

Teaching and learning the pronunciation of the English back stress suffix 2 at secondary school.

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Abstract

This research work scrutinizes the pronunciation of English back stress suffix 2 in the teaching and learning process at secondary school. Data collection have been carried out through observation and questionnaires by Massala Mfoutou (2017), Koudissabaka (2018) and Kembissa (2019) in different pedagogical classes. It results that English back stress suffix items are mentioned in the official English syllabus. Actually, English suffixes are not used to teach pronunciation, but rather for word creation in English vocabulary lessons. Owing to explanatory method and 3Ps model, English back stress suffix 2 could be taught, learned and assessed with particular reference to the number of syllable which should be at least three (3) word syllables.

Keywords: *Teaching, learning, back stress suffix, word stress, pronunciation.*

Résumé

Ce travail de recherche examine la prononciation de l'accent anglais du suffixe postérieur 2 dans le processus d'enseignement et d'apprentissage au secondaire. La collecte de données a été réalisée par l'observation et des questionnaires des travaux de recherche de Massala Mfoutou (2017), Koudissabaka (2018) et Kembissa (2019) dans les différentes classes pédagogiques. Il en résulte que les items de l'accent anglais du suffixe postérieur sont mentionnés dans le programme officiel du cours de langue anglaise. En fait, les suffixes ne sont pas utilisés dans le cadre de l'enseignement de la prononciation, mais plutôt dans la création de mots anglais dans les leçons de vocabulaire. Grâce à la méthode explicative et au modèle d'enseignement de 3Ps, l'accent anglais du suffixe postérieur 2 pourrait être enseigné, appris et évalué avec une référence particulière au nombre de syllabes qui devrait être d'au moins trois (3) syllabes de mots.

Mots clés : *Enseignement, apprentissage, l'accent du suffixe postérieur, l'accent de mots, prononciation.*

INTRODUCTION

The teaching and learning of English in the Republic of Congo encompasses several items such as Grammar, Reading, Writing, and Pronunciation. The present research work is dedicated to the teaching and learning of pronunciation. It particularly aims to tackle back stress suffix 2 (antepenultimate) from Première 'A' class at secondary school. In fact, we want to determine the position of stress with words carrying the back suffix –ATE. Obviously, the English back stress suffix is mentioned in the English syllabus (2016:15) G.O.3: *Understanding writing messages*, S.O.3.6: *Using affixes*. As this dissertation deals with pronunciation items, the following objectives have been added to promote the teaching and learning process of oral activities: G.O.2: *Expressing oneself orally*, S.O.2.3: *Articulating language word stress*. As a matter of fact, it should be taught, learnt and assessed as other items of the English course at secondary school.

The stress position depends on many principles implying word category, number of syllable, word origin to quote just a few. Concerning back stress suffix 2 position, it could be argued that its position could depend on the number of word syllables. Elsewhere, since most secondary school teachers are not trained on pronunciation, they could not teach English back stress suffix 2. And then, because this language item is not taught in classes, the secondary school learners would experience in implementing English back stress suffix 2 in their productions. Three main reasons have urged our dissertation. In fact, the first is that the teaching of English back stress suffix would help learners improve their listening, speaking and loud reading skills during the English learning process at senior secondary school. Thanks to this implementation, learners would be able to converse among them in English by respecting the English prosody. The second reason is to avoid confusion between back stress suffix 1 (penultimate) and back stress suffix 2. As a matter of fact, learners should be able to distinguish back stress suffix 1 from back

stress suffix 2 stress placement. Finally, only few works deal with the teaching and learning of back stress suffix (Kembissa: 2019). Obviously, the motivation is to provide teachers with didactic suggestions on the teaching and learning process of back stress suffix in order to boost the secondary school learners' pronunciation awareness. These suggestions are explained through a teaching lesson plan based on 3Ps model in the domain of applied linguistics or didactics of English disciplines. Elsewhere, the review of the related literature, the contrast between back stress suffix 1 and back stress suffix 2 and the teaching of English back stress suffix 2 are the three main parts of this article.

I. The review of the related literature

The first part aims at scrutinizing the previous works related to the teaching and learning of English pronunciation items in general and English stress suffix in particular at secondary school. As a matter of fact, the research works of Peter Roach (1998), Massala Mfoutou (2017), Koudissabaka (2018) and Kembissa (2019) are our main focus in this dissertation.

Peter Roach aims at revealing some causes which always hinder foreign learners when facing some English pronunciation items. In fact, foreign learners get trouble on how to stress a word; they do not know exactly which syllable sounds louder or lower in a polysyllabic word. In this context, Roach (1998:88) writes: *"We now come to a question that causes a great deal of difficulty, particularly to foreign learners (who cannot simply dismiss it as an academic question): how can one select the correct syllable or syllables to stress in a English word? As is well known, English is not one of those languages where word stress can be decided simply in relation to the syllables of the word, as can be done in French"*. The analysis of this passage reveals that the author is concerned with the fact that foreign learners face difficulties in pronouncing English words. That is; learners find it a tricky exercise to solve. The main issue for them is to select the syllable that will be stressed or not in a word. Otherwise, Roach tries to show that the foreign learners attempt to improve their pronunciation but in vain because they should first be trained in classes by teachers who have the command on how sound and stress items are taught and assessed. Elsewhere, Peter Roach thinks that English is different from some languages which are eventually based on the fact that syllables are linked together in a word. This means that, it is thanks to the relation of syllables in a word that one syllable gets the privilege to be stressed. The following example (1) demonstrates that in French language, the majority of words are accentuated at the final syllable:

(1)

- a- opération, rédaction
- b- manger, finir,
- c- santé, beauté

The above example shows that in 1a, the grammatical category of these two words is 'noun' and they are accentuated at the final syllable because in French, the suffix "ion" is always sounded. When we consider 2b, the nature of the two words is 'verb' since the stress pattern falls on the infinitive part (er and ir). Thus, the stress is always at the end of these verbs. In 1c, the same reality as in (1-a) and (1-b) is attested. This means that the stress pattern gains final syllable position because in French the letter "é", in the final syllable covers the stress.

