

# تقويم قدرة متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية في استخدام المقاطع المنبرة

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**An Assessment of Iraqi EFL Learner's  
Ability to Produce Stressed Syllables In  
English**

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يهدف البحث الى تقصي الاخطاء المرتكبة من قبل متعلمي اللغة الانكليزية من العراقيين في المستوى الجامعي وتحديد المشاكل التي تواجههم في استخدام المقاطع المنبرة عند كلتا المستويين التمييزي والانتاجي ، ويفترض البحث بأن معظم المتعلمين للغة الانكليزية من العراقيين يواجهوا مشاكل في تمييز وانتاج المقاطع المنبرة داخل الكلمات التي تحتوي على اكثر من مقطعين .على ضوء هذه الفرضيات تم تحديد وتطبيق اختبار تجريبي على عينة مكونة من خمسة وعشرين طالباً من المرحلة الرابعة قسم اللغة الانكليزية من الجامعة العراقية . وظهرت النتائج بأن معظم المتعلمين للغة الانكليزية من العراقيين يواجه مشاكل في تمييز وانتاج المقاطع المنبرة ، فالنسبة الاعلى من اجوبتهم هي غير صحيحة وبنسبة (٥٦ و ٥٨%) مقابل (٤٥,٢٢%) نسبة اجوبتهم غير الصحيحة في مستوى التمييز ، وان اخطاء الطلبة وكذلك اسبابها المحتملة تم تحديدها وتحليلها وتم وضع الاستنتاجات على ضوئها

### Abstract

The study aims at investigation the errors made by the Iraqi Learners of English at the University level and identifying the difficulties which they face in using stressed syllables at both levels of recognition and production. It is hypothesized that most of Iraqi Learners of English are expected to face difficulty in recognizing and producing stressed syllables within words of more than two syllables. On the basis of these hypotheses, a diagnostic test was designed and applied to a sample of twenty-five students of the fourth year, Department of English, University of Al- Iraqia . The results show that most Iraqi Learners of English face difficulties in recognizing and producing stressed syllables as the highest rate of their responses is incorrect (٥٨.٥٦%). The results also show that learners face more difficulties at the production level as the rate of their incorrect responses is (٥٨.٥٦%) against (٤٥.٢٢%) for their incorrect responses at the recognition level; The subjects' errors as well as the portable causes were identified and analyzed and accordingly conclusions were drawn.

### Introduction

Although it may be somehow easy to recognize a syllable, it is difficult to define it in absolute terms. Linguists do not agree on a particular definition of a syllable. Meanwhile, most native speakers of English have an instinctive feeling for the nature of syllables. In English, syllables can be formed either solely by a vowel or a diphthong, or by a vowel or a diphthong preceded and or followed by one or more consonants. Syllables consist maximally of an onset, a nucleus, and a coda. Phonetically, the syllable consists of center which has little or no obstruction to air flow and which sounds comparatively loud before and after this center, the beginning and the end of the syllable (Roach, ١٩٨٨: ١٠٢). Phonologically the syllable consists of the onset and the

core, the core in turn consists of the peak and coda. Syllables are classified into open and closed. Open syllables end in a vowel, e.g., **CV**, while a closed syllable is arrested by a consonant, e.g., **CVC**. Thus, a **CV** syllable has a core with V peak and C coda (Hyman, ١٩٧٥: ١٨٨).

The traditional physical definition of the syllable says that syllables come about when air leaves the lungs in little puffs rather than a continuous stream, which is also known as the chest- pulse theory of the syllable and it represents an explanation of the way the syllable is intuitively sensed by speakers of all languages (Ibid; ١٨٩).

Ladefoged(١٩٧٥: ٢١٩) points out that one needs to account for the words in which there is agreement on the number of syllables, and also to explain why there is disagreement on some other words in order to find an adequate definition of the syllable. This can be achieved by defining the syllable in terms of the inherent sonority of the sound. There are few cases where people disagree on how many syllables there are in a word in English. Some of these cases of disagreement are the result of dialect differences in the way that particular words are spoken. People may not differ in the pronunciation of words but in their estimation. This can be seen in several groups of words, for example, the words communism, mysticism may be said to have three or four syllables depending on whether the final /m/ is considered to be syllabic.

In another group words contain high front vowels followed by /l/. for example, **meal**, **seal**, **reel** will be said to contain two syllables or they may be considered to have one. The third group contains words in which may not be syllabic, for example, some people consider **hire**, **fire**, **hour** to have two syllables where as others do not (Ibid: ٢١٨).

How to break a word into syllables is clearly language dependent. There is only one general statement which could be taken into consideration that is every syllable has a peak. This has an indication to the way English syllables are formed. English syllables are formed rather by a single vowel or diphthong or by combining a vowel or diphthong with one or more consonants (Ibid: ٢١٩). The different English syllable types can be seen in the following table.

