



Sudan University of Science & Technology
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The Difficulties of Placing Stress on English Words as Encountered by EFL University Students

الصعوبات التي يواجهها دارسو الجامعة للغة الانجليزية لغة أجنبية في تحديد
موضع النبره في المفردة الإنجليزية

**A thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of (M.A) in English Language (Applied Linguistics)**

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this study to my parents who were always a constant source of inspiration, support, and encouragement. To my brothers and beloved friends Mohamed, Hani, Emad, and Alla-eldeen who always stand beside me. To readers who believe in the worthiness of the study.

Acknowledgements

First of all, I wish to thank Allah who provided me with strength, patience, and everything to accomplish this study. Also, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Areig Osman Ahmed Mohamed who guided me from the beginning of this study to the end; I wish to thank her for her patience, constant moral support, as well as her skillful supervision. Many thanks are also due to the staff of English Department of the College of Languages who provided me with precious views and assistance whenever they were asked to help. Also, I would like to thank Prof Mahmoud Ali, Dr. Hillary Marino, as well as Ustaz Sami-Ballh and Abdul-kareem Hassan for their advice and valuable comments. Moreover, I would like to extend my gratitude to my colleagues and friends, especially Hani Mohamed and Amjad-elsaim Mohammed who were always encouraging me to do the best. Lastly, I am grateful to many other individuals who have also provided valuable support in various forms.

Abstract

This study has been carried out at Sudan University of Science & Technology, College of Languages, English Department. It considers the difficulties of placing stress on English words as encountered by EFL university students. The researcher has already observed that most of the students especially those who study English as a foreign language face difficulties while stressing English words. Therefore the main aim of this study is to investigate these difficulties. In order to find out the fact, the researcher adopted the descriptive, analytical method. The total number of the students who participated in the test is 50 students. They are 3rd year English language students at College of Languages/ English Department, in the academic year **2017**. To collect the data needed the researcher has designed a test to examine the specific samples that were chosen randomly by the researcher. After the exam was marked by the researcher and analyzed with statistical program labeled **SPSS**, the final findings revealed that: First, most of 3rd year EFL students are not capable to distinguish between the strong and weak syllables within a word with the percentage of 88%. Second, the result has also reflected the weakness of the student's knowledge regarding stress placement. This is the cause in words that only carry primary stress, as well as polysyllabic words which include affixes and therefore carry both primary and secondary stress, with the percentage of 72% and 90% respectively. Based on the final findings, the researcher recommends that English learners should pay attention to recognize the right pronunciation of each new word they hear. Also students should learn the rules of word stress, because that may help them to master it.

المستخلص

أجريت هذه الدراسة في جامعة السودان للعلوم والتكنولوجيا/ كلية اللغات/ قسم اللغة الإنجليزية. حيث عنونت ب: الصعوبات التي يواجهها دارسو الجامعة للغة الإنجليزية لغة إنجليزية في تحديد موضع النبره في المفردة الإنجليزية. لاحظ الباحث بأن معظم دارسو اللغة الإنجليزية في كلية اللغات يواجهون بعض المشاكل في تحديد موضع النبره الصوتية في المفردة الإنجليزية، لذلك هدفت الدراسة للتقصي عن هذه الصعوبات، حيث تتبني المنهج التحليلي الوصفي. ولإكتشاف الصعوبات قام الباحث بوضع إمتحان، عدد الطلاب المشاركين في هذا الإمتحان خمسون طالب يدرسون في كلية اللغات وينتمون للمستوي الثالث، العام الدراسي 2017. بعد تصحيح الإمتحان وتحليل البيانات إحصائياً عبر البرنامج الإحصائي SPSS، أشارت النتائج النهائية إلي الآتي: أولاً، معظم طلاب المستوي الثالث بنسبة 88% فشلوا في التمييز بين المقطع القوي والضعيف في الكلمات المعنية. ثانياً، معظم الطلاب بنسبة بلغت 72% فشلوا في تحديد موضع النبره الصوتيه للكلمات ذات النبره الواحده، ونسبة 90% من الطلاب فشلوا في تحديد موضع النبره الأولي والثانيه فيما يختص بالكلمات معقدة التركيب والتي تحتوي علي بدائيات ونهائيات. بناء علي النتائج النهائية التي توصلت اليها الدراسة والتي أشارت إلي ضعف الطلاب فيما يختص بالنبرة الصوتية، يوصي الباحث بالآتي: يجب علي الطلاب الإنتباه لإدراك النطق الصحيح للمفردات الجديده بجميع خصائصها الصوتيه، كما ينبغي عليهم تعلم قواعد النبره الصوتية مما يساعدهم علي إتقانها.

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CHAPTER ONE

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

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A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1-0 Overview

Every language is characterized by a unique sound system; English language is one of these languages. On one hand, the study of speech sound is called ‘phonetics’ which concentrates on parole or performance, it divides the utterances into individual speech sound. Phonetics is divided into three main branches. The first which deals with speech production is called ‘articulatory’. The second branch which studies the physical properties of speech sound known as ‘acoustic’; the last one refers to ‘auditory’ deals with the listener’s perception of speech sound. On the other hand, the study of the function of the sound system is called ‘Phonology’, which concerned with langue or competence. In fact, both English phonetics and phonology are sub-discipline of linguistics, which deal with pronunciation, so it is very important for foreign learners who want to master English pronunciation to take some courses in these fields.

According to many linguists (Skandera and Burleigh, 2005: 5) Phonology has also been divided into two parts: ‘Segmental’ which is based on the segmentation of language into individual speech sounds provided by phonetics and therefore it deals with the function and possible combination of sounds within sound system. The second part which is called ‘supra-segmental’ or in other word ‘prosody’ concentrates on the features of pronunciation that cannot be segmented, because they extend over more than one segment or sound. What we said so far about phonetics

and phonology is just a brief background and the distinction between them is not a matter of discussion right now.

One of the characteristics of English sound system is what is called ‘word stress’ which is regarded as one of the supra-segmental features of English phonology; it seems to be unfamiliar for foreign learners and even for native speakers themselves who use it unconsciously, because they acquired the sound system spontaneously rather than learning it. However, stress pattern is real in English and it plays an important role in pronunciation and in fact, non- native speakers (NNS) encounter challenges in using it. First of all we must know what it means ‘word stress’

According to (Underhill, 2005: 51) word stress is a term that is used to describe the accent or emphasis given to a particular syllable of a word, and it is more or less invariable attribute of that word when spoken in isolation.

1-1 Statement of the Problem

Many learners have first language where word stress or accent is regular or fixed, such as French or Turkish where stress falls on the final syllable, or Polish or Spanish where stress falls on the penultimate syllable. In English however, word stress is variable across words which can cause problems for foreign learners (Rogerson, 2011: 137). Moreover, English word stress is so difficult to predict and if you stress the wrong syllable it spoils the pronunciation of the word for an English hearer and he may have difficulty in recognizing the word and that may lead to confusion and intelligibility problems (O,Connor, 2000: 91). This study is an investigation into students’ knowledge of placing stress on English words, at the College of Languages, SUST.

1-2 Questions of the Study

This study attempts to address the following questions.

- 1- To what extent are 3rd year English language students able to differentiate between strong and weak syllable?
- 2- To what degree are 3rd year English language students able to determine the right place of stress?

1-3 Hypotheses of the Study

This study attempts to verify the following hypotheses.

- 1- Most of 3rd year English language students are not able to distinguish between strong and weak syllable.
- 2- 3rd year English language students face difficulties in determining the right place of stress on syllables.

1-4 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to realize the following goals:

- i. To investigate the awareness of 3rd year English language students in the distinction between strong and weak syllables.
- ii. To investigate the knowledge of 3rd year English language students in placing stress on English words.

1-5 Significance of the Study

Since most of English words are stressed, so it is very important for foreign learners to learn how English words are stressed; which words that must be stressed and why. In fact, native speakers of English focus on the stressed syllable, not for the weak, so if you use word stress in your speech, you will instantly and automatically improve your pronunciation and your comprehension (László.S, 2014: 19). Also, using word stress can help non- native speakers (NNS) in understanding native speakers (NS)

and especially those who speak fast. This Study shed lights on the problems that foreign learners face while trying to master English word stress.

1-6 Methodology of the Study

This is a case study and it follows the descriptive and analytical method. The researcher is going to design a test to collect the data from the specific participants. they are EFL learners precisely, 3rd year English language students whom study at Sudan University of Science & Technology (SUST) College of Languages, after that the researcher will mark the data collected and then analyze it statistically by using SPSS program to get the final findings.

1-7 Scope of the Study

This is an investigation about the awareness of EFL students at SUST, College of Languages, English department, especially those who belong to the third level, in the academic year 2017. Generally, it revolves around the area of English Phonetics & Phonology, precisely the ‘supra-segmental’ and it covers all the aspects of English word stress, it will not overcome these limits.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVEIOW & PREVIOUS STUDIES

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LITERATURE REVIEW AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is about literature reviews and previous studies related to the topic, it consists of two sections. The first one is about literature review; it includes aspects of English transcription, syllable structure, some theories of syllable division, as well as features of weak and strong syllables. Moreover, it talks about word stress including concept, function as well as rules. Regarding section two, it is just previous studies related to the study.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 English Transcription

Everybody may notice that the spelling system of English is different from spoken language; there is no collocation between the written word and its pronunciation. If we look at the spelling of these words (tough, though, through) we notice that they end with the same form (ough), but they pronounce differently. On the other hand, there are some words in English that they have different spelling, but they pronounce in the same way such as (to, too, two). In fact, in order to avoid these sorts of ambiguity, there must be a method of writing things down and describe each word accurately. According to (Rogers, 2000: 16) ‘*Transcription*’ is the use of phonetic symbols to write down the way an utterance is pronounced”. One of the goals of

English phonetics and phonology is to be able to transcribe accurately English utterances, so any sound of English is given a symbol, and these symbols is known as International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and is most widely used in English dictionaries (ibid).

