An Approach to English Phonology
Mohammed AbdAlla Mohammed
Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics, Department of English Language & Translation, College of Science & Arts Arrass, Qassim University, KSA
Corresponding Author: Mohammed Abdalla Mohammed, E-mail: dr.mohammed_saleem@hotmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Received: December 01, 2019
Accepted: December 22, 2019
Published: December 31, 2019
Volume: 2
Issue: 7
DOI: 10.32996/ijllt.2019.2.7.15

ABSTRACT

This study aims at clarifying various concepts in the linguistic field of English phonology. The researcher has adopted the descriptive research methodology. The study has emerged upon the observations of the researcher in teaching English pronunciation and phonology classes at the tertiary level. A very big number of students lack the correct information about some fundamental concepts in the domain of English phonology. Thus, this study has been conducted as an attempt to illuminate some vague and obscure concepts that cause a real learning problem to students who study English phonology in particular and those who study English language in general. Students are not aware of basic English phonological concepts such as homophones, homographs, homonyms, etc. In addition, students lack knowledge of the structure of the syllable, syllabification process, counting syllables in words, etc. Moreover, most English language learners are not familiar with stress patterns, stress shift, unstressed syllables, etc. In a nutshell, this study has been carried out due to several noticeable learning weaknesses that students encounter in their learning process, so it attempts to resolve some of these problematic difficulties and ease the way to assimilate some essential English phonology concepts.

KEYWORDS

Phonology, homophones, homographs, homonyms, capitonyms, syllabification, syllable analysis, stress.

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper is intended to highlight some areas in English phonology that might seem interesting to some English language learners as well as teachers. The paper comprises definitions of terms, transcription, pronunciation of (-ed) and (-s) endings, homographs, homophones, homonyms, capitonyms, clear and dark /l/, the syllable, and stress. This was conducted due to the urgent need of English language learners to have a general idea about some rules that govern correct pronunciation in English language. As a result of the inconsistency and disparity between spelling and pronunciation of the vast majority of English words, this paper intends to elucidate some topics in the field of English phonology.

2. DEFINITION OF PHONOLOGY

Phonology is one part of the study of language systems. It deals with the analysis and description of the meaningful sounds that human beings make during their everyday oral communication. It is intended to describe the function of these sounds. It also studies the differences and similarities of speech sounds. In addition, it concerns itself with how these sounds influence on another.

According to Richard Nordquist (2019), "Phonology is the branch of linguistics concerned with the study of speech sounds with reference to their distribution and patterning".

Pennington M.C. (2007) cites: many different answers can be given to the question, “What is phonology?” The classical definition differentiates phonology from phonetics, as in the following passage from Catford (2001):

The study of the physiological, aerodynamic, and acoustic characteristics of speech-sounds is the central concern of phonetics [all emphases as in the original]. The study of how sounds are organized into systems and utilized in languages is the central concern of phonology. Neither of these two linguistic disciplines is independent of the other. A knowledge of what features of sound are most utilized
in languages determines what aspects of sound production are most worth studying in depth. Thus, phonetics depends to some extent upon phonology to indicate areas of linguistic relevance and importance. Phonology, on the other hand, is heavily dependent on phonetics, since it is phonetics that provides the insights that enable one to discover what sound features are linguistically utilized, and it is phonetics again, that supplies the terminology for the description and classification of the linguistically relevant features of sounds, (p. 177)

3. TRANSCRIPTION (NOTATION)
Transcription means the use of phonetic symbols to show sounds or sound sequence in a written form. There are different systems of phonetic symbols, but the most commonly used one is that of the (IPA): International Phonetic Association.

3.1. Types of Transcription:
Roach (2009) states that the distinction between the two types of transcription refers to the degree of refinement in representing speech sounds.

3.1.1. Phonemic Transcription/Broad Transcription:
It uses only the distinctive sounds of language (phonemes). It does not show the finer points of pronunciation. It’s written within slanting brackets, /            /.

