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Algerian Students'Acquisition of Accentual Properties of Mono/bi-morphemic English Words

إكتساب الطلبة الجزائريين للخصائص النبرية للكلمات الإنجليزية أحادية/ثنائية المورفيم

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ملخص :

تقدم ورقة البحث التي بين أيدينا النتائج المتعددة والمستخلصة من اختبار النطق التشخيصي الذي صمم أساسا لتقديم إجابات مدعمة تجريبيا على السؤال الذي بني عليه هذا البحث: هل للتأثيرات اللغوية الداخلية أثر معرقل أكثر من التداخلات اللغوية في ما يتعلق بإتقان المتعلمين الجزائريين للأنماط النبرية في اللغة الإنجليزية؟. واعتبر هذا النوع من المشاركين الأكثر ملائمة لدراستنا وذلك راجع إلى سبب ثان: وهو اعتقاد آخر لهذه الدراسة متعلق بمدى مساهمة التدريب الصوتي في تحسين كفاءة المتعلمين في استعمال الأنماط النبرية. تظهر البيانات ثلاثة عوامل رئيسة متداخلة إلى حد ما والتي كانت وراء ظهور معظم الأخطاء. 1.لقد كان أداء المتعلمين المستهدفين أدنى من المعايير المطلوبة بسبب العوامل اللغوية الداخلية، .2 لم يكن للتدريب الصوتي تأثير ملحوظ على تحكم المتعلمين في التركيبة النبرية و3 الألفة مع المعطيات اللغوية لاتستلزم بالضرورة أداء أحسن إذا لم يتم سابقا إدخال بعض المعارف اللغوية الأساسية على نحو صحيح. وتتضمن الورقة أيضا وصفا وتصنيفا للأخطاء، وتشرح التفاعل الكائن بين سلامة نطق الأصوات والأنماط النبرية للكلمات ونسب الترابط بينهما.

الكلمات المفتاحية:الأنماط النبرية، تأثير الإختلافات اللغوية، الجزائريين، التدريب الصوتي، العوامل اللغوية الداخلية..

le résumé :

The present research paper reports on the manifold findings gleaned out of a diagnostic production test fundamentally tailored to furnish empirically-grounded answers for the research question underpinning the inception of the study proper: Does crosslinguistic influence get saliently outstripped by intra-linguistic variables in Algerian learners' English accentual pattern mastery experience? We have, likewise, sought out to enrich this rather locally under-chartered research avenue and open the door for further local like-scoped enterprises. To delimit the potential interference of some other variables, like inadequate amount of exposure and insufficient length of experience, we targeted students reading for a Master's Degree in Applied Language Studies.This genre of participants was deemed the most suitable for our investigation for yet a second rationale: another tenet of the study relates to how phonetic training contributes to the maturity of learners' accentual pattern aptitude. The data demonstrate three key fairly interlocked factors that lie behind the materialisation of most errors: 1) the targeted learners have fallen below standards because of intralinguistic factors, 2) phonetic training has not had a remarkable influence on the learners' stress structure command and 3) familiarity with the input does not perforce entail better performance if some key linguistic knowledge has not been previously properly internalised. The paper also encompasses a description and classification of the errors made and pinpoints the interplay of segmental and suprasegmental accuracy and their interdependence ratios.

Key Words: Stress patterns; cross-linguistic influence; Algerian; phonetic training; intra-linguistic factors.

Introduction :

Failure to be sufficiently well-attuned with the accurate realisations of the various facets of the English stress pattern placement is, we believe, only the beginning of other facets of failures, namely potentially cumbersome communicational exchanges or, worse still, total breakdown. These two couple with yet another linguistic repercussion: a patent projection of a foreign accent. False recognition of entire lexical items do abound in the literature. Benrabah (1997, p. 161) reports that the word normally was perceived as no money by English listeners due to the placement on the part of an Indian speaker of stress on the second syllable rather than the first one. The word absent, too, was wrongly interpreted as upset owing to the assignment of stress to the initial syllable rather than the second. These instances are merely scratching the surface of an indeed profounder issue. This is, by implication, more than a driving incentive for more and more investigatory studies into the erroneous deployment of stress, its precise nature, what lies behind its materialisation and what should be done to ease up the learners' burden. A quick glance at the research enterprises undertaken locally would reveal (quite shockingly at the very least to concerned didacticians) that Algerian learners' accentual pattern aptitude has not received half of its fair share of scholarly attention over the years. Hyper-obsession with grammatical and lexical competence should be reduced to pedagogically moderate doses or else the university would not manage to provide the society with decently balanced language tutors. After all, most research studies that university tutors undertake targets English majors who will ultimately become themselves teachers at middle schools, secondary schools or beyond. This undoubtedly necessitates that researchers should be truthfully weary of not bowing to the communicative language teaching approach. This approach's most defining ethos, so to speak, is to gear the learners up to become able to communicate and interact using the foreign/second language outside the classroom with relative ease. Since this approach to language learning gives utmost precedence to fluency at the expense of accuracy, it may, we would hasten to add, be more of an impediment than an asset for future language teachers trained under this approach and it will augment their professional vulnerability. Even members of the scientific committee (who were behind tailoring the new English textbooks that the Algerian Educational Reform which came into being in 2005 necessitated) were painfully aware of the paramount importance of pronunciation. The proof of the pudding is that unlike pre-reform English textbooks, the ones in use now place due emphasis on the pronunciation of English. This shift of emphasis should be taken into consideration by Algerian universities and far more attention should be allocated to pronunciation tutoring and pronunciation research. Our present research work has targeted a highly critical pronunciation facet, English stress structures acquisition. The various underlying premises and sought promises will become plainly obvious as the components of this article gradually unfold.

