

THE NATURE OF SUPRASEGMENTAL UNITS OF PHONETICS IN ENGLISH

Ikromova Gulasal Paxlovan qizi

Fergana state university

English language and literature faculty

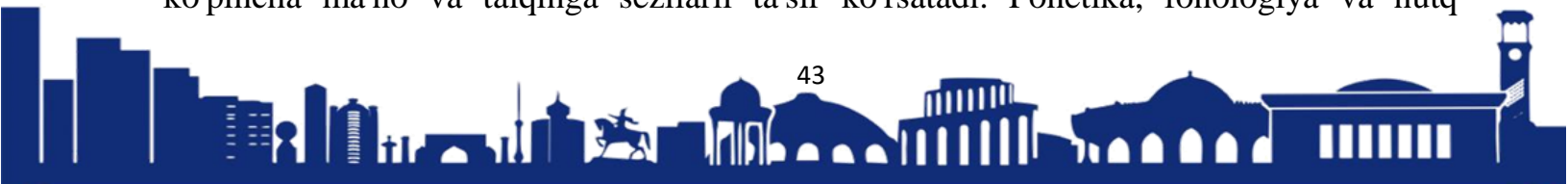
Abstract: This study delves into the intricate domain of suprasegmental units of phonetics within the English language. Suprasegmentals, encompassing features such as stress, intonation, and rhythm, play a pivotal role in linguistic communication, often wielding significant influence over meaning and interpretation. Employing a multidisciplinary approach drawing from phonetics, phonology, and discourse analysis, this research endeavors to unravel the underlying mechanisms governing these suprasegmental phenomena.

Key words: Suprasegmental units, Phonetics, English language, Stress, Intonation, Rhythm, Linguistic communication, Phonology, Discourse analysis, Hierarchical structure, Syntax, Semantics, Pragmatics, Speech data analysis, Second language acquisition, Pedagogy, ESL learners, Communication, Discourse structure, Language education.

Аннотация: Это исследование углубляется в сложную область супrasegmentных единиц фонетики английского языка. Супrasegmentальные элементы, охватывающие такие характеристики, как ударение, интонация и ритм, играют ключевую роль в языковом общении, часто оказывая значительное влияние на значение и интерпретацию. Используя междисциплинарный подход, основанный на фонетике, фонологии и анализе дискурса, это исследование пытается разгадать основные механизмы, управляющие этими супrasegmentарными явлениями.

Ключевые слова: Супrasegmentные единицы, Фонетика, английский язык, Ударение, Интонация, Ритм, Лингвистическое общение, Фонология, Анализ дискурса, Иерархическая структура, Синтаксис, Семантика, Прагматика, Анализ речевых данных, Овладение вторым языком, Педагогика, Учащиеся ESL, Коммуникация, Дискурс структура, Языковое образование.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu tadqiqot ingliz tilidagi fonetikaning suprasegmental birliklarining murakkab sohasini o'rganadi. Stress, intonatsiya va ritm kabi xususiyatlarni o'z ichiga olgan suprasegmentallar lingvistik muloqotda hal qiluvchi rol o'ynaydi, ko'pincha ma'no va talqinga sezilarli ta'sir ko'rsatadi. Fonetika, fonologiya va nutq



tahlilidan kelib chiqqan holda multidisipliner yondashuvni qo'llagan holda, ushbu tadqiqot ushbu subsegmental hodisalarni boshqaradigan asosiy mexanizmlarni ochishga harakat qiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: Segmental birliklar, Fonetika, Ingliz tili, Stress, Intonatsiya, Ritm, Lingvistik aloqa, Fonologiya, Diskurs tahlili, Ierarxik tuzilma, Sintaksis, Semantika, Pragmatika, Nutq ma'lumotlarini tahlil qilish, Ikkinchi tilni o'zlashtirish, Pedagogika, ESL o'quvchilari, Muloqot tuzilishi, Til ta'limi.