3.1.2. Phonetic Transcription/Narrow transcription:
It uses phonetic symbols for various sounds, including symbols to show in details how a particular sound is produced. It is written within square brackets. In narrow transcription aspiration (= a little puff of air which sometimes follows a speech sound) is shown by the symbol [ʰ] or [’], e.g. [pʰɛn] or [p’ɛn]. Narrow transcription would also mark the difference between clear and dark [L].

4. PRONUNCIATION OF "-ed and -s" ENDINGS
Not all "-ed" endings are pronounced the same, rather differently, i.e. they could be pronounced: /d/, /d/, or /d/. As well as "-s" endings could be pronounced: /s/, /s/, or /s/.

4.1 Pronunciation of "-d/-ed" Endings

4.1.1. If the final sound of the word is a vowel sound or one of the following consonant sounds (b, g, v, δ, z, ʒ, dʒ, m, n, η, l, r), then the (-d/-ed) endings are pronounced /d/.

**Examples:**
- hurried, married, played, enjoyed, covered, answered
- robbed, rubbed, grabbed, disturbed, absorbed, curved, scrubbed
- begged, nagged, banged, clanged, dragged, hugged
- loved, moved, carved, arrived, received
- bathed, soothed, teethed, breathed
- used, fused, mused, refused, amazed, surprised
- massaged, camouflaged, sabotaged
- judged, changed, fringed, damaged, raged
- calmed, combed, roamed, blamed
- fastened, abandoned, determined, ruined
- pulled, fooled, ruled, drooled, juggled

4.1.2. If the final sound of the word is one of the following consonant sounds (t, d), then the (-d/-ed) endings are pronounced /d/.

**Examples:**
- painted, invited, lasted, wanted, created, started, hated, visited
- faded, added, persuaded, needed, decided, ended

4.1.3. If the final sound of the word is one of the following consonant sounds (p, k, f, θ, s, ʃ, tʃ), then the (-d/-ed) endings are pronounced /t/.

**Examples:**
- helped, dropped, kidnapped, stopped
- picked, kicked, asked, booked, cooked, baked, looked, worked
- sniffed, stuffed, puffed, coughed, laughed
- earthed, berthed
- missed, kissed, forced, mixed, fixed, danced
- washed, fished, finished, brushed
• watched, crunched, stretched, reached

4.2. Pronunciation of "-s/-es" Endings

4.2.1. If the final sound of the word is a vowel sound or one of the following consonant sounds (b, d, g, v, ð, ŋ, m, n, l, r), then the (-s/-es) endings are pronounced /z/.

Examples:
• cities, plays, ways, boys, keys, sees, fleas, shows, follows, news, views, etc.
• jobs, ribs, clubs, disturbs
• friends, kids, stands, accords, awards
• dogs, eggs, pigs, pegs, digs
• wives, drives, moves, survives, arrives, receives
• clothes, booths, bathes, breathes, teethes
• rings, sings, kings, wings, things
• names, blames, screams, teams, dams
• pens, scans, bans, explains, maintains
• tools, examples, travels, rules, noodles

4.2.2. If the final sound of the word is one of the following consonant sounds (p, t, k, f, θ), then the (-s/-es) endings are pronounced /s/.

Examples:
• ships, taps, maps, grapes, camps, wraps
• cats, fats, rats, governments, kits
• sacks, works, books, cooks, looks
• cliffs, chiefs, paragraphs, laughs, graphs
• months, myths, maths

4.2.3. If the final sound of the word is one of the following consonant sounds (s, z, j, tj, ʃ, ʒ, dj), then the (-s/-es) endings are pronounced /iz/.

Examples:
• boxes, services, misses, forces
• uses, fuses, muses, refuses, amazes, surprises

• dishes, polishes, relishes, flourishes, diminishes
• matches, churches, teaches, crunches
• camouflages, sabotages
• bridges, judges, changes, damages

5. HOMOGRAPHs
Homographs are words that have the same spelling but have different pronunciation and meaning.

Examples:
1. Bow:
• The actors came back on stage and took a bow /bəʊ/.
• He learned to hunt with a bow and arrow. /bəʊ/.

