

Lecture No. 3:

WORD STRESS: Stress Placement in Complex Words

Introduction

Up to this point, we have considered stress placement in **simple words** consisting of a single **stem**. In the following courses, we shall examine stress placement in **complex words**, which are of two types: words made from the basic stem word with an addition of an affix (prefix or suffix), and compound words which are made of two or more words.

* **Affixes** have one of the three possibilities effects on word stress (Roach, 1991, p.96):

- The affix itself receives the primary stress: **semicircle, chinese**
- The word is stressed just as if the affix was not there (the affix is neutral, it does not affect stress), e.g. un-, ing-, al-, ly-, ness-, less-...
- The stress remains on the stem, but shifts to another syllable (ic-, ation-, ...)

1. Stress assignment on prefixes (most of the prefixes do not receive stress)

For example, in the words containing prefixes such as: **a-, ab-, an-, co-, de-, dis-, im-, in-, re-, un-** the primary stress mostly does not fall on the prefix but on one of the stem syllables (neutral prefixes)

Prefixes	Example words
a-	aside /ə'saɪd/, aback /ə'bæk/, apart /
ab-	abnormal /æb'nɔ:məl/, absolve /əb'zɒlv/
an-	anachronism /ə'næk'rɒnɪzɪzəm/, another /ə'nʌðə/
co-	cooperative /kəʊ'ɒpəreɪtɪv/, cohabit /kəʊ'hæbɪt/, coordinate /
de-	demotivate /di:'məʊtɪveɪt /, decode / di:'kəʊd/, deactivate /
dis-	dislike /dɪs'laɪk/, disagree /dɪsə'grɪ:/, dispatch /dɪ'spætʃ/, disable /
im-	impossible /ɪm'pɒsəbl/, immortal /ɪ'mɔ:təl/, imprison /ɪm'prɪzn/, imbalance /
in-	intoxicate /ɪn'tɒksɪkeɪt/, invaluable /ɪn'væljəbl/, incorrect /
re-	resource /rɪ'zɔ:s/or_/rɪ'sɔ:s/, reorder /rɪ:'ɔ:də/, rearrange /
un-	uncertain /ʌn'sɜ:tɪn/, Unfaithful /ʌn'feɪθfl/, unable /

Exceptions: impotent / /, impulse / /, impudent / /, infinite / /

2. Stress assignment on suffixes

Unlike prefixes, suffixes can either be neutral, receive stress or change stress placement from one syllable to another on the stem.

2.1. Neutral suffixes

For words containing stress-neutral suffixes, the stress does not shift to another syllable when these suffixes are added to the stem and they do not influence its pronunciation.

Suffixes that do not affect stress placement (neutral) are **able, age, al, dom, ern, ful, ing, ist, less, ly, ment, ness, ship, some, wise, ish, un, ous, fy, y, hood...**

neutral suffix	words
able (adj)	considerable /kən'sɪdərəbl/, unavoidable /ʌnə'vɔɪdəbl/, comfortable /
age (adj)	marriage /'mærɪdʒ/, passage /'pæsɪdʒ/, orphanage /
al (adj/n)	actual / /, refusal / /, arrival / /
dom (n)	kingdom /'kɪŋdəm/, Wisdom /'wɪzdəm/, martyrdom /
ern (adj)	western /'westn/, eastern /'i:stən/, northern /'nɔ:ðən/, southern /
ful (adj)	sorrowful /'sɒrəʊfl/, beautiful /'bjʊ:tɪfl/, merciful /
ing (gerund)	educating /'edʒʊkeɪtɪŋ/, interesting /'ɪntrestɪŋ/, consisting /
ist (adj)	journalist /'dʒɜ:nəlɪst/, physicist /'fɪzɪsɪst/, specialist /
less (adj)	bottomless /'bɒtəmləs/, defenseless /dɪ'fensləs/, penniless /
ly (adv)	apparently /ə'pærəntli/, rapidly /'ræpɪdli/, carelessly /
ment (n)	development /dɪ'veləpmənt/, accompaniment /
ness (n)	tenderness /'tendənəs/, greatness /'greɪtnəs/, quietness /
ship (n)	censorship /'sensəʃɪp/, dictatorship /dɪk'tetətʃɪp/, sponsorship /

some	(adj)	<u>adventur<u>some</u></u> , <u>quarrel<u>some</u></u> /'kwɒrɪsəm/, <u>ventur<u>some</u></u> / /
wise	(adj)	otherwise /'ʌðəwaɪz/, clockwise /'klɒkwaɪz/, cornerwise / /
un	(adj)	unhappy / /, unsuccessful
ous	(adj)	dangerous / /
y	(adj)	funny / /
hood	(n)	brotherhood / /, neighbourhood / /

