

Putting stress where it belongs: Stress rules for Turkish language learners

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Abstract: This paper is a synthesis of the most helpful scholarly comments about stress placement in Turkish for language learners. The lesson includes in a minimal amount of jargon, a simple set of rules, many examples, and three post-lesson activities. Being that this important concept is rarely addressed in the available material, the language learner will find this lesson a clear and helpful addition to their learning.

1. Introduction

Language learning is tough work. No matter how long we've been at it, there is always more to learn, more to perfect. It requires more hours, more effort, and more *çay* drinking than anything else we *must* learn in cross-cultural living. *Allah yardımcımız olsun!* 'God help us!'

This paper teaches a simple set of rules to equip the Turkish language learner in placing stress correctly. But why stress stress? Stress placement is a very important part of learning to speak naturally in another language. Mother-tongue Turkish speakers are generally quite satisfied when language learners put stress on the correct syllable, even if difficult vowel or consonant sounds are fumbled. However, despite its importance, very few of Turkish language learning materials spend much time teaching stress placement.

There are, nonetheless, a number of very helpful scholarly works that directly address this issue. Because language learners often feel bogged-down by linguistic jargon, this paper uses only the minimal amount needed to understand the subject matter. The scholarly comments are synthesized and reformulated into a lesson appropriate for language learners. Kabak and Vogel (2001) and Göksel and Kerslake (2005) are especially helpful and thus often mentioned in this lesson.

Regarding usage, this paper is not meant to be a short and concise summary of stress rules in Turkish that is kept in one's pocket for reference; it is a language lesson. This lesson is meant to be read through once or twice slowly, taking careful note of the examples and making sure the reader is following the argument and understanding the points being made. The examples in the lesson do not need to be memorized. Instead, the language learner is expected to understand the pattern and learn the rules the examples illustrate.

This paper has four parts: 1) an introduction to two linguistic terms, 2) stress rules for isolated words, 3) stress rules for compound words and phrases, and 4) an appendix. The exercises in the appendix are meant to be done soon after the paper is read so that readers can quickly ascertain where they are regarding stress placement in their language learning. *Haydi başlayalım!* 'Let's get started!'

2. Defining terms

First, what is meant by 'stress placement'? Let's think about the verb *imports* and the noun *imports* in English. How are they pronounced? They are spelled the same and the vowels make the same sounds, but they differ. Compare these sentences: (a) Turkey *imports* too many things; and (b), Turkey has too many *imports*. The verb is stressed on the second syllable, impórt, while the noun receives stress on the first, ímport. Native English speakers differentiate these two words solely by stress placement. Such aspects of grammar are learned either with a rule or simply as an exception. The same is true of stress placement in Turkish; the stress placement patterns of words and phrases need to be learned by rules or learned as exceptions to those rules. Before beginning the lesson proper two linguistic terms need to be defined: *phonological words* and *clitics*.

2.1 Syntactic words and phonological words

Every word as defined by syntax (for example, ‘me’, ‘candy’, ‘automotive’, ‘superficially’, etc.) will always have its own primary stress. The stress on these words could be marked as such: *mé, cándy, automótive* (aútomotive in some dialects), and *superficially*.¹

Yet in regular speech, there is normally one primary stress put on a *group of words*. For this reason, linguists use the term *phonological word* to mean *a group of one or more syntactic words that share one primary stress*. Because stress rules are not concerned with the same things as syntactic rules, phonological words are different in size than syntactic words. For example, if someone were to ask you, “Where are you going?” you might answer:

(1) [tó] [thé] [stóre] (speaker is upset or annoyed)

The brackets above mark off the phonological word boundaries. In this answer, every syntactic word receives its own primary stress. And thus, every syntactic word is its own phonological word. A native English speaker would normally speak this way when she wants to express irritation or anger. For example, she may have already been asked where she is going, given her answer, but is being asked the same question again. Having become upset that she is being asked the same question a second time, she would respond with an abnormal stress pattern to express her annoyance, like in example (1) above.

The more common answer, however, would be to stress only the main part of the answer. This way, the whole phrase is one phonological word:

(2) [to the stóre]

Notice in example (2) that there are three syntactic words but only one phonological word. There is only one primary stress placement for the whole phrase. Adjectival phrases in English are also normally spoken as one phonological word, having only one primary stress on the whole phrase, i.e. [bíirthday party], [apártment building], [a dífficult subject], etc.²

Example (3) offers some examples of phonological words in Turkish and their normal syntactic classifications. What is important to note is that each phonological word has only one primary stress despite its length and number of syntactic words.

(3)	[sepét]	‘basket’	1 word, 1 phonological word
	[beyáz peynir]	‘white cheese, feta’	adjectival phrase, 2 words, 1 phonological word
	[teşekkúr etmek]	‘to thank’	verbal phrase, 2 words, 1 phonological word
	[cép telefonu]	‘cellphone’	noun phrase, 2 words, 1 phonological word
	[başbakan]	‘prime minister’	compound, 2 words, 1 phonological word
	[İçerenköy]	PLACE NAME	compound, 3 words, 1 phonological word

¹Of course, most long words also have secondary and even tertiary stress as well. The reader should also be aware that Kabak and Vogel (2001) redefine the term *phonological word* in a more specific way for Turkish that goes beyond the common definition used here.

