

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter will present some theories which are related to the material that the writer is going to apply to do this research on the following chapter. It concerns about interlanguage, language transfer, contrastive analysis, interference, phonological interference and stress. It will be discussed more clearly from many references.

A. INTERLANGUAGE

Interlanguage refers to the systematic knowledge of an L2 that is independent of both the target language and the learner's L1. The term 'interlanguage' was coined by the American Linguist, Larry Selinker, in recognition of the fact that L2 learners construct a linguistic system that draws, in part, on the learner's L1 but is also different from it and also from the target language.¹⁰

The concept of interlanguage involves the following premises about L2 acquisition:¹¹

1. The learner constructs a system of abstract linguistic rules which underlines comprehension and production of the L2. This system of rules is viewed as a 'mental grammar' and is referred to as an 'interlanguage'.

¹⁰ Rod Ellis, *Second Language Acquisition* (New York : Oxford University Press, 2008) p 35.

¹¹ Ibid.,

2. The learner's grammar is permeable. That is, the grammar is open to influence from the outside. It is also influence from inside.
3. The learner's grammar is transitional. Learners change their grammar from one time to another by adding rule, deleting rule, and restructuring the whole system. For example, learner may begin with a very simple grammar where only one form of the verb is represented (for example, 'pain'), but over the time they add other forms (for example, 'painting' and 'painted'), gradually sorting out the functions that these verbs can be perform.
4. Some researchers have claimed that the systems learners construct contain variable rule. That is, they argue that learners are likely to have comparing rules at any one stage of development.
5. Learners employ various learning strategy to develop their interlanguage. The different kinds of errors learners produce reflect different learning strategy.
6. The learner's grammar is likely to fossilize. Selinker suggested that only about five per cent of learners go on to develop the same mental grammar as native speakers. Fossilization does not occur in L1 acquisition and thus is unique to L2 grammar.

B. LANGUAGE TRANSTER

L1 transfer refers to the influence that the learner's L1 exert over the acquisition of an L2 or target language.¹² Native language absolutely, they

¹² Ellis., *Second Language.*, p 5.

have good acquisition in their first or native language, therefore their acquisition in their native will automatically influence when they try to acquire foreign language or in this case second language. More or less they will bring their language system into their target language they learn.

Behaviorist psychologist, who first defined “transfer” technically, used it to refer to process described as the automatic, uncontrolled and subconscious use of past learned behaviors in the attempt to produce new responses.¹³

The automatic, uncontrolled and subconscious means that transfer often occur in that situation because when the foreign learner wants to produce utterance or a word, they will still carry out their behavior in their native language. It is natural for the foreign learner undergoing such thing because behaviorism theory comes to this case.

Another definition of transfer is stated by Odlin (1989) offers this “working definition” of transfer as a basis for his own thoughtful treatment of such phenomena:

Transfer is the influence resulting from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired (1989: 27).¹⁴

Hence, according to Odlin that transfer is not only from the difference of language system or structure but also it can be from the similarities of the language system. Transfer viewed in this way, of course, far removed from the original use of term in behaviorist theorist of language learning. This

¹³ Heidi Dulay, et.al., *language two* (New York : Oxford University press, 1982) p 100-101.

¹⁴ Rod Ellis, *The Study of Second Language Acquisition* (New York : Oxford University Press, 2008) p 301.

definition, although somewhat vague (as Odlin admits), provides an adequate basis for the material to be considered in this part.

Based on the definition about transfer above, there are four manifestations of transfer, they are negative transfer, positive transfer, avoidance and over-use.

1) Negative transfer

The result of this transfer may lead to an error. It can be said that the cause of difference that commonly exist in the first or native language can lead to an error or inappropriate form when they try to produce utterance in foreign or target language. The effect of the learners' first language on their production of the language they are learning, it is called negative transfer. Other term of negative transfer is Interference.

2) Positive transfer

The effect of the similarities of one language or native language on other language can cause the transfer. When the relevant form or structure of language is same or appropriate, it can lead to positive transfer. It can be said that positive transfer is the language transfer that facilitates the acquisition of target language form, therefore another term of positive transfer is facilitation.

The facilitative effect of the L1 is evident in other aspect of L2 acquisition. In many cases, this is obvious, as when two languages share a large number of cognates (for example, English and French), thus giving the learners a head start in vocabulary. Chinese learner of L2 Japanese

have an enormous advantage over English learner because of the similarity of the Chinese and Japanese writing systems. They are able to make use of written as well as spoken input straight away.¹⁵ Therefore, the positive transfer can facilitate the easier way to acquire target language.

