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On the Pronunciation of "Amusee" and Secondary Stress in General

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I remember teaching some students "Hero-Worship", by Thomas Carlyle, in the summer of 1919, soon after I graduated from Kyoto University. The full title of the book is: On Heroes, Hero-Worship and The Heroic in History. That part of the book which I explained was Lecture 111: The Hero as Poet. Dante-Shakespeare.

I happened again to read the same text at class in January of last year, 1952.

It was very interesting for me to find a number of things last year which attracted my keen attention, but which had not done so over thirty years ago.

One of the points which greatly interested me was the pronunciation of the word "amusee" in Dante. London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd. p. 83, l.7

Before I speak of its pronunciation, let me quote a passage from the book where the word is found: "Dante, poor and banished, with his proud earnest nature, with his moody humours, was not a man to conciliate men. Petrarch reports of him that being at Can della Scala's court, and blamed one day for his gloom and taciturnity, he answered in no courtier-like way. Della Scala stood among his courtiers, with mimes and buffoons making him heartily merry; when turning to Dante, he said: 'Is it not strange, now, that this poor fool should make himself so entertaining; while you, a wise man, sit there day after day, and have nothing to amuse us with at all?'

Dante answered bitterly: 'No, not strange; your Highness is to recollect the Proverb, Like to Like;'—given the amuser, the amusee must also be given!"

Now, every dictionary has the word 'amuser', but not the word 'amusee.' Some unabridged dictionaries give the meaning of 'amusee,'

but its pronunciation is all.....wrong, if I may say so. The meaning is very clear. Amuser: one who amuses; one who provides diversion. 'Amusee': one who is amused. 'Amusee' can only be found in big dictionaries, and not in all, but the meaning can easily be known if one knows the meaning of such words as employee, examinee, addressee etc., etc. The Century Dictionary reads: "Amusee: The person amused. Carlyle. (Rare)." It is indeed a very rare word used by Carlyle. S. O. D. and N. E. D. have it, too. But all these dictionaries treat the vowel of the first syllable of the words 'amuse', 'amuser' and 'amusee' as the same. If so, they will be (ə'mju: z), (ə'mju: zə), (ə'mju: 'zi:) when phonetically transcribed: that is, (ə), No. 12 vowel for the first syllable of each.

We can easily tell that the vowel of the third syllable of 'amusee' must be (i:), No. 1 vowel, when we know the pronunciation of employee, examinee, addressee, etc., vowel.

The first vowel of the word 'amusee', however, is surely different from that of the other two words: not (ə), No. 12 vowel, but (æ), No. 4 vowel.

Here 12 vowels and 9 diphthongs are shown numbered:

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (5) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) | (11) | (12); |
| i: | i | e | æ | ɑ: | ə | ɔ: | u | u: | ʌ | ə: | ə |
| (13) | (14) | (15) | (16) | (17) | (18) | (19) | (20) | (21) | | | |
| ei | ou | ai | au | ɔi | iə | ɛə | ɔə | uə | | | |

Before I decide the pronunciation of the vowel of the first syllable of the word in question, let me mention the evident fact that almost all the words which have stress on the third syllable, have stress also on the first; the former is called primary stress, and the latter secondary stress. Examine the following words: Japanese, conversation, preparation, employee etc., etc. They are pronounced /dʒæpə'n i: z, /kən və'seɪʃən, /pre pə'reɪʃən, /em plɔ'i: .

It is also interesting to notice that the vowel of the first syllable of these words are all different from that of their corresponding words: Japan, converse, prepare, employ, which are pronounced dʒə'pæn, kən'və:s, pri'pə, im'plɔi.

In these words the first syllable is not stressed, and the vowels are (ə), No. 12, (ə), No. 12, (i), No. 2, (i), No. 2 respectively.

When the first syllable is stressed in Japanese, conversation, preparation and employee, though secondary, the vowels are (æ), No. 4, (ɔ), No. 6, (e), No. 3, (e), No. 3 respectively.