Syllable type	Orthographic Transcription	Phonetic Transcription
Simple		
V	A	/ə / or /ʌ/
CV	the	/ ðə/
VC	eat	/i: t/
CVC	sit	/sit/
Complex		
CCV	<u>T</u> ree	/tri:
VCC	<u>e</u> ast	/i:st/
CCVC	<u>s</u> tood	/stud/

CCVC	<u>street</u>	/stri:t/
CCVCC	<u>streets</u>	/stri:ts/
CCVCCC	<u>strengths</u>	/streθs/
CVCC	<u>sips</u>	/sips/
CCVCC	<u>treats</u>	/tri:ts/
CVCCC	<u>depths</u>	/depθs/
CCCV	<u>screw</u>	/skru:/
VCCC	<u>asks</u>	/asks/

After Singh and Singh(١٩٧:١٩٠)

## Syllabification

Syllabification, as a term, is used to refer to the division of a word into syllables(Hartmann and strock, ١٩٧٦: ٣٦٤; Crystal, ١٩٩٨:٣٧٣). Depending on this, notion, words can be classified into monosyllabic and polysyllabic words. Monosyllabic words refer to those words which contain only one syllable, whereas polysyllabic words refer to those words which contain more than one syllable. Crystal (Ibid) mentions that the syllabification of a word such as "nevertheless" can be represented by a good dictionary as a word of four syllables "ne-ver-the- less" such a kind of division may occur in writing by using hyphenation, and it may occur in speaking as well. O'Connor and trim (١٩٧٣: ٢٥٧) provide examples wherein the syllable division is often indicated, the word **anger** / æŋd / is a disyllabic word, since it has two nuclei: the /æ/ and the /d/ vowels. The syllable division can be placed between /ŋ/ and the /g/ consonants. It is important to state why such a division is adopted rather than another. In fact, the / ŋ g/ sequence is permitted neither initially not finally. Another example, which is provided by O'connor and trim (ibid), is **anxious** /æŋks/ and the /ks/ are not permitted to occur initially. It is the frequency of occurrence of different types of syllable finals and initials that can help recognizing the appropriate discussion of syllabifying words. Gimson (١٩٧٣:١٠٠) believes that stress plays the most important role specifying the syllable division, a matter which is explicit in a **name** / ð neim/ and **an aim** / æn eim/ . Gimson (ibid) maintains that although native speakers may well find no difficulty in dividing words into syllables, it seems that learners of English have trouble in doing so. It is believed that there are certain difficulties encountered by Iraqi learners of English at the university level concerning the syllabification and the stress marking of English polysyllabic words.

## English stress pattern

Stress placement has an essential and extra- ordinary role in the pronunciation of words. According to Roach (١٩٩١: ١٠٣) and Iones (١٩٦٧: ١٣٦) just like many other languages, English syllables, are either stressed or

unstressed. When a syllable is said to be stressed this means that the syllable has been uttered with more muscular effort, increased air pressure, and greater amplitude of vibration (Gimson, ١٩٨٩: ٢٥). Roach(١٩٩١: ٨٦) distinguishes four different kinds of phonetic prominence(١) prominence of pitch,(٢) prominence of duration,(٣) prominence of vowel quality,(٤) prominence of loudness. English stress, is of two types, primary and secondary. The former is marked with stress mark(ˈ) before the syllable, and the latter is marked (ˌ) before the syllable. In monosyllabic words, there can be only one stressed syllable which is a primary stress. The location of primary stress in disyllabic, trisyllabic or polysyllabic syllables varies from one word to another. Gormbaum(١٩٦: ٤٩٦). Believes that it is not easy task to establish rules. That determine where to place the primary and the secondary stress, such rules are extremely complex and admit numerous exceptions. For example.

	<u>Examples</u>	<u>Gloss</u>
Disyllabic words	/ ˈPɪktʃə / /bi ˈ haɪnd /	Picture behind
Trisyllabic words	/ ˈ pɜːfɪktli / / kəmˈpɜːliːtli /	Perfectly Completely
Polysyllabic words	/ fəˈ tɒɡrəfi / / fəʊtəˈɡræfɪk /	Photography photographic

In English, stress syllables tend to occur at regular intervals and unstressed syllables in between are reduced and given less time. The vowels in unstressed syllables are systematically reduced, English speakers will not try to control the position of the tongue body during the vowel of an unstressed syllables. Instead the tongue body will reach whatever points is convenient in getting from the preceding consonant to the following consonant, and the average position reached is mid- central schwa / ə /. The tendency to reduce and run together all unstressed syllables is one of the characteristics which make spoken English very difficult for foreign students and failing to reduce unstressed vowels is one of the major contributions to an accent in non- native speaker of English. This because the differences between stressed and unstressed syllables are more extreme in English than in most languages (paulston and bruder, ١٩٧٦: ٩٢).

Finocchiro (١٩٨٦: ٢٨) points out that in speaking English, speakers try to maintain the same time between one stressed syllable and the next stressed syllable in the utterance. In order to maintain the rhythm, we say the unstressed syllables faster. This is done by crowding the unstressed syllables

to gather and by pronouncing all or most of the unstressed vowels as / ə / or not pronouncing them at all. That's why people may say the sentence:

What are you going to do? as:

/ wə t ə you ə gouing tə du: /

The researcher thinks that the real problem encountered by most Iraqi learners of English is their failure to specify and produce stressed syllables and place their stress mark correctly so; the learners of English may tend to stress every syllable without determining which

syllable of a word should be stressed thinking that by doing so they are pronouncing a given English word or utterance properly. For example, the word listen has primary stress falling on the first syllable / 'li-/ and the stress pattern of this word is / 'lisn/ or / 'lisən/. this word is syllabified into two syllables / 'li/ and / - sən/. On the other hand, it is expected that many learners of English may attempt to stress the final syllable of the English word listen. The learners are expected to pronounce the word listen as / li' sən /.