2. Close:
• Close your eyes and count to ten. /kləʊz/.
• Please keep close to the path, it’s easy to get lost. /kləʊz/.

3. Content:
• Soft drinks have a high sugar content. /ˈkɒntent/.
• I was content just to stay at home and read. /ˈkɒntent/.

4. Contract:
• The new export contract is worth $16 million. /ˈkɒntrækt/.
• Your muscles will contract if you get cold. /ˈkəntrækt/.

5. Desert:
• It hasn’t rained in this part of the desert for years. /ˈdezət/.
• He was planning to desert his family and go abroad. /ˈdɛzət/.

6. Lead:
• Just follow the signs and they will lead you to the exit. /liːd/.
• Gold is heavier than lead. /ˈled/.

7. Minute:
• Can I speak to you for a minute please? /ˈmɪnɪt/.
• We’ve got a small house with a minute garden. /ˈmɪnjuːt/.

8. Object:
• This small stone object is over 5000 years old. /ˈɔbdʒɪkt/.
• I strongly object to these cuts in public spending. /ˈɔbdʒɪkt/.

9. Project:
• The housing **project** will create 5000 new homes. /prədʒekt/.

• He’s trying to **project** a more confident image. /prədʒekt/.

10. **Refuse:**
• I won’t do it, I absolutely **refuse**. /rifju:z/.
• Put empty bottles here and other **refuse** in the bin. /refju:s/.

### 6. HOMOPHONES
Homophones are words that sound the same but have a different spelling and meaning.

**Examples:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>cents</th>
<th>sense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>council</td>
<td>counsel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fourth</td>
<td>forth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>herd</td>
<td>heard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>led</td>
<td>lead (n)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>naval</td>
<td>navel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>principal</td>
<td>principle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recede</td>
<td>reseed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>straight</td>
<td>straight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stationary</td>
<td>stationery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weather</td>
<td>whether</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>which</td>
<td>witch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>would</td>
<td>wood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>your</td>
<td>you’re</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**/ɔ:/:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>board</th>
<th>bored</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>caught</td>
<td>court (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coarse</td>
<td>course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hoarse</td>
<td>horse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sauce</td>
<td>source (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>saw</td>
<td>soar (UK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sort (UK)</td>
<td>sought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>warn</td>
<td>worn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**/ei/:**

• **rain/rein/reign**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>bale</th>
<th>bail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>brake</td>
<td>break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grate</td>
<td>great</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>mail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pain</td>
<td>pane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pray</td>
<td>prey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sale</td>
<td>sail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slay</td>
<td>sleigh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stake</td>
<td>steak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>sundae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tale</td>
<td>tail</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wail</td>
<td>whale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wait</td>
<td>weight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waste</td>
<td>waist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>way</td>
<td>weigh</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**/əυ/:**

• **road/rode/rowed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>groan</th>
<th>grown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hole</td>
<td>whole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>know</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loan</td>
<td>lone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>role</td>
<td>roll</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>row</td>
<td>roe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>so</td>
<td>sew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soul</td>
<td>sole</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**/a/:**

• **heel/heal/he’l**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>bean</th>
<th>been</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>be</td>
<td>bee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feat</td>
<td>feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flea</td>
<td>flee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leak</td>
<td>leek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meat</td>
<td>meet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peace</td>
<td>piece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peak</td>
<td>peek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peal</td>
<td>peel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quay</td>
<td>key</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sea</td>
<td>see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seam</td>
<td>seem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seen</td>
<td>scene</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>steal</td>
<td>steel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suite</td>
<td>sweet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weak</td>
<td>week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weave</td>
<td>we’ve</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>alter</th>
<th>altar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>current</td>
<td>currant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gorilla</td>
<td>guerrilla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>idol</td>
<td>idle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minor</td>
<td>miner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An Approach to English Phonology

/ai/:
- aisle/isle/I’ll
- by/bye/buy
- right/write/right

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>die</th>
<th>dye</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hi</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>higher</td>
<td>hire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rye</td>
<td>wry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sight</td>
<td>site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tyre</td>
<td>tire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

/eə/:
- there/their/they’re
- where/wear/ware

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>air</th>
<th>heir</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>fair</td>
<td>fare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bare</td>
<td>bear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pair</td>
<td>pear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stair</td>
<td>stare</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

/aʊ/:
- to/too/two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>blue</th>
<th>blew</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>through</td>
<td>threw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>flu</td>
<td>flew</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. HOMONYMS
Homonyms are words that have the same pronunciation and spelling but differ in meaning.

