

A Comparison and Contrast of the Words Stress Patterns in Urdu and English

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Abstract

In second language learning, pronunciation plays a vital role, to acquire a perfect pronunciation, the importance of stress patterns should not be overlooked. The present research aims at a contrastive study of the word stress patterns in English and Urdu, which would disclose the difference between the two languages. It has been perceived that speakers of Urdu face difficulties in learning the word stress patterns in English and therefore they speak English with wrong stresses on words by which the meaning is not expressed to their listeners properly. Also, English speakers find it difficult to speak Urdu with proper accent. No systematic study of the word stress patterns in Urdu has yet been done. This is an area which needs proper investigation. This study will help the Urdu speaking learners and teachers who have been facing difficulties in teaching pronunciation.

Keywords: Second Language Learning, Syllable Structure and Word Stress.

Introduction

A syllable is a cluster of sounds with one peak of prominence in a word. There may be as many syllables as there are peaks of prominence. Peaks of prominence are created by vowel sounds, which correspond with pulmonary chest pulses. In a polysyllabic word, some of these peaks of prominence are loud while others may be low. This depends upon the amount of force exerted on the articulation of a particular peak carrier (i.e. a vowel). This loudness is relative because it occurs in a phonetic environment of other peaks. This loudness is known as stress.

Theoretically, all languages have the feature of stress because the chest pulse concept applies to the articulation of sounds in a similar fashion. However, in certain languages stress is distinctive and hence phonemic because it carries differentiation of meaning and follows the principle of 'complementary distribution'. Stress is phonemic in English whereas it is not so in Urdu, though contrasted loudness of peaks of prominence may be heard in Urdu, which is very often used for emphasis.

A syllable is a small sound sequence containing a peak of prominence. If a word or phrase contains a number of peaks of prominence it is generally found that the degrees of prominence at various peaks are unequal. Some of the peaks get greater prominence than others. That is to say, some of the syllables of a word or phrase are heard more distinctly than others. There are three sound attributes, which apply to both English and Urdu. These are length, stress, or intonation or a combination of these. These attributes increase or decrease the prominence in the peaks formed in a group of syllables constituting a word or a phrase. In the present study, the term stress is used to denote the degree of force of utterance and is independent of length and intonation. For example, stress without intonation can be heard in English in clergymen's intoning the prayers in a church service. But in spoken English used for interactional purposes the role of intonation is of distinctive importance.

Thus, syllables which are pronounced with a greater degree of breath force than the neighbouring syllables in a word or sentence are said to be *stressed*. Those syllables, which are pronounced with a relatively small degree of breath force, are said to be *unstressed*. Daniel Jones's suggestion is, of using the terms, stressed and unstressed rather than designating different degrees of stress in a particular utterance. However, in a polysyllabic word, two distinct stresses are perceived. In a word like opportunity /ɒpə'tjʊnɪtɪ/ there is a strong stress on the third syllable. But there is an equally strong, but lower in pitch, stress on the first syllable as well. The nomenclature of primary stress and secondary stress to the relative loudness or softness of the two syllables in a particular word can be seen like this /ɒpə'tjʊnɪtɪ/. Thus, two degrees of stress --- primary and secondary --- are to be recognized both for spoken and pedagogical purposes.

Literature Review

A.C. Gimson, (1994) while discussing stress or 'accent' on English words, has made a generalized remark about the pattern of stress in English at the word level: "The accentual pattern of English words is fixed, in the sense that the main accent always falls on a particular syllable of any given word, but free in the sense that the main accent is not tied to any particular situation in the chain of syllables constituting word." "The accentual shape of a word, in terms of the degree of prominence associated with its parts, is a reality for both the speaker and the listener; but the speaker's impression of the factors which produce such a pattern of varying prominence, may differ from the actual auditory cues by which the listener perceives the prominence pattern." Stress has been defined as the degree of force with which sound or syllable is uttered. "It is essentially a subjective action. A strong force of utterance means energetic action of all the articulating organs; it is usually accompanied by a gesture with the hand or head or other parts of the body; it involves a strong push from the chest wall and consequently strong force of exhalation; this generally gives the objective impression of loudness." Jones (1963) argues that "cases do occur where a strong stress fails to give much carrying power to a sound, and therefore, fails to make it objectively prominent."

Strong stress without strong force of exhalation and consequent loudness is not often found in English. The same is the case with Urdu.

A.C. Gimson, (1994) while expressing the loudness says that stressed syllables are normally louder than the unstressed syllables because of the extra breath force. Greater loudness is carried principally by voiced sounds, in which greater amplitude of variation of the vocal cords, together with the reinforcing resonance of the supra-glottal cavities, results in acoustic terms, in a relatively greater intensity. This strong intensity and the loudness perceived by the listener results from the relatively greater breath effort and muscular energy expended on the articulation of a sound by the speaker.

Daniel Jones (1963) has asserted that “the foreign student is obliged to learn the stress of each word individually.” He has to learn, for example, that the main stress falls

| | | |
|---------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| on the first syllable in | ‘photograph | /’fɔ:təgrɑ:f/ |
| on the second syllable in | pho’tography | /fə’tɒgrəfi/ |
| on the third syllable in | photo’graphic | /fəʊtə’græfɪk/ |

Some phoneticians like A.C. Gimson believe that no syllable is really unstressed in English unless it contains one of the vowels /ə, I / or the monophthongal reduction of əʊ to [o] or /u/ or a syllabic consonant. These phoneticians maintain that when /e,æ,ɔ:, ʌ / and the long vowels and falling diphthongs occur in weak positions, they are pronounced with secondary stress. Thus, for them the following words will have secondary stress on their second syllable.

| | |
|-------------|----------------|
| concrete | /’kɔ:ŋkri:t/ |
| schedule | /’ʃeɪdju:l/ |
| mundane | /’mʌnɪdeɪn/ |
| fortnight | /’fɔ:tnaɪt/ |
| portmanteau | /’pɔ:tɪməntəʊ/ |

