

ALESSANDRO: Hi everyone, Welcome to English Experts podcast number five. I'm your host Alessandro Brandão and I'm your co-host Adir Ferreira.

Thank you for joining us again on our podcast. Let's get started!

ALESSANDRO: Hello, Adir! How are you doing?

ADIR: I'm doing great. I'm coming down with the flu and I little of a sore throat, but I'm doing good.

ALESSANDRO: Great.

ADIR: And you?

ALESSANDRO: I've been working hard on..here on English Experts...Uh..By the way, uh, believe me, most of my holidays I spent maintaining the blog and forum. Ah...but it's worth it. I like it very much.

ADIR: It sure is. Yeah, we gotta keep on working on that one.

ALESSANDRO: Exactly. Oh, by the way, ah, how was the trip?

ADIR: Oh, man, it was great. I had a great time over at Campina, Minas Gerais..The we... We rented a house, and there was also...uhmm.. a river shore, you know it was fantastic. A really cool carnaval.

ALESSANDRO: Heheh great! Very.. Very good. heheh.. uh, I hope you liked it. Uhmm how can I say...

ADIR: I did. A lot. Yeah. Yeah. I had a blast.

ALESSANDRO: heheh Great.

ADIR: I had a blast means I had a great time. I had a wonderful time.

ALESSANDRO: Oh great!

ADIR: I had a blast, alright?

ALESSANDRO: Thank you. Thank you. So, let's start with some reader's comments.

ADIR: Cool.

Talking in Portuguese: Alessandro told Adir that he made a podcast 100% in English while Adir was traveling. He explained that he wants to create podcasts for all the levels including the advanced readers and not exclude any level.

ADIR: Oh yes, I totally agree with that one.

ALESSANDRO: Great!

Alessandro continues talking in Portuguese and mentions that he suggests that native speakers should speak a little slower so that the readers can understand what they are saying. (tip: you can slow down the speed in audacity, a free recording software. Go to Projeto>Importar áudio and import the mp3 of the podcast. Then go to Efeitos>alterar velocidade to slow it down.) Alessandro says there were many comments on the blog for which he is thankful. Alessandro tells Adir about some of his loyal readers. One topic was the difference

between 'new' and 'news'. Alessandro said that today they would talk about intonation. He says that in English the intonation is musical.

Adir recommended to repeat the intonation you hear, imitating it, for example "It's fanTastic!" no one would use that rising falling intonation in Portuguese, but there is no way around it in English. when one is learning a different language, one has to adopt the intonation of that particular language. Adir has seen many students use a Brazilian intonation when speaking English for example, in the greeting they say "How are you?" lifting their voice pitch at the end of the question _/ instead of letting their voice fall at the end _\ . How are **YOU**.. instead of how **ARE** you? Alessandro adds that the wrong intonation can add a completely different meaning to a sentence, which happens a little in Portuguese, but is more evident in English, for example irony or happiness. Adir continues with the example of the word 'really' (mesmo). He demonstrates the pronunciation of REAL ly decreasing his voice pitch each time he says the word as an example of how one transmits a different emotional meaning with each variation in pitch.

