

ANALYSIS OF THE REALISATION OF STRESS PATTERN OF SOME MULTI-SYLLABIC WORDS AMONG SELECTED HAUSA NATIVE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH

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Abstract

Languages of the world have phonological peculiarities. Speakers of Nigerian languages are no exempt. No two languages have exactly the same phonological rules regulating the deployment of the sounds. Hence, any Hausa speaker of English is bound to encounter some difficulties in speaking the language and vice versa since the two languages are different. In the most basic sense, second language learners encounter some problems as a result of their inability to understand the phonotactic constraint that exist in the target language, resulting in mispronunciation and misplacement of stress. The study was carried out using the Perceptual Assimilation Model (PAM) and Speech Learning Model (SLM) theories to explore the occurrences of such misplacement. The respondents' production of the given exercise was recorded and analysed. The respondents for the research were from Kano and Jigawa states respectively. Interview method was used for 100 respondents and they were reduced to 20 by selecting 4 using random sampling from the five groups of 20 each which ensure a

feasible and successful analysis. Data analysis used tables based on the respondent's pronunciation syllabic-ally. Each word category was allocated a table containing the words, as well as its IPA/RP transcription, stressed syllable, and a summary of respondent's realisation. The study finds out that the roles of stress in communication cannot be overemphasized because it affects understanding which is very paramount to language use. The result of the investigation shows that misplacement of stress on syllable is mostly caused by the influence of mother-tongue interference. The research concludes that stress misplacement is mostly done because of the effect and dominance of Hausa language. The research also shows the importance of right placement of stress and how important the stress is to effective human communication.

Key Words: Realisation of Stress Pattern , Multi-syllabic Words, Hausa Native Speakers

Introduction

The study of sound is one of the important aspects of linguistics. Phonology is one of the branches of linguistics which is basically concerned with sounds and how these sounds are produced in languages. English is today a global language so using it simplifies communication. Communication is very important in human life. As pointed out by Jackson, "effective communication processes among users of language must be achieved by maintaining the morphology, syntax, semantic and phonological ideals of the language" (20). The study of sounds is very paramount in all human languages. In fact, without the use of sounds, there would be no verbal communication. Phonology deals with sounds of speech of human language. It plays an important role in human communication. It studies how languages systematically organise their sounds (or signs, in sign languages). The term also refers to the sound system of any particular language variety. At one time,

the study of phonology only related to the study of the systems of phonemes in spoken languages. Now it may relate to: any linguistic analysis either at a level beneath the word (including syllable, onset and rime, articulatory gestures, articulatory features, mora, etc.), or all levels of language where sound or signs are structured to convey linguistic meaning. (Brentari, 117)

Phonology is further categorised into segmental and supra-segmental. Segmental phonology deals with individual speech sounds (phonemes) -vowels and consonant sounds. Scholars hold different opinions in relation to the number of these sounds. Generally, there are twenty-four consonant sounds and twenty vowel sounds. The vowels are divided into two and to some three, namely; monophthongs, diphthongs and triphthongs. For many scholars, adding triphthongs to the group of vowels is done to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of vowel sounds and their variations in speech. On the other hand, the supra-segmental features of phonology include: syllable, stress, intonation, rhythm and Assimilation. This research focuses on the stress pattern of multi-syllabic words of English as realised by Hausa speakers. Stress is the muscular energy or force applied to a particular syllable in a word. Some syllables are louder in production than others in the same word, when this is

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violated, mispronunciation occurs, leading to misplacement of this stress syllable thereby distorting communication. As a result of the aforementioned, this research investigates the misplacement of stress syllable which mostly results to breach of communication. This study also investigates the pattern of stress that exists in English and makes comparison between it and what is obtainable in Hausa native speaker's realisation of stress. This study hopes to suggest ways to overcome the difficulties faced by Hausa native speakers of English as a second language.

