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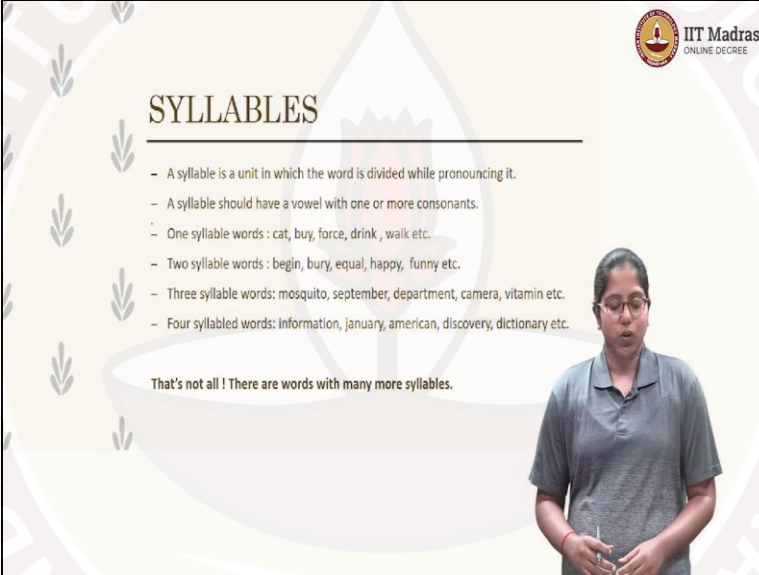
ONLINE DEGREE

English-I (Basic English)
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Lecture-17
Syllables and Stress in Words

I welcome you to this module. Today's module is titled Syllables and Stress in Words. In this module, we are going to be looking at the rules of stress and syllabification, when we speak a word that is when we pronounce the word. Let's get started.

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The slide is titled "SYLLABLES" and features a list of bullet points defining syllables and providing examples. A video inset shows a woman speaking. The IIT Madras logo is in the top right corner.

SYLLABLES

- A syllable is a unit in which the word is divided while pronouncing it.
- A syllable should have a vowel with one or more consonants.
- One syllable words : cat, buy, force, drink , walk etc.
- Two syllable words : begin, bury, equal, happy, funny etc.
- Three syllable words: mosquito, september, department, camera, vitamin etc.
- Four syllabled words: information, january, american, discovery, dictionary etc.

That's not all ! There are words with many more syllables.

A syllable is a unit in which a word is divided by pronouncing it, and the golden rule is that every syllable has to have a vowel but not necessarily a consonant. So let us look at a few words and see how many syllables these words have. So, let us first look at one-syllable words. Cat, buy, force, drink, walk etc. are one-syllable words or monosyllabic words. Example of two-syllable words or disyllabic words are, begin, bury, equal, happy, funny etcetera.

Examples of three-syllable words are mosquito, September, department, camera, vitamin etcetera. Now examples of four-syllable words are information, January, American, discovery and dictionary. But that is not all; there are words with many more syllables.

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SYLLABIFICATION

ONE SYLLABLE WORDS	TWO SYLLABLE WORDS
1. Cat - /kat /	1. Begin - /biː-gin /
2. Buy - /bahy /	2. Bury - /ber-ee /
3. Force - /force /	3. Equal - /ee-qwul /
4. Drink - /drɪŋk /	4. Happy - /hap-ee /
5. Walk - /wɔːk /	5. Funny - /fun-ee /

Now let us look at syllabification. Let us see how many syllables these words have. Cat, buy, force, drink, walk. So, one test of syllabification is, you keep your hands under your jaw, pronounce the word and see how many times your jaw drops and that many syllables a word has. So, in this case, cat, buy, force, drink, walk; you see my jaw drops one time, every time I pronounce these words. So, it has one syllable. But, non-native speakers, have difficulty in understanding syllabification because it's quite intuitive to the native speaker's knowledge of the language. Look at two-syllable words; begin. Let us try it with the jaw drop experiment.

Begin /biː-gin/, bury /ber-ee/, see my jaw drops two times. So, /biː-gin/, /ber-ee/, /ee-qwul/, /hap-ee/, /fun-ee/ are all two syllable words.