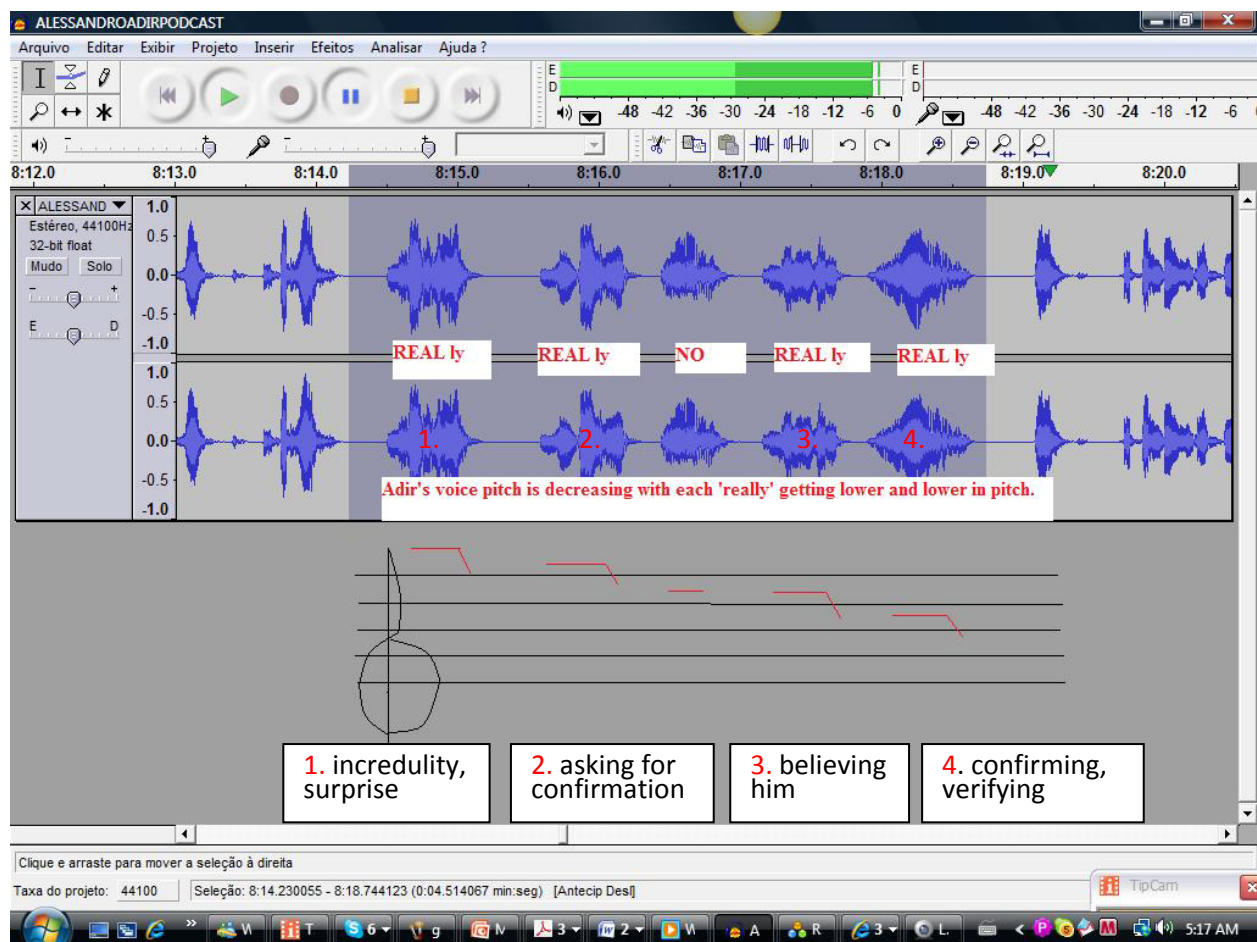


Figure 1. Depending on your intonation you express different meanings.

Alessandro talks about a student who attends a language school. He gives the example of the student learning How are you? How are you doing? What are you doing? What are you going to do in the USA? (a question that you might hear at the American Embassy). But the Embassy official will speak differently, pronouncing all the words slurred together (everything all together, tudo juntos). He will not clearly separate the words so that you can understand them. Adir confirms that this elision takes place, in fact, in all languages and gives an example about a book that was underneath the table, in Portuguese, speaking rapidly, at a normal pace. Adir suggests accustomizing yourself and listening skills to it. He says English is like a song. There isn't any way to master the intonation of English except to listen and listen and listen to it being spoken over and over again.

Alessandro talks about the schwa, which sounds like 'uh' (ã in banana) and is indisputable the most used sound for vowels in the English language. He says it is also the sound that most confuses people learning English. The vowels in many syllables are turned into schwas when one is speaking rapidly.

Adir gives the example of the word 'ago' (atras) "2 years **ago**" He says that a Brazilian has the tendency to pronounce it A go — A gain — or EX plain — instead of ex PLAIN — .

