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The difficulties encountered by EFL Learners at the Suprasegmental level (stress and intonation): Case of second year EFL students at the University of Tlemcen

Dissertation submitted to the Department of English as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Language studies

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Dedications

This humble work is dedicated to every person who is reading it.

To my gorgeous parents Haouari and Houaria who made their possible to support me during the whole study career.

To my sweet sister Amina and her daughter Riheb.

To my dearest brothers Youcef, Mohammed, Marwene.

To my husband Zine Labidine who is my partner and supporter in life.

To my lovely son Iyed .

To all the members of my family and my family in law.

To all my freinds : Akila, Manel, Rahma, Amina,Nesrine.

Acknowledgments

Abstract

EFL students face many difficulties in learning English especially at the level of the suprasegmental features, these features namely, stress and intonation, are taught in the modules of Phonetics and oral expressions. In fact, this study aims mainly to find the difficulties EFL learners face at the level of stress and intonation, it tries to investigate the reasons behind those difficulties. This research is divided into two chapters moving from theory to practice to test the hypotheses concerning the difficulties of EFL learners. To reach this aim, two questionnaires were used to gather the necessary data to be analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The results obtained confirmed that teachers incorporate stress and intonation in both modules Oral Expressions and Phonetics and students find difficulties in learning the rules of both stress and intonation this is why teachers try to incorporate stress and intonation in their teaching. Eventually, it looks for suggestions for better learning/ teaching experience.

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List of Acronyms

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

LMD: Licence Master Doctorat

TL: Target Language

General Introduction

General Introduction

Any foreign language requires patience, efforts and determination to be taught and acquired. EFL learners are exposed to a number of difficulties to master the English language. One of the difficulties namely stress and intonation are two important points especially in speech production, pronunciation and even for approaching the target meaning. Generally, these two points are the most common problems that EFL learners face at the suprasegmental level. Stress and intonation completes each other since, if the student reads a sentence with a correct intonation while he/she misplaces the stress, it results a different meaning. On the other hand, if a student reads a sentence and succeeds in placing stress but, he/she misses the intonation; the result differs. The difficulties that students face at the level of stress and intonation are due to many reasons, even teachers face these difficulties while teaching the two aspects. Consequently, the aim of this research is to find students' difficulties at the suprasegmental level, reasons behind these difficulties and to suggest some solutions that could help in this situation.

Problems that push EFL students from mastering the English language at the suprasegmental level go back to many reasons; like the lack of participation in class, lack of vocabulary and the affection of the mother tongue on the target language. EFL teachers do know all these reasons that prevent students from mastering suprasegmental rules. Thus, the researcher investigates about all difficulties that encounter EFL students at the suprasegmental level by answering these questions:

- What are the difficulties that EFL learners face in learning the suprasegmental level?
- How do teachers incorporate the suprasegmental features in their teaching?
- What are the most points teachers tackle at the suprasegmental level?

These research questions have led to the formulation of the following hypotheses:

1. The difficulties that EFL learners may face at the suprasegmental level are: the difficulty of applying the rules of the suoprasegmental level on individual words, complex words and sentences.

2. Teachers may incorporate the suoprasegmental features in the module of Phonetics

and Oral Expressions.

3. The main points that teachers may tackle at the suprasegmental level are: intonation and stress, since they might occur in speech more than other features of the suprasegmental level.

To check out to what extent these hypotheses are true; the researchers' sample of her investigation will be second year students of LMD system, teachers of Phonetics and Oral Expressions from the department of Tlemcen University. This case study collected both quantitative and qualitative data from teachers and students' questionnaire.

This work involves two chapters. The first chapter is a literature review about suprasegmental features; stress and intonation. Through giving a definition to each term aside, citing their importance in the English language, the techniques of teaching both stress and intonation. Therefore, the difficulties of learning both of them. The second chapter contains research design and methodology where data instruments will be described, data collection will be gathered and analyzed to be compared for either accepting or rejecting hypotheses in addition to another part where the researcher suggests and recommends some tips and solutions to help students in passing their difficulties at the level of suprasegmentals.

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Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter tries to expose definitions about some aspects related to the suprasegmental features including stress and intonation. Besides, it puts emphasis on what makes learning stress and intonation difficult concerning EFL students.

Teaching the Suprasegmental Features (stress, intonation)

There are some modules that tackle the most important rules included in phonetics concerning pronunciation and speech production namely, the suprasegmental features. According to Logman Dictionary of Applied linguistic (Richard, Platt, and Weber, 1985, p. 281), "*suprasegmentals are units which extend over more than one sound in an utterance such as stress and tone*". Features like stress, intonation, are essential in learning the English language. These features enable learners of English especially EFL learners to build a purer language uttered correctly. Stress and intonation are learned usually in the modules of phonetics and Oral Expression, what makes the task easier for both learners and teachers to learn and teach respectively.

Learning the rules of suprasegmental features is important to fix the correct meaning of all sentences when there is a clear intonation and the stress is well placed. Adrian Underhill (:58) states that :"To avoid confusion in meaning, both features should be well done".

Defining Stress

The speaking skill could never be without forcing some syllables and weakening others. Because, in some languages, when you change the place of that force in a certain syllable then, it changes the meaning of the word. Adrian Underhill (1994:65) pointed out:

"*A stressed syllable is articulated with relatively more force than an undressed syllable. This   is.   Due   to   the   extra*

pressure of air reaching the vocal cords, caused by an increase in lung power".

A stressed syllable distinguishes from an unstressed syllable with more force in articulation, by making the air goes out with more pressure.

It is impossible to communicate with others giving the same force to all syllables since, it would be an incomplete message having misunderstanding. This was clearly described by Peter Roach (1988:175) in which he states :

"*In any language you listen to, you will notice that some syllables sound stronger and more noticeable than others. In English, for example, the middle syllable of the word* **'tomato'** *is clearly stronger than the first and last syllables. We say that the middle syllable is stressed. In some languages the position of the strongest stress may affect the meaning of a word".*

Catford (1988,175) defines stress as initiator power. He mentions *"initiator power is infinitely variable, from zero (when the initiator is inactive, and consequently, there is no airflow and no sound to an indefinite maximum_depending on the size and muscular strength of the speaker-when the initiator is operating at full power, forcing the air out of the highest possible velocity against the resistance imposed upon the airflow by phonatory and articulatory strictures".*

What was mentioned before claims that stress is the soul of the word and any mistake would change the whole meaning.

Stressed syllables are often defined as those syllables with an utterance that are longer, louder and higher in pitch ,it is the degree of force with a syllable or a word is uttered. When a word has more than one syllable, there is always one syllable that has greater stress than the others.