Daniel Jones does not agree with this view and feels that words which contain /ə, I, ɔ:, u/ are less prominent than /e, æ, ʌ/ because of the prominence they derive from stress or ‘a special push of the chest wall’. He submits that these vowels have considerable prominence because of their ‘inherent sonority’ or ‘their carrying power’, meaning thereby that they can be heard at a greater distance when pronounced with the same length, stress, and voice-pitch. Daniel Jones (1964) states: “The relative sonority or carrying power of sounds depends on their inherent quality (timbre) and must be distinguished from the relative ‘prominence’ of sounds in a sequence; prominence depends on combinations of quality with length, stress and (in the case of voiced sounds) intonation. When length and stress (degrees of push from the chest wall) are constant and the intonation is level, the sounds defined as vowels are more prominent than the sounds defined as consonants. ‘Open’ vowels are

mostly more prominent than ‘close’ vowels; voiced consonants are more prominent than voiceless consonants.” G.N. Leech & M.H. Short (1981) states: “The pragmatic analysis of language can be broadly understood to be the investigation into that aspect of meaning which is derived not from the formal preparation of words and constructions but from the way in which utterances are uttered.” Goldsmith (1990) says that only the content of rhyme not the onset is useful in determining stress in a syllable. These rhymes are then organized into simple constituents called feet. The feet combine to form a prosodic word. The principles of stress foot establishment will need to have access to syllable weight if they are to place stress feet correctly in these systems, known as quantity-sensitive systems. As found earlier that Urdu establishes a stress distinction involving weight of syllable. Hence Urdu can be termed as quantity sensitive language. MacCarthy (1978) discuss the stress-timing of English language as a problem for speakers of other languages to correctly pronounce English. English is a stress-time language and Urdu and Hindi native languages are syllable-time languages; therefore, Urdu/Hindi speakers show different stress patterns. Pooja Kalia (2017) attempted to conduct a study on "English language teaching in India: Trends and Challenges” Her study revealed that a. the students are over dependent on the teacher as the teachers generally spoon feed the students. b. the students are bored, inattentive and unmotivated to study English as a language. c. there is lack of participation and barrier of hesitation. d. over crowded classes and clear cut aims of teaching English is also one of the problem. G. Vijay (2014) attempted to conduct his study on "Constraints Of Teaching English In Engineering Colleges." His study revealed that a. teachers face a difficult task when students are not motivated to learn English. Teachers face challenges such as irrelevant syllabus, lack of motivation etc c. teachers need to continuously improve their communicative skills in English. Alan Cruttenden (1997) has used grammatical categories to make general statements on stress pattern in English. They are (I) verbs and adverbs. Primary accent stress falls on the penultimate syllable when the final syllable contains a short vowel in an open vowel or followed by only one consonant: For Example:

| | |
|------------|------------|
| sur'render | /sə'rendə/ |
| 'palish | /'peII/ |
| as'tonish | /əs'tɒnI/ |

Methodology

Phonemics generally forms the basis of most of the phonological approaches. They attempt to probe at the formation of phonemes. In simple terms phonemics is the minimal distinctive unit of sound in a language. Phonemic analysis has been carefully used for the phonological analysis of English spoken by speakers of Urdu language in Western U.P. and Delhi. In the process of analysis special focus has been given to segmental phonemes as well as supra-segmental phonemes.

Choice of Speakers: The corpus of the data for analysis was selected from the first-year undergraduate students of the faculty of Arts, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. Twenty-five (25) undergraduate students speaking Urdu as their mother tongue, coming from the different areas of Western UP and Delhi were chosen as informants. Students of Science, Technology, and other courses were not taken into account because their competence in the English language is at great

variance from that of the Arts students. Moreover, these Arts students mostly come from the rural areas of Urdu and Hindi speaking regions. Hence selection as informants for the present research was felt to be more meaningful. These informants who had been speaking Urdu as their first language were identified because they had some sort of uniformity in their speech utterances as well as diversity because of the regional differences of their previous schooling. Their number was deliberately limited not exceeding 25 students.

Choice of Materials

- (i) In order to be able to grasp the violation or neglect of the socio-cultural component in an interactive speech act, a detailed questionnaire was prepared.
- (ii) A word list including simple words, compound words and words involving functional shift of stress for analyzing the stress patterns of Urdu.

Recording: The recording was made on the Phillips Tape recorder, in the Department of English, AMU, Aligarh, UP. Firstly, the informants were asked to read the lists given to them silently to make the informants well aware of the given text. Before recording their speech, they were asked to mention their name and class and then asked to read the word lists as they spoke those words in their daily conversation.

The following framework for listing the various characteristics of forming syllables and using word stress patterns were recorded. These categories were then reshuffled and rearranged in order to investigate the general patterns.

- (a) Recognition of peaks of prominence in syllable formation.
- (b) Various possible consonant clusters in syllable, initial and final positions.
- (c) Stress on monosyllabic, disyllabic and polysyllabic words.
- (d) Functional shift of stress

Students were encouraged to read the given word lists for analyzing the word stress patterns and syllable structures. Later, these recorded materials were tabulated so as to arrive at a generalization as to which area(s) presented great difficulty to these informants.

Choice of Models: At the Aligarh Muslim University, Urdu-speaking students, officially or as the common perception is, use a variety of Urdu which is highly coloured by the regional dialects. This dialectal colouring is quite marked among the Urdu speakers coming from rural areas and lower, uneducated families. But this situation is different so far as students from educated traditional Muslim families are concerned. This, in fact, is not an insurmountable problem for a research scholar, except that the researcher has to be cautious in selecting his informants. Another variety of spoken Urdu is literary Urdu which is used only on formal occasions by the distinguished, users. Such occasions are Lectures, Seminars, Citations or literary discussions in academic and other sophisticated circles. Since such users of Urdu are not to be counted for purposes of interactive

language teaching, they can safely be left aside. Hence, to limit the scope of the present study, literary users of Urdu are not taken into consideration.

