



An Analysis of Students' English Word Stress Errors Made by the Final Year Students of English Department at Universitas Negeri Padang

Rada Ayu Pareza and Ratmanida

English Department

Faculty of Languages and Arts

State University of Padang

email: radaayupareza17@gmail.com

ratmanida@gmail.com

Abstract

The objective of this research was to identify and to analyze the common type of English word stress errors made by the final year students of English Department at Universitas Negeri Padang based on Academic Word List and also to find out the students' level of error in English word stress. The research subject was K2-2016 class which consisted of 30 students selected by using cluster random sampling technique. The technique of data collection was speaking test. In analyzing the data, the researcher used Speech Analyzer Software. From the result of the test, the researcher found that the common type of stress error that made by the students was misplaced stress (81.8%) from all the errors occurred. The mean of students' level of error in English word stress was 45.9% which categorized as low error level.

Key words: Word Stress, Stress Error, Level of Error

A. INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation in language has functions as basic requirement of learners' competency and one of the most important features of spoken language. It places as an important role because it shows how people make a sound of words and how they articulate the words. It includes the sound of its element like vowels, consonant, intonation, rhymes and stress.

Stress is one of the most important speech tools used by English speakers to communicate meaning. It can be defined as a pressure of sound that is given to several syllables in a word. As Harmer (2007:32) stated that "stress is the term used to describe the point in a word or phrase where pitch changes, vowel lengthen and volume increases". It means that when we point out to the important thing between the others, we have to give stress on it. Thus, word stress is a stressed syllable pronounced louder and longer than the other syllables.

However, word stress is still a problem in language teaching especially for foreign language learners. As Kusumawati (2017) agreed that stressed syllable is one of the problems to be encounter because the students still do not aware of stress syllable. Most of the students do not pay attention in the position of the word stress. It cannot be denied that everyone think that fluency in speaking is more important than sounding the word with the correct stress. In fact, there is a



difference between the pronunciation of first language and pronunciation in foreign language particularly English language that full with stress level. Thus, the students should be aware of these differences.

Since there are a lot of problems about word stress placement, several researchers have conducted studies related to this topic. For example, Weda (2012) did a research about stress shifts of English utterances made by Indonesian speakers of English (ISE). Furthermore, Duka (2014) did a research about the influencing factors in syllabic stress errors produced by an Indonesian speaker of English. The last, Kusumawati (2017) did a research about increasing students' awareness of stressed syllable in pronouncing English words. These studies discussed about stress syllables, stress shift, factors that influence the presence of error in word stress and how to increase the students' awareness of word stress.

Therefore, this topic is interesting to study because the researcher wants to know what the type of stress error that is commonly made by the students and how the students' level of error of English word stress in pronouncing Academic Word List.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

Participants

The participants of this study was 30 final year students of English Department at Universitas Negeri Padang registered in academic year 2016. They were chosen because they had already got the the lesson about word stress in their last semester, for example, in Intensive Course, in Speaking for Formal Interaction Course, in Speaking for Informal Interaction Course, and in Public Speaking Course.

Materials

The instrument of this research was a speaking test. The material used for this study were 20 English words adopted from Academic Word List developed by Coxhead (2000). These words were chosen purposively based on the stress placements which were on the first syllable, last syllable, penultimate syllable, and ante-penultimate syllable as assigned in the Oxford Advance Learners' Dictionary, Twenty-fifth Impression (revised and updated) (1987). There were five words (two-four syllables) in each stress placement that was established.

Table 1. Academic Word List

WORDS	PART OF SPEECH	NUMBER OF SYLLABLES	PHONETIC SYMBOLS
abstract	adj	2	/'abstrakt/
contract	v	2	/kən'trakt/
specific	adj	3	/spə'sɪfɪk/
authority	n	4	/ɔ:'θɒrəti/
final	adj	2	/'fɪnl/
conclude	v	2	/kən'klu:d/
commission	n	3	/kə'mɪʃn/
philosophy	n	4	/fɪ'lɒsəfi/

evident	adj	3	/'evidənt/
proceed	v	2	/prə'si:d/
proportion	n	3	/prə'pɔ:ʃn/
psychology	n	4	/sʌɪ'kɒlədʒi/
neutral	adj	2	/'nju:trəl/
exceed	v	2	/ɪk'si:d/
dynamic	adj	3	/daɪ'namɪk/
empirical	adj	4	/ɪm'pɪrɪkl/
visible	adj	3	/'vɪzəbl/
transmit	v	2	/tranz'mɪt/
dimension	n	3	/di'menʃn/
priority	n	4	/praɪ'ɔrəti/

Procedure

For the speaking test that conducted for this research, the students were asked to read the lists of Academic Word List one by one and the researcher provided a recorder to record it. After collecting all the recordings of the students' test, later processed with Speech Analyzer Software to determine the accuracy of stress placement.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Finding

The findings are presented into two main parts; first, the results of the common type of word stress error and secondly the students' level of error of English word stress.