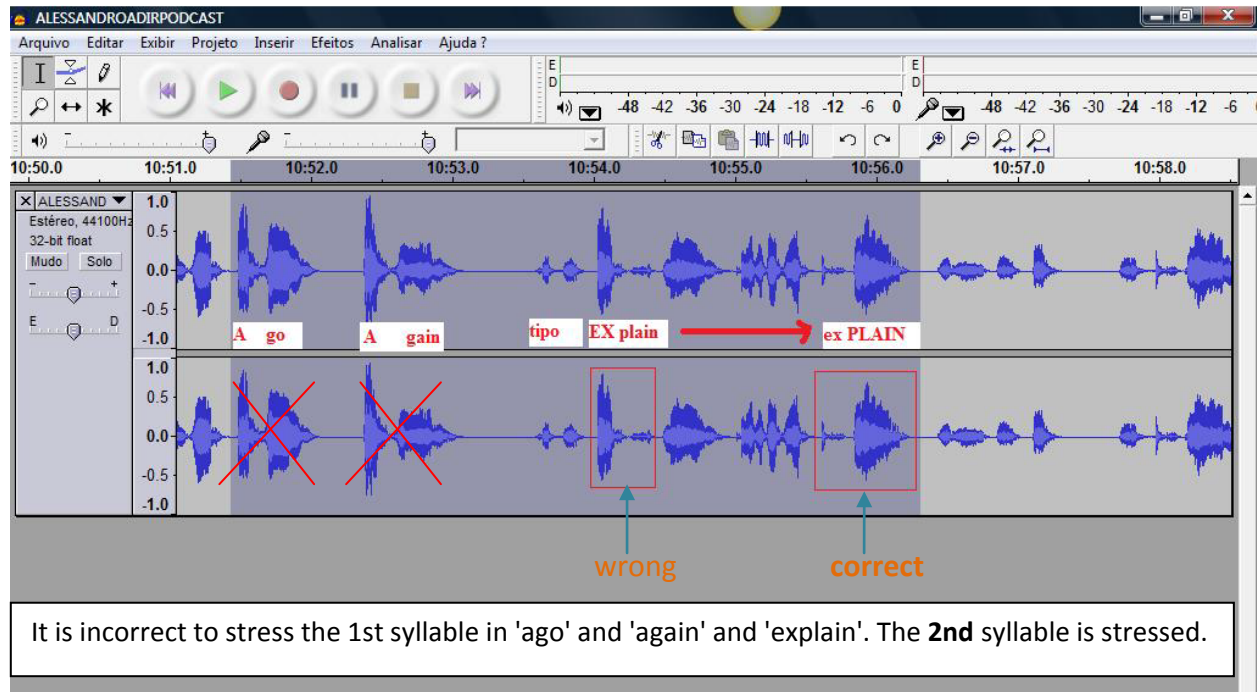


Figure 2. Showing the incorrect pronunciation tendency that comes automatically to Brazilians.

Adir pronounces occur (uh CURR), soda (SO duh)