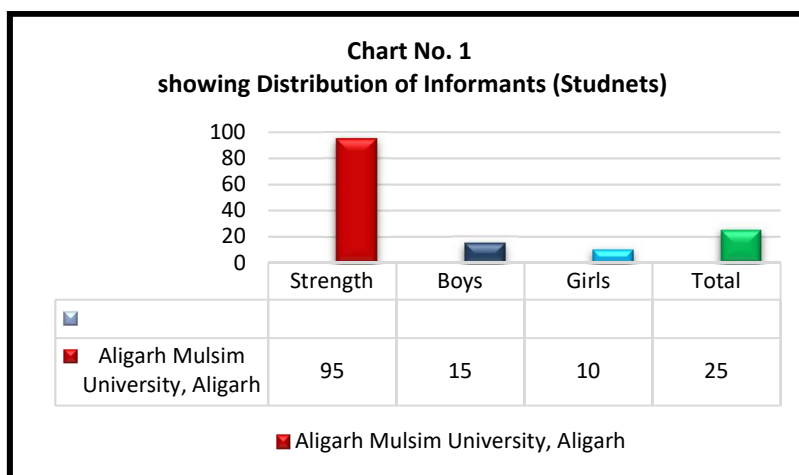
The real problem to be faced is the choice of the variety of spoken English to be taken up for comparison and contrast with Urdu. First comes the suggestion from erudite, westernized experts that the only choice is R.P. (Received Pronunciation). RP is a variety of the spoken form of English used in Southern England where the English language is used in a sophisticated form by the educated upper class English-men. Whether RP actually exists is another controversial point which is beyond the scope of this study. In fact, RP is an abstract form, drawn from the speech habit of people of Southern England.

The proposed plan was to analyze and describe the word stress patterns in Urdu and compare those of English with a view to suggesting certain remedial measures to improve Urdu speakers use of English word accent and also English Speakers use of Urdu word stress patterns.

We have provided questionnaire to 95 students in Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, only 25 students have returned the questionnaire. The details of the informants are shows in the following table & Chart.1.

TABLE NO. 1
TABLE SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMANTS (STUDENTS)

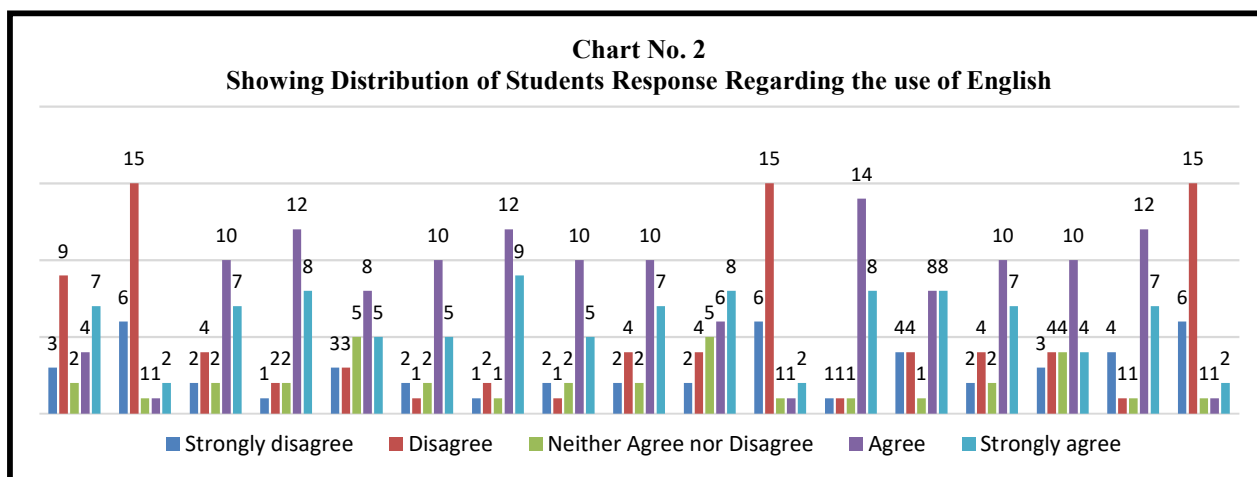
| S.No. | Name of the University | Strengt h | Informants Size | | | Percentage of Informants |
|-------|---------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------|-----------|--------------------------------|
| | | | Boy s | Girls | Tota l | |
| 1. | Aligarh Mulsim University, Aligarh | 95 | 15 | 10 | 25 | 26.31% |



The questions and possible responses in the questionnaire were stated in a manner assumable to rapid, unambiguous coding and processing. We have shown here only part I and part V of the questionnaire as examples. The other parts of the questionnaire were not shown to avoid the length of the paper. See the following charts.

TABLE NO. 2.
SHOWING DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS RESPONSE REGARDING THE USE OF ENGLISH.

| | I think English is a very difficult language | I learn English because my parents force me | I want to learn English because my English is very | My English is poor because I came from Hindi medium background | I think my pronunciation of English is poor because I have been taught like this. | British English pronunciation is easier than American English pronunciation. | I face language problems regarding English as a medium of instruction. | I hesitate to speak English in classroom. | I feel that writing is complex skill to acquire effectively. | I get stressed about taking test and examination in English. | Teachers speak British English rather than American. | I speak English at my college. | I think my pronunciation of English is poor because I have been taught like this. | My English teachers' pronunciation is easy to understand. | I face difficulties in speaking with native speakers. | Teachers speak only English in the classroom. | I think that English is necessary for me. |
|----------------------------|--|---|--|--|---|--|--|---|--|--|--|--------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Strongly disagree | 3 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Disagree | 9 | 15 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 15 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| Neither Agree nor Disagree | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| Agree | 4 | 1 | 10 | 12 | 8 | 10 | 12 | 10 | 10 | 6 | 1 | 14 | 8 | 10 | 10 | 12 | 12 |
| Strongly agree | 7 | 2 | 7 | 8 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 3 |
| Total | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 |