1. Most Prevalent Pronunciation-error Inducing Variables : Under this heading, we will try to look at how pronunciation errors have been tackled in the realm of EFL. We will, more peculiarly, confine our account to the most overriding, oft-recorded reasons to which pronunciation errors have been ascribed over the years.

1**.1 Linguistic constraint :**The factor number one to which a great deal of scholarly attention has been devoted ever since the late fifties pertains to crosslinguistic influence or as is was previously known language transfer. The theory which has made ample use of transfer and its connectedness to learning route, rate and ultimate success is Contrastive Analysis (Henceforth CA).

CA, as is conceived and practised in interlanguage studies and applied linguistics research, owes its very existence to Lado (1957). We will, nonetheless, spell out shortly below that this statement is not entirely flawless. It is in his seminal work Linguistics across Cultures where the totality of the theory's early founding assumptions are delineated. Perhaps the following oft-cited quote encapsulates one of the major underpinnings of the theory that this pioneering scholar tried to elucidate back then:

Individuals tend to transfer the forms and meanings and the distribution of forms and meanings of their native language and culture to the foreign language and culture both productively and when attempting to speak the language and to act in the culture and receptively when attempting to grasp and understand the language and culture as practiced by natives. (Lado, 1957, p. 2)

It is patent from this quote that the linguistic influence does not operate only at the productive end of the linguistic pole; the receptive one is equally susceptible to such an impact. In Lado's own account we can straightforwardly observe that he couples language and culture in the sense that both at the linguistic level and the cultural level influence may come out. It is, nonetheless, worth pointing out right at this juncture that part of this assumption did not see the light of day till a bit later. Most of the contrastive analyses that were undertaken under the influence of CA predominantly operated at the micro-linguistic end of the linguistic spectrum (Corder, 1973; Gass & Selinker, 2008; James, 1980). Most of the studies in the early sixties, during which phase CA witnessed its heyday, focused on the morpho-syntactic and phonological comparisons of languages. Years later, when pragmatics and sociolinguistics started to emerge and gain credibility as worthwhile disciplines in linguistics in and of themselves, cultural elements started to be seriously and insightfully considered in language acquisition research spheres. To testify that CA is likewise concerned with predicting stress and rhythm problems, Lado wrote, 'We tend to transfer to … [foreign] language our phonemes and their variants, our stress and rhythm patterns, our transitions, our intonation patterns and their interaction with other phonemes' (1957, p. 11).

Lado (1957) was, we must append herein, overtly overambitious for the potential contributions and tangible merits CA would gain when put to the meticulously tough pedagogic test. This was, we would surmise, primarily due to his theory being devoid of accounts of the other elements that may get into the language learning process.

Before we go any further, it is worthy of mention that before CA managed to secure its permanent outlook, it had appeared in a less clearer guise bearing less distinct dimensions decades earlier. Indeed, the first ideas as well as the first tentative building blocks out of which CA grew were postulated by Fries in the mid-forties. What Fries (1945) did not do, however, is that he did not put into actual practice the hypotheses he propounded and became later on the groundwork for what is now commonly known as Contrastive Analysis, 'The most efficient materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learnt carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner' (Fries, 1945, p. 06). Irrespective of his moderately sound ideas, Fries never conducted any contrastive analysis to test the robustness of his theory that is why Lado harvested all the credit associated with the theory. This idea is what Selinker tries to get out here, 'Fries is not known for having undertaken detailed CAs himself and that is most likely why histories of CA and SLA usually fail to mention him'(1992, p. 09).

1.2 Biological and social constraints: Another variable with which pronunciation success and failure have been strongly correlated bears essentially on the age at which learning a second language is set in motion. Adherent of this claim put forth that the gate to managing to pick up a reasonably good pronunciation (that runs parallel to native norms and which encompasses the fewest numbers of departures) get gradually closed down as the learner grows out of hi/her teen years. For them, the optimal period at which learning is prone to be most successful is that spanning from the first two or three years up to nine or ten years. Research has come to give this rather simplistic view of age and language acquisition more profundity through correlating age with other closely related factors such as the quality and amount of experience with language (Moyer, 2004). Fairly recently, another potential determinant of success even when learning begins at a tender age is social factors (Moyer, 2014). Amongst these social factors and arguably the most widely researched one is attitude towards the language and its native speakers. In an experimental study into the weight of two basic factors, cognitive (being the critical period and sociolinguistic (of which is attitude towards the language and the community of its speakers), Moyer (2014) concluded that socially-driven variables such as willingness to integrate and to acculturate may actually addle the effect of age to great degrees. She argued that although past the age of ten some learners (which she refers to as being 'exceptional') managed to attain native-like pronunciation because they managed to, use her own words 'defy the critical period

hypothesis' (p. 3). According to her research, learners who accomplished heightened pronunciation accuracy did so because of their possessing positive social orientation: they are bent upon merging into the speech community. The findings of this study are corroborated by another study conducted by Lewis (2015) into learners' views of pronunciation learning. He inferred that only learners who hold positive beliefs towards the second language culture and do not consider that aiming at a native-like pronunciation is a potential threat to who they really are do fare well vis-a-vis pronunciation gains.