INTRODUCTION

The study of phonetics in the English language has long been a focal point for linguists and language researchers seeking to understand the intricacies of human communication. While segmental units such as vowels and consonants are foundational to linguistic structure, the realm of suprasegmental elements adds a nuanced layer of complexity to the spoken word. Suprasegmental units, encompassing features such as stress, intonation, and rhythm, play a crucial role in shaping the meaning and interpretation of utterances in English.

The investigation of suprasegmental units is vital for elucidating the dynamic nature of spoken language and its expressive capabilities. Stress, for example, can alter the emphasis and clarity of specific words within a sentence, thereby influencing the overall message conveyed. Intonation, on the other hand, can signal the speaker's emotional state, mood, or attitude, adding layers of meaning beyond the words themselves. Rhythm, in terms of timing and flow, contributes to the overall cadence and coherence of speech, impacting the listener's perception and comprehension. In this study, we aim to delve into the nature of suprasegmental units of phonetics in English, exploring their underlying mechanisms, functional significance, and interplay with other linguistic domains. By drawing upon a multidisciplinary approach that integrates phonetic, phonological, and discourse analytic perspectives, we seek to unravel the complexities of these suprasegmental features and their role in facilitating effective communication in English. Through a comprehensive review of theoretical frameworks, empirical research findings, and practical applications, this study endeavors to shed light on the intricate relationships between suprasegmental units and various aspects of linguistic structure and meaning. Furthermore, we aim to address the implications of suprasegmental analysis for language pedagogy, particularly in the context of second language acquisition and ESL instruction.

MAIN BODY



Phonetics is the scientific study of the physical properties of sounds produced and perceived as speech. It encompasses various aspects of speech, including segmental and suprasegmental components. Segmental units are the individual phonemes or speech sounds that make up words, while suprasegmental units are the larger speech patterns that convey meaning beyond the individual phonemes. In English, suprasegmental units are essential for conveying stress, intonation, and rhythm. This article explores the nature of suprasegmental units of phonetics in the English language.

1. Stress in English Phonetics

Stress is the emphasis placed on a syllable within a word or a sentence. In English, stress can affect the pronunciation, meaning, and rhythm of words. Different words have different stress patterns, and the stress pattern within a word can change its meaning.¹ For example, the words "accent" and "accentuate" have different meanings depending on the stressed syllable.

There are three main stress patterns in English:

- Strong stress: The stressed syllable is pronounced with a greater intensity than the other syllables in the word.
- Weak stress: The stressed syllable is pronounced with a lesser intensity compared to strong stress.
- Alternating stress: The stress pattern alternates between syllables within the word.

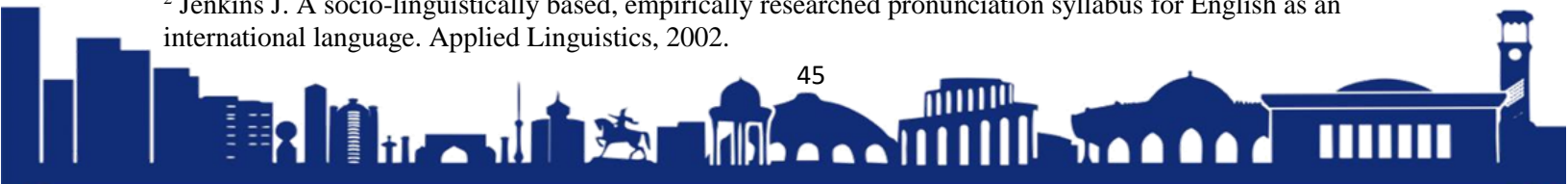
In English Phonetics, "Stress" refers to the emphasis placed on a particular syllable within a word or sentence, which can affect the meaning of the word. In English, stress can be variable, meaning it may change depending on the context or speaker. There are three main types of stress patterns in English:

1. Lexical stress: This is the stress that occurs within words. In English, stress typically falls on the first or second syllable of a word.² For example, in the word "geography," the stress is on the first syllable, while in the word "atmosphere," the stress is on the second syllable.

2. Phrasal stress: This is the stress that occurs within phrases or sentences. Phrasal stress can change the meaning of the words being used. For example, in the phrase "They are going to the store," the stress is on the word "store." However, in the phrase "They are

¹ Harmer J. The practice of English language teaching. New York NY: Longman, 1993.

