

**Stress Errors Committed by Yemeni University Students of
English Language: Common Errors, Reasons, and Solutions**
Dr. Ibrahim Ali Ahmed Al-Shami
Deputy Governor of Hajjah Governorate- Yemen

Abstract

This research deals with an important problem that faces students of English language departments, Hajjah University, Yemen which is the misuse of stress in pronouncing English words and reading English poetry. It points out the reasons of this problem and suggests some solutions and suggestions to overcome this problem.

الملخص:

يتناول البحث بالدراسة والتحليل مشكلة من اهم المشاكل اللغوية التي تواجه طلاب قسم اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة حجة باليمن في نطق الكلمات وتقطيع الشعر لتحديد التفعيلة والبحر الشعري وهى مشكلة الخطأ في استخدام الشدة أو النبرة Stress يكشف البحث عن أسباب هذه المشكلة ويقدم بعض الحلول والمعالجات المقترحة للتغلب علي هذه الاشكالية وحلها وتجاوزها.

Introduction :

Language is a particular system of human communication that distinguishes those human beings from other creatures. In any language, there should be some skills to be mastered. One of these skills is speaking which is considered the most important skill by which we can judge on a person on whether he can master the language very well or not.

A speaker of a language should be aware of different terms that can help him to be fluent speaker such as grammar, sound system, pronunciation ...etc. In pronunciation, we have stress, intonation, and so many other things. Because these terms can send different ideas and messages to the listener, the speaker should be very careful of the words and sentences he produces. This research examines word accent to find out the difficulties that encounter the learners in producing and marking stress on these words focusing on the type of the word that has a great difficulty for the learners to put stress on.

1.1 Background of the Problem

As the proverb says that " To err is human, not animals", we can say that committing errors is one feature of human beings. It means that human beings are expected to commit errors. On this assumption, this research studies the errors as well as the difficulties that the English language students face and commit while making stress on the different types of words.

One of the common problems is that English Language students usually complain from exams whose questions demand to put stress in some words. In addition, they usually complain from the exams of poetry in which the students are asked to find out the feet and the meter. So, the students always make wrong answers because they think that marking stress is very difficult.

Another important note is that, some English language students do not apply stress at all in their speech and some misuse stress, and these are among the reasons that make this research investigates the most difficult areas in stress and the reasons behind such problems, focusing only on word accent to find out some solutions for this problem.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

It has been usually observed that some students in English Departments commit errors in making stress. They may not apply stress to some words and sometimes they misuse it, specially, in their speaking and marking stress in poetry to find out the feet and meters of the poem, thus, this research examines the common errors committed by the learners as well as the reasons to suggest some solutions.

1.3 The Objectives

The aim of the current work is to study the difficulties that Yemeni University students face in making stress whenever

necessary in a word to suggest some solutions that would help them overcome such problems, so the research aims to:

1-Identify the common errors in making stress, which are committed by students of level three and four in English Language Department focusing on words of different types.

2- Point out the reasons behind such errors.

3- Find out the most suitable and proper solutions to overcome those difficulties.

1.4 The Questions of the Problem

1. Do students of Faculty of Education, Hajjah University apply stress rules correctly?
2. What is the most difficult type of words –monosyllabic, disyllabic, tri-syllabic, polysyllabic –to put stress on?
3. Are there any reasons behind such difficulties, and what are they?
4. What are the individual differences between level three and four?
5. What are the suitable and proper solutions?

1.5 The Significance of the Study

This research is a significant one because it deals with an important area of study for Arabic learners of English language, stress usage and application. Many students of English Language Department either do not apply stress properly or misuse it in spoken

courses as well as poetry. This research focuses on the common errors of using stress committed by English Language students, it examines the main reasons behind committing such errors, and then it suggests some solutions to overcome this problem. The research is of great significance since it deals with a new and an important area of study. It will be of great value both for the students of English language as well as for the teachers and the university authorities because it suggests some solutions, which will participate to improve speaking skill and poetry learning among the students of English Departments in Yemeni Universities.

Thus, this research is significant because light can be shed on the areas to which the teachers should devote special care and emphasis in their teaching and the universities authorities should increase the related courses to this area if study and they should support Departments of English with Languages Labs in order to overcome these difficulties.

1.6 The Limitation of the Study

This research takes place in Faculty of Education, Hajjah University, and the sample is students of level three and four, Departments of English.

The study is limited to investigate the difficulties that Yemeni University students face in making stress both in linguistic and in poetry courses. This research focuses on words of different

syllables, monosyllabic, disyllabic, tri-syllabic, poly-syllabic and compound words.

Part 2- The Methodology

This part provides information about the procedures that are followed in order to find out the most common errors that are committed by English students in making stress whenever necessary in words of different types and syllables.

2.1 Research Method:

This research is a field research. Its method is descriptive, using statistical analysis for the obtained data. For analyzing the data, "SPSS" program is used in order to get validated results and that can be generalizable to the all population and to similar ones.

2.2 The Population:

The population of this research is the students of English Department, Faculty of Education, Hajjah University. More accurately, fifty students from level three and four, Department of English is the population of this research.

2.3 The Setting of the Study

The research was carried out to investigate the difficulties that students of English language Department, Faculty of Education Hajjah University face in using and producing word stress .It was carried out during the second semester of the academic year (2013-2014).

