

# Stress and Vowel Peculiarity in Yoruba/English Bilingual Educated Speakers

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## Abstract

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*The concern of this study is the investigation of stress placement on English words by Yoruba Nigerian English Speakers (YNES). Not only this, it examines their vowel production in typically unstressed syllables of English words which must require a shift of stress and a consequent reduction of vowels. For example, electricity from electric, and personality from personal. A text comprising five different exercises was read by twenty Yoruba English Speakers. The data was analyzed and subjects production converted to percentages, the higher percentages were regarded as the norm. The result reaffirms scholars' assertion that syllables that are supposed to be unstressed, have their vowels reduced and at times syllabic consonants are realized as strong and full by the YNES.*

**Keywords:** Yoruba/English Bilinguals, Stress and Vowel peculiarity, Educated speakers, Standard English, Syllabic Consonants

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## Introduction

Standard English is said to be the variety of English that enjoys worldwide acceptability. Akindele and Adegbite (2005:153) refers to it as an abstraction not referring to a particular national standard form. For Quirk and Greenbaum (2000:7) standard is a function of acceptability and Jowitt (1991:62) sees standard as a matter of interpretation. This therefore engenders the notion of world Englishes whereby there is the recognition of standards like British English, American English, Indian English, South African English etc.

With respect to the above however, codification is a vital ingredient of standardization. Although several scholars such as (Banjo 1971, Jibril 1982, Jowitt 1991, Akindele and Adegbite 2000) have attempted the description of the variations in areas such as — Syntax, Lexis, semantics and phonology yet the codification of the Nigerian English remains a dream.

## Standard Nigeria English Stress

Stress is to English what fuel 'is to vehicles. The importance of stress manifests in the pronunciation of syllables and units constituting them. Stress placement in English words have been discovered to be a bit strenuous as there seems not to

be a simple means to determining which syllable or syllables must be stressed. Scholars have suggested that stress placement should be taken as a property of the individual word that should be learnt whenever a word is learnt (O'Connor 1980:91, Roach 2000:97, Aremo 2001:82). For instance in a word like 'conduct' /k?ndAkt/ (noun) and 'conduct' /k?n'dAkt/ (verb) we realize that the strong /?/ sound in the noun form weakens to the shwa/?/ as soon as the stress shifts to the second syllable in the verb form. This is what Akinjobi (2002) refers to as graphically identical words with different first syllable vowel sounds varying according to the acoustic prominence of the syllable.

As a matter of rules however every content word has at least one stressed syllable; even grammatical words that are monosyllabic occurring in isolation must be stressed. Scholars who believe in the usefulness of rules have proposed a dependence on the class of the word (noun, verb or adjective).

The rule for two syllable words according to Roach (2000:110) is that if two words are spelt identically, one of which is a verb and the other of which is either a noun or an adjective, the verb should be stressed on the second syllable while the noun or adjective on the first syllable. Some of his examples are given below (V = Verb, A = Adjective, N = Noun):

'abstract'	/æbstrækt/ (A)	/æb'strækt/ (V)
'conduct'	/'kɒndʌkt/ (N)	/kən'dʌkt/ (V)
'desert'	/'dezət/ (N)	/di'zɜ:t/ (V)
'export'	/'eksɔ:t/ (N)	/ɪk'spɔ:t/ (V)
'object'	/'ɒbdʒɪkt/ (N)	/əb'dʒekt/ (V)
'permit'	/'pɜ:ɪnt/ (N)	/pə'mɪt/ (V)
'present'	/'preznt/ (N,A)	/pri'zent/ (V)

As for complex words, Roach (2000:105) identifies two categories. There are words derived from a basic word from which he calls stem plus affix and the second category are compound words consisting of two or more words (e.g. 'ice-cream', 'armchair' etc). Affixes could be either suffixes or prefixes and they have one of three possible effects on word stress:

- (i) The affix itself may receive the primary stress (e.g. 'semi' - + 'circle' = 'semicircle' /'semɪs;kl/; - 'ality' + 'person' = 'personality' /'pɜ:sn'lɪti/).
- (ii) The word may be stressed as if the affix were absent (e.g. 'pleasant' /'pleznt/, 'impleasant' /m.'pleznt/; 'market' /'m :kʌ/, 'marketing' /'m :kʌ? /).
- (iii) The stress may shift to a different syllable but remains on the stem not the affix (e.g. 'magnet' /'mægn?t/ magnetic /mæg'netʃ/).