In contrast, words in English may be stressed either at the beginning, in the middle or at the end. Otherwise, the stress placement in English varies from one syllable to others according to the following aspects: Morphology, grammatical category, phonology and syllables number. In the same perspective, Roach (1998:88) mentions: *"In order to decide on stress placement, it is necessary to make use of some or all of the following informations: (I) whether the word is morphologically simple or whether it is complex as a result either of containing one or more affixes (that is, prefixes or suffixes) or of being a compound word. (II) The grammatical category to which the word belongs (nouns, verb, adjective, etc.). (III) The number of syllables in the word. (IV) The phonological structure of those syllables"*. Through the above passage, Peter Roach tries to enlighten that stress placement of a word in English does not occur at random. Indeed, the stress placement may happen on the morphology of a word, the structure of the word or how a word is formed. As a result, a word may be simple or complex. Talking about simple word, the author (1998:95) unveils that *"simple in this context means not composed of more than one grammatical unit"*. As a matter of fact, a simple word is a single unit which can be meaningful alone without the occurrence of an affix whereas, a complex word *"has got more than one units"*. Complex words are made of two groups; the first group is about the combination of an affix with the stem and the second one is about compound words. This latter is two or three meaningful words bound together as a unit when Roach stipulates: *"Compound words are made of two (or occasionally more) independent English words"* (p.95). In other words, compound words can be separated each other but always meaningful by themselves, and they do not need the presence of another word to create meanings. The following example (2) evidences:

(2)

- a- thank, king, give, belly
- b- joyful, establishment, indirectly

c- armchair, ice-cream, White House

Firstly, the three words in 2a are simple words because, they are made of a root without a suffix. It is necessary to mention that root may have more than one syllables. Secondly, in 2b, the selected words are complex. In fact, these three (3) words are made up of a root and an affix as follows: joy-ful, establish-ment, in-direct-ly. Finally, the example 2c deals with compound words. As a result, a compound word is the combination of two meaningful words gathered together for one meaning. They can be written in closed form (grandfather), hyphenated form (ice-cream) or opened form (White house). Next, Roach describes that the stress placement varies according to the grammatical category, that is, a word can be at the same time a noun, a verb or an adjective. Thus, the author (1998:100) mentions:

One aspect of word stress is best treated as a separate issue. There are several dozen pairs of two-syllable words with identical spelling which differ from each other in stress placement, apparently according to word class (noun, verb or adjective). All appear to consist of prefix stem. We shall treat them as a special type of word and give them the following rule: when a pair of prefix-plus-stem words exists, both members of which are spelt identically, one of which is a verb and the other is either a noun or an adjective, the stress will be placed on the second syllable of a verb but on the first syllable of the noun or adjective.

From this passage, Roach explains that there is a possibility to shift stress placement from one syllable to another one of the same word. That is to say, with the same word, we can move the stress from one syllable of that word to another syllable in order to enlighten the different categories of homograph words. The following example (3) illustrates:

(3)

- a- 'abstract, 'perfect, (A)
- b- 'abstract, 'perfect (N)
- c- ab'stract, per'fect (V)

To consider the above homographs, 3a, 3b and 3c examples have the same words with different stress placement. 3a is made of adjectives and 3b is a set of nouns. Therefore, they are stressed on the first syllable whereas, 3c constituted of verbs and stressed on the second syllable. In short, concerning homographs, when the stress pattern is on the first syllable, the category can be either an adjective or a noun. However, when the stress occurs on the second syllable, it is a verb. Besides, Roach has taken into account the number of syllables. In fact, by the number of syllables, he enlightens that 'stress placement' may change because of the number of syllable added. The example (4) below evidences this process:

(4)

- a- 'operate
- b- ope'ration

When the suffix 'ion' is added to the base 'operate' as in 10a to form 'operation' as in 10b, the stress placement changes. In 10a, the simple word is accentuated at the initial syllable whereas, in 10b, the complex word (base-suffix) is stressed at the first syllable when counting from the suffix letter to the root. Therefore, talking about different categories of suffixes and the use of stress placement on words containing suffixes, Roach (2018:96) suggests:

The primary stress is on the first syllable of the suffix. If the stem consists of more than one syllable there will be the secondary stress on one of the syllables of the stem. This cannot fall on the last syllable of the stem, and is, if necessary, moved to an earlier syllable. For example, in 'Japan' the primary stress is on the last syllable, but when we add the stress-carrying suffix 'ese' the primary stress is on the suffix and the secondary stress is placed not on the second syllable but on the first: Japa'nese

Evidently, Roach unveils that there are two kinds of stress; the primary stress is louder in a word whereas, the secondary one is not. He wants to explain that if the base has two syllables, the stress is either on the first or the second syllable, but when the suffix 'ese' is added, the stress moves to the syllable that bears the suffix 'ese' to illustrate the stress placement of auto stressed suffix as in "Japa'nese". Concerning the stress placement of unstressed suffix letters such as: *able*, *ful*, *ish* to quote only a few, they do not affect the stem as in: 'comfortable, 'anchorage, 'wonderful, 'devilish. That is, the base always keeps its stress placement accordingly. In this perspective, Roach (2018:98) thinks that:

When these affixes are attached to single-syllable stems, the stress is almost always placed on the stem. When the stem has two syllables the stress is sometimes on the first, sometimes on the second syllable of

the stem. To explain this we need to use a rule based on syllable-structure (...). If the final syllable of the stem contains a long vowel or a diphthong, or if it ends with more than one consonant, that syllable receives the stress.

Roach unveils that when these neutral affixes are attached to a base of one syllable, we stress that base. When the base is composed of two syllables, the stress is either at the first syllable or at the last one of the base according to the lightness and the loudness of the syllable. That means, the syllable must cover either a diphthong or a long vowel. Emphasizing on the relevance of teaching and learning English word stress, Roach aims at providing some available strategies that can clarify the study of word stress in order to help both teachers and learners be familiar with the contrast between stressed and unstressed syllable in a given word. Therefore, the author pinpoints that all stressed syllables are related to the notion of “prominence” when he (2009, 86) suggests: “*stressed syllables are recognized as stressed because they are more prominent than unstressed syllables*”.