2.4 The Sample

The sample of this research is fifty students, boys and girls, from level three and four, English Department, Faculty of Education, Hajjah University.

2.5 The Instrument of the Research

Twenty-five words have been selected for investigating the research problem by using a test, which was developed by the researcher. The test consists of three questions. Each question has a number of words of different types and the students are requested to put stress marker wherever necessary.

2.6 The Procedures

After selecting the data collection tools, the test was run on the 14 of May at English Department, Faculty of Education-Hajjah. Fifty students sat for this test; they were selected randomly, 25 students –boys and girls – from level three and 25 students from level four. After collecting the data, a statistical analysis is made for the obtained data by using a software program in order to categorize the errors committed by the learners and deciding the most difficult areas for the students to find some solutions to such problems.

Part 3. Review of Related Studies and Stress Background

Stress is an essential element in pronunciation. It is an important area related to English spoken skill; thus, native speakers

of English as well as its learners pay great attention on stress and number of related studies to stress were done. However, before talking about those studies, the word "Stress" should be defined. Applied Linguistics Dictionary has defined stress as:

"The pronunciation of a word or syllable with more force than the surrounding words or syllable. A stress word or syllable is produced by using more air from the lungs".

3.1 Previous Related Studies.

Among the related studies to stress, Kelly (2000) made a study on how one can teach pronunciation; one way is to be aware of stress and its features. He says:

" In order for one syllable to be perceived as stressed, the syllables around it need to be unstressed .There are three features of syllables which were identified: loudness, pitch change, and a longer syllable."

Another important study is that of **Culter (1979)** who had made a study on errors in stress and intonation .He pointed out that in word stress the false stress placement is due to the omission or addition of any syllable to the root or to the word itself. He also pointed that some errors arise at the point which the motor programs for the articulation are activated, not by selection of the wrong program as that would result in utterance of the wrong word than the right word with the wrong stress pattern.(P. 68)

Another study has been done by Greenberg, Carvey and Hitchcock (1947) . They studied the relationship between stress and pronunciation They said that:

"Stress accent is an integral component of many languages such as English that so heavily depend on it for lexical, syntactic and semantic disambiguation".(P.40)

There are many rules for placing stress. Some of these rules have been studied by

Kelly (2000) who pointed out that:

"Many everyday nouns and adjectives of two syllables are stressed on the first syllable. For example, Sister , Brother..etc."

Rauch (1983) has written about the rule of placing stress in a word which functions as a verb in a sentence as:

"If the second of the verb is a strong syllable, then that second syllable is stressed."

In addition, Rauch , (1983), stated the rule of making stress in three syllabic words , especially , if it is a verb . He said that:

" If the final syllable is strong, then it will be stressed. Also, if the last is weak, then it will be unstressed and stress will be placed on the preceding syllable if that syllable is strong."

Moreover Rauch said about the word which consists of three syllables and acting as nouns as:

" If the final syllable is weak or ends with “ ə ” , then it is stressed; if the syllable preceding this final syllable is strong, then that middle syllable will be stressed"

3.2 Word in English

Generally, a word is a linguistic unite. Any word in any language consists of one phoneme or more than one phoneme .For example, the English words , ah ,oh , eye consist of one phoneme each. Also, the words tea, eat, zoo, and go consist of two phonemes each. The words cat, dog, fat, gun, and moon consist of three phonemes each. The words bread, dust, first consist of four phonemes each and so on.

All these words differ from each other in the number of the phonemes they have, but all of them are monosyllabic. Each one of the words listed previously has one syllable each.

There are a number of words in every language that have more than one syllable. The English words daughter, elephants, gigantic, honesty, tremendously, and station have more than syllable each .

3.3 Stress in English

Each syllable in a word has a degree of emphasis, called stress. It can be defined also as:

"The relative emphasis that may be given to certain syllables in a word. The term is also used for similar patterns of phonetic prominence inside syllables."

3.4 The Nature of the Stress

The nature of stress is simple enough, practically everyone would agree that the first of words like father, open , camera is stressed , that the middle syllable is stressed in potato , apartment , relation and that the final syllable is stressed in about , receive ,perhaps but it needs practice. In addition, most people feel they have some sort of idea of what the difference is between stressed and unstressed syllables, although they might explain it in different ways.

A stressed syllable in transcription will be marked by placing a small vertical line (') high up , just before the syllable it refers to . It is important to understand that there are two different ways to approach the characteristics of stressed syllables. One is that to consider what the speaker does in producing stressed syllables and the other is to consider what characteristics of sound make a syllable seem to a listener to be stressed. In other words, stress can be studied from the point of view of production and of perception; the two are obviously closely related, but are not identical.