1.3 Classroom-based constraints :Another factor which is closely linked to pronunciation errors bears essentially on what goes on in the classroom. According to Baran-Lucarz (2012), 'Individuals can achieve much higher levels of pronunciation accuracy in EL pronunciation when exposure is supported by explicit phonetic training' (p. 295). According to this researcher, exposure, bare exposure alone, may not on its own fulfil the learners' multifarious pronunciation accuracy needs. Hence, for him, exposure must be solidified by training. Moreover, what he lays especial emphasis on is the word explicit as such. It indeed makes perfect sense to lend due backing to this claim since not all learners who come into our classrooms are endowed with the requisite skills whereby they can, when left to their own devices, work out what exactly underlies native speakers' performance. It is, therefore, imperative that the instructor highlights in the most explicit terms possible the various parameters in accordance with which speech is constructed. By way of example, having the learners listen out to an audio clip or a video clip and asking them to pick out all the poly-syllabic words which have iambic or trochaic stress patterns without first defining what the word stress actually denotes is bound to be a futile endeavour.

The impact instruction has on learning outcome was termed in the early 1970s transfer of training (Selinker, 1972, p. 39). This should most preferably be viewed as a mega umbrella term underneath which comes an array of other variables. After all, the teacher may not always be the one to be held accountable for what backfires or goes wrong in their classroom. He/she operates following a set of principals and maxims imposed upon him/her by the syllabus's objectives. Above all, what ought to be included into a syllable or what should not get into it is predominantly governed by the language policy of the country as a whole. So transfer of training is itself the outcome of quite a vast array of chains of inhibitory variables. However, being at the forefront of the whole process, the teacher receives the most criticism. This does not, none the less, remotely imply that teachers are utterly un-blameworthy because of their pioneering role where they could either steer the wheel of learners' linguistic development or just bring everything to a halt lies within their professional hands. Learners of all ages and competencies are known to extensively rely on their teachers' tuition. This, however, may under some conditions where the methodological tools in use, the teacher's own unhealthy

conceptualisations as to how languages are properly taught, the lack of balance between the teacher's gauges of the learner's needs and the faced hurdles may serve to hamper learning or bring about unwanted disturbances (Derwing, 2010; Foote, Holtby and Derwing, 2011; Murphy, 2014).

1.4 Learning-strategy constraints :One of the other variables that have over the last decade come to be closely associated with overall linguistic gains relates to what learners do and what strategies they deploy for augmenting their accuracy. The line of enquiry endorsed by adherents of this belief is fuelled essentially by the conviction, which we strongly approve, that most training courses (no matter how properly-devised they are) are prone to do virtually next to nothing for helping learners pick up accurate pronunciation unless learners, the very recipients of the instructional content, are reluctant to take charges of their own learning and do not entertain the rewarding belief that pronunciation inaccuracy is a big shortcoming that has to be safely avoided. One of the scholars that wrote extensively on this issue and delineated its profusion of facets is Szyszka (2017). This scholar in his volume, which is devoted partly to the linkage holding between pronunciation gains and learner-deployed strategies, has conspicuously stated that, 'Perhaps the most neglected area in studies on LLS refers to the process of pronunciation learning. LLS stands for Language Learning Strategies.

2. The Study : As has been pointed out in the introduction and abstract, our study has endeavoured to provide research-based interpretations to the whys and whereofs of Algerian learners' English accentual patterns. It, likewise, sought out to identify and classify all the errors that these learners made as regards English stress placement. More specifically, this study has attempted to work out some tangible answers to each of the forthcoming questions:

i. What hallmarks Algerian advanced learners' stress assignment aptitude as regards two-syllable words?

ii. Is cross-linguistic influence the variable number one behind the materialisation of stress assignment errors?

iii. Is failure to abide by the stress norms a minimal issue or does it transcend into other dimensions of the learners' interlanguage phonology as a whole?

iv. Do learners have at their disposal correct pronunciations of English monophthongs and diphthongs?

2.1 Subjects and procedure : Advanced learners of English were selected to take part in this experiment. More specifically, we targeted students reading for an MA degree in English at the Department of Letters and English Language, Constantine University 1. To ensure homogeneity of the subject pool, however, we made certain that only those students reading for a master's degree in Applied Linguistics were involved in the investigation. After all, the two other areas of specialisation, namely Language Sciences as well as American/British Civilisation and Literature, do employ different genres of curricula. To be more precise, amongst

the modules which the curriculums of the other specialties do not teach is Phonetics and Phonology. Unavailability of this module alone would render the candidacy of students of these branches a sheer impossibility. After all, the research enterprise aims, amongst a host of other things, to generate some research-rooted insights into what may serve to enrich, at the very least minimally and marginally, some areas in the syllabus of this module not for the MA programme alone but for the BA one, too.