Statement of the Problem

Generally, languages of the world have phonological peculiarities of importance to this study is Hausa, alongside Igbo and Yoruba often referred to as the ethnic groups with the largest number of speakers in Nigeria. Languages are ordered into a common language family based on phonology, morphology and syntax. Katamba states that “no two languages have exactly the same inventory of phonemes which are realised by the same set of allophones” (79). No two languages have exactly the same phonological rules regulating the deployment of the sounds. Hence, any Hausa language speaker is bound to encounter some difficulties in speaking English language and vice versa since the two languages are different. Thus the inherent sound system of the L1 may pose problem in speaking the L2. The segmental phonemes and phonotactics of the major languages of Nigeria differ from those of English. However, realisation of English sound varies with the speakers of Nigerian major languages, and Hausa language in particular. The realisation of English multi-syllabic words by native speakers of English differs from the realisation of Hausa speakers. This difference no doubt poses challenges for a potential Hausa learner of English language and might as well result in mispronunciation and misplacement of their stress pattern and the rules guiding the language sounds system. Non-native speakers of English have the tendency of adopting features from their first language into the study of English language. As Dobrovosky and Katamba note that;

native speakers of any language are aware that certain features and words that come from other languages are unusually strange; as a result, adjustments on the segment sequences and features are often made by them, to conform to the pronunciation requirements of their own language (84).

In the same vein, Abu Rabia and Kehat state that “even though most adult learners of a second language may exhibit language features that show high or even total mastery of the language, the elision of their native accent is inevitable” (17). In the most basic sense, second language learners encounter some problems as a result of their inability to understand the phonotactic constraint that exist in the target language. In the light of this, many Hausa native speakers while speaking, exhibit the tendency of bringing certain structures and phonotactic constraint of their native language into the study of English language, resulting in mispronunciation and misplacement of stress.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the problem of misplacement of stress on polysyllabic English words by selected Hausa speakers of English. Its salient objectives are to:

1. identify the causes of misplacement of stress on syllables among the Hausa native speakers of English Language.
2. determine the similarities and differences between Hausa and English stressed syllables for coherent communication.
3. ascertain the extent Hausa phonology affects the pronunciation of English words

Research Questions

To achieve the stated objectives of the study, this research hopes to answer the following questions:

1. What are the causes of misplacement of stress on syllables by Hausa native speakers of English?
2. What are the similarities and differences between Hausa and English stressed syllables for coherent communication?
3. To what extent does English phonology affect Hausa and vice-versa?

Scope of the Study

This study was conducted on the stress realisation by Hausa speakers of English. Although the problem of the present study is applicable to all Nigerian speakers of English the study focuses only on Hausa speakers of English since the contribution of this study is related to the Nigerian context. Thus, this will narrow down the focus of this investigation. The respondents of this study are both male and female. The study limited its scope by focusing on the evaluation of oral communication. That is, no attempt was made to examine written errors. In addition, only supra-segmental features in the speech of

Hausa speakers of English were investigated and analysed. Hence, only stress shifting and misplacement and errors that occur that were examined in this study.

Literature Review

In linguistics, realisation is the process by which some kind of surface representation is derived from its underlying representation; that is, the way in which some abstract object of linguistic analysis comes to be produced in actual language. Phonemes are often said to be *realised* by speech sounds. The different sounds that can realise a particular phoneme are called its allophones. Realisation is also a sub task of natural language generation, which involves creating an actual text in a human language (English, French, etc.) from a syntactic representation. Realisation involves different kinds of processing; According to Gatt, it involves three kinds of processing, namely: 1) Syntactic realisation which uses grammatical knowledge to choose inflections, add function words and also to decide the order of components. For example, in English the subject usually precedes the verb, and the negated form of *smoke* is, *do not smoke*. 2) Morphological realisation which computes inflected forms, for example the plural form of *woman* is *women* (not *womans*). 3) Orthographic realisation, dealing with casing, punctuation, and formatting. For example, capitalizing the *T* in *The* because it is the first word of the sentence.