Exceptions: admirable, advertisement, reference, preferable, resident. (transcribe them)

2.2. Stress-carrying suffixes

The suffixes which attract the primary stress placement to the **final syllable** are also called *stress-attracting suffixes* or *stress-carrying suffixes*, which are summarized in the following rule:

Rule: the following suffixes carry the primary stress: **-aire, ee, eer, ese, -ette, esque, ique**

Suffixes	Examples for Transcription
aire	billion <u>aire</u> /bɪljə'neə/, million <u>aire</u> /mɪljə'neə/, question <u>aire</u> / /
ee	absent <u>ee</u> , refer <u>ee</u> ,
eer	engine <u>eer</u> /endʒɪ'nɪə/, volunt <u>eer</u> /vɒlən'tɪə/, mountaine <u>er</u> / /, pion <u>eer</u> / /
ese	Vietnam <u>ese</u> /vɪetnə'mi:z/, Portug <u>ese</u> /pɔ:tʃʊ'gi:z, -tʃʊ-/ , Japan <u>ese</u> , Journ <u>al</u> es <u>e</u>
ette	silhou <u>ette</u> /sɪlu'et/, marion <u>ette</u> /mæriən'et/, laund <u>er</u> ette /lə:n'dret/, kitchen <u>ette</u>
esque	roman <u>esque</u> /rəʊmə'nesk/, pictur <u>esque</u> /pɪktʃə'resk/, arab <u>esque</u> / /
ique	critiqu <u>e</u> /krɪ'ti:k/, techniqu <u>e</u> /tek'ni:k/, un <u>ique</u> /ju:'ni:k/, boutiqu <u>e</u> / /

Remark: 'ade' 'oo' and 'oon' can be either endings or a suffixes; in both cases they receive stress, such as:

1. persuade /pə'sweɪd/, dissuade /dɪ'sweɪd/, blockade /
2. kangaroo /kæŋgə'ru:/, shampoo /ʃæm'pu:/, waterloo / /
3. typhoon /taɪ'fu:n/, balloon /bɔ:l'u:n/, buffoon / /

Exceptions: Igloo /'ɪglu:/, Cuckoo /'kuku:/, decade /'dekeɪd/, comrade /'kɒmreɪd/, employee / /

2.3. Stress-shifting suffixes

Some suffixes cause a change of the primary stress from one syllable to another one on the stem; it either moves to the **penultimate** syllable **ante-penultimate**.

2.3.1. Suffixes causing penultimate stress

Rule: When the following suffixes are added to the stem, the primary stress shifts to the last syllable of the stem (or the penultimate syllable, the syllable preceding the suffix);

Suffixes: eous, graphy, ial, ual, ian, ient, ic, ible, logy, ion, ious, ty ive, meter.

Examples:

Suffix-ending	Examples for Transcription
ic	Athlet <u>ic</u> /æθ'letɪk/, econ <u>om</u> ic /i:kə'nɒmɪk/ , graph <u>ic</u> /'græfɪk/, geogr <u>aph</u> ic /dʒɪ:'gæfɪk/, philosoph <u>ic</u> /fɪlə'sɒfɪk/, psychol <u>og</u> ic /saɪkə'lɒdʒɪk/, spec <u>if</u> ic /spə'sɪfɪk/, scient <u>if</u> ic /saɪən'tɪfɪk/, syntact <u>ic</u> /sɪn'tæktɪk/, semiot <u>ic</u> s /semi'ɒtɪks/ , theoret <u>ic</u> /θɪə'retɪk/, lingu <u>ist</u> ics /lɪŋ'gwɪstɪks/, semant <u>ic</u> s / /, phon <u>et</u> ics.
ion	televis <u>ion</u> /telɪ'vɪʒn/, revis <u>ion</u> /rɪ'vɪʒn/, elis <u>ion</u> /ɪ'lɪʒn/, eros <u>ion</u> / /
tion	relat <u>ion</u> /rɪ'leɪʃn/, associat <u>ion</u> /ə'səʊsɪ'eɪʃn/, participat <u>ion</u> / /

Transcribe the words below:

eous: advantageous
graphy: photography
ial: commercial, financial
ual: intellectual
ian: politician
ient: efficient, sufficient

ible: flexible, impossible
logy: psychology, physiology
ion: perfection, interaction
ious: injurious, furious
ty: complexity, objectivity
ive: attractive, collective

ic: energetic, academic

meter: parameter, kilometer

Most common exceptions: arabic /'ærəbɪk/, arithmetic /ə'riθmətɪk/, arsenic /'ɑ:sənɪk/, Heretic /'herɪtɪk/, catholic /'kæθəlɪk/, lunatic /'lu:nətɪk/, politic /'pɒlɪtɪk/, rhetoric /'retərɪk/.