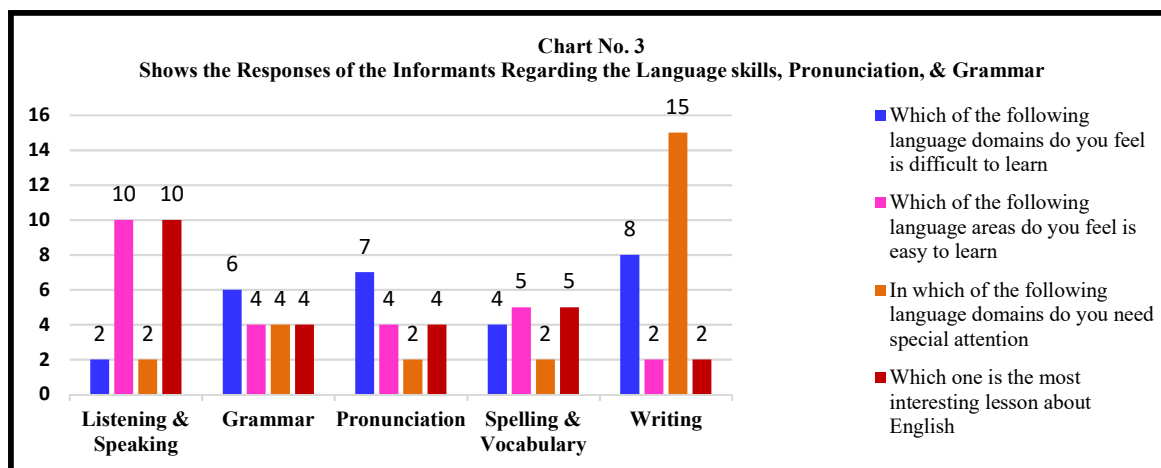
The consolidated data of the informants' is shown in the above table and chart. The responses of the informants were discussed discretely in respective segments viz. problems related to the use of English, thinking about English, why English is poor or good, British English or American English, etc. 36% students mentioned that English is a very difficult language. 60% students reported that their parents do not force them to learn English. 40% agreed that they learn English because their English is very poor. 40% students mentioned that their teachers' pronunciation is good to understand. 48% of them reported that their English is poor because they came from Hindi background while 48%

mentioned that their English is good because they came from English medium background.60% students reported that British English pronunciation is easier than American English pronunciation. 84% of them disagree that their teachers speak British English rather than Americanand60% agreed that English is necessary for them.

The following table mentions the data of the informants' related to the difficulties they face in different domains of English, viz. Listening & Speaking, Pronunciation, Grammar, Spelling & Vocabulary, Writing etc. All these details were discussed separately.

TABLE NO. 3.
SHOWS THE RESPONSES OF THE INFORMANTS REGARDING THE LANGUAGE SKILLS, PRONUNCIATION, & GRAMMAR

| Language Skills | Which of the following language domains do you feel is difficult to learn | Which of the following language areas do you feel is easy to learn | In which of the following language domains do you need special attention | Which one is the most interesting lesson about English |
|-----------------------|---|--|--|--|
| Listening & Speaking | 2 | 10 | 2 | 10 |
| Pronunciation | 6 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Grammar | 7 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| Spelling & Vocabulary | 4 | 5 | 2 | 5 |
| Writing | 8 | 2 | 15 | 2 |



The consolidated data regarding language skills of the informants' is highlighted in the above table and chart. The responses of the informants were discussed separately. 8% students mentioned that listening and speaking is difficult for them, 40% reported that listening& speaking is easy while only 8% of them need special attention in this domain and 40% of them say that it is very interesting for them. As far as grammar is concerned 24% students mentioned that Grammar is difficult for them, 16% reported that it is easy for them while other 16% need special attention in this domain and 16% reported that it is a very interesting subject. 28% students reported that pronunciation is difficult for them, 16% said that it is easy while around 8% of them need special attention in this area

and 16% of them feel pronunciation very interesting for them. Spelling & Vocabulary is difficult for 16% students on the other hand 20% reported it difficult while 8% students need special attention in this subject and 20% said that it is a very interesting area. Writing is more difficult than speaking that is why around 32% students reported that writing is difficult for them while 8% mentioned it easy for them. 60% said that they need special attention and 8% felt that writing is an interesting subject.

Word Stress in English

Word stress means producing one syllable of a multisyllabic word with greater emphasis (stress) than the other syllables in the word. The following factors are to be taken into account in determining the relative prominence of a syllable. It is to be noted that it is chiefly the pitch change which marks a stressed syllable.

Pitch Change – Pitch change as well as pitch height determine the stress pattern of words. e.g. the stress pattern of /'ɒbdʒɪkt/ object (noun) and /əb'dʒɪkt/ object (verb) are differentiated by their pitch patterns. Pitch changes may create stress prominence at the word level or within a phrase. It can be demonstrated in a diagrammatic form as follows:



In the above diagram the final pitch accent is normally known as primary stress. A pitch accent on an earlier syllable which is usually less prominent is known as secondary stress.

Quantity and Quality— Pitch change and loudness are the principal function in stress, no-doubt, but the quality and quantity of the vowels are also important in stress, e.g. long vowels and diphthongs usually create prominent peaks than short vowels. Certain vowels in English, when unstressed, are least prominent and are called REDUCED VOWELS as opposed to other FULL vowels.

Stress has clearly marked degrees of prominence in English. Primary stress is marked by the last major pitch change in a word, e.g. 'examination' as shown in the above diagram. Secondary stress is marked by a non-final pitch change in a word or longer utterance. A minor prominence produced by the occurrence of a full vowel, containing no pitch change at the final syllable, a non prominence syllable, containing no pitch change and one of the vowels /ɪ, u, ə/, is the least stressed. It is the position of the primary stress which contributes most to a word's stress pattern. There are some working rules for setting the primary stress on a syllable in a word. e.g. primary stress is to fall on ante-penultimate syllable in a polysyllabic word ending in 'ate' in spelling, such as interrogate. But there are a large number of exceptions to a rule.

