are also some considerations in terms of the division of segments. An intonation group can be divided

into different intonation groups for every ‘sirrema’ within a sentence. An example of this is shown as follows: ‘Los tres profesores trabajaron juntos en la ponencia’ (the three teachers worked together in the speech). This sentence can be considered as just one unit, but it can also be divided into three intonation groups related to the three ‘sirremas’ present in the sentence. In the following example, the division of tone groups is indicated by a bar, which reflects a pause at the end of tone margin

(12) || Los 'tres profe`sores | traba'jaron ´juntos | en la po`nencia ||
(the three teachers worked together in the speech).

In example 12, the sentence can be pronounced as a single unit or into different groups with tonic margins. It is important to note that there cannot be more tone groups, because they are ‘sirremas’ which are indivisible syntactic units of information.

2.3.2 Compulsory intonation groups

Clegg & Fails (2018:469-470) state that there are four cases in which an intonation group is present between pauses. In order to identify this phenomenon, examples will be marked by a single bar for intonation groups and a double bar for the beginning and end. In the first case, there is a pause at the end of the group. This situation can coincide with a ‘sirrema’ at the end of the sentence:

(13). || Yo 'vivo en esa `casa ||
(I live in that house).

There is also a case in which intonation groups have a tonic margin between listed elements in a sequence. ‘Sirremas’ will be separated into different intonation groups.

(14) || La 'niña sal´tó, | co`rrió | y bai`ló por el prado. ||
(The girl jumped, run, and danced around the meadow.)

Another classification is an intonation group in which there is an explanation after the subject. This section explains a modification and it would not be possible to understand it without context. They also provide little or no information about the element in modification:

- (15) || Los o`breros, | que su'frían de `hambre, | de'jaron de traba`jar. ||
(the workers, who suffered from hunger, stopped working.).

This division is called the explanatory intonation group.

There is also a classification related to adverbials. This classification is called presiding adverbial intonation group. In this category, adverbial modifiers in an initial position present a single unit in terms of division:

- (16) || Des'pues del `dia fe`riado, | los a'lumnos `vuelven a estu`diar. ||
(After holiday, the students came back to study)

Finally, there are different classifications when it comes to distinctive intonation groups. They range from explanatory and specifying clauses or phrases to linguistic properties in associative contexts. The first classification deals with the differences present in a sentence with or without tonic margins. This explained as follows:

- (17.a) || Los a`lumnos, | que estu`diaron, | sa'caron un `siete
(the students, who studied, scored a seven).

This is an explanatory case in which it is stated that all the students studied and scored a seven. In terms of specifying intonation groups, there is a slight change in the division, but a huge one in meaning.

- (17.b) || Los a'lumnos que estu`diarion, | sa'caron un `siete.||
(The students who studied scored a seven)

In example 17.b, we can see that the meaning changes, in which it is stated that not all the students scored a seven, just who studied did. This phenomenon can also be present in phrase form. In this case, it can have similar characteristics to the previous examples, such as in the case of:

- (18) || Los ve`cinos, | cu`riosos, | deci'dieron investi'gar la situa`ción. ||
(the neighbours, nosy ones, decided to investigate the situation).

Another classification is related to associative linguistic properties. In this case, the division of 'sirremas' and intonation groups can have more than one option. This phenomenon can alter linguistic expressions such as in the case of mathematical operations. In terms of linguistic expressions, there is also an example in which a single sentence can adapt the form of a declarative sentence (19.b) or an imperative sentence (19.a):

- (19.a) || `Juanito, | 'cierra la `puerta ||
(Johny, close the door)

This case is about a vocative expression plus a command which transform the sentence into a similar structure present in imperative sentences. However, if we alter the division of intonation groups, and we consider the whole sentence as just one intonation group, it will shape into a single declarative sentence, showed as follows:

- (19.b) || Jua'nito 'cierra la `puerta. ||
(Johny closes the door).