Hausa Language is a major language of the northern part of Nigeria. It is also seen as the lingua-franca of the north, perhaps, because it is predominantly used in the north. Bauer avers that Hausa language

is the Chadic language (a branch of Afro-asiatic language family) with the largest number of speakers. It is spoken as a first language by some 44 million people and as a second language by another 20 million. It has developed into a lingua-franca across much of western Africa for purposes of trade(29).

The Hausa language is also spoken in international communities – especially in some part of North Africa and a few other countries outside Africa (Hausa Ethnologue. Retrieved 2018-08-16).

Phonetically, syllables "are usually described as consisting of a centre which has little or no obstruction to airflow and which sounds comparatively loud; before and after that centre there will be greater obstruction to airflow and/or less loud sound" (Roach, 70). In the monosyllabic (one syllable word) "cat" /kæt/, the vowel /æ/ is the centre in which little obstruction takes place,

whereas the surrounding /k/ and /t/ have complete obstruction to the airflow. English has also disyllabic words (words consisting of two syllables) like "puppy" /pɛpɛ/, trisyllabic words (words consisting of three syllables) like "carefully" /ˈkɛəfəli/, and polysyllabic words (words containing more than three syllables) such as examination /ɛgzæ mɛˈneɪʃən/.

Researches have been conducted on syllables in many different languages including Arabic. In his *Manahij-l-bahth fil-lugha*, Hassan spells out that syllables are either an ordered symmetry of analytic units, chest pulses throughout speech, structural units, or certain figures and quantities. (170). Umar contends that there are phonological trends in defining the syllable in assuming that phonologically the syllable is perceived as a unit per language, i.e. each language has its own sequences of consonants and vowels besides other features like length, stress and intonation (286-4). In English, the syllable is phonologically a complex unit made up of nuclear and marginal elements. Nuclear elements are the vowels or syllabic segments, whereas marginal elements are the consonants or non-syllabic segments. In the syllable "pet" /pet/, the monophthong /e/ is the nuclear element, whereas the initial and final consonants /p/ and /t/ are the marginal elements.

In English, it is assumed that there are two types of theories defining syllables (Ladefoged, 237): those defining syllables in terms of properties of sounds, such as sonority (acoustic energy) or prominence (some combination of sonority, length, stress and pitch), and theories based on the notion that a syllable is a unit in the organisation of the sounds of an utterance. Stress is applicable in the production of words with one or more than one syllable; a syllable may be pronounced with extra force. The extra force used when pronouncing a particular syllable is known as stress. It is also the degree of emphasis given to a syllable in speech. It is noticed by loudness, vowel length or rising or falling of the voice. According to Jowitt, "it is a muscular energy given to a particular syllable" (18). Serdar quotes Ladefoged who explains stress as "a kind of suprasegmental feature of utterances", and states that "it cannot be found in individual vowels or consonants but in the whole syllables" (216). If a syllable or a word is pronounced with higher pitch than other syllables or words, it can be said that it is stressed.

Stress is an important tool in speech to deliver a meaning. Moreover, speakers use stress to highlight the information they believe or think is important. On the other hand, if the speakers do not produce the stress correctly, the misunderstanding will occur (Alkhuli, 45). Stress in English is associated only with vowels, so

consonants do not take stress. Stressed syllables in English become stronger, louder, and greater in intensity, less centralised in vowel quality and longer in duration than non-stressed (Betti and Ulaiwi, 45). Betti and Ulaiwi also explained that stress is problematic because it is hard to describe its actual nature. In addition, phonetic correlates such as duration, intensity, and segmental quality affect the shape of utterance in stress (Zou, 20).

