

## **Languages with and without word stress**

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A language has word stress if a syllable-based culminative and obligatory prominence feature is part of the phonology of words (Hyman 2006). This definition excludes languages with a mora-based obligatory tone, like Kinga, languages with an obligatory phrase-based syllabic pitch accent, like French, and languages with non-obligatory syllable-based prominence, like Japanese.

A criterion not listed by Hyman is phonetic prominence. I will discuss data from a number of languages in which the relation between phonetic salience and stress is unexpected. In Ambonese Malay, a language without vowel quantity, minimal pairs like [barat] ‘West’ – [bāraat] ‘heavy’ strongly suggest that the language has word stress, yet it is hard to make a case for the existence of word stress, which is best analyzed as having phrase-boundary melodies that do not associate. Conversely, the existence of word stress in varieties of Tamazight is ambiguous at best, yet in the variety spoken in Zuara (Libya), penultimate stress is an unmistakable feature of words, even of words that have a voiceless obstruent in the rime of the penultimate syllable. Finally, Standard Nigerian English has tonal structures which reflect the position of the word stress in British English. While other new varieties of English with tonal substrates may lack word stress, Standard Nigerian English distinguishes between words with initial and peninitial stress in duration as well as pitch.