²As we listen closely we may notice a secondary stress in these examples as well, but one syllable in the more important part of the phrase receives the strongest stress placement. Such primary stress is the focus of this lesson.

2.2 Not all *ekler* are stressable: suffixes vs. clitics

Having learned what a ‘phonological word’ is, we now learn our second term, ‘clitic’. Turkish has all kinds of *ekler* ‘additions, endings’, *anla-t-abil-iyor mu-yum* ‘am I making sense’? These *ekler* are affixed to the end of words creating longer words. *Ekler* are often translated as ‘suffixes’ in English. However, not all of these *ekler* are the same. Linguists talk about both suffixes and clitics.³ What makes clitics different from suffixes is that though they are connected to words like suffixes regarding stress patterns, they have their own syntactic function like separate syntactic words.

The important thing to know is that some of the Turkish *ekler* are actually clitics, not suffixes, and particularly for the purposes of this paper, clitics reject stress. This is why we are taught that we must be careful in how we pronounce a word like *gitme*. Just like the English words spelled ‘import’, there are actually two words that differ only regarding stress placement: *gítme* ‘don’t go’ and *gitmé* ‘going’ (as in *gitme zamanı geldi* ‘it’s time to go’). What is helpful for Turkish languages learners is that there are rules that predict how these two *gitme*’s are to be pronounced. We will explain the rules that differentiate such examples below. For now, the language learner needs to be aware that certain *ekler* are clitics, not suffixes, and that clitics reject stress.

In summary, we have discussed two terms. ‘Phonological words’ are one or more syntactic words that receive only one primary stress placement. And ‘clitics’ are *ekler* that reject stress. Having defined these terms, we now move on to the lesson proper.

3. General rules for stress placement in isolated Turkish words

Let’s begin with the rules for assigning stress in isolated Turkish words.

3.1 Regular stress assignment

Here is the first and most important rule to learn.

❖ **Rule One:** Most words in Turkish are stressed on the final syllable.

If unaffected by an irregularity, Turkish words are stressed on the final syllable. Language learners can assume that until they hear a native speaker say a word differently, the last syllable of a word is the stressed syllable. Here is a quick list of words that are stressed ‘regularly’ (many taken from Göksel & Kerslake 2005:26):

(4) [iyilík]	‘goodness’	[hastá]	‘sick’
[erkék]	‘man’	[kutú]	‘box’
[sepetlér]	‘baskets’	[cumhuriyét]	‘republic’
[kalabalík]	‘crowd’	[öğrén]	‘learn’
[kaldırín]	‘(you all) lift up’	[beklicém]	‘I will wait (colloquial)’

³There are actually things that fit in between prototypical suffixed and clitics in the world’s languages. For example, certain studies assume there are three types in Turkish: suffixes, unstressable suffixes, and clitics (Göksel & Kerslake 2005). For the purpose of this lesson, we will only focus on the stressability of each type. Thus, ‘suffixes’ that are unstressable are termed clitics; stressable ones are termed suffixes.

All of the above words are stressed on the final syllable. Some are Turkish (*iyilik*); others are loanwords (*cumhuriyét*). Some lack suffixes (*erkék*), others include suffixes (*sepetlér*), and still others are compound words (*cumhuriyét*). Verbs are also included (*öğrén*). Many Turkish words follow Rule One regardless of their type.

Furthermore, as we noted above, Turkish allows for long strings of *ekler* to be added to words. When those *ekler* are true suffixes—not clitics—stress still comes on the final syllable. This applies to suffixes added to nouns and verbs as illustrated in example (5) (Kabak & Vogel 2001:324 and Göksel & Kerslake 2005:29–30).

(5)	[sepét]	‘basket’	[kír]	‘break’
	[sepetlér]	‘baskets’	[kíríl]	‘be broken’
	[sepetlerím]	‘my baskets’	[kırılacák]	‘it will be broken’
	[sepetlerimdén]	‘from my baskets’	[kırılacaklár]	‘they will be broken’

Thus, the language learner should assume stress on the final syllable in most Turkish words.

3.2 Irregular stress assignment on words

Though Rule One goes a long way, more rules are needed.

❖ *Rule Two: Learn irregular stress by listening.*

Above we said regarding Rule One, “*If unaffected by an irregularity*, Turkish words are stressed on the final syllable.” How should the language learner learn when Rule One does not apply? Language learners will need to both memorize certain words as exceptions as well as learn rules that account for groups of irregularities. This is how mother tongue speakers learn stress placement as well.