Examples:
- Right:
  - Ben fractured his right arm. (The opposite of left).
  - Are you sure this is the right key. (Correct).
- Bear:
  - I haven’t seen a real bear. (An animal).
  - Tim said he can’t bear the situation he’s in anymore. (To endure or tolerate).
- Fly:
  - I saw a fly in my cookie. (An insect).
  - Most birds fly with a speed of 30 mph. (To engage in flight).
- Patient:
  - Nurse Susan is very patient. (Enduring).
  - He is a cancer patient. (A person under medical treatment).
- Can:
  - He can run fast. (To be able).
  - We drank a can of Coke each. (The amount contained in a can).
- Address:
  - To address a conference. (To make a formal speech to a group of people).
  - Don’t forget to write your address. (Details of where someone lives or works).

8. CAPITONYMS
A capitonym is a word that changes its meaning when its first letter is capitalized. It is a form of homonym. Thus, capitonyms are words that have the same pronunciation and spelling but differ in meaning when the first letter of one of them is capitalized. A lot of proper nouns are capitonyms, such as names of people, places, teams, etc.

Examples:

1. Bill & bill:
   - My best friend Bill lives next door. (A man’s name).
   - Do you have a ten-dollar bill? (A piece of paper money).

2. Rose & rose:
   - He gave Rose a gift yesterday. (A woman’s name).
   - She gave him a rose last night. (A flower).

3. Brown & brown:
   - John discussed the matter with Mr. Brown. (A man’s name).
   - It’s such a nice brown jacket. (A colour).

4. Turkey & turkey:
   - One of my siblings lives in Turkey. (A country).
   - Mom will cook turkey for dinner. (A type of bird).

5. China & china:
   - Made in China. (A country).
   - A china vase. (White clay which is baked and used for making delicate cups, plates, etc).
6. May & may:
   - We will be having a vacation this May. (A month).
   - You may leave now. (To give permission).

9. CLEAR AND DARK /l/
The so-called "clear /l/" or "light /l/" occurs before a vowel, e.g. (lap, leaf, leap, lord, lose, black, follow, failure, etc.) or before the approximant or glide consonant /j/ (billiard, scallion).
The so-called "dark /l/ " occurs at the end of words, e.g. (call, trial, mail, dull, pool, full, etc.) and before consonants (milk, hold, fault, film, belt).
Examples of some words with both kinds of clear and dark /l/:
- lull /lʌl/
- flail /fleɪl/
- little /ˈlɪt/ (As you can see, English /l/ sounds that are close to the beginning of the syllable are clear, while those which are close to the end of the syllable are dark).

Because in all English words which begin with the sound /l/ the next sound is a vowel or a glide consonant, English words never start with a dark "l".

In many varieties of English there are two quite different /l/ sounds. The difference between them in sound production is the position of the back part of the tongue, i.e. the first variety is known as clear /l/ in which the back part of the tongue is low, e.g. listen to the first sound in "led" /led/. Whereas, the second variety is known as dark /l/ or velarized /l/ in which the back part of the tongue is raised towards the roof of the mouth, e.g. listen to the final sound in "bell" /bel/. The tip of the tongue is in the same position, contacting the alveolar ridge (behind the upper front teeth) for both of these sounds.