Ladefoged (2006) claims that stress is a suprasegmental feature of utterances. Where, any uttered word produced with more force than another word is "stressed". Thus, Roach(2002:94) mentions that" *all stressed syllables have one characteristic in common; which is prominence where, stressed syllables are more prominent than*

the unstressed ones". Moreover, according to Roach(2002) prominence is a result of four factors: loudness, length, pitch, and vowel quality. These lasts works together in combination and pitch and length are the most factors effecting prominence.

The Importance of Learning Stress

Any well structured sentence respecting grammar rules has a fixed meaning. And any change of its elements among the same sentence respecting the rules too, results a new meaning. But, you can simply change the meaning of the same sentence keeping the same order of its elements through stressing at each time one element. To this extent, one can recognize that the role of stress in a sentence is immense. Any competent user of the English language can produce various meanings resulting from one sentence with playing by stressing the elements needed to make emphasis.

Stress is considered as an important feature of English pronunciation, where a part of the meaning of a word depends on stress. It is also serviced to mark the function of words in spoken English.

English pronunciation depends on stress to a great deal in order to become a powerful communicator of English language.

According to Anderson Hsieh, Jhonson and Koehler (1992) Stress is considered as an important feature of English pronunciation; in individual words, in phrases, and sentences. where a part of the meaning of a word depends on stress, and it is also serviced to mark the function of words in spoken English.(Sabir Mirgani Ali Ahmed, 2017).

Techniques of Teaching Stress

The module that helps in learning speaking very well is Oral Expression. Teachers of this module should be clever, they may use the may use the faster way to teach many things to students in a limited time. For instance according to Hardison (2005) , teachers might start the lecture of Oral Expressions with listening activities; they can advise students by watching videos in which yes/no questions are used. Furthermore, other activities called by lead perception exercises on duration of stress, loudness of stress, and pitch; will help the learners to recognize between both stressed and unstressed syllables Field (2005).Elsemore, students can also use a pronunciation computer program, as American speech sounds for learning the duration and loudness of stress Hiser and Kopecky (2009). Teachers use audio players holding native speakers' voice showing which syllables are stressed in some words, or dialogues containing questions and answers, for attracting students' attention to the way words are pronounced and where the stress is put. Elsemore, teachers of phonetics may also help in developing the level of students through providing them with transcription of technical words at first than moving to new terms. Thus, teachers can make the stress patterns clear by writing stressed syllables in capital letters, they can use boxes to show the stressed syllable, or they can even underline under the stress syllable for attracting students' attention, Neelam Shahwar (2004).

Difficulties in Learning stress

The speaking skill is not easy especially for EFL learners, since they learn new rules in Grammar and phonetics where the mistake is forbidden. EFL learners make some mistakes that may lead them to misunderstanding , as putting stress on the wrong syllable, because any mistake in pronouncing a word or a sentence can cause a problem in speaking later ,and the meaning changes. for instance, they say ho_tel with stressing the first syllable, instead of ho_tel with stressing the second syllable. The second difficulty is putting stress on the wrong word in a sentence; this may lead to confusion

in meaning where the speaker misses the right meaning that he/she wanted to convey. For example this sentence, **"john got a new job"**, it can be stressed differently where stress can be on (**john, new** or **job)** and the answer will be different if you switch the given sentence to the interrogative form; i,e; **"who got a new job?"** the answer should be according to stressing the word **"john"**. But, if you ask them, **"what did john get?"** stress should be on the word **"job"**, Busyteacher.org (2018).

The rules governing stress are complicated starting from a lexical word that is naturally stressed to the words containing two or more syllables, where the problem of learning get bigger and bigger. The reason of that difficulty lies in the necessity of awareness of both; the rules of putting stress and how many syllables do each word contains.

Defining Intonation

Intonation is that changing in voice where every type of voice conveys a new different meaning which was clearly defined according to Logman Dictionary of contemporary English (2009) as:*"the way in which the level of your voice changes in order to add meaning to what you are saying, for example by going up at the end of a question"*.Furthermore, Cook (1996), also defines it in the introduction of his book *"Active intonation"* as *"the rise and fall of the voice during speech"*, and he has designed intonation into rising and falling intonation.

Moreover, Khader (2010:123) mentions: *"intonation is created mainly throughout the variation in pitch movement that goes frequently ups and down. This phenomena takes place according to the meaning that speaker wants the listener to receive"*.

A communicative speech is characterized by a rhythmical sign that defines the information, the intonation of each sentence or utterance gives the correct understanding that the speaker wants to deliver to the listener. That intonation contains some vibrations in the vocal cords and differentiation in pitch that goes up and down, Adrian Underhill (2007:65).

There are some differences that students should be aware of concerning tone versus intonation. Change in pitch on tone can change meaning whereas, on intonation, a falling or a rising tone indicates different types of utterances; such as statements and questions like the sentence: you are from Algeria (with a Falling intonation) indicates a declarative sentence. But, the same sentence with a rising intonation indicates an interrogative sentence. Which means that any switch of tone regarding the same sentence results a type change of that sentence.

The Importance of Learning Intonation

The hearer can guess the mood of the speaker or different meanings from his/her speech. He/she could also understand that the speech reflects anger, happiness, fear, sadness or other feelings that the speaker reflects from the intonation of his/her speech, in addition that the tone plays the role of decoding the message that the speaker wants to deliver; absence of confusion in meaning, Sabir Mirgani Ali Ahmed (2017).Moreover , peter Roach(2001:35) pointed out that :

"...*Communicative interaction would be much more difficult without intonation: think how many misunderstanding between people arise in the exchange of e_mail messages, where intonation cannot play a role***"**

Techniques of Teaching Intonation

At the University of foreign languages, there are many modules which study all aspects and branches concerning foreign languages. For instance, when studying English, there are some modules and for each module there is a certain curriculum that involves basically phonetics, and Oral Expressions which enable the teacher to focus on intonation and put emphasis on how to pronounce an utterance or many utterances in English like a native speaker. Moreover, Adrian Droff considers intonation as the music of a language in which the way the voice goes up and down as we speak intonation is very important in expressing meaning, and especially in showing our feelings (e.g. surprise, anger, disbelief, gratitude) however, intonation patterns are quite complex, and it is better for students to acquire them naturally

rather than try to learn them consciously" which means that students are advised to drain their ears for hearing a correct intonation like listening to native speakers rather than learning the rules of phonetics. Additionally, Tesol Quarterly(1982:71) mentioned in his book that the production of intonation depends heavily on the perception of intonation, unfortunately it soon appeared that even trained phoneticians and language teachers and learners clearly needed help to improve their perception of intonation in which he states:" *A good production results a good perception. If the student took the habit of hearing a pure and correct production of speech, he /she will take the habit to produce correct utterances with a good intonation*".