Linguistic theorists write often about the concept of the *lexicon* or ‘mental dictionary’ (Kroeger 2005:66–67). The assumption is that when we learn our mother tongues our brains are writing mental dictionaries that include separate entries for every word, every suffix, every clitic, etc., as well as the rules of the language. This is very much like writing such entries into a written dictionary, except that the mind *only remembers as much as needed* to apply the rules of the language correctly concerning that entry. This means that regular words would have short entries and irregular words would have longer entries. What is important for the purposes of this paper is to note that the entries not only include each word’s meaning and type (noun, verb, etc.) but also “irregular forms or patterns associated with that specific word” (67).⁴ For example, this is how the entry for the English word ‘child’ might be represented (67):

child /tʃaɪld/
 ‘young human’
 category: noun
 PLURAL: *children*

⁴Kroeger gives a bit longer list (2005:67): “[T]he lexical entry for each word must specify at least the following information: phonological shape, meaning (semantic properties), syntactic category (part of speech), other grammatical information, [and] irregular forms or patterns associated with that specific word.”

This entry includes the word's standard spelling, its pronunciation (because English spelling no longer correctly reflects pronunciation), its meaning, its speech category, as well as a line of irregular information, its abnormal plural. What we see is that this word is learned as a normal noun and thus can follow the rules for nouns when used in communication: that it can be modified by adjectives, the 's-possessive marker, etc. But there is one irregularity that has to be memorized, it does not take the normal plural suffix: *childs is wrong, children is correct.

Applying this to Turkish, following Kabak and Vogel (2001)⁵, the stress placement of words which do not follow Rule One must be learned as irregular information. This means the entries for the regularly stressed word *sakát* 'cripple' would be shorter than the irregularly stressed word *fákat* 'but', as below:

<i>sakat</i> 'cripple' category: noun

<i>fakat</i> 'but' category: conjunction STRESS: <i>fákat</i>
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Language learners need to become aware of which words do not follow Rule One and then memorize the stress patterns as an exceptional part of that word's entry in their lexicons.

Note also that Rule Two says that such information is best learned audibly. Irregular stress patterns are not marked regularly in writing because mother-tongue speakers have already written the irregular stress patterns into their mental lexicons. Marking them on paper would be unnecessary and distracting to them. We language learners however do not have that luxury. We must learn irregular stress patterns by listening.

Göksel and Kerslake offer a list of types of words that often receive irregular stress to aid us in recognizing them (6). Examples (7–8) are lists of words that have a matching word in Turkish that differs only regarding stress placement. One word is stressed regularly; the other irregularly.

(6) List of irregularly stressed words types (Göksel & Kerslake 2005:26–28):⁶

- Many adverbs⁷ are stressed on the first syllable:
şimdi 'now', *bélki* 'perhaps', *yárin* 'tomorrow'
- Many nouns of foreign origin are not stressed on the final syllable:
lokánta (Italian) 'restaurant', *bánka* (Italian) 'bank', *táksi* (French) 'chair', *lóbi* (English) 'lobby', *fútbol* (English) 'soccer', *péncere* (Persian) 'window', *politíka* (Greek) 'politics'
- Many place names are not stressed on the final syllable:
Túrkiye, *Ankara*, *Ístánbul*, *Táksim*, *Adána*, *Íngiltére*, *Fránsa*, *Afrika*
- Many question words are stressed on the first syllable:
hángi 'which', *háni* 'where (informal)', *násıl* 'how', *níçin* 'why'
- Words with reduplicative prefixes are stressed on the first syllable: *kápkara* 'pitch black'
- Words with loan prefixes are stressed on the prefix: *ásosyal* 'antisocial'

⁵"We propose to lexically specify the position of stress for any root that is irregular" (325).

⁶Vocatives, forms of address, are also included in their list but this is debatable (Kabak & Vogel 2001:316).

⁷"Note that this rule does not apply to words which function primarily as adjectives, but to [words] that are [primarily] adverbs" (Göksel & Kerslake 2005:27). This distinction is important because most adjectives can function as adverbs in Turkish: *o iş koláydır* 'that activity is easy (adjective)'; *koláy gelsin* '(literally) may it go easily (adverb)'. Other examples of forms that are inherently adjectival and do not have different stress patterns when used adverbially include the following: *çabuk* and *iyi* (Kabak & Vogel 2001:318). This should be kept in mind regarding *yalnız* and *nihayet* in example (7).

- Words containing clitics (mentioned below)
- Compound words (mentioned below)

(7) List of pairs which differ only regarding stress (Göksel & Kerslake 2005:28 and Kabak & Vogel 2001:318, 321):

[gitmé]	‘going’	[gítme]	‘don’t go’
[mısır]	‘maize’	[Mısır]	‘Egypt’
[bebék]	‘baby’	[Bébek]	PLACE NAME
[ordú]	‘army’	[Órdu]	PLACE NAME
[yalnız]	‘alone (adjective)’	[yálnız]	‘lonely, only (adverb)’
[nihayét]	‘end (noun)’	[nihayet]	‘finally (adverb)’
[eştiníz]	‘you all dug (it) up’	[éştiniz]	‘you all were spouses’

Now, these lists may suggest wrongly that each of the stress placement patterns of these words needs to be memorized as an exception. In fact, there are rules that account for many of them. The groups of examples above are meant to help the language learner notice such irregularities but many are accounted for in the rules that follow. The way in which the language learner should approach them is this: (1) listen for stress placement; (2) after noticing an irregular stress placement, see if it is accounted for by one of the rules that are taught below, (3) if no such rule accounts for it, memorize the irregular stress pattern.

