



INVESTIGATION OF STUDENTS' PRONUNCIATION OF WORD STRESS IN ENGLISH ONLINE CLASS

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ABSTRACT

The placement of stress is also part of learning the pronunciation of a foreign language. many non-native English students cannot pronounce the English word in the right way. This study aimed in analyzing students' pronunciation of word stress in an English online classes and how students correct their word stress mistakes. This study was conducted at a public Senior High School in Bekasi that involved five participants who agreed to be tested and answered questionnaires. The genders of participants are chosen randomly in eleventh grade. This study found that students still faced difficulties with the pronunciation of word stress. The misplaced stress happened to the two-syllable words, three-syllable words, and four-syllable words. The words most misplaced stress made by students are the three-syllable. The two-syllable words are also the second most misplaced stress made by students. The students' misplaced stress are quite similar and those words are not difficult because they are quite familiar to be used in conversation. Since the teacher does not pay more attention to word stress in the class, it makes students not understand how to pronounce clearly, especially the word stress. Students only follow how the words are produced by the teacher during the learning process. Thus, students use the media on their phones to help them correct the mispronunciation of the word stress.

A. INTRODUCTION

Speaking needs to consider pronunciation to avoid misunderstanding the meaning of the words spoken.

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Pronunciation roles as an important skill of spoken English because it can convey the meaning immediately (Gilakjani, 2011). Even though the perfect pronunciation is not required to communicate effectively with a native speaker or non-native speaker, it should be correct enough to be understood (Harmer, 1991). In oral communication, pronunciation is one of the important aspects of English. Every sound, stress pattern, and intonation may convey meaning. The non-native English speakers who speak English have to be very careful in pronouncing some of the statements, or they may create a misunderstanding. The speaker who makes pronunciation errors to the listener can lead to misunderstanding or increase the difficulties for the listener who is interpreting the message or information.

Pronunciation should not be underestimated in the teaching and learning process because it is one of the important components that English learners need to master.

Accordingly, Harmer (2001, p. 183) argues that “concentrating on sounds, showing where they are made in the mouth, making students aware of where words should be stressed – all these things give them extra information about spoken English and help them achieve the goal of improved comprehension and intelligibility.” Thus, pronunciation is a crucial component of English, and teachers or students must pay careful attention to it.

The acquisition of suprasegmentals, i.e. the placement of stress or the intonation also part of learning the pronunciation of a foreign language. It is not just the segment, i.e. the sounds of the L2 (Liu, 2017). Incorrect placement of primary stress in L2 words may lead to the breakdown of communication (Liu, 2017). Incorrect placement of primary stress in L2 words may lead to the breakdown of communication (Liu, 2017). The stress placement is important because different stress placements on some words might change the words’ meaning, such as in the word desert. When the word is stressed on the first syllable, it means “barren land, waterless, and treeless, often sand-covered” (Hornby, 1974, p. 234), but when it is stressed on the second syllable, it means “leave, go away from” (Hornby, 1974, p. 233). Furthermore, the word stress can also change the word’s part of speech, such as in the word *import*. When the word is stressed on the first syllable, it is a noun, but when it is stressed on the second syllable, it is a verb.

Kenworthy (1987, p. 28) explains that correct word stress is very important for English learners because “if a non-native speaker produces a word with the wrong stress pattern, an English listener may have great difficulty in understanding the word, even if most of individual sound has been well pronounced.” Unfortunately, the misplacement of word stress is one of

the problems that many ESL/EFL teachers and learners face. (Jenkins, 2009) also mentioned that the most difficult element for L2 students is stress placement and, it can be assumed, for Indonesian students. For example, many non-native English students cannot pronounce the English word in the right way. Most non-native English students do not know about stress and also the function of it in giving comprehension, they only focus on how to pronounce the word correctly without using a correct stress placement to convey the word's meaning.