Difficulties in Learning Intonation

Teaching a foreign language is a hard task, since EFL learners are naturally influenced with their mother tongue including grammar, phonetics. For Instance, Algerian learners use the same intonation of Arabic while speaking a foreign language. In this case, both teachers and students may face difficulties in teaching and learning intonation respectively. Selinker (1972) believe that most second language learners could never achieve native_like proficiency in target language, and they are still imprisoned by their mother tongue where they miss that ability to produce a different pronunciation which causes a problem against any other new language because their tongue cannot master easily a new pronunciation, So their pronunciation continues to interfere with their ability to communicate effectively. Furthermore, Lenneberg (1967) hypothesized that language could be acquired only by a critical period, extending from early infancy until puberty, and People who have learned English when they were children, think in English and use it naturally ; resulting that age is another obstacle in pronunciation to some people , as when people grow old they lose the capacity to acquire quickly any new language or even some new rules. Besides, according to Kim Dodge (2014), a learner could never be able to learn intonation rules in isolation since, there is an intimate relation in phonology that links intonation to stress, and every one aiming at learning intonation, he/she must learn stress at

first, because stress and intonation are considered as key elements of prosody, or the characteristics of speech beyond words that affect how information is communicated and understood. Prosody includes: pitch, stress, intonation, rhythm, pace, loudness. All of these elements work together to create meaning.

To sum up, teachers may face difficulties in finding the strategy of teaching intonation that works well with learners, and at the same time, learners may find ambiguity in mastering those techniques.

Conclusion

This chapter gave theories concerning what is meant by stress and intonation, it stated the importance of each one. It provides some techniques used by teachers to make learning the Suprasegmental features easy. The reader may take an overview about how learning stress and intonation by EFL learners would be difficult.

Chapter two

Part one: Data Description

Introduction

This present work is made in order to investigate about the difficulties encountered by EFL learners at the suprasegmental level (stress and intonation). For this reason, the researcher designed two questionnaires for both teachers and learners to check whether research hypotheses are reliable or not. It is divided into two parts, the first part is based on data collection by giving information about the setting of the research that provides the reader with sample population then, their profiles, and the tools used in this research. The second part on the other hand, is devoted to the analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the results.

Research Setting

This research is a case study, it was done far from the University of Abou Bakr Belkaid Tlemcen by using the social media for Accomplishing this study. It was made in the period of "CORONA VIRUS". It was addressed via Instagram, Facebook, E mail to second year students of LMD system 2019/2020. This University regroups students from different cities of Algeria, even from other countries. It regroups teachers from several origins, different cities as well. The department of foreign languages especially the English Department, provides its students with all what they need to develop their level in English. This is through organizing several modules such as Oral Expressions, Phonetics for enhancing their capacities in pronunciation and oral production of the English language.

Sample Population

This research sample combines two categories. Four (4) teachers of LMD system; two (2) teachers of Oral Expressions, two (2) teachers of Phonetics. To the addition of fifteen (15) student of second year EFL students from the University of Abou Bakr Belkaid Tlemcen who are from two different generations.

Teachers' profile

The teachers sample consists of four LMD teachers of Phonetics and Oral expressions modules. These teachers are from Abou Bakr Blekaid University of Tlemcen acquiring

different degrees of qualification with a long time experiences in teaching English at University.

Students' profile

Student's sample consists of fifteen 2nd year EFL students; it was delivered via Instagram, Facebook, and Email. The respondents were from different categories, some of them are just studying while others are workers at the same time.

Data Collection Instruments

The researcher used two different questionnaires for both students and teachers to collect data in order to confirm or reject the research hypotheses. The researcher has programmed other tools; teacher's interview plus observation in class, but it was impossible because of the "Corona Virus", in addition to the situation of the researcher who is living outside the country.

Questionnaires

The questionnaire is a research device that is used for collecting relevant data from respondents. It is defined According to Brown (2001:06): "*any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers*". Besides, there are two types of questionnaires: exploratory questionnaire as it is also known as unstructured questionnaire; they are used to collect qualitative data. The second type is called the formal standardized questionnaire, it is also known as structured questionnaire which is used to collect qualitative data. In this research, the structured questionnaire is the suitable tool. This last consists of many types of questions; first, close ended that are composed of several answers, it could be dichotomous questions i.e. yes/no questions, multiple choice items where the respondents are required to choose one answer or more. The next type is open ended questions, it requires the participant's own answers, their opinions or points of view. The last type of questions is the multiple choice question that comprises more than two answers.

For collecting data to this study, the researcher distributed fifteen (15) questionnaires to second year EFL students of Abou Bakr Belkaid University of Tlemcen via Instagram, Facebook, and Email. The students questionnaire consists of nine(9) questions, and teachers

questionnaire is composed of seven(7) questions delivered to four (4) EFL teachers; two(2) teachers of Oral expressions, two(2) teachers of Phonetics.

Students' questionnaire

The students' questionnaire is based on the Oral Expressions and Phonetics modules. It is programmed to check out the difficulties encountered by EFL students at the suprasegmental level. It consists of nine(9) questions, these questions are Yes/No questions, questions that demand the participant's points of view ,and questions with multiple choice.

The first and second question ask students whether they find the English language easy to be learned or not then, which modules they prefer to attend a lot. For the third and fourth questions , they try to seek the difficulties that respondents face in Oral Expressions and Phonetics; its aim is discovering the reasons behind these difficulties. Moreover, the fifth and sixth questions enquires about the easiest item in making stress among simple words, complex words, and sentences then, the easiest item in making intonation among declarative, interrogative, exclamative, and imperative sentences. In addition, in the seventh question, the researcher asks the participants if they prefer the listening or the speaking skill in learning stress and intonation; the goal behind this question is to know which strategy works well in the teaching stress and intonation. Therefore, the researcher made the eighth question to know whether students make some phonetic exercises at home , and if they are satisfied with what they get from the lectures I.e. his aim is to know if they make some efforts for developing their level in this module. Finally, the ninth question investigates about students' concentration in class by asking them if the teacher pay attention to his pronunciation.

2.4.1.2. Teachers' Questionnaire

Teachers' questionnaire is based on the modules of Phonetics and Oral Expressions.

It consists of six questions, some questions demand the participants points of view, and others are with multiple choice answers. Each question aims to collect a different idea, as for instance the first question tries to discover whether the teacher finds any difficulty in teaching Oral Expressions or Phonetics modules. Moreover The second question seeks to know how is teaching stress and intonation, at the same time the the third question question tends to discover whether the teacher affects students by paying attention to his/her

pronunciation. Concerning the fourth question , it attempts to find the difficulties that students face in Oral Expressions and Phonetics, and the fifth question verifies teachers' incorporation of the suprasegmental features while teaching. The last question investigates about the most important points that teachers tackle while explaining the lectures.

Part two: Data analysis

Introduction

This part focuses on data analysis that will be analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. It is necessary since, it helps in analyzing all information gathered from students and teachers questionnaires, to either confirm or reject the hypotheses mentioned before.