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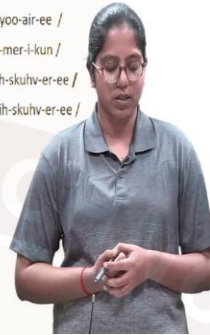
SYLLABIFICATION

THREE SYLLABLE WORDS

1. Mosquito - /muh-skee-toh/
2. September - /sep-tem-ber/
3. Department - /dih-pahrt-ment/
4. Camera - /cam-er-a/
5. Vitamin - /vi-ta-min/

FOUR SYLLABLE WORDS

1. Information - /in-for-may-shun/
2. January - /Jan-yoo-air-ee/
3. American - /uh-mer-i-kun/
4. Discovery - /dih-skuhv-er-ee/
5. Dictionary - /dih-skuhv-er-ee/



Now, let us come to three-syllable words such as mosquito, September department, camera, vitamin. So, these are all three-syllable words. Now, coming to the four-syllable words; information, January, American, dictionary, discovery. So, for example, /in-for-may-shun/, my jaw drops four times. An important thing that you need to look at is, just ask yourself do you pronounce them, do you pronounce all these syllables the same way?

For example /Jan-yoo-air-ee/. Is that so? Is that so? No. But you have an added force or stress on one of the syllables; right. So, next, we are going to look at stress and see how a word can be pronounced with stress.

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STRESS- POINTS TO KNOW

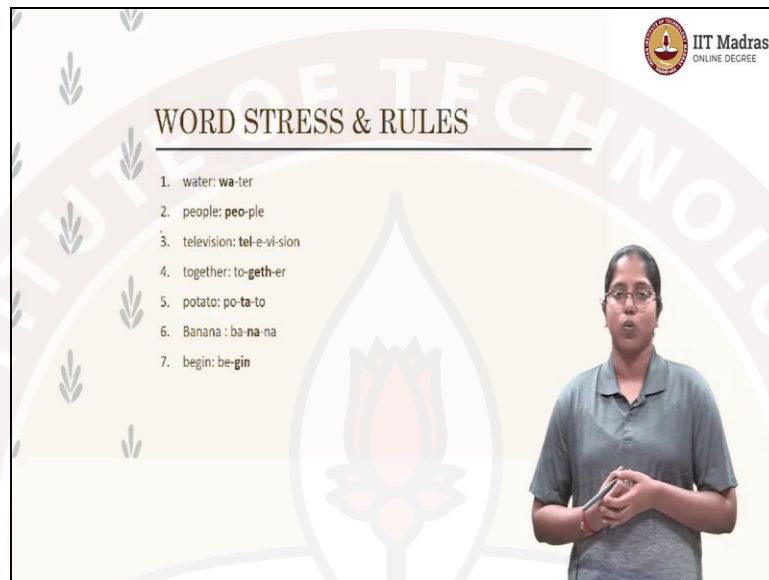
Syllables uttered with greater degree of force is said to be stressed. The three golden rules of stress in English words are :

1. A word can only have one stress.
2. Only vowels are stressed, not consonants.
3. There are many exceptions to the rules.



So, what is stress? Syllables uttered with a greater degree of force, is called a stressed syllable and the rest are called unstressed syllables. The three golden rules of stress in English are; the first one, a word, can have only one stress. The second one, only vowels, are stressed and not consonants. Only vowels are stressed and not consonants. And what is the third rule, there are many exceptions to these rules.

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WORD STRESS & RULES

1. water: **wa**-ter
2. people: **peo**-ple
3. television: **tel**-e-vi-sion
4. together: to-**geth**-er
5. potato: po-**ta**-to
6. Banana : ba-**na**-na
7. begin: be-**gin**

So, keep these in mind and let us get started with word stress and rules. Now let us see how water is pronounced? The - divides this word and shows how many syllables it has, it basically shows a syllabification and here understand that stress applies on the syllables that are marked with bold. Example water here **wa** is elongated and said a little louder than the next syllable **ter**. So, how do you say that **wa**-ter.


The next word is people, **peo**-ple television **tel**-e-vi-sion, together to-**geth**-er, potato po-**ta**-to, banana ba-**na**-na, begin be-**gin**. So, you see the bold syllables are stressed. **Water**, **people** **television**, **together**, **potato**, **banana** and **begin**.

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Two-syllable nouns & adjectives


- Rainy, Samples, Carton, Content
- In **most** two syllable nouns and adjectives, the **first syllable takes on the stress**.
- RAI-ny
- SAM-ples
- CAR-ton
- CON-tent



Now, let us see why those syllables are stressed? What are the rules for finding out the stress that is applied in a word? We have some rules, but also keep in mind that these rules do not apply for all the words and there are a lot of exceptions. But, a lot of these rules apply to at least 80% of the words in that class. For example, now the first rule is, when you have a two-syllable noun or an adjective, the first syllable takes the stress.

