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EFL Students' Word Stress Errors

A Case Study of Third Year Students of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia- Jijel University

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Dedications

In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, most merciful

I dedicate this work to

*my beloved parents **Ammar** and **Nadira** for their devotion for my education,*

*my beloved sisters **Meriem** and **her husband**, **Imane** and **Wiam** for their*

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EFL Students' Word Stress Errors

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Abstract

The present study aims at investigating the major word stress' types of errors experienced by EFL students. The study was based on the hypothesis that if students were aware of learning English word stress rules and used a variety of strategies when learning stress placement, they would not experience serious word stress difficulties. In order to achieve the aforementioned aim, the research opted for a test and a questionnaire for students. Both the test and the questionnaire were administered to 30 third year students out of 270 at the department of English, university of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia/ Jijel. The results revealed that the students are unaware of learning English word stress rules, therefore their word stress errors is high. The analysis of the research findings supported the hypothesis of the present research work: The learners experience word stress types of errors because they are not aware of learning word stress rules. Based on those findings, some pedagogical recommendations are suggested for minimizing and overcoming word stress problems.

EFL Students' Word Stress Errors

List of Abbreviations and Symbols

CVC: Consonant Vowel Consonant

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

ICTs: Information and Communication Technologies

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

LT: Language Teaching

N: Number

RP: Received Pronunciation

TL: Target Language

Q: Question

%: Percentage

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General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

The major aim of learning English as a Foreign Language for the majority of learners is to have an acceptable pronunciation that enables them to understand and to be understood by others. However, many of Algerian EFL students encounter types of errors towards English word stress as an important aspect of pronunciation which must be considered from the perspective of both the speaker and the listener. Roach (2000, p.87) considered that studying words in isolations in the English language does help teachers to see stress placement and stress levels more clearly than studying them in a context of continuous speech, which implies that word stress plays a decisive role and it is unavoidable prosodic aspect. Indeed, it is not an optional extra, but rather a core part of the language. Teachers should play a crucial role to give help and support to their learners to perceive and produce it on the right syllable from one hand, and learners should experience useful ways and strategies that may help them put it correctly on the other hand.

Various authors and scholars in the field have undertaken this issue and provided evidence that stress placement can determine how well native speakers will understand the nonnative talk. These studies have also addressed the main source of stress misplacement and major difficulties encountered and anticipated by EFL learners such as, Garnes and Bond, (1975), Hubicka (1980-1981), Fudge (1984), Kenworthy (1987), Brown (1990), Dalton and Seidlhoffer (1994), Benrabah (1997), and Ur (2003). In fact, Al-Jarrah (2012) pointed out that

> *"stress misplacement by the nonnative speaker does not often help the*
>
> *listener (the native speaker in this case) identify points of focus in the*
>
> *speech stream, and thus, fails to draw a line of demarcation between what*
>
> *is given and what is new as it would in normal native-to-native interaction.*

> *This may not only lead to communication breakdowns, but it may also*
>
> *result in serious misunderstanding".* (p. 4&5)

The misplacement of stress may lead to misunderstanding and sometimes to communication loss. The studies above supported the claim that misplacement of English word stress leads to misunderstanding and the inability to be understood by others and it is one possible cause of the problems. Therefore, the mastery of stress is an essential portion to attain accurate and native-like pronunciation.

2. Statement of the Problem

While many English learners aspire to have an accurate pronunciation to communicate effectively, some students claim that their way of producing English Sounds is generally good. However, one serious problem that Algerian EFL University students encounter is misplacing English word stress. It has been shown that a considerable number of learners face such obstacle which would make their speech unintelligible and not fully understood. The reason behind it is may be due to the lack of awareness and teacher's training, ineffective instruction and inappropriate learning strategies. Therefore, it is very necessary to push the learners to practice English word stress and to notice the stress placement in words, because word stress is important in conveying meaning in the spoken language.

3. Aim of the Study

The present research work aims at finding out the major word stress types of errors experienced by Algerian EFL License students .

4. Research Questions and Hypothesis

The current study is conducted in order to provide possible answers to the following research questions:

1. To what extent do EFL License students experience word stress types of errors?

2. What are the students' perceptions of these errors?

3. How students find learning of English word stress?

On the basis of what has been mentioned above, it is hypothesized that:

If students were aware of their word stress problems and used a variety of strategies when learning the stress placement, they would not experience serious word stress difficulties.

5. Means of Research

To achieve the aim of the present study two means of research are designed: a test and a student's questionnaire. A test is administered to investigate whether the learners experience any errors with regards to the area of word stress. In addition, a questionnaire is administered to students in order to examine their perceptions of word stress rules.

6. The Structure of the Study

The current work is divided into two major parts: the first one is the theoretical part, which divided into two chapters. The chapter one defines pronunciation as a significant component in the field of language teaching and learning. The second chapter deals with stress as an important seprasegmental feature of pronunciation and major types of errors that EFL students experience. The second part of the study involves field investigation; it describes the population and description of the instruments used in the study. In addition, it displays the findings sorted from the test and the questionnaire for students to get their perceptions about word stress errors. Lastly, it ends with the main search findings, pedagogical recommendation and limitation.

CHAPTER ONE: PRONUNCIATION LEARNING AND TEACHING

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CHAPTER ONE: PRONUNCIATION LEARNING AND TEACHING

Introduction

Many English learners aspire to have an acceptable pronunciation, despite the fact that they regularly experience communication breakdowns as a result of mispronouncing. Pronunciation is considered as important as the other aspects of English like grammar, vocabulary, syntax and so on. This chapter casts light on some important issues about pronunciation teaching and learning, namely; its definition, main features, and importance as well as pointing out to student and teacher roles in pronunciation teaching and learning. Indeed, it sheds light on the effectiveness of pronunciation instruction and some influential factors of pronunciation learning and teaching.

1.1. Definition of Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the most needed aspect to learn English. Some authorities in the field of phonetics and phonology defined it in different ways. For Cook (1996), pronunciation is the manufacturing of English sounds that are used to express meanings. It is learned by reproducing sounds and correcting them when produced in a faulty way, in other words, when learners learn new English sounds, they automatically make new habits that enable them to overcome the difficulties resulting from their first language (as cited in Gilakjani, 2016, p. 2).

Fraser (2001) claimed that pronunciation

"includes all those aspects of speech which make for an easily intelligible flow of speech, including segmental articulation, rhythm, intonation and phrasing, and more peripherally even gesture, body language and eye contact Pronunciation is an essential ingredient of oral communication, which also includes grammar, vocabulary choice, cultural considerations and so on"(p.6).

According to Kristina and Diah (2006)

"Pronunciation is the act or manner of pronouncing words; utterance of speech. In other words, it can also be saidthat it is a way of speaking a word, especially a way that is accepted or generally understood. In the senses, pronunciation entails the production and reception of sounds of speech and the achievement of the meaning" (as cited in Pratiwi, 2010, p.12)

Burgess and Spencer (2000) defined pronunciation as "the practice and meaningful use of TL [target language] phonological features in speaking, supportedby practice in interpreting those phonological features in TL discourse that one hears" (p. 191-192). They stated that pronunciation is the nature of the process to practice listening and speaking by interpreting and producing phonological features respectively. Therefore, pronunciation as a skill includes both recognition and production.

Concerning the above definitions, it can be summarized that pronunciation is the way of pronouncing words in a particular manner that should be understood.

1.2. The Main Features of Pronunciation

Opposed to the common idea that pronunciation is just related to how separate words of a language are articulated, this is also related to the voicing of these words with a sentence. Particularly, pronunciation does not relate only to individual sounds such as vowels and consonants (segmental elements) but in addition to further characteristics of the language related to other things such as stress, rhythm, and intonation (suprasegmental elements) (Saka, 2015, p. 13). The former feature can be considered as individual sounds of language that differentiate one word with another. The later, on the other hand, includes features of sounds (AK, 2012, p.27). These aspects are treated in different ways, yet, they work together in communication, and that is to say, both of them are important to learners

in mastering English pronunciation. For this reason, it is important to the English learners to take into consideration these features together in speech production.

1.2.1. Segmental Features (Phonemes)

Segmental features are separate sound units, which also correspond to phonemes; these set of phonemes consist of two categories: vowel sounds, diphthongs and triphthongs, and consonant sounds with their place, manner of articulations and voicing. According to Roach (2009)

" In any language we can identify a small number of regularly used sounds (vowels and consonants) that we call phonemes; for example the vowels in words "pin" and "pen" are different phonemes so are the consonants at the beginning of the words" pet" and "bet". It is particularly important to learn to think of English pronunciation in terms of phonemes rather than letters of the alphabet". (P. 2)

1.2.1.1. Vowels

Vowels are the first type of speech; they differ from consonants in the way of their production. Rogers (2000) stated, "In making vowels the vocal tract is more open than consonants" (p.28). Roach (2009) defined vowels as "sounds which are produced with no obstruction of air as it comes from the larynx and passes freely through the oral/or nasal cavity to the lips" (p.10). The following diagram shows the different positions of the tongue in the mouth when producing each of the English vowels:

Fig 1.1: Cardinal Vowels (Kelly, 2001, P. 5)
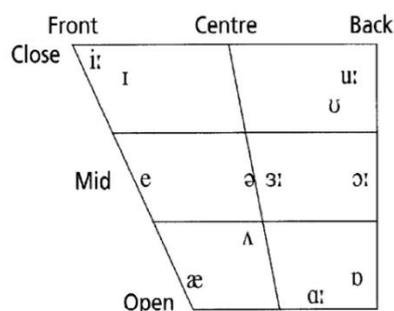
Cardinal vowels (Close, mid, and open) refer to the distance between the tongue and the roof of the mouth. Front, Centre, back, and their compatible vertical lines refer to the part of the tongue that is raised. The position of each phoneme in the above diagram represents the highest part of the tongue (as cited in Zerdoumi, 2014, p.13). For Kelly (2000), correspondingly, the pure vowel sounds are classified into three subcategories: close, mid, and open vowels. First, Close vowels are produced with the tongue somehow raised in the mouth. Not that the position of the tongue changes from front to back when moving from /i: / to /u: /. Second, when articulating mid vowels the tongue is taking a middle position in the mouth neither high nor low. Not that the tongue changes its position, in /e/ it is front, but in /ɔ: / it is back. Finally, Open vowels, when the tongue in the production of open vowels is low in the mouth, it changes its position of front to back when moving from /æ/ to /ɒ/ (p.5).

Roach (2002) stated that, "British English (BBC accent) is generally described as having short vowels, long vowels and diphthongs. There are said to be seven short vowels, five long ones and eight diphthongs". (P. 2)

Table 1.1:Vowels of British English

Short vowels		Long vowels		Diphthongs	
ɪ	**p**i**t**	iː	**bean**	eɪ	b**ay**
e	**p**e**t**	ɑː	b**ar**n	ai	b**uy**
æ	**p**at	ɔː	b**or**n	ɔɪ	b**oy**
ʌ	**p**utt	uː	b**oon**	əʊ	n**o**
ɒ	**p**ot	ɜː	burn	aʊ	n**ow**
ʊ	**p**ut			ɪə	p**ear**
ə	**anoth**er			eə	p**air**
				ʊə	p**oor**

Diphthongs are commonly defined by the way they are pronounced by speakers in the sense that the speaker makes a movement from the first vowel sound to the second one involving the change in the place and manner of articulation, and the shape of the lips in

order to produce a diphthong. Kelly (2000) clarified this by saying that a diphthong is "a combination, involving a movement from one vowel to another" (p.2).

Fig 1.2: English Diphthongs
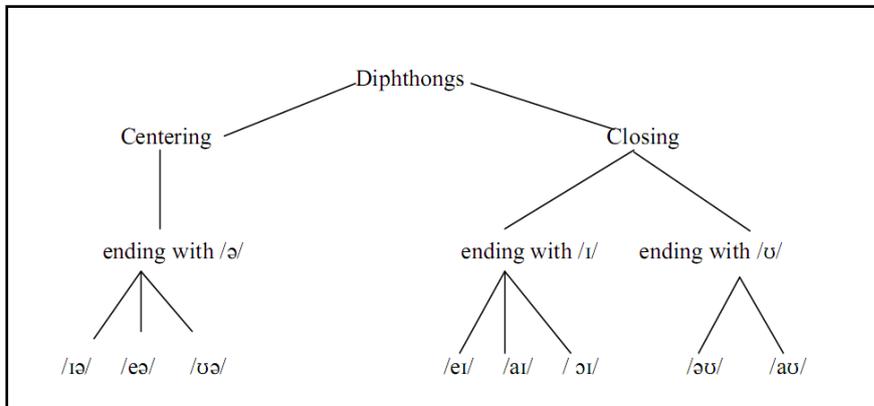
(Kelly, 2000, p.35-36) grouped diphthongs as follow:

➢ The centering diphthongs:

They end with a glide towards the sound /ə/, which is a centering vowel.

/ɪə/ the glide is from the position of /ɪ/ to the position of /ə/, which necessitates moving down and back. Regarding the lips, they are neutral with a slight movement from spread to open, as in 'idea', 'pierce', and 'here'.

/ʊə/ the glide is from /ʊ/ to /ə/ so the shape of the lips changes from being loosely rounded to neutrally spread, as in 'tour', 'moor', and 'obscure'. This diphthong is somewhat rare and most speakers replace it with /ɔ: /.

/eə/ the glide requires moving from /e/ back to /ə/ while the lips are neutrally open, as in 'wear', 'chair', and 'there'.

➢ The closing diphthongs:

They end with a glide towards /ɪ/ or /ʊ/, which are both closing vowels. The glide is then towards a higher position in the mouth.

➢ Ending in /ɪ/:

/eɪ/ the glide starts from /e/, moving up and slenderly back towards /ɪ/.The lips are spread in the process, as in 'cake', 'pain', and 'weigh'.