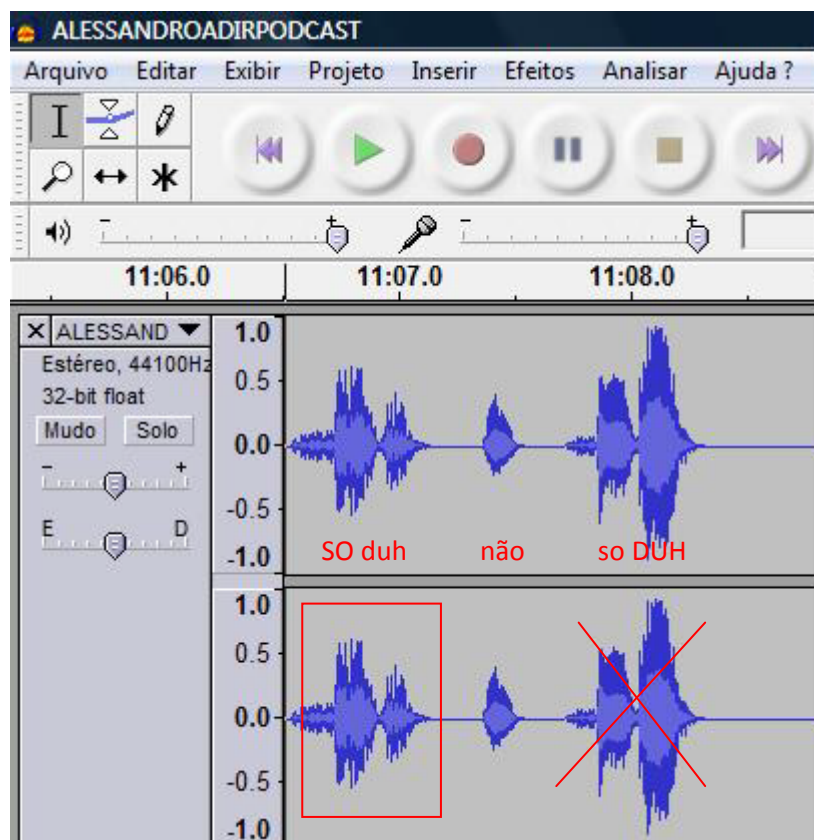


Figure 3. Showing the incorrect and correct pronunciation of the word 'soda'.

Adir explains that the schwa is very short (bem curtinho só) and gives examples of how to pronounce 'open', 'method', 'syrup', 'captain', 'mountain', which are all accented on the first syllable and the second syllable is a schwa. He says that all the sounds are produced in the nasal cavity and with the tongue on the teeth. He demonstrates the pronunciation of 'station' and cupboard. The pronunciation of 'cupboard' was unfortunately mispronounced. The p should be silent, not articulated: **cubb-erd**, as you can easily verify at <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/cupboard>, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cupboard>, and <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/cupboard>

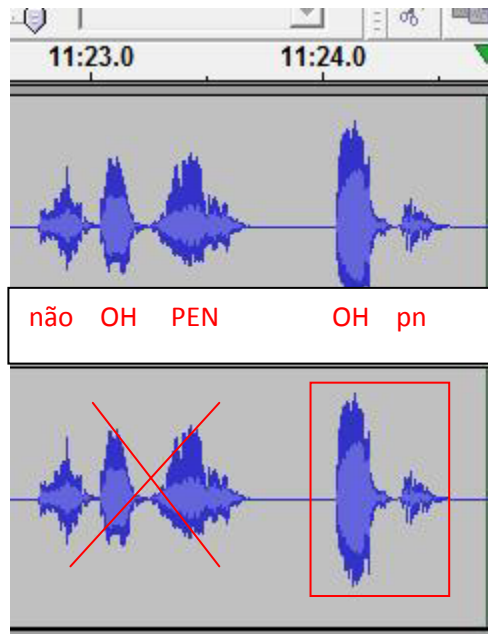


Figure 4. Soda

Adir gave other examples of words such as 'purse' /p³rs/. Note that the vowel is **not** a schwa in purse. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/purse>. Compare 'banana' which does have 2 schwas: ə. <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/banana> /bə'næn ə/

All of the examples with the **3** vowel sound that follow are similarly wrongly classified as examples of the schwa, but that is not a major concern since they are still pronounced correctly. You can verify that they do not have schwas by looking them up in the dictionary: 'serve', 'nerve', 'heard', 'bird', 'girl', 'first', 'work', 'worm', . What is really great is that Adir gives the translations of the words in the pronunciation examples.

Adir pronounces 'tournament' and identifies the schwas (in red). The first vowel is not a schwa: /'tʊər nə³ mənt, 'tʌr-/ , /tɔrn, tɔɔrn/ <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/tournament>

Alessandro adds that the schwa also comes into play when pronouncing complete sentences. One may be afraid to pronounce a pronoun incorrectly, similarly mixing up the prepositions 'to' and 'for'. People use intonation to emphasize the most important words in a sentence.

Adir gives us another example of a schwa: 'the', which some learners pronounce incorrectly. When you have "the book" the 'the' has a schwa. When 'the' comes before a word beginning with a vowel, it is stressed (tonico).