² Jenkins J. A socio-linguistically based, empirically researched pronunciation syllabus for English as an international language. Applied Linguistics, 2002.



going to the store near the bank," the stress is on the word "bank," which changes the meaning of "store" from a place to shop to a nearby location.

3. Intonation: This is the stress that occurs in connected speech, which can indicate the speaker's emotions, attitudes, or intentions. Intonation can also help to differentiate between statements, questions, and exclamations. For example, the sentence "I can't believe it's already Thursday" can have an intonation that indicates surprise, disbelief, or excitement, depending on the speaker's intonation patterns.

Understanding stress in English phonetics is crucial for effective communication and accurate pronunciation. It helps speakers convey their intended meaning and allows listeners to interpret the speaker's intent more accurately.

2. Intonation in English Phonetics

Intonation refers to the variation in pitch during speech. It is responsible for conveying emotions, attitudes, and meanings in sentences. In English, intonation is crucial for distinguishing between statements, questions, and exclamations. Intonation patterns in English can be categorized into four basic nuclear tones:

- High rising (H): The pitch starts high and rises to a higher level, often used in questions.

- Low rising (L): The pitch starts low and rises slightly, often used in questions.

- Low falling (L'): The pitch starts low and falls, often used in statements.

- High falling (H'): The pitch starts high and falls, often used in statements.

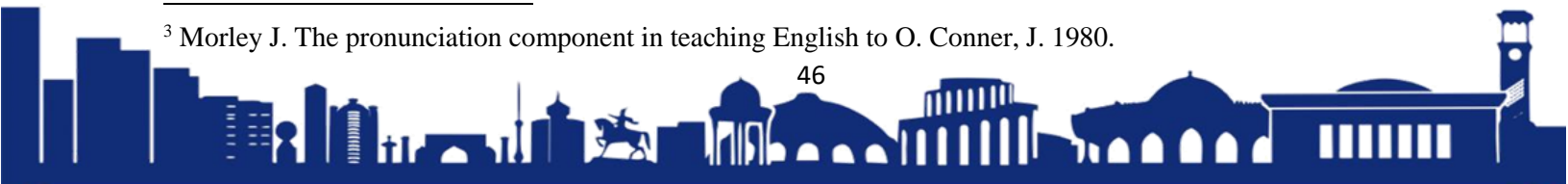
Intonation in English phonetics refers to the variations in pitch, stress, and tone that speakers use to convey meaning and express emotions in spoken language. These variations contribute to the nuances of a speaker's voice and can significantly affect the overall message and the listener's interpretation of the speaker's intent.³

In English, intonation typically involves the following aspects:

1. Pitch: The highness or lowness of the voice at any given moment. Pitch can indicate the speaker's emotional state, such as happiness, sadness, anger, or surprise, and it can also help to clarify the meaning of a sentence.

2. Stress: The emphasis placed on certain syllables or words within a sentence. Stress can change the meaning of a sentence or indicate the focus of a statement. For

³ Morley J. The pronunciation component in teaching English to O. Conner, J. 1980.



example, the word "not" can be stressed to indicate a negative meaning or unstressed to indicate a positive meaning (e.g., "I am not going to the party." vs. "I am not going to the store.").

3. Tone: The overall pattern of pitch and stress throughout a sentence or passage. Tone can help to convey the speaker's attitude, emotion, or intent, and it can also signal the relationship between the speaker and the listener.

There are several common intonation patterns in English, which can be used to convey different meanings and emotions:

1. Falling intonation: This pattern usually indicates a statement or declarative sentence, with the pitch starting high and gradually falling towards the end of the sentence. For example, "The weather is nice today."

2. Rising intonation: This pattern is commonly used to indicate a question or seek confirmation, with the pitch starting low and rising sharply towards the end of the sentence. For example, "You're going to the party, right?"

3. Rising-falling intonation: This pattern can be used to express surprise or disbelief, with the pitch starting low, rising sharply, and then falling at the end of the sentence. For example, "You're actually going to the party?"