/ɔɪ/ the glide goes up and forward from the position of /ɔ:/ to the position of /ɪ/. The lips change from being openly rounded to neutral, as in 'toy', 'voice, and 'enjoy'.

/aɪ/ the glide begins with /a/, moving up and slightly forward to /ɪ/ with the lips changing from neutral, to loosely spread, as in 'high', 'tie', and 'eye'.

➢ Ending in /ʊ/:

/əʊ/the glide moves from the position of /ə/ up and back towards /ʊ/. The lips are neutral then change to loosely rounded, as in 'go', 'snow', and 'although'.

/aʊ/ the glide starts in an open position similar to /a:/, and ends in /ʊ/. The lips go from neutral to loosely rounded, as in 'house', 'down', and 'loud'.

Roach (2009) defined triphthongs as "The most complex English sounds of the vowel type are the triphthongs. They can be rather difficult to pronounce, and very difficult to recognize. A triphthong is a glide from one vowel to another and then to a third, all produced rapidly and without interruption" (p.18-19.). Triphthongs occur when a closing diphthong is followed by /ə/, thus there are mainly five triphthongs, which are composed of the five diphthongs /eɪ/, /aɪ /, /ɔ ɪ   /, /əʊ /, and /aʊ / with the addition of schwa at the end.

1. /eɪ /+ /ə/= /eɪ ə / as in: layer, player.

2. /aɪ /+ /ə/ = /aɪ ə/ as in: fire, tyre, liar.

3. /ɔ ɪ /+ /ə/ = /ɔ ɪ ə/ as in: employer, loyal, royal.

4. /əʊ /+ /ə/ = / əʊ ə/ as in: lower, slower.

5. / aʊ /+ /ə/ = /aʊ ə/ as in: hour, power.

1.2.1.2. Consonants

Kelly (2000, p. 12) stated that

"In teaching pronunciation, English consonants can be grouped according to the sounds produced. Before we discuss one by one, we must know the meaning of consonants generally. Consonants are kind of sounds that produced by interrupting, restricting or diverting the airflow in some ways".

Consonants can be grouped of place of articulation, manner of articulation and voicing. The description of each group is stated as follows:

First, the consonant sounds of English can also be classified according to the place of articulation. It refers to the place in the vocal tract where the flow of air is obstructed. The place of articulation (speech organ) as follows:

Table 1.2: English Consonants Regarding their Place of Articulation

Place of articulation	
Bilabial	Using closing movement of both lips, e.g. /p/ and /m/.
Labiodental	Using the lower lip and upper teeth, e.g. /f/ and /v/.
Dental	The tongue tip is used either between the teeth or close to the upper teeth, e.g. /θ/ and /ð/.
Alveolar	The blade of the tongue is used close to the alveolar ridge, e.g. /t/ and /s/.
Palato-alveolar	The blade (or tip) of the tongue is used just behind the alveolar ridge, e.g. /dʒ/ and /ʧ/.
Palatal	The front of the tongue is raised close to the palate, e.g. /j/.
Velar	The back of the tongue is used against the soft palate, e.g. /k/ and /ŋ/.
Glottal	The gap between the vocal cords is used to make audible fiction, e.g. [h].

Second, the English consonant sounds can be classified according to the manner of the articulation. It is defined as the way speech organs produced speech sounds. Based on the manner of articulations, the consonants are classified into some types. They will be explained in the following table:

Table1.3: English Consonants Regarding their Manner of Articulation

Manner of articulation	
Plosive	A complete closure is made somewhere in the vocal tract, and the soft palate is also raised. Air pressure increases behind the closure, and is then released 'explosively', e.g. /p/ and /b/.
Fricative	When two vocal organs come close enough together for the movement of air between them to be heard, e.g. /f/ and /v/.
Affricate	A complete closure is made somewhere in the mouth, and the soft palate is raised. Air pressure increases behind the closure, and is then released more slowly than in plosives, e.g. /dʒ/ and /tʃ/.
Nasal	A closure is made by the lips, or by the tongue against the palate, the soft palate is lowered, and air escapes through the nose, e.g. /m/ and /n/.
Lateral	A partial closure is made by the blade of the tongue against the alveolar ridge. Air is able to flow around the sides of the tongue, e.g. /l/
Approximant	Vocal organs come near to each other, but not so close as to cause audible friction, e.g. /r/ and /w/.

Third, the English consonant sounds can be classified according to their state of vocal cords; the vibration of vocal cords indicates the consonant. The position of vocal cords causes the difference between voiced and voiceless sound.

The following table includes the classification of the English consonants

Table 1.4: English Consonants Regarding their Voicing

Voicing			
Voiceless	**Examples**	**Voiced**	**Examples**
[p]	Put	[b]	Boot
[t]	Tin	[d]	Drive
[k]	Cape	[g]	Gone
[f]	Foot	[v]	Vote
[s]	sing	[z]	Zoo
[ʃ]	ship	[ʒ]	Measure
[tʃ]	choose	[dʒ]	jeans
[h]	hat	[ŋ]	Sing
[θ]	Think	[l]	Loose
		[r]	race
		[j]	yes
		[w]	wine
		[m]	mouse
		[n]	nose
		[ð]	this

1.2.2. The Suprasegmental Features of Pronunciation

Kelly (2000) defined Suprasegmental as "the features of speech which generally apply to groups of segments, or phonemes" (p. 3).that include stress (word stress and sentence stress), intonation and rhythm as well as the aspects of connected speech such as assimilation, elision, and linking.

1.2.2.1. Stress

Roach (1983) stated that stress has been mentioned several times but without any attempt to define the word meaning. Everyone would agree that in words like father, open and camera, the first syllable is stressed; in words like potato, apartment and relation the middle syllable is stressed, and the final syllable is stressed in words like about, receive and perhaps. These stressed syllables can be marked in transcription by placing a small vertical line (ʹ) high up, just before the stressed syllable. (p.85)

From the above-mentioned examples, stress can be defined as an emphasis that can be given to certain syllable in a word, phrase, or sentence. The latter, the syllable, is louder, longer, and has a higher pitch than the unstressed ones. In short, stress is the most important part in the word, or a group of words. This makes it an interesting aspect, or factor, in pronunciation.

1.2.2.2. Intonation

Kelly (2000) defined intonation as the way the voice goes up and down in pitch when speaking (p.86).Moreover, it is the fundamental method of understanding, expressing thoughts and even giving one's clue about the attitudes of the speaker. There is a strong connection between intonation patterns and particular types of grammatical structures. The first pattern is falling intonation which describes how the voice falls in speech; it is very common in Wh-questions e.g. where are you going? And also used with imperatives e.g.

close the door! Also, tag-questions expecting confirmation e.g. She is cute, is not she? Rising

intonation, on the other hand, describes how the voice is raised when speaking. It is common

with yes/No questions e.g. are you okay? In addition, with tag questions, showing less

certainty; such as you are French, are not you? For lists of items, the voice is raising and

finally falling. Thus Intonation is a crucial component and the most communicative aspect of

pronunciation being both structuring and interpreting speaker's meaning (Grimes & Belghiat,

2016, p. 19).

1.2.2.3. Rhythm

Celce-Murcia (1996) described English rhythm as "the regular patterned beat of

stressed and unstressed syllables and pauses" (p.152). Kenworthy (1987) added that it is "a

product of word stress and the way in which important items are fore grounded and

unimportant items are back grounded by their occurrence on a weak beat"(p.30).

1.2.3. Aspects of Connected Speech

In addition to the basic aspects of connected speech: stress, intonation and rhythm,

there exists other aspects, these are assimilation, linking, and elision. Harmer (2001) asserted

that, in order to accomplish the correct coherency of speech, learners need to acquire the

individual sounds. The use of intonation, as well as numerous aspects related to connected

speech which appears clearly when the learners are speaking in a casual and rapid manner

otherwise in lectures or while delivering speeches, they will be slow and careful and thereby

these aspects do not appear much.

Assimilation is a new sound produced when two others meet. For Celce-Murcia (2010,

p. 14),assimilation occurs when a sound becomes more similar to that which follows or

precedes it (e.g.light blue /laipblu/). Roach (1983) pointed out that "assimilation

occurs when a phoneme is realized differently as a result of being near to some other

phonemes belonging to neighboring words" (P. 14).

Elision refers to the deletion of some sounds during speech. Kelly (2000) stated that, "elision describes the disappearance of a sound" (p. 110). He asserted that elision happens when a certain sound is somewhat deleted owing to the previous-mentioned speed in order to accessorize speech and economize effort by not trying to pronounce every single sound. (e.g.'acts' becomes /aks/ rather than /akts/, 'twelfth night' becomes /twelfnaɪt/ or /twelθnaɪt/rather than /twelfθnaɪt/). Linking plays a significant role in the spoken English. It occurs usually when having two words or a group of words. It describes the connection that occurs between sounds one ending by a consonant followed by the other starting or proceeding with a vowel. This latter gives a certain extension to the consonant when joined together. Consequently, the speaker will appear much more natural and comfortable. (e.g. my train/maitrein/).

Roach (2009) stated that in hypothetical "mechanical speech" all words would be separated and next each other in sequence; however, in real connected speech, sometimes words are linked together. The most familiar case of liking is the use of linking / r /. In Received Pronunciation (RP), the phoneme / r / in syllable-final position does not occur, but when the word ends with a vowel the usual pronunciation for RP speakers is to pronounce the / r /. (e.g. here) is pronounced / hiə / but here are pronounce / hiərə / (p.115).

1.3. The Importance of Teaching Pronunciation

Pronunciation is as an unavoidable aspect of language teaching and learning. Perfect pronunciation always facilitates the processes of communication and makes the speaker's speech very comprehensible and intelligible. However, bad pronunciation leads to misunderstanding.

Burgess and Spencer (2000) argued that pronunciation is the nature of the process to practice listening and speaking by interpreting and producing phonological features respectively. Pronunciation as a skill includes both recognition and production. With this in

mind, teachers also should set obtainable goals that are applicable and suitable for the communication needs of learners and it is very important because it is the main source of understanding. If learners cannot utter the correct version of a word then they are not able to communicate correctly. Learning how to pronounce accurately and when teachers follow some effective teaching strategies help learners to have a better understanding of native speakers and improve their ability to communicate easily and effectively. Pronunciation should be regarded as a crucial part of communication since the focus of language learning is communication, it should be integrated with classes (Brown, 2002&Celce-Murcia, 1996).

Dalton and Seidlhofer (1994, p. 4) stated that pronunciation is significant as it represents an important part of a particular language code, and an important element for understanding meaning within communication. They stated that when someone learns a language, he or she does not only acquire the code and its variation, he or she also learns to make value judgments about the use of different forms which are based on how people used their language, the quality and pitch of the sound, their accents and so on.

In short, in order to achieve intelligibility and success in communication, the pronunciation should be a feature of the classroom situation. Teachers should take into account the learners communicative needs and the factors that affect the learning process in order to guide and motivate the learners and raise their awareness of the great role of pronunciation and proving the needed assistance to enable them to communicate effectively.

1.4. Student Role and Teacher Role in Pronunciation Teaching and Learning

Most of EFL learners wish to have an acceptable pronunciation, which enables them to improve their speech as well as communicating outside appropriately. Teachers, on the other hand, wish to give their efforts to help their students to achieve their needs. On that basis, the processes of pronunciation teaching or of learning, in general, is mostly a give, take and

collaboration between participants in the classroom. Here are the teacher and the learner different roles in the classroom.

1.4.1. Student's Role

When learning pronunciation, learners are expected to make efforts in order to acquire the rules and regularities of the English pronunciation. Kenworthy (1987) stated that the last thing that learners of pronunciation can do is to respond to the teacher's role although it is not easy. One important role for learners is that they should have the willingness to take responsibility for their own learning. Moreover, even though the teacher can skilfully notice and point out mispronunciations, it is never enough without the learners taking action. That is to say, the chances to improve their pronunciation would be minimal if the learners do not monitor their own efforts towards better results. Kenworthy (1987) said that If students do not practice good pronunciation at the beginning of their learning process, they may learn it wrong. Therefore, words should be learned regarding their pronunciation. Otherwise, this may damage learners 'overall success (p.3).

1.4.2. Teacher's Role

There is a range of roles that teachers of phonetics need to perform for a successful pronunciation teaching. Kenworthy (1987) offered several roles for teachers in pronunciation learning process such as: helping learners hear, helping learners make sounds, providing feedback, pointing out what's going on, establishing priorities, devising activities, and assessing progress. In general sense, teachers 'role is giving training to students to pronounce English words and giving correction to students in pronouncing English words. Sometimes students wriggle out of practicing English pronunciation by saying they are embarrassed. In this case, teachers have to make students more feel confident in practicing pronunciation (p.3).

Morley (1991) has expressed that "teachers do not teach but facilitate learners' learning pronunciation". The role of the teacher is like a coach, a speech coach, and a pronunciation coach. The pronunciation coach has the critical role of checking and guiding modifications of spoken English. She added that teachers perform pronunciation diagnostic analyses and select those aspects that can have a great effect on changing the speech of learners toward increased comprehensibility. They supply information, give models from time to time, offer cues, suggestions and constructive feedback about performance, set high standards, provide a widevariety of practice opportunities, and overall supports and encourage the learner (p.507).

In short, students sometimes wriggle out of practicing English pronunciation by saying they are embarrassed. In this case, teachers have to make students more feel confident in practicing pronunciation.

1.5. The Effectiveness of Pronunciation Instruction

Pronunciation instruction is a prominent factor in foreign language teaching. Although it plays a crucial role in acquiring and speeding up learning English sounds, there have been various arguments and support, which claimed that there is no need for the pronunciation instruction.