Related to the topic of pronunciation there are two studies concerning this topic. The first study was done by (Plansangket, 2016) the researcher studied word stress errors by Thammasat University graduate students studying in the Career English for International Communication program in the second semester of the academic year 2016. This study concluded that CEIC students have somewhat limited capability in locating the primary stress of English disyllabic pairs. Regarding words with high errors including contract (V), conflict (V), increase (N), and decrease (N). The second one was done by (Algifari, Analyzing Student's Pronunciation of Word Stress of IET 7 Student of Cambridge English College (CEG) Makassar, 2017) the researcher the analyzed pronunciation skills of the IET 7 students of Cambridge English College. The finding of this research is, that the words most misplaced stress made by the students are the two-syllable words.

As reviewed by the previous research above, all of them suggested further research concerning pronunciation to be conducted. However, those studies focus on language teaching and learning. Therefore, the researcher wants to develop her curiosity about the same issue that is pronunciation but at a different level.

Based on the background above, the researcher is interested in analyzing students' pronunciation of word stress in eleventh-grade students at Senior High School in Bekasi. The researcher is interested in analyzing students' abilities in word stress pronunciation in an English online class and how students correct their word stress mistakes.

From the problem and explanation above, the researcher decides to carry out the study entitled "Investigation of Students' Pronunciation of Word Stress in English Online Class"

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher used narrative inquiry in this study. Narrative inquiry is a way of understanding and inquiring into experience through collaboration between researcher and participants, over time, in a place or series of places, and social interaction with milieus

(Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Connelly and Clandinin (1990) state that because collaboration occurs from beginning to end in narrative inquiry, plot outlines are continually revised as consultation takes place over written materials and as further data are collected to develop points of importance in the revised story.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There was a type of instrument used by the researcher to collect data, namely the test and the questionnaire. The findings in this chapter were divided into two parts, namely research finding through tests and research findings through questionnaires.

1. Research Finding Through Test

Based on the findings of the tests performed, the researcher found that there was some misplaced stress made by the student. The misplaced stress occurred to the two-syllable words, three-syllable words, and four-syllable words. The misplaced word stress made by the students was quite similar.

Student 1

It was found that student 1 made 10-word stress errors. The error occurs in two-syllable words, three-syllable words, and four-syllable words. Most of the misplaced that student 1 made were words that had three-syllable words and two-syllable words.

Student 2

It was found that student 2 made 8-word stress errors. The error occurs in two-syllable words, three-syllable words, and four-syllable words. Most of the misplaced that student 2 made were words that had three-syllable words.

Student 3

It was found that student 3 made 9-word stress errors. The error occurs in two-syllable words, three-syllable words, and four-syllable words. The 9 words that were misplaced by this student, included 4 words in two-syllable words, 4 words in three-syllable words, and 1 word in four-syllable words.

Student 4

It was found that student 4 made 7 words stress errors. The error occurs in two-syllable words, three-syllable words, and four-syllable words. Most of the misplaced that student 4 made were words that had three-syllable words and two-syllable words.

Student 5

It was found that student 5 made 6 words stress errors. The error occurs in two-syllable words, three-syllable words, and four-syllable words. Most of the misplaced that student 5 made were words that had three-syllable words.

Based on the data above, the researcher found some common mistakes of students in pronouncing words. The following are examples of student errors based on syllables:

Two-syllable words	Three-syllable words	Four-syllable words
Backyard (back'yard)	Alaska (a'laska)	Usually ('usually)
Sledding ('sledding)	Example (ex'ample)	Especially (e'specially)
Many ('many)	Alaskan (a'laskan)	Competition (compe'tition)
	Dangerous ('dangerous)	
	Favorites ('favorites)	

Among all the words from the data above, the word Alaska, example, and Alaskan are the words most misplaced stress made by the students. These three words are three-syllable words. Other than that, those words are not difficult because they are quite familiar to be used in conversations. Two-syllable words are also the misplaced stress made by students. Those words that become misplaced stress are backyard and sledding.