The researcher also thinks that the number of syllables in a given word are expected to cause a great degree of difficulty learners to Iraqi of English. This difficulty is determinate by the length of syllables. For example, the word vocabulary / vəkæbjuləri/ Has a primary stress falling on the second syllable /- 'kæbjiləri/. This word is syllabified into five syllables. In this respect, the researcher thinks that most learners of English haven't the ability to pronounce the stressed syllables in words which consist of more than two syllables. For this reason, the word vocabulary may be pronounced and syllabified by most learners improperly because most learners are misled by the length and syllables.

Speakers of a language know which syllable receives primary stress, which receives secondary stress, and which are not stressed at all (Fromkin and Rodman, ١٩٨٣: ٩٦). But according to learners there is no simple way of knowing which syllable or syllables in an English word must be stressed. Every time one learns a new word, one must be sure to learn how it is stressed (O'connor, ١٩٨٠: ١٩). The placement of word stress is of special difficulty for foreign learners. It is difficult for them to select the syllable or syllables to be stressed in an English word (Roach, ١٩٨٨: ١٦).

Several objectives are to be fulfilled in the present study. One of these objectives is to investing the difficulties faced by Iraqi EFL College students as they attempt to make use of stressed syllables at both levels of recognition and production. Another objective is to check whether or not Iraqi EFL College students can stress syllables within polysyllabic words.

According to his experience as a teacher, the researcher thinks that there are many factors which provide the speaker with information that could help in the placement of stress. Roach (١٩٨٨: ٧٦) and Hyman (١٩٧٥: ٢٠٥) illustrate the grammatical factors whether the word is morphologically simple

or complex and the grammatical category to which the word belongs (noun, verb, adjective, adverb, ... etc). The phonological factors also illustrated, such as the number of the syllables in the word and the phonological structure of those syllables.

For example, light syllables in which the core consists of a short vowel cannot be stressed, stress in this case must pass to the neighboring syllable. Heavy Syllables, on the other hand, have cores which consist of either V. VV. VC or combination of those, these syllables can be stressed (Hyman , ١٩٧٥: ٢٠٥).

### Stress of English polysyllabic Words

English polysyllabic words can be syllabified depending on the number of syllables, which can be recognized mainly by specifying number of the vowel phonemes. Polysyllabic words include words ranging between two and eight syllables. In addition to that monosyllabic words are usually stressed. Such words can be single stems followed by inflectional suffixes that end these words (Roach, ٢٠٠٠, ٧٤). Roach (١٩٨٨: ٧٦) provides some useful pieces of information concerning the placement of stress within English words.

#### ١. Two syllable words

In two syllable words either the first syllable or the second is stressed. In two syllable verbs the second syllable is stressed if it contains a long vowel or diphthong, or if it ends with more than one consonant, and the first syllable is stressed if the final syllable contains a short vowel and one or no final consonant e.g.

Apply / lə ˈplai /

Arrive / ə ˈraɪv /

Enter / ˈentə /

Open / ˈəʊpən /

Two syllable simple adjectives are stressed according to the same rules used for stressing two syllables verbs e. g.

Correct / kə ˈrekt /

Alive / ə ˈlaɪv /

Hollow / ˈhɒləʊ /

Nouns of two syllables are stressed in the following way: if the second syllable contains a short vowel, the stress will usually come on the first syllable. Otherwise it will be on the second syllable e. g.

Money / ˈmʌni /



Product / ɒ prodʌkt/

Two syllable adverbs and prepositions behave like verb and adjectives:

## ٧. Three syllable words:

If the last syllable in three syllable verbs contains a short vowel and ends with no more than one consonants, stress will be placed on the penultimate syllable (Ibid: ١٧) . e. g,

Encounter / ɪŋˈkauntə/

Determine / dɪˈtɪmɪn /

In three syllable nouns if the final syllable contains a short vowel or /ə/ it is unstressed; if the syllable preceding this final syllable contains a long vowel or diphthong, or if it ends with more than one consonant, that middle syllable will be stressed e. g,

Potato / pəˈteɪtəʊnt/

Disaster / dɪˈzɑːstə /

If the final syllable contains a short vowel and middle syllable contains a short vowel and ends with no more than one consonant, both the final and middle syllables are unstressed and the first syllable is stressed (Ibid: ١٨) e. g.

Quantity / ˈkwɒntəti/

Custody / ɪˈkʌstədi /

Three syllable adjectives are stressed by the same rule used for stressing three syllable nouns e. g,

Opportune / ˈɒpətjuːn /

Derelict / ˈderɪlɪkt /

٨. Affix words are words made with affixes, which are either suffixes or prefixes. The different types of suffixes behave differently. Some suffixes carry the primary stress themselves. If the stem consists of more than one syllable, there will be a secondary stress on one syllable of the stems except the last syllable of the stem (Roach, ١٩٨٨: ٨١). e. g,

Ain → Entertain / ɛntəˈteɪn /

Ette → Cigarette / sɪŋgrˈet /

Another type of suffixes does not affect stress placement at all e. g.,

Comfort → Comfortable

/ ˈkʌmfət / → / ˈkʌmfəbl /

refuse → Refusal



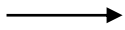
/ ri` fju: z /



/ ri` fu:z l /

A third type of suffixes influences stress in the stem, primary stress will be on the last syllable of the stem e. g.,

advantage



Advantageous

/ə d`vaintidz/



/ æd və n`teidz ə s

/photo/



/Photography/

/ `fə utə u /



/ fə `tə grə fi /

Stress in words with prefixes is governed by the same rule as those for words without prefixes, since there is no prefix of one or two syllables that always carries primary stress (bid: ٨٢).