Functional shift of Stress: There are a number of words of two syllables in which the accentual pattern depends on whether the word is used as a noun, an adjective or a verb. When the word is used as a noun or an adjective, the stress is on the first syllable. When the word is used as a verb, the stress is on the second syllable. Here are a few examples:

| Noun/Adjectives | Transcription | Verbs | Transcription |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------|---------------|
| 'absent | / 'æbsənt/ | ab'sent | /əb'sent/ |
| 'object | / 'ɔ:bdʒɪkt/ | ob'ject | /əb'dʒekt/ |
| 'subject | / 'sʌbdʒɪkt/ | sub'ject | /səb'dʒekt/ |
| 'permit | / 'pɜ:mlɪt/ | per'mit | /pə'mɪt/ |
| 'progress | / 'prɔ:ɡres/ | pro'gress | /prə'ɡres/ |
| 'perfect | / 'pɜ:fɪkt/ | per'fect | /pə'fekt/ |
| 'increase | / 'ɪnkri:s/ | in'crease | /ɪn'kri:s/ |
| 'present | / 'preznt/ | pre'sent | /prɪ'zent/ |

Word stress in English, for the sake of clarity and convenience, can be classified as follows:

Stress in Disyllabic words: In words of two syllables, one of them has strong stress and the other one weak. For example:

| | |
|-----------|-----------------|
| 'increase | / 'ɪnkri:s/ (n) |
| 'insult | / 'ɪnsʌlt/ (n) |
| in'crease | / ɪn'kri:s/ (v) |
| in'sult | / ɪn'sʌlt/ (v) |

Certain disyllabic words have strong stresses on both the syllables. For example:

| | |
|---------|------------------------|
| fifteen | / 'fɪfti:n/ (n) |
| prepaid | / 'pri:'peɪd/ (v/adj.) |

Stress in Polysyllabic Words: In English polysyllabic words, there is always one strong syllable and occasionally two. The other syllables in the words are unstressed; though in some words, there may be a syllable with secondary stress. The following words have one stressed and the remaining several unstressed syllables: **For Example:**

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| ex'cessively | /ɪk'sesɪvli/ |
| port'manteau | /pɔ:t'mæntəʊ/ |
| phi'lanthropist | /fɪ'lænθrəpɪst/ |

There are secondary stresses as well in these words:

| | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| ˌcentrali'zation | /ˌsentrəlai'zeɪʃn/ |
| adˌminis'tration | /ədˌmɪnɪs'treɪʃn/ |

Other examples from single stress compounds are words like

| | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 'foot-ɪpassages | /'fʊt-ɪpæsɪdʒɪz/ |
| 'cattle-ɪholder | /'kætl-ɪhəʊldə/ |

There can also be words which may have two secondary stresses, such as

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| ˌinteˌllec'tuality | /ˌɪntəˌlek'tʃʊælɪti/ |
|--------------------|----------------------|

Words of three or more syllables with a long vowel or short vowels + two or more consonants may have the primary stress on the ante-penultimate syllable rather than the final syllable.

For Example

| | |
|------------|-------------|
| 'anecdote | /'ænlkdəʊt/ |
| 'fortnight | /'fɔːtnaɪt/ |

However, Crutenden (1997) concedes that the above statements indicate tendencies rather than absolute rules. There are numerous exceptions to the above generalizations.

Stress Shift in double stress words also occurs when some special emphasis is desired. This emphasis may be for intensity or for contrast. In such cases secondary stress is reinforced and becomes as strong as the primary stress. Some examples are given below:

| Normal Stress | | Modified Stress | |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| ˌfunda'mental | /ˌfʌndə'mentl/ | 'funda'mental | /'fʌndə'mentl/ |
| ˌdɪstri'bution | /ˌdɪstrɪ'bjuːʃn/ | 'dɪstri'bution | /'dɪstrɪ'bjuːʃn/ |
| ˌrɛspɒnsɪ'bɪlɪti / | ˌrɪspɒnsə'bɪlɪti/ | 'rɛspɒnsɪ'bɪlɪti | /'rɪspɒnsə'bɪlɪti/ |

In the following cases primary stress is modified to secondary or no stress for emphasis or contrast:

| | | | |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| 'un'less | /ən'les/ | ˌun'less | /ˌən'les/ |
| 'spec'tator | /'spek'teɪtə/ | ˌspec'tator | /ˌspek'teɪtə/ |

The above type of modification is more noticeable in polysyllabic words such as:

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 'represen'tational, | /ˌreprɪzen'teɪʃnl/ |
| 'character'istically | /ˌkærəktə'rɪstɪkəli / |

Stress in Compound Words: A compound word is made up of two or more words. It may be written as one word with or without a hyphen (between words). Some compound words have single stress on the first element while the others have double stress. The most common stress pattern in compound words is a single stress on the first syllable. Some of such commonly used words are:

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 'book budge | /'bʊkbʌdʒ/ |
| 'bystander | /'baɪstændə/ |
| 'washing-stand | /'wɒʃɪŋ-stænd/ |
| 'dinning-room | /'daɪnɪŋ-ru:m/ |

Noun (N) + Noun (N): where a compound noun denotes single new idea rather than the combination of two ideas suggested by the original words, single stress is used.