Stress placement on suffixes in Roach's words can be in the form of some generalizations and for simplicity sake, he uses the term 'stem' His classifications include, suffixes carrying primary stress themselves, suffixes that do not affect stress placement, and suffixes that influence stress in the stem.

For suffixes carrying primary stress themselves, the primary stress is assigned to the first syllable of the suffix. In a word such as 'Japan' for instance, the primary stress is on the last syllable /dʒə'pæn/ but upon the addition of the stress-carrying suffix '-ese', the primary stress is on the suffix while a secondary stress is assigned to the first syllable of the stem: 'Japanese' /, dʒəp'ni:z/. Other examples are '-esque' as in 'picturesque' /,pɪktʃ'resk/, '-eer' as in 'mountaineer' /,maunt'nɪə/, '-ette' as in 'cigarette' /,sɪg'ret/ e.t.c

Suffixes that do not affect stress placement have the following spellings: 'able': 'comfort' /'kɒmfɔ:t/; 'comfortable' /kɒmfɔ:təbl/

'-age': 'anchor' /'æ kʌʃ/; 'anchorage' /æ kʌʃɪdʒ/

'-ful': 'wonder' /'wʌndə/; 'wonderful' /'wʌndəfʊl/  
 '-ish': 'devil' /'devl/; 'devilish' /'devlɪʃ/  
 '-ness': 'yellow' /'jelə/; 'yellowness' /'jelənəs/

In suffixes that influence stress in the stem, the primary stress is assigned to the last syllable of the stem and this include words with the following spellings: 'eous' 'advantage' /'dʌv :ntɪdʒ/; 'advantageous' /ædvəntɪdʒəs/

'-graphy': 'photo' /'fəʊtə/; 'photography' /'fəʊtəgrəfi/  
 '-ial': 'proverb' /'prɒvɜ:b/; 'proverbial' /'prɒvɜ:biəl/  
 '-ic': 'climate' /'klaɪmɪk/; 'climatic' /'klaɪmætɪk/  
 '-ion': 'perfect' /'pɜ:fɪkt/; 'perfection' /pɜ:fekʃən/

As far as prefixes are concerned, they do not always carry primary stress. In addition, their effects on stress are not as consistent, regular and predictable as in the case of suffixes. In essence, one can say that words with prefixes have similar stress patterns as those of words without prefixes.

The rules for stress placement in compound words cannot be said to be completely reliable (Roach 2000: 108, Ladefoged 1993:118).

Nevertheless, Roach (ibid) posits that compounds resulting from the combination of two nouns normally have stress on the first element. Examples are 'typewriter' /'taɪpraɪtə/; 'car-ferry' /'ka:feri/, 'sunrise' /'sʌnraɪz/, 'tea-cup' /'ti:kʌp/. Compounds with adjectival first element and the '-ed' morpheme at the end, the ones with first element as numbers, the ones functioning as adverbials as well as those functioning as verbs with adverbial first element usually take final stress. Examples are given in a respective order: bad-'tempered, heavy-'handed; second-'class, five-'finger; North-'East, down 'stream; back-'pedal, ill-'treat etc.

### Standard English Sentence Stress

The occurrence of words (lexical or function) in their citation forms is quite different from their occurrence in sentences. The most noticeable

modification is the dropping of some of the stresses (Ladefoged 1993:118). In the same connection, Akinjobi (2002:35) asserts that some monosyllabic words usually stressed in their isolation occurrence become unstressed while some others have their citation form primary stress converted to secondary stress leaving just a word in the 'string' with the strongest stress.

However, strong and weak forms are the features of function or grammatical words-auxiliary verbs, determiners, conjunctions, pronouns, and prepositions. These are often monosyllabic words carrying stress when they are isolated but unstressed

in utterances (O'Connor 1984, Roach 1991, Akinjobi 2004).

Vowel reduction is therefore the propensity to weaken an unstressed vowel to schwa /ə/. The alteration between stressful and unstressed reduced syllable has been pin-pointed as being a vital contributor to the typical rhythm of Standard English (Jowitt 1991, Schane 1973, Akinjobi 2005).