2. Identifying how students correct their mistakes on word stress pronunciation

In this section, the researcher will be identifying how students correct their pronunciation of word stress mistakes, based on the result of the questionnaire the researcher find out that most of the students correct their mistakes by themselves through the media. The researcher divided this section into two aspects:

a. Understanding how students learn about word stress

Student 1 answer based on the questionnaire shows that this student stated that learning pronunciation is important because learning pronunciation makes it easier for us to know how to pronounce sentences correctly. Based on her experience during the process of learning pronunciation in class, the teacher only gives practice assignments which read the English text, then the text will be memorized by the student and the text will be read in front of the teacher. Besides, the teacher also does not use an online dictionary or other media during the teaching process, students only follow how the words are produced by the teacher. This student admitted that she often compared her pronunciation with others because she felt that her pronunciation was not good and she also did not pay attention to stressing words. She also admitted that the misplaced words stress made by her are four-syllable words. From these mistakes, this student uses several ways to correct her mistakes. Among them, she will ask her friends who have good pronunciation skills how to pronounce words correctly. Another way that she uses is that she uses Google Voice media, from several mispronunciations of the previous word, she will listen to the audio from the google voice then pay attention clearly to the stressing word and repeat the pronunciation until she feels it is correct.

Student 2 answer based on the questionnaire shows that this student stated that learning pronunciation is important because if we speak English the pronunciation must be clear, so the message we convey can be understood by the listener. Based on her experience during the process of learning pronunciation in class, the teacher only gives practice assignments which read the English text, then the text will be memorized by the student and the text will be read in front of the teacher. Besides, the teacher also does not use an online dictionary or other media during the teaching process, students only follow how the words are produced by the teacher. This student admitted that she often compared her pronunciation with others because she felt that her pronunciation was not good and he also did not pay attention to stress words. She often makes mistakes pronouncing the word stress on unfamiliar words and words that have 4 syllables. From these mistakes, this student used Youtube to correct her mistakes. She usually finds words that she made a mistake before. She will listen to the audio from the original speaker and she will follow the speech until she feels it is correct.

Student 3 based on the questionnaire shows that this student stated that learning pronunciation is important because if our pronunciation is good, the listener will understand the message we convey. However, if our pronunciation is not correct, it will cause misunderstanding for the listener or the listener will not understand the meaning we convey.

Based on her experience during the process of learning pronunciation in class, the teacher only gives practice assignments which read the English text, then the text will be memorized by the student and the text will be read in front of the teacher. Besides, the teacher also does not use an online dictionary or other media during the teaching process, students only follow how the words are produced by the teacher. This student admitted that she felt that her pronunciation was not good and she also did not pay attention to stress words.

She often makes mistakes pronouncing the word stress on unfamiliar words and words that have more than 2 syllables. From these mistakes, this student uses a dictionary application on her phone, she usually listens to the audio pronunciation from the dictionary and she will follow the pronunciation until it is correct.

Student 4 based on the questionnaire shows that this student stated that learning pronunciation is important because pronunciation also affects communication when using English. Having good pronunciation will make our communication easier to understand each other. Based on his experience during the process of learning pronunciation in class, the teacher only gives practice assignments which read the English text, then the text will be memorized by the student and the text will be read in front of the teacher. Besides, the teacher also does not use an online dictionary or other media during the teaching process, students only follow how the words are produced by the teacher. This student admitted that he often compared his pronunciation with others because he felt that his pronunciation was not good and he also did not pay attention to stress words. He often makes mistakes pronouncing the word stress on unfamiliar words and words that have more than 2 syllables. From these mistakes, this student often uses the way of listening to audio from games, movies, and music. From the audio he listens to, he always repeats the pronunciation following the audio he listens to.

Student 5 based on the questionnaire shows that this student stated that learning pronunciation is important. Because if our pronunciation is good and clear, it will make it easier for listeners to understand the message we convey. However, if our pronunciation is poor and unclear, it will be difficult for the listener to understand what we are conveying. Based on her experience during the process of learning pronunciation in class, the teacher only gives practice assignments which read the English text, then the text will be memorized by the student and the text will be read in front of the teacher. Besides, the teacher also does not use an online dictionary or other media during the teaching process, students only follow how the words are produced by the teacher. This student admitted that she often compared her pronunciation with others because she felt that her pronunciation was not good and she also did not pay attention

to stress words. She often makes mistakes pronouncing the word stress on words that have more than 2 syllables. From these mistakes, this student uses an online dictionary which is Google Translate, then she will listen to the audio until the pronunciation is quite correct.

b. Identifying how students correct their mistakes

Student 1 based on the questionnaire shows that this student admitted that the misplaced words stress made her four-syllable words. From these mistakes, this student uses several ways to correct her mistakes. Among them, she will ask her friends who have good pronunciation skills how to pronounce words correctly. Another way that she uses is that she uses google voice

Student 2 based on the questionnaire shows that this student often makes mistakes pronouncing the word stress on unfamiliar words and words that have syllables. From these mistakes, this student used Youtube to correct her mistakes.