In all systems of transcription there is a distinction between **broad transcription** and **narrow transcription**. Broad transcription indicates only the most noticeable phonetic features of an utterance, whereas narrow transcription encodes more information about the phonetic variations of the specific allophones in the utterance. The difference between broad and narrow is a continuum. One particular form of a broad transcription is a **phonemic transcription**, which disregards all allophonic difference, and, as the name implies, is not really a phonetic transcription at all (but at times coincides with it), but a representation of phonemic structure. For example, one particular pronunciation of the English word *little* may be transcribed using the IPA as /'lɪtəl/ or ['lɪɾ̩]; the broad, phonemic transcription, placed between slashes, indicates merely that the word ends with phoneme /l/, but the narrow, allophonic transcription, placed between square brackets, indicates that this final /l/ ([ɾ̩]) is dark (velarized). Wikipedia

In one hand, the advantage of the narrow transcription is that it can help learners to get exactly the right sound, and allows linguists to make detailed analyses of language variation. The disadvantage is that a narrow transcription is rarely representative of all speakers of a language. Most Americans and Australians would pronounce the /t/ of *little* as a tap [ɾ]. Some people in southern England would say /t/

as [ʔ] (a glottal stop) and/or the second /l/ as [w] or something similar. A further disadvantage in less technical contexts is that narrow transcription involves a larger number of symbols that may be unfamiliar to non-specialists. On the other hand, the advantage of the broad transcription is that it usually allows statements to be made which apply across a more diverse language community. It is thus more appropriate for the pronunciation data in foreign language dictionaries, which may discuss phonetic details in the preface but rarely give them for each entry. A rule of thumb in many linguistics contexts is therefore to use a narrow transcription when it is necessary for the point being made, but a broad transcription whenever possible. (ibid)

2.1.2 The nature and structure of English syllable

In fact, there is disagreements among phonologists to the definition of English syllable and even (Ladefoged, & Johnson, 2010: 243) states that ‘syllable’ has not been defined at all, because there is no agreed phonetic definition. But, before we know the various definitions, first of all we must look at some disagreements to the structure of English syllable. In a few cases people disagree on how many syllables they are in particular word, some of these disagreements arise from dialectal differences in the way particular words are spoken; for some the word *predatory* has three syllables because they say: /predətri/. Other people who pronounce it as: /predətori/ says that it has four syllables. There are also many words such as *bottling* and *brightening*, that people pronounce with syllabic consonants in the middle, so that they have three syllables, whereas others do not. Moreover several groups of

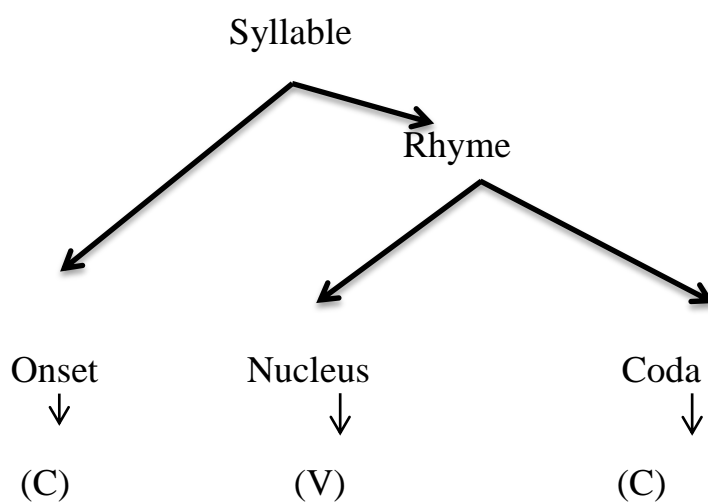
words that people pronounce the same way, but nevertheless differ in their estimates of the number of syllables. One group of words contains nasals that may or may not be counted as separate syllables. Thus words such as *pessimism* and *mysticism* maybe said to have three or four syllables, depending on whether the final {m} is considered to be syllabic. A second group contains high front vowels followed by {l}. Many people will say that *meal*, *steal* and *real* contain two syllables. But, others will consider them to have one syllable. A third group contains words in which {r} may or may not be syllabic; some people consider *hire*, *fire* and *hour* to be two syllables, whereas others who pronounce them in exactly the same way do not. Similar disagreements also arise over words such as *mirror* and *error* for some American English speakers. Finally, there is disagreement over the number of the syllables in a group of words that contain unstressed high vowels followed by another vowel without an intervening consonant, examples are words such as *mediate*, *heavier* and *Neolithic*, differences of opinion as to the number of syllables in these words maybe due to differences in the way they are actually pronounced, just as in the case of *predatory* cited earlier. But, unlike *predatory* it is often not clear if a syllable has been omitted on a particular occasion. It is also possible that different people do different things when asked to say how many syllables they are in a word. Some people may pay more attention to the phonological structure of words than others. Thus many people will say that *realistic* has three syllables. But, others will consider it to have four syllables because it is like the word *reality* which everybody agrees has four syllables. Judgments on the number of syllables in words such as *hire* and *hour* may also be affected by phonological considerations. Some people

distinguish between *hire* and *higher* and pronounce *hour* so that it does not end in the same way as *tower*. These people are likely to consider *hire* and *hour* to be a monosyllables and *higher* and *tower* to have two syllables. But, others who do not differentiate between *hire* and *higher* and who pronounce *hour* in the same way as *tower* may say that each of these words has two syllables. Thus two speakers may pronounce *hire* in exactly the same way but one will consider it to have one syllable and the other two, because of the way in which they pronounce other words. (ibid)

Syllable has been defined from different point of views. To begin with, (Roach, 2000: 70) says that: “*English syllable can be defined in both phonetic and phonological point of view. In phonetic perspective syllables are usually described as consisting of a center which has little or no obstruction to airflow and which sounds comparatively loud, before and after this center there will be grater obstruction to airflow or less vowel loud sound*”. Again the structure of English syllable in the phonetic point of view is divided into the following phonetic parts:

- i. Some syllables have an onset, and those are words which begin with consonant(s) followed by a vowel such as: more /mɔ: /, two /tu: /etc. (Yule, 2010: 46) says that words which have an onset and nucleus and no coda are called open syllables.

- ii. Some syllables have no onset, but have a coda and these exactly are words which formed with vowel and end with consonant(s). For instance, the word eat /ɪ:t/ or ought /ɔ:t/ are closed syllables (ibid). According to (Skandera & Burleigh. 2005: 66) it sometimes termed a checked syllable, and the vowel forming the center is then a checked vowel.
- iii. Some syllables have an onset and coda; those exactly are words which contain consonant(s) at the beginning and end of the word such as: bat /bat/, bad /bæd/ and fat /fæt/.
- iv. The last type is what so called minimum syllable and it is a single vowel in isolation such as: are /a:/, or /ɔ:/, etc... The following diagram illustrates the structure of English syllable in phonetic perspective.



Graph (2.1) the structure of English syllable

In phonological point of view, as English has a large number of consonant clusters, divided into onset and coda; the possible combinations of sounds in a language is called '*Phonotactics*'. (Rogers, 2000: 89). But, there are some consonants sequences which do not exist in English. There are two sorts of gaps (forms don't occur) the first type refers to systematic gap (sequences of consonants that do not occur in English at all) as in /bnɪk/ since bn is impossible. The second type refers to accidental gap (sequences seem to be possible, although it is unknown form, such as /lʊt/ (ibid). In English there is no word begins with more than three consonants and no word ends with more than four consonants (Roach, 2010: 71).

In addition to such phonological approaches to the syllable, phoneticians have attempted to provide definitions in terms of its psychological properties. The syllable has been defined acoustically in terms of sonority that refer to the relative loudness of sounds if we just look at the wave form of the word '*loving*' we can easily notice that the intensity of the vowel {ʌ} is much greater than the neighboring consonants. (Rogers, 2000: 268). Moreover, it has been defined in terms of motor theory, where each syllable is seen to correlate with a chest pulse. For discussion and references see (Allen, 1973: 38-45).

The table in the following page shows the structure and some phonological distribution of English syllable.

Table (2.1)

Phonological structure & Phonotactics

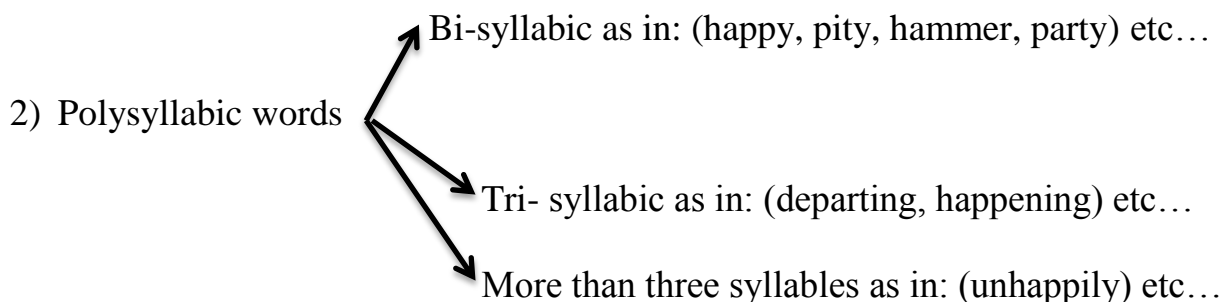
Word	Transcription	Structure	Phonological Distribution								
			Pre Initial	Initial	Post Initial	Vowel	Pre Final	Final	Post 1	Post 2	Post 3
Or	/ɔ:/	v				ɔ:					
Add	/æd/	VC				æ		d			
See	/si:/	CV	S			i:					
Play	/pleɪ/	CCV		p	l	eɪ					
Spray	/spreɪ/	CCCV	S	p	r	eɪ					
Action	/ækʃn/	VCCC				a		k	ʃ	n	
Options	/ɒpʃns/	VCCCC				ɒ		p	ʃ	n	s
Bed	/bed/	CVC		b		e		d			
Field	/fi:ld/	CVCC		f		i:	l	d			
Section	/sekʃn/	CVCCC	S			e		k	ʃ	n	
Samples	/sæmpls/	CVCCCC	S			a	m	p	l	s	
Sleep	/slɪ:p/	CCVC	S		l	i:		p			
Slump	/slʌmp/	CCVCC	S		l	ʌ	m	p			
Stations	/steɪʃns/	CCVCCC	S	t		eɪ		ʃ	n	s	
Spring	/sprɪŋ/	CCVC	S	p	r	ɪ		ŋ			
Strange	/streɪŋz/	CCCVCC	S	t	r	eɪ	n	ʒ			
strengths	/streŋgθs/	CCCVCCCC	S	t	r	e		ŋ	g	θ	s

In the above table, these are just some examples, for more details and explanations about syllable restrictions and possible combination of onset and coda review (Roach, 2000: 71-76), (Rogers, 2000: 89-92) or (Mc Cully, 2009: 92-100).