#### ٤. Stress in Compound Words

Compound words are words made up of two words written in conventional spelling as one with or without hyphen, they can also referred to as words composed of separable root morphemes (Iones: ١٩٧٨:٢٥٧).

Rules for stress in compound words are given by Rogerson and Gilbert(١٩٩٠: ٢٣):

If the compound is a noun, stress goes on the first part. e. g., green house/ `gri: n haus/.

If the compound is an adjective, stress goes on the second part. e.g.,

bad- tempered

bəd- `tempəd /

old- fashioned

Ould- `fæʃənd

The significance of the present study lies in the fact that the investigation of the difficulty concern the recognition and production of English stressed syllables may offer an insight to those who consider them a problem. Moreover, the findings of this study will be of great importance for instructors and syllabus designers in particular when developing teaching materials. The present study exclusively deals with the recognition and production of English stressed syllables.

In the light of the literature and the problem and objectives of the study, it is hypothesized that:

١- Most of Iraqi foreign language learners are expected to find difficulty in producing stressed syllables within words of more than two syllables.

٢- Most of Iraqi foreign language learners are expected to find difficulty in recognizing stressed syllables within words of moer than two syllables.

### *The Test*

#### *Introduction*

Since the main objective of this study is to check whether or not Iraqi EFL college students can produce stressed syllables within polysyllabic words. There should be a practical investigation that reveals the difficulties



and identifies' them, therefore, it was found necessary for the researcher to assess the learners actual pronunciation of the English stressed syllables in the form of diagnostic test that seeks to find out the difficult spots. In addition to this, the researcher feels that it turns essential for the test to assess the stress patterns of one to five syllable words, thus , other syllables words were excluded because they are quite rare, unfamiliar and not included in the tastes' book.

### ***Description of the Test***

The aims of the test are diagnostic, that is to diagnose the individuals', specific strengths and weakness. The kind of procedure used in the test is known as highly structured speaking tasks which consist of several parts, each designed to elicit a different kind of speech samples. A test consists of two questions was prepared to be administrated fourth year students. Department of English, College of Arts, university of Al-Iraqia.

Question one comprises ٥٠ items. It covers the production level of the test and is divided into five groups. Two syllable words, there syllable words., four syllable words and five syllable words The subjects', pronunciation was recorded while reading the test items. The subjects', placement of stress on stressed syllables was examined. Stress placement was noticed during the subjects, production of the stressed syllables and their production is compared with that of the researcher himself (semi-native speaker) . Question two comprises ٥٠ items. It covers the recognition level of the test in which the subjects were asked to place stress mark correctly before the stressed syllables. Moreover, the test items used in the recognition test were written down and transcribed into its phonetic representation on separate sheet of paper by the researcher.

### ***The subjects***

The subjects who took part in the test were (٢٥). They were randomly chosen from fourth year students of English at the College of Arts, University of Al- Iraqia. They were all native speakers of Iraqi Arabic, living either in Baghdad or in other cities in Iraq. They were between (٢١-٢٥)Years old. Non of them had ever been in an English speaking country or even had the chance to be taught by native speakers of English. With respect to their first and second years of their education. So, they supposed to be acquainted with certain phonetic and phonological concepts such as the syllables, stress and the like.

### ***The Administration of the Test.***

The test is designed to measure the students' production and recognition of the stressed syllables. In order to ensure the validity, the test items were examined by a number of experts who are known as having profound knowledge in this area. After checking validity, the test is administered in the language laboratory of English Department, College of Arts, university of Al-

Iraqia at the end of the second half of the Academic year ٢٠١٣. The students' production of each item was recorded individually. The test items used in the recognition test were written down on separate sheets of paper. The subjects had to put stress make before the stressed syllables. The period of the time allotted to the performance of the two questions of the test was limited to two hours. They was given serial and instructed to mention their members before starting to read. Moreover, they were asked to act serious and do their best in order to gain adequate results.

### ***The Scoring Scheme***

The researcher scored the subjects' test items on the right- wrong basis. Each correct one was given two marks and incorrect one was given a zero. The entire test had been scored out of (١٠٠). The researcher used the following statistical means.

- ١- Percentage method was used to find out the percentage of errors.
- ٢- The mean measure was used to find out the differences between the frequencies of errors on production and recognition levels.

### ***The Results of the Test***

This section presents and discusses the subjects, answers when recognizing and producing stressed syllables were categorized and their percentages were computed. The results were analyzed to determine the possible sources of the subjects' errors in order to get some insights into the nature of the difficulties they usually encounter in this area. After analyzing the subjects performance, the final results were used to verify or refute the hypotheses put forward.

The results of the study (tableI) below, show that the ability to produce stressed syllable is unsatisfactory and that they face certain difficulties when producing them.

