An Approach to English Phonology

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ARTICLE INFO	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.

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. [pʰin] or [p'in]. 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/, /id/, or /t/. As well as "-s" endings could be pronounced: /z/, /s/, or /iz/.

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, ð, z, ʒ, ʤ, m, n, ŋ, l, r**), then the (-d/-ed) endings are pronounced /**d**/.

Examples:

- hurried, married, played, enjoyed, covered, answered

- robbed, rubbed, grabbed, disturbed, absorbed, curbed, 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 /**id**/.

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, ʃ, tʃ, ʒ, dʒ**), 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** /baʊ/.
   - 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. /kləʊs/.
3. Content:
   - Soft drinks have a high sugar **content**. /kɒntent/.
   - I was **content** just to stay at home and read. /kəntent/.
4. Contract:
   - The new export **contract** is worth $16 million. /kɒntrækt/.
   - Your muscles will **contract** if you get cold. /kəntrækt/.
5. Desert:
   - It hasn't rained in this part of the **desert** for years. /dezət/.
   - He was planning to **desert** his family and go abroad. /dizɜːt/.
6. Lead:
   - Just follow the signs and they will **lead** you to the exit. /liːd/.
   - Gold is heavier than **lead**. /led/.
7. Minute:
   - Can I speak to you for a **minute** please? /minit/.
   - We've got a small house with a **minute** garden. /mainjuːt/.
8. Object:
   - This small stone **object** is over 5000 years old. /ɒbdʒikt/.
   - I strongly **object** to these cuts in public spending. /əbdʒekt/.
9. Project:

- The housing **project** will create 5000 new homes. /prɒdʒekt/.
- 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:

cents	sense
council	counsel
fourth	forth
herd	heard
led	lead (n)
naval	navel
principal	principle
recede	reseed
straight	strait
stationary	stationery
weather	whether
which	witch
would	wood
your	you're

/i:/:

- heel/heal/he'll

bean	been
be	bee
feat	feet
flea	flee
leak	leek
meat	meet
peace	piece
peak	peek
peal	peel
quay	key
sea	see
seam	seem
seen	scene
steal	steel
suite	sweet
weak	week
weave	we've

/ɔ:/:

board	bored
caught	court (UK)
coarse	course
hoarse	horse
sauce	source (UK)
saw	soar (UK)
sort (UK)	sought
warn	worn

/ei/:

- rain/rein/reign

bale	bail
brake	break
grate	great
male	mail
pain	pane
pray	prey
sale	sail
slay	sleigh
stake	steak
Sunday	sundae
tale	tail
wail	whale
wait	weight
waste	waist
way	weigh

/əʊ/:

- road/rode/rowed

groan	grown
hole	whole
know	no
loan	lone
role	roll
row	roe
so	sew
soul	sole

/ə/:

alter	altar
current	currant
gorilla	guerrilla
idol	idle
minor	miner

/ai/:

- aisle/isle/I'll
- by/bye/buy
- right/write/right

die	dye
hi	high
higher	hire
rye	wry
sight	site
tyre	tire

/eə/:

- there/their/they're
- where/wear/ware

air	heir
fair	fare
bare	bear
pair	pear
stair	stare

/u:/:

- to/too/two

blue	blew
through	threw
flu	flew

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 homonyms. 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 /ɫ/ " 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 /lʌɫ/

flail /fleɪɫ/

little /ˈlɪtɫ/

(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 "ɫ".

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 /ɫ/ or velarized /ɫ/ 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	peak	coda
/k/	/æ/	/t/

- stops

Onset	peak	coda
/st/	/ɒ/	/ps/

- splints

Onset	peak	coda
/spl/	/ɪ/	/nts/

10.2. Syllable Sequences

Typical syllable sequences in English include:

-V: err, or, are, eye

-CV: go, see, more, key, be, tea

-CCV: blue, true, pray

-CCCV: spray, splay, 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

-CVCCC: sixth, text, tempt

-CVCCCC: sixths, texts

-CCVC: stop, spot, clash, gloom, broom

-CCVCC: speaks, sports, snakes, crunch, friend

-CCVCCC: friends, crunched, clasps, sphinx

-CCVCCCC: twelfths, glimpsed

-CCCVC: spring, string, screen, scream, squeak, stream

-CCCVCC: strength, streets, strikes

-CCCVCCC: strengthen, splints, scratched, stretched

-CCCVCCCC: 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.ness, sug.ar.less, , etc.
3. When one or more consonants are followed by "le", count back three and divide, e.g. ma.ple, ex.am.ple, crip.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.", e.g. hap.pen, hap.py, bril.liant, bit.ter, 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.lip, 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 long, 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.", when the vowel sound before it is short, e.g. cab.in, rob.in, riv.er, trop.ic, pun.ish, 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.