Pronunciation is an essential component of communicative competence. Yong (2004) suggested that from the traditional ways of learning English, students neglected the basic knowledge of speaking. This may have been enough to meet the demands of English in the years when there is less communication with foreign countries. However, oral communication began to be more important when they arrived in this century with extended forms of communication with Western countries. Also, Yong (2004) asserted that understanding by reading or writing would no longer be sufficient for the development of the economy and that communicating face to face personally or through the internet needed to be understood (as

cited in Gilakjani, 2012, p. 99). The growing trend in today's pronunciation curriculum design is to integrate both the most important segmental and suprasegmental appropriately in one course. Another aspect of the issue is how to teach effectively. Along with the development of instructional approaches, traditional teaching methods and techniques have been advocated or challenged during different times while new methods and techniques have been created.

A more balanced view today, as represented by Celce-Murcia (1996), is to use traditional pronunciation techniques as a starting point of class and later have students move to more communicative classroom tasks.A number of studies provided empirical evidence on the effect of classroom pronunciation teaching practice. For example, Jamieson and Morosan (1986) proposed a framework for successful pronunciation instruction and showed its effectiveness for the acquisition of a pair of contrastive English sounds by French learners. Morley (1991) states that the pronunciation class was one that gave primary attention to phonemes and their meaningful contrasts, combinatory phonotactic rules, and pronunciation of the basic formation of vowel or consonant etc., along with attention to stress, rhythm, and intonation. In short, the teachers must focus on two areas in teaching pronunciation.

Firstly, learners must be made aware of aspects of their pronunciation that result in other people being unable to understand them. Secondly, learners must be given the opportunity to practice aspects of the English sound system, which are crucial for their own improvement. However, some scholars have found few positive effects or even negative effects of pronunciation instruction. ForSuter (1976) and Suter and Purcell (1980) concluded that pronunciation practice in the class had little effect on the learner's pronunciation skills. Though Krashen's (1985) position was that pronunciation is acquired naturally, it was important to the effectiveness of pronunciation teaching (Pennington, 1998) but this was contested by Suter (1976) who was not able to find a positive effect from instruction.

In recent years, there has been a greater emphasis on teaching competent pronunciation, especially in ESL/EFL classrooms (as cited in Gilakjani, 2012, p. 102). For Wei (2006) "One of the reasons that it is neglected or ignored is because not many English pronunciation teaching strategies or techniques are available to teachers in the classroom"(p .1).

To sum up, Although Pronunciation instruction has got some negative sides as the others said, it is clear that the other side of scholars are with and for pronunciation instruction because they have brought lots of proofs and made empirical studies to show its importance in foreign classes for learning pronunciation accurately.

1.6. Factors Affecting Students 'Acquisition of English Pronunciation

Many factors have been proposed as influential in the L2 phonological acquisition, some of them are related to teachers and some of them are related to students as well as to the quality of the class size, resources, and the time allocation which are the contextual factors.

1.6.1. Student-Related Factors

Kenworthy (1987) asserted that during pronunciation lessons, teachers need to pay attention to factors that can have an influence on a learning process of their students. It is usually the native language that is taken into consideration and others are overlooked. Here are a number of factors that affect the acquisition of the sound system of a second or a foreign language and contribute to learning pronunciation.

1.6.1.1. The Age Factor

The age factor has a great influence on learning pronunciation, which might affect one's ability to learn the sound system of a new language. Many parents focus on teaching English to their children as young as possible because it said that young children are the best Second or foreign language learners. However, for some older children and adults are the ones who have their own strengths and can learn pronunciation well. Following this view, for

the adults are better able to set goals and to practice purposefully to reach their goals in a different way than children. In general sense, it is obvious that age factor affects the students' learning (Murcia, 2015, p. 3).

1.6.1.2. Phonetic Ability (Aptitude)

Individuals as they differ in many things, they also differ in their ability to acquire foreign/ second languages particularly in their ability to learn the sounds of a new language; in other words, some learners have a better ear for acquiring the target language than others.

According to Brown (1992), the phonetic ability sometimes called phonetic coding ability. It is a common view that some people have better listening skills for a foreign language than others. For example, they are able to discriminate between sounds more accurately than others are and to imitate sounds better (as cited in Khamkien, 2010, p. 759).

One study has indicated that those with good phonetic abilities benefit from pronunciation drills, tasks in which particular sounds are heard and the learner has to imitate repeatedly. Poor discriminators do not seem to benefit from drills very much. In fact, drills seem to cause their attempts to stabilize before they reach an accurate production of a sound (Kenworthy, 1987, p. 6-7).

1.6.1.3. Attitude and Identity

The acquisition of English pronunciation is also affected by learners' learning identity and attitudes. That is to say, the acquisition of accurate pronunciation of a target language largely depends on the person's 'sense of identity' and feelings of 'group affiliation' (kenwothy, 1987, p. 7).

In many studies of attitude in language learning, it has been shown that those learners who show positive feelings towards the speakers of the new language tend to develop more accurate, native-like accents. These positive feelings have been related to their 'integrative

motivation'; the language learner is willing to be integrated into the new speech community and is genuinely interested both in the speakers and in their culture (Kenworthy, 1987, p 8).

1.6.1.4. Motivation

Motivation is an influential factor in the sense that if a person. For example, is motivated to pronounce the English language in an accurate way, this will affect his/ her pronunciation positively. Kenworthy (1987) stated that this desire to do well is a kind of achievement motivation (p.8).

In other words, there are some learners who are strongly concerned about their pronunciation and this will result in better and more accurate pronunciation; whereas others who are not motivated; they will have poor and inaccurate one.

Kenworthy (1987), claimed that the reason behind students being unconcerned is their ignorance that their way of speaking results in the listener experiencing difficulty, irritation or misunderstanding (p.8).

1.6.1.5. The Role of Students' L 1

A learner's first language (often referred to as the L1) has a strong influence on the way he or she learns the pronunciation of a second language (referred to as the L2). Often this influence is helpful, such as when some sounds are very similar in the two languages. For example, knowing how to pronounce /m/ in one language makes it easy for a learner to pronounce /m/ in another language. However, learners' pronunciation habits in their first language can also make it more difficult for them to pronounce sounds in the new language that do not exist in their L1 or that are used in a different way. This influence is called native language interference or language transfer (Murcia, 2015, p. 5).

1.6.1.6. Exposure to the English Language

Exposure is generally, related to the length of time that learners live in the target language environment. It depends on how much they use English in their daily life without

considering residency, in other words, the more they listen and speak English, the better their pronunciation will be. According to language learning such as Krashen (1982), learners acquire language mainly from the input they receive before being expected to speak.

According to Zhang (2009), children of immigrants may be given a good example: since these children start learning second language in the target language environment, they have more advantages than children who try to learn the target language in their motherlands. However, it does not mean that learners who live in the target language country will have good native-like pronunciation. Because the key point, on the one hand, is whether the learners grasp the opportunity to use the target language, on the other hand, it should be bear in mind that many people live in the target country, but they spend much time with their native language speakers or non-English speakers (p.44-54).

1.6.2. Teacher- Related Factors

1.6.2.1. Teachers' Training and Experience

Inexperienced teachers do not know how to teach pronunciation due to having lack of knowledge of pronunciation theory. When pronunciation is not neglected, it tends to be reactive to a particular problem that has arisen in the classroom rather than being strategically planned. Teachers need to improve their practical skill in teaching pronunciation.

1.6.2.2. Techniques for the Development of Pronunciation Skills

Teachers when teaching students can give good pronunciation to students imitated and they necessarily have strategies of how to attract students. Consequently, students will easily understand materials presented by teachers. So, students will not get bored with available materials. They will get more enthusiastic in learning pronunciation.

1.6.3. Contextual Factors

Many contextual factors must be considered in learning and teaching pronunciation because students and teachers are unique with individual experiences that include class size, time allocation, and other resources.

1.6.3.1. Class size

Many students use the school classes as the appropriate setting and the main source for learning English pronunciation, Blatchford & Martin (1998) &Nye et al (2000) said that class size differences have an impact on pupils' academic progress. Pate-Bain, Achilles, Boyd-Zaharias, and McKenna (1992) reported that teachers always claim that small and regular classes are better than the large classes to individualize instruction, monitoring student's behaviour and learning, more individualized re-teaching, more enrichment, more frequent interactions with each child. A better match between each child's ability and the instructional opportunities provided, a more detailed knowledge of each child's needs as a learner, and more time to meet individual learners' needs using a variety of instructional approaches.(as cited in Beyond Repeat After Me)

1.6.3.2. Amount of Time Spent on Developing Pronunciation Skills

Pronouncing sounds involves both our minds and our bodies. When you learn new sounds, you need to learn to move the muscles of your mouth in new ways and change the pronunciation habits you have built up all through your life. This is not easy, and like learning any other muscular activity, it takes a long time. Most people cannot learn to dance or to play a musical instrument immediately; they have to start out slowly, practice a lot, and gradually build up speed and skill. Your muscles begin to "remember" how to move in a certain way because they have done it so often. Teaching pronunciation also takes time. As teachers, we cannot just teach something once and expect our students to master it right away. Teachers

need to come back to the same point, repeatedly, giving students many reviews and continued

practice (as cited in Beyond Repeat AfterMe, p. 8)**.**

1.6.3. 3. Materials

Resources are another contributing factor for student and teaching pronunciation such

as textbooks, teaching methods, tests, types of activities, computer software, that provide a

more support for the learning experience for students. Celce-Murcia (2010) claimed that you

need to know many ways to teach pronunciation to your students, adapting your methods to

fit them and their needs, and helping them practice effectively to overcome any problems they

might have. Fraser (2000) stated that EFL teachers "need to be provided with courses and

materials to help them improve their effectiveness in teaching pronunciation"(p. 2). She added

that there is also a need for "high quality, effective materials, especially computer-based

materials with audio demonstrations, for learners of EFL pronunciation, both for self-access

and for use in classes where the teacher needs the support of this kind. Fraser (2000) also has

pointed that teacher training and professional development needs to take into account

"developments in the area of second language phonology driven partly by an interest in

psycholinguistics and theory of speech, and partly by a need to know more about how to teach

pronunciation to learners of a second language." Teachers need a greater appreciation of the

pronunciation difficulties faced by learners of ESL/EFL and the reasons for these difficulties,

and a simple framework for understanding the situation of the second language learner.

Lambacher (1999, p. 138) noted that research in pronunciation has revealed that "difficult L2

contrasts (not just suprasegmentals) can interfere with intelligibility and a need, therefore,

exists within the pronunciation curriculum to address the problems of L2 learners in

identifying and producing difficult L2 speech contrasts" (as cited in Gilakjani, 2011, p. 11).

These resources help the teachers to know what educational strategy that should implement in

classrooms to teach pronunciation.

Conclusion

Language pronunciation is a topic of great theoretical interest and relevance, which unfortunately has been out of fashion for some decades. EFL teachers should focus on the students' needs, level and their ability; incorporate pronunciation into their oral skills and other classes and focus on both segmental and supra-segmental features. Pronunciation must be viewed as a crucial and an integral part of communication that should be incorporated into classroom activities. Teachers can help students by highlighting elements such as sounds, syllables, stress, and intonation. It can be concluded that with careful preparation and integration, pronunciation can play an important role in supporting the learners' overall communicative power.

CHAPTER TWO: WORD STRESS LERNING AND MAJOR DIFFICULTIES

FACING EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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CHAPTER TWO: WORD STRESS LERNING AND MAJOR DIFFICULTIES FACING EFL STUDENTS

Introduction

Commonly, in language teaching there has been a single focus on the single sounds of English. However, all aspects of pronunciation including intonation, rhythm, word stress, individual sounds, and syllable structure are significant to achieve intelligibility. Despite the fact that most teachers are aware of the importance of pronunciation in EFL classes especially, some of them, unfortunately, neglect teaching word stress patterns. As a result, many students have not taken time to study word stress seriously and do not give the value it deserves. In this research paper, attention is given to word stress in second language learning and teaching. Therefore, it is important to shed light on word stress: its definition and main features, its basic rules, and importance. Some methods of indicating word stress are discussed. Moreover, the chapter provides an examination of some challenging problems that are anticipated by the EFL students in learning the area concerned.

1.1. Definition and Main Features of Word Stress

Suprasegmentals are aspects of speech beyond the level of the individual sounds. Stress is one of the so-called suprasegmental features, along with rhythm and intonation. All words have at least one syllable. According to Small (2005) a syllable is "a basic building block of language that may be composed of either one or more vowels alone or vowel in combination with one or more consonants"(P. 180).Words of more than one syllable have what is called word stress. Various authorities in the field provided different definitions of word stress. Such definitions have evolved from diverse perspectives, interests and needs.

Oxford dictionary defined stress as "an extra force used when pronouncing a particular word or syllable (e.g. strategic), the stress falls on the second syllable" (2005, p. 1463).

Trask stated that stress is a certain prominence which presented in some languages upon certain syllables. Native speakers and phoneticians usually find it easy to determine which syllables bear stress, and even to distinguish varying degrees of stress. However, the phonetic characterization of stress is exceedingly difficult: Stress is variously associated with greater loudness, higher pitch and greater duration, any of which may be most important in a given case, and sometimes with vowel quality (1996, p. 336).

According to Roach (1983), stress is an important prosodic feature, applies to individual syllables and involves most commonly loudness, length, and higher pitch. For him, loudness is an important component of prominence and a syllable that is louder than the others within a word is considered as a stressed syllable. He stated that if a syllable is longer than the others are, it tends to be stressed and heard better. Moreover, he asserts that high syllables are more prominent than low and unstressed syllables because the vibration of the vocal cords has also an effect on the prominence (P. 85)

According to Dale and Poms (2005), stress is "the amount of volume that a speaker gives to a particular sound, syllable or a word saying it" (P. 84).

Katamba (1989) has explained that in English,

"Every lexical item is entered in the dictionary with word stress and a particular syllable of a word is pronounced in a way that makes it more prominent than the rest. For example, the words mother, better, cotton and pity. The first syllable is said to be stressed and the second one unstressed" (P. 222).