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 'blackboard | /'blækbɔ:d/ |
| 'kingfisher | /'kɪŋfɪʃə/ |

where N+N has the meaning restricted to the second (N) single stress is used on the first element.

| | |
|-------------|--------------|
| 'birthday | /'bɜ:θdeɪ/ |
| 'cart-horse | /'ka:t-hɔ:s/ |

(Adj. + Adj.) Double stress is used in compound adjectives: where the first element is adjective.

| | |
|----------------|---------------|
| 'good'looking | /'gʊd'lʊkɪŋ/ |
| 'old'fashioned | /'əʊld'fæʃnd/ |

When the second element of a compound is felt to be of special importance, double stress is used: e.g. 'gas'stove has double stress because the second element has an implied contrast with the first but since a compound like 'gasengine has no particular contrast between 'engine' and anything else except a contrast between an engine worked by gas and engines work by other means there is single stress. Other examples are:

| | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 'India'rubber | /'ɪndɪə'rʌbə/ |
| 'eye'witness | /'aɪ'wɪtnəs/ |

Graveyard /'grevja:d/ is always said with single stress because there is no contrast in this case as is noticed in the examples given.

When a compound noun is used attributively, it may have single stress, e.g. 'midsummer day. Even in rhythmic modification, words like midsummer, midnight (attributive) retains their stress on the first element. 'mid'winter which is not used attributively, has double stress.

There are certain miscellaneous compounds which have double stress– of course subject to rhythmic variations and to emphasis– which are not covered under the principles stated above.

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Some of these compounds are listed below:

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| 'down'hil | / 'daʊn'hɪl / |
| 'up'hil | / 'ʌp'hɪl / |
| 'down'stairs | / 'daʊn'steəz / |
| 'wherea'bouts (interrogative adv.) | / 'weərə'bauts / |
| 'there'abouts | / 'ðeərə'bauts / |

It has been mentioned, while discussing stress in English that in the articulation of any connected speech or sound sequence, a peak of prominence is automatically formed. It is borne out by the pulmonic chest pulse theory accepted by phoneticians. The extra breath force applied to a particular sound in a sequence of utterance forms these peaks of prominence. Only vowels and certain syllabic consonants are responsible for such peaks. This phenomenon is a proven fact and does not require much elaboration. The points to be considered is whether the formation of such peaks of prominence is a natural physiological phenomenon only or does it have any significant functional role to play in the language concerned? In English we have seen that if the right stress is not placed on a particular syllable, the word is either incomprehensible or else its grammatical category is blurred. For example, orthographically represented, 'absent' is one word consisting of two syllables. But semantically, the word has two functions distinguished by the placing of the stress. If the stress is on the first syllable the word functions as an adjective. If the stress is on the second syllable its function changes to a verb. Besides this change of the grammatical category with changed meaning, there is a change in the articulation of the vowel sound as well. The change in grammatical category entails a change in the semantic implications as well. For example, absent, with its stress on the first syllable means a quality or a condition requiring a noun if it occurs in the semantic category of Subject or it may occur finally if it occurs in the category of Predicate for example:

| <u>Subject</u> | | <u>Predicate</u> |
|-------------------------|---|----------------------|
| The absent staff | / | will be punished. |
| Almost the entire staff | / | absented themselves. |

The phonological change to denote the change in the grammatical status of the word is æ→ə and æ←ə. In English because of the requirements of rhythmical variation, the stress pattern undergoes modifications.

In English, stress is phonemic as it differentiates one syllable from the other by leading to prominence on one particular syllable with reduction of prominence to other syllable. Sometimes it uses elision (disappearance of the syllable altogether) in order to make the peak of prominence distinct. Thus, in English, stress is phonologically phonemic and semantically distinctive in function. But in Urdu, though the physiological chest pulse phenomenon is applicable, stress is prominent in

the sense that it differentiates one syllable from the other but is not distinctive in regard to its function.

Word Stress Patterns in Urdu

Iqtidar H. Khan in his doctoral dissertation, “*A Comparative and Contrastive Study of Standard Urdu and Standard Hindi*” (Aligarh Muslim University, 1999, p.66) has tried to establish that long vowels alone are responsible for constituting syllables in Urdu. If his view is accepted, it will be difficult to analyze the syllabic feature of some words such as:

| Urdu words | | English Translation |
|------------|------------|---------------------|
| qalam | qə-lə-m | pen |
| sabaq | sə-bə-q | lesson |
| qadam | qə-də-m | step |
| aqalmand | ə-qəl-mənd | wise |

The difficulty can be overcome if it is understood that Urdu, like Hindi, is a syllable timed language where a consonant cannot be pronounced without an accompanying final vowel sound ‘ə’ in a word without a long vowel which Iqtidar H. Khan has called a ‘*matra*’. This short phoneme forms a syllable in a word like ‘qalam’, which has two syllables [q+ə/ l+ə / m+ə]. The third syllable does not come into existence because the consonant ‘m’ does not get functionally a vowel support because of its occurrence in the final position of the sound sequence. However, the structure of stress in syllables of all vowels excepting ‘ə’ is made prominent because of long vowels. A classification of the stress patterns of syllables with varying numbers is given below:

×

Disyllabic words (short + short vowels)

| Urdu Words | | English Version |
|------------|-----------|-----------------|
| batakh | / bətək / | duck |
| qasam | / qəsəm / | swear |
| asar | / əsər / | effect |
| fasal | / fəsəl / | crop |

Disyllabic words (short + long vowels)

| | | |
|--------|--------------|-----------|
| dahi | / d̤ə'hi: / | curd |
| kahi | / kə'hi: / | said |
| udhaar | / u'd̤ha:r / | loan |
| Quraan | / qu'ra:n / | Holy book |

Disyllabic words (long + short vowels)

| | | |
|---------|------------|-------------|
| khaalid | / 'xa:lid/ | proper name |
|---------|------------|-------------|

| | | |
|---------|-------------|---------|
| maalik | / 'ma:llk / | owner |
| baarish | / 'ba:rI / | raining |
| qeemat | / 'qi:mət / | price |

Liquid consonants or consonant clusters consist of at least one liquid consonant or doubling of consonant, where short vowels have a tendency to carry greater prominence than other consonants with short vowels. The liquid consonants are / l, m, n, ŋ/, and nazalizations.