The following are the functions or grammatical words of English in their strong and weak instances of pronunciation and the environments in which each variant occurs:

**Table 1 The strong and weak forms of Standard English Grammatical Words**

Words determiners	Stressed strong forms	Unstressed weak forms	Contexts of weak variants
'a' (used only before a consonant sound)	/eɪ/	/ə/	All weak contexts
'an' (before vowels)	/æn/	/ən/	Every weak context except after /t/ or /d/
'the'	/ðɪ:/	/ðə/	Before consonants Before vowels
'some'	/sʌm/	/səm/	All weak contexts
<b>Conjunctions</b>			
'and'	/ænd/	/m/ /ə/ /ənd, ən/	After labials e.g. /get ʔp m gʔʔ/ After velars e.g. /bæg ʔ bæɡldʔ/ Other weak contexts
'that'	/ðæt/	/ðət/	All weak contexts
'but'	/bʌt/	/bet/	All weak contexts
'or'	/ɔ:/	/ə/	All weak contexts
<b>Preposition</b>			
'to'	/tu:/	/tə/ /tʊ/	Before consonants Before vowels
'for'	/fɔ:/	/fɚ/ /fɔr/	Before consonants Before vowels
'from'	/frɔm/	/frəm/	All weak contexts
'of'	/ɒv/	/ə/ /əv/	Before voiceless consonants All other weak contexts
'by'	/baɪ/	/bɪ/	All weak contexts
'at'	/æt/	/ət/	All weak contexts
<b>Pronouns</b>			
I	/aɪ/	/ɪ/	All weak contexts
'me'	/mi:/	/mɪ/	All weak contexts
'my'	/maɪ/	/mɪ/	All weak contexts
'you'	/ju:/	/ju/ /jɪ/	Before vowels Before consonants
'he'	/hi:/	/i/	All weak contexts except at the beginning of a word group where /hi:/ is used
'his'	/hɪz/	/ɪz/	All weak contexts except at the beginning of a word group where /hɪz/ is used
'her'	/hɚ/	/ə/	All weak contexts except at the beginning of a word group where /hɚ:/ is used
/him/	/hɪm/	/ɪm/	All weak contexts
'their'	/ðeɪ/	/ðə/	All weak contexts
'them'	/ðem/	/ðəm/	All weak contexts
'us'	/ʌs/	/əs/	All weak contexts
<b>Auxiliary Verbs</b>			
'shall'	/ʃæl/	/ʃəl, ʃəl/	All weak contexts
'should'	/ʃʊd/	/ʃəd/	All weak contexts
'would'	/wʊd/	/d/ /wəd/	After I, he, she, we, you, they Every other weak context
'will'	/wɪl/	/l/ /l/ /l/	After vowels and /l/ After I, he, she, we, you, they After consonants except /l/
'must'	/mʌst/	/mʌst/	All weak contexts
'are'	/ɑ:/	/ə/ /ər/	Before consonants Before vowels
'were'	/wɚ:/	/wə/	All weak contexts

(Adapted from O'Connor 1984, Roach 2000, Akinjobi 2005).

Adetugbo (2004:189) suspects that Nigerian English, in keeping with our inherent tonal pattern, realizes stress largely by pitch and amplitude rather than by length. He contends further that our syllable-timed indigenous languages have impacted heavily on the stress-timed nature of English. For Omoniyi (2004:108), it is either stress is completely absent or wrongly placed in NE. In Jowitts (1991:93) observation, the primary stress has the tendency to shift to the right. This is more consistent with verbs than with Nouns and Adjectives. He observes further that same can be noticed at the levels of compound words, complex Noun phrases with pre-modification and at the sentence level where stress placement is shifted as far to the right as possible. This therefore culminates in the assignment of Nuclear stress to an unsuitable word in the sentence.

Kujore (1985 Referenced by Akinjobi (2002:41) identifies what he termed delayed primary stress' as the most noticeable characteristics of NE pronunciation. Like Adetugbo, he traces this to the influence of local languages with a rising rhythm as against the Standard English falling rhythm. In his analysis, NE stress placement rules may be summed up as follows:

- The principal stress falls on the last syllable of verbs ending with -ass, -ate, -fy, -ise/-ize -yse, -ish, -ment, -ute e.g canvass, abbreviate, exhibit, amplify, advertise, distinguish, comment, attribute. This is the same with Nouns ending with -ene, -i, -air, -in, -one e.g gangrene, ampicillin, iodine, abattoir, baritone. Compound Nouns and forms like aeroplane, backbite, wardrobe, watchman are also noted to have stress placement in their last syllable.
- Some words are also noted to have their stress assigned to the penultimate syllable e.g advertisement, beneficent, embarrassment, omnipotent. Nouns ending with -er, or, -sphere are also affected by this rule e.g accelerator fertilizer, atmosphere.
- Certain words ending with -ive, -tory and -ture that could function as Nouns and Adjectives are also assigned penultimate stress. E.g. Administrative, primitive, accusative, ablative, compensatory, laboratory, agriculture, legislature.
- There are instances of stress pattern reversal as in 'acute', 'cabal', 'canoe', 'cassette' where the first syllables are assigned the primary stress rather than the second syllable which are assigned the primary stress in Standard English.