Data analysis Procedures

Research instruments should be analyzed by using both quantitative and qualitative methods; this is the aim of this section. Data analysis helps the researcher to find answers for his questions which will be analyzed later quantitatively and qualitatively; the first method aims at describing data throught statistics with numbers, graphs, or tables, and the second method criticizes, analyzes, and interprets the statistical aspects . In this research, the researcher depended on both qualitative and quantitative procedures to analyze data.

Quantitative data analysis

This method in analyzing, converts the obtained data into statistical and numerical way. In this research, data are analyzed through tables and bar_graphs to have an objective and reliable results.

Qualitative data analysis

This type of analysis describes the collected answers, which means it tries to interpret and discuss deeply what is mentioned in participants' responses. This last is formed in texts or notes following the quantitative analysis for better understanding, and to clear more the collected results.

Questionnaires Analysis

This section aims at analyzing the obtained data from both teachers and students questionnaire, it analyzes results first quantitatively ,and then qualitatively.

Students' questionnaire analysis

The questionnaire was distributed to fifteen student of second year from the department of English at Tlemcen University via; Facebook, Instagram, E mail ,and it is analyzed as follows:

Question 01: **As an EFL learner, do you find it easy to learn English?**

The results reveal that all students (100%) find the English Language easy to be learned. They declare that they are satisfied in learning this branch, as they have the pleasure to be an EFL learner of English. This pie chart explains the obtained results :

100,00 %

■ YES
■ NO
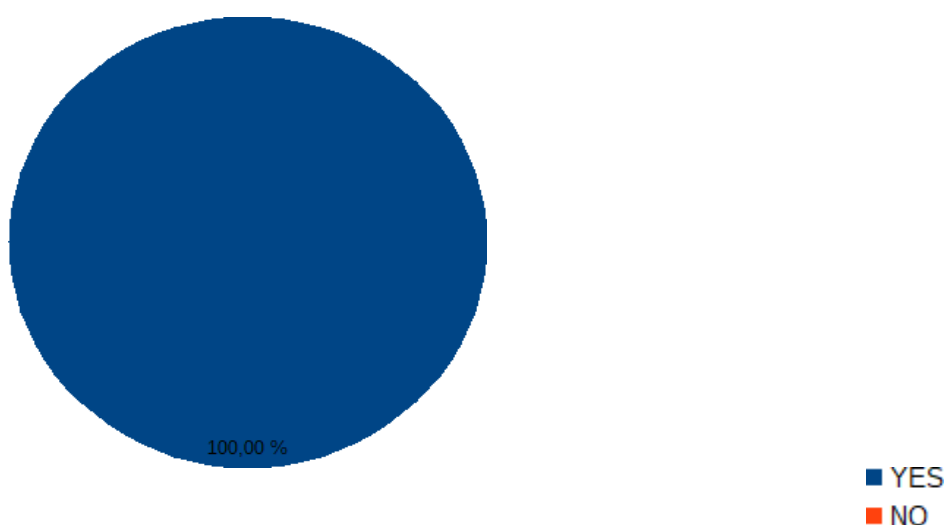
Pie chart 1.1. The English Language is easy to be learned

Question 02: What are the modules that you attend a lot?

Data obtained from this question show that the majority of students (29,79%) attend a lot the module of Written Expressions. (21,28%) of students attend the Oral Expressions module, and (19,15%) of students prefer to attend linguistics while (17,02%) of the participents attend civilization, and only (12,76%) attend the litterature module. This is clearly shown in the following bar_graph:
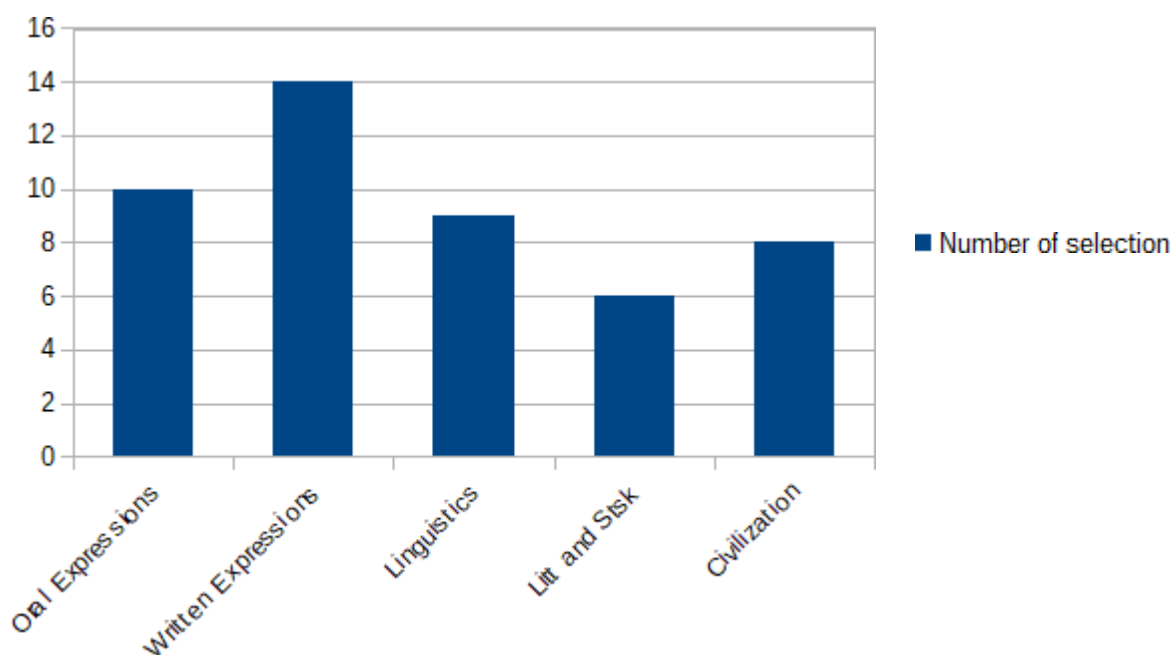
Bar_graph 1.2. The Modules that Students Attend More

Question 03: What are the difficulties that you face in phonetics?

Item number three attempts to investigate about the difficulties that students face in phonetics. The participants reported that they find phonetic transcription very difficult and the rules of phonetics are somehow hard to be learned, besides the description of speech sounds. The minority have a problem with the module itself where they don't like it at all. Then, the entire modules sounds difficult to others.

Question 04: What are the difficulties that you face in Oral Expressions?

This question seeks to find the difficulties that students face in Oral Expressions. The participant claimed that time is not sufficient to think about subjects they are supposed to talk about. Others find it difficult to participate in the lectures; since their classmates make fun of them, because they don't produce the language very well, so they don't feel comfortable in this module. Criticizing the strategy that the teacher use in the lectures like talking about subjects they don't even know, what does it mean, and they do not have ideas

about some subjects. Moreover, stating that their obstacle is the lack of vocabulary, and they can't speak fluently. Finally, adding that pronunciation is their basic problem.