The test was deliberately carried out when the subjects were conducting their MA research. This was the case because we sought to work out whether advanced learners' command of English stress is remarkably different from that of less advanced learners. This would enable us to furnish refuting arguments or lend supportive and confirmatory accounts to those theorists who purport that cross-linguistic influence is manifestly robust solely at the onset of learning, but as learners' experience expands, their reliance on mother tongue constraints would go gradually down. A second reason why we opted for this population as such burns own to the fact that we wanted to figure out their readiness level vis-a-vis facing up to the challenges that lie ahead of them. We strove, more specifically, to gauge whether they are phonologically prepared and able to cope with teaching a middle school or a secondary school class. Right at this juncture it is worth reminding ourselves of the importance attributed to pronunciation instruction by textbook designers of the new generation of books. Phonological failure would, therefore, potentially be more of a cumbersome handicap when these students step into the classroom (when they become teachers themselves) and have a face-to-face encounter with the phonemes of English and worse, its stress.

After the administration of the test, all of the 51 subjects were allowed the amount of time they saw fit to read the items the test encompasses and no recording was initiated until the subject declared themselves well and truly ready to get started. Rushing the participants to read was deemed counterproductive as going hastily about the task would make the ultimate recordings fraught with hesitation noises and other verbal productions, which would utterly defeat the purpose; it would interfere with an otherwise safer, more representative transcription. Worse still, without prior familiarity with the items, informants could have ended up failing to decipher the phonotactic and/or graphological constitution of some new items; thereby they would have fallen short of taking resort to their learning strategies like generalisation, for instance.

2.2 Diagnostic test stimuli : The test consisted of 45 real English words. These words did not fall into the same category, though. They were grouped into different categories following a set of parameters thus:

a.The number of syllables each word contains;

b. The grammatical category to which the word belongs;

c.The accentual pattern of the word; and

d. The morphological constitution of the word.

It is to be noted that under this rubric we have only hinted at some big issues and most prominent factors and rationale that contributed in the ultimate shaping of the test stimulus content. As the discussion of the results unfold, however, more particulars of the content together with their rationale will be dealt with more conspicuously.

2.3 Analyses and discussions of the diagnostic test data

It should be recalled right at the outset of this analysis that the study reported herein is an essentially error-analysis enterprise. What is noteworthy, nonetheless, is that transition from one procedural framework into another (from recognition into description into categorisation and ultimately into explanation) would not be as salient and as clear-cut as the theoretical accounts would tell. This is primarily due to two major reasons:

i. Information exposition in theoretical reviews aims to make arguments as explicitly stated as possible in such a way that readers will readily get ample, un-obscured grasp on the theoretical content per se; and

ii. Approaching the analyses from that perspective would make data presentation rather unconventionally clumsy and hard to straightforwardly assimilate.

Table 01: Production of First Syllable Stressed Mono-morphemic Di-syllabic Verbs

Word	Transcription	Production	Students	Percentage
Enter	/ˈentə/	/ˈentə/	06	11.76%
		/entər/	18	35.29%
		/ɪntər/	27	52.94%
Envy	/ˈenvi/	/ˈenvi/	14	27.45%
		/ɪnvi/	18	35.29%
		/ɪnˈvai/	19	37.25%
Open	/ˈəʊpən/	/ˈəʊpən/	44	86.27%
		/ˈɒpən/	07	13.72%
Worship	/ˈwɜːʃɪp/	/ˈwɜːʃɪp/	10	19.60%
		/ˈwɜːrʃɪp/	17	33.33%
		/wɒrʃɪp/	24	47.05%
Whisper	/ˈwɪspə/	/ˈwɪspər/	16	31.37%
		/ˈwaispər/	24	47.05%
		/wɪsˈpɜː/	11	21.56%

The first type of words the test contains is, as is shown in this first table, non-affix two-syllable verbs. There are five different tokens of such a structure and they are all stressed on the last syllable. Of these stressed syllables, three are open (have no coda), while two are closed. Their productions are, upon the whole, erroneous and most of their errors fall into two categories: errors of mis-selection (like /ɪnˈvai/

and /wɪsˈpɜː/) and complete unstressing of any of the two syllables like (/ɪnvi/and /wɒrʃɪp/). Another error pertains to substituting the schwa vowel by the long, half-close, central, unrounded vowel /ɜː/. What seems to have been behind the materialisation of this error is an intralingual variable. The word infer, which receives stress on the final syllable whose peak is /ɜː/, could well have been the one which has triggered off this error. What is intriguing about their error, however, is that the word infer as such is very uncommon, while the peak of the final (second) of most of the common words which end in 'er' is arguably the schwa vowel. It is fair to argue, by implication, that this error is as much an intralingual error whose inducer is wrong application of a highly scarce pattern as it is an error of total reliance on spelling-pronunciations coupled with arbitrary allocation of stress.