Trisyllabic words (Short+short+short vowels)

| | | | |
|-----------|----------------|--|-----------|
| Mashaqqat | / məʃə'qqət / | (Doubling consonant affecting stress) | Hard work |
| Muqaddar | / muqəḍḍər / | (Doubling consonant affecting stress) | destiny |
| Munawwar | / mʊnə'wwər / | (Doubling consonant affecting stress) | happiness |
| Samander | / səmən'dər / | (stress because preceding the just voiced nasal) | Sea |
| Chuqander | / tʃuqən'ḍər / | (Doubling consonant affecting stress) | beetroot |

Trisyllabic words (Short+short+long vowels)

| Urdu Words | English Version | |
|------------|--|-------------|
| samajhdar | / səmədʒh'ḍa:r / | intelligent |
| izzatdar | / Izzət'ḍa:r / | responsible |
| | (secondary stress because of doubling consonant) | |
| musalman | / müsəl'ma:n / | Muslim |
| qabristan | / qəbrɪs'ta:n / | graveyard |

Trisyllabic words (Short+long+long vowels)

| | | |
|-----------|------------------|----------------------|
| afghani | / əfḍa:ni: / | from Afghanistan |
| tabadla | / tə'ba:ḍla: / | transfer |
| gunahgar | / gu'na:hga:r / | culprit |
| parhezgar | / pər'he:zga:r / | care conscious |
| sawari | / sə'wa:ri: / | passenger/conveyance |

Trisyllabic words (Long+Short+Short vowels)

| | | |
|----------|---------------|-------------|
| bekhabar | / 'be:xəbər / | unaware |
| adatan | / 'a:ḍətən / | by habit |
| matehat | / 'ma:təhət / | subordinate |

Trisyllabic words (Long + Short + Long vowels)

| | | |
|--------|---------------|------------|
| haziri | / 'ha:zɪri; / | presence |
| qafila | / 'qa:fɪla: / | procession |

| | | |
|----------|-----------------|-------------|
| Pakistan | / 'pa:kIsta:n / | proper name |
|----------|-----------------|-------------|

Trisyllabic Sords (Long + Long + Long vowels)

| | | |
|------------|------------------|----------|
| badami | / ba:'ḍa:mi: / | a colour |
| asmani | / a:s'ma:ni: / | sky-blue |
| khoobsurti | / xu:b'su:rti: / | beauty |

Polysyllabic words (Short+Short+Short+Short vowels)

| | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| shaharbadar | / 'ʃəhərbədər / | exile (taripar) |
| idharudhar | / 'Idhəruḍhər / | here and there |

Polysyllabic words (Short+Short+Short+Long vowels)

| | | |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| husnparasti | / 'husnpərəsti: / | lover of beauty |
| sharmindagi | / ʃər'mInḍəgi: / | shame |
| badqismati | / bəḍ'qIsməti: / | unfortunate |

Polysyllabic words (Short+Short+Long+Long vowels)

| | | |
|-------------|--------------------|------------------|
| pehelwani | / pəhəl'wa:ni: / | show of strength |
| meherbani | / meher'ba:ni: / | kindness |
| dardmandana | / ḍərdḍən'ḍa:na: / | sympathetic |

Polysyllabic words (Short+Long+Long+Long vowels)

| | | |
|-------------|--------------------|----------------|
| perhezgari | / pərhe:z'ga:ri: / | self-care |
| mehmandari | / meh'ma:nḍa:ri: / | hospitality |
| mubarakbadi | / mu'ba:rkba:di:/ | congratulation |

Polysyllabic words (Long+Long+Long+Long vowels)

| | | |
|----------|-------------------|-----------|
| anakani | / 'a:na:ka:ni: / | avoidance |
| marapiti | / 'ma:ra:pi:ti: / | quarrel |
| kalapani | / 'ka:la:pa:ni: / | exile |

Words consisting of Prefixes: Prefixes in Urdu are mainly adjectival:

They function as intensifier and have their own semantic functional status for example / be'ḍa:ḍ / = be + ḍa:ḍ spotless.

Examples indicates that / be: / has its semantic value of negative meaning but cannot function grammatically as an independent item. Other examples which are quite frequently used are:

| | | |
|--------|--------------------|-------|
| baddoa | / 'bəḍ / + / ḍua / | curse |
|--------|--------------------|-------|

| | | |
|---------|-----------------------|---------|
| nalayaq | / 'na: / + / la:jəq / | useless |
| najaiz | / 'na: / + / dʒa:lz / | illegal |

In these prefixes, the stress falls on the prefix. It should be noted that these prefixes are negative. Positive prefixes may not be stressed, e.g. /ba:səla:hIjət/ (efficient). In this example, it is optional to have one or two stresses. Suffixes affect stress only when they are formed by inflections using long vowels. Such as

| | | |
|--------|---------------|-----------|
| aurat | / 'əʊrət/ | woman |
| aurtē | / 'əʊrtē/ | women |
| beti | / be:'ti: / | daughter |
| betijā | / be:'ti:jā / | daughters |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|----------|
| Compounds (a) prefix + noun | (be: + ɖa:δ) | spotless |
| (b) prefix + Adjective | (na: + xʊʃ) | anger |

Other prefixes, which can constitute compounds, are rare. However, wherever there is a compound of this type, stress falls on the prefix. Given below are a few examples of stress patterns in compound words:

| | | |
|-----------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| (c) Adj. + Adj. | / kə'tʃtʃa: + pə'kka: / | unripe+ripe |
| | / 'nərəm + 'gərəm / | hot and cold |
| (d) Adj. + noun | / gərəm + mə'sa:la: / | hot spices |
| | / 'bəɖ + tə'mi:z / | impertinent |

Stress in Compound Words: Stress on a compound word falls on the item which contains the core meaning but stress can shift because of the requirement of rhythm, pitch variation, comparison or contrast.

