THE INTERACTION BETWEEN STRESS AND MORPHOLOGICAL STRUCTURE IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH: A COMPARATIVE PHONOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract: *This article presents a comparative phonological analysis of the interaction between stress and the morphological structure of the word in Uzbek and English. It demonstrates that in Uzbek, as a representative of the agglutinative type, stress regularly shifts to the final syllable as successive suffixes are appended to the stem, whereas in English, derivational and inflectional affixes condition stress placement within an essentially free-stress system. The analysis brings to light the typological distance between the two languages: in Uzbek, stress operates as an indicator of grammatical structure and morphological completeness, while in English it functions as a means of lexical and grammatical contrast. The findings are of practical relevance for comparative phonology, pronunciation pedagogy and translation theory.*

Keywords: *stress, morphological structure, agglutination, derivational affixes, comparative phonology, Uzbek language, English language, prosodic typology.*

Annotatsiya: *Maqolada o'zbek va ingliz tillarida urg'uning so'zning morfologik strukturasi bilan o'zaro ta'siri qiyosiy-fonologik aspektda tahlil qilingan. Tadqiqotda agglyutinativ tip vakili bo'lgan o'zbek tilida urg'u suffikslarning ketma-ket qo'shilishi bilan oxirgi bo'g'inga muntazam ravishda ko'chishi, ingliz tilida esa morfologik shartlilik asosida fleksiyalar va derivativ qo'shimchalar urg'uning erkin joylashuviga ta'sir qilishi ko'rsatilgan. Tahlil natijasida ikki tilning tipologik farqlari aniqlangan.*

Kalit so'zlar: *urg'u, morfologik struktura, agglyutinatsiya, so'z yasovchi qo'shimchalar, qiyosiy fonologiya, o'zbek tili, ingliz tili, prosodik tipologiya.*

Аннотация: *В статье проводится сравнительно-фонологический анализ взаимодействия ударения и морфологической структуры слова в узбекском и английском языках. Показано, что в узбекском языке, относящемся к агглютинативному типу, ударение регулярно перемещается на последний слог при последовательном присоединении суффиксов, тогда как в английском языке деривационные и флективные аффиксы обусловливают размещение ударения в системе свободного ударения. Выявлены типологические различия двух языков.*

Ключевые слова: *ударение, морфологическая структура, агглютинация, словообразовательные аффиксы, сопоставительная фонология, узбекский язык, английский язык, просодическая типология.*

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary linguistics, the comparative investigation of language structure across different levels has become a particularly productive line of inquiry. One of the central concerns of phonological analysis is the interaction between stress and the morphological organisation of language, since in many languages changes in the morphological composition of the word directly govern the placement of stress. Stress manifests itself not merely as a prosodic feature but as a systemic factor that participates in shaping both the grammatical and the lexical identity of the word.

Uzbek and English present a strikingly contrastive typological picture in this respect. Uzbek, being an agglutinative language, exhibits a stress system in which prominence regularly shifts to the final syllable as derivational and inflectional suffixes are appended to the stem. English, by contrast, possesses a free-stress system in which derivational and inflectional morphemes may attract, shift, or leave unchanged the position of stress in markedly different ways. This contrast is not an abstract typological curiosity but a phenomenon with direct practical consequences for pronunciation teaching, translation and lexical precision.

The aim of the present article is to analyse the interaction between stress and morphological structure in Uzbek and English from a comparative perspective and to formulate the regularities and typological conclusions that arise from this comparison. To achieve this aim, three principal objectives have been set: to identify the patterns of stress shift produced by agglutinative suffixation in Uzbek; to develop a classification of morphologically conditioned stress in English; and to compare the morphological-prosodic systems of the two languages and to draw typological conclusions on this basis.

The material of the study draws on the theoretical contributions of U.K. Yusupov, A.A. Abduazizov, M. Mirzayev and other Uzbek linguists, the foundational works of P. Roach, A.C. Gimson, J.C. Wells and B. Hayes in English phonology, and lexical examples selected from both languages. The analysis employs comparative-typological and contrastive methods.