Moreover, what is patent in the table is that errors of vowel substitution are also many and varied. Most of these errors are most likely of an intralingual nature stemming essentially from the lack of balance between English graphemes and phonemes. Another equally plausible interpretation that can be put into this is that these errors are equally of an interlingual nature. Because Arabic and, to a lesser extent, French exhibit high rates of grapheme-phoneme correspondence, this habit has been fallaciously carried over onto English.

Table 02: Production of Last Syllable Stressed Mono-morphemic Di-syllabic Verbs

Word	Transcription	Production	Students	Percentages
Produce	/prəˈdjuːs/	/prəˈdjuːs/	11	21.56%
		/ˈprəəʊdjuːs/	08	15.68%
		/prɒˈdjuːs/	21	41.17%
		/prɒdjʊs/	11	21.56%
Maintain	/meɪnˈteɪn/	/meɪnˈteɪn/	13	25.49%
		/ˈmeɪnteɪn/	24	47.05%
		/mənˈteɪn/	11	21.56%
		/menteɪn/	13	25.49%
Occur	/əˈkɜː/	/əˈkɜː/	14	27.45%
		/ˈʌkə/	20	39.21%
		/əˈkjuːr/	12	23.52%
		/ˈʌkər/	07	13.72%
Obtain	/əbˈteɪn/	/əbˈteɪn/	09	17.64%
		/ˈɒbteɪn/	42	82.35%
Omit	/əˈmɪt/	/əˈmɪt/	11	21.56%
		/ˈɒmɪt/	40	78.43%
Persuade	/pəˈsweɪd/	/pəˈsweɪd/	13	25.49%
		/ˈp ɜːrsweɪd/	15	29.41%

		/ˈpɜːsweɪd/	23	45.09%
Surprise	/səˈpraɪz/	/səˈpraɪz/	06	11.76%
		/syrpraɪz/	33	64.70%
		/syrpraɪz/	12	23.53%
Dragoon	/drəˈguːn/	/drəˈguːn/	05	43.13%
		/dragõ/	22	23.53%
		/ˈdrægu:n/	12	23.53%
		/ˈdrægən/	12	09.80%
Obey	/əˈbeɪ/	/əˈbeɪ/	07	13.72%
		/ˈɒbeɪ/	44	86.27%
Assault	/əˈsɔːlt/	/əˈsɔːlt/	11	21.56%
		/ˈæsɔːlt/	21	41.17%
		/ˈæsɒlt/	18	35.29%
Protect	/prəˈtekt/	/prəˈtekt/	12	23.53%
		/prɒˈtekt/	12	23.53%
		/ˈprɒtəkt/	27	52.94%

The second structure present in the test pertains to two-syllable non-affix verbs, but, unlike the first structure, this second one is stressed on the second syllable. There are eleven tokens of which only two-stressed syllables are open. Precisely like the above structure, their errors are of two types: errors of wrong selection and errors of total unstressing. When producing the word produce, for example, some of the students gave the first syllable undue salience by substituting the weak schwa vowel by the stronger open back rounded short vowel /ɒ/. The same holds true for omit, obey, obtain and occur. These words were intentionally selected for the big rate of frequency of occurrence that each of them enjoys both in the native speaker' use and in the students' and teachers' use, too. Does not the deviant pronunciation of these words open our pseudo-awake pedagogic eyes to the fact that exposure alone may not be guaranteed to enable the learners to pick up error-free pronunciations? Many teachers when filling out the questionnaire kept repeatedly accenting the pivotal importance of exposure and practice for fostering good pronunciation habits. If exposure and practise have been of much help, these errors would not have possibly maintained this tenacity for so long. The least that could be said about these errors is that they are doubtless very hard to expunge; the worst and the nearest to the truth would be that they have secured long-term fossilisation. So, it seems that it is feedback which should have stepped in and set these errors right. Learners could not invariably spot errors of their own accord; teachers should be out there for them: perceptual linguistic vigilance does help and repeated feedback could make sure errors would no longer surface.

Table 03: Production of Second Syllable Stressed Mono-morphemic Di-syllabic Adjectives

Word	Transcription	Production	Students	Percentages
Abrupt	/əˈbrʌpt/	/əˈbrʌpt/	08	15.68%
		/ʌˈbrʌpt/	14	27.45%
		/ʌbrʌpt/	29	56.86%
Sublime	/səˈblaɪm/	/səˈblaɪm/	04	07.84%
		/ˈsʌblaɪm/	25	49.01%
		/sʌblɪm/	22	43.13%
Alone	/əˈləʊn/	/əˈləʊn	51	100%
Aloof	/əˈluːf/	/əˈluːf/	13	25.49%
		/əˈlʊf/	20	39.21%
		/ælʊf/	18	35.29%
Polite	/pəˈlaɪt/	/pəˈlaɪt/	16	31.37%
		/pɒlaɪt/	35	68.62%
Asleep	/əˈsliːp/	/əˈsliːp/	15	29.41%
		/əˈslɪp/	05	09.80%
		/æslɪp/	31	60.78%
Complete	/kəmˈpliːt/	/kəmˈpliːt/	12	23.52%
		/ˈkɒmplɪt/	19	37.25%
		/ˈkɒmpliːt/	29	39.21%
Mature	/məˈtʃʊə/	/məˈtʃʊə/	08	15.68%
		/ˈmeɪtə/	11	21.56%
		/mætjuːr/	18	35.29%
		/mætər/	07	13.72%
		/ˈmeɪtʃər/	07	13.72%