Enlightening on the prominence of stressed syllables in English words, Roach suggests the following four different factors: louder, length, pitch and quality. The relevance of these factors is to equip teachers and learners with a basic knowledge on how to stress a syllable of a word. Firstly, a syllable is louder when the primary stress is marked by putting a raised vertical line ['] at the beginning of the syllable as in the words 'table, 'finger, 'teacher... Evidently, these words are made of two (2) syllables. They are stressed on the first syllable because it contains stronger sounds. Secondly, Roach talks about long vowel sounds when a spelling is considered as a unique vowel sound in monosyllabic words: (take, fire, stop, week...). These words are monosyllabic and all of them are stressed because they are made up of one vowel sound; either simple, diphthong or triphthong. Thirdly, Roach deals with the involvement of pitch in pronunciation when there is a perceivable notion of low and high pitched notes. This means that, when a syllable has high pitch, that syllable is perceived as stressed. Finally, Roach works on “quality”; a factor that makes one vowel sounds different from another in a stressed syllable through its strong form as in the words: (a'low, be'low, 'letter...) In fact, the vowel letters in the stressed syllables are stronger than those in the unstressed syllables because of their quality. That is, the quality of vowel letters “o, o and e” make these syllables audible.

Here, Roach has tried to provide some rules related to English sounds and word stress so as to help both teachers and learners implement them when teaching and learning English pronunciation. However, it is noticeable that Roach’s demonstration is more scientific for the secondary school learners when learning English as a foreign language. As a matter of fact, these linguistic or scientific knowledge need to be transposed in order to facilitate the teaching and learning of English back stress suffix items.

Massala Mfoutou deals with the pedagogical strategies for the teaching and learning of English disyllabic noun stress at secondary school. In fact, the purpose of this work is to help the secondary school learners be able to master the stress placement in English disyllabic nouns when he (2017:2) writes that: “*It is essential to learn English noun stress if we want Congolese learners speak English as accurately as possible. It is worth noting that, many cases of misunderstanding, confusion and changing of meaning are raised because secondary school learners do not use the correct noun stress placement*”. This passage shows the importance of learning English noun stress with learners of secondary school in the republic of Congo. They should master the stress position properly in a word to avoid confusion and misunderstanding when pronouncing in different classes at school. When words are mispronounced by the speaker, it will be misunderstood by the listener because it provides another meaning. In other words, when learners do not know the stressed syllable of a polysyllabic words, the meaning of that word may be affected in the listeners’ minds. This means that the message conveyed is not clear and understandable. Elsewhere, Congolese learners face difficulties to sound dissyllabic nouns. Thus, the author (2017:1) writes: “*Obviously, most Congolese secondary school learners experience difficulties in stressing English nouns appropriately. They constantly struggle when speaking and have difficulties to be understood while speaking in English*”. As a matter of fact, most Congolese secondary school learners are unable to accentuate English dissyllabic nouns, it is a trick notion for them to use. Also, the English language they speak is not understood by the listeners, because of the learners’ mispronunciation. Then, Massala also think that there are not many research works on teaching and learning of noun stress at high school. Indeed, he (2017:2) mentions: “*The second reason is that there are very few works on the teaching and learning of English noun stress at secondary school.*” Concerning Massala’s quotation, there are not many English lessons regarding dissyllabic noun stress. Indeed, teachers prefer teaching grammar, vocabulary and others but they do not really focus on pronunciation items. This is one of the main reason that incites Massala to select the teaching and learning of dissyllabic noun stress in order to help both secondary school teachers and learners develop their oral communicative competence when dealing with English language in different pedagogical classes.

Massala has used didactic process for the success of this dissertation when he (2017: 36-38) unveils:

“*The research methodology aims at highlighting the procedures, which helped us, collect the necessary information for the accomplishment of this research work among which we have observation, questionnaires and interviews*”. From this quotation, Massala lays emphasis on various techniques he has used for the collection of data related to the teaching and learning of dissyllabic noun stress at secondary school. In fact, he has conceived

questionnaires for both teachers and learners to make sure whether dissyllabic noun stress is implemented in schools. Talking about observation, Massala has attended and observed taught lessons at Chaminade high school to check if the selected topic is taught, learnt and assessed in classes. Elsewhere, the author has used the observation checklist to note adequate information so as to determine what is taught, learnt and assessed and what is not taken into account in classes. Finally, Massala has interviewed secondary school teachers about dissyllabic noun stress, he has collected their answers and the majority has confirmed that it is neither taught, learnt nor assessed and the whys this item is not taught.

Talking about the solutions, Massala proposes the teaching strategies and the learners' activities to facilitate both teachers and learners implement lesson of dissyllabic noun stress in classes. In this respect, Massala (2017: 59) mentions: *"Teaching and learning strategies refer to different methods or strategies used by both teachers and learners to carry out the teaching and learning process. These are different procedures teachers and learners adopt while dealing with the English dissyllabic noun stress such as pre-requisites checking, presentation, practice, production and evaluation"*. In fact, Massala has proposed the didactic process composed of stages namely pre-requisites checking, presentation, practice, production and evaluation. Elsewhere, he thinks that, the teacher should give a list of words containing verbs, adjectives, nouns and adverbs and asks learners to identify nouns having two syllables. Then, the teacher explains the term "dissyllabic noun" when teaching the English word stress at secondary school. In addition, Massala believes that the teacher should provide some conditions and examples justifying the selected topic so that learners can understand the day's lesson when he (2017: 60) unveils: *"When a dissyllabic noun is not derived from a verb, the stress is put on the first syllable as in 'adult, 'money... When a dissyllabic noun is derived from a verb, the stress falls on the part that bears the verb meaning as in mis'take, un'stress... When a dissyllabic noun is derived from a verb and ends with the suffix letters "ee", the stress falls on the last syllable as in pa'yee, trus'tee..."* As a matter of fact, Massala has provided three conditions in order to justify the stress placement of dissyllabic words. In fact, the first condition reveals that the stress is on the first syllable if that noun of two syllables does not derive from a verb. The second condition shows that a dissyllabic noun covers stress pattern on the verb part if that noun comes from a verb. Finally, the author thinks that when a dissyllabic noun is generated from a verb ending in "ee", the final syllable receives the stress. In contrast, this work has not tackled the back stress suffix items based on back stress suffix 2 which is the main problem to solve in this paper.