Alessandro asked about the pronunciation of the words "the university". Adir explains that the 'u' has the sound of a consonant instead of a vowel. Here 'u' that sounds like the semi-vowel 'y', which functions like a consonant. More examples are: 'universe', 'university', 'union'. Adir makes the contrast with "the apple", "the egg", "the umbrella".

Adir sums up that the schwa is unstressed (átono, ele não tem força).

Alessandro turns the conversation back to the subject of English being like music (uma música compasso) and gives a demonstration of the beat.

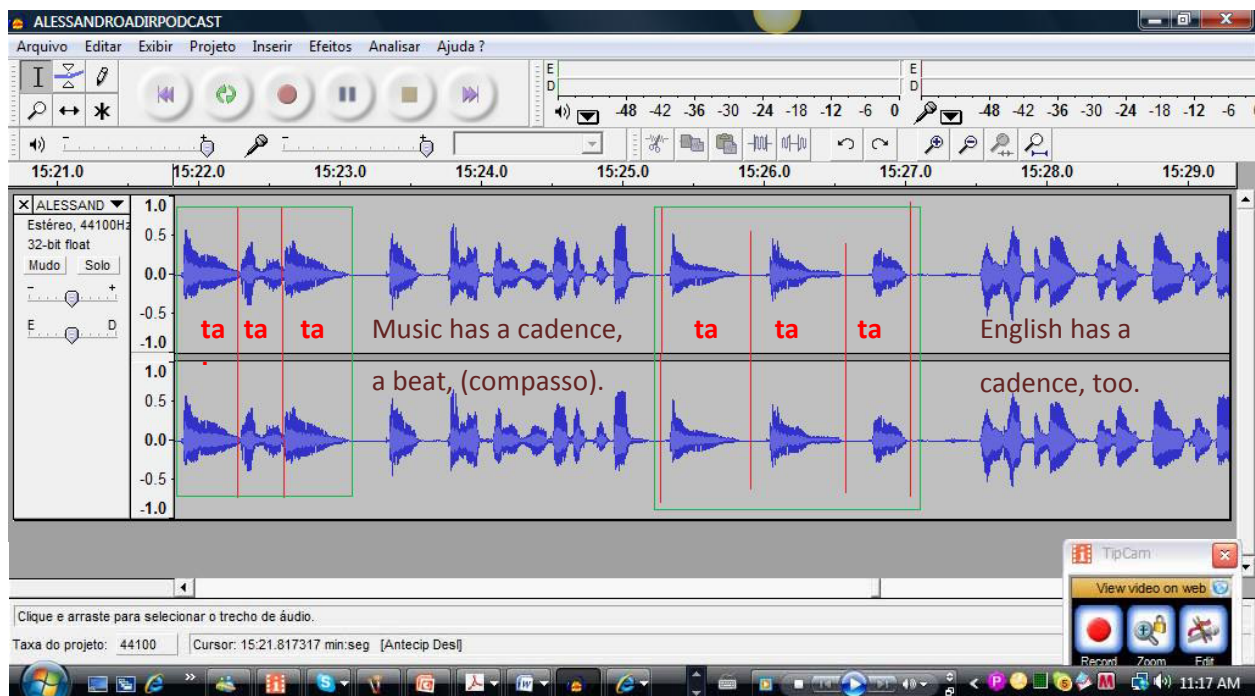


Figure 5. English sounds musical.