**Table(I) The Overall Results of the First Quest. The Production Test**

Item	Correct	Percent %	Errors	Percent %
١	٣٨	٧٦	١٢	٢٤
٢	٤٠	٨٠	١٠	٢٠
٣	٣٦	٧٢	١٤	٢٨
٤	٤٢	٨٤	٨	١٦



٥	٤٠	٨٠	١٠	٢٠
٦	٣٤	٧٨	١٦	٣٢
٧	٣٠	٦٠	٢٠	٤٠
٨	٣٢	٦٤	١٨	٣٦
٩	٣٦	٧٢	١٤	٢٨
١٠	٤٠	٨٠	١٠	٢٠
١١	١٨	٢٦	٣٢	٦٤
١٢	١٦	٣٢	٣٤	٦٨
١٣	٢٠	٤٠	٣٠	٦٠
١٤	١٤	٢٨	٣٦	٧٢
١٥	٢٠	٤٠	٣٠	٦٠
١٦	١٨	٣٦	٣٢	٦٤
١٧	٢٤	٤٨	٢٦	٥٢
١٨	٢٠	٤٠	٣٠	٦٠
١٩	١٨	٣٦	٣٢	٦٤
٢٠	١٦	٣٢	٣٤	٦٨
٢١	١٤	٢٨	٣٦	٧٢



٢٢	١٦	٣٢	٣٤	٦٨
٢٣	١٨	٣٦	٣٢	٦٤
٢٤	١٦	٣٢	٣٤	٦٨
٢٥	١٨	٣٦	٣٢	٦٤
٢٦	١٤	٢٨	٣٦	٧٢
٢٧	٢٢	٤٤	٢٨	٥٦
٢٨	٢٠	٤٠	٣٠	٦٠
٢٩	١٦	٣٢	٣٤	٦٨
٣٠	١٨	٣٦	٣٢	٦٤
٣١	١٦	٣٢	٣٤	٦٨
٣٢	١٨	٣٦	٣٢	٦٤
٣٣	١٢	٢٤	٣٨	٧٦
٣٤	١٤	٢٨	٣٦	٧٢
٣٥	١٦	٣٢	٣٤	٦٨
٣٦	١٦	٣٢	٣٤	٦٨
٣٧	٢٠	٤٠	٣٠	٦٠
٣٨	١٨	٣٦	٣٢	٦٤

٣٩	١٨	٣٦	٣٢	٦٤
٤٠	١٦	٣٢	٣٤	٦٨
٤١	١٨	٣٦	٣٢	٦٤
٤٢	١٤	٢٨	٣٦	٧٢
٤٣	١٠	٢٠	٤٠	٨٠
٤٤	١٢	٢٤	٣٨	٧٦
٤٥	١٤	٢٨	٣٦	٧٢
٤٦	١٦	٣٢	٣٤	٦٨
٤٧	١٨	٣٦	٣٢	٦٤
٤٨	١٨	٣٦	٣٢	٦٤
٤٩	١٦	٣٢	٣٤	٦٨
٥٠	١٤	٢٨	٣٦	٧٢
	١٠.٣٦	٤١.٤٤	١٤٦٤	٥٨.٥٦

The overall results of the study, as shown in table(I) indicate that the total number of errors made by the subjects are (٥٨.٥٦). Table (I) displays that the subjects were unsuccessful in producing stressed syllables within polysyllabic words correctly. Actually, none of the subjects could score within or above the average. Rather all of them scored below the average. The overall results of the study clearly show that the subjects were successful in producing stressed syllables within monosyllabic words. The production test was divided into five groups. Each group comprised ten words. The first group involves a list of one syllable word. The second group involves a list of two syllable words. The third group involves a list of three syllable words.



The fourth group involves a list of four syllable words. All those groups were tabulated in table(٢).

**Table(٣)  
production Test**

Group One			Group Two			Group three			Group four			Group five		
item	Correct Answers	Incorrect Answers	Item	Correct Answers	Incorrect Answers	item	Correct Answers	Correct Answers	item	Correct Answers	Correct Answers	item	Correct Answers	Correct Answers
١	٣٨	١٢	١	١٨	٣٢	٢	١٤	٣٦	٣	١٦	٣٤	٤	١٨	٣٢
٢	٤٠	١٠	٢	١٦	٣٤	٢	١٦	٣٤	٣	١٨	٣٢	٤	١٤	٣٦
٣	٣٦	١٤	٣	٢٠	٣٠	٣	١٨	٣٢	٣	١٢	٣٨	٤	١٠	٤٠
٣	٣٦	١٤	٣	٢٠	٣٠	٣	١٨	٣٢	٣	١٢	٣٨	٤	١٠	٤٠
٤	٤٢	٨	٤	١٤	٣٦	٤	١٦	٣٤	٤	١٤	٣٦	٤	١٢	٣٦
٥	٤٠	١٠	٥	٢٠	٣٠	٥	١٨	٣٢	٥	١٦	٣٤	٥	١٤	٣٦
٦	٣٤	١٦	٦	١٨	٣٢	٦	١٤	٣٦	٦	١٦	٣٤	٦	١٦	٣٤
٧	٣٠	٢٠	٧	٢٤	٢٦	٧	٢٢	٢٨	٧	٢٠	٣٠	٧	١٨	٣٢
٨	٣٢	١٨	٨	٢٠	٣٠	٨	٢٠	٣٠	٨	١٨	٣٢	٨	١٨	٣٢
٩	٣٦	١٤	٩	١٨	٣٢	٩	١٦	٣٤	٩	١٨	٣٢	٩	١٦	٣٤
١٠	٤٠	١٠	١٠	١٦	٣٤	١٠	١٨	٣٢	١٠	١٦	٣٤	١٠	١٤	٣٦
	٣٦٨	١٣٢		١٨٤	٣١٦		١٧٢	٣٢٨		١٦٤	٣٣٦			
	١٤.٧٢	٥.٢٨		٥.٣٦	١٢.٦٤		٦.٨٨	١٣.١٢		٦.٥٦	١٣.٤٤			