2.1.3 Syllable Division (Syllabification)

Although the structure of English syllable is complex, however it has been governed by rules and restrictions. Right now we are going to discuss a matter which seems to be more ambiguous. Even if it is an easy to count how many syllables they are in a word, but it is so difficult to determine the boundary of each syllable in a connected sequence of phoneme. Here are some theories of syllable division in terms of different perspectives. Firstly, According to (Mc Cully, 2009: 101) words in English are classified according to whether they are a monosyllabic (contain only one syllable), or a polysyllabic words (containing more than one syllable). There are two sorts of polysyllabic. The first type is called bi-syllabic which contains two syllables. On the other hand, the second type is tri-syllabic which contains three syllables. Also, more than three syllables are considered as a polysyllabic word.

1) Monosyllabic words as in: (pit, hat, bat, ham, ground) etc...



Syllabification is a matter that concerns polysyllabic words and particularly it concerns the syllables to which the consonants within the polysyllable belong (ibid).

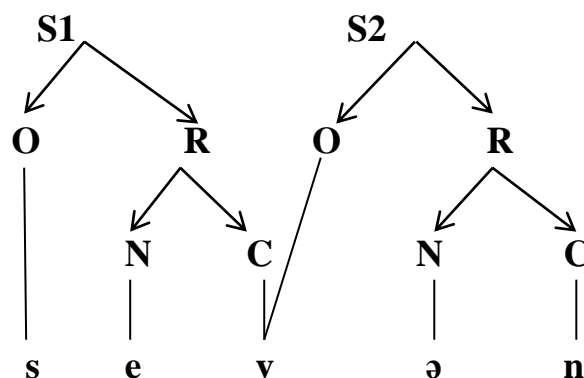
To explain how English syllable is divided let us take some complex word such as '*extra*', according to (Roach, 2000: 77-78) the consonant sound {s} in the middle between {k} and {t} would be counted as a syllable, whereas most English speakers

reject it and they assume that the word has only two syllable. However, if so, what is the boundary of each syllable. Hereby are some possibilities and the mark (.) is used to signal the syllable boundary.

i) **e.kstrə** ii) **ek.strə** iii) **eks.trə** iv) **ekst.rə** v) **ekstr.ə**

If we look at these forms, we may confuse because all of them seem to be possible. But if we look at them in phonological point of view, the situation may differ because there is restriction rules related to the syllable structure. So the there is a real problem in the division of such word like this. To overcome this problem an approach has been proposed and accepted by the phonologists known as *Maximal Onsets Principle* (PMO), this theory revolves around the idea that where two syllables are to be divided, any consonants between them should be attached to the right hand, not the left (ibid). According to (Mc Cully, 2009:102) “*PMO says that: if you can make a well formed onset, do it more formally and concisely the onsets maximized*”. If we follow this rule, the word ‘*extra*’ must be divided as **e.kstrə** but, as we know there is restrictions related to English syllable that the maximum onset is three and coda is four. This means the first and fifth options are rejected in English, because of the impossible onset and coda. According to (PMO) we must choose (ii). But, the problem still continue, because if we look at isolated syllables, we never find one ending with one of the short vowels (i, e, æ, ʌ, ɔ, u), so that syllables with a short vowel and no coda do not occur in English unless the vowel is {ə}. Another example the word ‘*better*’ with regard to (PMO) of syllable division, it must be analyzed as **be.tə**, but because of **be** is not allowed in English, so this theory must be modified to

allow a consonants belong to the left syllable; if that prevent a short vowel from occurring at the end of the syllable, so *bet.ə* seems more satisfactory. Furthermore, (Roach, 2000: 78) adds that: “when one consonant stands between vowels and it is difficult to assign the consonants to one syllable or the other as in ‘better’ and ‘carry’ we could say that the consonant belongs to both syllables”. This consonant is labeled and used by the phonologists as ‘*Ambisyllabic*’. Also, (Mc Mahon, 2002: 111) says that with regard to ‘*Onset Maximalism*’ “where there is a choice, always assign as many consonants as possible to the onset, and as few as possible to the coda. However, remember that every word must also consist of a sequence of well-formed syllables”. Moreover, (Gussenhoven & Jacobs, 1998) in addition to (PMO) they add new principle of ambisyllabicity; according to their view this principle says that: “in unstressed syllable, the first consonant of onset, also serves as the coda of the preceding syllable”. For example the word ‘seven’ since the second syllable is unstressed, the {v} belongs both to the coda of the first syllable and to the onset of the second syllable (Rogers, 2000: 93).



Graph (2.2) the structure of the word ‘seven’

For more details of syllable division see (Kreidler, 2004: 76-78).

2.1.4 Syllable's Weight

One of the characteristics of English words is that one of its syllables is strong and the other is weak. In fact, it is very important to learn to distinguish whether the syllable is strong or weak or in other words *'light'* or *'heavy'*, since the syllable weight plays an important role in the position of stress mark. So in this topic we are going to talk about some aspects and features of strong and weak syllables in different perspectives. First of all we must know what we mean by light and heavy syllables? Hereby are some definitions in different point of views.

According to (Ashby, 2011: 168) *“a light syllable is one that has a short vowel followed by no more than one short consonant such as: (it, cat, club, spring) are light syllables. Whereas, a heavy syllables will have either a short vowel followed by two or more consonants such as: (its, cats, clubs, springs, twelfth, acts, etc...), or a long vowel only as in: (Ah!, sky), or a short vowel followed by a long consonants”*. Also, (Mc Cully, 2009: 103) says that: *“syllables containing filled codas are called heavy syllables. On the other hand, syllables containing no codas such as the first and unstressed syllables of (appall, aghast, or the final syllables of button, chasm, etc...) are called light syllables”*. As there is gradual relationship between light and heavy syllables a great distinction has been mentioned by (Roach, 2000: 81) *“the vowel in a weak syllable tend to be shorter of lower intensity and different in quality e.g: in the word father /fa:ðə/ the second syllable is weak, because the vowel is shorter and less loud than the first, and also it has no coda. Another example, the word bottle /b ɒtl/, here the second syllable is also weak, because it contains of one syllabic consonant”*.

Furthermore, with regard to the distinction between light and heavy syllables (Mc Mahon, 2002: 114) says that: “a light syllable contains only a short vowel in the rhyme, with no coda as in the first syllable of (potato, report, about)”. Although, the first two cases have onsets and the third does not, all these initial syllables are still light, because onsets are entirely irrelevant to the calculation of syllable weight. If a syllable has a complex rhyme, then its heavy and complexity can be achieved in two different ways. The first, a heavy syllable may have a short vowel, but one or more coda consonants as in (bet, best). The second, it may have a branching nucleus, consisting of a long vowel or diphthong, such syllable will be heavy whether it also has a filled coda as in: (beast, bite, or not as in bee, by) (ibid). Another feature of strong syllable is that any strong syllable will have as its peak one of the vowel phonemes or possibly a trip-thong and if the vowel is short the strong syllable will always have a coda (Roach, 2000: 82). In fact, it is not an easy matter to determine the weight of the syllable; however the strong syllable seems to be clearer than the weak, so we need to pay attention more on the features of the weak syllable. Below there are some evidence and indicators which might help us in determining the weak syllable. Firstly, the vowel {ə} ‘Schwa’ is always associated with weak syllable and it may occur in different position within the word such as: /əgeɪn/, /əʊpən/, and /betə/. Secondly, a close front unrounded vowel in the general area of the sounds {ɪ:} and {ɪ}, which is symbolized {i}, a good example of this sound is /hæpi/. Or a close back rounded vowel in the general area of the sounds {u:} and {ʊ} which is symbolized {u}, as in /ju/. Thirdly, syllable which contains one of the syllabic consonants (syllable in which no vowel is found, in this case a consonant {l, r, ŋ, m,

or n} stands as a peak of the syllable instead of the vowel) is regarded as a weak. Note that syllabic consonants are always signed with small and low vertical line as in: (,) look at these following examples: (kætl̩, prtikəlr̩, hæpn̩, brəukŋ̩, ɔ:tm̩,) ibid.

2.1.5 Concept and stress patterns

Generally, stress is a property of the syllable rather than a segment; it is a prosodic or supra-segmental feature (Formkin et al, 2011: 258). *Stress* has been defined by (Ladefoged, 2001: 276) as “*the use of extra respiratory energy during a syllable*”. A detailed definition of stress by (Teschner and Whitley, 2004: 270) is “*the greater prominence or loudness that a vowel or syllable exhibits within a word, in at least two degrees: strong/weak (or primary/secondary)*.” The importance of stress patterns is illustrated by the fact that native English speaking children frequently omit unstressed syllables when learning words such as ‘banana’ /na:nə/ and ‘guitar’ /ta:/, while the significance of word stress might be greater for native speakers comprehension than (NNS) (Jenkins,200). Also, (Cruttenden, 2008: 249) claims that: “*differing accentual patterns of words are as important to their recognition as the sequence of phonemes*”. According to (Ladefoged, 2001: 93) stress has several different functions in English. Firstly, it can be used simply to give special emphasis to a word, or to contrast one word with another. Secondly, it is used to indicate the syntactic relationships among words or parts of words, since there are many nouns – verbs oppositions such as (an insult- to insult), (an increase- to increase) in all these pairs of words the noun has the stress on the first syllable, while the verb has it on the last syllable as we shall see later on. Thirdly, stress also has a syntactic function in

distinguishing between a compound noun such as ‘a hot dog’ (a formed of food), and an adjective followed by a noun as in the phrase ‘a hot dog’ (an overheated animal); compound nouns have a single stress on the first element, whereas adjective plus noun phrases have stresses on both elements. Furthermore, (Lacy, 2007: 196) divides the function of word stress into: First, culminated stress which it means that there is only one maximally prominent peak within stress domain; it is a characteristic of stress languages for grammatical units. The second is demarcated stress which it signals the beginning and/ or end of morphological boundaries (ibid).

