

THE FEATURES OF STRESS AND INTONATION IN ENGLISH FOR LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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Abstract This article focuses on highlighting the importance of understanding stress and intonation features for English language learners. Stress and intonation play a crucial role in ensuring accurate pronunciation and effective expression in English. The article analyzes the significance of stress within words and sentences, as well as the different types of intonation and their role in communication. It also addresses the challenges learners face when mastering these features and provides practical recommendations to aid in their acquisition. Overall, the article aims to support English learners in achieving clearer and more natural pronunciation.

Key words: stress, logical emphasis, lexical stress, logical-grammatical emphasis, intonation system, melody, pause, tone up speech, emotional intonation, lexical units, grammatical categories.

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada ingliz tili o'rganuvchilar orasida urg'u va intonatsiya xususiyatlarini o'rganishning ahamiyatini ko'rsatishga qaratilgan. Urg'u va intonatsiya ingliz tilida to'g'ri talaffuz va ifodalashni ta'minlashda muhim rol o'ynaydi. Maqolada urg'uning so'zdagi va gapdagi ahamiyati, shuningdek, intonatsiyaning turli turlari va ularning muloqotdagi roli tahlil qilingan. Urg'u va intonatsiya o'rganishda yuzaga keladigan qiyinchiliklar va o'rganuvchilarga bu xususiyatlarni o'rganishda yordam beradigan amaliy maslahatlar ham keltirilgan. Ushbu maqola ingliz tilini o'rganuvchilarga tilni aniq va tabiiy talaffuz qilishda yordam berishga qaratilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: urg'u, mantiqiy urg'u, leksik urg'u, mantiqiy-grammatik urg'u, intonatsiya tizimi, ohang, pauza, nutq ohangi, emotsional intonatsiya, leksik birliklar, grammatik kategoriyalar.

Аннотация В данной статье рассматривается важность понимания особенностей ударения и интонации для учащихся английского языка. Ударение и интонация играют

ключевую роль в обеспечении точного произношения и эффективного выражения на английском языке. Статья анализирует значение ударения в словах и предложениях, а также различные типы интонации и их роль в коммуникации. Также рассматриваются трудности, и предлагаются практические рекомендации для их усвоения. В целом, статья направлена на помощь учащимся английского языка в достижении более четкого и естественного произношения.

Ключевые слова: акцент, логическое ударение, лексическое ударение, логическое грамматическое ударение, интонационная система, мелодия, пауза, тон речи, эмоциональная интонация, лексические единицы, грамматические категории.

INTRODUCTION

Stress and intonation are fundamental aspects of spoken English that significantly impact how speakers communicate. These features can enormously alter the meaning of sentences and are essential for understanding spoken language. For learners of English, particularly second language learners, mastering stress and intonation is important for upgrading pronunciation and ensuring effective communication. While stress refers to the emphasis placed on specific syllables in words or on words in sentences, intonation refers to the rise and fall of pitch in speech, which helps express meaning, emotions, and intentions

METHODOLOGY

This paper adopts a qualitative research approach, drawing upon existing studies and literature in the fields of phonetics and second language acquisition. The research concentrates on exploring different aspects of stress and intonation, particularly their significance in communication and the challenges faced by language learners. To illustrate how stress and intonation influence meaning, the paper contains examples from both formal and informal spoken English. Additionally, it offers practical advice and exercises based on teaching strategies for effectively instruction stress and intonation.

Stress in English

Stress refers to the emphasis placed on certain syllables within a word or on particular words within a sentence. English is a stress-timed language, meaning that stressed syllables happen at roughly identical intervals, while unstressed syllables are abbreviated to fit this rhythm. The position of stress in a word or sentences can change its naturalness.

1. Lexical Stress and Word Stress

In English, lexical stress refers to the emphasis placed on certain syllables within a word, which can help differentiate between words that are otherwise spelled the same but have various meanings or grammatical functions. Word stress is a broader term that includes lexical stress, as it covers the stress placed on a syllable within a word, but it can also refer to stress patterns that separate words in a sentence.

For example, in the case of the word “record” and “contract,” the stress can change based on whether it is used as a noun or a verb:

*REcord (noun)- The stress is on the first syllable , as in “ I have a record of the event”.

*reCORD (verb)- The stress is on the second syllable, as in “I will record the meeting”.

*CONtract (noun)-The stress is on the first syllable, as in “I signed a CONtract yesterday”.

*conTRACT (verb)- The stress is on the second syllable, as in “ I will contract the company for the job”.

Types of Lexical Stress

1. Fixed Stress Language: In some languages, stress is steady, meaning it always occurs on the same syllable of a word. For example, in Polish, stress is almost always on the first syllable.

2.Variable Stress Language: In English, stress is changeable, meaning it can shift depending on the word and its grammatical function, as shown in the noun and verb examples above.

Grammatical Stress and Sentence Stress are associated, but they serve various aims in speech.

*Grammatical Stress: This type of stress is related to the grammatical function of words and their syntactic roles in a sentence. Grammatical stress is usually placed on function words, such as auxiliary verbs, prepositions, and articles, depending on their role in the sentence structure. These words tend to be unstressed in English because they do not carry the main meaning of the sentence but help form its structure. Example:

“She has already finished her homework.” In this example, ‘has’ and “finished” are grammatically related, but “finished” carries more stress because the key word that conveys the meaning of the sentence.