The analysis of the results obtained from the production test would reveal whether or not there was significant differences in the subject's performance. The production test is divided into two parts: the first part involves a list of individual words which represent the overall results (see table one), whereas the second part represents the five groups of the production test (see table two). The first part of the production test reveals that the subjects performances in producing stressed syllables within polysyllabic words are

unsatisfactory since the total number of errors made by the subjects is (١٤٦٤, ٥٨.٥٦٪) as shown in (table one). This indicates that the subjects face more difficulty in producing stressed syllables. In general, the subjects who make errors tend to give the same prominence to every syllable thinking that by doing so they are pronouncing a given stressed syllable correctly. For example, most subjects pronounce the stressed syllable within the following polysyllabic words **picture** /pi'ktʃə/, **incorrect** /in'kɒrɪkt/ **majority** /mə'dʒɔrə'ti/, **Solidarity** /'Solidəriti/, **apply** /əp'lai/, **forget** /'fɒget/ instead of /'Piktʃə/, /inkə'rekt/, /mə'dʒɔrə'ti/, /soli'dæriti/, /ə'plai/, /fə'get/ respectively. (See appendix I) The high percentage of the subjects' incorrect responses in producing stressed syllables means that Iraqi learners of English encounter difficulty in mastering English stressed syllables. Moreover, the researcher thinks that errors may be referred to insufficient sophisticated teachers whose improper pronunciation influences the subjects' performance. The second part of the production test shows that the difficulty in producing stressed syllables increases as the number of syllables in a given word increases. This difficulty is determined by the length of syllables. It seems clear that the group of five syllable words is the most difficult one. This can be realized from examining the results found in (table two). The total number of errors made by the subjects in using five syllable words which is (٣٥٢, ١٤.٨٪) suggests the subjects' poor performance in this respect. Table two reveals that the comparison between the results of group (I) with those of other groups was a significant differences in terms of the subjects' production performances. This can be noticed from examining the results found in table (٢). It appears that there was a wide gap between the subjects' production. For example, in the first group the subjects managed to score (١٣٢) incorrect answers and the same subjects scored (٣١٦, ٣٢٨, ٣٣٦ and ٣٥٢) incorrect answers in other groups of polysyllabic words respectively. The mean score of group (I) was (٥.٢٨٪) while the mean score of other groups was (١٢.٦٤٪), (١٣.١٢٪), (١٣.٤٤٪) and (١٤.٨٪) respectively. The reason behind fluctuation of errors in this respect may be related to the complexity of the number of syllables within polysyllabic words for the subjects. It is obvious from the total number of the erroneous responses that the subjects are incompetent in producing stressed syllables within polysyllabic words and this verifies that the first hypothesis which states that most Iraqi learners of English encounter difficulty in producing stressed syllables within words of more than two syllables.





Table ( ٣ )

The Subjects' Performance at the Recognition Level in Question Two

Item	Correct	Percent%	Errors	Percent %	Item	Correct	Percent%	Errors	Percent %
١	٤٠	٨٠	١٠	٢٠	٢٦	٢٨	٥٦	٢٢	٤٤
٢	٤٢	٨٤	٨	١٦	٢٧	٣٠	٦٠	٢٠	٤٠
٣	٣٨	٧٦	١٢	٢٤	٢٨	٢٤	٤٨	٢٦	٥٢
٤	٤٤	٨٨	٦	١٢	٢٩	٢٠	٤٠	٣٠	٦٠
٥	٤٢	٨٤	٨	١٦	٣٠	٢٦	٥٢	٢٤	٤٨
٦	٣٨	٧٦	١٢	٢٤	٣١	٢٠	٤٠	٣٠	٦٠
٧	٣٤	٦٨	١٦	٢٢	٣٢	٢٦	٥٢	٢٤	٤٨
٨	٣٦	٧٢	١٤	٢٨	٣٣	٢٨	٥٦	٢٢	٤٤
٩	٣٨	٧٦	١٢	٢٤	٣٤	٢٢	٤٤	٢٨	٥٦
١٠	٤٤	٨٨	٦	١٢	٣٥	١٨	٣٦	٣٢	٦٤
١١	٣٠	٦٠	٢٠	٤٠	٣٦	٢٠	٤٠	٣٠	٦٠
١٢	٣٢	٦٤	١٨	٣٦	٣٧	٢٦	٥٢	٢٤	٤٨
١٣	٣٤	٦٨	١٦	٣٢	٣٨	٢٠	٤٠	٣٠	٦٠
١٤	٢٨	٥٦	٢٢	٤٤	٣٩	١٦	٣٢	٣٤	٦٨
١٥	٢٦	٥٢	٣٤	٦٨	٤٠	٢٠	٤٠	٣٠	٦٠
١٦	٣٠	٦٠	٢٠	٤٠	٤١	١٨	٣٦	٣٢	٦٤
١٧	٣٢	٦٤	١٨	٣٦	٤٢	٢٢	٤٤	٢٨	٥٦
١٨	٢٨	٥٦	٢٢	٤٤	٤٣	٢٦	٥٢	٢٤	٤٨
١٩	٢٦	٥٢	٢٤	٤٨	٤٤	١٨	٣٦	٣٢	٦٤
٢٠	٢٦	٥٢	٢٤	٤٨	٤٥	١٤	٢٨	٣٦	٧٢
٢١	٢٢	٤٤	٢٨	٥٦	٤٦	١٨	٣٦	٣٢	٦٤
٢٢	٣٠	٦٠	٢٠	٤٠	٤٧	٢٤	٤٨	٢٦	٥٢