One more rule is needed regarding these irregularly stressed words.

❖ **Rule Three:** Irregularly stressed words keep hold of stress over suffixes.

(8) [Afríka]	‘Africa’	(5) [sepét]	‘basket’
[Afríkalı]	‘African’	[sepetlér]	‘baskets’
[Afríkalılar]	‘Africans’	[sepetlerím]	‘my baskets’
[Afríkálılardan]	‘from Africans’	[sepetlerimdén]	‘from my baskets’

As example (8) illustrates (Göksel & Kerslake 2005:30), words that do not follow Rule One hold their irregular stress pattern even when suffixes are added. This differs greatly from what happens when regularly stressed words receive suffixes, as shown in example (5) repeated above.

Below, it will be shown that though irregularly stressed words do control stress over suffixes, clitics actually may take control over stress when attached to both regularly and irregularly stressed words. Thus, is it important to read Rule Three as applying *only to suffixes*, not to clitics.

3.3 Clitics: unstressable syllables

As one researches Turkish clitics, it becomes clear that this is among the more complex of topics in Turkish grammar. For this reason, part 2.3 is divided into two subsections. The first deals with simple, common examples that will be immediately helpful to the language learner. The second deals with more complex examples, some which go beyond the primary rules of this lesson. The goal of the first section is like the rest of this lesson: the rules taught are to be learned and applied as rules of Turkish. The goal of the second section is to present some complex examples that will help language learners recognize when and why it is not entirely clear why certain words and phrases receive stress the way they do. Some ‘extra rules’ are offered which will be very helpful in putting the language learner on the right path. These extra rules, however, do not make definitive claims about the language. They are meant to orient the language learner in navigating the more complex aspects of Turkish stress placement. Contrary to the

recommendation for the rest of this lesson, readers may want to set aside section 2.3.2 temporarily and reread it later.

3.3.1 Normal usage of clitics

Let us begin this section by recalling Rule Two:

❖ *Rule Two: Learn irregular stress by listening.*

Section 2.2 dealt with the inherent stress patterns of regularly and irregularly stressed isolated words and also how suffixes interact with them. Rule Two was intentionally written generally so as to include both irregularly stressed words and irregularly stressed *ekler*, that is clitics, which also need to be recognized as exceptional. However, because clitics act alike regarding their stress patterns, the stress pattern of each clitic need not be written into our lexicons. They simply need to be recognized as clitics, not suffixes, so that Rule Four can be applied to them.

❖ *Rule Four: Clitics take control of stress and then shift it leftward.*

Here are ten Turkish clitics. Each is shown in two examples. These clitics are so common that the language learner should expect to find at least one of them in most Turkish sentences:⁸ =ma ‘NEGATIVE’,⁹ =(y)di ‘PAST’, =(y)miş ‘HEARSAY’, =(y)ken ‘while’, =sin ‘3-person imperative’, =tır ‘CERTAINTY’, mu ‘INTERROGATIVE’, =(y)le ‘with’ (affixed form of *ile* with), =ra ‘SPATIAL’, =im ‘1-person singular (added to verbs, not to words)’. Notice that in all the examples in (9) below, none of the clitics receive primary stress. Instead they throw the stress onto the previous syllable. Regarding the conventions used, the clitics are underlined and the vertical lines break the unstressable syllable of the clitic off from the rest of the word. The vertical lines should be seen as marking the phonological word into parts. (some examples taken from Göksel & Kerslake 2005:31–32):

(9) [káç <u>ma</u>]	‘don’t escape’	[kiralík <u>tır</u>]	‘it’s (definitely) a rental’
[anlatá <u>mi</u> yor <u>um</u>]	‘I can’t explain’	[okuyacák <u>tır</u>]	‘(s)he will (certainly) study’
[gít <u>ti</u> ler]	‘they went’	[git <u>ti</u> níz <u>mi</u>]	‘did you go?’
[gél <u>di</u> m]	‘I came’	[elmá <u>mi</u>]	‘an apple?’
[át <u>miş</u>]	‘(s)he (supposedly) threw	[etmék <u>le</u>]	‘by doing’
[vúr <u>muş</u> lar]	‘they (supposedly) hit	[arabáy <u>la</u>]	‘by car’
[otúr <u>ken</u>]	‘while sitting’	[ó <u>ra</u> dá]	‘there’
[evdéy <u>ken</u>]	‘while at home’	[né <u>re</u> de]	‘where’
[gél <u>sin</u>]	‘let it come’	[yorgún <u>um</u>]	‘I’m tired’
[káç <u>ma</u> <u>sin</u>]	‘may he not escape’	[gidiyór <u>um</u>]	‘I am going’

There are three points to be made from these examples. First of all—and most importantly—stress is placed just before the clitic, “leftward.” This is true whether the clitic is found at the end of the word or not: *gél|dim* ‘I came’, *gít|tiler* ‘they went’. This suggests, as Rule Four states, that the clitic “takes control” of the phonological word’s stress and places the stress to its left. This

⁸Following most linguistic conventions, clitics are marked with an equal-sign (=) distinguishing them from proper suffixes. Mode, aspect, and tense markers are also written in CAPS to distinguish them from normal word glosses.