Stress comes with lexical words such as noun, verb, adjective, and adverb. Hismanoglu claims that lexical stress comes with a specific syllable in a word (136). Speakers can distinguish lexical stress in two ways; the first one is segmentally. Ladefoged states that lexical stress is linked with long or unreduced vowels (39). The second way is supra-segmentally, lexical stress is related with various acoustic aspects such as fundamental frequency, intensity, and duration (Lehiste, 96). In English, four degrees of stress are distinguished, namely primary stress (strongest stress), secondary stress (less strong than primary one), tertiary stress (less strong than secondary one) and weak stress or unstressed (the weakest one).

Theoretical Framework

The Best's PAM theory was postulated and propounded in 1995. Perceptual Assimilation Model (PAM) is one of the most prominent second language speech acquisition theoretical frameworks that postulates the powerful influence of speaker's first language phonological experience on second language acquisition process. Experience with one's native language is viewed as "an organising perceptual framework that shapes discrimination of unfamiliar speech contrasts" (Best, Goodell and McRobert, 776). The model was propounded specifically for segmental acquisition, yet it can be further extrapolated to L2 supra-segmental learning. PAM was developed to predict speech sound perception from the perspective of naive non-native listeners, or beginner learners of a language that are first exposed to second language speech. The model states that contrary to the widespread view, not all non-native sound contrasts will be uniformly difficult to learn; instead, there is variability in the degree of difficulty that listeners will experience with certain second language sound contrasts. A learner's success or lack of it in acquiring non-native contrasts depends on the perceived distance between the L1 and L2 phonological categories. SLM consists of four postulates and seven hypotheses about second language sound acquisition. SLM is based on the premise that the capacity for speech learning remains intact throughout lifespan, such that the observed difficulties that second language learners

experience stem from prior linguistic experiences with their native language rather than from neurological maturation. The more developed and elaborate the L1 system is at the onset of L2 exposure, the more influence L1 will exert on the L2 system, decreasing the learner's ability to discern phonetic differences between L1 and L2 sounds, and between L2 sounds that are non-contrastive in L1.

Empirical Review

Several researchers have carried out studies on the Nigerian languages on one hand and English on the other. Akinkuolie in his study titled "Empirical Research Study on Stress Assignment in Educated Ikwerre English Disyllabic Nominal Words Rendered as Verbs" (13). The study centred on causes of lack of competence of Ikwerre natives in English stress' assignment. The study investigated the patterns of Ikwerre English stress with a view to determining whether it conforms to Standard English patterns or not. The result of the study showed that the EIES' stress assignment does not conform to standard English stress. The review showed that it is similar to the current research because both are on stress. They also slightly differ because one is on Hausa and the other is on Ikwerre language.

Bihari carried out his research "An Analysis of Stress in English Language: A Study of the Rules and Approaches." This study centered on stress and its rules and approaches. The study found out that non-native speakers, who speak English to native speakers without using word stress, encounter two problems. The result of the study showed that the speakers find it difficult to understand native speakers, especially those speaking fast, and the speakers of English will get insight in learning the rules of stress. Therefore, the research is different from this because it is on stress and its rules whereas this focuses on stress and Hausa language.

Al-Kubaisy carried out a research in 2018 on "Placement of Stress in English and its Effect on Meaning." The work focused on the effect of stress placement on word, phrase and sentence. The findings of the study show that English stress has different positions and has an effect on meaning of word and sentences. Moreover, the reviewed work shows that they are not similar because this is on stress as a whole whereas the current is on Hausa language and stress.

Sidabutar conducted a research on "The Analysis of Phonological Process on the Student Pronunciation. The research focuses on the description of the English vowels and consonants sounds spoken by the English students of Batak Toba tribe. The findings revealed the ways that the

students go about solving the English vowels and consonant problem in their pronunciation. The study is different from the current one because it dealt with sounds whereas the current is on stress of English and Hausa speakers of English.