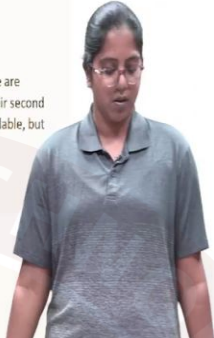
For example, what are those words, rainy, samples, carton, content so with the stress how do you pronounce it RAI-ny, SAM-ples, CAR-ton, CON-tent. Let me repeat it, RAI-ny, SAM-ples, CAR-ton, CON-tent.

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Two-syllable verbs & preposition

- In most two syllable verbs and prepositions, the **stress is on the second syllable**.
- re-LAX
- re-CEIVE
- di-RECT
- a-MONG
- About 80% of two-syllable words get their stress on the first syllable. There are exceptions to this rule, but very few nouns and adjectives get stress on their second syllable. Verbs and prepositions usually get stress placed on the second syllable, but there are exceptions to this too.




Now, two-syllable verbs and prepositions take the stress on the second syllable. So, it is re-LAX, re-CEIVE, di-RECT, a-MONG. Let me repeat that, re-LAX, re-CEIVE, di-RECT, a-MONG. So, as I have already said 80% of the two-syllable words get their stress on the first syllable, when it comes to two-syllable nouns and adjectives. Whereas, the second syllable takes the stress for two-syllable verbs and prepositions.

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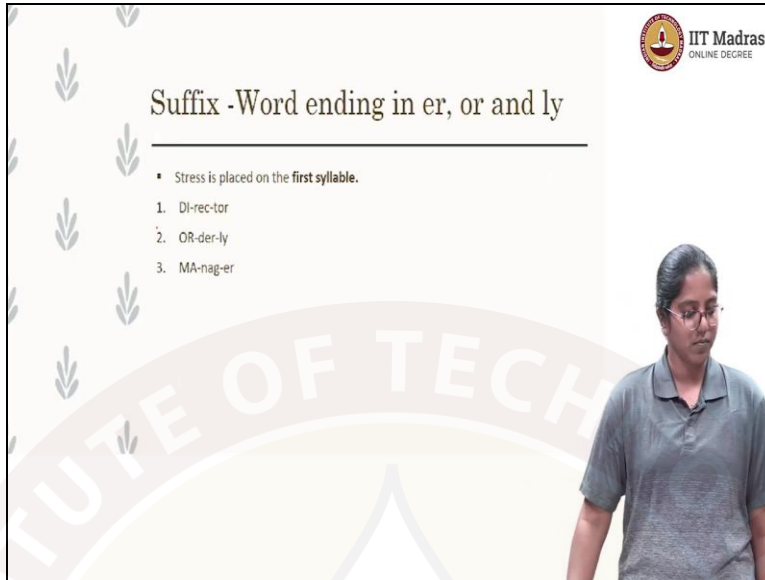
Suffix -Word ending in er, or and ly

- Stress is placed on the **first syllable**.
- 1. DI-rec-tor
- 2. OR-der-ly
- 3. MA-nag-er



Now, let us look at suffix. So, the first class of suffix is words ending in er, or and ly. Here the stress is placed on the first syllable. Understand that if a word ends with er, or or ly, then the stress is placed on the first syllable: example, DI-rec-tor, OR-der-ly MA-nag-er. Let me repeat that for you, DI-rec-tor OR-der-ly MA-nag-er.

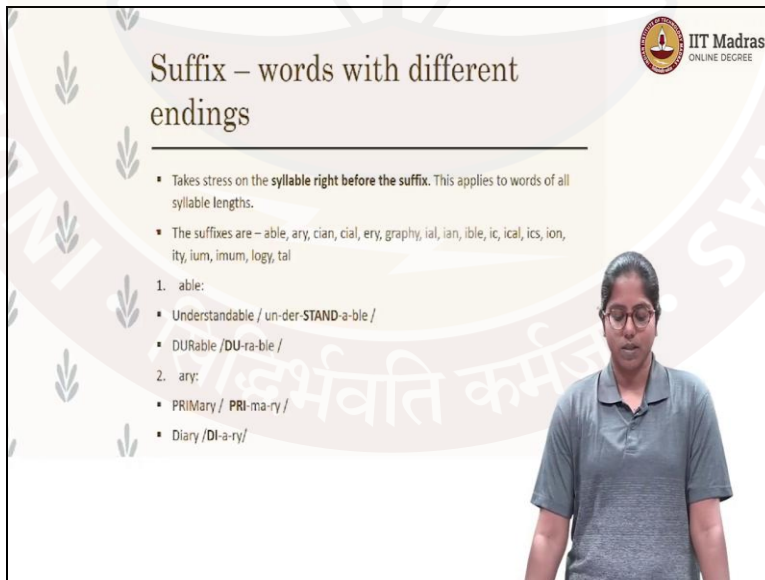
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The slide is titled "Suffix - Word ending in er, or and ly". It features a list of three words: 1. DI-rec-tor, 2. OR-der-ly, and 3. MA-nag-er. A bullet point states: "Stress is placed on the first syllable." The IIT Madras logo is in the top right corner. A woman is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide frame.