2.1.6 Level of stress and stress shift

Most stress languages distinguish only two degrees of stress, stressed and unstressed. Yet, a further distinction among stressed syllables into primary and secondary stress, while some languages display a three way distinction into primary, secondary and tertiary stress (Lacy, 2007: 195). In English the stress is variable within the word, particularly longer words especially when spoken in isolation; they may have more than one stressed syllable. The strongest which is given more force than the other refers to primary stress which is given small high vertical line (ˈ) at the beginning and above the strong syllable, whereas the less strong syllable is referred to a secondary stress, which is also given small low vertical line (ˌ) under the beginning of the syllable (Underhill, 2005: 54). Also (Roach, 2000: 96) states that: “*there is also a third level which is called unstressed or distressed and is regarded as being the absence of any recognizable amount of prominence*”. With regard to the stress shift (Hannahs and Davenport, 2005: 80) claim that the position of the main stress

may even vary within the same word itself. So, in isolation number like ‘**thirteen**’ are stressed on the final syllable, but when they are followed by another stressed syllable, the stress on **teen** shift to the first syllable to preserve eurhythmy as in ‘**thirteen** pints’.

2.1.7 Word stress and features of stressed syllable

Word stress is term used to describe the accent or emphasis given to a particular syllable of a word, and it is a more or less invariable attribute of that word when spoken in isolation (Underhill, 2005: 51). Before we talk about stressed and unstressed syllables within word, it is very important to know which words that must be stressed. (Formkin et al, 2011: 257) claims that: “*in English one or more of the syllables in every content word are stressed, except the function word such as (to, the, a, of) are unstressed*”. Moreover, (O’ Connor, 2000: 91) mentions that: all words of more than one syllable are stressed, except in some circumstances. Whereas, words of one syllable are generally unstressed, if they are purely a grammatical words like: pronouns (I, me, you, etc...), prepositions (to, for, at, from, by, etc...), articles (the, a, an, some). Other words are stressed such as full verb (eat, love, take, etc...), nouns (head, chair, book, pen, etc...), adjectives (good, blue, long, cold, etc...), or adverbs such as (well, just, quite, etc...). Generally, it is the picture words which are stressed (words which give us the picture or provide most of the information. Now, let us talk about which syllable that must be stressed? In general, strong syllables are always stressed, while the weak syllables are unstressed. Below are some characteristics for both in terms of different perspectives. According to

(Roach, 2000: 93) stress can be studied in terms of production and perception. Firstly, the production of stress is generally depending on the speaker using more muscular energy than is used for unstressed syllable. When we produce stressed syllables, the muscles that we use to push the air from the lungs are often more active. Secondly, from the perceptual point of view, all stressed syllables have one characteristic in common and that is ‘prominence’ always stressed syllables are recognized as more prominent than unstressed syllables. But, (Lacy, 2007: 195) maintains that “*prominence is not an intrinsic property of stressed syllable; however it is a matter of relative strength between stronger and weaker syllables*”. According to (Rogerson-Revell, 2011: 138) “*prominence relates to the amount of muscular energy used to produce a syllable*”. Prominence is produced by four factors:

1) Loudness or ‘amplitude

Some people feel that stressed syllables are louder than unstressed as in (ma:ma:), in this meaningless word we may notice that the second syllable seems to be louder than the first one.

2) Length

It plays an important role in prominence, if one syllable in the word is pronounced longer than the other as in (ma:ma).

3) Pitch

It refers to the frequency of vibration of the vocal folds. The syllable that pronounced in high pitch differs from that in low pitch.

4) Vowel quality

Stressed syllables is always have a full vowel, whereas unstressed one typically have a reduced vowel (ma:ma:mɪ:). Also, (Underhil, 2005: 52) adds that: “*stressed syllables maybe a companied by larger jaw, lip and other facial movements by the speaker*”.

With regard to unstressed syllables, the absence of the above features can correlate with unstressed syllables.

2.1.8 The rules of stress

In fact, stress in English is not an easy matter, we cannot simply predict and determine the right position of stress in random way, and we cannot use it whatever we want; it has govern by rules and restriction, so we must pay attention when we use it. According to (W.Khreidler, 2004: 180) stress rules are based on three sorts of information stated below as follows:

Firstly, syntactic information: Refers to the sort of word, or on what part of speech it is. If we look at the word ‘present’ it may pronounce in three different ways, it can be noun if we stress the first syllable which means ‘gift’, also it may form as adjective if we stress the first syllable which means ‘not absent’, lastly it may pronounce as a verb if we stress the second syllable, so stress pattern is influenced with grammatical category of the word.

Secondly, morphological information: the placement of stress is influenced by affixes whether suffixes (tion, ity) or prefixes such as (re, mis). In English every

word has structural morpheme, some word maybe simple consisting of a single base such as (arm, baby, circle, manage) others are compound consisting of two bases together such as (armchair, babysit), also there are some words which may consisting of a prefix plus a base as in (disarm, encircle, mismanage), or a base plus suffix as in (babyish, happiness, management), moreover, a word may contain a prefix + base + suffix as in (mismanagement, unhappiness), or a base + base + suffix as in (babysitting), another type it may consist of a base + suffix + suffix as in (fattening, sharpener), therefore morphological information plays an important role in determining stress placement.

Thirdly, phonological information: the position of stress depends on the nature of the last two syllables (ultimate and penultimate); also it is influenced with syllable structure, how many vowels and consonants does the particular word have; and how many syllables are there in a given word (ibid).

2.1.9 Stress in simple word

First of all you must know that the word ‘simple’ in this context refers to words that are not composed of more than one grammatical unit such as ‘hope’ on the other hand, the word ‘complex’ refers to words that are composed or constructed with more than one grammatical unit such as (hopeful, hopefully, hopelessness).

2.1.9.1 One syllable words

Generally, words of one syllable are unstressed if they are function words (pronouns, articles, prepositions, etc...) however, one syllable words have primary stress, if they are (verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs) (Rogerson-Revell, 2011: 141).

2.1.9.2 Two syllable words

In two syllable words one of them either the first or the second must be stressed and not both according to the grammatical category of the particular word. In verb according to (Roach, 2000: 98) there are three rules regarding the place of stress. Firstly, the basic rule is that “if the second syllable is strong, then it must be stressed such as (apply, divide, restrict, attract, arrive) all these verbs are stressed in the second syllable. But, if the final syllable is weak, then the first syllable is stressed as in (pretty, open, correct), also a final syllable is unstressed if it contains the diphthong {əu} as in (borrow /'bɔrəu/, follow /'fɔləu/).

Two syllable adjectives follow the same rule as verb for example (divine /dɪ'vaɪn/, correct /kə'rekt/, alive /ə'laɪv/) but there is exception that even some adjectives end

with strong syllable, they stressed in the first syllable as in (honest /'ɒnest/, perfect /'pɜ:fekt/).

Regarding the nouns (Rogerson-Revell, 2011: 141) states that: “*the majority of two syllable nouns (especially the proper nouns) have stress on the first syllable such as ('Peter, 'Miller, 'Coffee, 'Basket, 'Money, 'product, 'Larynx*”, also (Roach, 2000: 99) adds that: “*if the second syllable contains a short vowel, then the stress will usually come on the first syllable, otherwise it will be on the second syllable*”. Moreover, adverbs follow the same rule as verb (ibid).

2.1.9.3 Three syllable words

Regarding three syllable words and precisely the verb, there are three rules that may influences on the position of stress. Firstly, if the final syllable is strong, then it must be stressed as in (entertain /**entə'tem**/, understand /**əndər'stænd**/). If it is weak, then the penultimate syllable must be stressed as in (determine /**dɪ'tʒ:mɪn**/, develop /**dɪ'vɒləp**/, examine /**ɪk'zæmɪn**/). Thirdly, if the ultimate and penultimate are both weak, then stress falls on the initial syllable as in (parody /'parədi/). With regard to nouns which consist of three syllables, if the ultimate syllable is weak or ends with /əu/, then stress moves on the penultimate syllable such as (potato /**pə'teɪtəu**/, disaster /**dɪ'zɑ:stə**/). If the ultimate and penultimate syllables are both weak, then stress falls on the first syllable as in (cinema /**ɪnəmə**/, quantity /**kwɒntəti**/, customer /**kʌstəmə**/). Moreover, (Rogerson-Revell, 2011: 144) claims that: “*in three syllable noun there is some cases in which two of three syllables must be stressed, because they tend to be prominent, the primary stress will be at the final syllable, while the*

secondary stress will be in the first syllable which seems to be less prominent” as in:
(entertain / **entə'tem**/, represent / **ri'pri:zənt**/, magazine / **magə'zi:n**/).

2.1.10 Complex word stress

In fact, most of English polysyllabic words (words that consist of more than one syllable) derive from other language and most of them are noticeable, there are some words which come from Latin such as (sub, com, per + mit), others which derive from Greek as in (cata, ana, dia, mono + logue). According to (Roach, 2000: 105) complex words are two sorts: the first type is words that composed from basic word, or in other word ‘stem’ plus an affix. While, the second type refers to compound words that are composed of two or more independent English words such as ‘mankind’.

Affixes in English are of two sorts: ‘suffix’, which comes after the stem and ‘prefix’ which comes before stem. Moreover, affixes have one of three possible effects on word stress. First, the affix itself may take a primary stress such as: (Semicircle /**'semisɜ:k**l/, personality /**pɜ:s**, **n'æləti**/). Sometimes, it does not effect on word stress and the particular word is stressed as if the affix does not exist such as (unpleasant / **ʌn'plez**, **nt**/).

Thirdly, stem may receive the stress, but it may influenced by affix and then the position may change and shift to different syllable as in (magnet /**'mægnət**/, magnetic /**mæg**'netic/) (ibid).