Ahmad researched the topic “The Impact of Students' Realization of Stress Placement on Identifying the Class of the English Word and its Meaning.” It focused on the impact of the realisation of the university student of Iraqi. The findings of the study invalidated the hypothesis of the research. It also showed that stress as a problematic area that faces Iraqi University students due to certain factors such as the great influence of two firmly established linguistic habits of the learners' native language on the process of learning foreign language. Therefore, the above research is similar to the current study because the two are on stress only that the current one's emphasis is on Hausa language whereas the other is on the Iraqi University Students.

Long, carried out a research on “Phonological Awareness of Stress and Syllable” The study investigates the abilities of pre-school and school age children through measurement of their performance on two-syllable, three-syllable, and four-syllable pseudo-word forms with varying stress patterns. It examined the participants' ability to identify targeted syllables and targeted stressed elements. The study found out that there was no difference in the abilities of the participants in the young group compared to those participants in the old group at the two-syllable or three-syllable level. Their own mistakes in pronunciation. In a research carried out by Shadrach and Lateef Ismail on the topic “Comparative Study of Word Stress Among Nigerian Literate Speakers of English in Northern Nigeria,” which was designed to on the bases of four objectives, to identify the variations in NE, find out the word stress placement patterns in NE and provide justification for the word stress pattern of NE speakers in Northern Nigeria, the result showed poor word stress patterns in Northern Nigeria English with 34.6%. Though there are a large number of researches on stress, there are few related to Nigerian languages especially on Hausa native speakers of English. This point of view created a gap and made it necessary for the current research to be carried out.

Ahmed, in his paper investigated the realisation of Tone by Fulfulde native speakers and to assess whether such difficulty is as a result of the influence of their language on the L1. 10 sets of Hausa minimal pairs (20 lexical items) with tone particles were selected, 12 of them (6 pairs) were presented in isolation, while 8 (4 pairs) were used in sentences. The data was presented to

20 native speakers of Fulfulde from rural areas that have little exposure to the native Hausa community. The results showed that Fulfulde native speakers find it difficult to distinguish lexical items based on Tone variation. This research differs from the current one centered around the Hausa speakers.

Amoniyani et al, in his study examined the stress placements on loanwords among educated Igbo and Yoruba speakers of English. A well-prepared text was read by sixty (60) educated Igbo and Yoruba speakers of English, and Daniel Jones' 8th Edition Cambridge English Pronouncing Dictionary served as a baseline. The study uses Praat 6.0 to ascertain the degree of prominence of each syllable in the tokens among the respondents (dependent and control). The samples are analysed using the metrical theory of stress for theoretical relevance (Liberman, 1975). Findings revealed that the stress patterns of educated Igbo and Yoruba speakers of English in loanwords are 65% and 70% (respectively) closer to British English. The study showed that educated Igbo and Yoruba speakers of English preferably stress the second syllable regardless of what is obtainable among the native speakers. This research differs from the current in location and respondents for research as well as content of study.

Another factor is that most Nigerian languages are identified to be tonal. This gives many Nigerians not only Hausas difficulty as a result of the mother-tongue influence and interference.

According to Amoniyani, although scholarly attention has been drawn to the stress correlates of the sub-varieties of Educated Nigerian English (ENigE) without a conclusion on modes of determining stress patterns in the varieties, therefore, his study provides insights into the stress correlates in the sub-variety. Two regional sub-varieties of ENigE, namely: Educated Yoruba English (EYE) and Educated Igbo English (EIE) are compared to describe the correlates of the stress of ENigE. Data were collected from twenty (20) university degree graduates (ten men and ten women). The participants have Igbo and Yoruba as their first languages (L1), satisfying Udofot's 2004 classification for an educated variety of NigE. The participants read the prepared phrases and compounds to acoustic cues for stress placement in educated NigE. Acoustic signals such as pitch, intensity and duration are employed. The thresholds of significant difference are set at $p < .05$. This allows for interactions between YE, IE, and the control (British English). Findings showed that pitch (F0) serves as the main cue for stress correlates in the sub-varieties. The results further revealed that 80% of the participants operated British English stress pattern in isolated words.