According to Ladefoged (2001), "stress is a suprasegmental feature of utterances. It applies not to individual vowels and consonants but to whole syllableswhatever they might be. A stress syllable is pronounced with a greater amount of energy than an unstressed syllable, and it is more prominent in the flow of speech"(P. 231). Furthermore, Ladefoged explained that stress sounds are those on which the speaker expends energy that is more

muscular. This usually involves pushing out more from the lungs by contracting the muscle of the rib cage and perhaps increasing the pitch by the use of the laryngeal muscles. The extra activities may bring about the sound having length that is more prominent. There may also be increases in the muscular activity involved in the articulatory movements. When there is an increase in the amount of air being pushed out of the lungs, there is an increase in the loudness of the sound produced" (P. 231).

1.2. Rules of Word Stress

In many of the world languages, stress pattern is predictable and rules can be formulated regarding the placement of stress in the majority of words. For example, in French, it is the last syllable that is generally stressed. However, stress in English is not fixed and it is very difficult to predict the stressed syllables.

According to Roach (2009) there are some pieces of information that should be considered before deciding on placement of stress within English words, whether the word is morphologically simple or complex (P.76).

- The grammatical category of the word: Is the word a noun, verb, adjective and so on.

- The number of syllables in the word: Does the word contain one syllable, two syllables, and three syllables and so on.

- The phonological structure of those syllables: Does the syllable contain a long vowel or a diphthong or ends with more than one consonant (a heavy syllable) or a short vowel or ends with one (or no) consonant (light syllable)

Provided below is a summary of some useful rules provided in Roach (2009, p. 76-87)

1.2.1. Stress in Simple Words

English simple words of one, two, and three syllables have different stress rules. The following word-Stress rules are mentioned to guide the English learners to place stress on the right position:

➢ Single -Syllable Words

Single syllable words present no problem. If they are pronounced in isolation, they are said with primary stress. (e.g. 'cut)

➢ Two syllable Words

The basic rule for verbs is that if the second syllable contains a diphthong or a long vowel, or if it is intended with more than one consonant, that second syllable is stressed. (e.g. ap'ply)

- If the final syllable contains a short vowel and one (or no) final consonant, the first syllable is stressed. For example, (e.g. 'enter)

- A final syllable is also unstressed if it contains /əʊ/ (e.g. 'follow, 'borrow)

- Two-syllable adjectives are stressed according to the same rule:

('Lovely) (cor'rect)

Exceptions: /'honest/   /'perfect/

- Nouns require a different rule: if the second syllable contains a short vowel, the stress is usually on the first syllable. Otherwise, it will be on the second syllable. (e.g. 'money, 'productes'tate, bal'loon)

- Other two syllable words as adverbs and prepositions seem to behave like verbs and adjectives. (e.g. 'besides, 'behind, 'under)

➢ Three Syllable Words

In verbs, if the last syllable contains a short vowel and ends with no more than one consonant, the syllable will be unstressed, and stress will be placed on the preceding (penultimate) syllable. (e.g. en'counter)

- If the final syllable contains a long vowel or a diphthong, or end with more than one consonant, that final syllable will be stressed. (e.g. enter'tain)

- Nouns require a different rule. If the final syllable contains a short vowel or /əʊ/, it is unstressed; if the syllable preceding this final syllable contains a long vowel or diphthong, or if it is tended with more than one consonant, that middle syllable will be stressed. (e.g. po'tato)

- If the final syllable contains a short vowel and the middle syllable contains a short vowel and ends with no more than one consonant, both final and middle syllables are unstressed and the first syllable is stressed. (e.g. 'quantity)

-If the final syllable contains a short vowel or diphthong or ends with more than one consonant, the stress is on the first syllable. (e.g. 'Intellect)

1.2.2. Stress in Complex Words

There are two major types of complex words: words made from a basic stem word with the addition of an affix (a prefix or a suffix), and compound words, which are made of two (or occasionally more) independent English words (Roach 2009, p. 78).

1.2.2.1. Prefix Words

Prefixes in English are not usually stressed

Un-: unhealthy, unwise, unnecessary.

In-: indolent, insufficient, indifferent

Dis-: discourage, discolor, disintegrate

Mis-: misplace, misrepresent, misunderstand.

Il-: illegal, illiterate, illegible.

1.2.2.2. Suffix Words

According to Roach (2009, p. 84), in English, some suffixes carry primary stress themselves and others do not effect stress placement. Still others influence stress in the stem. Examples are provided below:

- **Suffixes carry primary stress themselves:**

–**ee:** refu'gee, tru'stee

-**ese:** Portu'guese, Chi'nese

–**ique**: u'nique, an'tique, phy'sique

- **Suffixes that do not affect stress placement:**

-**able:**'comfort   -   'comfortable

–**al:** 'refuse   -   'refusal

–**ful**: 'wonder   -   'wonderful

–**ish:** 'devil   -   'devilish

–**less:** 'power   -   'powerless

–**ment**: 'establish   -   'establishment

–**ous:** 'poison   -   'poisonous

- **Suffixes that influence stress in the stem:**

–**eous:** advan'tageous

–**ic:** cli'matic

–**ty:** tran'quility

–**ion**: per'fection

–**ive:** re'flexive

–**ial:** com'mercial

-**graphy:** lu'xurious

Additionally, there are some general rules that are very useful in deciding word stress falls on suffix words (Roach, 2009, p. 85). Examples are provided below:

- Words ending in –**ic** or –**ics** have their main stress on the syllable before the last one (or penultimate syllable). Examples: spe'cific   - diplo'matic   -   idio'matic demo'cratic - au'thentic - fan'tastic.

The most common exceptions are 'Arabic -   - 'arsenic - 'catholic - - 'politic -

'rhetoric.

- Words ending in –**ical** have their main stress on the second syllable before the last.

  Examples: e'lectrical -   me'chanical   -   eco'nomical   -   paren'thetical   -

  psycho'logical.

- When a word in –**ic** generates a word in –**icist**, -**icize** or –**icism**, then the main stress

  remains on the same syllable. This means that these words behave accentually like

  words in –**ical.**

Examples: ro'mantic > ro'manticism'Critic > 'criticism

'Classic > 'classicist   I'talic > I'talicize

But:'politic > po'liticize'Catholic > Ca'tholicism

- Words ending –**ion** are stressed on the syllable before –ion.

Examples: sus'picion -   'legion –   'cushion – 'tension -   explo'itation

Final –**ional** words are stressed in the same way as –ion words. The same applies to final –

ionist-ionism and –**ionize** derived words.

Sen'sation   >   sen'sationalTra'dition   >   tra'ditional

'Fraction   >   'fractional   'Nation   >   'national

Abo'lition   >   abo'litionistEdu'cation   >   edu'cationist

Revo'lution > revo'lutionizePer'fection   >   per'fectionism

1.2.3. Compound words

For Roach (2009, p. 86),

compound words may receive stress either on the first syllable or the on the second. Words

which that do not receive primary stress normally have secondary stress. The most familiar

type of compound word is the one, which combines two nouns, and normally has stress on

the first element:

'Typewriter   'airport   'suitcase   'sunrise   'cheesecake

However, varieties of compounds receive stress on the second element:

- Adjective + noun; compound nouns have main stress on the second part and secondary stress on the first part:

  Social se'curity   hot po'tato   absolute 'zero   inverted 'commas

- Adjectives with an adjectival first element and the -**ed** morpheme at the end

  Bad-'tempered   heavy-'handed

- Compounds in which a first element is a number

Three-'wheeler   Second-'class   five-'finger

1.2.4. Word-Class Pairs

The word class of English words plays a significant role in stress placement. There are words, which have the same spelling, but they can belong to a different word class. Their pronunciation therefore differs in stress placement. These words can belong simultaneously in two or even three word classes (nouns, adjectives, verbs). The stress will be placed on the second syllable if the word is a verb, but on the first syllable if the word is a noun or an adjective. Some common examples are given:

Word	Verb	Noun	Adjective
• Object	/əbˈdʒekt/	/ˈɒb.dʒɪkt/	-
• Subject	/səbˈdʒekt/	/ˈsʌb.dʒekt/	/ˈsʌb.dʒekt/
• Record	/rɪˈkɔːd/	/ˈrek.ɔːd/	/ˈrek.ɔːd/
• Abstract	/əbˈstrakt/	/ˈæb.strækt/	/ˈæb.strækt/
• Segment	/segˈment/	/ˈseg.mənt/	-
• Conduct	/kənˈdʌkt/	/ˈkɒn.dʌkt/	-
• Contract	/kənˈtrækt/	/ˈkɒn.trækt/	-
• Export	/ɪkˈspɔːt/	/ˈek.spɔːt/	-

- Import /ɪmˈpɔːt/ /ˈɪm.pɔːt/
- Insult /ɪnˈsʌlt/ /ˈɪn.sʌlt/ -
- Perfect /pəˈfekt/ /ˈpɜː.fekt/ /ˈpɜː.fekt/
- Permit /pəˈmɪt/ /ˈpɜː.mɪt/ -
- Present /prɪˈzent/ /ˈprez.ənt/ /ˈprez.ənt/
- Produce /prəˈdjuːs/ /ˈprɒd.juːs/ -

In short, the study of stress in English words is very difficult and making rules in this regard is a complex matter (Roach, 2009, p. 87).

1.3. The Importance of Teaching Word Stress

Stress has always been a controversial area of learning. It plays a crucial role in the English language. A considerable number of studies and linguists claimed that it is extremely important as an essential suprasegmental feature for communication. Because it can significantly affect the intelligibility and comprehensibility of the English language much more than the other elements of pronunciation such as Morley (1991), Anderson

(1992), Munro & Derwing (1995), Derwing & Munro (2001), Celce-Murcia, Derwing & Rossiter, (2002) Benrabah (2007),

According to Katamba (1989, p. 221)

"Linguists have an intuitive understanding of the phonetic properties of stress although they find formulating a precise description of these properties problematic. Stress is primarily a matter of greater AUDITORY PROMINENCE. It is essentially a perceptual phenomenon".

Celce-Murcia (1996) pointed out that putting the stress in the correct position of a syllable when speaking is crucial since by putting it otherwise, may cause the listener to mishear or even misunderstand the word. Studying stress patterns in English is particularly important for speakers of other languages whose stress rules are more regular and/or different

and thus interfere with comprehensibility. Stressing the incorrect syllable in a word can make the word very hard to hear and understand. The meaning or type of the word can change when the words are stressed wrongly. Mistakes that make in word stress are a common cause of misunderstanding in English. One of the most important criteria used in assessing the importance of word stress is intelligibility (P. 163-177).

According to Hughes (2006), although intelligibility includes a variety of speaking related features, it is often closely tied to pronunciation. She has added that intelligibility refers to whether a listener is able to understand a speaker. In other words, the speaker's message or intention must be able to be understood by a listener speaker. In short, placing right stress on the right syllable of the word is very important in English because wrong stress position can result in an unintelligible utterance that makes the listener unable to understand what is meant by the speaker (as cited in Asyik, 2008, p. 6&7).

Hence, to achieve intelligibility and comprehension and to minimize Communication obstacles, it is necessary to stress words on the right syllables and learners
of a second or foreign language should produce it and perceive it successfully and correctly (Eckman, 2004). Keawpasom (1991) stated that the major cause of the problems in misunderstanding and interpreting is the failure of non-native speaking students of English to indicate word stress accurately (as cited in Aungcharoen, 2006, p. 5).

Field (2005) stated that stress is linked to other aspects of pronunciation, vocabulary learning and grammar (p.399-423).

1.4. Strategies of learning Word Stress

Raising awareness of word stress patterns is evidently important. For Kelly (2000, p. 66-84), teachers should regularly introduce the new vocabulary item to the students because it is important to consider what the students need to know about the word stress. With regard to pronunciation, stressed and unstressed syllables are important features. He explained that,

there are ways in which the teacher can encourage a continuing awareness of stress. Receptive awareness is important, as it is through that successful production tends to come. Choral and individual drilling of new words usefully combines receptive awareness and productive skill. The teacher should try drilling words hastily. If the students are having difficulty, the teacher can try exaggerating the stressed syllables in writing by showing them through circles, each circle is a syllable, and the bigger cycle shows the stressed syllable. (e.g. Saturday) is (Ooo). However, in most English dictionaries, the stressed syllables in words are indicated by a stress mark which is a symbol that resembles an apostrophe (') in the front of the stressed syllable. (e.g. humid)the second syllable is stressed (hu'mid). Also to mark the stressed syllables, capital letters are used. (e.g. comPUter). Other techniques can be performed in speaking by beating out the pattern of stress with your hand or finger or tapping with a pen on the table, speaking or singing the stress pattern.

1.5. Factors Affecting Word Stress Teaching and Learning

1.5.1. Syllable Structure

Patterns that are associated with syllabic structure consist of a complex series of variables including vowel length, number of coda consonants, and metrical structure (position of a syllable within a word) (Guion, 2004). The former two-determine syllable weight, which is an important determinant of stress placement (Chomsky & Halle, 1968; Hayes, 1982). Heavy syllables tend to attract stress rather than light syllables (Davenport & Hannahs, 2005). If a syllable has a branching nucleus (CVV) or a branching rime (CVC), it is considered heavy. A syllable with a branching rime is a closed syllable. If a syllable has a short vowel as the nucleus and no coda (a CV syllable), it is considered to be light. Guion (2003) showed that for real English words, long vowels are much more likely to be stressed than short vowels, regardless of the presence of coda consonants. In this investigation, they reported that

the percentage for stressed long vowels and stressed short vowels are 60% and 35%, respectively (Xiaoyao, 2010, p. 3)

1.5.2. Lexical Class

Stress patterns associated with lexical class largely follow the rule that disyllabic nouns tend to have more initial syllable stress and verbs tend to have more stress on the ultimate syllable Kelly & Bock (1988), Davenport & Hannahs (2005). The factor of the lexical class is usually combined with the syllabic structure of English words. In the case of disyllabic nouns and verbs, stress placement regularly complies with the following patterns, although not without exceptions.