The production of stress is generally believed to depend on the speaker using more muscular energy than is used for unstressed syllables. Measuring muscular effort is difficult, but it seems

possible according to experimental studies, that when we produce stressed syllables, the muscles that we use to expel air from the lungs are often more active, producing higher sub glottal pressure. It seems probable that similar things happen with muscles in other parts of our apparatus .Many experiments have been carried out on the perception of stress, and it is clear that many different sound characteristics are important in making a syllable recognizably stressed. From the perceptual point of view, all stressed syllables have one

Characteristic in common and that is prominence. Stressed syllables are recognized as stressed because they are more prominent than unstressed syllables. What makes a syllable prominent? At least four different factors are important; they are as the following:-

1. Most people seem to feel that stressed syllables are louder than unstressed; in other words, loudness is a component of prominence. In a sequence of identical syllables (e.g. ba:ba:ba:) if one syllable is made louder than the others , it will be heard as stressed . However, it is important to realize that it is very difficult for a speaker to make a syllable louder without changing other characteristics of the syllable.
2. The length of syllables has an important part to play in prominence. If one of the syllables in our nonsense word (ba:ba:ba:ba:)is made longer than the others , there is quite a strong tendency for that syllable to be heard as stressed. .

3. Every voiced syllable is pronounced in some pitch; pitch in speech is closely related to the frequency of vibration of the vocal cords and the musical notion of low-and high-pitched
4. Note is essentially a perceptual characteristic of speech. If one syllable of our nonsense word is said with a pitch that is noticeably different from that of others, this will have a strong tendency to produce the effect of prominence. For example , if all syllables are produced with low pitch except for one pronounced with high pitch , then the high pitched syllable will be heard as stressed and the others as unstressed .To place some movement of pitch(e.g. rising or falling) on a syllable is even more effective .

A syllable will tend to be prominent if it contains a vowel that is different in quality from neighboring vowels. If we change one of the vowels in our nonsense word (e.g.ba:bi:ba:ba) the odd syllable bi: will tend to be heard as stressed .Prominence , then , is produced by four main factors :

- 1- Loudness .
- 2- Length .
- 3- Pitch .
- 4- Quality .

Generally, these four factors work together in combination, although syllables may sometimes be made prominent by means of only one or two of them. Experimental work has shown that these factors are not equally important; the strongest effect produced by pitch and length is a powerful factor. Loudness and quality have much less effect.

3.5 Word Stress in English

Word stress is the magic key for understanding spoken English. Native speakers of English use word stress naturally. Word stress is so natural for them that they do not even know they use it. Non-native speakers, who speak English to native speakers without using word stress, encounter two problems:

They find it difficult to understand native speakers, especially those speaking fast.

The native speakers may find it difficult to understand them.

Lexical stress, or *word stress*, is the stress placed on a given syllable in a word. The position of lexical stress in a word may depend on certain general rules applicable in the language or dialect in question, although in some languages it is largely unpredictable, needing to be "learnt" for each individual word.; Languages in which the position of the stress can usually be predicted by a simple rule are said to have *fixed stress*. For example, in Czech, Finnish and Hungarian the stress almost always comes on the first syllable of a word; in Quechua and Polish the stress is almost always on the

penultimate syllable; while in Macedonian it comes on the third syllable from the end. Other languages have stress placed on different syllables but in a predictable way, as in Classical Arabic and Latin (where stress is conditioned by the structure of penultimate syllable).

They are said to have a regular stress rule. French words are sometimes said to be stressed on the final syllable, although French has no lexical stress at all: instead, *prosodic stress* (see below) is placed on the final syllable (or, if that is a schwa, the next-to-final syllable) of a string of words, which may be equivalent to a clause or a phrase. When a word is pronounced alone, its last syllable is also the end of the phrase, so the stress is placed there. Languages in which the position of stress in a word is less predictable are said to have *variable stress*. This applies to English and Russian, and to some extent to Italian and Spanish. Here stress is truly lexical: it must be memorized as part of the pronunciation of an individual word.

In such languages stress may be phonemic, in that it can serve to distinguish otherwise identical words; for example, the English words *insight* and *incite* are distinguished in pronunciation only by the fact that the stress falls on the first syllable in the former and on the second syllable in the latter. Other examples include *umschreiben* ("rewrite") vs. *umschreiben* ("paraphrase, outline") in German, and землі́ (genitive of "earth, land") vs. зе́млі (plural of

"earth, land") in Russian. Stress placement for some words may differ between dialects. For example, in British English the word *laboratory* is pronounced with primary stress on the second syllable, while American English stresses the first syllable, *laboratory*. Some English speakers make semantic distinctions based on stress, for instance between *paper bag* as a bag made of paper, and *paper bag* as a bag for carrying newspapers.

Some languages mark the position of stress in their orthography (spelling system), as is the case in Spanish and Portuguese. In other variable-stress languages, including English and Russian, stressed syllables are normally explicitly marked only in dictionaries and other pronunciation keys and learning aids.

3.6 Levels of Stress

There are three stress levels in English, primary (/), secondary (I), and unstressed (-). Each word of two or more syllables has one syllable that is longer and louder than the others are. It has primary stress. A syllable with secondary stress is stressed relative to unstressed syllables, but not as strongly as a syllable with primary stress. As with primary stress, the position of secondary stress may be more or less predictable depending on language. In English it is not fully predictable; for example, the words *generation* and *accumulation* both have primary stress on the fourth syllable, but the secondary stress comes on the first syllable in the former word and on the second syllable in the latter. In some

treatments, English has been described as having four levels of stress: primary, secondary, tertiary, and quaternary, but these treatments often disagree with each other.

English secondary stress does not have the phonetic characteristics normally associated with stress, and it is possible to describe English without secondary stress, as long as a distinction is made between unstressed syllables with and without vowel reduction.