٢٣	٣٢	٦٤	١٨	٣٠	٤٨	١٤	٢٨	٣٦	٧٢
٢٤	٢٦	٥٢	٢٤	٤٨	٤٩	١٢	٢٤	٣٨	٧٦
٢٥	٢٢	٤٤	٢٨	٥٦	٥٠	١٢	٢٤	٣٨	٧٦
						١٣٦	٥٤.٤٪	١١٤٨	٤٥.٩٢٪

Table (٣) clearly indicates that the subjects' performance in the recognition test was better in comparison with that in the production test. This can be easily realized when we compare the means of both tests. Table (٣) shows that the total number of errors made by the subjects are (٤٥.٩٢٪) while the total number of errors made by the subjects in production test are (٥٨.٥٦٪). For example, most subjects managed to score (١٣٦٠) correct answers and the same subjects score (١١٤٨) incorrect answers (see table ٣). As it can be seen, the results of recognition test proves that, the subjects were more efficient in recognizing stressed syllables than producing them. It was found out that items No.(١-١٠) were of low difficulty and they can be easily recognized by EFL students. This indicates that the subjects were able to place the stress mark on the accented syllable in the first ten items. See appendix (٢).

The difficulty is further complicated since the number of syllables within polysyllabic words increases such as items of two syllable words, three syllable words, four syllable words and five syllable words. For example, most subjects were failed to place the stress mark in an appropriate syllable in words such as **compulsory** /kəmpʻʌlsəri/, **exaggeration** /igzædzə'reɪfn/, **personality** /pə:sə'næləti/, **Olympic** /ə'limpik/, **Welcome** /'welkəm/, **midway** /mid'wei/, **Island** /ai'lənd/, **Sensuality** /sensʻuələti/, **characteristic** /kə'rektə'ristik/ most subjects face difficulty in identifying the accented syllables in the same words above as simple examples. So, they make errors in syllable stress placement by placing the stress mark in an inappropriate syllable such as **compulsory** /kəmpʻʌlsəri/, **exaggeration** /ig'zædzereɪfn/, **personality** /pə:sənælə'ti/, **Olympic** /əlim'pik/, **welcome** /we'kəm/, **midway** /'midwei/, **island** /ai'lənd/, **sensuality** /'sensʻuələti/, **characteristic** /kə'rektəristik/. The percentage of errors shows that the subjects are very weak in recognizing the stressed syllables especially the items of four and five syllable words. This indicates that EFL students fail to distinguish stressed syllable, due to the lack of attention given to such aspect of English sound system by the instructors. This would verify the second hypothesis of this study which states that most Iraqi learners of English encounter difficulty in recognizing stressed syllables within words of more than two syllables.

### Conclusion

The study reveals that Iraqi learners are weak at producing and recognizing stressed syllables within words of more than two syllables. In the light of the study results, it comes out with the following conclusions:

١- Iraqi learners of English at the university level are varied considerably with respect to their abilities to produce and recognize English stressed syllables, namely four syllable words and five syllable words.

٢- By comparing the test performance of the production test with that of recognition test, it appears that the subjects made (١٤٦٤) errors with a percentage of errors (٥٨.٥٦٪). The same subjects made (١١٤٨) errors with a percentage of errors (٤٥.٢٢٪) at the recognition test. The scoring of errors in both test indicates that the subjects face difficulty in producing the correct responses and in placing the stress on the suitable syllable in words. This aspect is neglected by the teachers because stress represents a difficult area not only to the students but also to the teachers.

٣- They were found to be more successful in producing stressed syllables within words of one and two syllables than words of more than three syllables. This may suggest that though, in some cases, they were managed to place the stress mark on the stressed syllable, they face some difficulty in producing them. It appears that good performance of most subjects could be attributed to guessing rather than sharp distinction between stressed and unstressed syllable. For instance, a subject may face little difficulty in identifying the accented syllable in a word such as compulsory /kɒmˈpʌlsɔːri/ as having four syllables which the same subject may tend to produce it as /ˈkɒmpʌlsɔːri/. The subject make error in word stress placement by placing the stress mark in an inappropriate syllable.

٤- It is suggested that English phonetics and phonology should be considered as a basic subject and the prescribed textbooks have to pay great attention to this skill.

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## Appendix-I

**The production test Read the following words carefully one syllable word**

١	Sack	/ ɒ Sæk /
٢	Tooth	/ ɒ tu:θ /
٣	Pump	/ ɒ pʌmp /
٤	One	/ ɒ w ʌn /
٥	Love	/ ɒ lʌv /
٦	Loo	/ ɒ lu: /
٧	Isle	/ ɒ ail /
٨	How	/ ɒ hau /
٩	Frank	/ ɒ fræŋk /
١٠	Deep	/ ɒ di:p /

## Two syllable words

١١	Picture	/ ɒ pɪktʃə /
١٢	Behind	/ bi ɒ haɪnd /
١٣	Refuse	/ ri ɒ fju:z /
١٤	Forget	/ fə ɒ get /
١٥	Correct	/ kə ɒ rekt /