Koudissabaka is interested in the teaching-learning of English suffix stress. In fact, the purpose of this research work is to study the difficulties that prevent both teachers and learners deal with auto stressed suffix at secondary school. Koudissabaka tries to demonstrate that suffix stress is mentioned in the official syllabus. Next, the author mentions that suffix stress is part of English pronunciation which is considered as one of the sub-disciplines of the course of English language. Though, it is mentioned in this syllabus, Koudissabaka tries to show that pronunciation is not taken into account when he (2018:6) writes: *"It is therefore not uncommon to find that the course of English pronunciation, which is the basis of its oral expression, is hardly taught at all levels of secondary school. It is the same for all of these components as is the case of the accent of the suffixes"*. This quotation reveals firstly the relevance of teaching and learning pronunciation items in order to raise the learners' abilities in speaking the target language. Since English is a language, its first function is to be spoken before the writing activities. In addition to that, this passage evidences that the teaching of pronunciation items are neglected by teachers of English at secondary school. Analysing the course of English pronunciation, Koudissabaka notices that a bunch of items are not taught and then, he selects to work on English affix stress based on auto stressed suffix in order to help both teachers and learners face this item in classes.

The author has collected the appropriate data about this issue; through pre-investigation and investigation methods. In pre-investigation, the author aims at analysing some pedagogical documents such as: the English syllabus, the inspectors' term planning, the teachers' lesson plans and the learners' previous lessons. It is important to underline that the English syllabus is the gathering of English language items that teachers must cope with in order to train learners in classes in general whereas, inspectors' term planning is set of English teaching items devoted to the first, the second and the third terms in particular. Elsewhere, the teachers' lesson plans refer to the previous lessons that teachers have produced in the teaching card accordingly while, the learners' previous lessons are the learnt lessons that the secondary school learners have copied down in their copybooks. They evidence if the target teaching items have been taught or not. In fact, Koudissabaka unveils that the teaching and learning of English suffix stress items are not taught when he (2018: 74) writes: *"During our pre-investigation, the verification of the learners' copybooks did not present any element on the teaching of the course on the accent of affixes. The same was true when consulting the English teachers' educational sheets. It should be said that the course of the accent of affixes is not taught in the classes of Seconde A, of Nganga Edouard High school. This evidenced by the total absence of this teaching in the various consulted documents"*. In this quotation, Koudissabaka mentions that during that period of pre-investigation, some copybooks have been collected from learners and teaching cards from teachers in order to check whether the English suffix stress items are implemented in schools. However, it has been evidenced that the teaching and learning of English suffix stress are not taken into account in classes of

seconde “A” at NGANGA Edouard. Next, the author has used investigation methods such as: questionnaires and observation. In fact, the author has used questionnaires addressed to teachers and learners. Talking about the questionnaire addressed to teachers, Koudissabaka has formulated some questions related to the teachers’ experience and other aspects concerning teaching of English suffix stress, when he (2018:72) asserts:

As for the teachers’ questionnaire, our questions were summarized on their experience in the matter, their conceptions on the question and what constitutes obstacles in teaching-learning the learners’ questionnaire essentially focused on their experience of English as a second language, the teaching-learning activities, the difficulties they experience in learning the accent of affixes.

Obviously, the author has put interrogations to know how long the selected teachers of English have been teaching English, their opinions about the teaching of English suffix stress and some obstacles they meet when teaching this notion. In other words, the author deals with the difficulties teachers of English encounter when teaching this English language items in classes. Likewise, Koudissabaka has been interested to ask the same questions to the secondary school learners in order to obtain the appropriate information about the learning of English auto stressed suffix when he (2018:72) unveils that *“the questionnaire addressed to the secondary school learners has essentially focused on their English learning experience, the learning activities, and the difficulties encountered when learning English suffix stress items in different pedagogical classes”*. In fact, Koudissabaka wants to know the number of the selected years learners have been learning the course of English language, the kinds of activities and language items they have dealt during the learning process. In addition to that, Koudissabaka is interested in the difficulties that learners encounter during the learning of English suffix stress as well as its importance in oral production. Therefore, the analysis of the above research instruments shows that the secondary school teachers and learners are victims of some hindrances that hamper the teaching-learning of English affix stress when Koudissabaka (2018:9) mentions: *“In fact, in teaching and learning English suffix stress, these teachers lack the appropriate strategies and methods. They wonder about the content they can include when teaching the selected items in classes”*. Obviously, the author evidences the problems that teachers of English face when teaching the different English language items in classes. In fact, these problems are related to the lack of teaching strategies, methods, procedures and the precision about the lesson plan or the elaboration of the teaching card. Consequently, teachers of English do not know when and how to train the secondary school learners about the selected item.

Elsewhere, Koudissabaka thinks that inspectors and lectures practices do not encourage and provide teachers or prospective teachers of English with the appropriate knowledge of English phonology which should be transposed into the teaching, learning and testing strategies. Thus, the secondary school learners are incapable of pronouncing English words effectively. Indeed, Koudissabaka (2018:10) underlines the whys teachers of English do not care about the teaching of English pronunciation of words and sentences. Therefore, the mispronunciation of English auto stressed suffixes remains a permanent blockage by learners when speaking English in classes or out of the school environment. In addition to that, the pronunciation items are not taken into account in testing items because they have not been trained to teach language items of English pronunciation at secondary school. In fact, the lack of teachers’ training on how to teach English suffix stress is really one of the main factors that hampers the secondary school teachers to take into account the stress items when teaching English lessons in classes. In connection to this image, Koudissabaka (2018:104) enlightens that teachers are limited at the level of morphology or structure when forming new words with affixes, but at pronunciation level, they are not skilled to train learners face the pronunciation of these words. Otherwise, Even though those notions are seen in classes, but teachers do not exactly know how to teach their pronunciations.