Question 05: **Is it easy to make stress on(simple words, complex words, sentences) why?**

The results of this question reveal that the majority of students (73%) find that it is easy to make stress on simple words, others (20%) claimed that they find complex words easy to put stress on. Then, just (6,67%) who has mentioned sentences. These results are shown in the following bar_graph.
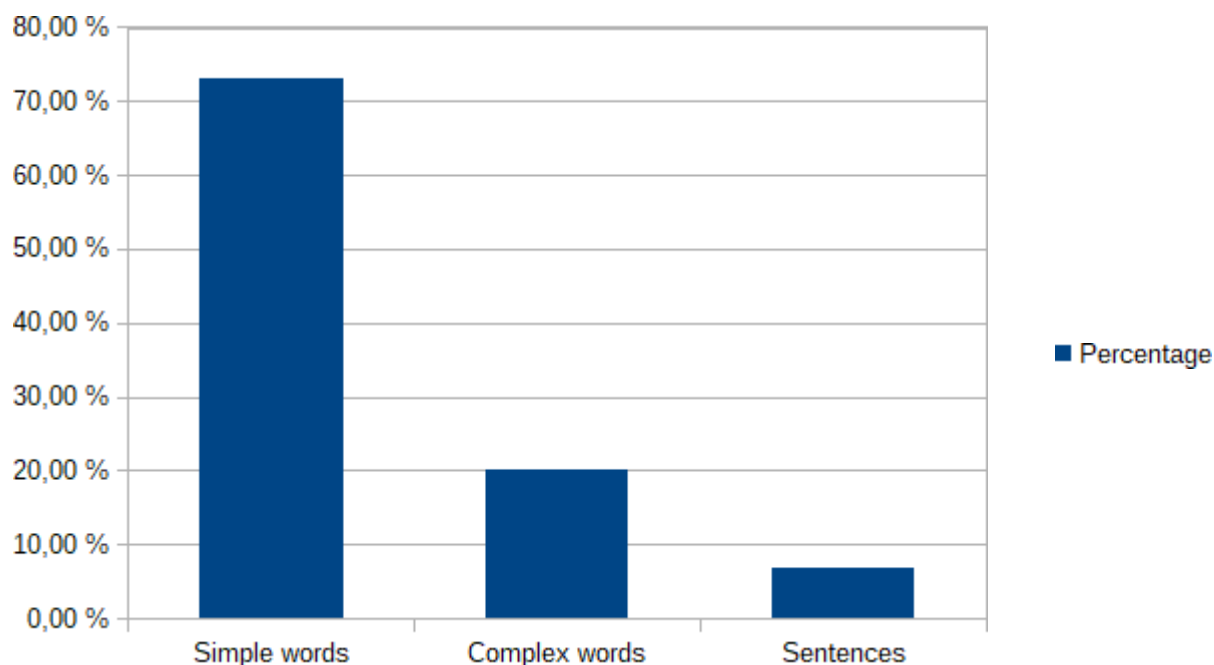
Bar_graph 1.3. The Easier Item in Making Stress

Question 06: What kind of sentences is the easier in making intonation?

Data obtained from this question show that, the majority (60%) of the participants find that putting intonation on declarative sentences is the easier. The interrogative sentence takes place in the second classification where it was chosen by (33,33%) of students. However, only (6,67%) from the participants chose the exclamation sentences. The bar_graph below shows clearly what was mentioned before:

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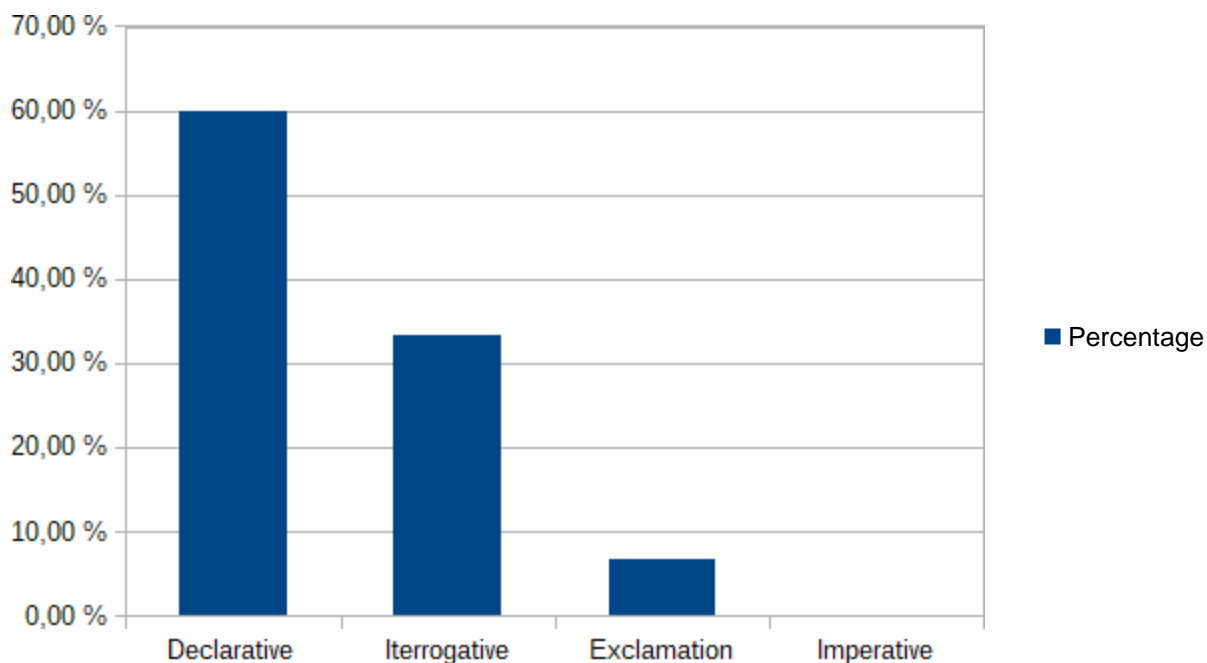
Bar_graph 1.4. The Easier Sentence in Making Intonation

Question 07: **Do you prefer the listening skill or the speaking skill for learning intonation?**