2.3.2. The verbal suffix –ish causing Penultimate stress:

This is a stress-shifting suffix found only in **verbs** (we can find the suffix –ish with adjectives, but it is a stress neutral suffix like in: Child – Childish /'tʃaɪldɪʃ/)

Rule 3: English **verbs** ending in –ish carry the stress on the penultimate syllable(before this suffix)

E.g: banish /'bænɪʃ/, nourish /'naɪʃ/, polish /'pɒlɪʃ/, cherish /'tʃerɪʃ/, publish /'pʌblɪʃ/, abolish /ə'bɒlɪʃ/, distinguish /dɪ'stɪŋɡwɪʃ/, demolish /dɪ'mɒlɪʃ/, establish /ɪ'stæblɪʃ/.

Exception: The only one exception to this rule is the verb ‘**impoverish**’ /ɪm'pɒvərɪʃ/.

2.4.3. Verbal endings causing Antepenultimate stress: (2nd from the suffix or 3rd from the end)

Rule 5: English **verbs** of three syllable or more ending in –ate, –ise (ize) or –fy, are stressed on the antepenultimate syllable (3rd from the end).

Examples:

–ate	Calculate /'kælkjuleɪt/, Discriminate /dɪ'skrɪmɪneɪt/, Evaluate /ɪ'veljueɪt/, Generate /'dʒenəreɪt/, Hibernate /'haɪbərneɪt/, Investigate /ɪn'vestɪgeɪt/, Legitimate /lə'dʒɪtɪmeɪt/, Participate /pɑ:'tɪsɪpeɪt/, Separate /'sepəreɪt/.
–ise (ize)	Analyse /'ænləɪz/, Civilize /'sɪvəlaɪz/, Democratize /'deməkrə'taɪz/, organize /'ɔ:gənaɪz/, Paralyse /'pærəlaɪz/, Publicise, Utilise /'ju:tɪlaɪz/
–fy	Clarify, dignify, identify /aɪ'dentɪfaɪ/, electrify, exemplify, nullify /'nʌlɪfaɪ/ purify /'pʊrɪfaɪ/, qualify /'kwɒlɪfaɪ/, signify, simplify, solidify /'sɒlɪdaɪz/.

Exercise : transcribe the following words : operate, exaggerate, recognize, criticize, apologize, associate.

Exercise : transcribe these words: aristocracy, democracy, pharmacy, ambiguity, creativity, credibility, opportunity, necessity, reality, society, attitude, gratitude, aptitude.

Time for Practice

Exercise 1: Transcribe the following complex words and marks stress

Examples	Transcription	Examples	Transcription
Assistance	Defiance	.....
Allowance	Servant	.....
Freedom	Difference	.....
Frightful	Fatherhood	.....
Preparing	Fearlessly	.....
Uselessness	Amendment	.....
Elitist	Troublesome	.....
Afterwards	Research	.....
Otherwise		

Exercise 2: Transcribe the following words

Examples	Transcription	Examples	Transcription
Limonade Canonnade	Barricade Cascade	..........
Refugee Detainee Devotee	Trainee Interviewee	..........
Velveteen Careen	Seventeen Halloween	..........
Mountaineer	Pioneer	.....
Journalese	Japanese	.....
Grotesque	Evacuee	.....
Tattoo	Cartoon	.....
Cigarette	Cassette	.....
Antique	Boutique	.....

Exercise 3: Transcribe the following words

Examples	Transcription	Examples	Transcription
Problematic Gigantic Electric	Poetic Magnetic Basic	...............
Occasion	Illusion	.....
Communication Fiction Radiography Trilogy Kilometer	Publication Civilisation Filmography Eulogy Speedometer	.........................

Exercise 4: Transcribe the following words

Examples	Transcription	Examples	Transcription
Duplicate Pasteurise Falsify	Associate Americanize Horrify	...............
Lunacy Latitude Historical	Humility Variety Poetry	...............
Radiography Trilogy Kilometer	Filmography Eulogy Speedometer	...............