3) Avoidance

Avoidance may be caused by L1 transfer. It occurs when specific target language feature are under-represented in learner production in comparison to native-speaker production. For example, Chinese and Japanese learners of English have been found to avoid the use of relative clauses because their language do not contain equivalent structure. These learners make fewer errors in relative clauses than Arabic learners of English but this is only because of the rarely use them.¹⁶

Avoidance is complex phenomena. Kellerman (1992) attempts to sort out the complexity by distinguishing three types, they are:¹⁷

- a) Avoidance occurs when learners know or anticipate that there is a problem and have at least some sketchy idea of what the target form is like.
- b) Avoidance arises when learners know what the target is but find it too difficult to use in the particular circumstance.

¹⁵ Rod Ellis, *The Study of Second Language Acquisition* (New York : Oxford University Press, 2008) p 304.

¹⁶ Ellis, *Second Language.*, p 51-52.

¹⁷ Ellis, *The Study of Second.*, p 305.

c) Avoidance is evident when learners know what to say and how to say it but are unwilling to actually say it because it will result in them flouting their own norm behavior.

4) Over-use

Over-use can also result from transfer, often as a consequence of the avoidance or underproduction of some “difficult” structure. Japanese learners of English, for example, may overproduce simple sentence and may even be encouraged to do so.¹⁸

C. CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS

In the belief of interference, and thereby the learning difficulty, could be predicted by identifying those areas of the target language that were different from the learners’ L1, comparisons of the two languages were carried out using contrastive analysis. Therefore, contrastive analysis is a set of procedures for comparing and contrasting systems of two languages in order to identify their structural similarities and differences.¹⁹ To analyze the interference or find the similarities and differences, we can use kind of analysis that is contrastive analysis. It can make us easier to identify the error that is produced by target language learners.

Contrastive analysis (CA) took the position that a learner’s first language “interferes” with his or her acquisition of second language, and that it therefore comprises the major obstacle to successful mastery of the new language. When the structure of first language differs from the target

¹⁸ Rod Ellis., *The Study of Second Language Acquisition* (New York : Oxford University Press, 2008) p 306

¹⁹ Rod Ellis., *Second Language Acquisition* (New York : Oxford University Press, 2008) p 138.

language, it may lead to produce an error. For example, in Spanish the adjective is usually placed after the noun; according to CA hypothesis, therefore Spanish speaking learners should tend to say *the girl smart* instead of *the smart girl* when attempting to communicate in English. In the contrary, it will result the positive transfer if there are the similarities structure or grammatical pattern. For example the use of the Spanish plural markers *-s* and *-es* on English nouns should yield a correct English plural noun, for example *nifia-s* and *mujer-es* in Spanish, *girl-s* and *dress-es* in English.²⁰

In this case, contrastive analysis is used to recognizing not only the error that suddenly comes but also to comparing and contrasting the similarities and the difference that results to make error.

D. INTERFERENCE

Interference is another term of negative transfer. It is the effect of inappropriate form or structure of one language on another language. Interference also has been used to refer to two very distinct linguistic phenomena, one that is essentially psychological and another that is essentially sociolinguistic. The psychological use of the term interference refers to the influence of old habits when new ones are being learned, whereas the sociolinguistic use of interference refers to language interaction, such as linguistic borrowing and language switching, that occur when two language communities are in contact.

²⁰ Dulay, et.al., *language two.*, p 97.

Weinreich and Haugen have different definition about interference.²¹

Weinreich defines interference as:

Those instances of deviation from the norms of either language which occur in the speech of bilinguals as a result of their familiarity with more than one language, i.e., as a result of language in contact.

Haugen defines linguistic borrowing as:

An example of cultural diffusion, the spread of an item of culture from people to people. Borrowing is linguistic diffusion, and can be unambiguously defined as the attempt by a speaker to reproduce in one language, patterns which he has learned in another (p.363).....it is the language of the learner that is influenced, not the language he learns (p.370).

Another definition of interference according to contrastive analysis or CA hypothesis states that Interference is due to the unfamiliarity of with the L2 that is, to the learner's not having learned target pattern.²² It means that actually interference comes out because the learners do not have any knowledge about target language they learn. Therefore, they tend to transfer the structure or grammatical pattern to the target language and it is called interference.

In this case, interference can take place all level of linguistic system, such as phonological, morphological, syntactic, lexical, semantic, and etc. however, only phonological interference will discuss more deeply in this research.