١٦	Alive	ð ò laiv /
١٧	Apply	/ ð ò plai /
١٨	Enter	ò entð /
١٩	Arrive	/ ð ò raiv /
٢٠	Comfort	ò kʌmfɔt /

## Three syllable words

٢١	Determine	/ di ò tɔmin /
٢٢	Encounter	/ iŋ ò kauntð /
٢٣	Disaster	/ di ò za:stð /
٢٤	Custody	/ ò kʌstɔdi /
٢٥	Incorrect	/ inkð ò rekt /
٢٦	Perfectly	/ ò pɜfɪktli /
٢٧	Completely	/ kɔm ò pli:tli /
٢٨	Potato	pð ò teitɔ /
٢٩	Envisage	/ in ò vizidʒ /
٣٠	Sensitive	ò sensɔtiv /

## Four syllable words

٣١	independence	/ indi ò pɛndɔns /
٣٢	Nevertheless	/ nevð ò les /
٣٣	Enthusiasm	/ in ò ɔju:zaiazɔm /
٣٤	Systematic	/ sistð ò matik /
٣٥	Sympathetic	/ simpð ò ɔetik /
٣٦	Majority	mð ò dʒɔriti /
٣٧	Regimented	ò redʒɪmentɪd /
٣٨	comprehensive	/ kompri ò hensiv /
٣٩	approximation	ðproksi ò meɪfn /
٤٠	hypermarket	/ ò haɪpðma:kit /

## Five syllable words

٤١	Popularity	/ popju ò larɔti /
٤٢	precautionary	/ pri ò ko:fɔndri /
٤٣	sophisticated	sð ò fistikeɪtɪd /
٤٤	introductory	/ inrð ò dʌktɔri /
٤٥	anthropology	/ ænθrð ò polɔdʒi /
٤٦	contributory	/ kðn ò tribjɔtɔri /
٤٧	disproportionate	disprð ò poɪfɔnɔt /
٤٨	paramilitary	pærð ò milɔtri /
٤٩	Sexuality	seksju ò aliti /
٥٠	Solidarity	Soli ò dæriti /

## Appendix Two The Recognition Test

Please place stress make over the stressed syllables on the following words.

**One syllable words**

١	Bank	/ ˈ b æ ŋ k /
٢	Cap	/ ˈ k æ p /
٣	Frame	/ ˈ f r eɪ m /
٤	Fraud	/ ˈ f r oː d /
٥	Guard	/ ˈ g aː d /
٦	Hostel	/ ˈ h oʊ s t l /
٧	Join	/ ˈ dʒ oɪ n /
٨	Oven	/ ˈ ʌ v n /
٩	Pulse	/ ˈ p ʌ l s /
١٠	Rent	/ ˈ r e n t /

**Two syllable words**

١١	Midway	/ mɪ ˈ d w eɪ /
١٢	Owner	/ ˈ ɒ n ɪ /
١٣	Polite	/ p ɒ ˈ l aɪ t /
١٤	Resent	/ rɪ ˈ z e n t /
١٥	Slander	/ s ˈ l aː n d ɪ /
١٦	Target	/ ˈ t aː g ɪ t /
١٧	Welcome	ˈ w e l k ɒ m /
١٨	Message	/ m e s ɪ dʒ /
١٩	Lsland	/ ˈ aɪ l ɒ n d /
٢٠	Disease	/ dɪ ˈ zː z /

**Three syllable words**

٢١	Seusitive	/ ˈ s e n s ɪ t ɪ v /
٢٢	olympic	/ ɒ ˈ l ɪ m p ɪ k /
٢٣	methodist	/ m e ˈ θ ɒ d ɪ s t /
٢٤	outstaning	/ aʊ t ˈ s t ɒ n ɪ ŋ /
٢٥	etementary	/ e lɪ ˈ m e n t rɪ /
٢٦	guarantee	/ g æ r ɒ n ˈ t iː /
٢٧	imagine	/ ɪ ˈ m æ dʒ ɪ n /
٢٨	lavender	/ ˈ l æ v ɒ n d ɪ /
٢٩	perspective	/ p ɒ ˈ s p e k t ɪ v /
٣٠	determine	/ dɪ ˈ t ɜː m ɪ n /

**Four syllable words**

٣١	Sensuality	/ s e n s u ˈ æ l ɪ t ɪ /
٣٢	Sensibility	s e n s ɪ b ɪ l ɪ t ɪ /
٣٣	Majority	m ɔː ˈ dʒ ɔː r ɪ t ɪ /
٣٤	Radioactive	r eɪ dɪ ɒ ˈ æ k t ɪ v /
٣٥	Exaggeration	ɪ g z æ dʒ e ˈ r eɪ f n /

٣٦	monosyllable	monˌɒsɪləbəl /
٣٧	redevelop	/ redi ˌveləp /
٣٨	limitation	Limi ˌteɪʃn /
٣٩	liquidation	Likwi ˌdeɪʃn /
٤٠	compulsory	kəm ˌpʌlsəri /

## Five syllable words

٤١	personality	/pɜːsənæləti
٤٢	sensuality	/ sensu ələti/
٤٣	exaggeration	igzadzə ˌreɪʃn /
٤٤	characteristic	kærektɪ ˌrɪstɪk /
٤٥	microcomputer	/ ˌmaɪkrəʊkəmˈpjʊːtə/
٤٦	depreciation	/ Dɪpriːʃi əɪʃn /
٤٧	investigator	/ in ˌvestɪgeɪtə/
٤٨	ungrammatically	/ ʌnɡrə ˌmætɪkli /
٤٩	pronunciation	/prəˈnʌnsi əɪʃn /
٥٠	popularity	/ popju ˌlærəti /