3.7 Stress and Vowel Reduction

In many languages, such as Russian and English, vowel reduction may occur when a vowel changes from a stressed to an unstressed position. In English, many unstressed vowels reduce to schwa-like vowels, though the details vary with dialect. Other languages, such as Finnish, have no unstressed vowel reduction.

3.8 Prosodic Stress and Word Accent.

In English, stress is most dramatically realized on focused or accented words. For instance, consider the dialogue:-

"Is it brunch tomorrow?"

"No, it's dinner tomorrow."

In this dialogue, the stress-related acoustic differences between the syllables of "tomorrow" would be small compared to the

differences between the syllables of "dinner", the emphasized word. In these emphasized words, stressed syllables such as "din" in "dinner" are louder and longer. They may also have a different fundamental frequency, or other properties. Unstressed syllables typically have a vowel, which is closer to a neutral position (the schwa), while stressed vowels are more fully realized. In contrast, stressed and unstressed vowels in Spanish share the same quality—unlike English, the language has no reduced vowels.

(Much literature emphasizes the importance of pitch changes and pitch motions on stressed syllables, but experimental support for this idea is weak. Nevertheless, most experiments do not directly address the pitch of speech, which is a subjective perceived quantity. Experiments typically measure the speech fundamental frequency, which is objectively measurable, and strongly correlated with pitch, but not quite the same thing.).

3.9 TIMING:

English is a stress-timed language; that is, stressed syllables appear at a roughly constant rate, and non-stressed syllables are shortened to accommodate this. English does this to some extent with noun-verb pairs such as a *récord* vs. to *recórd* , where the verb is stressed on the last syllable and the related noun is stressed on the first; record also hyphenates differently: a *réc-ord* vs. to *re-córd* .(PLACEMENT).

Prosodic stress can also be put on any word in a sentence to make possible several sentences of different meaning:

I didn't take the test yesterday. (Somebody else did.)

I *didn't* take the test yesterday. (I did not take it.)

I didn't *take* the test yesterday. (I did something else with it.)

I didn't take *the* test yesterday. (I took a different one.)

I didn't take the *test* yesterday. (I took something else.)

I didn't take the test *yesterday*. (I took it some other day.)

The possibilities for stress in tone languages are an area of ongoing research, but stress-like patterns have been observed in Mandarin Chinese.[4] They are realized as alternations between syllables where the tones are carefully realized with a relatively large swing in fundamental frequency, and syllables where they are realized "sloppily" with typically a small swing. Stressed syllables are often perceived as being more forceful than non-stressed syllables. Research has shown, however, that although dynamic stress is accompanied by greater respiratory force, it does not mean a more forceful articulation in the vocal tract.

3.10 Rules of Word Stress in English.

There are two very simple rules about word stress:

1. One word has only one stress. (One word cannot have two stresses. If you hear two stresses, you hear two words. Two stresses cannot be one word. It is true that there can be a

"secondary" stress in some words. But a secondary stress is much smaller than the main [primary] stress, and is only used in long words.)

2. We can only stress vowels, not consonants but with some exceptions, rather more complicated, rules that can help you understand where to put the stress. But do not rely on them too much, because there are many exceptions. It is better to try to "feel" the music of the language and to add the stress naturally. The exceptions will be discussed later on.

Primary Stress.

1 A°) Normal Stress Rule:

a) Two-syllable words are normally stressed on the first syllable . For example *foreign*² , *mountain* , *legal* , ...etc. .

b) Three-syllable words are normally stressed on the first syllable ,
(*character* , *family* , ...

c) Words of more than three syllables are normally stressed on the antepenultimate (code /-100/) and may need a secondary stress.

original , *curiosity* , ... (unless a strong suffix assigns the primary stress to the penultimate as in *characterization* /200010/, *popularization* /200010/, or elsewhere as in *characteristically* /20010(0)0/ where one strong suffix is followed by two weak suffixes).

Some rules can be shown in the following table:

1-Stress on first syllable

Rule	Example
Most 2-syllable nouns	PRESent, EXport, CHIna, Table
Most 2-syllable adjectives	PRESent, SLENDER, CLEVer, HAPpy

2-Stress on last syllable

Rule	Example
Most 2-syllable verbs	to preSENT, to exPORT, to deCIDE, to begin

There are two-syllable words in English whose meaning and class change with a change in stress. The word present, for example is a two-syllable word. If we stress the first syllable, it is a noun (gift) or an adjective (opposite of absent). But if we stress the second syllable, it becomes a verb (to offer). More examples: the words export, import, contract and object can all be nouns or verbs depending on whether the stress is on the first or second syllable.

Stress on Penultimate Syllable

(penultimate = second from end)

Rule	Example
Words ending in –ic	GRAPHic, geoGRAPHic, geologic
Words ending in -sion and – tion	teleVIsion, revelation

For a few words, native English speakers do not always "agree" on where to put the stress. For example, some people say teleVIsion and others say TELevision. Another example is: CONtroversy and contROversy.

Stress on Ante-penultimate Syllable

(ante-penultimate = third from end)

Rule	Example
Words ending in -cy, -ty, - phy and –gy	deMOcracy, dependaBility, phoTOgraphy, geology
Words ending in –al	CRItical, geological

Compound Words

(Words with two parts)

Rule	Example
For compound nouns, the stress is on the first part	BLACKbird, GREENhouse
For compound adjectives, the stress is on the second part	bad-TEMpered, old-FASHioned
For compound verbs, the stress is on the second part	to underSTAND, to overflow

Some Rules and their Exception.