²¹ Heidi Dulay, et.al., *language two* (New York : Oxford University press, 1982) p 99.

²² Heidi Dulay, et.al., *language two* (New York : Oxford University press, 1982) p 99.

E. PHONOLOGICAL INTERFERENCE

Phonology deals with the system and pattern of the sound which exist within particular language. The study of the phonology of English looks at the vowels, consonants, and suprasegmental features of the language.²³ However, before we come to the part of phonological interference, there are two features of phonology, they are :

1. Segmental

Segmental is individual sounds of speech: place and manner of articulation, and voicing for consonants; tongue height and advancement, lip rounding, and tenseness for vowels.²⁴ In segmental is the specific study about vowel and consonant. Vowels are those segments of speech produced without any interruption or stoppage of the air is continuous and frictionless. While consonants are segments marked by interruption of airstream.²⁵

2. Suprasegmental

Suprasegmental (supra- means 'over, above') suprasegmental features are different from the segmental feature because suprasegmental is more difficult to identify the quality especially if we hear just a single segment. Instead, for suprasegmental, has to be compared different segments and different utterances to see what the features are. In addition,

²³ Kelly, *how to teach*, p 9.

²⁴ Vedrana Mihalicek and Christin Wilson., *Language File* (Columbus : The Ohio State University, 2011) p 63

²⁵ Lim Kiat Boey., *An introduction to linguistic for the language teacher* (Singapore : Singapore university press, 1975) p 16

some suprasegmental features can extend across numerous segments in an utterance, rather than belonging to a single phonetic segment. The features of suprasegmental are length, pitch, intonation, tone, speech sound and stress.²⁶

Berthold et. al, (1997) define phonological interference as items including foreign accent such as stress, rhythm, intonation and speech sounds from the first language influencing the second.

F. STRESS

Stress is a suprasegmental feature of utterances. It applies not to individual vowels and consonants but to whole syllables.²⁷ When we talk about stress we cannot ignore about syllable which is the essential part of stress. However, in determining stress, it brings the role of syllable to know which part should be stressed or unstressed. Stress syllable is produced by pushing more air out of the lungs in one syllable relative to other.

To get the definition of stress actually that is not easy from listener's point of view because when speaker produced an utterance, listener can catch what the speaker means easily. However, they do not know what the stress is. It can always be defined in terms of something a speaker does in one part of utterance relative to another. The most reliable thing for a listener to detect is

²⁶ Vedrana Mihalicek and Christin Wilson., *Language File* (Columbus : The Ohio State University, 2011) p 66

²⁷ Peter Ladefoged., *A Course in Phonetics* (USA : Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975) P 105

that a stressed syllable frequently has a longer vowel. Thus, to determine stressed, it can be seen from the vowel.

Furthermore, the existence of stress in English has several function. The first function is that can be used simply to give special emphasis to a word or to contrast one word with another. In this case, stress is to determine the one word to another because different place of stress in a word can give different meaning. Another function is to indicate the syntactic relationship between words or parts of words such as noun and verb. Sometimes, the same word has two function in syntactical relationship such as the word *insult* can be functioned as noun or verb, it depends on the function in sentence. Therefore, stress is very essential in certain language based on its function.

1. The Definition of Stress

In linguistics, stress is the relative emphasis that may be given to certain syllables in a word, or to certain words in a phrase or sentence. The term is also used for similar patterns of phonetic prominence inside syllables.

Another definition of stress is meant the degree of force or loudness with which a syllable is pronounced so as to give it prominent.²⁸ It means that stress is the level of loudness in a word which is influenced by the syllable to know which syllable should be emphasized or not because in a word consisting one or more syllable in order to know the meaning of the word. Therefore, in this case, syllable is very essential in

²⁸ Ramelan., *English Phonetics* (Semarang: IKIP Semarang Press, 1985) p 24

learning stress. In this study, Stress deals with syllable particularly in word stress in English. In another words, it can be said that stress refers to amount of force with which the sound is articulated.

The placement of the stress can give the different meaning. In all these pairs of words the noun has the stress on the first syllable, the verb has it on the last. Besides that, stress also occurs in word phrase form compound. In this cases, there is a stress only on the first element of the compound for the nouns but on both elements for the verbs. Stress also has a syntactic function in distinguishing between a compound noun and an adjective followed by a noun. Compound nouns have a single stress on the first element, and the adjective phrases have stressed on both element.