10.4. Syllable Analysis

I. <u>ONSET:</u>

1. One-consonant onset (CV/CVC/CVCC/etc.):

The only one consonant in the **onset** is analyzed as **initial**, e.g. the /n/ in **n**o, the /h/ in **h**at, the /p/ in **p**ens, etc.

2. Two-consonant onset (CCV, CCVC, CCVCC, etc.):

The two-consonant clusters in the **onset** are divided into two types:

A. Two-consonant clusters with pre-initial /s/:

Pre-initial	+	Initial
/s/	+	/p, t, k, f, m, n/

*/l, w, 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, **st**ick, **sk**in, **sph**ere, **sm**ell, **sn**ow, **sl**ip, **sw**ing, **su**e, syringe, etc.

*syringe is pronounced /srindʒ/ for many speakers.

B. Two-consonant clusters with post-initial /l, r, w, j/:

Initial	+	Post-initial
/p, t, k, b, d, g, f, θ, s, ʃ, h, v, m, n, l/	+	/l, r, w, j/

Examples:

Play, **pr**ay, **pu**ke, **tr**ay, **tw**in, **tu**ne, **cl**ay, **cr**y, **qu**ick, **que**ue, **bl**ack, **br**ing, **bea**uty, **dr**ip, **dw**ell, **du**e, **gl**ue, **gr**in, **fl**y, **fr**y, **few**, **thr**ow, **thw**art, **sl**ip, **sw**im, **sue**, **shr**ew, **hu**ge, **vie**w, **mu**se, **ne**ws, **le**wd, etc.

3. Three-consonant onset (CCCVC, CCCVCC, CCCVCCC, CCCVCCCC):

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**.

Pre-initial	+	Initial	+	Post-initial
/**s**/	+	/p, t, k/	+	/l,r,w,j/

Examples:

Splay, **spr**ay, **spe**w, **str**ing, **ste**w, **scl**erosis, **scr**een, **squ**eak, **ske**wer, etc.

II. <u>CODA:</u>

1. One-consonant coda (VC, CVC, CCVC, CCCVC):

The only one consonant in the **coda** is analyzed as **final**, e.g. the /t/ in ha**t**, the /ns/ in pe**ns**, the /lpt/ in he**lped**, the /n/ in ra**n**, etc.

2. Two-consonant coda (VCC, CVCC, CCVCC, CCCVCC):

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

A. Two-consonant clusters with pre-final /m, n, ŋ, l, s/:

Pre-final	+	Final
/m, n, ŋ, l, s/	+	/consonant/

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Examples:

Bu**mp**, be**nt**, ba**nk**, be**lt**, a**sk**, etc.

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

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

Examples:

Be**ts**, be**ds**, ba**cked**, ba**gged**, eigh**th**, 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:

Bu**mps**, bo**nds**, ba**nks**, he**lped**/twe**lfth**, te**sts**, 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	+	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/+ **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:

Twe**lfths**, pro**mpts**, 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:

Si**xths**, te**xts**, 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	mis**take**
carpet	ma**chine**
country	tech**nique**
human	an**tique**
doctor	mi**rage**
village	ga**rage**
building	cha**let**
garden	bro**chure**
valley	buf**fet**
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	su**perb**
ugly	a**sleep**
yellow	a**lone**
fancy	com**plete**
lovely	ex**treme**
little	a**live**
famous	dis**tinct**
friendly	pre**cise**
sunny	in**tense**
hungry	e**nough**

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

Examples:

oO	Oo (Exceptions)
con**vene**	**trav**el
pur**sue**	**ans**wer
con**cede**	**bor**row
pre**vent**	**car**ry
de**cide**	**vis**it
re**lax**	**stud**y
be**gin**	**can**cel
for**get**	**cop**y
ex**plain**	**en**ter
ar**rive**	**lis**ten
re**turn**	**o**pen