This phenomenon can also shape direct questions into indirect ones. It can also make changes in sentences answering questions, in which confirmation is needed. In this case, an intonation group may change from a negative statement or a verb affirmation.

2.3.3 Structure

There are different elements within an intonation group. These elements are unaccented and accented words. In the accented ones, there is a unit that presents a tone inflexion. These words are composed of syllables. An intonation group is composed of five or ten syllables. There are cases in which one of these groups can be composed of syllables such as the case of a previous example given for the affirmation ‘Sí’. However, the number of syllables can increase up to sixteenth (Quilis, 1993:418-419).

An intonation group can be divided into two parts in order to accent different elements of the sentence. The first division in this group is pretonema, which is formed by a group of syllables preceding the last accent. This one is called the nuclear accent. The second division is called ‘tonema’, which is formed by the last accented syllable and the following ones if they are present (RAE, 2010:6639). This structure is explained in the following example:

(20)

'Viernes, 'sábado, do'mingo y	`lunes
Pretonema	Tonema

There is another point to consider in reference to the nuclear accent. This one does not necessarily need to coincide with the last accented word. There are cases in which this accent takes an earlier position, such as a focus on verbs in the following imperative sentence:

(21)

`Ándate	para la casa
Tonema	

Methodology

This research study is conducted in the field of education which covers a spectrum of phonological sciences. These are commonly referred to as the analysis of sound patterns of a language. Yet this research type tackles this topic in a different way, providing a design which can be seen as an extension of a literature review. Even more, this research studies previous works on the field in order to fulfil one main objective of this research: to identify positive nuclear placement transfer patterns from Spanish to English. For this, this research contains a data selection coming from different sources, which is analysed and discussed afterwards in Chapter 4.

3.1 Desk-based research

The previously mentioned elements give way to the research type of this study, the so-called ‘desk-based’ research. Robson (2011) states that the literary review is an essential part of a research process, or in some cases, it can be the full research process. Most of the social sciences are related to applied field research, while desk-based research relies on analysis and review of existing data. This method can also be called library study which can also be carried out using the internet on laptop computers, not on desks or libraries only. It is also worth to mention that this research type can also be useful both as a precursor to empirical research or a complement to major research. Desk-based research can also be compared to systematic research, yet desk-based research can provide something done on a small scale without financial and timing issues. Systematic research, on the other hand, can have a different meaning, it uses a considerable amount of time and resources, and it also has a whole team of researchers involved.

However, there are some characteristics of this type of research that provide useful tools for desk-based research. Considering the previous elements, desk-based research could be considered as a minor investigation, but it can be assessed with the same rigour as an empirical, primary-research focused project according to Robson (2011:82-83).

3.2 Data and Analysis

The following section describes all the steps taken in order to collect and analyse data in this research. This description ranges from the selection and classification of information to its presentation and discussion.

First, ten papers were selected in order to explore the research questions of this study. This selection covers English sentence accent, Spanish sentence accent and contrastive studies involving both languages. These studies were done in relation to intonation, suprasegmental and post-lexical accentuation. The ten papers were searched in Google Scholar using the following search entries: *English nuclear placement*, *English Spanish intonation*, *English and Spanish sentence accent*, *Spanish nuclear placement* and *English Spanish sentence accent*. The criteria for selection considers published papers since 1990. Considering this, research from different countries emerged: Spanish-speaking countries such as Chile, Argentina and Spain; English-speaking countries such as the USA and the United Kingdom. These papers contain empiric research mostly carried out under qualitative research and mixed-methods research.

Second, after selecting suitable sources of research, the papers were analyzed, summarized and classified in a literary review summary spreadsheet. This process consisted of different categories such as the following: *title*, *author*, *journal reference*, *year of publication*, *country*, *abstract*, *research question or hypothesis*, *objectives*, *variables*, *methodological approach*, *research design*, *sample*, *instruments of data collection*, *research analysis*, *research results*, *conclusions*, *research limitations*, *research implications*.