10. THE SYLLABLE
According to Roach (2009), a syllable is a unit in speech larger than a single segment and smaller than a word. However, this characterization can be seen from both a phonetic and phonological point of view. In phonetics it is identified on the basis of the amount of the articulatory effort needed to produce it. In phonology it is defined by the way sounds combine in a language to produce various sequences. Vowels can form a syllable on their own, or they can be the center of a syllable.
Crystal (1985:164) believes that syllable is an element of speech that acts as a unit of rhythm, which is noticeable in English pronunciation and consisting of a vowel, a syllable consonant or a vowel plus consonant combination. On the other hand, a syllable is defined by Laver (1994:39) as “a complex unit made up of nucleus and marginal elements”. Forel and Puskás (2005:35) affirm that in English a syllable consists of a phoneme or sequence of phonemes. If the syllable receives word stress it can be associated with meaning and form what is usually called a word. For us, syllable is the unit which sounds loud in a spoken word, formed normally by a nucleus, which stands as the center of the syllable.

10.1. The Structure of the English Syllable
The beginning of a syllable is called (onset), the center or middle of a syllable is called (peak/nucleus), and the end of a syllable is called (coda).

Examples:
- cat
  onset /k/ peak /æ/ coda /t/
- stops
  Onset /st/ peak coda
- splints
  Onset /spl/ peak coda /nts/

10.2. Syllable Sequences
Typical syllable sequences in English include:
- V: err, or, are, eye
- CV: go, see, more, key, bi, tea
- CCCV: blue, true, pray
- CCCVV: spray, spay, spew
- VC: in, on, at, am, ought, ease
- VCC: ant, apple, eggs, eighth, ink
- VCCC: ants, apples
- CVC: hat, king, ran, fill, pick
- CVCC: hats, kings, runs, fills, picks
- CVCCV: sixth, text, tempt
- CVCCCV: sixths, texts
- CCVC: stop, spot, clash, gloom, broom
- CCVCC: speaks, sports, snakes, crunch, friend
- CCVCCC: friends, crunched, clasps, sphinx
- CCVCVCC: twelfths, glimpsed
- CCCVC: spring, string, screen, scream, squeak, stream
- CCCVCC: strength, streets, strikes
-CCCVCCC: strengthen, splints, scratched, stretched
-CCCVVCCC: scrambles, strengthens

10.3. Syllabification
Syllabification or syllable division is the act of dividing the word into syllables.

10.3.1. Syllabification Rules
1. Divide after the prefix, e.g. un.seen, pre.view, im.po.lite, ir.reg.u.lar, etc.
2. Divide before the suffix, e.g. trac tion, pi.ous, friend.ship, hap.pi.less, sug.ar.less, etc.
3. When one or more consonants are followed by "le", count back three and divide, e.g. ma.ble, ex.am.ple, cri.ple, etc.
4. When there are two consonants in the middle, you should divide the word between the consonants, unless they blend into one sound like "ch, ph, sh, etc.
5. When one consonant appears between two vowels, it will most likely be in the same syllable as the second vowel, e.g. si.lent, mi.nus, tu.rip, pu.pil, ba.sic, etc.
6. Divide between compound words, e.g. dog.house, ice.cream, high.school, liv.ing.room, etc.
7. Divide before a single middle consonant when the vowel sound before it is short, e.g. o.pen, ti.ger, u.nit, mu.sic, bo.nus, etc.
8. Divide after the middle consonant or consonant blend like "sh, ch, ph, etc.
9. Divide between two vowels that don't blend to make one sound, e.g. be.ing, po.et, o.a.sis, ne.on, Du.et, etc.
10. Syllabification or syllable division is the act of dividing the word into syllables.

10.4. Syllable Analysis

1. ONE CONSONANT ONSET (CV/CVC/CCVC/etc.):
The only one consonant in the onset is analyzed as initial, e.g. the /n/ in no, the /h/ in hat, the /p/ in pens, etc.

2. TWO CONSONANT ONSET (CCV, CVC, CCVC, CVCC):
The two consonant clusters in the onset are divided into two types:

A. TWO CONSONANT CLUSTERS WITH PRE-INITIAL /s/:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-initial</th>
<th>Initial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>/p, t, k, f, m, n/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* /l, j, r/ are also possible. These clusters can be analyzed either as pre-initial /s + initial /l, w, j, r/ or initial /s + post-initial /l, w, j, r/.

