

THE INVESTIGATION OF ENGLISH WORD STRESS

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Annotation. This article investigates the role of stress in English focusing on how stress functions in this language. In linguistics, word stress refers to the emphasis placed on a syllable within a word. This emphasis can affect the meaning, pronunciation, and overall flow of spoken language. For example, in the word "CON-duct" versus "con-DUCT," the stress on a different syllable changes the meaning from a noun to a verb. Word stress plays a crucial role in English and many other languages, contributing to effective communication and clarity in speech.

Key words: word stress, emphasis, organizing language, spoken language

In the English language, word stress plays a significant role in how we communicate meaning effectively. Word stress refers to the emphasis or prominence given to a particular syllable within a word. Understanding word stress can help us pronounce words correctly, distinguish between words that are spelled similarly, but have different meanings, and improve our overall communication skills in English.

Word stress involves the idea that within a word with more than one syllable, one syllable will receive more emphasis when spoken aloud. This syllable is pronounced louder, longer, and at a slightly higher pitch than the other syllables in the word. For example, in the word "elephant," the stress falls on the first syllable "el-" and is pronounced with more force compared to the other syllables.

Word stress is crucial because it can change the meaning of a word entirely. In English, we have many examples of words that are spelled the same but have different meanings based on where the stress falls. Consider the words "present" and "present." When we stress the first syllable in "present," it becomes a noun referring to a gift, while stressing the second syllable changes it into a verb meaning to introduce or give something formally.

Understanding word stress can also help with comprehension. When we stress the correct syllable in a word, we make it easier for listeners to understand us. Misplaced stress can lead to confusion or misinterpretation, especially for non-native English speakers.

In English, word stress follows certain patterns that can help us identify which syllable to stress in a word. While there are some general rules to follow, English is a complex language with many exceptions. However, here are some common guidelines to help determine word stress:

Rules for Word Stress:

Noun-Verb Pairs: In many cases, the word stress changes when a word shifts from being a noun to a verb. For example, "record" (noun) has stress on the first syllable, while "record" (verb) has stress on the second syllable.

Suffixes: Pay attention to where the suffix is added in a word. For words ending in -tion, -ic, -sion, stress often falls on the syllable just before the suffix.

Prefixes: Prefixes like "un-", "re-", and "dis-" usually do not receive word stress. Stress typically falls on the syllable following the prefix.

Compound Words: In compound words, each part retains its original stress. For example, in "hotdog," both "hot" and "dog" retain their stress.

To improve your word stress skills, practice is key. You can try listening to native English speakers, paying attention to where they stress certain words. You can also use online resources or language learning apps that provide exercises specifically designed to help you master word stress in English.

By understanding and practicing word stress, you can enhance your English pronunciation, fluency, and overall communication skills. Remember, mastering word stress takes time and practice, but the benefits to your language proficiency are well worth the effort.

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