⁹There is one exception to this. The aorist negative *–maz* does receive stress, *gidmészler* ‘they don’t go’.

taking of control is an inherent feature of Turkish clitics. It does not matter how long the word is (compare *kâçma* ‘don’t escape’ and *anlatâmiyorsunuz* ‘You (all) can’t explain’), clitics grab control of stress and put it leftward.

Second, sometimes two clitics occur in the same phonological word. What do native speakers do in such cases? We might have assumed that Turkish had a rule stating something like “the first clitic takes control instead of the others.” However, this is not always the case. Compare *anlatâmiyorum* ‘I can’t explain’ and *gittiniz mi* ‘did you go?’. In the former case, the first clitic took control and put the stress leftward; in the latter, the second took control. This suggests that *certain clitics are stronger than others*. In particular, these examples show that the question particle is *stronger* than both the past tense and the first-person subject agreement markers. This issue is discussed in more detail in section 2.3.2.

Lastly, we must consider phonological words here, not just syntactic words. Notice that the examples with the question particle according to Modern Turkish writing conventions are written as more than one word. This brings up a point that will aid the language learner. *Certain clitics are perceived by native speakers to be more like words; others are perceived to be more like suffixes*. Consider the following:

(10) [anl^yór |mu|sun] ‘do you understand?’

Notice the question particle *mu* is written as a separate word and the second-person marker *sun* is added after it. Regarding meaning however, the second-person marker relates to the verb *anlıyor* more than the question particle. This illustrates how in some ways *mu* is a separate word, because it is marked by a space, but in other ways it is part of the first, because it both is part of the same phonological word as *anlıyor* and sits in between *anlıyor* and *anlıyor*’s subject-agreement marker. Clitics often produce these kinds of situations.

Seeing that native speakers consider certain clitics to be separate words leads us to a helpful observation: if there was a true word break before each clitic (where the vertical lines have been placed) the *stress is placed exactly where Rule One would put it*, at the end of the previous word. The only thing that is not expected is that not every ‘word’ receives a primary stress. This is because the parts have been joined into one phonological word. Section 3 explains below how stress in phrases and compound words works in this same way. For now it is helpful to note this observation: clitics take control of stress and move it leftward *as if starting a new word*.

Much has been covered up to this point. Before addressing the most difficult and the most helpful sections of this paper (2.3.2 and 3 respectively), let us review the rules so far. Notice, Rule Four has been slightly altered to account for the last observation.

- ❖ **Rule One:** Most words in Turkish are stressed on the final syllable.
- ❖ **Rule Two:** Learn irregular stress by listening.
- ❖ **Rule Three:** Irregularly stressed words keep hold of stress over suffixes.
- ❖ **Rule Four:** Clitics take control of stress and shift it leftward, as if beginning a new word.

We can summarize how these rules are applied. Being aware that phonological words are broken up differently from syntactic words, language learners should assume all phonological words are stressed on the final syllable (e.g., *sepetlerimden* ‘from my baskets’ and *kırılacaklar* ‘they will be broken’) but keep their ears open for words and *ekler* that differ from this norm. Their ears should expect to notice and write into their mental lexicons two types of irregularities. First, certain words are inherently stressed irregularly and those words generally retain that irregular stress pattern regardless of the suffixes that may follow (e.g., *fakat* ‘but’ and *Afrikalılardan* ‘from Africans’). Second, certain *ekler* are actually clitics that take control of stress and move it to their left, as if starting a new word (e.g., *anlatâmiyorum* ‘I am not able to explain’, *gittiniz mi* ‘did you go?’).

3.3.2 Complex usage of clitics

Two questions need to be raised before moving onto compounds and phrases.

- If there is both an irregularly stressed word and a clitic in the same phonological word, which will control stress?
- How can language learners know which clitic will be strongest if two or more are found in the same phonological word?

There is not a simple set of answers to these questions. Göksel and Kerslake (2005) take a lists-based approach that addresses certain clitics and how they act (and then the exceptions to the normal ways they act). Kabak and Vogel (2001) offer a rules-based approach that compares how clitics are stressed with how compounds and phrases are stressed in Turkish.¹⁰ Both are helpful descriptions, yet neither is simple enough for most language learners to readily apply. For this reason, many of their observations have been synthesized into a few ‘extra rules’. These extra rules address many of the situations that language learners will frequently encounter. Though not comprehensive, the treatment will be readily applicable for language learners and help them begin to navigate through the large majority of irregularities that come out of this complex issue.