Examples:
Spin, stick, skin, sphere, smell, snow, slip, swing, sue, syringe, etc.
*syringe is pronounced /srindʒ/ for many speakers.

B. TWO CONSONANT CLUSTERS WITH POST-INITIAL /l, r, w, j/:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>Post-initial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/p, t, k, b, d, g, f, θ, s, j, h, v, m, n, l/</td>
<td>/l, r, w, j/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples:
Play, pray, puke, tray, twin, tune, clay, cry, quick, queue, black, bring, beauty, drip, dwell, due, glue, grin, fly, fry, few, throw, thwart, slip, swim, sue, shrew, huge, view, muse, news, lewd, etc.

3. THREE CONSONANT ONSET (CCCVC, CCCVCC, CCCVCCC, CCCVCCVCC):
The three consonant clusters in the onset are always start with /s/ as pre-initial + /p, t, k/ as initial + /l, r, w, j/ as post-initial.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-initial</th>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>Post-initial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/s/</td>
<td>/p, t, k/</td>
<td>/l, r, w, j/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples:
Splay, spray, spew, string, stew, sclerosis, screen, squeak, skewer, etc.

II. CODA:

1. ONE CONSONANT CODA (VC, CVC, CCVC, CCCVC):
The only one consonant in the coda is analyzed as final, e.g. the /t/ in hat, the /ns/ in pens, the /lpt/ in helped, the /h/ in ran, etc.

2. TWO CONSONANT CODA (VCC, CVCC, CCVC, CCCVCC):
The two consonant clusters in the coda are divided into two types:

A. TWO CONSONANT CLUSTERS WITH PRE-FINAL /m, n, η, l, s/:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-final</th>
<th>Final</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/m, n, η, l, s/</td>
<td>/consonant/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Examples:

Bump, bent, bank, belt, ask, etc.

B. Two-consonant clusters with post-final /s, z, t, d, θ/:

Final + Post-final
/consonant/ + /s, z, t, d, θ/

Examples:

Bets, beds, backed, bagged, eighth, etc.

3. Three-consonant coda (VCCC, CVCCC, CCVCCC, CCCVCCC):

The three-consonant clusters in the coda are divided into two types:

A. The three-consonant clusters in the coda include a pre-final /m, n, ŋ, l, s/ + a final + a post-final /s, z, t, d, θ/.

Pre-final + Final + Post-final
/m, n, ŋ, l, s/ + /consonant/ + /s, z, t, d, θ/

Examples:

Bumps, bonds, banks, helped/twelfth, tests, etc.

B. The three-consonant clusters forming a coda include a final + a post-final1 /s, z, t, d, θ/ + a post-final2 /s, z, t, d, θ/.

Final + Final + Post-final 1 + Post-final 2
/consonant/ + /s, z, t, d, θ/ + /s, z, t, d, θ/

Examples:

Fifths, next, lapsed, etc.

4. Most four-consonant clusters forming a coda can be analyzed as consisting of a pre-final /m, n, ŋ, l, s/ + a final + a post-final1 /s, z, t, d, θ/ + a post-final2 /s, z, t, d, θ/.

Pre-final + Final + Post-final1 + Post-final2
/m, n, ŋ, l, s/ + /consonant/ + /s, z, t, d, θ/ + /s, z, t, d, θ/

Examples:

Twelfths, prompts, etc.

5. A small number of cases seem to require a different analysis, as consisting of a final consonant with no pre-final but three post-final consonants.

Examples:

Sixths, texts, etc.

11. STRESS

Only one syllable can receive the primary stress in a word unless it is an exceptional case of compound words.

When you stress a syllable in a word, this is what you do:

➢ Produce a longer vowel.
➢ Raise the pitch of the syllable to a higher level.
➢ Say the syllable louder.
➢ Pronounce it with clarity.
➢ Create a more distinctive facial movement.

In two-syllable nouns, the first syllable is normally stressed but there are exceptions to the rule.

