

## LECTURE 6: INTRODUCTION TO WORD STRESS

### I-Basic syllable structure:

The syllable is a unit containing one and only one vowel either alone as in *I* /aɪ/ or surrounded by consonants in certain arrangements such as *tick* /tɪk/, *click* /klɪk/.

**Examples:** *Ann* /æn/, *sit* /sɪt/, *split* /splɪt/, *twelfths* /twelfθs/, *say* /seɪ/, *spray* /spreɪ/, *kicked* /kɪkt/.

<b>Counting Syllables:</b> To find the number of syllables in a word, follow the next steps:
1. Count the vowels in the word.
2. Subtract any silent vowels, (like the silent <i>e</i> at the end of the word) such as: <i>rate</i> /reɪt/.
3. Diphthongs count as one vowel sound like: <i>time</i> /taɪm/, <i>tone</i> /təʊn/, <i>toy</i> /tɔɪ/, <i>leave</i> /li:v/.
4. The number of vowel sounds equals the number of syllables. E.g.: <i>receive</i> /rɪ'si:v/, <i>many</i> /menɪ/
5. When there is a word that has an '-le' in final position, we divide the syllable before '-le'.

**For example:** a/ble, hum/ble, dou/ble, ca/ble, no/ble and whi/stle.

<b>Syllabic Consonants:</b> The English consonants /m/, /n/, /r/, /l/, can be the nuclei of syllables under certain conditions.	
/r/ can be a nucleus mostly in final position of syllables /r/ as the nucleus; in other words, there is no vowel in these syllables, even though they have one in the spelling.	/l/ and the nasals /m, n/ become syllable nuclei /l̩, m̩, n̩/ when they follow an alveolar consonant in the last syllable of a word.
<b>Example:</b> words of syllabic /r/ as nucleus: <i>camera, reference, difference, considerable.</i>	<b>Example</b> words of syllabic /l̩/, /m̩/, /n̩/: <i>able, battle, bottom, rhythm button, revision.</i>

### II- The nature of stress:

In English, when a word has more than one syllable, one of the syllables will be produced with more force, energy, and prominence than the rest, this emphasis is called stress. We mark a stressed syllable in transcription by placing a small vertical line ( ' ) high up before the syllable.

#### 2.1. Factors of stress placement:

<b>1. Loudness:</b>	stressed syllables seem to be louder to the listener's ear than unstressed ones.
<b>2. Duration or Length:</b>	Stressed syllables are longer than unstressed ones and take more time
<b>3. Vowel quality</b>	stressed syllables mostly have strong vowels /e, æ, ʌ, aɪ, iː, ɔː, ɜː, əʊ, aɪ, aʊ/ whereas the weak vowels /ə, ɪ, ʊ/ are frequently unstressed in polysyllable words.
<b>4. Pitch of the voice:</b>	it is the most efficient factor for recognizing the prominence of stressed syllable, in which the stressed syllable is pronounced with a higher pitch than unstressed ones.

## 2.2. Levels of stress:

1 <sup>st</sup> Level:	2 <sup>nd</sup> Level:	3 <sup>rd</sup> Level
the primary stress' is strongest type of stress in prominence, that is, (longer, louder, and higher in pitch).	Secondary stress' is weaker than the primary stress in prominence (without pitch).	Unstressed' or 'Zero stress' which is the absence of stress. It can be found in the weak syllables /ə,ɪ,ʊ/ and syllabic consonants.
<b>E.g:</b> <i>fashion</i> /'fæʃn /, <i>event</i> /ɪ'vent /, <i>language</i> /'læŋgwɪdʒ/.	<b>E.g:</b> <i>Examination</i> /ɪg,zæmɪ'neɪʃn /; <i>Photographic</i> /,fəʊtə'græfɪk /; <i>International</i> /,ɪntə'næʃənəl /.	<b>E.g:</b> <i>Money</i> / mʌ nɪ /, <i>Design</i> / dɪ 'zain/, <i>Sudden</i> /sʌdən/

## III. Rules of stress placement in simple words:

**In two-syllable words:** The choice of stress placement in two-syllable words is either the *first* syllable or the *second* one:

1. Stress on 1 syllable	2. Stress on second syllable
most of <b>two-syllable nouns &amp; adjectives</b> are stressed on the 1 syllable.	most of <b>two-syllable verbs</b> receive the stress on the second syllable.
<b>Examples:</b> <i>china, table, camera, complex, clever, happy, eager,</i>	<b>E.g :</b> <i>apply</i> / ə'plai /; <i>attract</i> /ə'trækt/; <i>arrive</i> /ə'raɪv/; <i>perfect</i> /pə'fekt/; <i>begin</i> /bɪ'gɪn/.

**N.B:** The syllable which contains the schwa /ə/ is never stressed.

## Time for practice

**Task 1:** split up the following words into syllables using slashes / / (i.e: Geology /ge/o/lo/gy/)

1-Unwavering –Evil –Enter –Apology–Creation–Accurate–Emphasis –Circular –Trouble.

**Task 2:** classify and transcribe the following words according to their stress placement

*Complain, contact, secret, acquire, contract, perceive, affix (n), graduate (v), subject (n), object (v), balloon, jacket, product, divine, compound, content, collect, detail, absent (v).*

First syllable is stressed	Second syllable is stressed

**Task 3:** convert the following sentences into their corresponding orthography

1- /ðə 'kɑ: 'sɪ:t ɪz 'brəʊkən ɪn ðə 'gærɑ:dʒ ənd ɪt 'nɪ:dʒ rɪ'peə/

2- /aɪv 'sɪ:n 'pɪ:tə 'wɒndɪŋ ə'krɒs ðɪ 'aʊtbɪldɪŋz əv pə'li:s 'steɪʃn/