Functional Shift of Stress: Stress shift in Urdu is not functional, as it is in English. This is evident from the examples given above while talking about stress in affixation in English. Since in Urdu, word stress is largely dependent upon syllables containing long vowels or what are called *matras*, stress shift occurs either between these long vowels or sometimes, though not very frequently, from syllables containing long vowels to syllables containing short vowels.

Contrast: e.g. the following neutral utterance:

/ 'æsa: qʌs'sa: 'sunnemēkəm 'a:ta: hæ /
 (Aisaqissasunne me kamaatahai)
 (such a story is very rare.)

For contrast stress of one particular word may become significantly prominent so that other stresses are shifted from primary to secondary stress, e.g.

/ æsa: kIs'sa: ɪsunnemēɪkəmɪa:ta: hæ /

Likewise, stress shift may affect other disyllabic words in the above example even by emphasizing a monosyllabic word, e.g.

/ ɪæsa: kIsɪsa: 'sunnemēɪkəma:ta: hæ /

Likewise, for emphasis or contrast, extra prominence may be given to any syllable in the utterance.

Pitch Variation: For purposes of choosing a particular tone and dividing the utterance into tone groups, pitch variation takes place on a particular syllable or sequence of syllables. In such a case, stress shift – as contrasted with the neutral form of the utterance – takes place. **For example:**

/ pɪtʃhɪle tʃhəmaɪ:nə se / a:p / kja:/ kərrəhehē /
(*pichchleychemaheeno=se aapkyakarrahehe=?*)
(What have you been doing since the last six months?)

Stress can be shifted in words of more than one syllables considering the attitude of the speaker and the meaning which he intends to convey. It is relevant to note here that such type of freedom is not available in English. For example, in an utterance in English the stress falls on a particular syllable in connected speech as it falls in isolation e.g

Aca'demic /ækə'demɪk
insti'tution /Instɪ'tju:ʃn/
This is an aca'demicinsti'tution.

The above examples indicate that the stress is fixed in English words ending with the suffixes i.e. in these words the stress falls on the suffix. But in Urdu, there is no fixed place for the word stress as it may fall on first syllable or in some words on the suffix or on any other syllable.

Conclusion and Remedial Measures

In the present study we have relied for the substantiation of our observations mostly through examples taken from the actual utterances of the students. We have tried to induct the principles of socio-linguistics and have referred to the concept of the linguistic element related to the principle of 'power and solidarity' and 'context of situation'. It is needless to emphasize the validity of the fact that language is product of culture. We can say that one has learnt a foreign language only when he has been acculturated in the target language. In other words, the learner has to imbibe in his speech-habits the cultural nuances of the foreign language before he can claim to have learnt the language. For this a 'Chimeran' suggestion has been put forward by highbrow pedagogical experts and

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theorists. This has led to the unsuccessful polarization of methodological theory of the learners ‘immersion’, in the environment of the foreign language so that acquisition of the spoken skills of the language is unconscious and automatic. Since this concept is not workable at all in the Indian context we have called it Chimeran or impractical. The experience of students’ competence after twelve years of their schooling in an environment of ‘immersion’ in the foreign language environment is not very encouraging in the context of the Indian family and social life. The learner, returning home from the exclusively immersion environment in the foreign language situation, reverts to the use of his mother tongue. In certain neo-rich and so-called high society, the use of the foreign language in homes is very often ridiculed as artificial and conceited.

Whatever the methodology, the teacher should constantly keep in view the importance of stress in English. If he/she has considerably reduced the stressing errors normally made by the Urdu speakers, half of the battle with regard to the teaching of the other supra segmental feature will be won automatically. The teaching of the syllable structure will be useful only to make the students aware of the cluster formation of consonants, elision of sounds and articulation of the right vowels. It also helps in the separation of syllables in a word either for the sake of breaking a word or for practising the division of a word into morphs and allomorphs.

The following preventive and remedial measures could be suggested to improve the syllable division and word stress patterns of Urdu speaking learners of English and English-speaking learners of Urdu:

1. Phonemic transcription of words should be written for dividing the words into syllables.
2. Spelling pronunciation should be avoided, and the correct pronunciation of words and syllable division of isolated words should be learnt through a standard pronouncing dictionary.
3. The correct distribution of vowels / ə / and / ʌ / should be maintained while dividing syllable structures. Vowel /ə / should never be replaced by vowel / ʌ /.
4. Omission or addition of vowel /ə/ should be carefully avoided in the division of syllables.
5. In English word ‘the’ vowel / ə / should be pronounced before a consonant sound and vowel / I / before a vowel. This distinction should be carefully maintained.
6. Correct word stress patterns in simple words, complex words, words involving functional stress shift and compound words should be learnt and practiced.
7. Word stress patterns in disyllabic, tri-syllabic and polysyllabic words should be learnt and practiced according to the following stress positions.
 - (i) Stress on the first syllable.
 - (ii) Stress on the second syllable
 - (iii) Stress on the third syllable
 - (iv) Stress on prefixes and roots
 - (v) Stress on suffixes

- (vi) Stress on suffixes and roots
 - (vii) Stress on the first element in compound words
 - (viii) Stress on the second element in compound words, etc.
8. Unstressed syllable should be pronounced weakly and rapidly between two stressed syllables.
 9. Semi vowel /w/ should never be replaced by voiced labio dental frictional /v/, especially in Urdu.
 10. English words should be pronounced with the correct stress patterns as used in normal English.
 11. Some initial clusters like /sp-/, /st-/, /sk-/, and /sm-/ should be pronounced correctly. Insertion of an extra short vowel / I / before these consonant clusters should be carefully avoided by the Urdu speakers.
 12. Syllabic consonants /m/, /n/, /l/ should be learnt and practiced and should be pronounced carefully without adding an extra vowel.
 13. Dental plosive / th / and / d / should be used carefully for English dental fricatives /θ/ and / ð /.
 14. Post –alveolar / t / and / d / can be used for English alveolar / t / and /d/.
 15. Vowel /e:/ and /o:/ should be sufficiently long when used for normal English /eI / and / əʊ/ in Urdu.

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