Third, paper data were analysed with a syntactic focus. As this research contrasts Spanish and English, a criterion for each language was selected based on a literary review: ‘Gramática descriptiva de la Lengua Española’ (Bosque & Demonte, 2000) for Spanish and ‘A comprehensive grammar of the English language’ (Quirk et al, 1985). In order to provide evidence, examples were taken from the selected papers and the books previously mentioned. These were contrasted from each language providing an equivalent translation: English-Spanish and Spanish-English. These translations provided a suitable scenario to study the similarities and differences presented in both languages in terms of nuclear placement. The analysis of these items was also based on nuclear placement in both languages: ‘Núcleo en la Última Palabra’ (NUP) coined by Ortiz-Lira (2000) for Spanish; ‘Last Lexical Item rule’ (LLI) by Cruttenden (1997) for English. The latter includes

exceptions to the LLI rule such as Final adverbials, Vocatives, Verb + INF, among others. The entire analysis and contrast between both languages were done in simple sentences. Other types of sentences such as compound and complex (compuestas y complejas) were out of the scope of this research. This is due to the presence of a few examples of these types of sentences in the papers reviewed which did not allow for comparison.

Findings

This chapter presents the analysis of the results of this research. This discussion comprehends different sources of information which are also present in the literature review section. We assume that there is one nuclear placement rule in English (Cruttenden, 1997:73). This one also has different exceptions. On the other hand, we have Spanish in which most of the time the nucleus is placed on the last lexical item (Ortiz-Lira, 2000:29, Nava & Zubizarreta, 2008:1). Considering this, we can say that there are certain syntactic expressions which have similar characteristics in both languages. However, some of them are out of categorization due to the nature of this investigation, such as compound and complex sentences.

This analysis presents declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamatory sentences. Every section contains examples in both languages in order to identify possible positive transfer from Spanish to English. Most of these analysed elements in this section correspond to the structure of a simple sentence in both languages. Compound and complex sentences have not been considered for this research, but they present an opportunity for further research.

4.1 Declarative sentences

In terms of declarative sentences, we start from the assumption that both intonational languages have syntactic similarities, particularly, the SVO pattern. Within this category, there are some kinds of sentences which can be described as copulative sentences. These sentences have a subject which is strictly related to its predicate through a copular verb such as the verb ‘to be’.

4.1.1 Copulative sentences: Attribution

According to Bosque y Demonte (1999:2379), there are copulative sentences that cannot be reversible due to their structure. The information presented in this type of sentence is based on characteristics or attributes of the subject i.e. the topic of the sentence. This phenomenon is present in both languages, in which there can be a positive transfer pattern from Spanish to English.

(22) Ma'ría es `guapa.

'Mary is `pretty.

- (23) An'tonio es arquitecto. 'Anthony is an architect.
 (24) El 'cielo es azul The 'sky is blue.

As it can be observed, both languages present a high transfer possibility. However, there can be differences in the accentuation of post-nuclear syllables. If the subject is composed of a pronoun, there is a possibility for Spanish to accent these words although they can be function words (specify how this is different in English). Whichever the case, this action does not alter the nuclear placement of the sentence. Considering the attitude of the speaker, there are contexts in which copulative sentences can have an emphasis on one word. This phenomenon is called 'focalization', in which the selected word has tonal prominence.

- (25) 'Muy inteligente es Juan. 'Very clever John is

In this case (25), both sentences share the nuclear pattern. However, the English language follows a CSV pattern which could be considered agrammatical or at least less common. In addition, there is also a subcategory within copulative sentences. These have a tendency to specify the subject which can be reversible. This condition is present in Spanish only if the predicate has a contrastive function in relation to the subject as previously described (Bosque y Demonte, 1999:2402).

- (26.a) El alcalde es Antonio. The 'mayor is Anthony.
 (26.b) Antonio es el alcalde. Anthony is the mayor.

