

Stress and Pronunciation: Partners in Functional Communication

Sometimes stress is a good thing!

Hints on Pronunciation for Foreigners

by: T.S.W.

I take it you already know
Of tough and bough and cough and dough?
Beware of heard, a dreadful word
That looks like beard and sounds like bird,
And dead: it's said like bed, not bead—
For goodness sake don't call it "deed"!
Watch out for meat and great and threat.
(They rhyme with suite and straight and debt.)
A moth is not a moth in mother
Nor both in bother, broth in brother,
And here is not a match for there
Nor dear and fear for bear and pear,
And then there's does and rose and lose—
Just look them up—and goose and choose,
And cork and work and word and sword,
And do and go and thwart and cart—
Come, come, I've hardly made a start!

Goal of Communication

To understand &
be understood

Poor pronunciation restricts social interactions & negatively influences estimations of a speaker's credibility

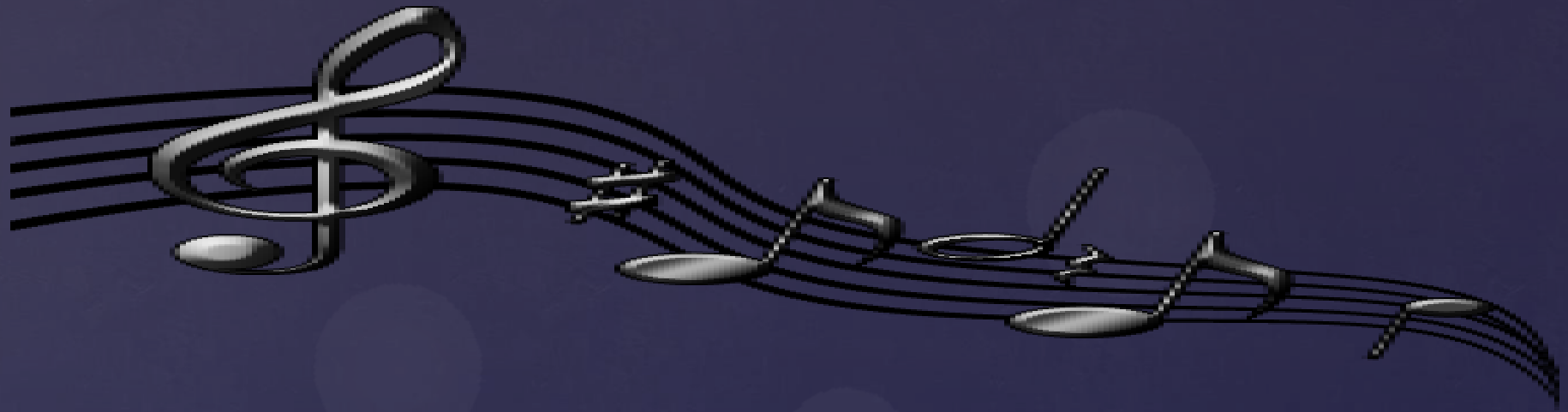
The vast sea of Pronunciation



We are going to
focus on teaching

STRESS

to improve
students'
pronunciation.



**Stress: The rhythm
of the language.**

Stress is so important
because it impacts
meaning.

Activity 1

1. I asked you to buy me a bunch of red roses.
2. I asked you to buy me a bunch of red roses.
3. I asked you to buy me a bunch of red roses.
4. I asked you to buy me a bunch of red roses.
5. I asked you to buy to me a bunch of red roses.
6. I asked you to buy me a bunch of red roses.
7. I asked you to buy me a bunch of red roses.

Many world languages like Spanish, French, Cantonese & Polish are syllable-timed languages.