Results demonstrate students preferable skill for learning intonation. It is noticeable that the most of them (53,3%) chose the listening skill for learning intonation for several reasons; as it helps them in learning pronunciation, and developing their level, and learning new concepts. The remaining students (46,7%) declared that they prefer the speaking skill for learning intonation, simply because they believe that practicing the language is the best way to learn the English Language. The results are cleared in this bar_graph:
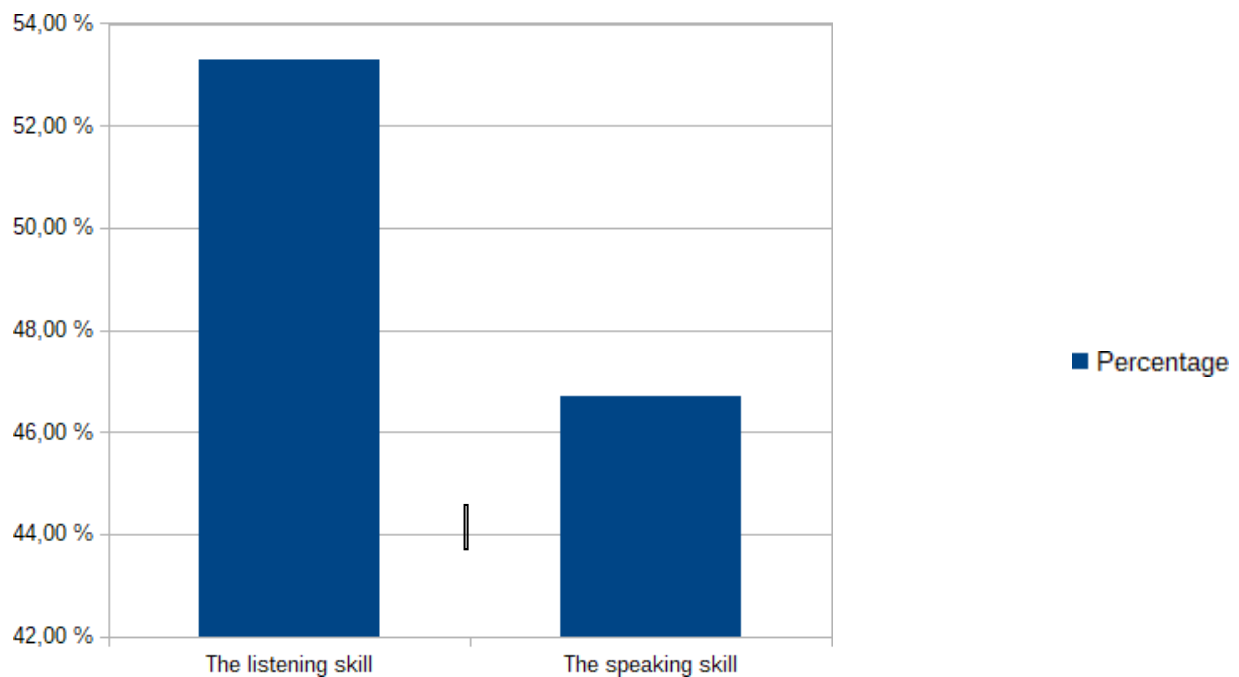
Skill in Learning Intonation

Bar_graph 1.5. The Listening or the Speaking

Question 08: Does the teacher makes emphasis on his/her pronunciation while explaining the lectures to train you well for placing stress and making a good Intonation?

According to the findings, the majority (46,67%) declared that the teacher always pay attention to his/her pronunciation, but (33,33%) mentioned that they don't pay attention to this. Then, only (20%) who marked that the teacher does that sometimes. These results are shown in the following bar_graph:

21
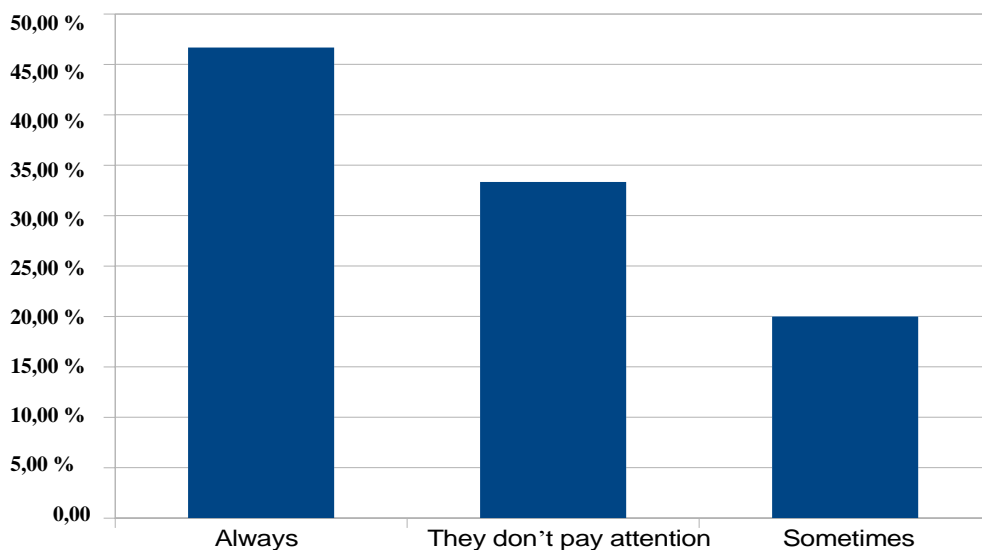
Bar_graph 1.6. Students Remarks about Teachers Pronunciation

2.3.2. Teachers' Questionnaire Analysis

Teachers   questionnaire was distributed to four teachers of Abou Bakr Belkaid of Tlemcen via Email. It is analyzed as follows:

Question 01: Do you find any difficulty in teaching Oral Expressions or phonetics?

According to teachers answers, half of teachers find difficulties in teaching these two modules, since students have a bad pronunciation due to the affection of the mother
tongue, besides to the reason of not acquiring quickly. However, the other half said that they do not face any difficulty since they have a long experience in teaching by knowing exatly which strategy fits well students. The following bar_graph explains the answers ;
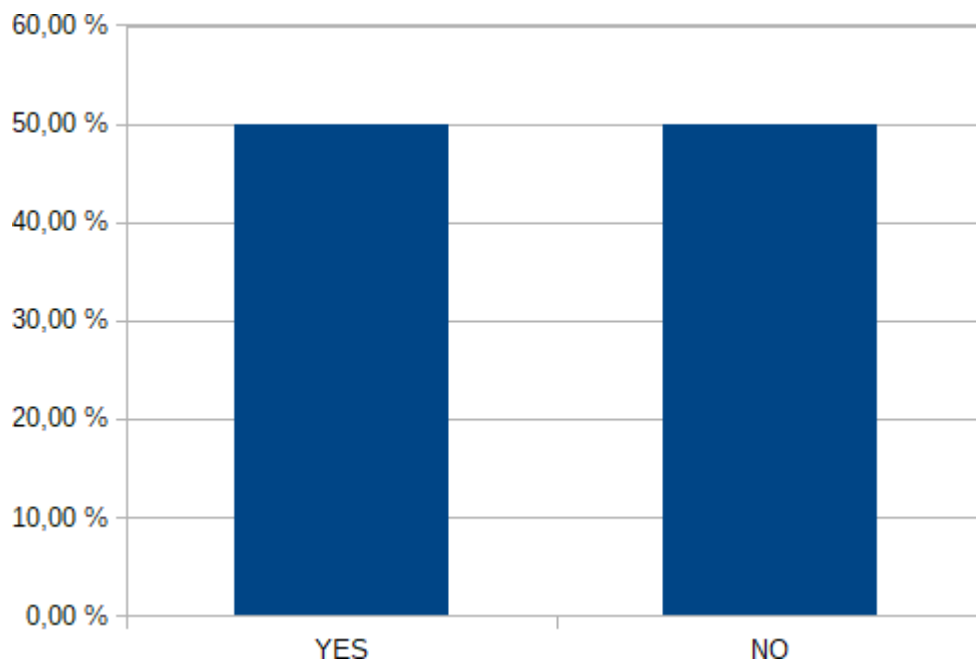
Bar_graph 2.1. Difficulties in Teaching Oral Expressions or Phonetics

