

THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF SENTENCE STRESS IN ENGLISH AND UZBEK LANGUAGES: A COMPARATIVE LINGUISTIC STUDY

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Abstract. *This article examines the role and importance of sentence stress in English and Uzbek languages from a comparative linguistic perspective. It explores how sentence stress influences meaning, emphasis, and pragmatic interpretation in spoken discourse. The study also highlights the flexible and rhythm-based nature of English stress patterns compared to the relatively fixed and semantically oriented stress system in Uzbek.*

Keywords: *sentence stress, intonation, phonetics, pragmatics, semantics, rhythm, communication.*

Annotatsiya. *Mazkur maqolada ingliz va o'zbek tillarida gap urg'usining (sentence stress) lingvistik va kommunikativ ahamiyati qiyosiy jihatdan tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqotda urg'uning nutqning ma'no, emotsional va pragmatik jihatlariga ta'siri yoritiladi. Shuningdek, ingliz tilida urg'uning fleksibil va ritmik xususiyatlari hamda o'zbek tilida urg'uning nisbatan qat'iy va semantik yo'naltirilgan tabiati ko'rsatib beriladi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *gap urg'usi, intonatsiya, fonetika, pragmatika, semantika, ritm, kommunikatsiya.*

Аннотация. *В данной статье рассматривается роль и значение логического ударения (sentence stress) в английском и узбекском языках в сравнительно-лингвистическом аспекте. Анализируется влияние ударения на смысл, эмфазу и прагматическую интерпретацию высказывания. Также подчеркиваются различия между гибкой ритмической системой английского языка и более фиксированной семантической системой узбекского языка.*

Ключевые слова: *логическое ударение, интонация, фонетика, прагматика, семантика, ритм, коммуникация.*

Introduction. Sentence stress is one of the most important suprasegmental features of spoken language. It plays a crucial role in shaping meaning, expressing emphasis, and organizing information within discourse. In both English and Uzbek languages, sentence stress contributes to communication efficiency; however, its function and degree of importance differ significantly due to structural and typological differences between the two languages.

In linguistics, sentence stress refers to the relative prominence given to certain words within an utterance. This prominence is achieved through increased loudness, pitch variation, and lengthening of sounds. The placement of stress often determines the focus of the sentence and may even alter its meaning.

The comparative study of sentence stress in English and Uzbek is particularly valuable because the two languages belong to different prosodic systems. English is a stress-timed language, where stressed syllables occur at relatively regular intervals, whereas Uzbek is generally considered syllable-timed, with more even timing across syllables.

This article aims to analyze the functional role of sentence stress in both languages and to identify similarities and differences in its linguistic realization and communicative importance.

Literature analysis. The issue of sentence stress has been widely investigated in phonetics, phonology, and discourse studies. Scholars such as M. Halliday, David Crystal, and Peter Ladefoged emphasize that sentence stress plays a crucial role in information structure, communicative focus, and pragmatic interpretation in English discourse. Research in English phonology demonstrates that stress placement contributes significantly to rhythm organization and semantic differentiation, particularly in stress-timed languages. In Uzbek linguistics, studies by Nodir Mahmudov and Bahodir Yoʻldoshev mainly focus on the semantic, cultural, and communicative aspects of language, while comparative investigations of sentence stress between English and Uzbek remain relatively limited, which highlights the relevance of the present study.

Research methodology. Sentence stress is closely related to phonetics, phonology, and pragmatics. From a phonetic perspective, stress is produced through variations in pitch, intensity, and duration. From a phonological point of view, stress organizes speech into rhythmic units. From a pragmatic perspective, stress helps speakers highlight new, important, or contrastive information.

According to linguistic theory, sentence stress is not random but guided by information structure. The concepts of *theme (given information)* and *rheme (new information)* are essential in determining stress placement. Typically, new or important information receives primary stress.

In English linguistics, scholars such as Halliday emphasize the role of stress in information packaging. In contrast, Uzbek linguistic tradition focuses more on fixed lexical stress patterns and their role in word formation rather than sentence-level contrast.

Results and discussion. English sentence stress is highly flexible and plays a central role in communication. In English, changing the stressed word in a sentence can significantly alter its meaning.