❖ *Extra Rule One: Irregular words are stronger than many clitics.*

Concerning the first question above, we have already seen that irregularly stressed words keep their stress placement pattern even when suffixes are adjoined to them (Rule Three). But what about when clitics are adjoined to them? Göksel and Kerslake explain that when certain clitics are added to irregularly stressed roots, the existing position of stress “tends not to change” (2005:34). They offer the following example:

(11)	[İstánbul]	PLACE NAME
	[İstánbulday dım]	‘I was in Istanbul’
	[İstánbul la]	‘with Istanbul’

They go on to show, however, that with certain clitics this principle varies from dialect-to-dialect. All of the options in example (12) are acceptable (2005:34).

(12)	[İstánbul bile]	or	[İstánbúl bile]	‘even Istanbul’
	[İstánbul mu]	or	[İstánbúl mu]	‘Istanbul?’
	[İstánbulsa]	or	[İstánbúlsa]	‘as for Istanbul’
	[İstánbul da]	or	[İstánbúl da]	‘Istanbul too’

Thus, Extra Rule One claims that irregularly stressed words are *generally* stronger than clitics. Language learners should assume that irregularly stressed words are stronger than clitics but should be aware that their ears will notice and need to memorize exceptions.

The second question above considers which clitics are strongest. As noted, the question particle *mi* seemed to be stronger than the two other clitic types with which it was found in

¹⁰Both also assume “copular forms” that though often not pronounced or written alters stress patterns (Kabak & Vogel 2001:329–332, Göksel and Kerslake 2005:31). This author finds this conclusion suspect.

example (9). How can a language learner know which clitics are strongest? Following are some helpful points to help in that regard.

There seems to be a number of levels of strength among clitics regarding the control of stress placement. As it turns out, certain clitics are so strong that they can even cause unstressable syllables to be stressed. Slightly less strong are others which may or may not take control of the stress pattern of irregularly stressed words, let alone cause unstressable syllables to be stressed. Some of these were mentioned in example (12). Still others never take control of such stress patterns, as Extra Rule One teaches. One very helpful observation for the language learner to make is that all of the strongest clitics and most of the second strongest type in (12) are *written as separate words in Modern Turkish*. Thus we have our next extra rule:

❖ **Extra Rule Two:** The strongest stress controllers are clitics that are treated as separate words.

Example (13) illustrates the use of some of the strongest Turkish clitics. Along with controlling stress when other clitics and irregularities are involved, they can even cause ‘unstressable syllables’ to be stressed (Göksel & Kerslake 2005:34).

(13)	[söylé <u>memiş</u>]	‘(s)he hasn’t said’	[söyle <u>me</u> <u>mış</u> <u>ya</u>]	‘but (s)he <i>hasn’t</i> said’
	[yürü <u>yorum</u>]	‘I (can) walk’	[yürü <u>yorum</u> <u>da</u> <u>koşa</u> <u>miyorum</u>]	‘I can walk, but I <i>can’t</i> run’
	[istemış <u>tım</u>] ¹¹	‘I had requested it’	[istemış <u>tım</u> <u>ki</u> (otursun)]	‘I had requested (that (s)he sit down)
	[anlayá <u>miyorum</u>]	‘I can’t understand’	[anlayamıy <u>orum</u> <u>ki</u>]	‘I just <i>can’t</i> understand’

More is available in both Göksel and Kerslake (2005) and Kabak and Vogel (2001) concerning the two questions above. Convinced that these extra rules will account for the large majority of what the language learner will encounter, the language learner is encouraged to read their works for more details.

4. Rules for assigning stress in compounds and phrases

Our third and final section of the lesson involves only one more rule. According to the experience of this author and numerous language learners with whom this lesson has been shared, this is the most helpful section of the entire lesson and is quite simple.

Many Turkish language learners have experienced this situation. A native speaker asks, ‘Where are you going’. We answer (whether in Turkish or English), ‘I am going to *Eminönü/Karaköy/Çanakkale*’ etc., and our pronunciation of the place name sounds so foreign they cannot make out what we are saying. Sometimes this is simply because English speakers pronounce these place names differently in English from the way Turkish speakers do in Turkish (*İstánbul* vs. *İstanbul* as pronounced in English, for example). We have to relearn such pronunciations. But other place names, the three above for example, are ones that we likely never

¹¹The *-miş* here is not the same as the *-miş* in *söylememiş*. The latter marks reported speech, ‘HEARSAY’, and is a clitic; the former marks ‘COMPLETIVE’ aspect and is a suffix. It is for this reason that the *-miş* here is not shown to be a clitic (for example, *pişmişmiş* ‘(someone said that) it is fully cooked’). As footnoted above, certain scholars assume these to be the same and that an unpronounced copula is causing the change in stress pattern. Regardless, they also assume this *-miş* ‘COMPLETIVE’ is normally stressable. Unfortunately, most language learning materials do not address this clear differentiation.

said in English before arriving in Turkey. The language learner should be happy to know that since all three of these place names are compounds, their stress placement is completely predictable and thus easily learned.