1. Stress and Agglutinative Word Formation in Uzbek

Uzbek belongs to the Turkic family and is one of the canonical representatives of the agglutinative type. In languages of this type, word formation and inflection proceed through the sequential attachment of suffixes to a lexical root. Each suffix expresses a distinct grammatical meaning and, in turn, becomes an integral part of the phonological word. This morphological organisation has direct consequences for stress placement: as a rule, stress in Uzbek falls on the final syllable of the word and shifts toward the end as the morphological structure expands.

For example, the sequence kitob (stress on the final syllable: ki-ˈtob) — kitob+lar (ki-tob-ˈlar) — kitob+lar+im (ki-tob-la-ˈrim) — kitob+lar+im+dan (ki-tob-la-rim-ˈdan) illustrates the regular shifting of stress. With every newly added

suffix, stress moves to the new final syllable of the extended form. This process is commonly described in Uzbek phonology as cascading stress shift and is recognised as one of the central regularities of agglutinative phonological organisation.

This stress shift is not arbitrary but reflects a systematic grammatical principle: each newly attached suffix becomes part of the phonological word, and stress placement adjusts accordingly to mirror the updated morphological structure. In this sense, stress in Uzbek functions as an indicator of morphological completeness: the appearance of stress on the final syllable signals that the word has reached its final morphological shape.

At the same time, the language exhibits a number of exceptions to the final-stress rule. Foremost among these are borrowed words, particularly from Russian and other European languages: many such loanwords entered Uzbek relatively recently and preserve their original stress patterns (for example, ˈpapka, ˈkomp'yuter). Certain function words, modal particles and interjections also display atypical stress behaviour. These exceptions, however, remain limited in number and do not constitute an alternative stress system within the language; they do not undermine the general characterisation of Uzbek as a language with stable final-syllable stress.

It is essential to note that changes in stress position in Uzbek do not typically produce changes in lexical meaning. This observation leads to an important theoretical conclusion: stress in Uzbek carries a low functional load. It does not serve to distinguish lexical items and does not yield minimal pairs based on stress alone. The underlying reason is that Uzbek belongs to the syllable-timed rhythmic type, in which vowels retain their full phonetic quality in both stressed and unstressed positions and undergo no systematic reduction.

2. Stress and Morphological Conditioning in English

English is genetically a Germanic language and, typologically, an analytic-inflectional one. English stress is a free, variable and lexically specified system. In other words, the placement of stress in an English word is not governed by a single uniform rule but is determined by the interplay of several factors — lexical structure, morphological composition and historical origin. Together, these factors require an individual decision for every word in the lexicon.

Derivational affixes in English fall into three principal categories according to the way they interact with stress. The first category comprises stress-attracting suffixes such as -ee, -eer, -ese, -esque and -ique, which invariably attract stress to themselves (employˈee, mountainˈeer, JapanˈEse, picturˈEsque, uniˈque). The second category includes stress-shifting suffixes such as -ic, -ity, -ion, -ial and -ious, which shift stress to the syllable immediately preceding them (ˈphotograph → photoˈgraphic, ˈdemocrat → demoˈcracy, ˈcurious → curiˈosity). The third category consists of stress-neutral suffixes such as -ness, -less, -ful, -ly, -ment, -er and -ing,

which leave the underlying stress pattern of the stem unchanged (ˈhappy → ˈhappiness, ˈtreat → ˈtreatment).

This three-way system of suffixes stands in sharp contrast to the regular final-syllable rule of Uzbek. In English, the behaviour of a suffix with respect to stress cannot be predicted from its segmental form alone — this information has to be acquired together with each individual lexical item. In addition, English makes extensive use of morphological conversion, in which a noun and a verb derived from the same root are distinguished by a shift in stress placement. The most familiar such pairs are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Noun–Verb conversion pairs in English: stress as a means of lexical contrast

№	Noun (stress on 1st syllable)	Meaning	Verb (stress on 2nd syllable)	Meaning
1	REcord	a written account	reCORD	to register, document
2	PREsent	a gift	preSENT	to give formally
3	OBject	a thing, item	obJECT	to disagree, oppose
4	INcrease	a rise, growth	inCREASE	to grow larger
5	PERmit	a written permission	perMIT	to allow

Note: capitalised syllables indicate the position of primary stress. In each pair, the segmental composition is identical, yet the contrast in meaning and grammatical category is carried by stress placement alone.