Question 02: According to you, how do you find teaching stress and intonation?

The results of this question show that (25%) of teachers find a difficulty in teaching stress and intonation, because the lecture is very long, and carries many details while students have only one hour and a half for the lecture. For this reason, it is not enough to have both practice and theory at the same time. The remaining teachers (75%) do not face any difficulties in teaching stress and intonation, because they set the practice skill after listening to native speakers. In addition, teachers also explain in terms the rules learned in the module of Phonetics.

The results are cleared out in this bar_graph:
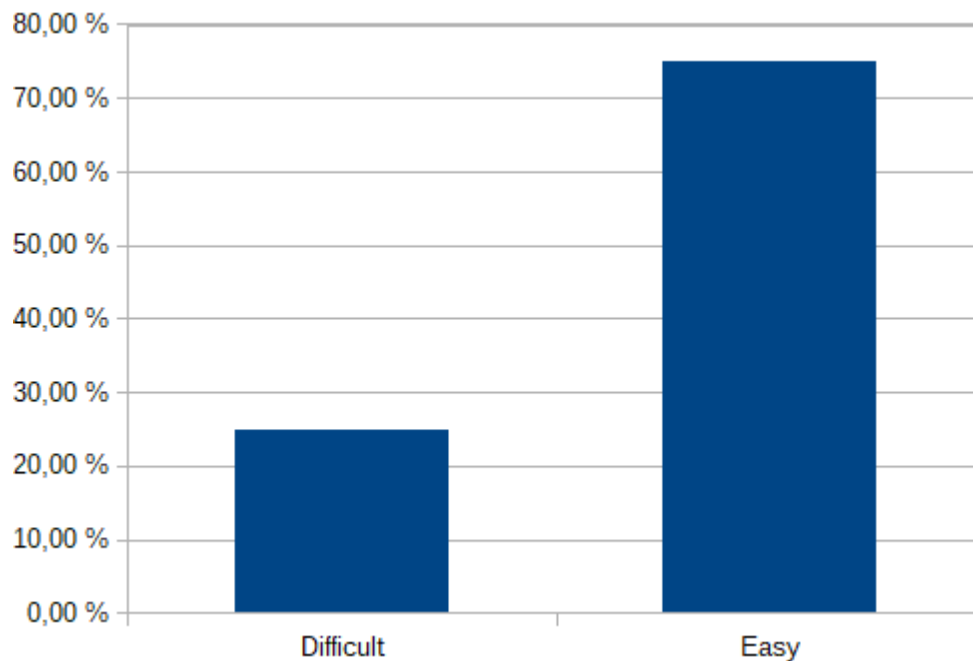
Bar_graph 2.2. Teachers Difficu0lty in Teaching Stress and Intonation

Question 03: **Do you pay attention to your pronunciation while explaining the lectures?**

In this question all answers were similar; all teachers (100%) confessed that they do pay attention to their pronunciation while explaining the lectures for many reasons such as that students are supposed to imitate their teachers. So, teachers should pay attention to their pronunciation, and students get their pronunciation from their teachers considering them as a best example to imitate.

Question 04: According to you, what are the difficulties that second year students face in Oral Expressions or Phonetics?

Data gathered from this question show that students have real problems in Oral Expressions and Phonetics modules. Teachers answers differentiated between that Students have just one session per week and surely it is not enough for lectures and practice .Furthermore, adding that students have a difficulty in the pronunciation of a number of speech sounds, and also difficulties in using suprasegmental features that approach those of

native speakers. At last the known obstacles that most of students face including the lack of participation, grammar mistakes, shyness, fear of public speaking, luck of vocabulary, and the affection of their mother tongue.

Question 05: **How do you incorporate the suprasegmental features in your teaching?**

Data obtained from this question reveal that teachers use many strategies to incorporate the suprasegmental features in their teaching including some activities and examples,and explaining some rules taught in the module of phonetics.Furthermore,by pushing learners to imitate native speakers after the listening skill or by recording their speech then, comparing it with native speech,besides focusing on suprasegmental features in any given home work.

Question 06: **What are the most important points that you tackle while teaching suprasegmentals?**

The results obtained from this questions gave many important points that teachers tackle while teaching the suprasegmentals ,for instance their focus on stress placement , and the division of syllables,tone and phonological phenomena.In addition of teaching the differences between weak syllables and strong syllables,and whithout forgetting the emphasis on the correct use of weak form words specific to the English language.

Data Interpretation

The goal of this section is to analyze, summarize and interpret the data gathered from teachers and students questionnaires to reveal the difficulties encountered by EFL learners at the suprasegmental level (stress and intonation). According to the obtained results, students find learning English easy, but they do not give importance to all the modules, they do not attend all the lectures and this might be the main cause of having problems in learning . Besides, they find phonetic rules difficult to be understood and grasped especially putting stress and intonation. Consequently, this situation obliged teachers to do more efforts in

class and push them to practice more stress and intonation activities in all home works. Furthermore, Teachers also use many exercises to enhance students level in the module of Phonetics in general and even in Oral Expression practices whenever it is possible. Additionally, they also attempt to correct learners during their oral production as much as possible.

The other problems that prevent students from mastering stress and intonation according to both students and teachers are: shyness and lack of participation in class, phonetic transcription as well, the rules of phonetics, criticism of their classmates and lack of vocabulary. What was observed is that students find it easy to make stress on simple words and make intonation on declarative sentences; which means that students learn and master the evident rules, however they cannot apply the rules of suprasegmentals in another case, this clearly confirms the 1st hypothesis. Furthermore, teachers believe that teaching suprasegmentals is difficult simply because students do not do efforts to learn more and delve into the topic, for this reason, teachers do efforts to improve their pronunciation by tackling supsegmentals in both modules Oral Expressions and Phonetics using many strategies, and this what confirms the second hypothesis. At last, it was observed that teachers pay attention to their pronunciation in class since they believe that students eventually imitate them, they do efforts to incorporate stress and intonation in the given home works, and even in class by using different strategies in explaining the lectures because they have noticed that students average in pronunciation is unsatisfactory; this last confirms the third hypothesis.