According to Hayes (1982), for disyllabic nouns, stress falls on the ultimate syllable only if it has a long vowel (or a diphthong). (e.g. machine, prestige, and canoe). Otherwise, the initial syllable carries the main stress. (e.g. habit, agent, and basket). For disyllabic verbs, the ultimate syllable carries the main stress if it has a long vowel (or a diphthong) or ends with at least two consonants. (e.g. behave, suggest, and domain). If the ultimate syllable does not have a long vowel or ends with two or more consonants, the initial syllable is stressed. (e.g. cancel, listen, and manage) (Xiaoyao, 2010, p. 4).

1.5.3. Phonological Similarity

Stress assignment in unknown words is heavily influenced by stress patterns of known words, which have a similar phonological structure. It was found that stress assignment on non-words based on phonological similarity predicted stress in many cases for native speakers, and there were even predictions against stress patterns based on syllabic structure Baker & Smith (1976). When faced with unknown words, native speakers first analyzed the similarities of the phonological properties of the unknown and already known words, and then determine the main and secondary stress of the unknown words.

According to Guion (2004), there were great chances for second language learners and native English speakers to use an analogy with phonologically similar words to determine stress placement for English words. Participants were able to give similar real words with the non-words, and the real words obviously shared much with non-words in segmental properties. The regression analyses on both production and perception data of non-words in Guion et al. (2003) showed that the effect of phonological similarities predicted stress placement independently from the effect of syllable structure and lexical class (Xiaoyao, 2010, p.5).

1.6. Word Stress Difficulties Anticipated by Algerian EFL Students

Language is the core and power of what makes us human. If you have to understand the fact of being human, then you should first comprehend the meaning of language, operates and how it is used. Although languages of the world may have universal features in common, they are different from each other. Each language has its own semantic, grammar, morphology, phonetics, Phonology and syntax.

Algeria has a different linguistic situation because its speakers do not use only one language. There are plenty of spoken languages and varieties; Arabic, as the Algerian native language, French and Berber, and English.This linguistic complexity implies the influence of these languages on the learning of any other language, including English French is considered as the second language, the majority of Algerian students speak it freely,and it is taught as a subject in primary school system. However, English is considered as the foreign one, when foreign learners come to learn English they often face such challenging problems for being able to pronounce English words accurately (as cited in Bouchair, 2003, p. 6-8) these problems can be attributed to the following reasons:

1.6.1. L1 Interference

Algerian students think that English pronunciation is difficult to acquire and for Stern (1983, p. 341), becoming good at pronouncing English words, including accurate word stress, is being dreamed by non-native speakers who are learning English as a foreign language and pronouncing English words like native speakers is not an easy effort.

Many students may transfer their mother tongue word stress patterns to English in fact that In Arabic, word stress is quite regular, contrary to the English one which has a free-word stress, and this can be problematic for Arabic learners who may expect the English word stress to be as the same as Arabic (Rogerson-Revell, 2011, p. 271). For example, Arabic students will tend to stress a final syllable if it ends in a vowel followed by two consonants as in ″comfort″.

This leads to conclude that the difficulties that Algerian students may face when learning stress emerge from the fact that bothlanguages: Arabic and English vary in their stress systems.

1.6.2. Lack of Awareness

Another reason is that both Algerian teachers and students are not aware of the important of word stress position is. They tend to neglect to learn more about the pronunciation properties of word stress because they wrongly think that fluency is the most important aspect in speaking. That is why the Algerian students do not know much about the importance of word stress in English. In addition, most Algerian students only learn English when they are at school students. At schools, English is a compulsory subject that needs to be taken by every student. In addition, for some students, they learn English to be able to pass their exams.

1.6.3. Teachers' Training and Experience

The main reason why students are not able to recognize the importance of word stress in English is that there are some unqualified English teachers at schools and some Algerian teachers even do not know how pronounce English words accurately. As a result, they cannot be a good model of pronunciation. In addition, schools do not have good facility that can be used by students to practice their English pronunciation such as; Language laboratory, CDs, DVDs, players, tapes, TVs, etc. These facilities are very important for the students to learn and to practice their pronunciation including word stress system in English.

1.6.4. Cognates (transfer from French)

As far as English and French languages, both do share the same alphabet, they sometimes use similar grammatical structures, and have several words in common. In fact, their word stress patterns are very different for why the majority of Algerian EFL learners face such problems when they come to put stress on the right syllable in pronouncing English words.

Rogerson-Revell (2011) stated that word stress is not usually marked in French dictionaries and stress is not essential to the phonological structure of the word, which makes it very different English and many other European languages. Unlike the variable or mobile stress of English, French word stress is usually predictable, with stress on the final syllable (or the penultimate syllable if the last syllable contains schwa). A learner may be unsure of where to place stress in English words, or may place it incorrectly on the final syllable because of the influence of French. This is particularity difficult for cognate words such as restaurant (p.275-276).

Most of the previous studies of English stress have focused on the French transfer. It has been demonstrated that knowledge of language-specific prosodic patterns affects learners' speech processing of L2. In addition, among the properties of the native linguistic system, prosody seems to be one of the first learned elements by infants (Moon, Cooper and Fifer

(1993). Learners from a language without contrastive stress (French), especially when greater use of processing resources are required, as cross-linguistic studies of stress perception have indicated (Depoux, Pallier, Sebastian-Galles, & Mehler, 1997).

1.6.5. Overgeneralization of English Word Stress

English Stress rules are predictable and they affect stress placement. It is assumed that languages with predictable rules of stress influence negatively on the perception and production of other languages stress. Kenworthy (1987, p. 125) points out that Arab learners tend to transfer three of their mother-tongue speaking habits into English:

1. Learners put stress on the final syllable of English words ending in a vowel followed by two consonants, as in "difficult", "comfort" and "expert",

2. They tend to place stress on endings such as '-est', 'ism', -less', and '-ness'. This is because these endings are formulated from a vowel and two successor consonants.

3. Learners put stress on the last syllable of a word ending with a diphthong or a long vowel plus a single consonant as in "irritate", "gratitude" and "institute".

Thus, it is shown that because of the predictable nature of stress on Arabic, Arabs tend to apply the rules of their language when learning the stress of English.

1.7. The Effectiveness of Word Stress Instruction

Celce-Murcia (1996, p. 163-177) stated that stressing words accurately in careful speech as well as less conscious utterances, which will help learners to understand and be understood more easily. However, Word stress often causes a problem for learners of English. This is due to the apparent irregularity of word stress in English. Studying stress patterns in English is particularly important for speakers of other languages whose stress rules are more regular and/or different and interfere with comprehensibility.

Dupoux, Navarrete, and Peperkamp (2008) argued that word stress instruction does not help learners with stress perception, since one group in their study described above "Did have a metalinguistic awareness of stress, since they had been taught explicitly about contrastive stress as part of their Spanish language training," and there was no difference in performance. However, there is no information about what that explicit instruction consisted of. It is not clear whether the learners had been presented with stress rules that are easily applicable and easy to remember. Nor is anything said about the amount of time spent to raise students' metalinguistic awareness of word stress. (as cited in Pierrel, 2010, p.11).

Murphy (2004, p.67-83) has a different approach. He argued that attending to word stress helps to learn vocabulary. After introducing a numeric system to identify stress patterns in English to two ESL classes, he surveyed his students to obtain feedback about his instructional techniques. The numeric system he developed only had students take into consideration the number of syllables in the word to help them guess on which syllable the stress would occur. Although this system is minimal and does not really provide rules of thumb, it still suggests that students can benefit from it, since 25% and 36% strongly agreed that "using the numeric system helped them learn to pronounce new words", and "to learn to use new words in conversation" respectively.

In Tremblay (2008), it is also suggested that more advanced learners can use word stress to recognize words. Although the connection is not immediate, this does suggest that there is a correlation between instruction and word stress processing, even though. He argues that "knowing where the primary stress falls in English words is not sufficient for L2 learners to be able to use stress for L2 lexical access" (p. 353).

Conclusion

Word stress is one of the important properties of pronunciation. Yet, it is a problematic area facing many EFL learners of English including Algerians. The word stress problems

need to be solvedso that the learners will be more willing to participate in communication in class and outside of their schools. Improving the learners' word stress capability would be beneficial to the learners who will be more confident to make conversations with native speakers and non-native of thelanguage. Schools should provide facilities and resources that facilitate learning and practicing word stress and all the aspects of pronunciation.

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK

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CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK

Introduction

The current chapter constitutes the practical part of the present study, which aims at investigating the word stress' errors facing EFL learners. The chapter is concerned with the description and the administration of the data collection tools (the students' questionnaire and the test), the analysis of the findings, followed by an overall discussion of the results and some pedagogical recommendations.

3.1. Research Design

The present study uses quantitative research in nature. Because this research aims at investigating the major word stress difficulties encountered by the Algerian EFL students, the best method is the descriptive one. Class & Hopkins (1984) argued that descriptive research involves gathering data, describes events and organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data collection. In other words, quantitative research is the nature of data that makes the researcher decide about the adopted process and method of his data gathering and collection. Since the dissertation in hand aims at eliciting information about the students' word stress difficulties and also their perceptions of these difficulties and of learning word stress , the appropriate tool used to gather adequate data is the test and questionnaire.

3.1.1. The sample

The participants in this study are 30 out of 270 third year License students of English as a Foreign Language at the Department of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel. The participants were randomly chosen. The selection of the population is based on the consideration that these students have already studied word stress in their second year in the module of "English Phonetics & Phonology". This

suggests that these students have already been equipped with basis knowledge of word stress.

3.1.2. Data Collection Tools

In order to gather reliable data to answer the research questions of the present study, different research tools were used. The first tool is testing. An oral test is conducted to measure the degree to which the students are experiencing word stress difficulties. The second tool is the questionnaire. A students' questionnaire is designed to know about students' views, perceptions, and difficulties concerning word stress and how such awareness can contribute to understanding and applying stress rules whenever they speak.

3.1.3. Description and Administration of the Research Tools

3.1.3.1. Description and Administration of the Test

To collect data about the learners' ability to stress words correctly, a test was administered to third-year students. The test consisted of thirty sentences, which contained thirty words that the students were asked to read aloud. They were chosen at random. The chosen words are selected according to different categories included in the test: word class pairs, disyllabic simple words, trisyllabic simple words, complex words (prefix words), complex words (affix words), compound words, and words that have French cooperates (French transfer). The aim of the test is to know whether the students applied the word stress rules correctly in each given case or not.

The test was administered to 30 students belonging to the same group. It is worth mentioning that the atmosphere in which the test took place was suitable to give students the opportunity to answer enthusiastically. The test was conducted in the second semester at the end of an oral session with the help of their teacher.

3.1.3.2. Description and Administration of the Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire consists of 20 close-ended questions (either yes or no questions or multiple-choice questions). They are the type in which participants are asked to choose from the predetermined answers. Besides, follow up questions are used in the form of clarification such as; please, explain; justify, please. This type of questions helps us to reduce the number of ambiguous responses.

The questionnaire is divided into four main sections. The first section is about general information. It consists of 3 multiple choice questions. The second section is concerned with learners' perceptions of learning English word stress. It is made up of 11 questions, (Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9, Q10, Q11, Q12, Q13) which are multiple choice questions, except (Q4 & Q14) which are multiple choice questions with justifications and (Q12 Q14) are "yes or no" questions. The third section is concerned with students' views of their word stress difficulties. It consists of 5 questions, (Q15, Q16, Q18, Q19) are multiple choice questions, except (Q17) is a multiple choice question with justification. The last section is consisting of only one open-ended question, devoted to further suggestions.

Concerning the administration of the students' questionnaire, it was distributed to them with the presence of their teacher at the beginning of the oral expression session to be handed back. Their teacher herself distributed the questionnaires and students were given enough time to read and answer all the questions carefully. They were also given the right to ask for further explanations.

3.2. Data Analysis

3.2.1. Analysis of the Test

3.2.1.1. General Analysis

This section offers the analysis of the students' performance in the test. More specifically, it focuses on the word stress errors committed by the participants. Listening to the students' voices that were recorded individually, each student's pronunciation of each target word has been categorized as stressed correctly or incorrectly. It is worth mentioning that other segmental errors, which do not affect the correct placement of stress,were not taken into consideration. For example, the word disconnect pronounced as /dɪskɒ'nekt/ was counted as correct because it was stressed correctly despite the fact that it was pronounced with /ɒ/ instead of /ə/.

Table 3.1 displays the correct stress placement of each word and all the faulty forms given by the students:

Table 3.1: Faulty Word Stress Given by the Students

	Words	Correct stress	Faulty stress
1	**record**	'record	re'cord
2	**conduct**	con'duct	'conduct
3	**present**	pre'sent	'present
4	**import**	'import	im'port
5	**correct**	cor'rect	'correct
6	**believes**	be'lieves	'believes
7	**consume**	con'sume	'consume
8	**subscribe**	sub'scribe	'subscribe
9	**encounter**	en'counter	'encounter
10	**entertain**	enter'tain	'entertain
11	**disaster**	di'saster	'disaster
12	**cinema**	'cinema	cine'ma
13	**Chinese**	'Chinese	Chi'nese
14	**comfortable**	'comfortable	com'fortable / comfor'table
15	**photographic**	photo'graphic	pho'tographic / photogra'phic
16	**invitation**	invi'tation	'invitation / invita'tion
17	**illegal**	il'legal	'illegal
18	**unpleasant**	un'pleasant	'unpleasant
19	**misunderstand**	misunder'stand	'misunderstand / mis'understand
20	**disconnect**	disco'nnect	'disconnect / dis'connect
21	**sunrise**	'sunrise	sun'rise
22	**Inverted comas**	Inverted 'comas	'Inverted comas
23	**Second-class**	Second-'class	'Second-class
24	**Heavy- handed**	Heavy- 'handed	'Heavy- handed
25	**camera**	'camera	ca'mera
26	**festival**	'festival	fes'tival / festi'val
27	**sandwich**	'sandwich	sand'wich
28	**method**	'method	me'thod
29	**voyage**	'voyage	vo'yage
30	**apricot**	'apricot	ap'ricot / apri'cot

As shown in table 3.1, some of the trisyllabic words and most of the polysyllabic words have more than one faulty stress form. For example, while some students stress wrongly the word comfortable on the second syllable (comfor'table). As for the disyllabic words, it is logical that there is only one faulty form (either on the first or on the second syllable).