*Sentence Stress: Sentence stress refers to the emphasis placed on certain words (nouns, main verbs, adjectives and adverbs) are usually stressed because they carry the key meaning of the sentence. Function words (articles, prepositions, auxiliary verbs) are typically unstressed because they do not carry the main meaning, but help with the structure of the sentence. Example:

“I went to the store yesterday.” In this sentence, “went” and “store” are stressed because they carry the main meaning. Words like “I”, “to”, and “the” are not stressed, as they are function words.

Relationship:

Grammatical stress and sentence stress are related in that sentence stress demonstrate which words in a sentence are emphasized, including how grammatical elements like auxiliary verbs and prepositions may or may not stressed.

While grammatical stress concentrates on the function of words in the sentence structure, sentence stress helps highlight the key words that carry the main meaning of the sentence.

Logical Emphasis.

Logical emphasis refers to the stress placed on certain words in a sentence to convey a particular meaning or to highlight important information. For instance, in the sentence “I did not say he stole the money,” the words did not and stole accept emphasis to clarify the intended meaning. Logical emphasis is often used to correct misunderstandings or to express emotions like amazement or rage.

Intonation in English.

Intonation refers to the variation in pitch while speaking. It plays a significant role in conveying emotions, mindset, and intentions. The way pitch increases and falls in a sentence can alter its meaning or even make it sound more courteous or rude. English intonation patterns are closely linked to the melody of speech, making it important for learners to understand and master them for effective communication.

Different Types of Intonation.

English features various distinct intonation patterns, including:

*Rising Intonation: This happens when the pitch increases towards the end of a sentence, typically used in yes-no questions or when the speaker is uncertain. For example, “Are you coming?” The rising pitch indicates it is a question.

*Falling Intonation: The pitch decreases at the end of the sentence. This is commonly used in statements, commands, and wh-questions (e.g. “Where are you going?”). Falling intonation suggests competition or certainty.

*Rising-Falling Intonations a pattern in which the pitch of the voice first rises and then falls within a sentence. This type of intonation is often used to express certainty, strong emphasis, or to convey complete thoughts, especially in statements, commands, or when making lists. (“I want to go to the store, not the park.”)

Uses of Rising-Falling Intonation:

1.Statements of fact: Rising-falling intonation is commonly used in declarative sentences to indicate a statement or fact.

*She arrived on time.

2.Emphasis or Strong Feelings: It is used to emphasize certain words or ideas, especially when the speaker wants to strongly highlight something.

*I love this movie!

3.Commands and Request: Rising-falling intonation can give a more forceful tone to requests or commands, showing authority or certainty.

*Please close the door.

4. Lists: When listing items, rising-falling intonation can be used at the end of each item to express completion of the list.

*I need bread, milk, and eggs.

Falling-Rising Intonation is a pattern of intonation where the pitch of the voice rises and then falls within a sentence. This type of intonation is typically used to express contrast, uncertainty, or to indicate that the speaker is persisting their thought. It often occurs in more complex sentences, particularly in cases where there is emphasis on a particular part of the sentence.

Examples of Falling-Rising Intonation: *I want to go to the store, not the park.

Uses of Falling-Rising Intonation:

1. Contrast: The rise and fall of pitch help to highlight a contrast or comparison between two ideas.

*I like coffee, but I prefer tea.

2. Uncertainty or Hesitation: It can signal that the speaker is unsure or has not fully decided.

*I think I might go to the party later.

3. Politeness: It can often the message, making it sound less direct or more polite.

*I could help you with that if you need it.

Pause and Melody.

Pauses in speech contribute to rhythm and clarity. A well-timed pause can allow the listener to process information and separate between different parts of a sentence. For example, the sentence “I am going to the store to buy some fruit” can be understood more clearly with a brief pause after “store” to distinguish the two actions. Melody in speech refers to the overall pattern of pitch changes that occur across a sentence or discourse. It helps to indicate mood and emotional states, such as excitement or sadness.

Speech Styles

Different speech styles (e.g. formal, informal, academic) require varying levels of stress and intonation. In formal speech, grammatical stress and falling intonation are common, whereas in informal speech, rising intonation and logical emphasis are more regular. Advanced learners need to modify their speech based on the context to sound natural and suitable.

Grammatical Categories

Grammatical categories like tense, aspect, modality, and question forms often influence intonation patterns. For instance, a rising intonation pattern is commonly used in yes-no questions, while falling intonation is used in wh-questions.

Challenges for Language Learners

Many language learners contend with mastering stress and intonation due to differences between their native language and English. Some languages do not use stress or intonation in the same way, leading to misunderstandings. Common issues include

incorrect word stress, which can change the meaning of a word, and inappropriate intonation patterns that may confuse the listener.

Tips for Overcoming Challenges:

Regular practice with native materials such as listening to podcasts, watching videos can help learners understand and internalize proper stress and intonation patterns.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, stress and intonation are integral features of English pronunciation and play a significant role in effective communication. Mastering these features is crucial for language learners who wish to sound natural, fluent, and expressive in their speech. By understanding the different types of stress and intonation patterns, learners can upgrade both their speaking and listening skills. Regular practice, imitation of native speakers, and focused exercises can help learners overcome common challenges and master stress and intonation for clearer, more natural speech. Mastering stress and intonation is essential for effective communication in English. Word stress and sentence stress help learners emphasize key words, conveying meaning and ensuring clarity. Grammatical stress ensures correct sentence structure, while lexical stress distinguishes between different meanings of words. Intonation, including rising, falling and rising-falling patterns, plays a crucial role in expressing emotions, intentions, and emphasis. English learners may face challenges due to differences in rhythm and stress patterns between languages. However, with practice and awareness, learners can improve their speech, sound more natural, and convey their intended message accurately. Understanding these features enhances both fluency and comprehension, facilitating more effective communication in various contexts.

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