

ABSTRACT

Malaysian English is said to be different from British English in terms of stress placement with the tendency for Malaysian English speakers to stress the final syllables of polysyllabic words, such as *manfully*, whereas in British English, stress placement is on the initial syllable. Two observations led to the investigation of the said cross-varietal difference. Firstly, previous studies have explored stress differences based on auditory impressions, not acoustic evidence (Platt & Weber, 1980; Tongue, 1972). Secondly, the auditory evidence from such previous studies comes from the realisations of test words in phrase-final position or citation form, where phrase-final lengthening is expected. Ten Malaysian English speakers produced polysyllabic words in both phrase-final and phrase-medial positions which were measured in duration and fundamental frequency (F0). The results do not support the claimed cross-varietal difference. In phrase-final position, Malaysian English speakers do not always stress the final syllable of polysyllabic words; in fact it is difficult to ascertain which syllable is always stressed. In phrase-medial position, the results are mixed; stress may or may not be on the initial syllable, and there is no consistency as to which syllable is always stressed. Stress placement in Malaysian English seems to depend on the speaker, as average duration and F0 show a different result when compared to individual duration and F0.

Keywords: lexical stress placement, Malaysian English, acoustic analysis

ABSTRAK

Bahasa Inggeris Malaysia dikatakan berbeza dari bahasa Inggeris British dalam penempatan stres kerana penutur bahasa Inggeris Malaysia cenderung menempatkan stres pada suku kata akhir perkataan-perkataan yang mengandungi banyak suku kata, contohnya *manfully*, di mana penutur bahasa Inggeris British menempatkan stres di suku kata pertama. Dua pemerhatian telah menghasilkan kajian di atas perbezaan tersebut. Pertama, kajian-kajian dahulu adalah berasaskan perbezaan stres berdasarkan apa yang didengar, bukan bukti akustik (Platt & Weber, 1980; Tongue, 1972). Kedua, bukti yang dikumpul dalam kajian-kajian dahulu didapati secara penyebutan perkataan-perkataan yang berada di posisi hujung-frasa atau disebut sahaja, di mana pemanjangan suku kata akhir boleh diharapkan. Sepuluh orang penutur bahasa Inggeris Malaysia telah menyebut perkataan-perkataan yang mengandungi banyak suku kata yang berada di posisi hujung-frasa dan tengah-frasa dan diukur panjang dan frekuensi fundamentalnya. Hasil kajian tidak menyokong hasil kajian-kajian dahulu. Di posisi hujung-frasa, penutur bahasa Inggeris Malaysia tidak selalu menempatkan stres pada suku kata akhir perkataan-perkataan yang mengandungi banyak suku kata; malah adalah sukar untuk memastikan suku kata yang mana yang selalu ditempatkan stres. Di posisi tengah-frasa, hasil kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa stres tidak selalu ditempatkan di suku kata pertama, dan konsistensi suku kata yang selalu ditempatkan stresnya tidak juga didapati di posisi ini. Penempatan stres dalam bahasa Inggeris Malaysia mungkin bergantung pada penutur, kerana purata ukuran panjang dan frekuensi fundamental menunjukkan hasil yang berbeza dari ukuran panjang dan frekuensi fundamental individu.

Kata-kata kunci: penempatan stres leksikal, bahasa Inggeris Malaysia, analisis akustik

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