It suggests that the cues for stress placement vary in the varieties by region and gender where English functions as a second language. However, duration and intensity as acoustic parameters are insufficient to predict stress correlates in the sub-varieties of the ENigE understudy. The study as well discovered fundamental frequencies as stress correlates in the sub-varieties. This research differs from the current research under investigation.

From the above reviews, many researchers have conducted researches on English verses languages both local and international language. In the course of reviewing these articles, it was identified that works reviewed paid less if not no attention to why Hausa native speakers of English face problem on English stress. This current study therefore takes a different perspective as it conducted on the challenges of stress placement by Hausa speakers of English. It is also identified that Hausa speakers of English face this problem because Hausa which is their mother-tongue is a tonal language whereas English is stress-timed.

Methods and Procedure

The target population of the study consisted of Hausa speakers of English from two Universities: Federal University, Dutse and Bayero University, Kano, in the North western part of Nigeria. Using the simple random process, Dutse, the capital city Jigawa State and Kano the capital city of Kano state were selected. Their major tertiary institutions were visited where the sample population, students who speak English as a second language, were sampled. A sample population of fifty students was drawn for sample from each institution to

serve as respondents for the research. That is to say, a total number of 100 respondents were targeted for the research. The respondents of this research were mostly undergraduate students from the faculties of Social Sciences, Arts and Law, both male and female, most of whom are below 27 years of age.

The instruments used for this study was a list of words, containing twenty disyllabic words: Nouns, Verbs and Adjective were selected and given to the respondents to pronounce. Each respondent in this research was given a word list to read aloud while the researcher recorded their production. The interview was carried out with the 100 respondents. These respondents were divided into five groups of twenty from which four were selected after the interview. This gave a total of twenty respondents used for the research. A pretest was administered to test the viability and reliability of instrument before the main test was administered. The data gathered was analysed using tables based on the respondent's responses and pronunciation, syllabic-ally. The concentration was on the Bi syllabic words because they seem to be where most speakers have difficulties in the placement of the right stress. Each word category was given a table containing the word, as well as its IPA/RP transcription, stressed syllable, and respondent's pronunciation. Thereafter, each word was analysed based on respondent's responses separately.

Data Analysis

The 20 disyllabic words production administered to the respondents were recorded and later transcribed for the purpose of analysis.

Table 1 Transcription of the Words used for Data Collection

S/N	Words	Transcription (N/ADJ.)	Transcription (V)
1	EXPORT	/ˈɛks.pɛʔ/	/ɛks. 'pɛʔ/
2	IMPORT	/ˈɪm.pɛʔ/	/ɪm. 'pɛʔ/
3	REPORT	/rɛpɛrt/	/rɛpɛrt/
4	RESULT	/rɛzɛlt/	/rɛzɛlt/
6	OBJECT	/ˈɛb.dɛɛkt/	/ɛb.'dɛɛkt/
7	DOUBLE	/ˈdɛb.əl/	/ˈdɛb.əl/
8	TRANSPORT	/ˈtrænz.pɛʔ/	/trænz. 'pɛʔ/
9	CONDUCT	/ˈk ndɛkt/	/k n'dɛkt/
10	CAMPAIGN	/ˈkæmpɛm/	/kæm'pɛm/
11	CONTAIN	/kən'tɛm/	/kən'tɛm/
12	EVENT	/ˈɛvɛnt/	/ɛvɛnt/
13	PROMISE	/ˈprɛmɪs/	/prɛ'mɪs/
14	PROJECT	/ˈprɛdɛɛkt/	/prɛ'dɛɛkt/
15	MATTER	/ˈmætə/	/mæ'tə/

S/N	Words	Transcription (N/ADJ.)	Transcription (V)
16	INTAKE	/ˈɪntek/	/ɪnˈteɪk/
17	PRESENT	/ˈprezənt/	/preˈzənt/
18	CHALLENGE	/ˈtæ l.əndʒ/	/tæ ˈl.əndʒ/
19	MORAL	/ˈmɛrəl/	/mɛˈrəl/
20	MODERATE	/ˈmɛdərət/ ADJ	/mɛˈdərət/

The results of realisation of the administered words are presented in the table below. The table below presents cumulative results of the analysed data for easy comprehension.