As it can be observed, the positive transfer pattern is possible due to the nature of the sentence structure. It is important to mention that focusing the subject on an initial position is considered an unmarked version of the sentence. This phenomenon is present in different languages especially in Spanish and Italian (ibid:2411).

There are also descriptive sentences, which can also be called 'reduced'. These are expressions which use the verb 'to be'. This connection is present after the copula i.e. there is a word between the verb and the descriptive word. Most of the sentences are time-based (Bosque y Demonte, 1999).

- | | | |
|------|--------------------|--------------------|
| (27) | Es 'muy `tarde | It's 'too `late |
| (28) | Es 'hora de co`mer | It's 'time to `eat |
| (29) | Es tu her`mano | It's your `brother |

The examples 27,28 and 29 show that Spanish presents a possible positive transfer pattern. It is worth mentioning that some Spanish sentences start from the verb. This particularity is due to the ellipsis of the subject. Considering that, Spanish sentences would place a prenuclear accent on the verb 'to be'. In any event, the nucleus is placed on the last lexical item in both languages.

4.1.2 Copulative sentences: location and situation

Spanish grammar tradition considers the verb *estar* 'to be' as a predicative verb. This one can be intransitive in order to express permanency, localization and situations. This phenomenon can be compared with the previous examples of the verb *estar* as a copular verb. Examples of the verb 'estar' as location and time expressions are described as follows:

- | | | |
|------|--|-----------------------------------|
| (30) | Pedro es'tá a`quí | 'Pedro is `here |
| (31) | Mi 'casa es'tá cer'ca de la universi`dad | My 'house is near the uni`versity |
| (32) | 'Maria es'tá en `Londres | 'Mary is in `London |

The examples 30, 31 and 32 show that there is a scenario for positive transfer patterns. Example 30 can also be presented in two forms. In the first case, if the sentence answers the questions 'Where is Pedro?' (¿Dónde está Pedro?), the nucleus would be placed at the end of the sentence. In the second case, the nucleus would follow the standard LLI rule. The examples 30, 31 and 32 show an unmarked version. Although both languages share the same intonation patterns, there are cases in which the predicate is based on an adverb:

- | | | |
|------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| (33) | El 'libro es'tá a`llí | The 'book is `there |
| (34) | 'Ana es'tá a `bajo | 'Ana is `downstairs |
| (35) | 'Pepe es'tá muy `bien | 'Pepe is very `well |

In examples 33, 25 and 35; we can see that a positive transfer pattern is present. Both languages act in a similar way when the predicate is completely made up of an adverb, in which case, the verb *estar* ‘to be’ does not indicate location or time expression.

It is important to mention that within Spanish copular verbs, we can find the verb *parecer* ‘seem’. In English, more than one verb can be used to convey the same meaning.

- (36) Ella pa'rece `triste She 'seems `sad
(37) Ella pa'rece enfer`mera She 'looks like a `nurse

Although both cases present a positive transfer pattern, the verb ‘parecer’ can have more than one meaning. This phenomenon also gives rise to phrasal verbs such as the one in the English sentence in example 37.

On the other hand, we have English which provides copular verbs such as feel, look, sound, smell, taste, become, among others.

As a conclusion, both languages share most of the intonation patterns. This is due to the nature of both languages, especially if they are compared to an SVC sentence. There are also some categories coming from English which have not been mentioned, such as predicational, specificational, identificational and equative. These categories were not included explicitly in this chapter, due to the nature of the data collected.

4.1.3 Predicative sentences

Following the pattern of simple sentences, there is a category in which we can find predicative sentences. This type of sentence structure presents a state or situation which can involve one or more participants. We define predicate as a verbal expression which describes a state or event. These can be composed by a transitive verb (Bosque y Demonte, 1999:2463).