Thus, to help teachers and learners deal with English affixes stress, Koudissabaka has developed some strategies that facilitate the teaching and learning of English affixes stress. Some practical exercises and a sample of the teaching card have been suggested when Koudissabaka (2018:8) writes: *“This work analyses the causes in order to suggest the appropriate solutions. Therefore, these solutions would be centered on the teaching strategies and the elaboration of lesson plans in order to help both teachers and learners implement this English language issue in classes”*. Here, the author thinks that the didactic process is the best means that every teacher should apply when teaching English affix stress. As a matter of fact, when teaching, teachers should have their teaching cards which include: teaching strategies, learning activities and testing items. The goal is to help both teachers and learners face this item of English pronunciation in classes at secondary school. Otherwise, Koudissabaka has insisted on the fact that suffix stress is normally requested to be taught, learnt and assessed since the selected item is included in INRAP syllabus. Finally, Koudissabaka’s work is limited on the teaching of English auto stressed suffix whereas, the English back suffix stress is the main issue in this dissertation. In fact, Koudissabaka did not focus on category and the number of syllable to specify his research work. The lack of selecting the number of syllables may influence the pronunciation of a word and learners may get lost. So, when teaching English suffix stress, long words are boring. They do not permit learners to understand how they exactly work.

Kembissa provides the pedagogical strategies for teaching and learning English back suffix stress in the class of seconde at high school. In fact, this work puts emphasis on the teaching of back suffix stress¹ or penultimate which is different from back suffix stress 2 or antepenultimate. Since these English pronunciation items are mentioned in INRAP syllabus, Kembissa (2019:1) enlightens that: *“it is important to mention that the English back stress suffix is included in the English syllabus of INRAP and requested to be taught and learnt in the class of Seconde at High school.”* In fact, Kembissa has chosen to write on English suffix stress because this notion is mentioned in the INRAP syllabus. As a matter of fact, it should be taught and learnt like other items at secondary school. Therefore, Kembissa has written that the teaching of English back suffix stress might develop the learners’ speaking, listening and reading skills when he (2019:1) argues that:

This investigation shows that the teaching of English back stress suffix would help learners improve and develop their listening, speaking and loud reading skills during the English learning process at secondary school through the intense practice on series of exercises provided, learners would be able to communicate by taking into account the English prosody.

As a matter of fact, Kembissa mentions that the teaching of English back suffix stress at secondary school could boost the secondary school learners’ skills such as: speaking, listening and reading. The author thinks that these skills are possible to be developed when the learning of English pronunciation items are implemented in classes. To master these three skills, Kembissa requires teachers of English to give explanations and series of exercises that learners should practice in classes. In other words, the teaching of English back suffix stress stands to help learners pronounce individual or connected words intelligibly in English. Basing on the fact that back suffix stress¹ or penultimate needs to be taught as an autonomous lesson of English pronunciation, Kembissa (2019:1) argues that: *“the English back stress suffix can be taught, learnt and evaluated as other issues of the English course at secondary school”*. In this passage, he wants to demonstrate that nothing should be neglected in the English syllabus. In fact, all notions are important to the extent that they contribute to the improvement of the target language.

Therefore, the notion of back suffix stress is as equal as other English courses mentioned in the English syllabus that must be taught, learnt and assessed in classes. Talking about the research methodology of this work, Kembissa (2019:22) underlines that: *“The purpose of this section is to provide questionnaires both for teachers and learners so as to investigate on the different hindrances related to the teaching and learning of English back stress suffix at secondary school”* Obviously, Kembissa tackles questionnaires so as to collect information related to the problems that block the teaching and learning of English back suffix stress at secondary school. These questionnaires are addressed to both teachers and learners. In fact, the teachers’ questionnaire deals with the teachers’ background information, their work experience and their capacity to teach and assess the notion of back suffix stress¹ in the second class. The learners’ questionnaire is concerned with the duration of learning English, the lack of motivation and learning activities of English back stress in the selected class

Emphasizing on interview, Kembissa (2019:22) asks some questions to collect the teachers’ opinions about the English back stress suffix in the INRAP syllabus:

To collect more information, we have also used interviews for teachers. In fact, the use of these interviews aims at collecting the teachers’ opinions about the teaching of English back stress suffix which is well-written in the English syllabus and requested to be taught from 6ème to terminal. Therefore, we have asked three (03) questions linked to the teachers training background, the importance of teaching English back stress suffix, and the use of a teaching card when teaching English pronunciation in classes.

As a matter of fact, Kembissa has collected information from teachers about the English back stress suffix by asking three questions. The first question deals with the teacher training background; a set of knowledge that a teacher possesses. The second question is related to the importance of teaching English back suffix stress and the last one refers to the use of a teaching card about the selected pronunciation item in classes. Talking about the different factors that block the learners’ intelligible pronunciation in English language, Kembissa (2019:13) writes: *“The main problem that hampers learners to learn pronunciation is the influence of French on the learners’ production while communicating in English”*. From this passage, Kembissa mentions that the issue which prevents secondary school learners to pronounce well English words or sentences is French. That is, learners are accustomed to French pronunciation when speaking in their day life experiences. Since the secondary school learners have been trained to learn and to communicate in French from the class of CP1 at primary school, French becomes their blockage in English language. It hampers them to speak English intelligibly in classes.

Kembissa has also noticed that the major problem concerning the teaching-learning of back suffix stress¹ is that most English teachers are not trained as full teachers of English pronunciation in general and back suffix stress in

particular. Thus, Kembissa (2019:27) mentions: “the majority of teachers have not been trained on the teaching of English back stress suffix during their training periods as teachers at Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS) or Faculté des Lettres, Arts et Sciences Humaines (FLASH).” Obviously, the above passage unveils the problem that hampers the teaching-learning of back stress suffix at secondary school. In fact, Kembissa has found that teachers coming from ENS and FLASH have not been trained on how to teach English during their training period at University. As a result, the majority of teachers agree that English back stress suffix cannot be taught as an autonomous lesson which needs a specific lesson plan. In the same perspective, Kembissa (2019:40) asserts:

As a matter of fact, most of them affirm that the use of a teaching card when teaching English back stress suffix in the class of seconde is not necessary. For them, teaching English back stress suffix must not be considered as a course which needs to be taught with its own teaching card. But, this language item is included in the lessons of grammar or vocabulary.