Examples:

Oo oO (Exceptions)

Table mistake

Carpet machine

Country technique

Human antique

Doctor mirage

Village garage

Building chalet

Garden brochure

Valley buffet

Forest

Mountain

Distance

Summer

In two-syllable adjectives, the first syllable is normally stressed but there are exceptions to the rule.

Examples:

Oo oO (Exceptions)

Happy superb

Ugly asleep

Yellow alone

Fancy complete

Lovely extreme

Little alive

Famous distinct

Friendly precise

Sunny intense

Hungry enough
In two-syllable verbs, the second syllable is normally stressed but there are exceptions to the rule. Examples:

- convene (travel)
- pursue (answer)
- concede (borrow)
- prevent (carry)
- decide (visit)
- relax (study)
- begin (cancel)
- forget (copy)
- explain (enter)
- arrive (listen)
- return (open)

In two-syllable adverbs and prepositions, the first syllable is stressed but there are exceptions to the rule. Examples:

- always (perhaps)
- often (un)
- over (besides)
- shortly (until)
- slowly (above)
- sooner (below)
- under (before)

Words that have three syllables and end in “-ly” or “-er” often have the stress on the first syllable. Examples:

- perfectly (gardener)
- happily (manager)
- recklessly (publisher)
- instantly (carpenter)
- normally (character)
- orderly (happier)
- quietly (quieter)
- easily (easier)

In words ending with one of the suffixes: (-tion, -sion, -ian, -ious, -ic, -ient, -ia, or -ish), the stress falls on the syllable preceding them. Except the suffix “-able,” the first syllable is stressed. Examples:

- separation (decision)
- operation (occasion)
- compensation (corrosion)
- coalition (cohesion)
- education (abrasion)
- decoration (fantastic)
- communication (elastic)
- erratic (pragmatic)

In many words with suffixes: (-ade, -ee, -eer, -ese, -que, teen, or -oon), the suffix itself is stressed.
Examples:

-ade -ee -eer -
es -que -teen -oon

crusade guarantee puppeteer
Japanese physique thirteen balloon

tirade addressee auctioneer
Vietnamese mystique fourteen cartoon

brigade appointee volunteer
Nepalese unique fifteen buffoon

invade consignee pioneer
Chinese technique sixteen raccoon

persuade absentee engineer
Maltese oblique seventeen typhoon

In most compound words, the first syllable is stressed but there are exceptions to the rule.

Examples:

Oo Ooo

blackboard travel agent

sunrise bus station

art gallery sunglasses

swimwear supermarket

bedroom boarding card

tape recorder window seat

car park photocopy

bookshop check-in desk

bus stop basketball

Word stress shift

We can build longer words by adding parts to the beginning or end of shorter words. Usually, this does not change the stress; it stays on the same syllable as in the original word. For example:

forget

forgettable

forgettable

unforgettable

Suffixes that do not affect stress placement

-able: ‘comfort: comfortable
-age: ‘anchor: anchorage
-al: ‘refuse: refusal
-en: ‘wide: widen
-fill: ‘wonder: wonderful
-ing: ‘amaze: amazing
-like: ‘bird: birdlike
-less: ‘power: powerless
-ly: ‘hurried: hurriedly
-ment: punish: punishment
-ness: ‘yellow: yellowness
-ous: ‘poison: poisonous
-fy: ‘glory: glorify
-wise: ‘other: otherwise
-y (adjective or noun): ‘fun: funny
— ‘-ish’ in the case of adjectives does not affect stress placement: ‘devil,’ devilish’; however, verbs with stems of more than one syllable always have the stress on the syllable immediately preceding ‘ish’ - for example, replenish, demolish, etc.