1 B°) Main classes of exceptions for two-syllable words /01/:

a) Words beginning with a Latin or Germanic prefix (*remind, decide, except...*; *about, behind, forget...*)³

b) Verbs ending in <-ate>(*create, frustrate, translate...*)

2°) Retrieving the original word (= the deriving word)

To calculate the main stress of longer words, you must first remove any"

stem, are: weak" suffix, and then count from the end.

The principal weak suffixes, added to words without modifying the stress of the:

a) Grammatical suffixes such as <-ed>, <-en>, <-ing>, <-(e)s>, <-er>, <-est>...

b) Agent suffixes such as <-er>, <-or>,

1 A few explanations:

c) Any suffix beginning with a consonant such as <-ful>, <-less>, <-ness>,

<-ment>, <-ly>, ...

3A°) Words of three or more syllables are normally stressed on

the antepenultimate (code /100/ or /-100/)

a) Three-syllable words are normally stressed on the first syllable (code /100/):

character, family, ...

b) Words of more than three syllables are normally stressed on the antepenultimate (code /-100/) and may need a secondary stress.

3B°) Main classes of exceptions:

a) Words ending in <-ic> (code /-10/): *eccentric, symbolic, catastrophic, ...*

(CAUTION: a few words, which are not derived adjectives, are stressed according to

the "Normal" Stress Rule (code /100/ or /-100/) and must be learnt by heart: *Arabic,*

arithmetic, arsenic, Catholic, heretic, lunatic, politics, rhetoric)

b) Verbs ending in <-ish> /-10/ (*demolish, diminish, extinguish*)

c) Words ending in <-ion>, or more generally in CiV(C)#4

, CeV(C)# or

CuV(C)# (or Vi/e/uV(C)#, have their main stress on the syllable immediately

preceding the ending (code/-10/): *education, colonial, atrocious, advantageous, conspicuous, residual, ratio...*

Secondary Stress:

1°) Whenever two or more syllables precede the main stress, there must be a secondary stress, because the rhythm of English requires that no word can begin with two unstressed syllables. This can be summed up thus: (code */00-/)

2°) When ONLY two syllables precede the main stress, the secondary stress falls on the first: *mathematics /2010/ ; education /2010/ ; perspicacity /20100/*. This can be summed up thus: (code /201-/)

3°) When more than two syllables precede the main stress (code */00-/), consult the nearest deriving form (= the root word). The main stress of the deriving form becomes the secondary stress of the derived form:

character /100/ □□characteristic /20010/;

eradicate /0100/ □□eradication /02010/

Part 4- Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This is considered to be the most important part in this research because it serves the main objective of the study which is identifying the most common errors committed by students of level three and four, English Department, Faculty of Education, Hajjah University, in putting stress in words of different type of syllables. In addition, it will reveal the average of the individual differences between level three and four and the main reasons for such differences as well as such errors.

4.2 Data Analysis

The program of "SPSS" used in data analysis that helps in finding validated and reliable results. After the analysis, the researcher could find the answer for the question, what are the most difficult type of words –monosyllabic, disyllabic, tri-syllabic, compound words or polysyllabic – to put stress in?

For the analysis, the words are replaced by some symbols to get the numerical results of the data according to its type ,the number of syllables which a word has and to the rules by which a learner can put the stress marker and deciding whether this word can be stressed by a general rule or it is considered to be from exceptions. The following {table 1.1} would explain these symbols as they are in their questions .

{ Table 1.1 }

The following table (1.1) represents the original table of the students' answers

No	ID	Question 1					Question 2					Question 3			
		Answer	Score	Answer	Score	Score	Answer	Score	Answer	Score	Answer	Score	Answer	Score	
1	1010101	☆	1	☆	1	☆	1	☆	1	☆	1	☆	1	☆	1
2	1010102	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2
3	1010103	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2
4	1010104	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2
5	1010105	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2
6	1010106	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2
7	1010107	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2
8	1010108	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2
9	1010109	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2
10	1010110	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2
11	1010111	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2
12	1010112	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2
13	1010113	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2
14	1010114	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2
15	1010115	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2
16	1010116	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2
17	1010117	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2
18	1010118	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2
19	1010119	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2
20	1010120	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2	☆☆	2

Table (1.2)

Now the results of the words can be shown in the following table (1.2)

Sub.	LEVEL	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Percent
ALLQ1A	level3	1.40	25.00	0.76	70.00
	level4	0.56	25.00	0.65	28.00
	Total	0.98	50.00	0.82	49.00
ALLQ1B	level3	1.56	25.00	0.96	52.00
	level4	1.32	25.00	0.75	44.00
	Total	1.44	50.00	0.86	48.00
ALLQ1C	level3	0.88	25.00	0.67	33.00
	level4	0.68	25.00	0.63	30.00
	Total	0.78	50.00	0.65	33.00
ALLQ1D	level3	1.80	25.00	0.65	60.00
	level4	1.16	25.00	1.03	38.67
	Total	1.48	50.00	0.91	49.33