- (38) Ma'ria boste`zó 'Mary `yawned
(39) Lle'gó el `tren The `train arrived

These sentences show a possible positive transfer pattern. Yet example 39 shows a sentence that is different in the English language. This one is called ‘event sentence’, which is described in detail in the following section.

Also, predicative sentences can have transitive and intransitive expressions depending on the verb. These are followed by direct and indirect complement.

- | | |
|---|--|
| (40) El car'tero visi'tó a su `madre | The 'postman 'visited his `mother |
| (41) El presi'dente entre'gó el pre'mio al nove`lista | The 'president gave the 'prize to the
`novelist |

In examples 40 and 41, the positive transfer pattern is clear. It should also be noted that the second example can be presented in another way. In Spanish, This would depend on the intention of the speaker. In English, simple sentences containing two objects would be presented with the indirect object first (Quirk et al, 1985:726), as it can be observed in the following examples:

- | | |
|---|--|
| (42) I 'gave him my `address | Ø Le 'di mi direc`ción |
| (43.a) We 'sent Jack a 'copy of the `letter | Le en'viamos a 'Jack una 'copia de la `carta |
| (43.b) | Le en'viamos una 'copia de la 'carta a `Jack |

It can be seen as a possible positive transfer pattern, even if we consider that object position varies from one language to another. Even so, the nucleus is placed at the end of the intonation group. Spanish has grammatical changes in which atonic pronouns are used before the main verb. These words are known as object pronouns in English. Also, the ellipsis is indicated using an empty set mark in most of the examples of this section. This phenomenon is quite common in the Spanish language.

Predicative sentences can go beyond the usage of a transitive or intransitive verb. Beyond direct and indirect objects and the relationship between them. These sentences can also have modifiers which express internal links. These structures are known as ‘complemento circunstancial del verbo’ (verb modifiers). These expressions can express different causes such as manner, place and time (Bosque y Demonte, 1999:2463). This type of modifiers is also present in English grammar.

- (44) Ma'ria boste'zó osten`tosamente
 'Mary yawned osten`tatioulsly
- (45) El car'tero visi'tó su an'tigua 'casa en Ponte`vedra
 The 'postman visited his 'old house in Ponte`vedra
- (46) Mi 'hija lle'gó a las `siete
 My 'daughter ar'rived at `seven

Taking examples 44, 45 and 46 into account, we can see that a positive transfer pattern is possible. It is worth mentioning that these structures are composed of different adverbials. This particularity does not belong to the categories described previously by Wells (2006:156)

In addition, there are cases in which this complement is not composed of adverbs. Considering this, there can be major classifications depending on the nature of the predicate (Bosque y Demonte, 1999:2463).

4.1.3.1 Exceptions of the LLI rule

As it can be observed, most of the examples provided in the previous section are related to nucleus placement following the LLI rule. However, there are identifiable exceptions to the rule of the final lexical item (Cruttenden, 1999:75, Ortiz-Lira, 2000:3). In this category, we can find three main aspects of this phenomenon such as Event sentences, final adverbials and adjectival wh objects.

Event sentences

This type of sentence is composed of intransitive verbs which show the appearance or disappearance of an object. Even so, these can also express misfortune. In these sentences, we can identify a subject which has a nucleus on it despite the sentence structure.

- (47) 'Watch `out! That `chimney's falling down ¡Cui`dado! La chime'nea se está ca`yendo.

Here, we can see that there is not a possible positive pattern from Spanish to English. Spanish language tendency to place the nucleus on the last lexical item is prominent in comparison to English. Bosque & Demonte (1999:2463) provide a similar example such as ‘El helado se congeló’ (The **ice cream** froze). Therefore, we can see that this pattern cannot be transferred coming from either Spanish or English. Ortiz-lira (1995:9) points out that most of Spanish EFL students place the LLI rule of accentuation in these kinds of sentences.

Final Adverbials

These types of exceptions to the LLI rule follow the SVOA or SVA pattern. The most common structure in this category is the time adverbial.