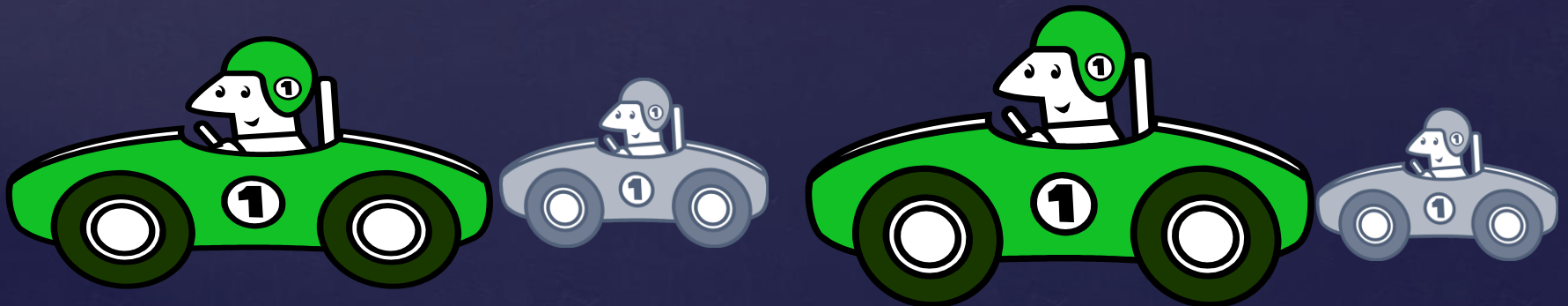
Which means the amount of time required to say a sentence depends on the number of syllables, not the number of stresses.

{ I.e. Vamos a la playa.



English is a stressed-timed language

{ Which means stressed syllables
{ occur at regular intervals.





*There was a young
girl from New York,
Whose ancestors all
came from Cork,
Who possessed an idea
That in order to be queer
She had to eat soup with a fork.*

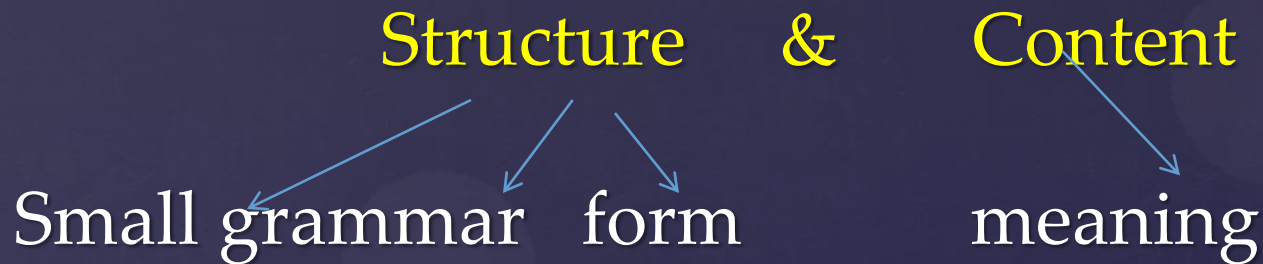
Birds eat worms.
The birds eat worms.
The birds eat the worms.
The birds will eat the worms.
The birds will have eaten the worms.

⌘ (Avery & Ehrlich, 2008)

Let's Practice Activity 2

How do I know
which words are
stressed?

Each sentence has **2** types of words:



Content words are spoken **louder, clearer & longer** because they receive the stress.

Think of content words
as telegraphic speech.

{ The sentence can still be
understood without
structure.

Message:

Sell house gone
Puerto Rico.

{ These are content
words.

Message:

Will you **sell** my **house**
because I've **gone** to
Puerto Rico.

Activity 2
Using ESL Literacy
p. 136

{ Pearson Longman
{ By: Yvonne Wong Nishio

Ways to help our students #1 :

Raise awareness so they **know** that they should be listening for stressed words.

Ways to help our students #2 :

Teach them to **pull-out** the stressed words within a dialogue and practice putting the **stress** on them.

Limericks can be used as a Warm-up or to teach how to recognize stressed words.

Ways to help our students #3:

From these activities they will learn that it is not necessary to understand every word!





A penny for your thoughts?