2. Degrees of stress

Stress can be detected at least in part of a word. Within a word absolutely has syllable and it can be of one or more. Thus, a syllable consists of a vowel. With or without one or more than one consonant preceding or following it. The psychological feature of a syllable is that it is pronounced with one single impulse of breath.

There are three degrees of stress, they are :

- ✓ Strong or primary stress
- ✓ Medium or secondary stress
- ✓ Weak stress

The ways of marking stresses vary with different writers or dictionaries. One of them is to use the symbol / ' / above the syllable for primary stress, the symbol / , / below the syllable for secondary stress, while the weakly stressed syllables are left unmarked. Here the symbol / ` / is used for secondary stress.²⁰

Every word has a different number of syllables, it can be one or more. A word which has one syllable can have only one primary stress, in the contrary the word which has more than one can have the primary and secondary stress. Nevertheless, within a word will consist of at least the primary stress.

The example :

1. Preparation.

It has two grades of stress that is primary on the second stress and secondary on the first stress.

2. Prepare

It only has one stress that is primary stress.

3. Category of stress

In some language, such as English, stress is largely unpredictable and must be learned for each separate word. The placement of stress determines the meaning of a word. The difference in stress can make the

²⁰ Ramelan., *English Phonetics* (Semarang: IKIP Semarang Press, 1985) p 24

different in meaning. The stress that occur on words sometimes become modified when the words are part of the sentence.³⁰ Therefore stress is categorized into two categories, they are :

a. Word stress

The distribution of the stress in a word in English cannot be predicted. This means that each word in English has its own stress pattern which should be learned together with its meaning because of this irregularity in the distribution of stress. Therefore, It is advisable to consult a dictionary in case of doubt. There are some rules in determining stress, consider these rule :

- 1) Monosyllabic words in isolation bear primary stresses , for instance:

| | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| - <u>M</u> an | - <u>I</u> n | - <u>A</u> nd | - <u>c</u> an |
| - <u>c</u> all | - <u>w</u> ill | - <u>R</u> ough | - <u>g</u> lass |
| - <u>I</u> s | - <u>a</u> ll | - <u>H</u> e | - <u>F</u> or |
| - <u>C</u> ut | - <u>E</u> at | - <u>A</u> s | - <u>l</u> and |

³⁰ Daniel Sahulata., *an introduction to sounds and sounds systems of English* (Jakarta : department pendidikan dan kebudayaan) P 23

- 2) Two syllabic words may have the primary stress on the first syllable and weak stress on the second, for instance :

| | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| B <u>a</u> by | A <u>b</u> le | Co <u>m</u> fort | Cu <u>s</u> tom |
| De <u>s</u> ert | Ob <u>j</u> ect | Ex <u>p</u> ort | Co <u>n</u> tent |
| Go <u>i</u> ng | Ho <u>t</u> ter | Cr <u>e</u> dit | P <u>i</u> llow |
| Re <u>b</u> el | Co <u>n</u> vert | Es <u>c</u> ort | In <u>s</u> ult |

Or the first syllable bears the weak stress and the second syllable primary stress :

| | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| A <u>g</u> o | Ho <u>t</u> el | Pre <u>f</u> er | aga <u>i</u> n |
| De <u>s</u> ert | Ob <u>j</u> ect | Ex <u>p</u> ort | Co <u>n</u> tent (A) |
| Allo <u>w</u> | Belie <u>v</u> e | Con <u>f</u> er | Decla <u>r</u> e |
| Re <u>b</u> el | Co <u>n</u> vert | Es <u>c</u> ort | In <u>s</u> ult |

- 3) In some compound words consisting of two parts of words, the primary stress is on the first syllable and the secondary stress on the second :

| | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Me <u>a</u> ltime | Foot <u>p</u> rint | Day <u>l</u> ight | Tea-cup |
| So <u>m</u> eone | Hea <u>r</u> tfelt | Rai <u>l</u> road | Foot-ball |
| Boo <u>k</u> -mark | Pen-kn <u>i</u> fe | Clear-cut | Sug <u>a</u> r mill |

There are also compound words with primary stress on both element, for instance :

| | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| De <u>a</u> d-t <u>i</u> red | Half-w <u>a</u> y | Old-w <u>o</u> ld | Hand-kn <u>i</u> t |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|

- 4) Three syllabic words may have the primary stress on (a) the first, (b) the second, and (c) the third syllable, for instance :

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| (a) <u>A</u> rticle | (b) Nov <u>e</u> mber | (c) Guar <u>a</u> ntee |
| <u>C</u> apital | <u>A</u> llowance | <u>A</u> dvis <u>e</u> |
| <u>C</u> ompliment | <u>S</u> uspicious | Engin <u>e</u> er |
| <u>U</u> sefulness | <u>S</u> poradic | Personn <u>e</u> l |
| <u>C</u> haracter | Tomor <u>o</u> row | Aftern <u>o</u> on |
| <u>F</u> amily | Fam <u>i</u> liar | Nomine <u>e</u> |

In addition, there are some specific additional rule of stress, they are .³¹

1) Two-Syllable nouns and adjectives

In most two syllable nouns and adjectives, the first syllable takes on the stress.