- | | | |
|------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| (48) | I 'went to `London on Thursday | ∅ 'Fuí a 'Londres el `Jueves |
| (49) | I'm 'seeing `John this morning | ∅ Ve're a 'Juan `hoy |

As it can be observed, there is a possible positive pattern transfer in the examples provided. We also need to keep in mind that Spanish sentences may vary. In this case, the Spanish language tends to place the adverbial in the initial position. So, example 48 and 49 would be presented as ‘El jueves fuí a Londres’ and ‘Hoy veré a Juan’. In this scenario, the speaker would place the nucleus on the last lexical item. Considering this, the English language would need to invert the sentence structure in order to find a possible transfer. In this case, both languages would share an ASV pattern with two separate intonation groups in English.

- | | | |
|------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| (50) | On `Thursday, I 'went to `London | El 'jueves 'fuí a `Londres |
| (51) | This `morning, I'm 'seeing `John | Esta ma'ñana ve're a `Juan |

Yet there is a point to consider regarding time and place adverbs. According to Wells (2006:156), adverbs are accented most of the time, yet adverbials tend to be unaccented within the intonation group, even if they carry new information. It is worth mentioning that this comparison is crucial for Spanish EFL students, who tend to confuse both structures.

- | | | |
|------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| (52) | She's 'coming to `dinner tomorrow | ∅ 'Viene a ce`nar mañana |
|------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|

- | | | |
|------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (53) | I've 'got an `exam today | Ø 'Tengo un e`xamen hoy |
| (54) | It's a 'bit `hot in here | Hace un 'poco de ca`lor acá |

As it can be observed in example 52,53 and 54, Spanish presents a positive transfer towards English. Both languages do not place the nucleus on function words as it has been described in chapter 2.

Final verbs and adjectives

There is also an exception to the LLI rule which places an early accent on specific words at the end of the intonation group. This general tendency shows that the nucleus is placed on a noun wherever possible in preference to other word classes, especially when it is followed by infinitives (Wells, 2006:170, Ortiz-Lira, 2000:3). This due to syntactic and semantic choices where post-verbal structures move the nucleus to an early position (Cruttenden, 1999:78).

- | | | |
|------|------------------------------------|---|
| (55) | 'John has a `duty to perform | 'Juan 'tiene una obliga'ción que ha`cer |
| (56) | I've still 'got an `essay to write | Ø 'Aun 'tengo un en'sayo que termi`nar |
| (57) | We've 'got a `job to complete | Ø Te'nemos un tra'bajo que comple`tar |

The examples 55, 56 and 57 show that there is no possible positive transfer pattern. Although Spanish speakers can put the nucleus in early words, there is a tendency to use reverse word order (Ortiz-Lira, 1995:8). Wherever the case, sentences would follow an SVO pattern where the nucleus would be placed on the last lexical item. The following examples show this phenomenon in the Spanish language.

- | | |
|------|---|
| (58) | 'Juan 'tiene que 'hacer una obliga`ción |
| (59) | Ø 'Aun 'tengo que termi'nar un en`sayo |
| (60) | Ø Te'nemos que comple'tar un tra`bajo |

Final vocatives and reporting clauses

Among the exceptions to the LLI rule, there are structures located in a final position which follows the same pattern as described in the section. This particularity is similar to adverbials in which we

can identify examples such as vocatives, reporting clauses, softeners, among others. Vocatives are structures that are used to address someone. This expression can be composed of a noun, pronoun or adjective.

(61) 'How do you 'like this `blouse, honey? ¿Te 'gusta esta `blusa, amor?

The example 61 shows that there can be a positive transfer pattern. Ortiz-Lira (1995:5) explains that Spanish and English vocatives are normally placed as tails in relation to the nucleus. In his study, it can be noted that this tendency is high. Therefore, there is a propitious place for positive transfer. Also, we can consider vocatives as two intonation groups, in which they can be placed in an initial position as well (Wells, 2006:195).