ALLQ2E	level3	2.24	25.00	1.27	44.80
	level4	1.64	25.00	1.22	32.80
	Total	1.94	50.00	1.27	38.80
ALLQ2F	level3	2.08	25.00	1.15	41.60
	level4	1.44	25.00	1.23	28.80
	Total	1.76	50.00	1.22	35.20
ALLQ3P	level3	2.40	25.00	1.19	48.00
	level4	1.24	25.00	1.05	24.80
	Total	1.82	50.00	1.26	36.40
ALLQ3S	level3	2.12	25.00	1.27	32.40
	level4	1.16	25.00	0.85	23.20
	Total	1.64	50.00	1.17	28.80
ALL	level3	14.48	25.00	3.22	48.27
	level4	9.20	25.00	3.15	30.67
	Total	11.84	50.00	4.13	39.47

Table (1.2)

From the previous tables we can observe the following;

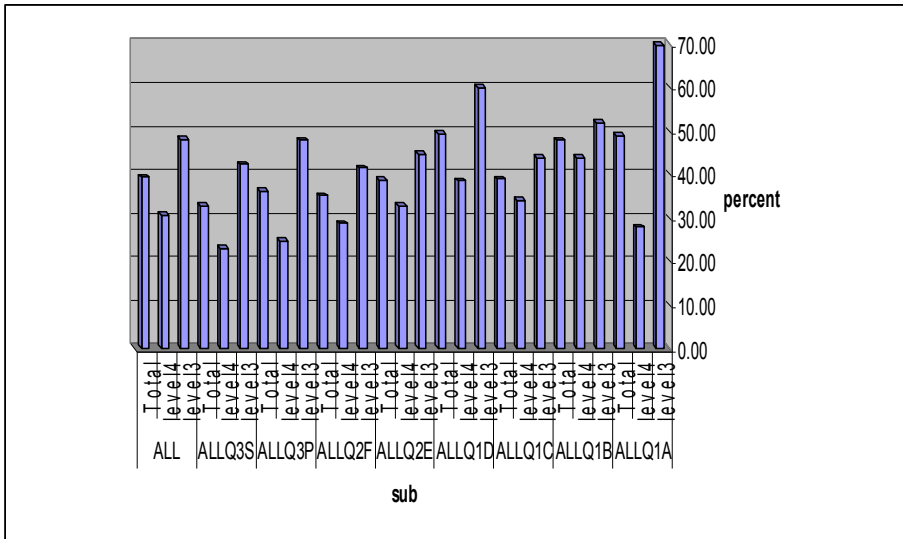
- 1- The percentage of errors for monosyllabic (ALLQ1A) words for the whole population is about %49 .00 .It means that this type of words has a medium degree of difficulty for the whole population. But considering which level has more difficulty –three or four – we can say that level four has more difficulty than level three in this type of word. The percentage of errors of level four is (28.00 %) . It means that it is a very difficult word for level four .For the percentage of errors for the monosyllabic words of level three it is about (70 %) which means that this type of words is very easy to put stress on.
- 2- Di-syllabic words (ALLQ1B) percentage of errors for the whole population with general rule is (48.00%), so this type of words is medium in its difficulty .The percentage of errors for level four is (44.00%) and for level three is(52.00 %)which means that this type of word is medium neither difficult nor easy for the whole population .
- 3- The percentage of errors for the words which can be used as a verb and noun (ALLQ1C) in a sentence for the whole population is(33.00%). It means that difficult words to put stress in for the whole population. Level four percentage is (30.00%) and level three is (33.00%) .
- 4- Disyllabic words percentage of errors which are exceptions with no general rule is (39.33 %), level three got (60.00 %)and level four got (38.68%).Thus this type of word is medium in its difficulty for the whole sample .

- 5- The percentage of errors for the compound words for the whole population is about (38.80%) .This means that the difficulty of these errors is medium. Level three result is (44.40%) and level four result is (32.80 %).
- 6- The percentage errors of the tri-syllabic words (ALLQ2F) for the whole population is (35.20%) , level three got about (41.60 %). That means these words' difficulty is medium only for level three, but level four percentage of errors is(28.80%)which means that level four face great difficulty in these words.
- 7- The percentage of the polysyllabic words regarding the percentage errors of the primary stress for the whole population is about (36.40 %). That means its difficulty is medium to some extent .For level three the percentage of errors is (48.00%)that means it is medium in its difficulty and level four is(24.80%) which means that level four encounters a great difficulty in marking primary stress in a word . The percentage of errors for the secondary stress for the whole population is (28.80%) . That means marking secondary stress is very difficult for the whole population. Level three got 32.40 and level four got (23.20%). Both of these percentages reflect a difficulty for the population to mark secondary stress in a word.
- 8- The total percentage of errors for this type of polysyllabic word is (32.76%). The percentage of the errors in general for level three (40.52 %). while level four percentage of errors is (24.00%).This is to some extent a medium one.
- 9- The total average of errors for the whole population in the whole test is (39.47%) . The percentage of errors of level

three is (48.27%) while level four percentage of errors is (30.67%).

