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## THE PHONOLOGICAL FUNCTION OF STRESS IN UZBEK AND ENGLISH: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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**Abstract:** *This study is devoted to a comparative analysis of the phonological function of stress in Uzbek and English. The research examines the role of stress in lexical differentiation, its position within the prosodic system, and its interaction with grammatical structures. While the English language is characterized by a free and multi-level stress system that serves as a key phonological marker, Uzbek demonstrates a more stable, final-syllable stress pattern that is closely linked to morphological organization. The findings reveal the fundamental similarities and differences between the stress systems of the two languages and contribute to a deeper understanding of their phonological nature. The results may also be applied in comparative phonetics and in developing effective methodologies for teaching pronunciation in both languages.*

**Keys words:** *Stress, prosody, phonological function, comparative analysis, morphological structure, rhythmic organization*

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### INTRODUCTION

The phonological characteristics of the stress systems in Uzbek and English constitute one of the relevant areas in contemporary linguistics, particularly in comparative phonetics, phonological typology, and speech process studies. In both languages, stress plays a crucial role as a distinctive unit in the rhythmic organization of speech and inter-syllabic balance. In English, the free and variable nature of stress serves as a primary tool for phonological differentiation, whereas in Uzbek, stress is manifested more in relation to morphological structures and prosodic stability. These differences necessitate a thorough analysis of both the commonalities and distinctions between the phonological systems of the two languages.

The aim of this study is to identify the phonological functions of stress in Uzbek and English, compare their rhythmic and structural features, and elucidate the interrelation of stress with morphological units on a scientific basis.

The objectives of the research are as follows:

- To identify the phonological functions of stress in both languages;
- To compare the role of stress in the prosodic systems;
- To explain the relationship between stress and morphological structure;
- To conduct a comparative analysis of stress patterns and their rhythmic characteristics in Uzbek and English;
- To draw general phonological conclusions based on the obtained results.

## Main Section

### 1. Phonological Functions of Stress

The stress systems in Uzbek and English exhibit significant differences in terms of phonological structure and the rhythmic organization of speech. In Uzbek, stress is predominantly manifested through morphological and prosodic stability, serving to distinguish grammatical forms and morphological units. This, in turn, ensures inter-word and inter-syllabic rhythmic harmony. In contrast, English stress is characterized by its freedom and variability, functioning as a central mechanism for both lexical and grammatical differentiation, and playing a crucial role in determining the meaning and functional category of words.

### 2. Rhythmic and Structural Characteristics

In Uzbek, inter-syllabic spacing and rhythmic stability constitute fundamental phonological principles. Stress typically occurs on the initial syllable or, in most cases, on the word’s prominent syllable, thereby reinforcing the metric and prosodic structure of speech. In English, however, stress placement depends on syntactic context and lexical-morphological features, producing considerable rhythmic variability and intonational differentiation.

### 3. Relationship with Morphological Units

In Uzbek, stress is closely linked to morphological changes: plural markers, case endings, and tense suffixes slightly shift word stress, yet overall rhythmic stability is largely maintained. In English, stress primarily serves as a tool for lexical distinction, with morphological affixes having limited impact on stress patterns. Moreover, in English, stress position often plays a central role in distinguishing word classes (e.g., verbs vs. nouns).

### 4. Comparative Analysis

The stress systems of Uzbek and English differ in several key phonological aspects:

Phonological Feature	Uzbek	English
Type of Stress	Stable, restricted	Free, variable
Phonological Function	Morphological and rhythmic	Lexical and grammatical differentiation
Rhythmic Structure	Inter-syllabic stability	Syntactic and contextual variability
Morphological Correlation	High	Low

These distinctions reveal fundamental differences between the phonological systems and speech rhythms of the two languages, as well as the intricate interplay between morphological and prosodic factors. Consequently, a comparative analysis of stress in Uzbek and English provides a deeper understanding of the phonological principles underlying both languages and their rhythmic-structural characteristics.

## RESULTS

The findings of this study revealed the principal differences between the stress systems of Uzbek and English in terms of their phonological, rhythmic, and morphological

characteristics. In Uzbek, stress is predominantly associated with morphological units and ensures inter-word and inter-syllabic rhythmic stability. This indicates that while stress plays a limited role in distinguishing word forms, it functions as a phonological mechanism that reinforces speech rhythm. In English, however, the free and variable nature of stress serves a central role in conveying lexical meaning and facilitating grammatical and lexical differentiation. Moreover, stress placement in English depends on syntactic and lexical context, which contributes to intonational and rhythmic variability. The study demonstrates that the stress systems in both languages interact differently with morphological and prosodic elements, defining the unique phonological architecture of each language.

Additional findings:

- In Uzbek, the stable placement of stress maintains the metric and rhythmic structure of speech.

- In English, the free shifting of stress is crucial for distinguishing lexical items and determining word class.

- Morphological affixes minimally shift stress in Uzbek, whereas in English, stress generally adheres to the main lexical unit, with affixes exerting limited influence.

## CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis indicates that the stress systems in Uzbek and English differ fundamentally in terms of phonological functions and rhythmic-structural characteristics. In Uzbek, stress primarily ensures morphological and prosodic stability, assisting in the identification of word forms and maintaining inter-syllabic balance. In English, the free and variable nature of stress serves as a primary mechanism for lexical differentiation and grammatical functions. The results of this study provide insight into both the similarities and distinctions between the phonological systems of the two languages, elucidating the interaction between speech rhythm and morphological structures. Furthermore, this research establishes a theoretical and practical foundation for comparative phonological studies, with significant implications for linguistic typology, prosody, and language learning methodologies.

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