As Table 1 demonstrates, stress in English can carry a lexical functional load comparable to that of phonemes themselves. This phenomenon has no counterpart in Uzbek: no minimal pair in Uzbek is formed solely by a shift in stress placement. Moreover, in English, changes in stress are accompanied by significant changes in vowel quality: unstressed vowels are reduced to the central neutral vowel schwa /ə/. For example, in the sequence ˈphotograph /ˈfoʊtəgrɑːf/ → phoˈtography /fəˈtɒgrəfi/, the same orthographic vowel is realised with entirely different phonetic content depending on its position relative to stress. Such reduction processes are absent in Uzbek, where vowels preserve their full quality regardless of their position with respect to stress.

3. Comparative and Typological Conclusions

The analysis presented above allows for a precise mapping of the typological landscape governing the interaction between stress and morphology in the two languages. Table 2 below summarises the principal differences across the key parameters of comparison.

Table 2. Comparative typology of the stress–morphology interaction in Uzbek and English

Parameter	Uzbek	English
Stress placement	Predominantly final, predictable	Free, variable, lexically specified
Functional load	Low — not lexically contrastive	High — distinguishes words and grammatical categories
Interaction with morphology	Regularly shifts to final syllable with each new suffix	Determined by suffix type: attracting, shifting, neutral
Vowel reduction	Absent; vowel quality preserved	Extensive; unstressed vowels reduce to schwa
Rhythmic typology	Syllable-timed	Stress-timed
Grammatical function of stress	Marker of morphological completeness	Lexical and grammatical category differentiator

As Table 2 makes clear, the two stress systems differ not only with respect to the question of where stress falls but also, and more fundamentally, with respect to the question of what stress does. In Uzbek, stress serves an organisational and grammatical function: it marks the morphological boundaries of the word and ensures that the word is perceived as a single, unified phonological unit. In English, stress functions in this organisational role as well, but in addition it carries an independent lexical and grammatical contrastive function — a function that is virtually absent from Uzbek.

This typological contrast has more than purely theoretical interest; it has direct practical implications.

First, Uzbek-speaking learners of English systematically encounter a number of stress-related difficulties: they tend to transfer the final-stress pattern of their L1 to polysyllabic English words (for example, producing *photoˈgraph instead of ˈphotograph); they fail to differentiate noun–verb minimal pairs (REcord vs. reCORD); and they produce unstressed syllables with full vowels rather than schwa, thereby disrupting the rhythmic structure characteristic of English. Second, in translation practice — particularly in interpreting and dubbing — failure to account for stress differences may result in genuine loss of meaning.

From a pedagogical perspective, the present comparative analysis indicates that English pronunciation teaching must address stress as a system in its own right, distinct from segmental phonetics. Such an approach involves systematic work with minimal stress pairs, drills on vowel reduction, exercises on stress shifts in derivational morphology, and rhythm-based practice.

This methodology corresponds to the framework known in applied linguistics as explicit contrastive instruction, developed and theoretically grounded in the work of Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin.

Conclusion

The present study has examined the interaction between stress and morphological structure in Uzbek and English from a comparative phonological perspective and has arrived at the following conclusions.

First, stress in Uzbek is a direct reflection of agglutinative morphology: it shifts regularly to the final syllable as each new suffix is appended to the word. This shift is not arbitrary but proceeds in accordance with a grammatical principle, and stress thereby fulfils the function of marking the morphological completeness of the word.

Second, the stress–morphology relationship in English is organised differently: within a free-stress system, derivational and inflectional suffixes interact with stress according to a tripartite classification — stress-attracting, stress-shifting and stress-neutral. This system requires lexical-level memorisation and, through morphological conversion, transforms stress into a means of lexical differentiation.

Third, the comparison of the two languages illustrates the collision of two distinct prosodic models within the broader typology — a syllable-timed model with stable stress and a stress-timed model with free stress. This contrast carries not only theoretical interest but also a clear pedagogical implication: the teaching of English to Uzbek-speaking learners calls for an explicit contrastive approach to pronunciation instruction.

The findings of the study contribute to comparative phonological theory and help to define the typological position of Uzbek in relation to English. Possible directions for further research include the empirical, instrumental verification of stress errors produced by Uzbek learners of English, and the development of contrastive methodologies for pronunciation teaching grounded in the typological framework presented here.

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