4.3 Discussion of Data Analysis

From the previous results, we can say that the most difficult type of words to put stress in for the whole population is disyllabic words which can be used as verbs and as nouns .The percentage of errors for these type of words was (33.00 %). In addition, the words which got highest percentage of lower errors were the words of two syllables and they are considered to be from the exception of the general rule. They got about (49.33%). But one point is that another type of words that are considered to be the most difficult is poly-syllabic words regarding the secondary stress .The percentage of



errors of the secondary stress is (28.80%) .The rest of the words were in the middle of difficulty as can be explained in the following diagram (1):

(1)

Another point which has been observed from table (1.3) is that in all type of words –monosyllabic, disyllabic, tri-syllabic, compound, and poly-syllabic words- level four got lower mark than level three. It means that what has been easy for level three was difficult for level four; that is because of the following reason: - level three studied the course Phonetic and Phonology, which includes stress and its rules in the last semester of the same year; they have fresh and updated knowledge.

Though level three and level four had studied the same course and by the same instructor , level four had a great difficulty on stress which means that level four do not apply stress all the time while they are speaking , they took the course Phonetic and Phonology only for the sake of passing the exam.

The students have been asked to give reasons for the difficulty of marking stress. The Majority of them gave the following reasons :

- 1- The courses that cover stress topics are not sufficient for the students to be familiar with, especially that they are from the second language learners and that they should have more courses in these things.
- 2- Most of the teachers ignore the individual differences between the students; their aim is only to rush into the courses in the handout as quickly as possible as some students think.
- 3-The learners have no link at all with the Lab to apply what they have studied especially those courses of listening, pronunciation, intonation, stress ...etc .

4- The lack of the specialized teachers in linguistics in English Department.

4.4 The Individual Differences between Levels Three and Four.

This question of the individual differences between level three and four has been answered by using T-Test, which was displayed to the learners as it is explained in the following table (2.1)

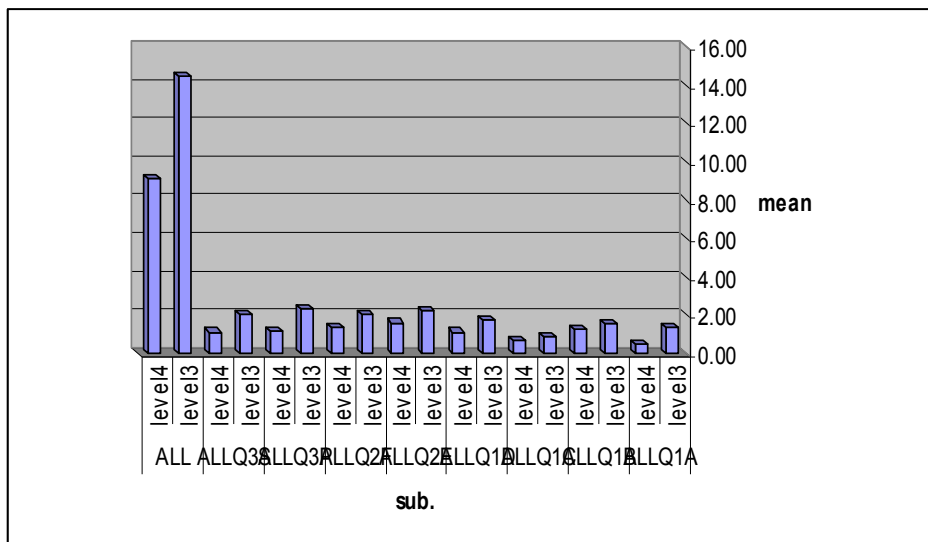
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
A	Equal variances assumed	1.097	.300	4.186	68	.000	.860	.201	.457	1.263
	Equal variances not assumed			4.186	66.817	.000	.860	.201	.456	1.266
B	Equal variances assumed	2.288	.137	.985	68	.329	.260	.266	-.250	.750
	Equal variances not assumed			.985	65.282	.330	.260	.266	-.251	.751
C	Equal variances assumed	.228	.628	1.092	68	.280	.200	.182	-.168	.568
	Equal variances not assumed			1.092	67.829	.280	.200	.182	-.168	.568
D	Equal variances assumed	6.061	.017	2.626	68	.011	.660	.262	.152	1.128
	Equal variances not assumed			2.626	60.280	.012	.660	.262	.150	1.130
E	Equal variances assumed	.026	.856	1.706	68	.095	.600	.262	-.108	1.308
	Equal variances not assumed			1.706	67.922	.095	.600	.262	-.108	1.308
L	Equal variances assumed	.809	.372	1.901	68	.062	.660	.227	-.027	1.317
	Equal variances not assumed			1.901	68	.062	.660	.227	-.027	1.317

	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	df	sig.	Mean	Standard Deviation	T	df	sig.
M (PA)	level4	1.580	.585	3.461	48	.001	1.140	.318	.821	1.788
	level3	1.580	.585	3.461	47.988	.001	1.140	.318	.821	1.788
	level4	1.580	.585	3.461	48	.001	1.140	.318	.821	1.788
M (PPA)	level4	1.585	.108	3.143	48	.002	.840	.308	.268	1.874
	level3	1.585	.108	3.143	47.982	.002	.840	.308	.268	1.874
	level4	1.585	.108	3.143	48	.002	.840	.308	.268	1.874
PA	level4	1.108	.747	3.848	48	.000	3.330	.900	3.670	0.000
	level3	1.108	.747	3.848	47.970	.000	3.330	.900	3.670	0.000
	level4	1.108	.747	3.848	48	.000	3.330	.900	3.670	0.000

Table (2.1)

difference between level three and four. The value of T for all the population is 5.885 . This percentage is lower than 0.05 that means the difference between the levels is very high. Of course, level four is lower than level three in their percentage. This can be explained in the following diagram (2)

Diagram (2)



This diagram explains the difference between the learners' level in every word.