This quotation evidences the non-teaching process of English back stress as a full lesson like other lessons of English language. Otherwise, English back stress suffix should be taught in grammar or vocabulary lessons. That means, when teaching English in classes, teachers should insert items of pronunciation in grammar or vocabulary lessons in order to facilitate the learners’ pronunciation of words or sentences. Thirdly, Kembissa’s suggestion aims at providing the pedagogical strategies for the teaching and learning of English back stress suffix¹ in English when he (2019:42) writes: “This chapter purposes to provide the practical suggestions that can help both teachers and learners deal with the English back stress suffix in the class of Seconde at Reconciliation high school”. In fact, the term “practical suggestions” refers to the teaching strategies, learning activities and a sample of a teaching card. In other words, it is a didactic process that every teacher should follow to help themselves and learners as well to face the teaching and learning of English back stress suffix¹ (penultimate) at secondary school. However, Kembissa also did not take into account some aspects related to the number of syllables and the word categories in order to clarify the teaching of the English back stress suffix. When talking about word category, we refer to verb, noun, adjective and adverb to quote only a few. Therefore, this dissertation is focused on the teaching of English back stress suffix². Indeed, when stressing English back stress suffix² words, the stress pattern falls on the third syllable from the end to the beginning. In addition to that, the above word categories, this research work deals with the verb category based on verbs of three syllables.

II. Contrast between back stress suffix 1 and back stress suffix 2

The main objective of this second part is to deal with the similarities and dissimilarities between the English back stress suffix 1 and back stress suffix 2 in teaching and learning process at secondary school. In English phonetics and phonology, the concept “back stress suffix” refers to the teaching-learning of English stress based upon the suffix of a word. When talking about back stress suffix, syllables are counted from the end (suffix letter) to the beginning of the word. In other words, back stress concerns the stress placement starting from the suffix to the lexical part of the word. As a result, there are two types of back stress suffix which are: back stress suffix¹ or pre-stress¹ (penultimate) and back stress suffix² or pre-stress² (antepenultimate).

English back stress suffix 1 is the syllable that comes immediately after the suffix from the end to the beginning of the selected word. The bold letters illustrate the stressed syllables of the following words in English back stress suffix 1 whereas, the underlined evidence its different suffix letters: operation, conclusion, technician, mathematics, scientific, format, reflate, gestate, predate, sufficient, cautious, fantastic, classify, terrify, solidify, visual, individual, usual, parameter, thermometer, financial, essential. However, back stress suffix² is when we refer to the second syllable from the end, or the third syllable of a word counting from the end to the beginning of the word. However, **English back stress suffix 2** is sounded among a series of syllables in a word. The following sample of words illustrate the stress placement in bold and the underlined suffix letters of back stress suffix²: criticize, recognize, computerize, secretary, necessary, vocabulary, dangerous, spontaneous, integrate, affectionate, congratulate, fabricate, demonstrate, and contemplate.

Thus, Kembissa (2014:) mentions: “The English back stress suffix can be taught, learnt and evaluated as other issues of the English course at secondary school” Indeed, Kembissa unveils that back stress suffix is part of English items that are proposed by the syllable to be taught, learnt and assessed at secondary school. As a matter of fact, the secondary school teachers are requested to teach back stress suffix in different classes like grammar, reading comprehension, language function when Ondze Otouba and Ndongo Ibara (2022:139) unveil that: “The English back stress encompasses two stress categories: back stress suffix 1 and back stress suffix 2. The back stress suffix 1 covers stress assignment on one syllable before the suffix whereas, the back stress suffix 2 is about two syllables before the suffix”. In fact, the authors think that the term back stress covers two items; the first item is back stress suffix 1 (penultimate) and back stress suffix 2 (antepenultimate). Indeed, they write that back stress suffix 1 receives the stress pattern on the syllable preceding the suffix. This means that back stress suffixes 1 requires the stress to be set on the first syllable of the root after the suffix whereas, back stress suffix 2 has not the

same stress placement from back stress suffix 1. As a matter of fact, when we talk about back stress suffix 2 we refer to the second syllable or the third syllable from the end (suffix). Insisting on stress assignment about the English back stress suffix, Kembissa (2014:1) writes: “We should remember that stress assignment goes from the end of the word to its beginning, that is, from right to left. The back stress suffix1 covers stress assignment on one syllable after the suffix whereas, the back stress suffix2 is about two syllables after the suffix”. For Kembissa, when counting the syllable of a word the process goes from the end of that complex word to the beginning. Afterwards, Kembissa has recognized that there are two kinds of back stress suffix which are: back stress1 and back stress2.

Concerning back stress 1, we stress the syllable that comes after the suffix, whereas the stress pattern in back stress suffix 2 is on the syllable after back stress suffix 1 (penultimate) or two syllables after the suffix. Therefore, Davenport and Hannahs (2005:83) believe that: “The noun-forming suffix ‘-ity’ behaves like ‘-ic’ in attracting stress to the immediately preceding syllable as in ‘personal’ but ‘personality’, and ‘-ation’ always takes main stress on the first syllable of the suffix. So ‘consider’ but ‘consideration’. Suffixes such as: ‘-ic’, ‘-ity’, and ‘-tion’ are known as stress-shifting suffixes”. Obviously, Davenport and Hannahs lay emphasis on back stress suffix 1 by saying that every noun having the suffix –ity and –ic take the stress assignment on the syllable that is close to the suffix. They think that the occurrence of those suffixes in a word changes the stress placement, it impacts the stress placement of the root. According to them, ‘-tion’ is also taken as a back stress suffix 1 of two syllables, and this suffix is pronounced on the first syllable as in “situation”. Likewise, Philip Carr (2013:26) writes: “stress-shifting suffixes which do not themselves take primary stress are -ity and -ic. In each case, the primary stress falls on the syllable immediately preceding the stress-shifting suffix.” Here, Philip joins Mike and Hannahs’ thought mention almost the same suffix letters that influence the original stress in a word. In other words, once those suffix occurring in a word or being attached to the stem, they automatically change the stress placement of the root.