As a first step in the analysis, the students' overall performance in the test is considered. The researchers counted for each target word the number of its correct stressed forms and incorrect stressed forms.

The total number of words is 900. It is the result of the number of the target words multiplied by the number of the participants (30* 30=900). The results are shown in table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Students' Overall Performance in the Test

	N	%
Correct stress	417	46.33
Incorrect stress	**483**	**53.67**
Total	**900**	**100**

As shown in table 3.2, the total number of words that word stress incorrectly is 483 with a percentage of 53.67 while those that were stressed correctly is 417 with a percentage of 46.33. Despite the fact that the number of words stressed correctly is slightly smaller than those stressed incorrectly, it is a considerable and alarming number. Taking into account that the most of the target words that are included in the test are easy words for third year students majoring in English, the number of words stressed incorrectly is very high. This entails the participants' poor abilities in stressing words correctly, which means that year students are experiencing serious word stress problems.

The results obtained by individual students were also examined. For each participant, the researchers counted the words that were stressed correctly and those that were stressed incorrectly. The results are displayed in table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3: Individual Students' Performance in the Test

Sub-jects	Correct stress		Incorrect stress		Total		Sub-jects	Correct stress		Incorrect stress		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%		N	%	N	%	N	%
1	13	43.33	**17**	**56.67**	30	100	16	12	40	**18**	**60**	30	100
2	**19**	**63.33**	11	36.67	30	100	17	11	36.67	**19**	**63.33**	30	100
3	**19**	**63.33**	11	36.67	30	100	18	12	40	**17**	**56.67**	30	100
4	**18**	**60**	12	40	30	100	19	13	43.33	**18**	**60**	30	100
5	**18**	**60**	12	40	30	100	20	12	40	**18**	**60**	30	100
6	**19**	**63.33**	11	36.67	30	100	21	10	33.33	**20**	**66.67**	30	100
7	**20**	**66.67**	10	33.33	30	100	22	13	43.33	**17**	**56.67**	30	100
8	13	43.33	**17**	**56.67**	30	100	23	11	36.67	**19**	**63.33**	30	100
9	**19**	**63.33**	11	36.67	30	100	24	12	40	**18**	**60**	30	100
10	**16**	**53.33**	14	46.67	30	100	25	11	36.67	**19**	**63.33**	30	100
11	**16**	**53.33**	14	46.67	30	100	26	09	30	**21**	**70**	30	100
12	14	46.67	**16**	**53.33**	30	100	27	09	30	**21**	**70**	30	100
13	14	46.67	**16**	**53.33**	30	100	28	11	36.67	**19**	**63.33**	30	100
14	**19**	**63.33**	11	36.67	30	100	29	11	36.67	**19**	**63.33**	30	100
15	12	40	18	60	30	100	30	11	36.67	**19**	**63.33**	30	100

Table 3.3 illustrates the performance of each participant in the test. The striking feature emerging from the students' performance is that no student managed to stress all words correctly. It is also noticeable that the participants' performance varies from one student to another. While only one student managed to stress twenty words correctly, nine students succeeded to give sixteen to nineteen correct answers. These results clearly show that the majority (or a high percentage) of third year students face word stress difficulties.

3.2.1.2. Detailed Analysis

This section provides the detailed analysis of the students' performance in different sections of the test. More specifically, the students' responses are classified according to

the different categories included in the test: Word class pairs, disyllabic simple words, trisyllabic simple words, complex words (prefix words), complex words (suffix words), compound words and words that have French cooperates (French transfer).

- **Word Class Pairs**

Table 3.4: Students' Performance Regarding the Word Class Pairs

Words	Correct answers		Incorrect answers		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Record	10	33.33	**20**	**67.67**	30	100
conduct	**22**	**73.33**	8	26.67	30	100
Present	12	40	**18**	**60**	30	100
Import	3	10	**27**	**90**	30	100
Total	57	47.5	63	52.5	120	100

As can be seen from table 3.4, while 52.50% stressed the words incorrectly, 47.5% stressed them correctly. Three percentages of the incorrect responses of three words range between 60 and 90. In particular 60%, 67.67% and 90% of the students failed to stress the words present (as a noun), record (as a noun) and import (as a noun). However, the only word that is stressed correctly by most of the students (73.33%) is the conduct (as a verb).

These results may suggest that the students are not aware that each of these words can be pronounced differently according to grammatical category of the word (a verb or a noun). They may also suggest that these students do not pay attention to the grammatical category to which a word belonged and pronounced them as they first come into their heads.

- **Disyllabic Simple Words**

Table 3.5: Students' Performance Regarding Simple Disyllabic Words

Words	Correct answers		Incorrect answers		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Correct	**16**	**53.33**	14	46.67	30	100
believes	**25**	**83.33**	5	16.67	30	100
consume	**24**	**80**	6	20	30	100
subscribe	8	26.67	**22**	**73.33**	30	100
Total	73	60.83	47	39.17	120	100

Table 3.5 shows that 60.83% of the students stressed the words correctly. However, 39.17% stressed them incorrectly. The only word that is stressed incorrectly by most of the participants (73.33%) is the word subscribe. However, the three percentages of the correct responses of three words range between 50 and 80. In particular, 53.33%, 80%, and 83.33% of the students succeeded to stress the words correct, consume, and believes.

These results may suggest that students are knowledgeable of the disyllabic simple words rules. They may also suggest that these students pay attention to the morphological category simple or complex and how many syllables a word contain.

- **Trisyllabic Simple Words**

Table 3.6: Students' Performance Regarding Simple Trisyllabic Words

Words	Correct answers		Incorrect answers		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
encounter	7	23.33	**23**	**76.67**	30	100
entertain	14	46.67	**16**	**53.33**	30	100
disaster	**20**	**66.67**	10	33.33	30	100
cinema	**18**	**60**	12	40	30	100
Total	59	49.16	61	50.84	120	100

The above table illustrates that, while 50.84% of the participants stressed the words incorrectly, 49.16% stressed them correctly. The two words that are stressed incorrectly by

most of the participants (76.67. %) and (53.33%) are the words encounter and entertain. However, the two percentages of the correct responses of the words disaster and cinema are 66.67% and 60%. These results clearly show that the total number of the words that were stressed correctly and the words that were stressed incorrectly have nearly the same percentage (50). Although third year students know the simple trisyllabic words' rules, they committed such errors. This may be due to the fact that they just keep going.

-   **Complex Prefix Words**

Table 3.7: Students' Performance Regarding Complex Prefix Words

Words	Correct answers		Incorrect answers		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Illegal	25	83.33	5	16.67	30	100
Unpleasant	12	40	**18**	**60**	30	100
misunderstand	9	30	**21**	**70**	30	100
Disconnect	19	63.33	11	36.67	30	100
Total	65	54.17	55	45.83	120	100

The obtained results from table 3.7 show that more than half of the students (54.17%), succeeded to stress the words correctly, while 45.83% placed the stress of on words incorrectly. More specifically, 83.33% and 63.33% of students succeeded to stress the words illegal and disconnect correctly. However, the remaining percentages displayed the students' incorrect stress placement on the words "unpleasant" and "misunderstand". These results may suggest that the students are aware of complex prefix words' rules. This may also suggest that third year students paid attention to that prefixes in English are not usually stressed.

- **Complex Suffix Words**

Table 3.8: Students' Performance Regarding Complex Suffix Words

Words	Correct answers		Incorrect answers		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Chinese	07	23.33	**23**	**76.67**	30	100
Comfortable	09	30	**21**	**70**	30	100
Photographic	09	30	**21**	**70**	30	100
Invitation	13	43.33	**17**	**56.67**	30	100
Total	38	31.67	82	68.33	120	100

The findings presented in the table illustrates that nearly 70% of the participants (68.33), failed to stress the words. However, the percentage of 31.67 represented the wrong answers committed by the students. These results may suggest that third year students' encounter serious difficulties with complex suffix words' rules.

- **Compound Words**

Table 3.9: Students' Performance Regarding Compound Words

Words	Correct answers		Incorrect answers		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sunrise	13	43.33	**17**	**56.67**	30	100
inverted commas	09	30	**21**	**70**	30	100
Second class	20	66.66	10	33.34	30	100
Heavy handed	13	43.33	**17**	**56.67**	30	100
Total	55	45.83	65	54.17	120	100

As it is shown above, while a high percentage of the sample 54.17% gave incorrect answers, 45.83% failed to stress the words correctly. In particular, 70% and 56.67% of the students failed to stress the words inverted commas, heavy-handed, and sunrise. However, the only word that is stressed correctly by most of the students (66.66%) is the word second-class. This may be due to the fact that third year students' face some problems with compound words and got confused whether to stress the first word or the second. In

addition, it is clearly that most of them did not memorize Compound Words' rules and did not take into account the exceptions.

- **French Transfer**

Table 3.10: Students' Performance Regarding French Transfer

Words	Correct answers		Incorrect answers		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Camera	**19**	**63.33**	11	36.67	30	100
Festival	**16**	**53.33**	14	46.67	30	100
sandwich	11	36.67	**19**	**63.33**	30	100
Method	10	33.33	**20**	**66.67**	30	100
Voyage	12	40	**18**	**60**	30	100
Apricot	11	36.67	**19**	**63.33**	30	100
Total	79	43.89	101	56.11	180	100

Table 3.10 shows that a high percentage (56.11) of the students gave incorrect word stress placement. However, 43.89 succeeded to stress the words correctly. Two percentages of correct responses of two words range between 50 and 65. In particular, 63.33% and 53.33% of the students succeeded to stress the words camera and festival. However, the remaining percentages 66.67%, 63.33%, and 60% represented the wrong answers given by the participants. This is may be due to the fact that the students are not aware of difference between the French and English stress patterns. They may also pronounce the English words like their own language. For example, twenty students pronounced the word ″Method ″ as French.

Based on the data obtained from the different sections of the test, the results revealed that all the participants failed to stress all the words correctly. The most common category includes complex suffix words with the percentage of 68.33, followed by the French transfer with the percentage of 56.11. Moreover, the most common words that were stressed incorrectly by the majority of the students are import (as a noun) with the

percentage of 90, encounter with the percentage of 76.66, Chinese with the percentage of 76.67, subscribe with the percentage of 73.33,and method with the percentage of 66.67.

The obtained results from the students' performance in the test indicates that the students who succeeded to produce stress on the right syllable on the given words have the knowledge of word stress rules while the same incorrect stressed of words in the test suggests that students have the lack of knowledge of word stress rules.

3.2.2. Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

Concerning the questionnaire, different answers that are supplied by the participants divulge invaluable pieces of information bound up with their perceptions about word stress. What follows is an analysis of the findings.

Section One: **General Information**

Q1: Which aspect of the English language, do you think is the most important to be learnt?

Table 3.11: Students' Most Important Aspect to Be Learnt

Option	N	%
Vocabulary	03	10
Grammar	03	10
Syntax	00	00
Pronunciation	**13**	**43.33**
All of them	**11**	**36.67**
Total	30	100

From the above table, it is remarkable that the majority of the students (46.33%) believed that pronunciation is the most important aspect to be learnt in English. However, 36.67% of the participants reported that all the aspects of English language are very important. These results indicate that third year students are aware of the importance of the pronunciation like the other aspects including vocabulary, grammar, and syntax.

Q2. Do you agree that having a good pronunciation is a major source of understanding?

Table 3.12: Students' Perceptions towards Having a Good Pronunciation

Option	N	%
Strongly agree	**10**	**33.33**
Agree	08	26.67
Neutral	07	23.33
Disagree	03	10
Strongly disagree	02	06.67
Total	30	100

Table 3.12 indicates that the majority of the students stated that they agree of having a good pronunciation as a major source of understanding. In particular, 33.33% of the participants opted strongly agree and 26.67% agree. While only few of the participants disagree with the above claim. More specifically, 10% opted disagree and 6.67% strongly disagree. This implies that pronunciation plays a crucial role in communication.

Q3. How would you rate your pronunciation overall?

Table 3.13: Students' Level in Pronunciation Performance

Option	N	%
Very good	03	10
Good	**13**	**43.33**
Average	**13**	**43.33**
Poor	01	03.34
Very poor	00	00
Total	30	100

The target behind addressing this question is to assess students' pronunciation proficiency. Only three students (10%) assumed to have a very good level, thirteen students (43.33%) considered their pronunciation good, and thirteen students (43.33%) thought that their level is average. Only one student believed that his level in pronunciation is poor. These results show that most of students are facing some problems that prevent them for mastering their pronunciation.

Section Two: Learners' Perceptions about Learning English Word Stress

Q4. How much is important for you to put stress on the right syllable when you speak in English?

Table 3.14: Students' perception about the Importance of Putting Stress in Speaking

Option	N	%
Very important	**13**	**43.33**
Important	10	33.33
To some extentimportant	05	16.67
Most important	02	06.67
Total	30	100

This question aims at displaying if the learners are conscious about the importance of putting stress on the right syllable in speaking or not. According to students' responses, 43.33% and 33.33% said that word stress placement is important. While only two students opted for most important. The obtained results clearly indicate that all the students involved in the study are well informed about the significance of putting stress in speaking because it may normally push them to avoid communication breakdowns.