❖ **Rule Five:** The normal stress placement of the leftmost part of a phonological word will be stressed.

Rule Five is particularly helpful regarding phrases and compounds. If a word is not affected by a clitic, the leftmost part of the phonological words will receive the primary stress. And, that leftmost part will receive the primary stress where it normally does in isolation. Some phrases and compounds have already been mentioned. They are repeated in (14) along with others, this time with their parts demarcated.

(14)	[beyáz peynir]	‘white cheese, feta’	phrase, 2 words
	[cép telefonu]	‘cellphone’	compound, from 2 words
	[báš bakan]	‘prime minister’	compound, from 2 words
	[fútbol sahası]	‘soccer field’	compound, from 2 words
	[Emín önü]	PLACE NAME	compound, from 2 words
	[Kará köy]	PLACE NAME	compound, from 2 words
	[Çaná kale]	PLACE NAME	compound, from 2 words
	[Érén köy]	PLACE NAME	compound, from 2 words
	[İç eren köy]	PLACE NAME	compound, from 3 words

As Rule Five predicts, all of these phonological words are primarily stressed in the normal place where their leftmost part would normally receive stress. This is true whether they are compound words with the compound marker *-(s)ı*; *cép telefonu*, *fútbol sahası*, compounds without the marker (*bášbakan*), or phrases with a modifier and head noun (*beyáz peynir*). It even applies when irregularly stressed words are found in the leftmost position (*fútbol sahası*, not **fútból sahası*) and when there are more than two parts in the compound (*İçerenköy*).

It should be noted that Rule Five was purposefully put after Rule Four because clitics break this norm. For example, the question marker clitic *mi* can be placed almost anywhere in a sentence. If placed immediately after such a compound, *mi* puts the primary stress to its left: *İçerenköy mi gidiyon*¹²? ‘Are you going to *İçerenköy*?’

Kabak and Vogel (2001:338) go on to point out that the verbal phrases formed with the ‘to do’ verbs *etmek* and *yapmak* make one phonological word and follow Rule Five. Their examples, along with some added later by Göksel and Kerslake (2005:29) are found in example (15).

(15)	[telefon et t ^u iler]	‘make a call’	[bitiriyor gözük t ^u]	‘it seemed to be finishing’
	[tést olur d ^u k]	‘we were tested’	[yardım etmiş t ^u in]	‘you had helped’
	[anlamış ol] ¹³	‘understand’	[hastá olur]	‘(s)he is sick’

Notice again that the phonological word’s primary stress is on the first part of the phonological word. This occurs in the examples above with and without clitics in the latter parts, e.g. *telefon ettiler* and *anlamış ol*.

Returning to the theory of the mental lexicon, this irregular stress pattern shows that native Turkish speakers know—or at least learned them as if they know—that these words have parts.

¹²Common slang form of *gidiyorsun* ‘you are going’.

¹³As noted above, this *-miş* would normally receive stress. It is not the reported speech marker.

That these are compounds will not always be obvious to language learners, however. When language learners notice an irregular stress pattern, they should analyze the example to see if they can identify separate parts. If parts are identified, Rule Five should account for the seemingly irregular stress.

Like all things in language, there are some exceptions. Göksel and Kerslake point out that certain compounds do not follow Rule Five. This means that they are either not recognized as having parts by native speakers (in the same way English speakers may not be keenly aware that the word ‘breakfast’ has two parts) or simply have inherent irregular stress. Either way, language learners must learn them as irregularities. They offer most of what is found in example (16) (Göksel & Kerslake 2005:29).

(16) [alış veriş] ¹⁴	‘shopping’	[bilgi sayár]	‘computer’
[kaba kulák]	‘mumps’	[kala balík]	‘crowd’
[cum huriyét]	‘republic’		

In conclusion of this lesson, the five rules and the two extra rules are repeated and their application is summarized below.

- ❖ **Rule One:** Most words in Turkish are stressed on the final syllable.
- ❖ **Rule Two:** Learn irregular stress by listening.
- ❖ **Rule Three:** Irregularly stressed words keep hold of stress over suffixes.
- ❖ **Rule Four:** Clitics take control of stress and shift it leftward, as if beginning a new word.
 - **Extra Rule One:** Irregular words are stronger than many clitics.
 - **Extra Rule Two:** The strongest stress controllers are clitics that are treated as separate words.
- ❖ **Rule Five:** The normal stress placement of the leftmost part of a phonological word will be stressed.

Application summary: Being aware that phonological words are broken up differently from syntactic words, language learners assume all phonological words are stressed word-finally (*sepét* ‘basket’ and *kırılacaklar* ‘they will be broken’) but keep their ears open for words and *ekler* ‘endings’ that change this norm.