As a matter of fact, this contrast is possible thanks to the use of Explanatory method. Obviously, Explanatory method helps draw the similarities and dissimilarities between the two phonological terms namely back stress suffix 1 and back stress suffix 2. In fact, this method has been used for the first time by Ndongo Ibara when teaching the course of phonetics and phonology at ENS. In this connection, Ndongo Ibara (2016:413) writes: “In this connection, phonetic course on English sound patterns and prosody should be taught the same way grammar notions are taught to students. These courses make students aware of English language peculiarities regarding its sounds, stress, intonation, and grammar”. Evidently, Ndongo Ibara considers that, it is important to provide the teaching guidance and learning activities so that the course of pronunciation must be taught, learnt and assessed like other items of the English language.

Elsewhere, this method consists at preparing prospective teachers of English to face the language items related to pronunciation aspects in general and back stress suffix 2 in particular. Therefore, Ondze Otouba and Ndongo Ibara (2022:139) argue: “It appears that English back stress suffix can be taught, learnt and assessed as other English courses at secondary school. In fact, back stress is twofold namely back stress suffix 1 and back stress suffix 2”. From this quotation, the two authors show that English back stress suffix is a notion as other notions that deserve the teaching, the learning and the assessment. That is, teachers of secondary school must do their best to take in consideration the teaching of back stress suffix at school. Also they reveal that back stress suffix is twofold. That is, there are two notions included in the term back stress suffix: back stress suffix 1 and back stress suffix 2.

Concerning the similarities, there are some identical elements that directly link the two notions. As a matter of fact, the grammatical elements that help both teachers and learners to show the similarities between back stress suffix 1 and back stress suffix 2 are related to “syllable order”, “stressed syllable location”, and “word category”. The first aspect that makes them common is “syllable order”. When talking about the term “syllable order”, we refer to the fact of counting syllables. That is, in back stress suffix 1 and back stress suffix 2, syllables are counted from the end to the beginning. Thus, the example (5) below mentions:

(5)

- a- technician
b- dangerous

The above words contain back stress suffix 1 and back stress suffix 2. In fact, in (5a) and (5b), syllables are counted in the same way; that is, from the underlined suffix letters to initial letter of the selected roots. The second element that makes them similar is the “stressed syllable location”. In fact, this term refers to the position of the stressed syllable in a word made of a “root” and a “suffix spellings” related to back stress. This position always happens after the syllable that covers the suffix letters; both in back stress suffix 1 and in back stress suffix 2. As a result, the following example (6) asserts:

(6)

- a- financial
b- criticize

The above example illustrates that (6a) and (6b) are composed of a root and a suffix. The stressed syllable is located after the syllable that bears the suffix letters; either the first or the second syllable. Finally, what makes back stress suffix 1 and back stress suffix 2 similar is *Morphology*. That is, once the suffix is attached to the stem, there is a formation of a new word and this creation is governed by morphological rules based on ‘word category’. As a matter of fact, the suffix bound to the root can give either a noun, a verb or an adjective. The following example (7) evidences:

(7)

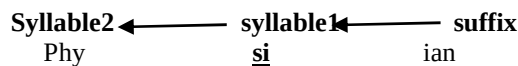
- a- Moderate, graduate, separate, traffic (v)
- b- moderate, graduate, emetic, traffic (N)
- c- moderate, graduate, separate, emetic (A)

Evidently, when considering (7a) these words with the same suffix letters “ate” and “ic” belong to “verb category”. In (7b), the same suffixes bound to these roots are “noun category”. In (7c), the identical suffixes being together with a given group of stem illustrate the “adjective category”. So, the suffixes ‘ic’ and ‘ate’ attached to these different stems make them have more than one category.

Talking about the dissimilarities between back stress suffix 1 and back stress suffix 2, the possible linguistic features are: stress placement, the syllable number with the letters “-ate” and the suffix category. Foremost, ‘stress placement’ refers to the position the stress occurs in words belonging to back stress suffix 1 and back stress suffix 2.

The “back stress suffix 1” consists in stressing the syllable immediately after the suffix as in (8).

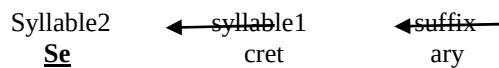
(8)



In fact, the word “physician” in the above illustration covers three parts or syllables: The first is the suffix (ian), the second is (si) and the third (phy). Obviously, the selected word is stressed on the syllable 1 (si) counting from the suffix because back stress suffix 1 is heavy. Indeed, a suffix is heavy when it contains a long vowel or a diphthong. To consider the above word “physician”, it receives stress pattern on back stress suffix 1.

The “back stress suffix 2” refers to the second syllable from the suffix. In other words, the back stress suffix 2 deals with the stress of the syllable that comes after back stress suffix 1 as in (9).

(9)



The analysis of the above example shows that the word “secretary” has three syllables on which the back stress suffix 2 syllable covers the stress assignment. In fact, if back stress 1 is light, the stress assignment shifts to back stress suffix 2 as demonstrated in the word “secretary”

Secondly, the number of syllables with the suffix letters “ate” draws the dichotomy. To explain, back stress suffix 1 and back stress suffix 2 do not have the same syllable number with the suffix (-ate) as in (10).

(10)

- a- reflate, primate, probate
- b- educate, navigate, elevate

The results derived from the example (10a) evidence that words are composed of two syllables and the letters “ate” are *fake suffix* because the stress placement of these words is located on the second syllable where these letters appear. However, in (10b) words are made of three syllables and the letters “ate” are *true suffix* in back stress because the syllable that covers these letters is not stressed. Finally, the dissimilarity between back stress suffix 1 and back stress suffix 2 is attested from the “suffix categories”. This means that the two language items of back stress do not have the same suffix letters. As a matter of fact, the letters “ian, ion, ic, ial, ify, ual, meter, ial, ity, logy, graphy” work with back stress 1 as suffix whereas, “ary, ous, ize, ate, al” belong to back stress suffix 2 in a polysyllabic word of more than two syllables as in (11) below.

(11)

- a- ki'lometer, per'sonify
- b- a'pologize, 'dangerous

Obviously, the underlined letters in the example (11) confirm that they are back stress suffix letters because the selected words have at least three syllables and these letters are not part of the stressed syllable. In (11a), “ify” and “meter” are suffixes for back stress suffix 1 because the two spellings influence the created words to be stressed

at the first syllable after the suffix syllable. But, in (11b) the spelling “ous” belongs to back stress suffix 2 because words made of these letters are stressed at the second syllable.