Now, suffix that is word endings with consonants and Y. So, here when a word ends with the consonants and Y, then the stress is placed on the first syllable. For example, RA-ri-ty, OP-ti-mal GRA-di-ent. How do we pronounce that? RA-ri-ty, OP-ti-mal, GRA-di-ent.

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The slide is titled "Suffix – words with different endings". It contains a bullet point: "Takes stress on the syllable right before the suffix. This applies to words of all syllable lengths." Another bullet point lists suffixes: "The suffixes are – able, ary, cian, cial, ery, graphy, ial, ian, ible, ic, ical, ics, ion, ity, ium, imum, logy, tal". There are two numbered lists of examples: 1. able: Understandable / un-der-STAND-a-ble / DURable / DU-ra-ble / 2. ary: PRIMary / PRI-ma-ry / Diary / DI-a-ry / The IIT Madras logo is in the top right corner. A woman is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide frame.

Now let us look at suffix, that is words with different endings. So, suffixes such as able, ary, cian, cial, ery, graphy, ial, ian, ible, ic, ical, ics, ion, ity, ium, imum, logy and tal takes the stress

on the syllable right before the suffix. So, these suffixes, I am underlining it for you. All these suffixes take the syllable right before the suffix. Now, for example, let us look at , able. So where does the stress come? So, this is how it is syllabified: /un-der-STAND-a-ble/. It is a five-syllable word, and what is the suffix in this? Able; right.

So, what is the syllable right before the suffix, it is STAND. So, the syllable STAND is stressed. So, how do you say that, /un-der-STAND/, /un-der-STAND-a-ble/. Similarly, if you see, the next word is durable, and the syllables are /DU-ra-ble/. So, able comes here, and the syllable that precedes the suffix is DU. So, you stress on DU so it is /DU-ra-ble/, /DU-ra-ble/. Okay.

The next word, the next suffix is ary, example primary, diary. So where does the stress come from? So, ary comes here. Look at this ary; right. So, now where does the syllable stress go? The syllable that is right before the suffix. So here it is PRI and in the second word its DI. So where do you stress, how do you stress and how do you pronounce it? /PRI-ma-ry/, /DI-a-ry/. Get it? Good.

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Suffix – words with different endings

3. ible:

- Visible / VIS-i-ble /
- terRible, / TER-ri-ble /

4. ical:

- MAGical / MAG-i-cal /
- CRITical / CRIT-i-cal /

5. ics:

- GeNETics / ge-NET-ics /
- paedIATrics /pe-di-AT-rics /

The third example is ible. Examples are visible, terrible. Again, both are three-syllable words; right. So, ible. So, now where does stress come? The syllable right before the suffix so; that is VIS and TER, so it is /VIS-i-ble/ and /TER-ri-ble/. The next suffix is ical, example; magical,

critical. So, again underline it, and the ical is underlined. What is the syllable preceding the suffix? MAG and in this case, it's CRIT, crit.

So how do you pronounce it? /MAG-i-cal/, /MAG-i-cal/, /CRIT-I-cal/. And the final one, the final suffix that we are going to look at is, ics—for example; genetics, paediatrics. Genetics is a three-syllable word and paediatrics is a four-syllable word. So, you see we underlined the ics, i.e., a suffix and look at the syllable before the suffix that is in this case; in the case of genetics NET and in the case of pediatrics AT. So, how do you pronounce it, /ge-NET-ics/, /ge-NET-ics/ and in second case it is /pe-di-AT-rics/, /pe-di-AT-rics/. Get it. Good.

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Suffix – words ending with ee, ese, ique and ette

- the primary stress is placed on the suffix.