That 'amuse' and 'amuser' are pronounced ə'mju:z, ə'mju:zə, with (ə), No. 12, vowel in the first syllable is, all right, as the syllable is unstressed, but 'amusee' which must have a stress on the first syllable should not be əmju:'zi:, because (ə), No. 12 vowel, a short and obscure vowel, is never stressed. Though no dictionaries give satisfactory pronunciation of the first syllable of 'amusee', I reached the conclusion that it must be pronounced, æmju:'zi:, comparing the pronunciation of the letter 'a' of the first syllable of 'amusee' with the 'a' in the first syllable of the following words: Japan, Japanese; address, addressee; assign, assignee; abolish, abolition; admire, admiration; apply, application; adapt, adaptation etc., etc.

I wrote a letter to Prof. D. Jones about it, who has retired, but who was chief of the Phonetics Department, at University College, London University, where I studied English phonetics for about two years, 1930—32, and who has been kind enough to answer any questions I asked. My letter was written on February 10 last year, and I received his reply on Feb. 28. How quickly air letters fly between Japan and England. Now I am proud to say that my conclusion was approved by him.

Students of English pronunciation will find it worth while to transcribe the following words phonetically: amuse, amusee; address, addressee; employ, employee; assign, assignee; examine, examinee; consign, consignee; consult, consultee; devote, devotee; dedicate, dedicatee; distraint, distraintee; deport, deportee; devise, devisee; license, licensee; refer, referee; mortgage, mortgagee; oblige, obligee; patent, patentee; refuge, refugee; transfer, transferee; warrant, warrantee, etc., etc.

Stress

Prof. D. Jones, in 'An Outline of English Phonetics' says: "Syllables which are pronounced with a greater degree of stress than the neighbouring syllables in a word or sentence are said to be stressed or pronounced with strong stress. Syllables pronounced with a relatively small degree of stress are said to be pronounced with weak

stress.”

Here is an interesting point. Some may think that all words, without any exception, which have more than one syllable doubtlessly have strong stress. Prof. Jones says, however, in his Outline that “the majority of English words of more than one syllable have one stressed syllable and the remainder unstressed.” He does not say all the words or every word, but he does say “the majority”, which means the greater number.

As I thought it very strange, I wrote a letter to him about it, and received his answer, saying, “There is one word, the weak form of upon (əpən) which has no stress on either syllable. And there are a number of words which have two stresses. mostly compounds like half-done.”

If one reads his Phonetic Readings in English, one will find quite a number of ‘upon’ all unstressed :

Lesson 8. calling upon the prince one day
(‘kɔ:lɪŋ əpən ðə ‘prɪns wʌn ‘deɪ)

Lesson 10. hit upon the plan
(‘hɪt əpən ðə ‘plæn)

Lesson 11. prevailed upon her husband
(pri’veɪld əpən hə: ‘hʌzbənd)

We may take it granted, however, all or almost all words of more than one syllable have strong stress on a certain syllable.

Here are some words which have two stressed syllables. They are said to have double stress, and “their stress is subject to certain rhythmic variations.”

Examples : fourteen (‘fɔ:’ti:n), but fourteen shillings

(‘fɔ:ti:n ‘ʃɪlɪŋz); just fourteen (‘dʒʌst fɔ:’ti:n)

unknown (‘ʌn’noun), but an unknown warrior

(‘ʌnnoun ‘wɔ:riə)

quite unknown (‘kwait ʌn’noun)

unsold (‘ʌn’sould), but an unsold donkey

(ən ‘ʌnsould ‘dɔŋki)

It is left unsold. (it s ‘left ʌn’sould.)

prepaid (‘pri:’peɪd), but a prepaid telegram

(ə’pri:peɪd ‘teli græm); It was prepaid.

(it wəz pri:’peɪd.)

Some words are made up of a number of syllables, which have many degrees of stress. "Thus, if we use the figure 1 to denote the strongest stress, 2 to denote the second strongest stress, and so on," the stress of the English words opportunity, ability, and conversation might be marked thus :

| | | | | | |
|--------------|------|-----|-------|-----|----|
| | 2 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 3 |
| opportunity | ˌɒ | pə | ˈtjuː | nɪ | tɪ |
| ability | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | |
| | ə | ˈbi | li | ti | |
| conversation | 2 | 3 | 1 | 4 | |
| | ˌkɒn | və | ˈsei | ʃən | |

It is useful to mark secondary stress in transcribing words which have three or more syllables preceding the principal or primary stress. Special attention must be given to the position of secondary stress in long words, where it precedes the primary stress.