The third type of words comprises non-affix two-syllable adjectives stressed on the second syllable. This stimulus contains eight tokens of the targeted structure, of which only one token has an open stressed syllable, viz /məˈtʃʊə/. The most common two categories of errors are also errors of mis-selection (like /ˈsʌblaɪm/ and /ˈmeɪtə/) and errors of unstressing (like /ʌbrʌpt/ and /ælʊf/). This stimulus, it should be noted, contains more frequently-encountered words (polite, asleep, complete and alone) than less frequently-encountered ones (aloof, sublime and mature). Of all these words, only alone was pronounced accurately by all the participating students. We can, following these results, deduce that students' heavily rely on English spelling for generating sounds and sound sequences paying little or no heed to the all-too-notorious fact regarding lack of concurrence between English spelling and pronunciation. Here again, taking recourse to the findings of both the teachers' and students' questionnaires would be empowering. Both teachers and students attested

to the paucity of feedback in the oral expression classroom. If the classroom had done its job of reminding the students' linguistic memory about the inherent lack of agreement between English letters and sounds, their errors would have been comparatively fewer. It seems to be transparently clear here again that familiarity with the input does not perforce entail fewer departures from the norm. We can readily observe that students made comparable errors both when producing more familiar input and less familiar one.

Table 04: Production of First Syllable Stressed Mono-morphemic Di-syllabic Adjectives

Word	Transcription	Production	Students	Percentage
Sudden	/ˈsʌdn/	/ˈsʌdn/	32	62.74%
		/ˈsʌdən/	19	37.25%
Clever	/ˈklevə/	/ˈklevə/	51	100%
Rigid	/ˈrɪdʒɪd/	/ˈrɪdʒɪd/	10	19.60%
		/rɪʒɪd/	21	41.17%
		/ˈrɪdʒiːd/	11	21.56%
		/ˈrɪʒiːd/	09	17.64%

This structure concerns non-affix two-syllable adjectives stressed on the first element. What is common to the three token words representing this structure is that the stressed syllables contain a short vowel. Moreover, two of the tokens (sudden and clever) are highly common while the third token is comparatively far less common. All the participants have got the pronunciation of clever right. The element of familiarity seems to have paid off this time. This could be due to the not-so-subtle grapho-phonemic constitution of the word itself. For the word sudden, however, many participants seemed to have generated a non-target-like final syllable by substituting the syllabic [n] by the schwa vowel. This, however, did not interfere so much with the accentual pattern of the word: owing to the articulatory vocalic weakness of the schwa, its insertion did not impart any perceptible salience to the last syllable. The last word rigid, however, seems to have posed some pronunciation challenges to the learners. A good proportion of them fell into the error of complete unstressing; they gave equal salience to both the first and final syllable by producing as their peaks the short, close, front, unrounded /ɪ/: /rɪʒɪd/. They, likewise, erroneously substituted the voiced, palato-alveolar, affricate /dʒ/ with its fricative counterpart /ʒ/. This error of substitution is by no means triggered off by the fuzziness of the English spelling-pronunciation correspondences; it is essentially due to ignorance of some rule-governed grapho-phonemic matches. The letter 'g' cannot be pronounced /ʒ/. At least this holds true as far as the overwhelming bulk of frequently-used English words are concerned: there might exist some foreign words or alternatively scientific jargon the pronunciation of which runs counter to this generalisation, though. Even so, these would be treated as highly scarce instances.

Table 05: Production of First Syllable Stressed Mono-morphemic/Bi-morphemic Di-syllabic Nouns

Word	Transcription	Production	Students	Percentage
Women	/ˈwɪmɪn/	/ˈwɪmɪn/	08	15.68%
		/ˈwʊmən/	43	84.31%
Honey	/ˈhʌni/	/ˈhʌni/	10	19.60%
		/ˈhɒni/	41	80.39%
Cabbage	/ˈkæbɪdʒ/	/ˈkæbɪdʒ/	14	27.45%
		/ˈkæbədʒ/	12	23.52%
		/kæbɪʒ/	11	21.56%
		/ˈkæbəʒ/	09	17.64%
Cotton	/ˈkɒtn/	/ˈkɒtn/	10	19.60%
		/ˈkɒtən/	23	45.09%
		/ˈkɔːtən/	09	17.64%
		/ˈkʌtən/	09	17.64%
Bottle	/bɒtl/	/ˈbɒtl/	17	33.33%
		/ˈbɔːtəl/	11	21.56%
		/ˈbɒtəl/	11	21.56%
		/ˈbʌtəl/	12	23.52%
Penny	/ˈpeni/	/ˈpeni/	18	35.29%
		/ˈpɪni/	22	43.13%
		/bɪni/	11	21.56%
Forty	/ˈfɔːti/	/ˈfɔːti/	17	33.33%
		/ˈfɔːrti/	34	66.66%
Actor	/ˈæktə/	/ˈæktə/	19	37.25%
		/ˈæktər/	32	62.74%
Teacher	/ˈtiːtʃə/	/ˈtiːtʃə/	22	43.13%
		/ˈtiːtʃər/	29	56.86%