Examples:

- SAMples
- CARTon
- COLorful
- RAIny

2) Two-Syllable verbs and prepositions

In most two syllable verbs and prepositions, the stress is on the second syllable.

Examples:

- reLAX
- recEIVE
- diRECT
- aMONG
- aSIDE

³¹Word Stress Rules in English", ([http /stress/word-stress 3.html](http://stress/word-stress-3.html)) accessed on Friday 8th of June 2013

- beTWEEN

More about word stress on two-syllable words

- About 80% or so of two-syllable words get their stress on the first syllable.
- There are of course, exceptions to this rule, but very few nouns and adjectives get stress on their second syllable.
- Verbs and prepositions usually get stress placed on the second syllable, but there are exceptions to this too.

3) Three-Syllable words

For three syllable words, look at the word ending (the suffix), using the following as your guide.

4) Words ending in er, or, ly

For words ending with the suffixes **er**, **or**, or **ly**, the stress is placed on the first syllable.

Examples:

- DIRect/DIRector
- ORder/ORderly
- MANage/MANager

5) Words ending in consonants and in y

If there is a word that ends in a **consonant** or in a **y**, then the first syllable gets the stress.

Examples:

- RARity
- OPtimal
- GRADient
- CONtainer

6) Words with various endings

Take a good look at the list of suffixes below (suffixes are word endings).

Your stress is going to come on the syllable right before the suffix. This applies to words of all syllable lengths.

Examples:

1. **able:** ADDable, ARable, DURable
2. **ary:** PRIMary, DIary, liBRary
3. **cial:** juDicial, nonSOCial
4. **cian:** muSician, phySician, cliNICian
5. **ery:** BAKery, SCENery
6. **graphy:** callIgraphy, bibliOgraphy, stenOgraphy
7. **ial:** celesTial, iniTial, juDicial
8. **ian:** coMEDian, ciVILian, techNICian
9. **ible:** viSible, terRible, reSistible
10. **ic:** arCHAic, plaTonic, synTHetic
11. **ical:** MAGical, LOGical, CRITICAL
12. **ics:** diaBetics, paediAtrics
13. **ion:** classifiCation, repoSition, vegeTation
14. **ity:** imMUunity, GRAvity, VANity
15. **ium:** HELium, ALUminum, PREmium
16. **imum:** MInimum, MAXimum, OPTimum
17. **logy:** BIology, CARdiology, RAdiology
18. **tal:** caPital, biCOAstal, reCital

7) Words ending in ee, ese, ique, ette

Words that use the suffix **ee, ese, eer, ique** or **ette**, have the primary stress actually placed on the suffix.

This applies to words of all syllable lengths.

Examples:

1. **ee:** agrEE, jamborEE, guarantEE
2. **eer:** sightsEER, puppetEER
3. **ese:** SiamESE, JapanESE, cheESE
4. **ette:** cassETTE, CorvETTE, towelETTE
5. **ique:** unIQUe, physIQUe

8) Prefixes

Usually, prefixes do not take the stress of a word.

There are a few exceptions to this rule, however, like: **un, in, pre, ex** and **mis**, which are all stressed in their prefix.

Examples:

1. **ex:** EXample, EXplanation, EXamine
2. **in:** INside, INefficient, INterest
3. **mis:** MISspoke, MIStake, MISspelled
4. **pre:** PREcede, PREarrange, PREliminary

9) Stress on the second from the end syllable

You put stress on the second syllable from the end of the word, with words ending in **ic**, **sion** and **tion**.

Examples:

- iCONic
- hyperTENSion
- nuTRItion

10) Stress on the third from end syllable

You put stress on the third from end syllable with words that end in **cy**, **ty**, **phy**, **gy** and **al**.