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

Examples:

Oo	oO
always	per**haps**

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

Examples:

-tion	-sion	-ian
-ious	-ic	
separation	decision	
technician	delicious	scientific
operation	occasion	
electrician	superstitious	economic
compensation	corrosion	
beautician	religious	atomic
coalition	cohesion	
comedian	ferocious	artistic
education	abrasion	civilian
nutritious	fantastic	
decoration		
bombastic		
communication		
elastic		
erratic		
pragmatic		

later	in**deed**
often	un**less**
over	be**sides**
shortly	un**til**
slowly	a**bove**
sooner	be**low**
under	be**fore**

Words that have three syllables and end in "-ly" or "-er" often have the stress on the first syllable.

Examples:

Ooo (-ly)	Ooo (-er)
perfectly	**gar**dener
happily	**man**ager
recklessly	**pub**lisher
instantly	**car**penter
normally	**char**acter
orderly	**hap**pier
quietly	**qui**eter
easily	**eas**ier
neighborly	**bus**ier

In words ending with suffixes: (-cy, -ty, -phy, -gy, or –al), stress falls on the second syllable preceding them, i.e. two from the end.

Examples:

-cy	-ty	-phy
-gy	-al	
infancy	pub**lic**ity	pho**tog**raphy
ge**ol**ogy	alpha**bet**ical	
de**moc**racy	nation**al**ity	ge**og**raphy
allergy	abo**rig**inal	
fallacy	person**al**ity	cal**lig**raphy
bi**ol**ogy	**ad**miral	
frequency	**dig**nity	bi**og**raphy
a**pol**ogy	**cul**tural	
au**toc**racy	nor**mal**ity	phi**los**ophy
pho**nol**ogy	**na**tional	
pregnancy	ad**ver**sity	
tech**nol**ogy		
privacy	ab**surd**ity	
	elec**tric**ity	
	re**al**ity	
	ac**tiv**ity	

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

Examples:

-ade	-ee	-eer	-ese	-que	-teen	-oon

cru**sade**   guaran**tee**   puppe**teer**
        Japa**nese**   phy**sique**   thir**teen**
        bal**loon**

ti**rade**   addres**see**   auction**eer**
        Vietnam**ese**   mys**tique**   four**teen**
        car**toon**

bri**gade**   appoin**tee**   volun**teer**
        Nepa**lese**   u**nique**   fif**teen**
        buf**foon**

in**vade**   consig**nee**   pio**neer**
        Chi**nese**   tech**nique**   six**teen**
        rac**coon**

per**suade**   absen**tee**   engi**neer**
        Mal**tese**   o**blique**   seven**teen**
        ty**phoon**

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

Examples:

Oo	Ooo
Oooo	

blackboard   **traf**fic light
        travel agent

sunrise   **bus** station
        art gallery

swimwear   **sun**glasses
        supermarket

bedroom   **board**ing card
        tape recorder

car park   **win**dow seat
        photocopy

bookshop   **check**-in desk

bus stop   **bas**ketball

footpath

airport

shoe shop

road sign

Stress on the second part too:

If the first part of the compound word is not a noun, there may be stress on the second part too.

If the object in the second part is made out of the material in the first part, e.g. **glass jar**.

If the first part tells us what type the second part is, e.g. **car door**.

Examples:

OO	OOo
OoO	

first class   **bad-temp**ered
        double **room**

half-price   **old-fash**ioned
        overnight

handmade   **short-sigh**ted
        second-**hand**

In reflexive pronouns, the second syllable is stressed.

Examples:

oO

my**self**

them**selves**

our**selves**

your**self**

your**selves**

him**self**

her**self**

it**self**

one**self**

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:

for**get**

for**get**ful

for**get**fulness

for**get**table

unfor**get**table

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):

abstract (A)   abstract (V)

perfect (A)   perfect (V)

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

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

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

More Examples:

Oo (nouns)	oO (verbs)		
record	record	import	import
object	object	register	register
export	export	increase	increase
		decrease	decrease
		discount	discount

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refund	refund
permit	permit
conflict	conflict
contest	contest
insult	insult
protest	protest
rebel	rebel

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.

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