The Finding for the Common Type of Word Stress Error

Table 2. Types of Error

Types of error		
Missplaced Stress	Double-Stressed	Equal Stressed
81,8%	11,1%	7,1%

The table above shows that from three types of word stress errors proposed by Kenyar (2009); misplaced stress, double-stressed, and equal stress, the common type of word stress error made by the students was misplaced stress (81,8%). It can be simplified in following figure:

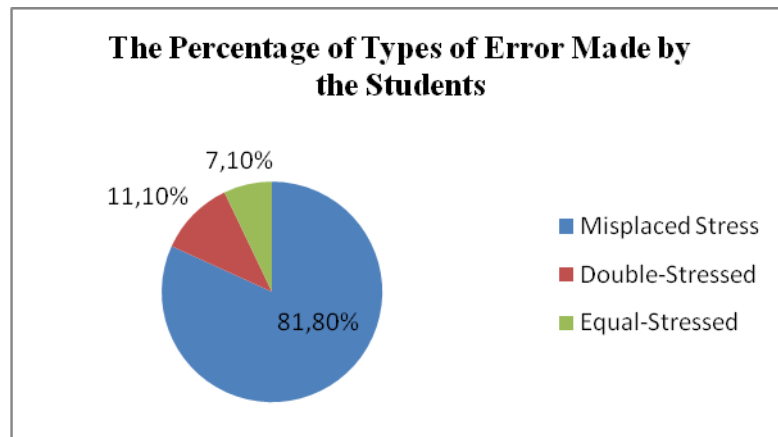


Figure 1. The Percentage of Types of Error Made by the Students

The Finding for the Students' Level of Error of English Word Stress

Table 3. Students' Level of Error

Students' Level of Error			
Very High	High	Moderate	Low
0	10 students	8 students	12 students
0%	33,3%	26,7%	40%

Based on the table above, there is no student who was in very high error level, there were 10 (33,3%) students who were in high error level, there were 8 (26,7%) students who were in moderate error level, and there were 12 (40%) students who were in low error level. It can be simplified in following figure:

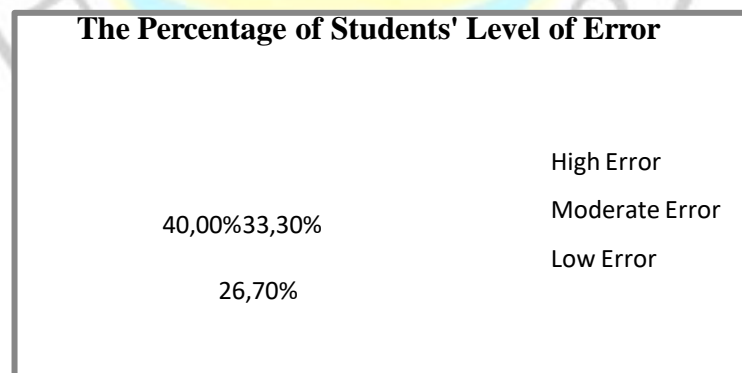


Figure 2. The Percentage of Students' Level of Error

Furthermore, the data also consulted to expert judgment to get the validity. The rater was the lecturer of English Department Universitas Negeri Padang. The table below showed the total of percentage of the students in this research:

Table 4. The Students' Average Percentage of Level of Error

No.	Researcher	Total of Percentage	Mean
1	Researcher	1.475	49,2%
2.	Rater	1.280	42,6%
Average			45,9%

From the students' average percentage above, the percentage for the students was 45,9%. Based on the students' level of error category that proposed by Harris (1969), it can be seen that the students' level of error categorized as low level of error (0%-49%).

2. Discussion

The findings of this research was similar with the result of the research done by Karjo (2016) and Kusumawati (2017) which misplaced stress was the common types of stress error made by the students. As the results from Karjo (2016), misplaced stress often happened in two-syllable words, the penult (initial) stress words. While Kusumawati (2017) who researched about increasing the students' awareness of stressed syllables in pronouncing English words, misplaced stress still occurred done by the students even though she have done the treatment to increase the students' awareness of stressed syllables.

The finding of the second research is the final year students of English Department at Universitas Negeri Padang categorized as low level of error in stressing the English words. Low error means the ability of students in putting the stress appropriately was good enough. The mean of the students' percentage of error is 45,9%. As Harris (1969) categorized level of ability that adapted by the researcher as level of error into four level: Very High (80%-100%), High (60%-79%), Moderate (50%-59%), and Low (0%-49%).

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

There are two major findings in this study. The first one confirms that common type of word stress error made by the students of English Department at Universitas Negeri Padang is misplaced stress (81,8%). The other types of stress error made by the students were double-stressed (11,1%) and equal stressed (7,1%).

The second major finding of this study is that the final year students' of English Department at Universitas Negeri Padang has low level of error in putting the stress appropriately. Low error means the ability of students in stressing the English words was good enough. The mean of the students' percentage is 45,9%. There is no student categorized in very high error level, there are 10 (33,3%) students categorized in high error level, there are 8 (26,7%) students categorized in moderate error level, and there are 12 (40%) students categorized in low error level.

Suggestion

Based on the findings and the conclusion of the research, there are several suggestions offered. First, the English pronunciation subject need to be more highlighted especially about word stress. A pronunciation subject need to be included to the syllabus. Next, based on the findings, the researcher hopes that the

teachers or lecturers can help students more in improving their awareness in English word stress by giving them more practice when teaching word stress in the class.

For other researchers, it would be valuable to study about factors that affect students' word stress error. Other researchers could also dig deeper and develop the instrument that the researcher used in investigating problems in English word stress errors. Thus, deeper analysis will be resulted. Last, it is as well worthwhile for other researchers to examine not only word stress, but also another kind of suprasegmental features of pronunciation such as pitch, length, etc.

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