III. Teaching and learning English back suffix stress 2

The purpose of this third part is to demonstrate the effective techniques available for the teaching and learning of back stress suffix 2 from the teaching method of the 3Ps and the explanatory method. In clear, the two methods are strengthened by Pre-requisites, Presentation, Practice, and Production stages.

Prerequisites: This stage aims at making learners aware of some pronunciation knowledge about the teaching and learning of English stress suffix in general and back stress suffix in particular. For the best understanding of the selected topic, the teacher proceeds by asking learners series of questions focused on the different types of English stress suffix (Auto stress suffix, Back stress suffix and Neutral stress suffix), the different components of English back stress suffix (Back stress suffix 1 and Back stress suffix 2), the different suffix letters belonging to back stress suffix 2 (ate, ous, ary, ize...), the teacher selects the suffix letter “ate” and then s/he announces the day’s lesson: Back stress suffix 2 based on “ate”.

Presentation: This stage has the purpose to draw learners’ intention to follow carefully the selected item by the teacher. Obviously, the first duty for the teacher is to furnish learners with illustrations and explanations justifying the teaching and learning of the English back stress suffix 2 in the class of Première. As a matter of fact, English back stress suffix 2 (words) are stressed at the second syllable after the suffix letter “ate” when the first syllable contains an audible vowel sound in trisyllabic words (impregnate, explicate, animate...) whereas, when letters “ate” are part of the second syllable of a dissyllabic verb, the stress is located at that syllable.

Practice: The main purpose of this stage deals with the speaking skill. In fact, the task of this stage is to strengthen the learners’ comprehension on the selected item so as to make them practice by using adequate examples. Therefore, in this research work, the teacher asks learners to repeat the selected words written on the board and requests them to provide their own words orally.

Production: The function of the current stage is based on the reading and writing skills. As a matter of fact, the teacher asks learners to write their own English back stress suffix words on the board and requires learners to pronounce them accordingly before evaluating them about the taught lesson.

CONCLUSION

This research work has dealt with the didactical strategies for the teaching and learning of English back stress aspects at secondary school. The objective of this work has been to promote the English back stress suffix 2 for the sake of urging both teachers and learners being able to stress English back stress suffix words composed of three syllables at least. As a matter of fact, back stress suffix 2 consists in putting the stress pattern on the second syllable going from the suffix to the beginning of a word. Therefore, some previous works concerning the teaching and learning of English suffix stress items have been scrutinized. The selected research works are twofold. The first group dealt with the scientific and linguistic items based on rules of pronunciation notions by Peter (Roach:1998) whereas, the second group has provided the pedagogical information of the pronunciation items didactically transposed through the following procedures: teaching strategies, learning activities and a sample of a lesson plan by Koudissabaka (2018), Kembissa(2019) and Ulrich Massala Mfoutou (2017). Actually, these works aims at providing teachers with the pedagogical notions to transpose the tricky items related to sounds and stress teaching at secondary schools. But, they did not tackle with the teaching and learning of English back stress suffix 2. So, this paper provides efficient solutions that could motivate both teachers and learners in different pedagogical classes at secondary school. In fact, these teaching strategies, learning activities and the sample of a teaching card on back stress suffix 2 are possible thanks to the explanatory method and the teaching model of 3Ps..

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S.O.2.3: Articulating language word stress

Master II EA

Performance objective	Teaching strategies	Learning activities	Evaluation	Time	Obs
P.O. By the end of the lesson, learners should be able to stress English back stress suffix words correctly thanks to the teacher's explanations.	I-Beginning 1. Warming up -Greetings -Date writing -Attendance checking 2. Pre-requisites The teacher asks learners to provide the different types of English stress suffix.	Good morning Sir Fine thanks Today is Friday, October 14 th 2022 No one is missing Answer Learners provide the different types of English stress suffix: -Auto stress suffix -Back stress suffix -Neutral stress suffix	Good morning class How are you? What's the date today? Is someone missing? Task 1: Provide the different types of English stress suffix	5 min	
	The teacher selects back stress suffix and asks learners to provide its different components	Answer Learners provide the different components of English back stress suffix: -Back stress suffix 1 (penultimate) -Back stress suffix 2 (antepenultimate)	Task 2: give the different components of English stress suffix	10 min	

	The teacher chooses back stress suffix 2 and requests learners to give its different suffix letters. The teacher selects the suffix letter “ate” and announces the day’s lesson. Day’s lesson: <i>Back stress suffix 2 based on the suffix letter “ate”.</i> Presentation The teacher recalls that the stress placement goes from the end of the word to its beginning because the suffix is the key to determine the stress position. A- Illustrations 1- 'F<u>ragmentate</u> 2- 'C<u>ommentate</u> 3- 'F<u>ractionate</u> B- Explanations When a word containing the suffix letter “ate” is composed of three syllables at least, the second syllable following the suffix “ate” takes the stress. Practice The teacher asks learners to repeat the selected words written on the board and asks them to provide their own words orally.	Answer Learners give the different suffix letters of English back stress suffix 2: ate, ize, ary, ous, al. Learners follow attentively the teacher’s illustrations and explanations about the learning of the English back stress suffix 2 based on “ate” Answer Learners repeat the words on the board and give their own words	Task 3: Give the different suffix letters of English back stress suffix 2. Task 4: Repeat the selected words written on the board and provide your own words orally.	15mi 10min 10min 10min	
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	Production The teacher asks learners to write their own words on the board and pronounce them accordingly. The teacher authorizes learners to copy down the lesson in their copybooks Evaluation The teacher requests learners to say if the following words are well stressed.	Answer Learners read their own words written on the board. 1- consummate, integrate, stipulate Learners copy down the lesson in their copybooks Answer 1- T 2- F 3- F 4- T 5- T	Task 5: Write your own words on the board and pronounce them accordingly. Task 6: copy down the lesson in your copybooks Task 7: Say true or false if these three syllable words are well stressed. 1- 'moderate 2- obli'gate 3- per'colate 4- 'modulate 5- 'navigate		
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