Q5. How do you find learning English word stress?

Table 3.15: Students' Perceptions on the Degree of Difficulty of Learning English Word **stress**

Option	N	%
Very easy	00	00
Easy	12	40
Difficult	**16**	**53.33**
Very difficult	02	06.67
Total	30	100

This question targeted to get insights about the students' views about their learning of English word stress. As can be seen from table 3.15, while the majority of the participants with a percentage of 53.33 thought that learning English word stress is

difficult, only two students (6.67%) found it very difficult. However, 40% of the students pointed that the learning of English word stress is easy. These results imply that third year students really face serious problems when learning English word stress. They may also suggest that the students have the lack of practice.

Q6. To what extent do you think you are knowledgeable about the following?

Table 3.16: Students' Familiarity with English Word Stress

Option	Extremely		Significantly		Moderately		Not at all		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	30	100
The nature of stress	03	10	08	26.66	**14**	**46.67**	05	16.67	30	100
Stress rules of simple words	07	23.33	**14**	**46.67**	06	20	03	10	30	100
Stress rules of affix words	04	13.33	**12**	**40**	11	36.67	03	10	30	100
Stress rules of compound words	05	16.67	09	30	**12**	**40**	04	13.33	30	100
Stress rules of word class pairs	02	06.67	10	33.33	**15**	**50**	03	10.33	30	100

The above table shows that the majority of participants (46.67%) stated that they are moderately familiar with the nature of stress. The same percentage 46.67 and 36.67 of the participants stated that they are significantly familiar with stress rules of simple and affix words. Forty per cent of the students assumed to be moderately familiar with stress rules of compound words and 50% of the participants assumed to be significantly familiar with the stress rules of word class pairs. The general result reflects the students' ignorance and their lack of their knowledge about word stress rules.

Q7. When you learn a new word, how often do you usually focus on the placement of stress within this word?

Table 3.17: Students' Frequency Stress Placement of New Words

Option	N	%
Always	04	13.33
Often	5	16.67
Sometimes	09	30
Rarely	**10**	**33.33**
Never	02	06.67
Total	30	100

An examination of the table reveals that 33.33% of the students reported that they rarely focus on the stress placement within a new word. However, 13.33% of the respondents opted for always. Only two students opted for never. This may be due to the fact that third year students are not interested in stress placement whenever learning new vocabularies.

Q8. When you look up a word in the dictionary, how often do you pay attention to which syllable is stressed?

Table 3.18: Students' Frequency of Paying Attention to Stressed Syllables while   Looking Up Words in the Dictionary.

Option	N	%
Always	04	13.33
Often	07	23.33
Sometimes	**10**	**33.33**
Rarely	07	23.33
Never	02	06.67
Total	30	100

The results in the table above show that a higher percentage of the participants 33.33 preferred to say that they sometimes pay attention to stressed syllables while looking words in the dictionary, then fourteen participants opted for often and sometimes which are represented by the same percentage 23.33. Only 13.33% of the total number of the

participants argued that they always pay attention to the stressed syllables. However, only two participants said that they never pay attention to stressed syllables when looking for a word in the dictionary. These above results indicate that third year students are not interested in looking up the stressed syllables of words in the dictionary.

Q9. How often do you pay attention to the placement of stress when you are speaking?

Table 3.19: Students' Frequency of Paying Attention of Stress Placement When Speaking

Option	N	%
Always	02	06.67
Often	03	10
Sometimes	**19**	**63.33**
Rarely	06	20
Never	00	00
Total	30	100

Through the analysis of the students' answers, it is clearly that 63.33% of the students stated that they sometimes pay attention to the placement of stress when speaking. However, 20% opted for rarely, 10% opted for often. While only two participants stated that, they always pay attention to the placement of stress when speaking. These results reveal that the students do not know that word stress is the key for communicating rapidly and accurately, even in difficult conditions.

Q10. When you are speaking and coming to a word you do not know how to stress, what do you usually do?

Table 3.20: Students' Reactions towards Stressing Unknown Words

Option	N	%
I pronounce the word the first way that comes into my head	**19**	**63.33**
I keep going	06	20
I check to see if the word is stressed correctly	05	16.67
Total	30	100

As can be noticed from table 3.20, the highest percentage of the participants (63.33%) reported that when speaking and coming to a word they do not know how to

stress, they pronounced the word the first way that came into their heads. This may be due to the fact that, they do not have enough time to check whether it is correct or incorrect. Additionally, 20% resort to keep going. However, a little percentage of the respondents (16.67%) claimed that they checked to see if the word is stressed correctly. From this result, it is clear that the students are not aware of searching for the right stress position when they do not know how to stress.

Q11. How often do you pay attention to the placement of stress when you are listening to someone?

Table 3.21: Students' Frequency of Paying Attention to Stress Placement in Listening

Options	N	%
Always	05	16.67
Often	05	16.67
Sometimes	**09**	**30**
Rarely	**09**	**30**
Never	02	06.66
Total	30	100

As it is shown in table 3.21, 30% of the participants stated that they sometimes pay attention to the placement of stress when listening to someone and the same percentage 30 of the students opted for rarely. However, only two students opted for never. From this result, it is noticeable that third year students do not generally pay enough attention to the placement of stress when listening.

Q12. Do you usually mark the stressed syllables of new difficult words?

Table 3.22: Students' Indication of the Stressed Syllables of New Difficult Words

Options	N	%
Yes	14	46.67
No	**16**	**53.33**
Total	30	100

From the obtained results, while among students (53.33%) opted for no, 46.67% of the participants selected yes. This result reveals that the students are not knowledgeable about the stress' rules and have serious problems regarding the indication of the stressed syllables of new difficult words.

Q13. If yes, which method of marking do you usually use?

Table 3.23: Students' Best Method of Marking the Stressed Syllable

Option	N	%
Using a small vertical line before the stressed syllable(e.g. com'puters)	**10**	**71.43**
Underlying the stressed syllable (e.g. comp<u>ut</u>ers)	04	28.57
Using capital letters (e.g. comPUters)	00	00
Showing the stressed syllable through a big cycle (e.g. oOo)	00	00
Not answered	00	00
Total	14	100

Table 3.23 shows that 71.43% of the participants indicated that they use a small vertical line before the stressed syllable as the best method of marking the stressed syllables. However, 28.57% of the students opted for the second option. These results reveal that, the students know the most frequent and useful method of marking the stressed syllable, which is using a small vertical line before the stressed syllable.

Q14. Do you use any other strategies or ways to impose your stress placement?

Table 3.24: Students' Best Strategies to improve Stress Placement

Options	N	%
Yes	02	06.67
No	**28**	**93.33**
Total	30	100

Table 3.24 shows a highest percentage of the participants 93.33 stated that they do not use any other strategies to improve their stress placement. While only two students claimed to use word stress strategies. This may suggest that since third year students studied word stress and mastered it previously, there is no need for word stress strategies.

Section three: Students' Views of their Word Stress Difficulties

Q15. How often do you put stress on the right syllable when you pronounce English Words?

Table 3.25: Students' Frequency of Stress Placement when Pronouncing Words

Option	N	%
Always	04	13.33
Often	06	20
Sometimes	**14**	**46.67**
Rarely	04	13.33
Never	00	00
I do not know	02	06.67
Total	30	100

The above table illustrates that the majority of the students (46.67%) sometimes put stress on the right syllable when pronouncing English words. 20% opted for often. However, the same percentage 13.33 represented always and rarely. Finally, no one opted for never. Again, it is obvious that the given sample generally do not pay attention in putting stress on the right syllable in pronouncing English words.

Q16. What areas do you generally face problems when you stress words in English?

Table 3.26: Students' Areas of Problems when Stressing Words in English

Options	N	%
Simple words	01	03.34
Affix words	07	23.33
Compound words	09	30
Word class pairs	**13**	**43.33**
Total	30	100

As it is clearly displayed in table 3.26, while 43.33% of the students indicated that they generally face problems with word stress pairs, 30% of the participants have a difficulty with Compound words. However, 23.33% of the participants opted for affix

words. One student said simple words. These results reveal that the students generally have serious problems with word class pairs' rules and compound words' rules. In particular, they may confuse to recognize whether the words are nouns, verbs or adjectives because each category receives its own word stress rule. Regarding the compound words' rules, the students may confuse to receive stress either on the first syllable or the on the second.

Q17. According to you, you make word stress errors because of:

Table 3.27: Causes of Students' Errors

Option	N	%
Lack of knowledge of English word stress rules	09	30
Complexity of word stress rules	00	00
Lack of practice	**15**	**50**
Lack of interest to learn word stress	01	03.33
Interference from other languages	05	16.67
Total	30	100

When the students were asked about the probable sources of their word stress errors, the answers were distributed rather eventually among all options. Table 3.27 demonstrates that the first main cause of students' word stress errors is the lack of practice as reported by 50% of the whole number of the participants, then the lack of knowledge of English word stress rules as well as the interference from other languages with the percentage of 30 and 16.67. The last main cause that has been selected by the participants (3.33%) was the lack of interest to learn word stress. Accordingly, students are expected to be experiencing serious problems.

Q18. How do your teachers usually respond to your word stress errors?

Table 3.28: Teachers Responses to Students' Word Stress Errors

Option	N	%
They provide feedback	**17**	**56.67**
They do not care	13	43.33
Total	30	100

As shown in table 3.28, slightly more than half of the participants (56.67%) stated that their teachers provide feedback to their word stress errors, the remaining (43.33%) claimed that their teachers do not care when they make errors. Therefore, it becomes clear that the majority of teachers are aware of the difficulties of their students' word stress errors. Thus, they provide their students with corrective feedback for avoiding word stress errors.

Q19. If your answer is a, how do you respond to your teachers' feedback?

Table 3.29: Students' Responses to their Teachers' Feedback

Option	N	%
I take it into account and correct	3	17.65
I ignore it	**14**	**82.35**
Total	17	100

In fact, table 3.29 shows that 82.35% of the participants ignore the teachers' feedback. Whereas, 17.65% of the participants stated that they consider it. These results indicate that the students ignore their teachers' feedback, despite of the teachers 'great assistance for avoiding students' word stress errors.

Section four: Further Suggestions

Q20. Please, add any suggestion or recommendation regarding the teaching and learning of English word stress?

The aim of this question is to examine students' opinions about teaching and learning of English word stress. The participants' answers varied between "Practice" and "Listening" as well as Teachers' training. The following are examples of their comments:

- "I believe that learning word stress should be based on the practice, either by listening or speaking even with errors".

- "To know the right word stress, I recommend downloading phonetic application".

- "Most of teachers do not pay attention to this aspect of language, even do not give students' remarks about their pronunciation, they should at least give much more emphasis on word stress".

- "I recommend listening well to native speakers".

Based on the data obtained from the different sections of the questionnaire, the results reveal that putting stress on the right syllable is very important. However, students experience great difficulties when learning word stress because they do not use any varieties of strategies. In particular, 53.33% of the students found learning English word stress difficult, and 93.33% of the participants do not use any strategies to improve their word stress placement.

3.3. Overall Discussion of the Results

From the data analysis of the test and questionnaire, it is sobering to realize that third-year Licence students of English as a Foreign Language at the Department of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel experience great word stress difficulties.

In fact, this was clearly shown through students' perceptions of learning word stress in the questionnaire who reported that learning word stress is very important and they have a good pronunciation. Surprisingly, the majority of the respondents failed to stress all the given words correctly in the test, which implies that third-year students are unaware of their word stress problems.

Students' word stress errors obtained from the analysis of the test were classified into seven categories. Word stress errors were concentrated in complex suffix words with the percentage of 68.33, followed by the French transfer with the percentage of 56.11. More specifically, it is obvious to realize that the students experience problems regarding suffix words, although they believe that they are significantly familiar with suffix words' rules. Concerning French transfer category, the participants appeared to confuse when

pronouncing the target words. In particular, the highest percentages 66.67%, 63.33%, and 60% represented the wrong answers given by the participants when pronouncing the words (sandwich, method, and voyage), which implies that these students are unaware of the difference between the French and English stress patterns.

In addition, when the students were asked about their perceptions about learning English word stress, they stated that it is very important with the percentage of 43.33. However, when they were asked about their frequency of paying attention to stress placement in speaking, they opted for sometimes with the percentage of 63.33. Regarding their perceptions of speaking and coming to a word they do not know how to stress, they stated that they pronounce the word the first way that comes into their heads with the percentage of 63.33. This indicated that they do not have enough time to check whether they produce stress on the right position or not and it is clear that they do not care about their word stress errors.

Moreover, the students' questionnaire revealed that among the participants (93.33%) did not use any varieties of strategies to improve their stress placement. This result implies that the respondents do not give the needed time for learning word stress effectively.

Based on the students' word stress errors classification, a large number of errors is due to the lack of practice as reported by the majority of the participants, which is indicated that the teachers do not give more explanations about stress placement. This can be explained by less word stress instructions.

In short, the analyses of the data obtained significantly divulged that third-year License students are highly experiencing word stress problems. Their word stress errors can be due to different causes. Some of which concern the nature of English word stress pattern, others are related to students who are unaware of the importance of learning word

stress. Last and not least, teachers also assign the responsibility for neglecting to some extent proving students with some knowledge of English spelling to make students more interested in learning word stress.

3.4. Pedagogical Recommendations

Based on the findings, the researchers would like to give out some recommendations and solutions in order to overcome and reduce the major errors regarding English word stress to both teachers' and students' as well as to the university's authorities to minimize the word stress types of errors encountered by EFL students at the department of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University.

3.2.2.1. To students

- Whenever the students learn a new word, they should not forget to learn its transcription and its stress placement as well.