Finally, it has been found that about (30.00 %) percent of words have not been answered by the learners from the two levels which means that the whole students in English Department face this problem.

Part 5- The Conclusion

This research aimed at investigating the most difficult type of word to put stress on and it has been found the following results:

- 1- The most difficult words to put stress on are poly-syllabic words. The percentage of errors for those words was (32.76%).The primary stress percentage of errors was about (36.40%) while the secondary stress percentage of errors was (28.80%).
- 2- The easiest words to put stress on is monosyllabic words. The average of errors was (49.00%).
- 3- The rest words of different syllables and rules can be stated gradually from the most difficult till the easiest ones as the following :
 - A- Di-syllabic words with general rule has (33.00%) percentage of errors
 - B- Tri-syllabic words percentage of errors is about (35.20%)
 - C- Compound words percentage of errors is about (38.40%)
 - D- Di-syllabic words which are considered to be from exceptions have the percentage of errors (39.33%)
 - E- Di-syllabic words with general rule have the percentage of errors (48.00%)
- 4- The percentage of error for the whole population is about (39.00%) . Level three percentage of error is (48.27 %), while level four percentage of error is (30.67%)

It has been found also that committing errors is due to the following reasons:

The students have lack of knowledge about stress because the courses that are related to stress are not sufficient for the students to be familiar with .When the students were displayed to study stress, there was no link between the subject topics and the library to apply what the students have studied . Thus, insufficient courses, the lack of facilities as Language labs and the shortage of specialized instructors are among the main reasons behind students' errors in using and producing stress. In other words, the following are the main reasons behind this problem:-

- 1- Most of the teachers and doctors who have taught Phonetic and Phonology course which is related to stress topics were not qualified in this specialization, and if they are specialized, they will be more able to teach these courses .It means that teaching Phonetic and Phonology needs specialist instructors in Linguistics for its difficulty for the students.
- 2- The teachers of this material ignore the students' differences and they rush into the handout as quickly as possible and they also ignore teaching these courses to some extent as some students complains.
- 3- Students study these courses for exam orientation not for something to be applied while they are speaking.
- 4- The absence of language lab and the related references in the library of the faculty are also main reasons behind this problem.

The Main Findings:

According to this research, the following main results can be stated as follows:-

The majority of the students in the two levels –three and four – have a great difficulty in putting the stress marker . After investigating the problem by giving a test for the whole population , it has been found that the percentage of errors or the difficulty of that test was about (39.00%), considering that level three students have a fresh knowledge about stress because they have studied Phonetic and Phonology course in the previous semester . The level which has more difficulty is level four .Their percentage of errors is about (30.67%) , while level three percentage of errors is (48.27% , so the differences between level three and four is about (5. 885%) which means that there is a high difference between the two levels .

The most difficult type of words to put stress on is polysyllabic words ,it means the words which have more than four syllables .The percentage of errors for these words is (32.76%).The primary stress percentage of error is about (36.40%) , while the percentage of errors for the secondary stress is (28.80%).

The easiest words to put stress on, is monosyllabic words. Their percentage of errors is (49.00%).

The main reasons behind such difficulty and differences are:

- 1- The shortage of the courses that are related to stress.
- 2- The lack of the listening [equipment's](#), language labs, and the link between the lab and the courses especially those courses which are related to pronunciation.
- 3- The shortage of the specialist teachers in Linguistics.
- 4- The teachers do not pay attention the students' pronunciation mistakes especially while producing stress when they are speaking.
- 5- The students themselves do not apply stress on their speech. It means that they do not apply what they study.

The Recommendations

After investigating the problem of the research as well as the reasons behind such problem, here are some recommendations as well as some suggested solutions for this problem which can be stated as the following:

- 1- Stress should be taught from secondary schools so that the students at the collages will be familiar with such terms.
- 2- There should be sufficient materials and more courses that are related to this field from level one till level four
- 3- There should be specialized instructors in linguistics, especially in phonetic and phonology to teach pronunciation and stress.

Instructors of the courses that are related to stress should pay attention to the individual differences among students, so they should vary their methods of teaching.

- 4- There should be link between the topics of stress and the Lab so that the students would listen and apply what they study.
- 5- Instructors should also use software programs in their teaching such programs like (pratt) . This program shows the placement of stress and the number of syllables which a word has.
- 6- Students of English in all levels should listen at least for three hours to the standard channels of English language such as BBC, CNN, and educational channels because these channels show the native speakers pronunciation as well as their way of applying stress in words and in their connected speech.
- 7- Instructors should correct the students' pronunciation errors on stress immediately if the students mispronounce any word because of errors on stress are said to be from the serious errors

that may be fossilized in the minds of students if they are not corrected immediately by some linguists of stress.

- 8- For teaching the polysyllabic words, teachers should cut the word into syllables and to show where secondary stress as well as primary stress to be put should. In addition, teachers should show the difference in pronunciation of both primary and secondary stress.

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