A great number of words have primary stress on the third syllable, and secondary stress on the first syllable. Many examples will be given later. They are very rhythmical, as they have stresses on the first and on the third syllables. To be rhythmical is indeed very characteristic of the English language. Just recollect the words which have double stress and their rhythmical variations mentioned above.

We can expect secondary stress on the first syllable, when there is a primary one on the third syllable. One is tempted to say that all the words which have strong stress on the third syllable surely have secondary stress on the first syllable. But Prof. Jones gives a few exceptions which have no secondary stress, though they have strong stress on the third syllable.

"It is notable," says he in his 'Outline', "that special words electricity (ilek'trisiti), electrician (ilek'triʃən), electrolysis (ilek'trɒlisis), etc., and with many speakers elasticity (ilæs'tisiti), have no perceptible secondary stress. Neither of the first two syllables can be said to have a stronger stress than the other." Examples are given below of words which have primary stress on the third syllable and secondary stress on the first syllable.

Words which have primary stress on the third syllable and secondary stress on the first syllable, represented as 1—3 :

- abdication abnormality abolition absentee academic

| | | | | |
|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|
| accidental | accusation | acquisition | acrobatic | actuality |
| adaptation | addressee | adjectival | admiration | adolescence |
| adoration | advantageous | advocation | affability | affectation |
| affirmation | affrication | aggregation | agitation | agricultural |
| alcoholic | Alexander | Agamemnon | alienee | alphabetic |
| alternation | amateurish | ambiguity | ammunition | anaconda |
| analytic | anecdotal | animation | anniversary | annotation |
| antecedent | anthological | apathetic | apparition | application |
| apposition | apprehend | apprehension | approbation | arbitration |
| archaeological | archaeologist | archipelago | architectural | argumental |
| argumentative | aristocracy | aristocratism | apostolic | apparatus |
| barricade | biographic | brigadier | energetic | enigmatic |
| eccentricity | exclamation | expectation | fabrication | fascination |
| federation | fundamental | generation | graduation | habitation |
| hesitation | horizontal | hospitality | illustration | imitation |
| cafeteria | calculation | cancellation | capability | catholicity |
| cavalcade | celebration | cigarette | competition | complication |
| compensation | composition | comprehend | concentration | condensation |
| condescend | condescension | contribution | conversation | definition |
| degradation | economic | education | decoration | dedication |
| deferential | lamentation | legislation | machination | mathematics |
| Japanese | navigation | notability | observation | occupation |
| operation | opportunity | panorama | panoramic | preparation |
| reputation | reservation | resignation | scrutineer | seminar |
| taciturnity | tabulation | vaccination | resignation | resolution |
| recitation | reformation | repetition | reference | restoration |
| resurrect | resurrection | retribution | revolution | rhetorician |
| rumination | sacramental | sacrilegious | salutation | sanitation |
| satisfaction | satisfactory | scientific | senatorial | sensitivity |
| sensuality | sentimental | serenade | sexuality | similarity |
| simultaneous | singularity | situation | sociability | socialistic |
| sociological | sociologist | sonneteer | speculation | stimulation |
| stupefaction | sublimation | suffocation | suitability | superhuman |
| supernatural | superstition | superstitious | supervision | supplemental |
| sympathetic | syndication | systematic | tangibility | taxability |
| telegraphic | tenability | termination | terminology | topographic |

| | | | | |
|------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|------------|
| ultimatum | unanimity | undergraduate | understand | undertake |
| universal | university | valuation | variation | vegetarian |
| veneration | ventilation | vindication | violation | violin |
| virtuosity | visitation | vivisection | volubility | volunteer |
| wagonette | warrantee | whereupon | whimsicality | whosoever |

Now what happens with secondary stress when the fourth or fifth or sixth syllable has primary stress, there being two, three, four or five syllables preceding the stressed syllable?

Among them some words have secondary stress on the first or on the second syllable. A great number of examples will be given, and more can be, if wanted, as I have checked many while reading through Prof. Jones's Pronouncing Dictionary and classified long words.

Prof. Jones says in his Outline of English Phonetics; "English word-stress cannot be learnt by means of rules. In most cases there is no rule as to the incidence of the stress, and when rules can be formulated at all, they are generally subject to numerous exceptions. It is therefore necessary for the foreign student to learn the stress of every word individually."