This table contains the production of nine tokens of a new structure. This structure relates to non-affix/affix two-syllable nouns having first-syllable stress. In fact, a big proportion of English two-syllable nouns do follow this accentual pattern. The nuclei of the stressed syllables vary; two contain long vowels (forty and teacher), whereas all the remaining others contain short vowels. We notice that errors of unstressing do figure here, too, namely /bɪni/, /kæbædʒ/ and /kæbɪʒ/. Falling short of imparting prominence to any of the two syllables could be ascribed to hyper-reliance on spelling for sound generation as well as probable ignorance of an intrinsic defining property of English stress placement i.e. all two-syllabic words and longer ones must be stressed on one of the syllables. The students also made

another error: error of substitution. They used the schwa vowel instead of the syllabic /l/ when producing the second syllable of bottle (like /ˈbɒtəl/). This substitution did not mangle the accentual pattern of the word, though. This is essentially due to the fact that both the schwa vowel and the syllabic /l/ never occupy peaks of stressable syllables. The word women was, likewise, mispronounced /ˈwʊmən/. The overwhelming bulk of the participating students pronounced the word as if it were the singular form woman.

Table 06: Production of Second Syllable Stressed Mono-morphemic/Bi-morphemic Di-syllabic Nouns

Words	Transcription	Production	Students	Percentage
Canoe	/kəˈnuː/	/kəˈnuː/	09	17.64%
		/ˈkɒnʊ/	22	43.13%
		/ˈkænəʊ/	13	25.49%
		/ˈkænuː/	07	13.72%
Ado	/əˈduː/	/əˈduː/	10	19.60%
		/ˈædəʊ/	16	31.37%
		/eɪdəʊ/	13	25.49%
		/əˈdəʊ/	12	23.52%
Machine	/məˈʃiːn/	/məˈʃiːn/	18	35.29%
		/mæʃɪn/	33	64.70%
Result	/rɪˈzʌlt/	/rɪˈzʌlt/	15	29.41%
		/rɪzɒlt/	36	70.58%
Festoon	/feˈstuːn/	/feˈstuːn/	05	09.80%
		/fæstuːn/	34	66.66%
		/ˈfæstən/	11	21.56%
Balloon	/bəˈluːn/	/bəˈluːn/	10	19.60%
		/bælu:n/	41	80.39%
Cartoon	/kɑːˈtuːn/	/kɑːˈtuːn/	13	25.49%
		/kɑːrtuːn/	38	74.50%
Disease	/dɪˈziːz/	/dɪˈziːz/	20	39.21%
		/dɪzɪs/	13	25.49%
		/dəˈses/	08	15.68%
		/dɪzɪz/	10	19.60%
Tonight	/təˈnaɪt/	/təˈnaɪt/	51	100%

Embodied in this table are the pronunciations on the part of the students of nine tokens of another structure, namely non-affix/affix two-syllable nouns stressed on the second element. The tokens, however, do fall into two distinct categories: tokens of familiar words (machine, result, balloon, cartoon, disease and tonight) and

comparatively less familiar words (canoe, ado and festoon). Two divergent types of errors crop up here too: errors of mis-selection (like /ˈkænəʊ/, /ˈædəʊ/ and /ˈfæstən/) and errors of complete unstressing (like /eɪdəʊ/, /mæʃɪn/ and /dɪzɪz/). If we were to ponder over the plausible causes lying behind the materialisation of the former genre of errors, the most probable explanation would be that some students have a tendency to stress the leftmost syllable irrespective of its phonological make-up. The second genre of errors, however, would mainly be ascribed to ignorance of the existence of a hugely determining maxim: all two syllable words (verbs nouns and adjectives and even propositions and adverbials) must be stressed on one of their syllables.

2. 4 Summary of major findings

Throughout the above error analysis, it is readily discernible that the learners' errors seem to neatly fall into two-cut categories. However, errors made in each set appear to have cropped on account of divergent reasons. Under this heading, we will strive to underscore the major outcomes of our study. Firstly, the most prevalent error types recognised are the following:

A. Errors of wrong selection (mis-selection error): this type relates to the learners selecting the wrong recipient of stress. Although a range of the token words the test comprises are familiar, this variable has not helped learners perform better. Therefore, it could be safely inferred that constant practice alone may not pay off unless it is aided by constant feedback. The materialisation of this error, therefore, may denote that feedback has not been used sufficiently enough. It could, in the same vein, entail that learners did not pay heed to the incoming feedback. A third inference is that learners did not get feedback when the error emerged in its early stages. Not having received feedback back then might have resulted in the error acquiring some tenacity which ultimately resulted in its complete fossilization.

B. Errors of complete unstressing: the second most type of errors pertains to learners imparting undue prominence to both of the syllables the ill-formed words comprise. Perhaps one of the factors that lead to the emergence of this error is that learners failed to use the schwa vowel and used in its stead some other vowel that rendered the resultant syllable as prominent as the other one in the word. This error could have equally surfaced due to ignorance of some English pronunciation ABCs: a great bulk of English two-syllable words and larger ones have at their peaks of one of their syllables one of these sounds, which are typical of only unstressable syllables:

1) The schwa vowel;
2) The vowel coming at end of words such as very and happy;
3) The vowel in the medial syllable of instrument; and
4) All the syllabic consonants without the slightest exception (Cruttenden, 2014; Gimson, 1970; Roach, 2009).