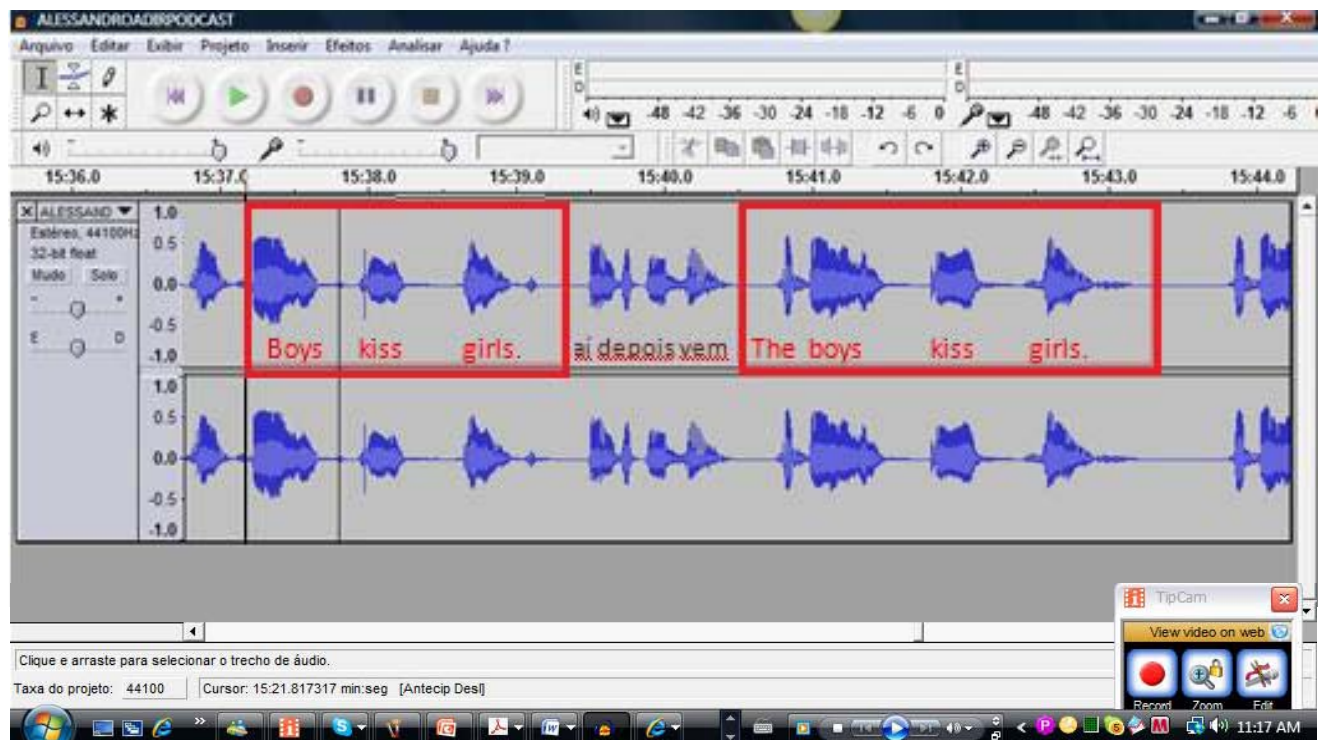


Figure 6. boys kiss girls, the boys kiss girls.