This is quite true. However, there seems to be a certain rule concerning the position of secondary stress—a rule which I may say I have discovered.

Just look at some of them :

classification (*ˌklæsɪfɪˈkeɪʃən*), centralization (*ˌsentrəlaɪˈzeɪʃən*), examination (*ɪgˌzæmɪˈneɪʃən*) and pronunciation (*prəˌnɑːnsiˈeɪʃən*), and compare them with classify (*ˈklæsi faɪ*), centralize (*ˈsentrəlaɪz*), examine (*ɪgˌzæmɪn*) and pronounce (*prəˈnaʊns*).

Thus nouns compared with their verb forms, the position of their secondary stress can be told. We can say that its position can be fixed from their corresponding words.

I wrote about it to Prof. Jones on December 23, 1951, and received his answer on January 15, 1952, saying, "You are correct about the secondary stressing of words with three weak syllables preceding the strong stress."

Examples of words which have primary stress on the fourth, fifth or sixth syllable are given below :

Notes : 1.....4 indicates secondary stress on the first syllable and

a primary one on the fourth syllable.

1.....5 indicates secondary stress on the first syllable and a primary one on the fifth syllable.

2.....4: secondary stress on the second syllable and a primary one on the fourth syllable

2.....5: secondary stress on the second syllable and a primary one on the fifth syllable

2.....6: secondary stress on the second syllable and a primary one on the sixth syllable

1.....4

| | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| alimentation | amicability | amplification | anglicization |
| anthropological | applicability | argumentation | aristocratic |
| aristotelian | atomization | authorization | autobiographer |
| autotypography | calcification | canalization | canonization |
| carbonization | caricaturist | centralization | certification |
| characteristic | cinematography | circumlocution | civilization |
| clarification | classification | codification | colonization |
| dedicatee | fundamentality | gratification | harmonization |
| humanization | hypnotization | idolization | jollification |
| jubilation | jurisdiction | justification | localization |
| magnification | manageability | mathematician | mobilization |
| modification | mystification | nasalization | neutralization |
| notification | organization | ornamentation | practicability |
| representation | reputability | scandalization | sentimentality |
| stabilization | tantalization | temporization | vaporization |
| velarization | versification | navigability | labialization |

1.....5

| | | | |
|----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| artificiality | attitudinarian | characterization | apopsiopsis |
| generalization | reconciliation | regularization | volatilization |

2.....5

| | | | |
|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| abbreviation | abomination | academician | acceleration |
| accentuation | acceptability | accessibility | acclimatation |
| accomodation | accountability | accumulation | adaptability |
| administration | admissibility | adulteration | advisability |
| affiliation | alineation | alleviation | alliteration |
| amalgamation | ambassadorial | amenability | annihilation |

| | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| annunciation | antagonistic | anticipation | apocalyptic |
| apologetic | appendicitis | appreciation | approachability |
| appropriation | approximation | articulation | assassination |
| asseveration | association | attainability | attainability |
| attractability | authentication | availability | attenuation |
| bacteriological | calumniation | capitulation | coincidental |
| collaboration | combustibility | commerciality | confederation |
| congratulation | consideration | defensibility | deliberation |
| pronunciation | effectuality | elaboration | ejaculation |
| elimination | enumeration | enunciation | exaggeration |
| examination | excitability | familiarity | felicitation |
| gesticulation | gravitation | habilitation | hallucination |
| humiliation | idealization | illumination | imagination |
| immutability | immovability | impersonality | impossibility |
| legitimation | matriculation | negotiability | negotiation |
| originality | participation | peculiarity | reliability |
| remuneration | respectability | responsibility | |

2.....5

| | | | |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| beatification | capitalization | democratization | identification |
| electrification | immobilization | exemplification | impenetrability |
| imperishability | impracticability | incalculability | incomparability |
| insuperability | intelligibility | intensification | macadamization |
| materialization | personification | solidification | syllabification |
| tuberculization | unalterability | | |

2.....6

americanization anathematization incomprehensibility irreconcilability

Based on the lecture delivered at Nagoya University
at the 24th meeting of the English Literary Society of
Japan on June 7, 1952.