(62) `Linda, | could I 'have a 'word? `Linda, | podemos ha'blar?

There is also another exception to the LLI rule called reporting clauses. They are composed of a structure that follows quoted words at the end of the sentence. This type of structure has similarities in both languages. They are considered tails in an intonation group. Ortiz-Lira (1995) and Wells (2006) provide examples as follows:

(63) 'What did you 'say? Bill asked John ¿'Qué di'jiste? Bill le preguntó a John

(64) 'I'm `fine', she replied “'Estoy `bien”, contestó ella

4.2 Interrogative sentences

Questions are structures which seek information and an answer from a speaker. These can have different structures that will be described in this section. We start with the assumption that questions also follow an SVO pattern. Yet the main difference is present in the usage of operators such as modal and auxiliary verbs in English. In Spanish, most of these type of sentences use ellipsis and atonic pronouns.

4.2.1 Information questions

Questions present certain similarities due to intonation group size. In most of the cases, the transfer is affected by a nucleus placed on object pronouns in the Spanish language. This particularity is presented in the following example (Valenzuela, 2013:1067):

(65) Did you **call** him? ¿Lo lla'maste **tú**?

It is also worth mentioning that the Spanish language uses atonic pronouns at the beginning of the sentences. This fact has been discussed previously, which presents confusions in Spanish EFL students. In terms of English, most of the questions follow the SVO pattern including operators and question words at the beginning of the sentence (Quirk et al, 1985:807). However, there are similarities which can be observed in the following example according to Valenzuela (2013:1070):

(66) 'What are you **doing**? ¿'Qué es'tás ha'**ciendo**?

(67) 'What is your **name**? ¿'Cual es tu **nombre**?

Both English and Spanish place an accent in interrogative pronouns. Information questions present similar intonation groups in both languages. However, the verb to be and auxiliary verbs are unaccented in English. Considering the similarities, we also need to know that some sentences carry the nucleus on the object (Cruttenden, 1997). In this case, positive transfer patterns are not possible due to the nature of the Spanish language.

(68) 'What **seed** did you use? ¿'Qué se'millas utili'**zaste**?

(69) 'Which **course** did you take? ¿'Qué 'curso to'**maste**?

4.2.2 Polar questions

These kinds of questions seek information which can be answered in an affirmative or negative way. Most of these sentences begin with an auxiliary or a modal verb. Yes-no questions are usually formed by placing the operator before the subject (Quirk et al, 1985:807). Polar questions could

be classified depending on the verb of the sentence, such as copular or linking. If the verb ‘to be’ is in use, its position is placed at the beginning of the sentence.

- (70) Is she in **London**? ¿Es'á Ø en **Londres**?
- (71) Is he **happy**? ¿'Es Ø **fe'liz**?

As mentioned in section 4.1.1 and 4.1.2, copular verb ‘to be’ can provide two functions in Spanish. In example 70, we can see the use of this verb to express location. In example 71, we can see the use of this verb as the topic of the sentence. Both examples show that there can be a clear positive transfer pattern. They also share pre-nuclear patterns as well regardless of pronoun ellipsis.

In terms of linking verbs, we can see that they have an operator which is placed before the subject in polar questions, such as:

- (72) Is 'Ann writing a **paper**? ¿Es'tá 'Anna escri'biendo un en'sayo?

As it can be observed, a positive transfer pattern can be possible in the last example. It is also important to mention that they even share a pre-nuclear pattern as well. Also, in Spanish, the word ‘Anna’ can be elided. Although there can be a positive transfer, nuclear placement will also depend on certain grammar structures at the end of the questions, such as:

- (73) Has the **boat** left? ¿Se ha 'ido el **bote**?

Here, we can see a clear pattern of negative transfer. This is due to English relies on the SVO pattern most of the time, in contrast to Spanish in which questions are inverted regardless of the tense. On the other hand, there is the use of ‘Do’ as an operator. This action will take place if there are not any verbs to function as operators.