Note that in English there are some words that have a complex stem such as ‘audacity’, another problem that encounter foreign learners is that in some cases it is very difficult to know whether the word has one or more than one suffix as in ‘personality’ /pɜːs,n + al + əti/. So it is very important for foreign learners to distinguish between stem (the head word when affixes are removed) and the root (which refers to the smallest piece of lexical material that the stem can be reduced to).

Now let us have a look at the three possibilities of affixes on word stress according to (Roach, 2000: 106) the first type is suffixes that receive primary stress themselves; in this case the first syllable of the suffix carry the primary stress and if the stem consists of more than one syllable, there will be a secondary stress on one of its syllables as in:

2.1.10.1 Suffixes carrying primary stress themselves

- '-ee': 'refugee' /,refjʊ'dʒi:/ 'evacuee' /,ivækju'i:/'
- '-eer': 'mountaineer' /,maʊntɪ'nɪə/ 'volunteer' /,vɒlən'tɪə/'
- '-ese': 'Portuguese' /,pɔːtʃə'giːz/ 'journalese' /,dʒɜːnl'iːz/'
- '-ette': 'cigarette' /,sɪgr'et/ 'laundrette' /,lə:ndr'et/'
- 'esque': 'picturesque' /,pɪktʃr'esk/

2.1.10.2 Suffixes that do not affect stress placement

- '-able': 'comfort' /'kʌmfət/ 'comfortable' /'kʌmfətəbl/
- '-age': 'anchor' /'æŋkə/ 'anchorage' /'æŋkərɪdʒ/
- '-al': 'refuse' (verb) /rɪ'fju:z/ 'refusal' /rɪ'fju:zl/
- '-en': 'wide' /'waɪd/ 'widen' /'waɪdn/
- '-ful': 'wonder' /'wʌndə/ 'wonderful' /'wʌndəfl/
- '-ing': 'amaze' /ə'meɪz/ 'amazing' /ə'meɪzɪŋ/
- '-like': 'bird' /'bɜ:d/ 'birdlike' /'bɜ:dlɪk/
- '-less': 'power' /'paʊə/ 'powerless' /'paʊələs/
- '-ly': 'hurried' /'hʌrɪd/ 'hurriedly' /'hʌrɪdli/
- '-ment' (noun): 'punish' /'pʌnɪʃ/ 'punishment' /'pʌnɪʃmənt/
- '-ness': 'yellow' /'jeləʊ/ 'yellowness' /'jeləʊnəs/
- '-ous': 'poison' /'pɔɪzn/ 'poisonous' /'pɔɪznəs/
- '-fy': 'glory' /'glɔ:ri/ 'glorify' /'glɔ:rɪfaɪ/
- '-wise': 'other' /'ʌðə/ 'otherwise' /'ʌðəwaɪz/
- '-y' (adjective or noun): 'fun' /'fʌn/ 'funny' /'fʌni/
- ('-ish' in the case of adjectives does not affect stress placement: 'devil' /'devl/ 'devilish' /'devlɪʃ/ however, verbs with stems of more than one syllable always have the stress on the syllable immediately preceding 'ish' - for example, 'replenish' /rɪ'plenɪʃ/, 'demolish' /dɪ'mɒlɪʃ/).

2.1.10.3 Suffixes that influence stress in the stem

In these examples primary stress is on the last syllable of the stem.

- '-eous': 'advantage' /əd'vɑ:ntɪdʒ/ 'advantageous' /,ædvən'teɪdʒəs/
- '-graphy': 'photo' /'fəʊtəʊ/ 'photography' /fə'tɒgrəfi/
- '-ial': 'proverb' /'prɒvɜ:b/ 'proverbial' /prə'vɜ:biəl/
- '-ic': 'climate' /'klaɪmɪt/ 'climatic' /klaɪ'mætɪk/
- '-ion': 'perfect' /'pɜ:fɪkt/ 'perfection' /pə'fekʃn/
- '-ious': 'injure' /'ɪndʒə/ 'injurious' /ɪn'dʒɔ:riəs/
- '-ty': 'tranquil' /'træŋkwɪl/ 'tranquillity' /træŋ'kwɪləti/
- '-ive': 'reflex' /'rɪ:fleks/ 'reflexive' /rɪ'fleksɪv/

Moreover, suffixes such as 'ance', 'ant', 'ary' are added to single syllable stems, the stress always placed on the stem. But, if the stem consists of more than one syllable in this case we will look at the final syllable of the stem if it is strong, it will be stressed as in 'importance' /ɪm'pɔ:tns/, otherwise the penultimate syllable receives the stress as in 'centenary' /sen'tɪ:nri/.

Regarding prefixes there is no prefix of one or two syllables that carries primary stress and stress in words with prefixes is governed by the same rules as words without prefixes (ibid).

2.1.10.4 Compound Words

Compounds are words that composed of two independent words, both of them can be found in English as separate words. English compounds are written in two different ways, sometimes with words separated by a hyphen as in (paper-sack), while others are written as one word as in (armchair, sunflower). Regarding compound words, primary stress may occur on the first constituent word, or in the second and words that do not receive primary stress, may receive a secondary. In English the most familiar type of compound is one which combines of two nouns and which usually has stress on the first element such as:

Suitcase /'su:tkeɪs/

Tea-cup /'ti:kʌp/

Sunrise /'sʌnraɪz/

Typewriter /'taɪpraɪtə/

There is also another type of compound that are composed with an adjective in the first element and 'ed' morpheme at the end of the second element, in this case stress will be at the second as in:

Bad-'tempered

Half-'timbered

Heavy-'handed

Furthermore, there are compounds in which the first element is a number, in this case the second element tend to be stressed as in:

Three-'wheeler

Five-'finger

second-'class

Also compounds functioning as adverbs usually receive final stress as in:

Head-'first

North-'East

down-'stream

Finally, compounds which function as verbs and have adverbial first element receive stress in the final element as in:

Down-'grade

Back-'pedal

Ill-'treat

(Roach,P. 2000: 108)

Know that sometimes word stress is used to differentiate the meaning of compound words for instance: 'white-'house' (a house that is white), and 'white-house' (the house where the president of USA resides) (Rogerson-Revell,p. 2011: 147).

2.1.10.5 Word Class Pairs

1. This food is very difficult to **digest**.

The director asked his colleague to provide him with a **digest** of the report.

2. I'm happy with your **progress**.

All students **progress** at different rates.

3. Our football team will **contract** with a new player.

The **contract** will finish at the end of this year.

If we look at these sentences above and precisely the underlined words, we notice that each pair of sentences share the same word, but with different grammatical category and meaning. Word class pairs are a group of words which written in the same form of spelling, But have different meaning according to a particular context, sometimes they called 'homographs' and they can be distinguished by the placement of stress. Some English words which they have the same form can operate as both nouns and verbs, or adjectives and verbs, in case of nouns or adjectives the first syllable is always stressed, on the other hand the verbs is always stressed in the last syllable. Below are some examples of word class pairs according to (Roach, 2000: 110).

‘Abstract’	/ˈabstract/ (A)	/əbˈsɹakt/ (V)
‘Conduct’	/ˈkɒndʌkt/ (N)	/kənˈdʌkt/ (V)
‘Contract’	/ˈkɒntrakt/ (N)	/kənˈtrakt/ (V)
‘Contrast’	/ˈkɒntrast/ (N)	/kənˈtrast/ (V)
‘Desert’	/ˈdezət/ (N)	/dɪˈzɜ:t/ (V)
‘Escort’	/ˈeskɔ:t/ (N)	/ɪsˈkɔ:t/ (V)
‘Export’	/ˈekspɔ:t/ (N)	/ɪkˈspɔ:t/ (V)
‘Import’	/ˈɪmpɔ:t/ (N)	/ɪmˈpɔ:t/ (V)
‘Insult’	/ˈɪnsʌlt/ (N)	/ɪnˈsʌlt/ (V)
‘Object’	/ˈɒbdʒɪkt/ (N)	/əbˈdʒekt/ (V)
‘Perfect’	/ˈpɜ:fɪkt/ (A)	/pəˈfekt/ (V)
‘Permit’	/ˈpɜ:mɪt/ (N)	/pəˈmɪt/ (V)
‘Present’	/ˈpreznt/ (N, A)	/prɪˈzent/ (V)
‘Produce’	/ˈprɒdju:s/ (N)	/prəˈdju:s/ (V)
‘Protest’	/ˈprəʊtest/ (N)	/prəˈtest/ (V)
‘Rebel’	/ˈrebl/ (N)	/rɪˈbel/ (V)
‘Record’	/ˈrekɔ:d/ (N)	/rɪˈkɔ:d/ (V)
‘Subject’	/ˈsʌbdʒɪkt/ (N)	/səbˈdʒekt/ (V)

2.2 Previous Studies

Saeed, (2008) M.A, Problems of Word Stress as Encountered by Sudanese Learners of English: A case Study of the 4th year Students of English at Sudan University, SUST. This research is an attempt to identify the problems encountered by Sudanese university students in the area of supra – segmental features namely word stress patterns. Since this study aims at knowing the extent to which they conceive this supra – segmental features and the causes that hinder them from mastering word stress patterns, of the target language (English), the researcher has conducted a test on word stress patterns for the fourth year English language students at the college of education, Sudan University. In this study the researcher uses the descriptive and analytical method. He has used tools dependent on teachers' questionnaire and students' test, the answer then organized in tables and analyzed statistically using the percentage and graphic presentations: The findings of this study reveal students' weakness on placing stress within different syllables of word classes. This problem as a result of students' mother tongue interference and English word stress is unpredictable. Depending on these results, the researcher recommends that teachers should master the sound systems of the two languages (L1- L2), and learners should start early on learning word stress patterns using all the modern means of developing their pronunciation in the target languages. Furthermore, the researcher recommends that researchers should be encouraged to conduct additional research on pronunciation in general and word stress patterns in particular.