**Word-class pairs**

One aspect of word stress is best treated as a separate issue. There are several dozen pairs of two-syllable words with identical spelling which differ from each other in stress placement, apparently according to word class (noun, verb or adjective). All appear to consist of prefix + stem. We shall treat them as a special type of word and give them the following rule: if a pair of prefix-plus-stem words exists, both members of which are spelt identically, one of which is a verb and the other of which is either a noun or an adjective, then the stress is placed on the second syllable of the verb but on the first syllable of the noun or adjective. Some common examples are given below (V = verb, A = adjective, N = noun):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oo (nouns)</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>oO (verbs)</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>survey</td>
<td>Let’s do a customer survey to find out.</td>
<td>survey</td>
<td>They surveyed over 1000 people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contrast</td>
<td>There’s a big contrast between you two.</td>
<td>contrast</td>
<td>He contrasted the two pictures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>detail</td>
<td>It’s just a minor detail.</td>
<td>detail</td>
<td>The story details their struggle with poverty.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>escort</td>
<td>You’ll need an escort to get through security.</td>
<td>escort</td>
<td>He escorted her out of the door.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perfume</td>
<td>He bought her a bottle of perfume for her birthday.</td>
<td>perfume</td>
<td>The roses perfumed the room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reject</td>
<td>This is one of the rejects from the factory.</td>
<td>reject</td>
<td>He rejected her advice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>upset</td>
<td>The victory was an upset in the championships.</td>
<td>upset</td>
<td>He upset her with his cruel remarks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compound</td>
<td>They lived in a compound.</td>
<td>compound</td>
<td>Current policy is just compounding problems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(verbs)</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>(nouns)</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rewrite</td>
<td>That’s a rewrite of an old song.</td>
<td>rewrite</td>
<td>She rewrote her story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>update</td>
<td>We’ve got some updates for you.</td>
<td>update</td>
<td>We’re updating our files.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>upgrade</td>
<td>They got an upgrade on the flight.</td>
<td>upgrade</td>
<td>It’s time to upgrade our computer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>invite</td>
<td>I received an invite to her party.</td>
<td>invite</td>
<td>They invited us to their house.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>misprint</td>
<td>There’s a misprint in the book.</td>
<td>misprint</td>
<td>He misprinted the word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insert</td>
<td>Put a couple of inserts in this text.</td>
<td>insert</td>
<td>He inserted a few words into her paragraph.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(nouns)</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>(verbs)</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>contract</td>
<td>Have you signed the contract?</td>
<td>contract</td>
<td>The economy is contracting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conduct</td>
<td>The conduct of the student was unacceptable.</td>
<td>conduct</td>
<td>They’re conducting an enquiry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subject</td>
<td>What subjects do you study?</td>
<td>subject</td>
<td>She was subjected to harsh criticism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>present</td>
<td>He gave her a present.</td>
<td>present</td>
<td>He’s going to present his findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refuse</td>
<td>The refuse collectors are on strike.</td>
<td>refuse</td>
<td>He refused permission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>desert</td>
<td>They went travelling in the Sahara desert.</td>
<td>desert</td>
<td>The soldiers deserted their post.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**More Examples:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(nouns)</th>
<th>(verbs)</th>
<th>import</th>
<th>import</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>record</td>
<td>record</td>
<td>register</td>
<td>register</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>object</td>
<td>object</td>
<td>increase</td>
<td>increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>export</td>
<td>export</td>
<td>decrease</td>
<td>decrease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>discount</td>
<td>discount</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
12. CONCLUSION

English phonology is an extremely significant domain in linguistics that should receive the attention of language learners, teachers, and researchers. This paper is just an attempt to cast light on some areas of English phonology that might seem important to those who are interested in having an overall idea about phonology. In conclusion, English phonology is never a solid material that has fixed patterns or rules; rather, it is flexible and has several exceptions as well. Further in-depth researching of English phonology is highly recommended and encouraged.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR(S)

The author(s) Dr. Mohammed AbdAlla AbdAlgane Mohammed is an assistant professor of Applied Linguistics at Qassim University. Awarded Ph.D. from University of Gezira, Sudan (2011). The author has several publications including:
1- The Role of Forensic Translation in Courtrooms Contexts, Arab World English Journal, ISSN: 2229-9327, Malaysia, (MAY, 2013).
2- Towards Effective Reading Strategies, American Arabic Academy for Sciences and Technology, ISSN: 2161-3621, Oman, (JUNE, 2014).

REFERENCES