### Syllabic Consonants and other Weak Vowels

The schwa is often described as a lax vowel simply because it is the most frequent occurring vowel in English always associated with weak syllables (Roach, 2000:82). But the schwa is not the only stakeholder in the business of vowel reduction; we also have the close front and the close back vowels. The close front unrounded is described as being in the general region of i and I while the close back rounded is in the general neighbourhood of u: and ? . Unlike in the strong syllable where it is easy to draw the line between /i:/ and /I/ as in 'beat' and 'bit' and between /u:/ and /u/ as in 'shoe' and 'book'. Roach (2000:85) suggests /i/ and /u/ as the representation of the close front and the close back vowels respectively. He illustrates this with the pair of 'easy and 'busy':

- |      |      |       |
|------|------|-------|
| (i)  | i:z: | bizi: |
| (ii) | i:zi | bizi  |

The second instance represents his suggested weak vowels which he claims is as acceptable as the first example to speakers with BBC accent, Although they are no longer a real phonemic transcription in the traditional sense, the fact that native speakers of the language accept them makes a strong case for them.

The positions where these weak vowels can be found according to Roach as follows:

The close front unrounded /i/

- (i) It can be found in the final word position of words spelt with final 'y' or 'ey' (after one or more consonant letters), e.g 'happy' /hæpi/; 'valley' væli/ and in morpheme-final position with suffixes beginning with vowels e.g 'hurrying' /hʔril /, 'happier' /hæpi/, 'easiest' /i'zi?st/
- (ii) Prefixes spelt such as 're', 'pre', 'de' when it precedes a vowel and is unstressed e.g 'react' / riækt/, 'preoccupied' / pri?kj?paid/, 'deactivate' / diæktiveit/
- (iii) It can also be found in suffixes such as 'iate', 'ious' when they have two syllables e.g 'appreciate' /pri:ʔeit/, 'hilarious' /hile?ri?s/.
- (iv) It can be found in pronouns such as 'he', 'she', 'we', 'me', the verb 'be' and the article 'the' when it precedes a vowel.

The close back rounded /u/ is often found in the words 'you', 'to', 'do', 'into' when they carry no stress and are not immediately before a consonant. It is also found in 'through' and 'who' in all positions if they are not stressed. It is also found before another

vowel with a word, as 'in' evacuation /ivækjueiʔn/ 'influenza' /influenzʔ/

As far as syllabic consonant are concerned, they are consonants that are syllabilized where no vowel is found the consonants, l, r, m, n, . The lateral /l/, the gliding /r/ as well as the nasals may be taken as the peak of the syllable in place of the vowel and when this happens, they are considered as weak syllables (Roach 2000:86). Standard English makes use of a small vertical mark (ˑ) to indicate that a consonant is syllabic. E.g 'bottle' /bʔtl/.

### Methodology

We gathered this study's data by preparing a text and making twenty educated Yoruba English

speakers to read this text into a voice recorder. This was done to ensure that the subjects produce the specific language items in order to achieve the purpose for these investigations. A reasonable degree of naturalness was achieved because the subjects were oblivious of the specific language items being tested. Their output was transcribed and arranged according to each item under investigation.

The data analysis was done through the counting of the various sounds that were produced where the weak forms of English were expected. There was a conversion to simple percentages and in each cases, the form with highest percentage is regarded as the norm.