Grace, (2006) M.A, the Patterns of English Word Stress by Hong Kong ESL Learners, the Chinese University of Hong Kong. This study demonstrates the pattern of English (primary) word stress in polysyllabic words by Hong Kong ESL (English as a second language) learners and the effect of suffixation on the stress placements by four types of suffixes that shift strong stress to the anti-penultimate (third from the last), penultimate (second from the last), and ultimate (last) syllables as well as those do not shift strong stress. The data were collected from eight undergraduates from the universities in Hong Kong, by recording their oral-reading of a word list. The findings of the study indicate the primary stress pattern varies among bisyllabic, trisyllabic, quadrisyllabic, and five-syllable stems. Also, four types of suffixes assert a variety of degree on the stress placements by the subjects. The most salient observation is that suffixes *-ese* and *-ade* have the least effect on subjects' stress placements because most of the primary stress of the stems maintain on first syllable as their roots but do not shift to last syllable. Since the correct primary stress is on last syllable in this type of stems, stress placement on first syllable causes most incorrect productions. Although suffixes *-ese* and *-ade* do not appear as frequently as other suffixes, for example, *-ic*, *-ity*, and *-cy*, the findings reveal the unawareness of stress-shifting effect by Hong Kong ESL learners, which should be received more attention.

Ahmed, A (2016) M.A The main aim of this study is to investigate the impact of syllables on reading ability for English students in 2nd year University level. The research has adopted the descriptive analytical approach in collecting and analyzing data and materials of the study purpose. The researcher has designed a test to examine the specific participants; they are fifty students who study English at SUST/ College of Languages, 2nd year. Based on the data collection and analysis, the study has reached into some findings, the most important ones are: Students of 2nd level encounter serious problem in dealing with syllables. The problem of the students lays on the difficulties they find when they split words into syllables especially with many syllabic words such '*Corporate*'. Students also face problem in finding out the stress in a group of given words either first syllable or two syllable. Based on the findings, the researcher has presented some recommendations as follows: Students should themselves seek the proper solution for the problem by study how syllables work and their complete rules. A lot of reading task is needed from students especially of 2nd level to enhance their ability to deal with syllables.

Mohammed, A (2014) M.A, Investigating knowledge of Syllable Structure and Stress Use among Sudanese EFL University Learners. This study aims to investigate the awareness of syllable structure and stress use among Sudanese University EFL learners. The aims of this study are; to investigate the students' awareness of English syllable structure, and to know to what degree students are able to use stress correctly. To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher designed and administered a test for a sample of 50 of the third year students of English. The researcher has followed the quantitative analytical method to analyze the results. The findings of the study revealed that students are aware of English syllable structure, and they are not able to use stress correctly. Based on the findings the researcher recommended that students should pay more attention in English word stress, because of its importance in pronunciation. The researcher also recommended giving phonological awareness a considerable portion in the learners' store of linguistic information.

Hassan, G (2016). The impact of using Audio-visual aids in teaching and learning English language Stress, SUST. This study aims at investigating the problem that encounter university students to master English language stress; to investigate learners problem in mastering English language stress ,and to know the impact of using the audio- visual aids in teaching and learning English language stress .to achieve the objectives of the study ,the researcher designed and administered questionnaire for a sample of (30) of the MA students in English department .the researcher has followed the quantitative analytical method to analyze the results. The validity and reliability of the tool mentioned above were measured. The findings of the study revealed that students are face problems in mastering English stress, and the using of audio –visual aids affect in teaching and learning English language stress. Based on the findings the researcher recommended teaching the way of teaching and learning the rules of English stress .The researcher also recommended to investigate the phonological problems that face university students to learn English language.

2.3 Comment on the previous studies in relation to the present study

In fact all of the previous studies which have been mentioned here so far deal with Supra-segmental Phonology. Although these studies have various titles and seek at different problems, however, they revolve around one area which namely word stress, and they deal with the difficulties related it. Even though these studies have different aims, but most of them follow the descriptive analytical method. Also they follow the same tool in collecting data; on one hand, some of them designed an oral test. On the other hand, the rest designed a written test as well as a questionnaire. Finally, the present study and the previous ones agreed on the students' weakness regarding English word stress, whereas they disagreed on the reasons behind that.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the research methodology, the method that the researcher used to conduct the study from the first step until the last point. It is a qualitative research and it follows descriptive, analytical method. To achieve all the necessities, the researcher is going to follow a scientific method, in order to get logical and acceptable outputs. Accordingly and in order to realize transparency, the researcher will provide details of all procedures that are followed in carrying out of the research. This chapter consists of population of the study, the place where the study is conducted, samples of the study or the respondents who participated in the study, the tool of data collection including its validity and reliability, and the procedures followed for carrying out the research.

3.1 Population of the Study

This study is carried out at Sudan University of Science & Technology, precisely the English Department at College of Languages. The population of this study is about 100 students. All of them study English as a foreign language. They belong to the 3rd level in the academic year 2017.

3.2 Methodology

The present study deals with the difficulties faced by 3rd year English regarding English word stress, it's a qualitative research. To investigate the problems that

encounter the students in mastering English word stress, the researcher will design a test to examine the specific participants. This test will adopt the descriptive and analytical method, since using both methods, will help to get transparent and real results.

3.3 Samples of the Study

The total number of the participants in this study is 50, all of the subjects are students of third year English language, who belong to (SUST), College of languages/ English department in the academic year 2017. Since the study deals with Supra-segmental Phonology, precisely the placement of stress in English words, the researcher selects this level to investigate the problems, because they have already studied English Phonetics and Phonology.

3.4 Tool of Data Collection

In order to get a real result, the researcher designs a test to examine the specific participants. This test is designed upon the level of the participants and it consists of two questions. These questions collocate with hypotheses of the study. The first question is related to syllable's weight and it includes five words to test the knowledge of the participants in relation to syllable's weight. The second one is divided into two parts; the first part deals with primary stress, whereas the second one includes both primary and secondary stress. Both parts are intended to measure students' knowledge of stress placement on words.

3.5 Pilot Test

To test the validity and reliability of the tool; the researcher has examined 10 students as a trial to the test. Those samples were chosen randomly from both third and fourth year English at the Department of English, College of Languages. After the researcher marked the test, and analyzed it statistically by SPSS the result shows the lack of student's knowledge regarding English word stress, since the total result illustrates that about 70% failed the exam.

2.6 Validity and reliability of the tool

After the data of the test was analyzed by SPSS, the result demonstrates that the Test is reliable with percentage 0.80 %, as well as valid with 0.64%.

3.6.1 Reliability

Reliability Coefficients:

N of Cases = 10.0 N of Items = 3

Alpha = .8019

3.6.2 Validity

$$\text{Validity} = \sqrt{\text{Reliability}}$$

$$\text{Reliability} = 0.80$$

$$\text{Validity} = \sqrt{0.80} = 0.64$$

$$\text{Validity} = 0.64$$

2.6.3 Face Validity

The researcher distributes four copies of the test to four English teachers at SUST, precisely College of Languages to give their opinion and comments toward the test. One of them is associate prof; the second is assistant prof, while the others are teachers under PH.D. However they have a great experience in teaching English language. All of them have accepted the test and admit that it is suitable for 3rd year students according to their experiences. Accordingly, the researcher took their comments into consideration and modified the test.

3.7 Procedures

After the validity and reliability of the test were confirmed, the researcher distributed 50 copies of test for 50 participants who belong to 3rd year English. In order to realize transparency and get real findings; each one of the participants will answer the test individually without any internal and external influences, after they finish, the researcher will collect all papers, after that he will mark the test. The test will be marked as follows: Since there are two hypotheses and the test consists of two questions. Firstly, each question will be marked individually to determine who are failed or succeed; if the result is negative, then the hypotheses will be accepted, however if it is positive, then the hypotheses will be rejected. Secondly, for more explanations, each question will be analyzed according its wor illustrated with tables.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DESSCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter talks about data analysis and discussion of the results. After the test has been marked and analyzed by statistical program labeled **SPSS**, the results obtained will be discussed in details. In order to explain whether the predictions is true or not; first of all, each question will be analyzed as a separate part illustrated by table and chart to show the feedback of the participants. Then, each statement will be discussed in details illustrated by tables to give full explanations. The discussion and comments of the result obtained will be tied with the hypotheses and previous studies.

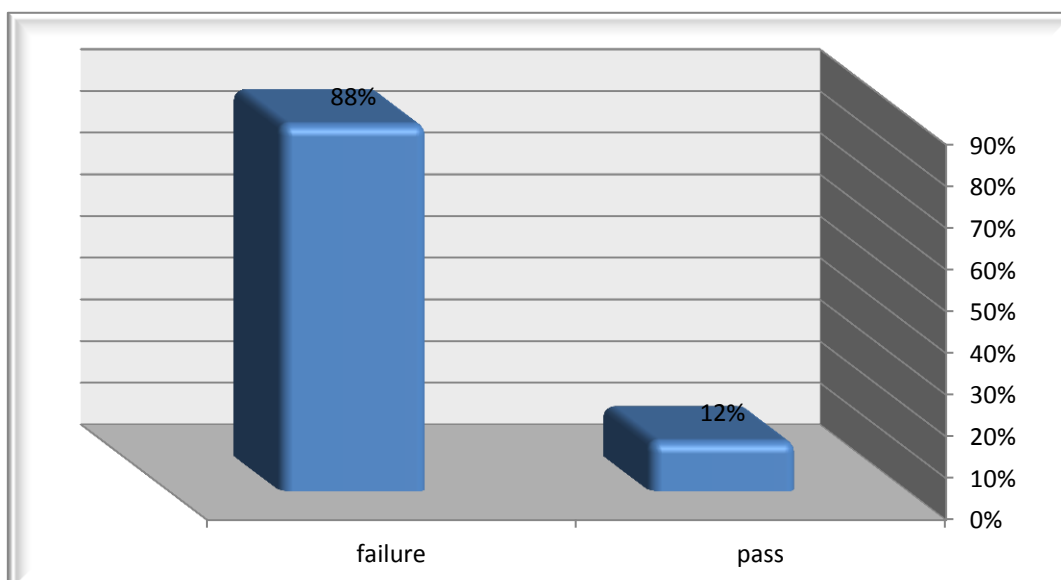
4.1 Descriptive analysis and Discussion

Hypothesis (1)

Most 3rd year English students are not able to distinguish between strong and weak syllable.