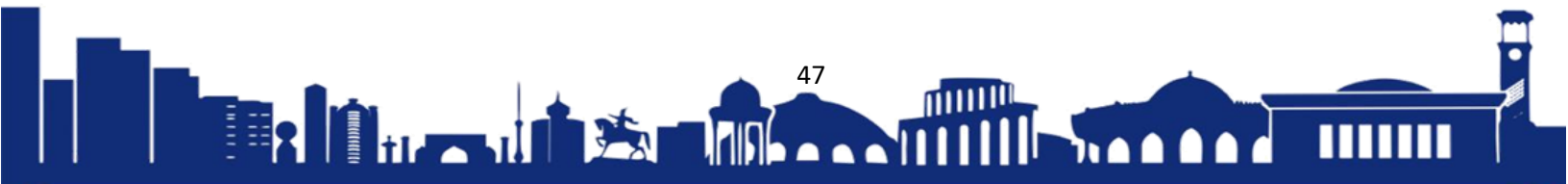
4. Falling-rising intonation: This pattern can be used to express hesitation or uncertainty, with the pitch starting high, falling, and then rising.

3. Rhythm in English Phonetics refers to the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables in English words and phrases. It plays a crucial role in the pronunciation and intonation of spoken English. To understand and produce natural-sounding English speech, it is important to be aware of the rhythm patterns.

English rhythm is typically described as having a trochaic stress pattern, which means that it follows a strong-weak or stressed-unstressed syllable structure. However, this pattern is not always consistent, and there are variations within the language.

Here are some key aspects of English rhythm in phonetics:

1. Primary and secondary stress: In English, words often have a primary stressed syllable, which carries the most prominence, and one or more secondary stressed



syllables.⁴ For example, in the word "misinterpretation," the primary stress is on the first syllable, while the secondary stress is on the third syllable.

2. Stress shifts: The stress pattern of a word may change depending on the context in which it is used. For example, the word "library" has primary stress on the second syllable when used as a noun, but stress shifts to the first syllable when used as a verb: "I will library the books."

3. Rhythmic groups: English speech is often organized into groups of syllables, with each group containing one stressed syllable followed by one or more unstressed syllables. This pattern is sometimes referred to as a "foot." For example, in the phrase "She sells seashells by the seashore," each foot consists of one stressed syllable (e.g., "sells") followed by one or more unstressed syllables (e.g., "seashells").

4. Phrasal stress: The stress pattern of a phrase or sentence may change depending on emphasis, context, and speaker intent. For example, in the sentence "I gave the present to Mary," the primary stress is on the verb "gave." However, if you want to emphasize the recipient of the gift, you might say, "I gave the present to Mary," with primary stress on "Mary."

5. Interpretation and variability: Different speakers may interpret and produce English rhythm differently.

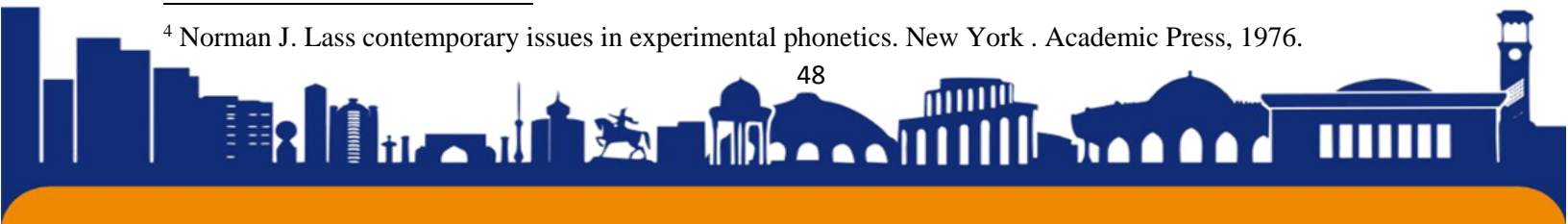
Suprasegmental units are essential components of our speech that go beyond the individual phonemes, or sounds, that make up words. They are responsible for conveying a wide range of meaning and information, such as pitch, stress, intonation, and duration, which help us express emotions, convey intentions, and create a coherent flow within our speech.