Examples:

- demoCRAcy
- TREAty
- geOGraphy
- ALlergy
- NAUtical

11) Word stress for compound words**a) Compound noun**

A compound noun is a noun made out of two nouns in order to form one word. In a compound noun, the first word usually takes on the stress.

Examples:

- SEAfood
- ICEland
- TOOTHpaste

b) Compound adjectives

A compound adjective is an adjective composed of at least two words.

Often, hyphens are used in compound adjectives. In compound adjectives, the stress is placed within the second word.

Examples:

- ten-MEter
- rock-SOLid
- fifteen-MInute

c) Compound verbs

A compound verb is when a subject has two or more verbs. The stress is on the second or on the last part.

Examples:

- Matilda loves bread but deTESTS butter.
- Sarah baked cookies and ATE them up.
- Dogs love to eat bones and love DRINKing water.

d) Noun + compound nouns

Noun + compound Nouns are two word compound nouns. In noun + compound noun, the stress is on the first word.

Examples:

- AIRplane mechanic
- PROject manager
- BOARDroom member

12) Phrasal verbs

Phrasal verbs are words made from a verb and preposition.

In phrasal verbs, the second word gets the stress (the preposition).

Examples:

- Black OUT
- break DOWN
- look OUT

13) Proper nouns

Proper nouns are specific names of people, places or things. For example: Jeniffer, Spain, Google.

The second word is always the one that takes the stress

Examples:

- North DAKOTA
- Mr. SMITH
- Apple INCORPORATED

14) Reflexive pronouns

Reflexive pronouns show that the action affects the person who performs the action. For example: I hit myself.

The second syllable usually takes the stress.

Examples:

- mySELF
- themSELVES
- ourSELVES

15) Numbers

If the number is a multiple of ten, the stress is placed on the first syllable.

Examples:

- TEN
- FIFty
- ONEhundred

b. Sentence stress

The placement of stress can create the different in meaning. Each word will have the different place of stress, it makes different meaning. However, when word are in a sentence, they usually maintain their own stress pattern, but whether they are stressed or not in sentence depends on their position of function in the sentence. As a general rule, the more important a word is in a sentence the stronger is its stress. In the absence of special emphasis, the most important words are the nouns, adjectives, demonstrative and interrogative pronouns, principal verbs and adverbs.³²

In a sentence there are some basic rule to determine the stress, which are should be stressed or unstressed. This is the rules of sentence stress:³³

Rules for Sentence Stress in English

The basic rules of sentence stress are:

1. **content words are stressed**
2. **structure words are unstressed**
3. **the time between stressed words is always the same**

³² Lim Kiat Boey., *An introduction to linguistic for the language teacher* (Singapore : Singapore university press, 1975) P 34

³³ Rules for sentence stress in English", (<http://stress/sentence-stress-rules.htm>) accessed on Friday 8th of June 2013

The following tables can help you decide which words are **content words** and which words are **structure words**:

Content words - stressed

| Words carrying the meaning | Example |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| main verbs | SELL, GIVE, EMPLOY |
| Nouns | CAR, MUSIC, MARY |
| Adjectives | RED, BIG, INTERESTING |
| Adverbs | QUICKLY, LOUDLY, NEVER |
| negative auxiliaries | DON'T, AREN'T, CAN'T |

Structure words - unstressed

| Words for correct grammar | Example |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Pronouns | he, we, they |
| prepositions | on, at, into |
| Articles | a, an, the |
| conjunctions | and, but, because |
| auxiliary verbs | do, be, have, can, must |

Exceptions

The above rules are for for what is called "neutral" or normal stress. But sometimes we can stress a word that would normally be only a structure word, for example to correct information. Look at the following dialogue:

"They've been to Mongolia, haven't they?"

"No, **THEY** haven't, but **WE** have.

Note also that when "be" is used as a main verb, it is usually unstressed (even though in this case it is a content word).

However, the placement of sentence stress may shift from one word to another in the same sentence depending on the intention of the speaker. Consider the example below that the words in the sentence is most emphasized in the mind of the speaker:³⁴

1. This is my house : primary stress on *house*, this is the normal way of saying the sentence.
2. This is my house : primary stress on *my*, to emphasize the possessor. The implication is that it is not your house or his house but my house.

³⁴ Ramelan., *English Phonetics* (Semarang: IKIP Semarang Press, 1985) p 26

3. This is my house : primary stress on the word *is* to emphasize the affirmative element of the statement, the implication is it is not a lie this house does belong to me.
4. This is my house : primary stress on the word *this*, the implication is it is this house that belongs to me and not that house