Their ears should expect to notice and write into their mental lexicons two types of irregularities: (1) certain words are stressed irregularly and those words generally keep that stress pattern regardless of the suffixes that follow (*fakat* ‘but’ and *Afrikalılardan* ‘from Africans’) and, (2) certain *ekler* are actually clitics and clitics take control of stress and put it to their left, as if beginning a new word (*gitmé* ‘don’t go’ and *anlatá|myorum* ‘I am not able to explain’).

When more than one irregularity is present in the same phonological word it is not always clear which will control stress. However, it should be assumed that there are varying degrees of strength and that the strongest clitic will take control. There are at least three levels of strength: (1) the strongest stress controllers are certain clitics that control stress and can even cause unstressable syllables to be stressed, (these are normally written as separate words), (2) other clitics are seemingly equal in strength to irregularly stressed words and may or may not control stress when added to such irregularly stress words (these may be written as separate words) and,

¹⁴Göksel and Kerslake may have this wrong. The native speakers this author knows stress this irregularly, not on the final syllable, but on the second-to-last: *alışveriş* ‘shopping’.

(3) certain clitics have control over stress only when added to regularly stressed words and suffixes (these will not be written as separate words).

And finally, phrases and compounds should be treated as one phonological word with parts; the leftmost of part will receive stress for the whole phonological word where it would normally receive stress. However, this normality as well can be made irregular by clitics.

5. Appendices

5.1 List of rules

- ❖ **Rule One:** Most syntactic words in Turkish are stressed on the final syllable.
- ❖ **Rule Two:** Learn irregular stress by listening.
- ❖ **Rule Three:** Irregularly stressed words keep hold of stress over suffixes.
- ❖ **Rule Four:** Clitics take control of stress and shift it leftward, as if beginning a new word.
 - **Extra Rule One:** Irregular words are stronger than many clitics.
 - **Extra Rule Two:** The strongest stress controllers are clitics that are treated as separate words.
- ❖ **Rule Five:** The normal stress placement of the leftmost part of a phonological word will be stressed.

5.2 Exercises

5.2.1 Marking stress exercise

This exercise should be carried out very soon after reading the lesson above. Directions:

1. Using the rules taught in the lesson above, mark the primary stress of each phonological word in this list of random words.
2. Reprint this list and have a local friend read it aloud. Be sure to tell them that it is a list of unrelated words and phrases. Encourage them not to put them into a sentence. Meanwhile, listen and compare their pronunciation with your markings.
3. Try and account for the mistakes with the rules and make notes about the questions that arise.

[Bay Cemil]	[konferans önderi]	[Altunizade]	[karar vermişti]
[ne anladınız]	[İçerenköy]	[sayesinde]	[katılımcılara]
[anlamadıklarımı]	[yöneltiverdi]	[olamaz ki]	[istirahat]
[İstanbuldaydım]	[katılımcıların]	[salonda]	[sessizlik]
[Eminönü]	[pek bir şey]	[fark edince]	[kendileri için]
[alakasız]	[sayılacak]	[kısımlarını]	[Allah bilir]
[onların]	[bütün]	[özetlenmeye]	[okuyorum da anlamıyorum]
[sadeleştirilmiş]	[anlayamadım]	[Karadeniz]	[ilk başta]
[hâkim oldu]	[zor görünen]	[kavramları]	[anlaşılır hale]

5.2.2 Listening on public transit to loud speaker

If you have the opportunity to ride public transit that has a recorded loud speaker announcing the coming stops, for example the metrobus or a metroline in Istanbul, this exercise will be very helpful for recognizing stress placement in compounds. Directions:

1. Before boarding a public transit, go online and printout the list of stops that line passes.
2. Taking careful note of parts in the place names, mark where you expect native speakers put the stress on those place names.
3. Take your marked list on the public transit with you and listen to the loud speaker. Compare your expectations with what you hear.

5.2.3 Noticing how stress placement is affected by intonation

After having gained a grasp of the rules taught above, it will be helpful to study a bit about how the normal stress placement rules are affected on words and phrases when spoken in context. Intonation, e.g. the rising and falling of pitch over long strings of speech, does affect stress placement, but how much? This exercise will help the language learner begin to understand this interplay. Directions:

1. Print out two copies of a short text. Perhaps a transcription of 30 seconds of a Turkish television show or a couple pages of a children's book.
2. On one copy, mark on each word where you expect the stress would be placed if the word was in isolation. If you wish to assume certain word groups are one phonological word, *teşekkür ederim* 'thank you' for example, feel free to do that, but only where you are fairly certain.
3. Then, hand the other unmarked copy to a native speaker and ask them to read the text. Listen and look at your marked copy of the text. Take careful note of where the reader reads differently than you had marked the first copy.
4. Study the differences. Some of the differences will be due to the fact that one or two words are being treated as one phonological word; you will know this because certain words seem to receive no stress at all. Other differences will be due to intonation patterns. Speakers and readers use very different intonation patterns at important points of the text. This alerts listeners to important information in the texts. The goal is to realize that some stress changes are not predictable from these rules; the normal stress rules are over-ridden by altered intonation.

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