Student 3 based on the questionnaire shows that this student often makes mistakes pronouncing the word stress on unfamiliar words and words that have more than 2 syllables. From these mistakes, this student uses a dictionary application on her phone

Student 4 based on the questionnaire shows that this student often makes mistakes pronouncing the word stress on unfamiliar words and words that have more than 2 syllables. From these mistakes, this student often uses the way of listening to audio from games, movies, and music.

Student 5 based on the questionnaire shows that this student often makes mistakes pronouncing the word stress on words that have more than 2 syllables this student uses an online dictionary which is Google Translate, then she will listen to the audio until the pronunciation is quite correct.

Discussion of the Result

Based on the results, the researcher will discuss some of the research questions in this study. The first question of this study is “what are the common word stress pronunciation

mistakes of eleventh grade at senior high school in Bekasi?”. To answer this problem formulation, the researcher used a test. The test that had been given was reading passages.

Words are read aloud by the subject.

Based on the results of the data analysis, the misplaced stress that the researcher found was on the two-syllable word, three-syllable words, and four-syllable words. (Weda, 2012) stated that the words stress that are misplaced are two-syllable words, three-syllable words, and the highest frequency of English word stress misplaced made by students was two-syllable words, three-syllable words, and words with prefixes.

Karjo’s research (Accounting for L2 Learners' Errors in Words Stress Placement, 2016) shows the production of English word stress by 30 English Department students of a private university in Jakarta. The finding of this research is that Indonesian students found more difficulty in producing stress for three-syllable words. In this study, it was also found that the three-syllable words are the most misplaced stress made by students. For example, the word “alaska” in which the stress should be located in the second syllable. Most of the students stressed this word on the first syllable “alaska”. This finding is similar to (Roach, 2009), the placement of stress for three-syllable nouns such as “dynamics” depends on the syllable structure of the second (penultimate) syllable. The second syllable will receive main stress if it is strong, if it contains a long vowel, diphthong, or ends with a consonant or a consonant cluster.

The two-syllable words are also the second most misplaced stress made by students. Algifari (2017) the researcher analyzed pronunciation skill of the IET 7 students of Cambridge English College. The finding of this research is, that the words most misplaced stress made by the students are the two-syllable words. The two-syllable words which the stress misplaced mostly stressed on the first syllable.

Then, to answer the second problem formulation, which is “how do students correct their word stress mistakes?”, The researcher uses an open questionnaire that aims to find out how students correct their word stress mistakes. Researchers found students used the media on their mobiles to help them correct their mistakes. According to Kim, H., & Kwon,

Y. (Exploring Smartphone Applications for Effective, 2012) “First, MALL enables students to more easily and more promptly access language learning materials and communicate with people at any time, for anywhere. Second, the nature of digital technology facilitates students’ participation in both collaborative and individualized language learning activities synchronously and/or asynchronously allowing rapid development of speaking, listening,

reading, and writing skills. Third, mobile technology provides various resources and tools for language learning that encourage learners to be more motivated, autonomous, situated (site-specific), and socially interactive”

D. CONCLUSION

After conducting the study and knowing all the data, the researcher concluded that students at Senior High School in Bekasi still faced difficulties with the pronunciation of word stress. The words most misplaced stress made by students are the three-syllable. Two-syllable words are also the second most misplaced stress made by students. The students’ misplaced stress are quite similar and those words are not difficult because they are quite familiar to be used in conversation

Since the teacher does not pay more attention to word stress in the class, it makes students not understand how to pronounce clearly, especially the word stress. Students only follow how the words are produced by the teacher during the learning process. Thus, students use the media on their phones to help them correct the mispronunciation of the word stress.

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