Here are some key aspects of suprasegmental units in our speech:

1. Pitch: Pitch refers to the perceived highness or lowness of a sound. In speech, it helps convey emotions, emphasis, and even gender. For example, higher pitch is often associated with happiness, excitement, or surprised, while lower pitch can indicate sadness, anger, or seriousness.

2. Stress: Stress is the emphasis placed on a particular syllable within a word or phrase. It is crucial for disambiguating word meaning and conveying emphasis in speech. For example, in the word "can't," the first syllable is stressed when saying "cannot," while the second syllable is stressed when saying "cant."

⁴ Norman J. Lass contemporary issues in experimental phonetics. New York . Academic Press, 1976.



3. Intonation: Intonation is the variation in pitch within a sentence or a series of syllables. It helps convey the speaker's attitude, emotions, and intentions.⁵ For instance, a rising intonation at the end of a sentence may indicate a question or a statement with uncertainty, while a falling intonation may convey a statement of fact or a command.

4. Duration: Duration refers to the length of time a sound is produced. It can convey emphasis, emotional tone, or stress within a word or phrase. For example, extending the duration of a vowel sound may indicate a louder or more emphatic pronunciation.

5. Volume: Volume refers to the loudness of the speech. It can be used to convey emotions, persuade others, or simply make oneself heard in different environments.

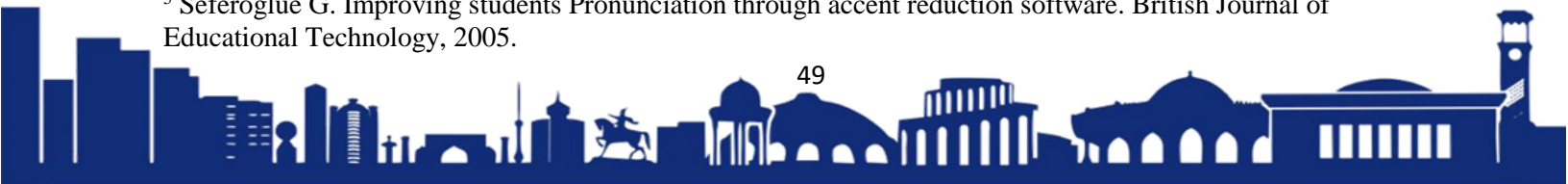
6. Rhythm: Rhythm is the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables within a phrase or sentence. It helps create a natural flow in speech and contributes to the overall comprehensibility of the message.

7. Pausing: Pausing is the temporary interruption of speech. It is used to separate ideas, emphasize points.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the nature of suprasegmental units of phonetics in English is a complex and fascinating topic. It is essential to understand that suprasegmental units, such as stress, intonation, and tone, play a critical role in conveying meaning and emotion in spoken language. These units help to differentiate between various meanings and nuances in spoken English, making them a crucial aspect of effective communication. Researchers have made significant progress in understanding the structure and function of suprasegmental units in English, but there is still much to learn. Future studies could benefit from focusing on the relationship between suprasegmental units and other linguistic aspects, such as morphology and syntax. Additionally, further investigation into the role of suprasegmental units in various dialects and accents of English would provide valuable insights into the diverse ways that these units contribute to the rich tapestry of the English language. Overall, the study of suprasegmental units in phonetics offers a deeper understanding of the complexities of human communication and the intricacies of the English language. As our knowledge of these units grows, so too does our ability to effectively teach and learn English as a global language.

⁵ Seferoglu G. Improving students Pronunciation through accent reduction software. British Journal of Educational Technology, 2005.



References:

1. Harmer J. The practice of English language teaching. New York NY: Longman, 1993.
2. Jenkins J. A socio-linguistically based, empirically researched pronunciation syllabus for English as an international language. Applied Linguistics, 2002.
3. Morley J. The pronunciation component in teaching English to O. Conner, J. 1980.
4. Norman J. Lass contemporary issues in experimental phonetics. New York . Academic Press, 1976.
5. Seferoglu G. Improving students Pronunciation through accent reduction software. British Journal of Educational Technology, 2005.