- (74) Do they 'live in **Sydney**? ¿Ø 'Viven en **Sydney**?
- (75) Does he 'like **driving**? ¿Le 'gusta condu'cir?

Examples 74 and 75 show a positive transfer pattern. They also share a pre-nuclear pattern as well. In example one, we can see that Spanish tends to elide pronouns. Example two shows the use of atonic pronouns. As it can be observed in this case, both languages share an SVO pattern most of the time. However, Spanish has a tendency to use inversion, ellipsis and atonic pronouns which may alter the sentence structure.

4.2.3 Tag questions

The typical and most common use of tag questions in English is for clarifying information (Celce-Murcia et al, 1996, cited in Valenzuela, 2013:1072). These type of questions present similarities in terms of nuclear placement. This is present at an early stage in the Spanish language. This particularity is due to additional structures. Also, there are tag questions that are composed of just one word instead of a complete verb as in example 76.

- | | | |
|------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (76) | It's a 'nice `day, 'isn't it? | Es un 'lindo `dia, 'cierto? |
| (77) | The `dodgers won, 'didn't they? | Los 'dodgers ga`naron, o 'no? |

In example 77, we can see that the nucleus is on a negation adverb instead of the auxiliary verb in English. This could alter the possible positive pattern of transfer from Spanish to English. This due to the fact that the nucleus is on the last lexical item (see chap. 2). So, Spanish EFL speakers would tend to accent 'they' instead of 'didn't'.

4.2.3 Declarative and echo questions

Declarative questions, also called Inverted questions (Valenzuela, 2013:1074), are considered a kind of yes-no questions. These ones have an identical form to a declarative statement, except for the final rising question intonation (Quirk et al, 1985:814). These kinds of questions have a similar pattern in both languages. They can also be considered a type of focus in which one word is selected to place the nucleus. This would depend on the intention of the speaker. Yet most of the time, they follow a declarative statement intonation pattern. In examples 78.a and 78b, we can see that there can be a clear positive transfer pattern.

(78.a) 'John cooked dinner?

¿'John preparó la cena?

(78.b) 'John cooked 'dinner?

¿'John prepa'ró la 'cena?

Conclusion

This research investigates positive transfer patterns in nuclear placement from Spanish to English. In this study, a desk-based research methodology was used, which consisted of a selection and analysis of different papers. This selection of contrasted studies was carried out in both languages. The qualitative analysis of data led to a discussion in which new perspectives on contrastive analysis of nuclear placement arose.

The objectives of this research intended to identify possible positive transfers and to provide evidence of the presence of this phenomenon in the learning of English as a Second Language. The discussion showed that the nature of both languages provided a suitable scenario for transfer based on the SVO language structure. There were sentences in which a speaker could use his/her L1 to place the nucleus accurately in the L2. This case was present in most of the copulative sentences. Moreover, this was also present in interrogative sentences types, in which ‘focus on object’ was the only exception. However, there were a considerable amount of cases in which a positive transfer was not possible, especially in predicative sentences. In this type of sentence, ‘Final vocatives’ and ‘Reporting clauses’ were the exception, which showed a high degree of similarity between both languages.

The methodology of this research was a fresh start for this study. Although the project design was different in the beginning, desk-based research provided a broader perspective in terms of data selection and discussion. However, in order to provide sufficient data, a corpus is needed as well as experimentation based on utterance recording.

Further research is needed to comprehend how the transfer phenomenon is present in recordings as well as its behaviour in different sentence types such as imperative and exclamative. Also, there is an urge to investigate transfer beyond the simple sentence.

It is hoped that this research makes a contribution to the contrastive analysis of nuclear patterns in both languages. Also, this research could be a starting point for Chilean EFL teachers who consider positive transfer as a useful tool to teach English nuclear placement.

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