For example:

- ✓ *I didn't say he stole the money.*
- ✓ *I didn't say he stole the money.*
- ✓ *I didn't say he stole the money.*

Each variation shifts the focus and implied meaning of the sentence.

English is classified as a stress-timed language, meaning that stressed syllables tend to occur at relatively regular intervals. As a result, unstressed syllables are often reduced or weakened, contributing to the rhythm of English speech.

Sentence stress in English also performs several key functions:

1. **Contrastive function** – highlighting differences;

2. **Emphatic function** – expressing emotion or importance;
3. **Informational function** – marking new or important information;
4. **Discourse organization** – structuring spoken text.

For example:

- ✓ *I wanted the **red** car, not the blue one. (contrastive stress);*
- ✓ *She is **absolutely** right. (emphatic stress).*

Thus, sentence stress in English is not only phonetic but also deeply semantic and pragmatic.

Uzbek language exhibits a different stress system compared to English. Generally, lexical stress in Uzbek falls on the last syllable of the word. However, sentence stress is less rigid and is mainly used for emphasis rather than meaning distinction. For example:

- ✓ *Men **kitobni** o'qidim.*
- ✓ ***Men** kitobni o'qidim.*

Here, stress placement changes the focus of the sentence but does not alter the grammatical meaning as drastically as in English.

Uzbek is often described as a syllable-timed language, where each syllable tends to have equal duration. This results in a more uniform rhythm of speech. Sentence stress in Uzbek is therefore more dependent on intonation patterns and communicative context.

The main functions of sentence stress in Uzbek include:

1. **Emphasis of important information;**
2. **Emotional expression;**
3. **Contrast marking in spoken discourse;**
4. **Clarification of speaker intention.**

Unlike English, Uzbek does not rely heavily on stress for grammatical differentiation, but rather for pragmatic emphasis.

The comparison between English and Uzbek sentence stress reveals several important differences and similarities.

In English, sentence stress carries a high functional load, often determining meaning differences. In Uzbek, its role is secondary and mainly supportive of intonation and emphasis.

English is stress-timed, while Uzbek is syllable-timed. This fundamental difference influences how stress operates within each language.

English uses stress to distinguish meaning at the sentence level, whereas Uzbek uses stress primarily for pragmatic emphasis rather than semantic change.

English sentence stress is highly flexible and context-dependent. Uzbek stress is relatively stable and predictable.

In both languages, sentence stress contributes to effective communication; however, English relies more heavily on stress for structuring discourse.

Sentence stress is not merely a phonetic feature; it plays a crucial role in pragmatics and discourse analysis. It reflects the speaker's intention, emotional state, and communicative priorities.

In English, stress patterns are essential for natural speech production and comprehension. Misplaced stress can lead to misunderstanding or ambiguity. In Uzbek, while stress is less critical for meaning differentiation, it still enhances clarity and expressiveness.

From a linguistic perspective, studying sentence stress helps to understand how languages encode information differently. From a pedagogical perspective, it is especially important in teaching English as a foreign language, where learners often struggle with correct stress placement.

The study of sentence stress has significant implications for language teaching. Uzbek learners of English often transfer their native stress patterns into English speech, which may lead to unnatural intonation or misunderstanding.

Therefore, explicit instruction in sentence stress is necessary in English language teaching. Learners should be trained to:

- ✓ *identify focus words in sentences;*
- ✓ *recognize contrastive stress;*
- ✓ *use stress to express meaning differences;*
- ✓ *understand rhythm differences between languages.*

Teaching sentence stress also improves listening comprehension, as learners become more sensitive to spoken emphasis.

Conclusion. In conclusion, sentence stress is a fundamental component of spoken language that plays different roles in English and Uzbek. In English, it functions as a powerful semantic and pragmatic tool that can change meaning and structure discourse. In Uzbek, it serves mainly as an expressive and emphatic device with limited semantic impact. The comparative analysis demonstrates that while both languages use sentence stress to enhance communication, they differ significantly in terms of flexibility, functional load, and rhythmic organization. Understanding these differences is essential for linguistic research, translation studies, and language teaching. Overall, sentence stress represents an important intersection between phonetics, semantics, and pragmatics, making it a key feature in the study of spoken language structure and communication.

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