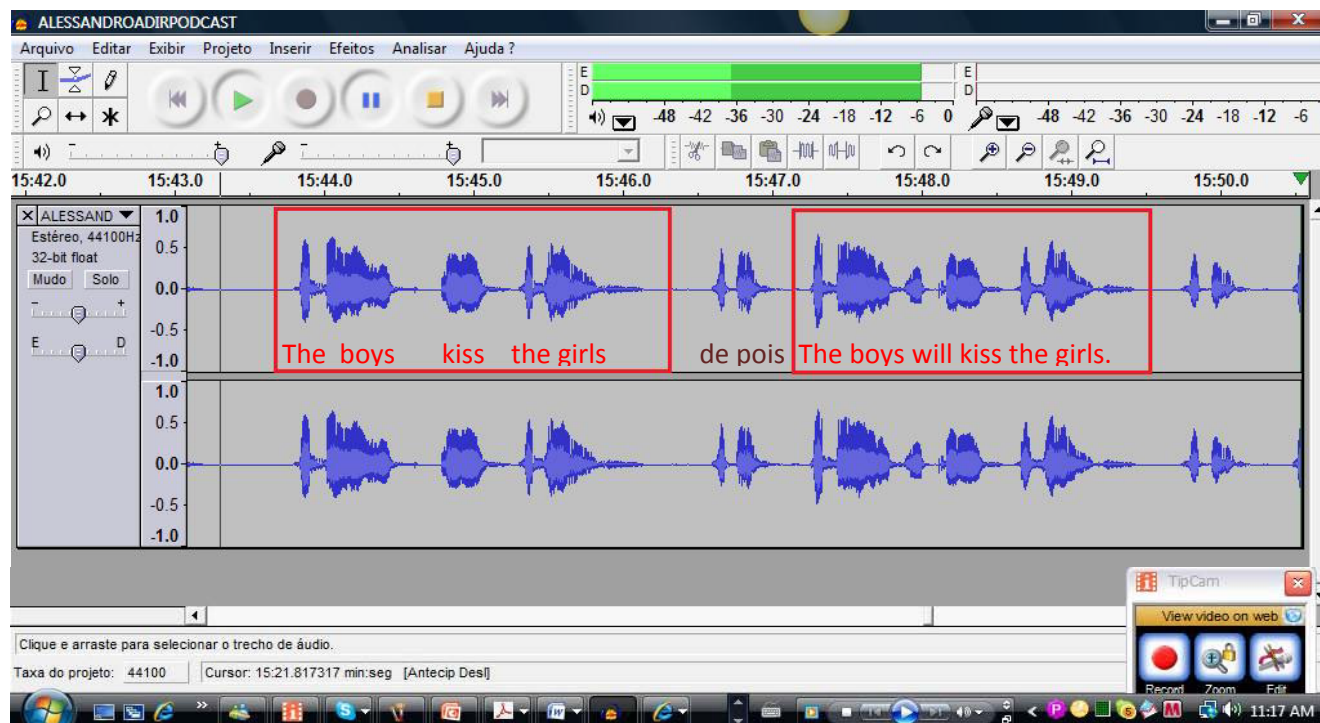


Figure 7. The boys kiss the girls and The boys will kiss the girls.



Figure 8. The boys have kissed the girls.

Alessandro determines that the important words in the sentence are 'boys' and 'girls'. He notes that the sentences have the same cadence. Adir adds the information that the modal verbs (verbos modais) have less stress. The verb have is an auxiliary verb, and not a modal verb. In addition, 'kissed' does not have two syllables (uma sílaba dupla) because the voiceless 's' influences the voiced 'd', making it voiceless, too.

Alessandro recommends training one's ear by listening to many podcasts to train one's ear to hear the cadence.

Adir agrees that "practice makes perfect."


Alessandro asks about the intonation when using the Wh question words: What, when, where. Does our voice rise at the end of those questions made using the wh questions words?

Adir responds that when you ask a question that can be answered with 'yes' or 'no' your voice rises (sobe) at the end of the sentence. for example: Are you a teacher? Do you study English? Are you going to call me tomorrow? When you are asking for information with what, where, when, why, how, who, your voice falls (desce).

Examples: Where do you ^{li} ve ? **NOT** Where do you ^{live?} **NOR** Where do you li ^{ive}

How are you going to come to ^w ork? **NOT** How are you going to come to ^{work?}

When does the ^{Mo} vie start? **NOT** 

When are you going to be ^{ba} ack?  **CORRECT**

Alessandro reports that he has noticed that when an American native speaker has lived in Brazil, his English becomes influenced by Portuguese. Some of Alessandro's American friends use the same intonation as Brazilians when they speak English with him in Skype.

Adir predicts that the same thing would probably happen to Brazilians' Portuguese, if they would live in a foreign country, immersed in a foreign language. He said he picks up accents (pegar sotaque) very easily.

Alessandro comments that Adir has become accustomed to and is in the habit of analyzing the languages. Adir responds that he has adapted this ability in several languages as he adapted to them.

Adir gave more examples:

YES OR NO = rising intonation at the end of the question

Are you going to study for a test?

Are you going?

Do you like to study English?

Will you be able to come to my house tomorrow?

WH Questions compared with Yes/No questions

When will you be able to study English?

Do you think you're going to be able to study English tomorrow?

Summarizing:

Yes/No questions have rising intonation at the end.

Wh- questions have falling intonation at the end.