To sum up, the researchers' hypotheses are all approved because students concentration is missing during the lectures since half of them do not remark whether the teacher pay attention to his/her pronunciation or not. This is why they find the rules of the suprasegmental level difficult to be learned. Meanwhile, teachers remarked that students have bad pronunciation as they are affected by their mother tongue. For this reason, they use many strategies to drain their tongue for good production of the language in both modules Phonetics and Oral Expressions by incorporating stress and intonation in all lectures even in home works.

Suggestions and Recommendations

In the last chapter, it was remarkable that students and even some teachers face difficulties in learning and teaching stress and intonation respectively. So, this part tend to give some suggestions for both students and teachers to overcome their difficulties and problems, then it provides them with solutions for beating it at the level of suprasegmentals (stress, intonation).

Suggestions for Teachers for Teaching Stress and Intonation

Teachers are advised to take into consideration some measures in teaching stress and intonation, as for instance word stress should be taught by using stress marks with a quick check in the dictionary. Moreover, the patterns of stress should also be taught by using stress and tone marks in the sentences that it should be divided into tone groups. Furthermore, teachers should pronounce words or sentences then ask students to guess the correct intonation, and make them repeat that sentence or word for better training their ears. Lastly, the use of arrows, notes, lines scales in showing high and low intonation is essential in learning stress and intonation that teachers must pay attention to this tip.

Suggestions for Learners for learning Stress and Intonation

Since learners find many difficulties in applying the rules of stress and intonation, for this reason there is a simple suggested tips to follow that might help them a little bit:

➢ The learner should do more efforts at home to learn and practice the correct word stress patterns at all kinds of words.

➢ The learner has to practice the correct patterns of sentence stress.

➢ They should acquire the right location of tonic syllables.

➢ Maintaining that different tones convey different meanings.

➢ Being aware that the correct use of English tones results different kinds of utterances: statements, questions, commands. Neelam Shahwar, (2004).

➢ In addition, there are some cases where putting stress is easy according to this phenomenon:

    ✓ there are many verbs that consist of two syllables, at most times, the stress is on the second syllable. e .g: to record   to re**cord**

    ✓ However, the same word with the function of a noun, the stress is in the first syllable; here is the distinction:_____to re**cord**   a **re**cord

    ✓ Other examples:

to per**mit** ——→ a **per**mit

To address ——→ an address

To export ——→ an export

To transfer ——→ a transfer

Conclusion

       The obtained data from the questionnaires that were analyzed and interpreted in this chapter succeeded in discovering the difficulties encountered by EFL learners in suprasegmentals. Therefore, Students are asked to make more efforts in learning stress and intonation, and teachers on the other hand are advised to look for solutions and strategies to develop students level in speech production, and to facilitate the task for them.

General Conclusion

The General Conclusion

Any foreign language is not easy to be learned and acquired easily. The English language precisely demands efforts to learn its rules and master its four skills. This work shed the light on the difficulties encountered by EFL learners at the suprasegmental level; clearly saying pronunciation that govern the syntactic angel of the sentence. Most EFL learners face difficulties in using stress and intonation, that is why this study attempts to investigate about those difficulties to help students to overcome them.

This work combines two chapters: the first one is a description of all items; definintion of both stress and intonation, their importance, the difficulties of learning both stress and intonation then, techniques of teaching the two. However, the second chapter cotains data collection and analysis of data obtained thus some recommendations for better learning and teaching stress and intonation.

Data obtained clearly answer the research questions. It reflects that students face difficulties at the suprasegmental level especially stress and intonation since they are used in speech more than any other item, they are also governing speech production because they go hand in hand to accomplish the meaning of the word or a sentence, likely, it was observed that students find it difficult to make stress on complex words and sentences and they find it difficult also to make intonation on interrogative, imperative and exclamation sentences, then it was also remarked that students do not do efforts to learn neither the rules of stress nor the rules of intonation. In addition to this, teachers incorporate the suprasegmental features maily in the modules of Phonetics and Oral Expressions since they are the only ones dealing with speech production and the study of pronunciation that is why these two modules are concerned with stress and intonation, but, unfortunately, some students are lacking concentration in class; it was clearly approved from the data obtained where some students do not pay attention to teacher's pronunciation. Furthermore, teachers do pay attention to their pronunciation in class because they find themselves as a miror that reflects everything to students and students imitate them as well. This is why, teachers should pay attention in choosing which strategy work well with students.

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Appendices

Appendix 01 :Students' Questionnaire

 Dear students, you are kindly requested to answer the following questions, and you can use any language you want.

-Use a cross " X " in the appropriate case, and write your answers in the blanks.

- Age :.......

- As an EFL learner, do you find it easy to learn the English language ?

☐ Yes

☐ No

- What are the modules that you attend a lot?

....
....
....

- What are the difficulties that you face in phonetics ?

....
....
....

- What are the difficulties that you face on Oral Expression?

....
....
....

- Is it easy to make stress on :

☐ Simple words

☐ Complex words

☐ Sentences

Why?

....

....

....

- What kind of sentences is the easier in making intonation?

☐ Declarative

☐ Interrogative

☐ exclamation

☐ emprerative

- Do you prefer the listening skill or the speaking skill in learning stress and
  intonation?What for ?

  ....

  ....

  ....

9. Do you make some phonetic exercises at home or you satisfy of what you get from the
lectures ?

Yes, why ? ....

No, why ?...........

10. Does the teacher of phonetics make emphasis on his pronunciation while explaining the
lectures to train you for well placing stress and making a good intonation ?

Always

Sometimes

Never

I don't pay attention

Appendix 02 : Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is about the difficulties encountred by EFL learners at the suprasegmental level, especially stress and intonation. Its objective, is to find out those difficulties then, check out the reasons behind. You are kindly requested to answer the following questions.

What is your degree of qualification?

☐ Majister /master degree.

☐ Doctorate.

☐ Proffessor.

1_ Do you find any difficulty in teaching Oral Expressions or Phonetics?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Why?...
....

2_ According to you, how do you find teaching stress and intonation?

☐ Easy

☐ Difficult

Why?…………………….……….…………….……….…….………….……….……
…………….……….….……….…………..

3_ Do you pay attention to your pronunciation while explaining the lectures?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Why? ………………………………………………………………………………

4_ According to you, what are the difficulties that second year students face in Oral Expressions or Phonetics?

....
....

5_ How do you incorporate the suprasegmental features in your teaching?

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

6_ What are the most important points that you tackle while teaching suprasegmentals?

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