The results of question one

The participants are given five words transcribed into IPA with syllable division. These words contain from two up to six syllables as follows: (conspire, tomorrow, enthusiasm, vocabulary, personification). Then the participants were asked to determine whether the syllable of each of the specific words is strong or weak. The results obtained showed that six of the subjects passed, whereas forty-four failed. The result is illustrated by chart below.



Graph (4.1)

(Student’s performance regarding syllable’s weight)

From the table (4.1) below, in words with six syllables *‘personification’*, five syllables *‘vocabulary’* the results show that consistency about 84%, 84%, of the participants failed to distinguish the syllable’s weight. On the other hand, with regard to the words with three syllables *‘tomorrow’* four syllables *‘enthusiastic’*, disyllabic *‘conspire’*, the result indicates that about 80%, 76%, 62% in the same order as they have just mentioned, the subjects failed in determining syllables weight.

Table (4.1)

(The result of the students regarding syllable’s weight)

Word	Correct		Incorrect	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Personification	8	16%	42	84%
Vocabulary	8	16%	42	84%
Tomorrow	10	20%	40	80%
Enthusiastic	12	24%	38	76%
Conspire	19	38%	31	62%

If we look at the results obtained by the samples, we will notice that the majority encountered difficulties in determining the syllable's weight, precisely a polysyllabic words tend to be more difficult than bi or tri-syllabic words. In fact the distinction between strong and weak syllable is not an easy matter, because each one of them has its own features and unless you know the rules of each one, you may confused in determining whether the syllable is light or heavy. Although Phonology is taught to English students in the second year, but maybe this confusion occurs due to the lack knowledge of them, or because of the low concentration. With regard to the result obtained in question one, Ahmed (2016) the researcher predicts that: "*Students don't easily determine the syllables in a given word*". The overall result indicates that: Students encounter serious problem in finding out the right position of stress, due to the confusion in determining the syllable's weight.

Moreover, Mohammed (2014) has reached to the same result, since the researcher speculates that: "students are not able to use stress correctly" the results obtained indicate that: Most of the students have a real problems in using stress correctly, based on the result obtained these problems occur due to students' ignorance about English transcription, also their lack of knowledge in determining syllable's weight.

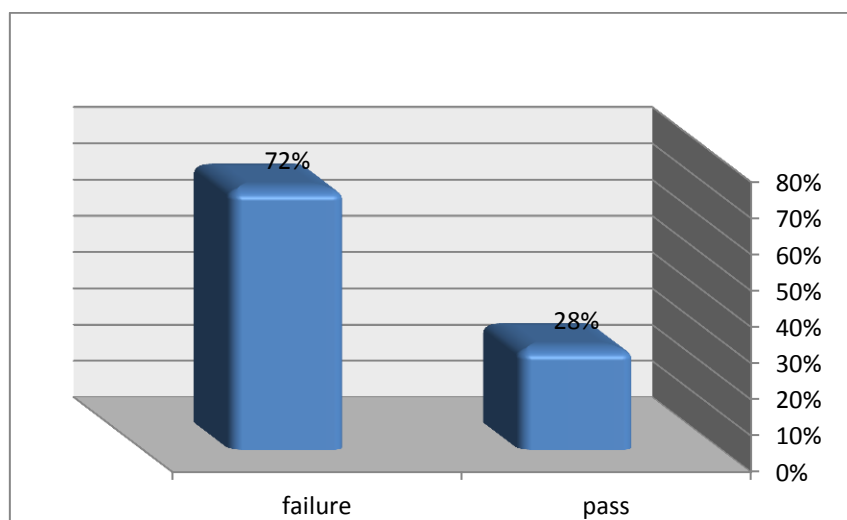
Based on the result obtained by the subjects in question one, the first hypothesis is confirmed.

Hypothesis (2)

3rd year English students face difficulties in determining the right place of stress on syllables.

Part (a) Stress Placement in Simple Word

This part consists of 18 words which have been specified to test the participant's ability on placing stress in written words. Most of the words are classified into different classes (V, N, Adj, etc...) and all of them just carry primary stress, whether in ultimate, penultimate or initial. The subjects were asked to determine the placement of stress according to their knowledge. The result obtained reflects the weakness of the students, since about 28% of the students who participated in the test got the pass.



Graph (4.2)

(Students' performance regarding stress placement in simple word)

To begin with the words that consists of two syllables such as: (*accent, early, accept and often*), the general result was not satisfactory, although these words contain two syllables, however one of its syllables is stressed whether the first or the second according to the class and the degree of prominence. But it is clear that most of the students are confused and have problems in determining the correct position of stress maybe that is due to the ignorance of stress rules, since in two syllable nouns '*accent*' 44% of the subjects have got the correct answer. In two

syllable verb *'accept'* 78% succeeded to stress it correctly, because of the length is one of the features of stressed syllable and it plays an important role in stress placement; therefore the majority succeeded to determine the correct position of stress, since in the word *'accept'* it is an easy to notice that the second syllable tend to be longer than the first one. Regarding two syllable adverb *'often'* the result reveals that 46% of the students stressed the word correctly. Maybe, those who failed ignored that the vowel [ə] is related with unstressed syllable. Regarding two syllable adjective *'early'* just 40% of the students stressed the word correctly. Maybe those who failed do not know that the vowel quality is a feature of stressed syllable. The table below demonstrates the result obtained

Table (4.2)
(Student's performance regarding stress placement in two syllable word)

Word	Correct		Incorrect	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Accent	22	44%	28	56%
Accept	39	78%	11	22%
Often	23	46%	27	54%
Early	20	40%	30	60%

Ahmed (2016) the researcher predicts that: *"Students do not easily determine the stressed syllable in a given words"* The overall result of this question shows that students encounter serious problem on placing stress in two syllable words.

Regarding word class pairs such as: *'minute'* (adj) and *'minute'* (n). It is clear that both of them have the same written form, but if we look deep under the surface we may discover that they have different sounds based on the class of words. The result obtained maintains that most of the students have problems in stressing word class pairs, since both of the percentage of failure is above 50%, which is 64% and 78% respectively.

Regarding the word *'contrast'* (n) and *'contrast'* (v), although both of them have the same written form, but in fact if we look at each one of them under the surface, we will find out that they have different stress pattern. Based on the result obtained, about 58% of the students stressed the word *'contrast'* (v) correctly. On the other hand, the word *'contrast'* (n) about 30% of the subjects succeeded to stress it correctly, whereas the rest about 70% failed. In the verb *'contrast'* it is an easy to capture that the first syllable is weak, because it contains [ə], also the second syllable tend to be longer than the first one, so that over 50% stressed it correctly. On the other side, the noun *'contrast'* seems to be more complicated, because both of the two syllables seem to be stressed, therefore about 70% of the students failed. The table below shows the result obtained by the students

Table (4.3)

(Student's performance regarding stress placement in word class pairs)

Word	Correct		Incorrect	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
minute as (adj)	18	36%	32	64%
minute as (N)	11	22%	39	78%
contrast as (N)	15	%30	35	%70
contrast as (V)	29	%58	21	%42

If we look at these pair of words, it is not an easy matter to stress it, unless you know to distinguish the weight of the syllable.

Mohammed (2014) maintains that: there is a significant correlation between the weak and strong syllable which strongly affect the stress placement, he has reached that most of the students do not differentiate between them.

Table (4.4)

(Students' performance regarding stress placement in three syllables noun)

Word	Correct		Incorrect	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Cinema	17	34%	33	66%
Disaster	24	48%	26	52%

The table above (4.4) demonstrates the students' performance regarding three syllable nouns, since they have given two words nouns, since one of them carry stress in initial position, while the second one carry stress in penultimate syllable and the participants were asked to determine the stress placement. The result obtained explains that most of the students' encountered difficulties to stress tri-syllabic word correctly, since in the word '*cinema*' about 66% failed to stress it correctly. On the other hand, the word '*disaster*' about 52% failed. It is clear that most of the students can recognize the vowel quality maybe that helped them to stress both of words correctly.

In three syllables adverb '*usually*', about 76% of the students failed to determine the correct position of stress. Maybe, this confusion occurred due to their lack of knowledge of stress rules. The table below shows the correct and incorrect answers obtained by the participants with frequency and percentage.

Table (4.5)

(Students' performance regarding stress placement three syllables adverb)

Word	Correct		Incorrect	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
usually	12	24%	38	76%

Regarding three syllable adjective, the subjects were given two words '*comfortable*' and '*amazing*' the first one carries stress in the first syllable, while the second one has stress in penultimate syllable. The result obtained explains that about 74% and 68% respectively failed to determine the placement of stress. The table below demonstrates the result obtained with frequency and percentage.

Table (4.6)

(Students' performance regarding stress placement in three syllables adjective)

Word	Correct		Incorrect	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Comfortable	13	26%	37	74%
Amazing	16	32%	34	68%

The table below (4.7) illustrates the student's result regarding three syllable verb, the participants were given three words with different stress placement mentioned as follows: (*understand, determine and parody*). The students were asked to stress all of them based on their knowledge. The result obtained indicates that most of them encounter difficulties while stressing them, since about 46%, 62%, and 66% respectively failed to stress them correctly. It is noticeable that the length and vowel quality facilitate stress placement than pitch and loudness.

Table (4.7)

(Students' performance regarding stress placement in three syllable verb)

Word	Correct		Incorrect	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Understand	27	54%	23	46%
Determine	19	38%	31	62%
Parody	17	34%	33	66%

From the table below (4.8), the participants were asked to stress two different compound words which have different stress placement, to test their ability. The first word is *'suitcase'* which carry stress in the first element. The second one is *'typewriter'* which has primary in the first part and secondary stress in the second one. The result reveals that the majority failed to determine the correct stress position in both words, since in the word *'suitcase'* about 78% of subjects failed. On the other hand, in the word *'typewriter'* about 70% of the students have got the incorrect answer. The general result reflects the weakness of the students regarding compound words; this problem refers to the lack of their knowledge about word stress rules.