- Students should speak out that new word with correct stress pattern until they have the feeling of having that "correct" word on their own.

- Students should pay more attention to the words that have different grammatical meanings simultaneously, such as a verb, a noun, an adjective...

- Students should try to correct systematically their known-words, which are pronounced wrongly by looking them up again in the dictionary or by asking their teachers.

- Students should listen intensively while others speaking and do the correction work to themselves if there are any stress errors in those talks.

- Students should be exposed to listening exercises, especially the ones in forms of dialogues and conversation in class with the help of their teachers.

3.2.2.2. To teachers

- The role of the teacher is crucial in drawing the learners' attention to the errors that they have made when uttering mispronouncing word stress.

- Since word stress aspect of pronunciation is such a difficult subject in EFL teaching, EFL teachers of phonetics should conduct, or be exposed to more workshop sessions in order to improve their pedagogic methods in teaching word stress.

- Teachers should benefit from using ICT tools in class because they save time and help to improve pronunciation (word stress) teaching and learning, as well as a source of motivation.

- Students should be provided with explicit teaching of stress placement rules so that they would be able to produce stress accurately.

- Teachers should be provided with more training in word stress teaching, so that they are ready for their teaching work.

- Teachers should become aware of the importance of word stress in pronunciation and communication.

- Teachers should let their students have more opportunities to speak. At that time they can listen and correct if they make any stress errors.

3.2.2.3. To the University's Authorities

- Phonetics is supposed to be taught in small class size (no more than 20 students per group) so that each student can have the opportunity to have sufficient practice.

- Universities should activate technological learning through offering language labs, phonetic labs computer labs and other facilities that give students the opportunity to practice producing the English word stress

- Universities at all levels should provide sufficient, relevant and state-of the-art textbooks and other teaching materials to teaching phonetics lessons and more specifically word stress.

3.5.Limitations of the Study

The present study aims at investigating the major word stress difficulties encountered by EFL Algerian university students. In spite the fact that the results of this research go hand in hand with the stated research hypothesis, some limitations can be noticed during the process of conducting this piece of work.

Since there was not enough time to deal with a large sample of the students, the number was reduced to cover only 30 students. Therefore, the result in the present study cannot be generalized. Because of time constraints, the researchers were not able to use other methods for data collection, especially the interview with teachers of phonetics, which stands to be of a particular relevance to strategy research and to give more validity to the findings of the present study. The data collected by the questionnaire was so limited because many students did not answer some questions and refused to justify their responses and did not explain their answers.

Conclusion

The analyzing of the data gathered from the students' questionnaire and the test administrated to EFL third year Licence English students in the English Department at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel reveals that the majority of the students is not aware of the importance of English word stress and is not aware of their word stress problems. Moreover, they do not use any ways or strategies when learning this aspect. Therefore, they experienced serious word stress difficulties. Because word stress is as important as the other aspects, teachers of phonetics should conduct more workshop sessions in order to improve their pedagogic methods in teaching word stress.

General conclusion

Word stress is considered as an important aspect of pronunciation. It plays a decisive role in communication as it is considered as the key of an accurate pronunciation. Word stress misplacement is a wide noticeable problem which should be taken into account because it leads to serious difficulties such as misunderstanding and inability of being understood by others.

The current study is made up of three chapters. While the first chapter presented a theoretical background about the most important issues that concern pronunciation in general, the second chapter discussed the issue of word stress in details and major of learners' word stress difficulties. However, the last chapter,which is devoted to the practical part of the present study,provided a thorough description of the research instruments used in the study: a test and a students' questionnaire. The results have been analyzed and discussed to end up with some conclusive points.

In fact, the findings of the study revealed that EFL third-year students at the University of Jijel are experiencing serious problems when it comes to their word stress performance. It also revealed students' failure to stress English words correctly in the test. The nature of English word stress pattern as being irregular, confusing, and full of rules and exceptions. Another cause of students' word stress errors can be addressed to students' carelessness, lack of knowledge, lack of interest to learn word stress and lack of practice.

Concerning the use of word stress strategies among students, the obtained results clearly indicated that students do not use any varieties to improve their word stress placement. That is, the poor word stress performance of students is getting more sophisticated by their lack of use of effective strategies.

To conclude, the findings of the present study was compatible with the research work hypothesis that third year students are experiencing serious word stress difficulties due to the fact that they are unaware of their word stress problems and they do not use any strategies to improve their word stress placement. In fact, there was an agreement between researchers that English word stress arises many difficulties for EFL learners, which implies that learning English word stress is not an easy task; it requires time and a lot of practice for learners to master the word stress rules in English language. EFL teachers are asked to scaffold their students to improve their English word stress performance.

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Appendices

Appendix A: The third year student's questionnaire

Appendix B: The third year student's test

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Appendix A

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Student's Questionnaire

Dear students,

   You are kindly requested to answer the following questions concerning this piece of work entitled "**Word Stress Difficulties Encountered by EFL University Students**", by putting a tick (√) in the appropriate box and by justifying or explaining whenever necessary.

   Thank you in advance for your collaboration.

Section One: General Information

Q1. Which aspect of the English language, do you think is the most important to be learnt?

   a) Vocabulary ☐

   b) Grammar ☐

   c) Syntax ☐

   d) Pronunciation ☐

   e) All of them ☐

   f) Others, please specify

   …………………………………………………………………..
   ....

Q2. Do you agree that having a good pronunciation is a major source of understanding?

   a) Strongly agree ☐

   b) Agree ☐

   c) Neutral ☐

   d) Disagree ☐

   e) Strongly disagree ☐

Q3. How would you rate your pronunciation overall?

   a) Very good ☐

   b) Good ☐

   c) Average ☐

   d) Poor ☐

   e) Verypoor ☐

Section two: Learners' Perceptions of Learning English Word Stress

Q4. How much is important for you to put stress on the right syllable when you speak in English?

a) Very important ☐

b) Important ☐

c) To some extent important ☐

d) Most important ☐

Please, justify

…………………………………………………………………………………………………...

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Q5. How do you find learning English word stress?

a) Very easy ☐

b) Easy ☐

c) Difficult ☐

d) Very difficult ☐

Q6. To what extent do you think you are knowledgeable about the following?

	Extremely	Significantly	Moderately	Not at all
a) The nature of stress				
b) Stress rules of simple words				
c) Stress rules of affix words				
d) Stress rules of compound words				
e) Stress rules of word class pairs				

Q7. When you learn a new word, how often do you usually focus on the placement of stress within this word?

a) Always ☐

b) Often ☐

c) Sometimes ☐

d) Rarely ☐

e) Never ☐

Q8. When you look up a word in the dictionary, how often do you pay attention to which syllable is stressed?

    a) Always ☐

    b) Often ☐

    c) Sometimes ☐

    d) Rarely ☐

    e) Never ☐

Q9. How often do you pay attention to the placement of stress when you are speaking?

    a) Always ☐

    b) Often ☐

    c) Sometimes ☐

    d) Rarely ☐

    e) Never ☐

Q10. When you are speaking and coming to a word you do not know how to stress, what do you usually do?

    a) I pronounce the word the first way that comes into my head ☐

    b) I keep going ☐

    c) I check to see if the word is stressed correctly ☐

Q11. How often do you pay attention to the placement of stress when you are listening to someone?

    a) Always ☐

    b) Often ☐

    c) Sometimes ☐

    d) Rarely ☐

    e) Never ☐

Q12. Do you usually mark the stressed syllables of new difficult words?

    a) Yes ☐

    b) No ☐

Q13. If yes, which method of marking do you usually use?

    a) Using a small vertical line before the stressed syllable(e.g. com'puters) ☐

    b) Underlying the stressed syllable (e.g. comp<u>u</u>ters) ☐

    c) Using capital letters (e.g. comPUters) ☐

    d) Showing the stressed syllable through a big cycle (e.g. oOo) ☐

Q14. Do you use any other strategies or ways to improve your stress placement?

   a) Yes   ☐

   b) No   ☐

If yes, please explain

……..

……..

Section three: Students' Views of their Word Stress Difficulties

Q15. How often do you put stress on the right syllable when you pronounce English words?

   a) Always   ☐

   b) Often   ☐

   c) Sometimes   ☐

   d) Rarely   ☐

   e) Never   ☐

   f) I do not know   ☐

Q16. What areas do you generally face problems when you stress words in English? Is it because;

   a) Simple words   ☐

   b) Affix words   ☐

   c) Compound words   ☐

   d) Word class pairs   ☐

Q17. According to you, you make word stress errors because of:

   a) Lack of knowledge of English word stress rules   ☐

   b) Complexity of word stress rules   ☐

   c) Lack of practice   ☐

   d) Lack of interest to learn word stress   ☐

   e) Interference from other languages   ☐

Other, please specify

……

……

Q18. How do your teachers usually respond to your word stress errors?

   a) They provide feedback   ☐

   b) They do not care   ☐

Q19. If your answer is 'a', how do you respond to your teachers' feedback?

    a) Take it into account and correct   ☐

    b) I ignore it   ☐

Section four: Further Suggestions

Q20. Please, add any suggestion or recommendation regarding the teaching and learning of English word stress?

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Thank you for your Cooperation

Appendix B
The Test

Read aloud the following sentences:

1. He gets fired and cannot find a new job because he has a **record.**

2. I was asked to con**duct** the orchestra at short notice.

3. Allow me to pre**sent** my friend.

4. It was a matter of great **im**port.

5. This exercise is cor**rect**.

6. She be**lieves** in ghosts.

7. The building was con**sumed** by fire.

8. Each man sub**scri**bed ten dollars.

9. EFL students en**coun**ter great difficulties with English word stress.

10. The committee would like to enter**tain** the idea of reducing the budget figure.

11. Earthquake is a natural di**sa**ster.

12. The **ci**nema is right across the street from the restaurant.

13. Peter is from Hong Kong and speaks **Chi**nese.

14. This is the most **com**fortable bed that I've ever slept in.

15. This shop stocks all the latest photo**gra**phic equipment.

16. Did you get my invi**ta**tion?

17. This is il**le**gal, you know!

18. I found the **a**tmosphere in there extremely un**plea**sant

19. If you misunder**stand** someone, you do not understand them properly.

20. There is a huge disco**nnect** between management and emplo**yee**s.

21. Did you see the beautiful **sun**rise this morning?

22. You should write it between inverted **commas**.

23. The **second-**class contains twenty students.

24. Don't be too heavy-**handed** with the salt.

25. He has the same **ca**mera as I have.

26. His **fe**stival is celebrated on the 8th of July.

27. My friend doesn't like **san**dwich.

28. If one **me**thod doesn't work, you should ask a friend to help you.

29. All best wishes for a nice *voyage*!

30. Brush the top of the cake with the *apricot* glaze.

Résumé

La présente étude a pour but d'étudier les difficultés liées à l'accent tonique rencontrées par les apprenants algériens de l'Anglais comme langue étrangère. Elle vise également à identifier les réceptions des apprenants de ces difficultés d'apprentissages de l'accent tonique. L'étude est basée sur l'hypothèse que si les étudiants étaient conscients des problèmes lies à l'accent tonique et utilisaient de multiples stratégies lorsqu'ils apprennent le domaine concerne, ils ne rencontreraient pas de difficultés énormes de l'accent tonique. Afin d'atteindre les objectifs susmentionnés, la recherche a opté pour un test et un questionnaire qui ont été soumis a 30 étudiants de troisième année au département d'anglais à l'université Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia Jijel. Les résultats ont relève que la fréquence des erreurs de l'accent tonique chez les étudiants est élevée et, par conséquent, ils éprouvent de graves difficultés de l'accent tonique. En outre, les résultats obtenus ont également relève que les étudiants ne sont pas conscients de leurs problèmes de l'accent tonique et qu'ils n'utilisent aucune stratégie lorsqu'ils apprennent cet aspect. L'analyse des résultats de recherche soutient l'hypothèse du présent travail de recherche savoir: les apprenants font face à de grandes difficultés dans le l'accent tonique en Anglais parce qu'ils ne sont pas conscients des problèmes de l'accent tonique et n'utilisent pas les différentes stratégies pour apprendre le domaine concerne. Sur la base de ces résultats, certaines recommandations pédagogiques sont suggérées pour minimiser et surmonter les problèmes de l'accent tonique.

ملخص

يهتم هذا البحث بدراسة الصعوبات المرتبطة بالنبرة التي تعترض متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية في الجزائر كلغة أجنبية. كما يهدف إلى التعرف على تصورات المتعلمين حول هذه الصعوبات. استند هذا البحث إلى فرضية مفادها انه إذا كان الطلاب على دراية بمشاكل النبرة و استخدموا استراتيجيات متنوعة لتعلم هذا الجانب فلن يواجهوا صعوبات كبيرة عند وضعها على الكلمات. اعتمد هذا البحث لأجل تحقيق الأهداف المسطرة اختبارا و استبيانا أجريا على ثلاثين طالبا في السنة الثالثة بقسم اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة محمد الصديق بن يحي –جيجل- كشفت النتائج أن أخطاء الطلاب في وضع النبرة على الكلمة الانجليزية كان مرتفعا و كنتيجة فهم يواجهون صعوبات خطيرة في ذلك بالإضافة إلى ذلك تكشف النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها أن الطلاب ليسوا على دراية بمشاكلهم عند وضع النبرة على الكلمات و لا يستخدمون أية استراتيجيات عند تناولهم هذا الجانب. أن تحليل النتائج المتوصل إليها يدعم فرضية البحث الحالي أن المتعلمون يواجهون صعوبات كبيرة في وضع النبرة على الكلمة الانجليزية لأنهم لا يدركون مشاكل النبرة و لا يستخدمون استراتيجيات متنوعة و بناءا على تلك النتائج تم اقتراح بعض التوصيات التربوية للحد من مشاكل النبرة و التغلب عليها.