1. ee:


- agree /a-GREE/
- guarantee /gaur-en-TEE/

2. ique:

- unique /u-NIQUE/
- physique /phy-SIQUE/


Now, let us look at the suffix that is words ending with ee, ese, ique and ette. So in such a case, for example, if the word ends with ee, ese, ique and ette, the primary stress is on the suffix. For example, agree, /a-GREE/. You see how e is elongated, agree. Then guarantee, /gaur-en-TEE/ so again this stressed. So, the final syllables are stressed. Next; ique, unique or physique, so how do you pronounce that /u-NIQUE/, /u-NIQUE/, /phy-SIQUE/, /phy-SIQUE/.

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Prefix

- Usually, prefixes do not take the stress of a word.
- There are a few exceptions to this rule, however, like: un, in, pre, ex and mis, which are all stressed in their prefix.
- in: IN-side, IN-efficient, IN-terest
- pre: PRE-cede, PRE-ar-range, PRE-li-min-ary




The next one is a prefix. Usually, prefixes do not take stress, but then there are exceptions again. These prefixes are un, in, pre, ex and mis. These are also the words that start with un, in, pre, ex and mis, are all stressed in their prefix: example, IN-side, IN-efficient, IN-terest. Similarly, PRE-cede, PRE-ar-range, PRE-li-min-ary, PRE-li-min-ary.

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Compound words

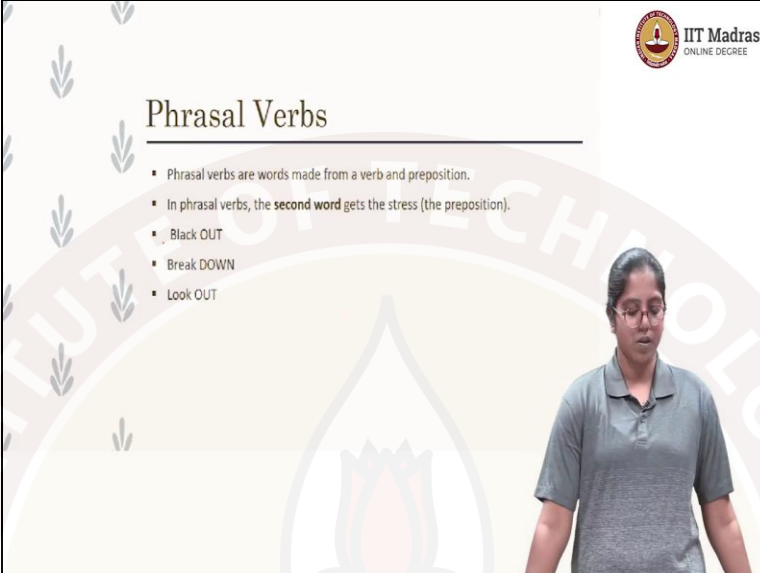
- **Compound nouns** : a noun made out of two nouns in order to form one word. In a compound noun, the **first word** usually takes on the stress.
- SEA-food
- TOOTH-paste
- **Compound adjectives** : an adjective composed of at least two words. In compound adjectives, the stress is placed within the **second word**.
- Rock-SOLID
- Sparkling-RED



Next is compound words, i.e., two words coming together to form a word. The first example is the compound nouns. So, a noun made out of two nouns, to form one word is a compound noun. So, in a compound noun, the first word takes the stress. For example, SEA-food. How do you pronounce it with stress? SEA-food, SEA-food. Similarly, TOOTH-paste, TOOTH-paste.

In compound adjectives, the stress is placed on the second word—for example, Rock-SOLID, Rock-SOLID, Sparkling-RED, Sparkling-RED.