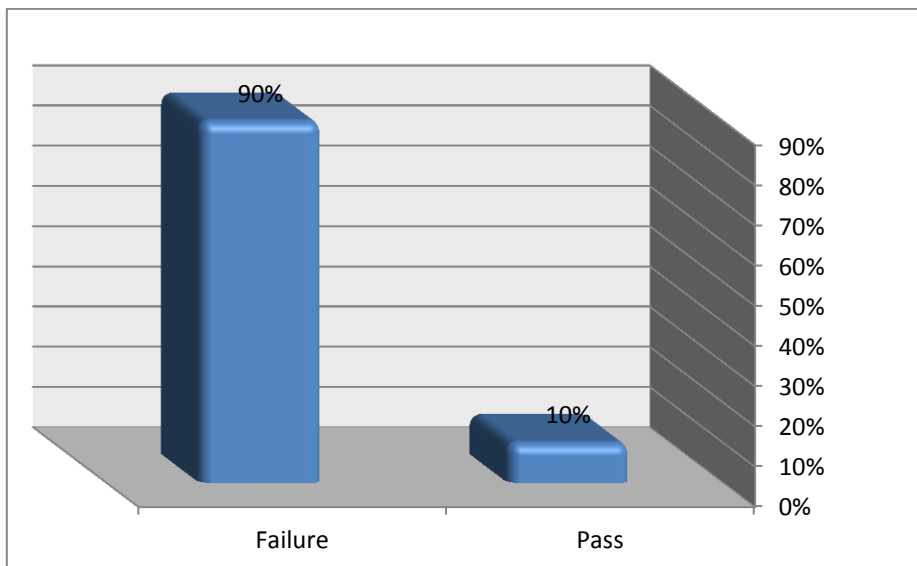
Table (4.8)

(Students' performance regarding Stress placement in compound words)

Word	Correct		Incorrect	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Suitcase	11	22%	39	78%
Typewriter	15	30%	35	70%

Part (b) Stress Placement in Complex Word

This part involves seven words. The subjects were given 7 words with complex structure and which have both primary and secondary stress. The general result is not satisfactory, since it reflects the weakness of the students on placing stress precisely in complex words. The majority about 90% of subjects failed on stressing the specific words. This disaster result maintains that the students are not just confused, but also they have a lack of knowledge and even most of them are unaware. This result illustrated by chart as follow:



Graph (4.3)

(Students' performance regarding stress placement in complex word)

Discussion of the result

As it has already mentioned that this question includes 7 words divided into two groups. The first group is four words mentioned as follows: (*entertain* (v), *presentation* (n), *automatically* (adv), *enthusiastic* (adj)). All these words are polysyllabic which carry both primary and secondary stress. The result is not satisfactory at all since in the verb '*entertain*' about 88% failed. Also, the result shows that some of them are able to determine the primary stress, but they are confused in determining secondary stress, therefore most of them failed. Secondly, the word '*presentation*' the result shows the students' lack of knowledge since about 90% failed. Thirdly, regarding the word '*automatically*' about 90% failed due to the ignorance of the students about stress rules. Furthermore, '*enthusiastic*' this word seems to be more difficult, because it consists of 5 syllables and it is not an easy matter to determine the degree of prominence among its syllables, unless you are

enough aware about the features of stressed syllable, therefore the vast majority about 96% failed. The table below demonstrates the degree obtained by the subjects.

Table (4.9)

(Students' performance regarding stress placement complex words)

Word	Correct		Incorrect	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Entertain	9	18%	41	88%
Presentation	5	10%	45	90%
Automatically	3	6%	47	94%
Enthusiastic	2	4%	48	96%

The last thing of part (b) includes three words with affixes; the first word is '*volunteer*' which includes suffix that carries primary stress. The second one is word with suffix that influence stress in the stem '*advantages*'. The last one is '*disadvantages*' which includes suffix that shift stress placement. If we look at these words, we may notice that they have different stress placement and they seem to be more complicated than the previous, because they include affixes in their structures. To begin with the word '*volunteer*' about 90% failed. Regarding the word '*advantages*' about 96% of subjects failed. In the last word '*disadvantages*' all of the students failed on placing stress in the word; maybe this is based on the background knowledge of the students about rules of complex word stress, since this word seems to be more complicated than the others. Hereby are the result obtained by the participants.

Table (4.10)

(Students' performance regarding stress placement in words with affixes)

Word	Correct		Incorrect	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Volunteer	5	10%	45	90%
Advantages	2	4%	48	96%
Disadvantages	0	0%	50	100%

Moreover, Grace (2006) the result obtained is consistent with the present study, since the researcher has reached that the students have a real problems regarding stress placement in words that formed with affixes.

Based on the result obtained, the second hypothesis is also accepted.

CHAPTER FIVE

**FINAL FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS &
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

CHAPTER FIVE

FINAL FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS & SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

5.0 Introduction

This is a final chapter of the study. It includes final findings, conclusion, recommendations, and suggestions for further studies. First of all the researcher is going to sum up the results obtained by the participants. Then he will write about the conclusion of the study. After that, based on the results, the researcher will provide his own advice as well as his suggestions to those who want to carry out further studies eventually in the area of Phonology in general, and Supra-segmental Phonology in particular.

5.1 Final Findings

The overall result is not satisfactory at all; it reflects the weakness of students regarding English word stress. The final results of the study reveal the following

- 1) The majority of 3rd year English language students at SUST failed to determine the syllable's weight within words with the percentage of 88%.
- 2) Most of 3rd year English language students failed to place stress in words that only carry primary stress with percentage of 72%.
- 3) Most of the students also failed to place stress in word class pairs.

- 4) Students' performance has also reflected the lack of knowledge regarding stress placement in words which compose of three syllables, including verbs, nouns, adjectives as well as adverbs.
- 5) Most of 3rd year English language students failed to place stress in compound words.
- 6) Lastly, the majority of the students failed to place stress in polysyllabic words, which compose of affixes and carry both primary and secondary stress with percentage of 90%.

5.2 Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to check the knowledge of English learners in determining the syllable's weight and the placement of stress. Moreover, this study deals with the stress pattern and its effects on English learners, it revolves around the idea that mastering English word stress can help learners to master English pronunciation, as well as comprehend the spoken language. The researcher has already speculated that most of English learners who study English as a foreign language at college of languages encounter difficulties regarding English word stress. This problem is due to the lack of the learner's knowledge about syllable's weight and stress rules. The final findings reveal that third year English students have real problems in determining the syllable's weight; since most of them failed to distinguish between the strong and weak syllable in a given words. This ignorance can confuse them while stressing English words. Both of the two hypotheses are confirmed. The result obtained demonstrates that third year students encounter serious problems regarding English word stress; since most of them failed to stress the particular words, and since identification of syllable's weight correlates with stress placement.

5.3 Recommendations

English word stress is not an easy matter. To master it, the researcher recommends the following:

- 1) Students should enable to recognize the syllable's weigh, whether is strong or weak, since the syllable's weight plays an important role in the stress placement.
- 2) English learners should pay attention to recognize the right pronunciation of each new word they hear.
- 3) Students should learn the features of stressed syllable, because that may lead them to master English word stress.
- 4) Students should learn the rules of stress, because that may help and facilitate stressing words.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

Based on the results, the researcher suggests the following topics for eventual studies.

- 1) The impact of English word stress on listening perception.
- 2) The impact of knowledge of syllable's structure of English words on the pronunciation of words.
- 3) The impact of suffixation on the stress placement.

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APPENDIX

Sudan University of Science & Technology

College of Graduate Studies

MA program in English Language (Linguistics) Batch (5)

An assessment Test/ 3rd year English Students /Time Allowed 1 h

Submitted by: Maan Abdulrahman Mustafa Mohamed

Supervised by: Dr. Areig Osman Ahmed Mohamed

▪ **Instructions:**

Dear students:

I will be grateful if you assist me by spending a little time to respond to these questions. The purpose of these questions is to check the knowledge of stress placement in English. So, please give the following questions your attention and answer each question honestly in the place provided.

Question (1):

Below there are some words transcribed into International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Each word is divided into syllables and the mark (.) is used to show the boundary among syllables in the particular word. Please, determine whether a syllable is strong or weak; just write (S) above the strong syllable, and (W) above the weak one.

Conspire /kən.spəɪə(r)/

Tomorrow /tə.mɔ.rəʊ/

Enthusiasm /ɪn.θju:.zi.æz.əm/

Personification /pə.sən.i.fi.keɪ.fən/

Vocabulary /və.kæb.jə.lə.ri/

Question (2):

(a) Read the following words, pay attention to the grammatical category of each one, and put the primary stress (') on the suitable syllable.

Accent (n) /**æk.sənt**/

minute (adj) /**mɪn.ju:t**/

Usually (adv) /**ju:zʊə.li**/

early (adj) /**ɜ:.li**/

Cinema /**ɪ.nə.mə**/ (n)

understand (v) /**ən.dər.stænd**/

Determine (v) /**dɪ.tɜ:.mɪn**/

parody (v) /**pæ.rə.di**/

Accept (v) /**ək.sept**/

often (adv) /**ɔf.ən**/

Disaster (n) /**dɪ.zə:.stə**/

follows (v) /**fɔ.ləu**/

Contrast (v) /**kən.trɑ:st**/

amazing (adj) /**ə.meɪ.zɪŋ**/

Suitcase /**su:t.keɪs**/

contrast (n) /**kən.træst**/

Minute (n) /**mɪ.nət**/

comfortable (adj) /**kʌm.fə.təbl**/

(b) Put primary and secondary stress on the suitable syllable. Write a high small vertical line as in (') to signal primary stress, and a low small vertical line as in (,) to signal secondary stress.

Entertain (v) /**en.tə.tem**/

disadvantageous (adj) /**dɪs.æd.vən.teɪ.dʒəs**/

Presentation (n) /**pre.zən.teɪ.ʃən**/

typewriter /**taɪp.raɪtə**/

Enthusiastic (adj) /**ɪn.θju:zi.æs.tɪk**/

advantageous /**æd.vən.teɪ.dʒəs**/

Automatically (adv) /**ɔ:.tə.mæt.ɪ.kli**/

volunteer (n) /**vɔ:lən.tɪə**/

Good Luck!