

LESSON NOTE ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE WEEK 3

SUBJECT: ENGLISH LANGUAGE
TOPIC: Word stress
CLASS: SS1
WEEK: 3

Introduction

A syllable can be defined as a minimum unit of a word higher than a sound segment which can be pronounced with a single breath. A syllable is usually a vowel. The English syllable has three parts. These parts are onset, peak and closure (coda). The initial consonant is the onset; the vowel is the peak while the final consonant is the closure or coda. Example 'make' /meik/ /m/ is the onset. /ei/ is the peak while /k/ is the coda.

It should be noted that no matter the number of syllables in a word, the vowel will always be the peak because it will always be the syllable to receive the most prominence. It is also possible for a word not to have an onset only a peak and a coda. E.g. ought /ɔ:t/, ease /i:z/. It is also possible for a word not to have a coda. E.g. car /kɑ:/, roar /rɔ:/.

Exercise 1

Identify those without an onset or a coda.

1. Fear
2. House
3. Sister
4. My
5. Greed
6. Star
7. Bench

What is stress?

Stress is the force with which the part of a word or sentence is articulated or pronounced. English words are divided into two broad groups: lexical and function words. Lexical words are words with dictionary definition, words like nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs while function words are words that can be explained by statements about the words are used in a sentence. These words include; articles, conjunctions and some pronouns.

Stress in English can be primary, secondary or tertiary. The primary stress can be indicated by placing the stress marker ['] on the syllable that receives the greater force while the secondary stress marker [,] is

placed behind the syllable that is next in order of prominence. The other syllables (s) are left unstressed indicating that they do not receive any prominence.

In word stress, the stress is usually not on the word as implied but on the syllable in the word. E.g. 'determination' -- determiNAtion the stress is on the syllable 'NA'

Mono-syllabic words

These are words that contain only one syllable and they are usually not stressed.

Examples: play, name. make, home, loath, spell, game, etc.

Disyllabic words

These are words that contain two syllables. Disyllabic words are stressed on the first syllable if they are nouns or adjectives and on the second syllable if they are verbs, adverbs or prepositions.

Examples

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------|
| 1. army | ARmy |
| 2. thirty | THIRty |
| 3. baby | BAby |
| 4. college | COLLege |
| 5. doctor | DOCTor |
| 6. father | FATher |
| 7. money | MOney |
| 8. digest(noun) | DIgest |
| 9. transport(noun) | TRANSport |