### Analysis

#### Exercise A: Test of the Schwa sound /ə/

Table 2

Words	SE	YNES Variants %
'teacher'	/ti:tʃə/	/ti:ʃa/ [a] 25% [ə] 75%
Success	/sək'ses/	/sɔses/ [ɔ] 55% [ə] 45%
Madam	/'mædəm/	/mædam/ [a] 45% [ə] 55%
afraid	/ə'freid/	/a:freid/ [a] 95% [ə] 5%
potato	/pə'tertəu/	/poteito/ [əʊ] 95% [ə] 5%
Women	/wɪmɪn/	/wumen/ [e] 100% [ɪ] 05
Market	/'ma:kɪt/	/ma:ket/ [e] 65% [ɪ] 35%
private	/praɪvɪt/	/praiveit/ [ei] 95% [ɪ] 5%
Business	/'bɪznɪs/	/bisnes/ [e] 100% [ɪ] 0%
tomatoes	/tə'ma:təuz/	/toma:tos/ [əʊ] 100% [ə] 0%

**Teacher:** which ought to have its second syllable reduced to the weak form /t/ in the SE was produced as the strong sound [a] by 25% of the subjects while 75% produced the appropriate weak sound /t/. **Success** was supposed to have the weak form /t/ in its first syllable but 55% produced the strong /t/ with 45% producing the expected /t/. The word **Madam** has 55% of the expected /t/ realization while 45% realized the strong [a].

Some words in the text seemed problematic for the YNES. These were **afraid**, **potato**, and

**private.** 95% produced the strong [a] in the first syllable of afraid while a mere 5% realized the normal weak /t/. The diphthong [??] was used by 95% in place of the [t] which was by 5% in potato and the strong [ei] was what 95% realized in private as against a mere 5% correct /t/.

The cases of **women**, **business** and **tomatoes** were 100% wrong realizations. In the case of market however, 65% pronounced the strong [e] while 35% got the correct /t/ sound.

### Exercise B: Test of stress placement in noun / Adjective versus verb

Table 3

Noun / Adjective	Verb
absent /'æbs'nt/ 90%	absent /æb'sent/ 10%
Combine /'kɒmbain/ 0%	combine /kəm'bain/ 100%
record /'rekɔ:d/ 50%	record /ri'kɔ:d/ 50%
protest /'prəʊtest/ 50%	protest /prəʊ'test/ 50%
contest /'kɒntest/ 40%	contest /kən'test/ 60%
conduct /'kɒndʌkt/ 50%	conduct /kən'dʌkt/ 50%
envelop /'envələʊp/ 100%	envelop /en'veləp, in'veləp/ 0%
frequent /'fri:kwənt/ 100%	frequent /fr'kwent/ 0%
Produce /'prɒdju:s/ 25%	produce /prə'dju:s/ 80%
perfect /'pɜ:fɪkt/ 100%	perfect /pə'fekt/ 0%

In this exercise, YNES could be said to far better. This is because they were able to place stress better on much of the words tested although not without some horrible pronunciation. Absent as an adjective had 90% while it has 10% as a verb. The noun **combine** had a very poor showing of 0% but subjects were able to have 100% placement of stress on the verbal

counterpart for the nouns **record**, **protest** and **conduct** and their verbals, it was a 50-50 affair. **Contest** has 40% as a noun and 60% as a verb. **Envelop**, **frequent** and **perfect** had 100% each as nouns but 0% each as verbs. The case of produce was 20% to the noun, 80% to the verb.

**Exercise C: Test of stress placement and weak forms****Table 4**

Words	SE Transcription	YNES Realization	Stress placement
Politics	/ˈpɒlətiks/	/ˈpolitiks/	100%
Phonetics	/fəʊˈnetiks	/fəʊˈnetiks, ˈfonetiks/	SE 45%, YNES 55%
grammar	/ˈgræmə/	/ˈgræmə, ɡrɑ:mə/	100%
final	/ˈfaɪnəl/	/ˈfaɪnəl, ˈfaɪnəl/	SE 40%, YNES 60%
eradicate	/ɪˈrædikeɪt/	/ɪˈeradikeɪt, ɪˈrædikeɪt/	SE 5% YNES 95%
inferior	/ɪnˈfɪəriə/	/ɪnˈfɪəriə, ɪnˈfɪəriə/	5% 59%
execute	/ˈeksɪkjʊ:t/	/ˈeksɪkjʊ:t, ˈesekjʊ:t/	30% 70%
Photograph	/ˈfəʊtəɡrɑ:f/	/ˈfəʊtəɡrɑ:f, fəʊˈtəɡrɑ:f/	SE 15% YNES 85%
Tutor	/ˈtju:tə/	/tuˈto/	0%
Drama	/ˈdrɑ:mə/	/ˈdrɑ:mə, ˈdramə/	100%

The test on this exercise witnessed 100% stress placement on the words politics, grammar and drama. The weak forms remain the headache for YNES, while the /ʔ/ in the second syllable of politics was realized as [i], the /ʔ/ in the last syllable of grammar and drama were produced as [a] by YNES.