C. Errors of ovegeneralisation: this is indeed the least common of all error types that learners made. This is fundamentally because over generelisation errors are prone to abound when learners have at their linguistic disposal many rules to which they refer for language production: the frequency of such errors may go noticeably down as mastery of some basic rules become lesser. After all, it must have been patently clear before now that the tested learners have not internalised half as adequate knowledge of English stress behaviour as they should have not least because they have had ample encounters with these rules. The presence of errors of unstressing is the most stressful thing for a concerned tutor because they will literally have to go back to the drawing board, as it were, and start teaching everything from scratch. Errors of wrong selection and of overgeneralisation are better appreciated because they denote that learning has already been set in motion and that some rudimentary grasp has taken place.

Now that we have looked in some brevity at the most recurrent error types, we will dwell upon recapitulating the most prevalent factors that are most closely linked to the emergence of these errors.

1 - Students' overdependence on grapho-phonemic relationships is apparently the most detrimental variable. This bears essentially on vocalic elements articulation because divergences between sounds and letters abound actually regarding the pronunciation of vowel sounds. Much to the dismay of these students, it is mostly vocalic elements which-when strong-impart salience to stressed syllables and-when weak-render syllables stressless. Their faulty reliance on spelling-pronunciation has triggered off their imparting undue prominence to both syllables making up a fairly large number of the stimulus words thereby falling into the error of complete unstressing. We ought to be reminded that for a stressed syllable to stand out, all the syllables with which it forms the words must undergo substantial weakening. This would entail that allocating identical amounts of breath energy and muscular effort to all of the syllables making up a word will necessarily deprive the stressed syllable of its rightful prominence and render the word utterly stress-free, which runs counter to English norms. So far, it is only fair to argue that such errors might have originated out of sheer ignorance of target language norms. This, however, does not preclude another potentially equally legitimate interpretation, i.e. learners might have acted as they did due to their dependence on already stored linguistic knowledge.

The linguistic habits which the learners have carried over with them from their exposure to both standard Arabic (their first academic language) and standard French (their second academic language) seems to have misled them into generating non-target like stress structures fundamentally because they wrongly applied the maxim of spelling-pronunciation.

2 - The easiest orthographic testimony about the almost 2 -exceptionless letter-sound concordances is that in most Arabic books on offer (except those tailored

specifically for primary school children or for foreign learners of the Semitic language) a great bulk of the Arabic vowel sounds have no spelling representations. Perhaps out of defective mastery of the new code, they just slipped into using old linguistic habits. Hence, if we were to wish to expunge such allegedly crosslinguistic-fuelled errors, we ought to make sure that our learners are adequately aware of the various trappings of the new language. Crosslinguistic influence gets only into inadequately trained learners, who have not procured sufficient assimilation of some of the defining characteristics of the foreign language. So, for us, old linguistic habits find their way into learners' performance-based linguistic principles only when one overarching condition is fulfilled, namely when learners are not cognizant of the specificities of the new code being learnt. It would, by implication, make pedagogical sufficient sense to argue that crosslinguistic influence is more of an outcome of partial learning than an actual generator of errors.

3 - The persistence of errors which appear to be put down to essentially mother tongue interference do send a profusion of didactically relevant signals all pointing in one unified direction: more needs to be done and newer approaches are called upon if learning were to be put on the right track. So, mother language transfer seems to be intimately intertwined with transfer of training as such. So, it is the training whether done and received at a classroom setting or beyond is the number one factor out of which most of the learning-fostering variables emerge and flourish or dwindle and fall into ruins.

Conclusion :

This error-analysis-based, diagnostic test into interlanguage prosody of a sample of advanced Algerian students' has contributed desperately needed, badly sought insightful outcomes by virtue of which we could ultimately reach a more fertile, more mature understanding of the idiosyncratic prosodic mechanisms at work. Although students exhibited varied instances of accentual pattern departures from the target norms, their performance is not utterly haphazard after all. The recurrent, unified types of errors made are one strong variable whereby systematicity of their linguistic aptitude could be measured. It is indeed fair and legitimate for us to call it a system in its own right since it abides by a number of persistently occurring patterns and these patterns are given rise to by a set of identifiably recognised conceptualisations and strategies regarding what is correct and what is otherwise. Coinage on the part of Corder in the late 1960s of idiosyncratic dialect and on the part of Selinker in the early 1970s of interlanguage was not done on shaky, arbitrary grounds. Our investigation has put aside any refuting arguments which may attempt to prove these labels fictitious. There are, after all, highly predictable sets of patterns that are invariably abided by and these are amongst the sure signs of the existence of a governing mental system at work. Of course, this system does not comply with the target norms. Nevertheless, the fact that the

underlying disruptive principles are known is a strong enough incentive to erect sets of remedial practices which may serve to set things right.

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