Table 2: Cumulative Result of the Analysed Data

RESPONDENT	RESPONSE		PERCENTAGE		CUMUMLATIVE POINT	REMARK
	RIGHT	WRONG	RIGHT	WRONG		
1	5	15	60%	40%	2.4	Pass
2	6	14	30%	70%	1.2	Poor
3	8	12	40%	60%	1.6	Fair
4	5	15	25%	75%	1.0	Poor
5	6	14	30%	70%	1.2	Poor
6	11	9	55%	45%	2.2	Pass
7	6	14	30%	70%	1.2	Poor
8	10	10	50%	50%	2.0	Pass
9	3	17	15%	85%	0.6	Poor
10	10	10	50%	50%	2.0	Pass
11	9	11	45%	55%	1.8	Fair
12	12	8	60%	40%	2.4	Pass
13	7	13	35%	65%	1.4	Poor
14	5	15	25%	75%	1.0	Poor
15	9	11	45%	55%	1.8	Fair
16	5	15	25%	75%	1.0	Poor
17	6	14	30%	70%	1.2	Poor
18	5	15	25%	75%	1.0	Poor
19	3	17	15%	85%	0.6	Poor
20	10	10	50%	50%	2.0	Pass

The overall percentage of correct responses across all respondents ranges from 15% to 60%. 55% of respondents fell into the "Poor" category, with correct responses percentages below 40%. Respondents 3, 11, 15 scored between 40% to 45% attaining the fair category, However, respondent 1, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 20 scored between 50% to 60%, achieving a "Pass" rating.

Their scores have the highest cumulative points, indicating a relatively stronger performance in stress syllable placement. On the whole 11 respondents out of 20 can be said to have failed the test since they scored below 40%. The term "Poor" is consistently used for respondents with correct response percentages below 40%. The majority of respondents that scored below 40% exhibit challenges in correctly placing stress syllables,

indicating a common area of difficulty. This may be influenced by factors such as language background, exposure, and individual learning styles.

Findings

In line with the objectives of this research, there are two major findings of this research:

It is found that stress placement is indeed problematic for Hausa L2 speakers; this is because of the dissimilarities in the phonological systems of Hausa and English. However, when confronted with placing stress for two syllable words, Hausa speakers find serious difficulties in placing the stress on the right syllable. It is found that some of the causes include the absence of the stress pattern in L1. Moreover, in two-syllable words, the

penult (initial) stressed words were mostly misplaced. It is however noted that three-syllable words, the final syllable stress words caused stress placement errors.

The second major finding of this study is that stress placement errors were caused by five phonological factors. The first factor was vowel height. Students often placed stress on the syllables which contain low front vowels as the peak (/e/, /ɛ/, or /æ/), thus it was because of the influence of vowel height.

The findings of this study certify that auditory input alone is not enough in learning stress placement in English words. Explicit teaching of stress placement 'rules' are also needed to provide learners with sufficient knowledge of English word stress placement. With auditory input, explicit teaching and controlled practice, it is expected that L2 learners will be able to produce stress accurately.

Conclusion

This research on the phonological concept of English stress pattern, examines to a great extent how it works as a concept in the English language. This study undertakes a search into the phonological investigation of the language, particularly, stress pattern of English among Hausa native speakers in the North western region of Nigerian speakers of English. Furthermore, it is believed that some of the questions raised at the beginning of this work have been answered. Thus, there should be more meaningful, intensive and extensive research conducted in this field of supra-segmental phonology. Conclusively, it is realised that Hausa speakers mostly find it difficult to place stress on the right syllable, especially the two syllable words that have alternative placement of stress based on their classes.

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