Phonetics, final and photograph also had 100% correct stress placement but it was only 45% of YNES that were able to realize the SE pronunciation of phonetics, 40% can realize SE final with 60%

inserting [a] between [n] and [l] while none of the subjects could realize SE photograph. In this case, there was a replacement of the [ʔ] by [o]. In the case of execute, 100% stress placement was also achieved but with only 30% realizing the SE pronunciation.

Eradicate, inferior and tutor were the worst in it. Only a fractional 5% could place the stress correctly on the words eradicate and inferior with none of the subjects being able to get a correct pronunciation. Tutor was both badly stressed and pronounced and it recorded 0% in all.

**Exercise D: Test of vowel reduction and syllabic consonant****Table 5**

Words	SE	YNES Variant
Hospital	/ˈhɒspɪtəl/ 65%	/ˈhɒspɪtəl/ 35%
Student	/ˈstju:dn̩t/ 40%	/ˈstju:dn̩t/ 60%
Passion	/ˈpæʃn̩ 80%	/ˈpæ:sn̩/ 20%
happen	/ˈhæpn̩/ 60%	/ˈhæpn̩/ 40%

television	/ˈtelɪvɪzən/ 65%	/teliˈvɪsən/ 35%
Little	/ˈlɪtl/ 90%	/liˈtu/ 10%
principal	/ˈprɪntsəpl/ 40%	ˈprɪnsɪpəl 60%
Bottle	/ˈbɒtl/ 75%	/boˈtu/ 25%
total	/ˈtəʊtl/ 10%	/toˈta/ 90%
panel	/ˈpænl 5%	/paˈnel/ 95%

The impact of the indigenous languages can be felt here. The CV nature of the indigenous languages has made it impossible for some YNES to properly realize syllabic consonants. In all the cases above, it is clear that a reasonable percentage of the YNES insert the vowel apparently in line with their L1. Not only this, the insertion of vowel where unnecessary also led some of the subjects to shift the stress position of some of the words e.g. 'bottle', total, panel etc from the first syllable to the second.

#### Exercise E: Test of article 'the' /ði:/

This is pronounced as /ð?/ before consonants and as /ði/ before a vowel. In the sample sentences tested in the exercise, it crystal clear that a majority of YNES have problems using 'the' appropriately either before the consonant or the vowel. The sample sentences tested are:

1. The party chairman announces that the selling of stationeries should become the business of the day .
2. The teacher came to the class yesterday.
3. The principal urges the educated people that were invited to the party to see themselves as role models.
4. The student was stopped from writing the examination because he failed to pay his school fees.
5. The protest was carried out by the former chairman of the party .
6. One of the company's managers bought the envelope for official use.
7. The tutor delivered a good lecture a couple of days ago.
8. The government has banned the importation of the inferior goods in the country .
9. The treatment was to the women by the medical doctor during their visit to the hospital .

10. The principal cautions the non-teaching staff to abstain from an act of laziness.

As reflected by the underlining, there are twenty-seven (27) occurrences of 'the' in the tested text. 22 of these representing 85% occur before consonant sounds while 5 occurrences representing 15% are before vowel sounds. As stated earlier, 'the' occurring before a consonant sound should be realized as /ð?/ while it is pronounced as /ði/ before a vowel sound. All the subjects involved in this exercise were unable as evident from the recorded tape, to realize the /ð?/, what they succeeded in realizing is the /ði/ irrespective of whether it occurs before a consonant or a vowel. In effect, the 15% occurrences of 'the' before the vowel were well articulated while the 85% occurrence before the consonant sound suffered greatly. In all the instances tested everything was /ði/.

#### Results

The outcome of this study clearly manifests two important facts: that the YNES can hardly draw a line between the strong forms and the weak forms of the English syllable in English. It is evident that the weak /?/ sound of English is absent in the Yoruba sound system, therefore, educated Yoruba English user has the tendency to substitute the strong vowel /a/ or /a:/ for every occurrences of the /?/.

Again, it was discovered that elision which is a major feature of weak unstressed syllable in Standard English can be hardly made use of in Yoruba. The CV structure of the indigenous language is responsible for the insertion of a corresponding vowel(s) into syllabic consonants. This in a nutshell means that many YNES may not be able to achieve the basic rhythm pattern of the English Language.

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