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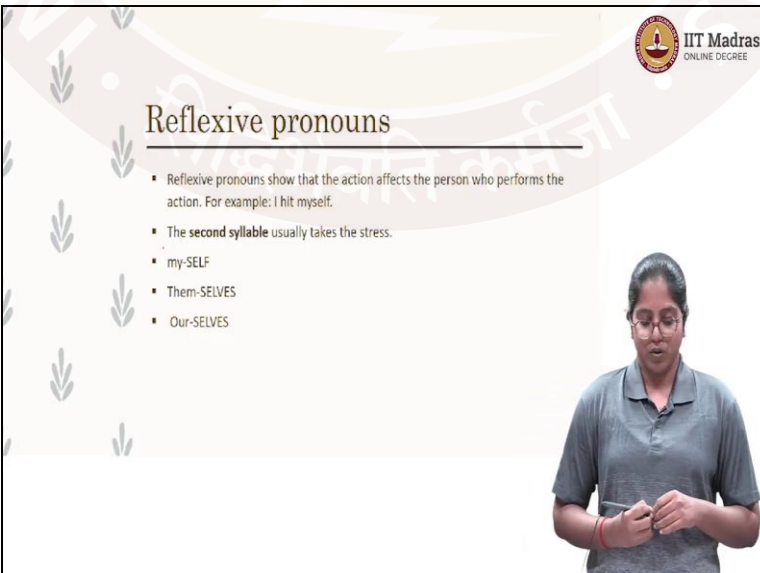
The slide is titled "Phrasal Verbs" and features the IIT Madras Online Degree logo in the top right corner. The background has a decorative pattern of leaves on the left and a large, faint watermark of the IIT Madras logo in the center. The text on the slide includes:

- Phrasal verbs are words made from a verb and preposition.
- In phrasal verbs, the **second word** gets the stress (the preposition).
- Black OUT
- Break DOWN
- Look OUT

A woman in a grey polo shirt is standing in front of the slide, presenting the content.

Next, we are going to look at phrasal verbs. Phrasal verbs are words made out of a verb and a preposition. In phrasal verbs, the second word gets the stress that is the preposition takes the stress—for example, Black-OUT, Break-DOWN, Look-OUT. Let me repeat that for you, Black-OUT, Break-DOWN, Look-OUT.

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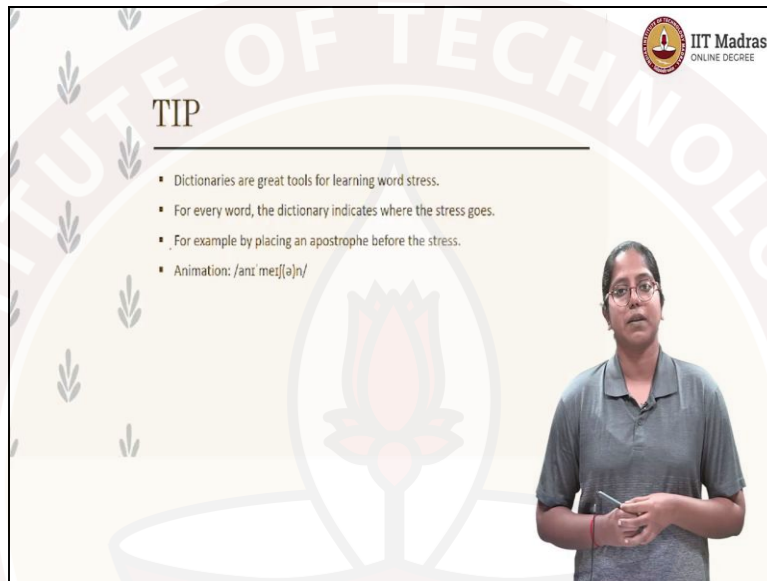
The slide is titled "Reflexive pronouns" and features the IIT Madras Online Degree logo in the top right corner. The background has a decorative pattern of leaves on the left and a large, faint watermark of the IIT Madras logo in the center. The text on the slide includes:

- Reflexive pronouns show that the action affects the person who performs the action. For example: I hit myself.
- The **second syllable** usually takes the stress.
- my-SELF
- Them-SELVES
- Our-SELVES

A woman in a grey polo shirt is standing in front of the slide, presenting the content.

The next class of words that we are going to look at is reflexive pronouns. So, reflexive pronouns show that action affects the person who performs the action. For example, I hit myself; myself here is a reflexive pronoun. So, in reflexive pronouns, the second syllable is usually stressed—for example, my-SELF, them-SELVES, our-SELVES. Let me repeat that for you, my-SELF, them-SELVES, our-SELVES.

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TIP

- Dictionaries are great tools for learning word stress.
- For every word, the dictionary indicates where the stress goes.
- For example by placing an apostrophe before the stress.
- Animation: /ˌɑːnɪˈmeɪʃ(ə)n/

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Before I conclude, let me give you a small tip on learning stress or understanding stress patterns in the English language. Use dictionaries; dictionaries are a great tool for learning word stress. In a dictionary, you see that the words or the syllable where the stress goes are marked with an apostrophe which means that is the syllable you need to stress, for example, animation, animation. So, with that, this module comes to an end and I will see you with another module on a different day. Until then, stay safe, happy learning.