A scale-based account of morpheme-specific exceptions in systems with lexical accents

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Introduction. This talk addresses some theoretical problems raised by accentual exceptions, focusing on two types of accent systems traditionally analyzed in terms of lexical accents: (i) lexical accent systems with accented dominant affixes (*e.g.*, Russian, Vedic Sanskrit), and (ii) those phonological weight-sensitive systems (which I call "hybrid") where certain morphemes violate the accent rule (*e.g.*, Eastern Literary Mari, Mattole, Tokyo Japanese).

Problem. How to capture regular and exceptional accent patterns using the same accentual grammar, both within a given accent system and across (i) and (ii)?

Account. I introduce here the *Scales-and-Parameters theory* (S&P), a parametric, non-metrical theory which segregates word accent from rhythm assigning those on separate planes (following van der Hulst 1996). I will focus here on word accent. First, note that, similar to syllables, individual morphemes can attract or repel accent. This ability may be treated as "diacritic weight", rather than lexical accent (van der Hulst 1999). Since weight is an *ordinal* variable, it allows for weight *scales*, unlike lexical accent, which is binary. I identify here two novel types of weight scales, *viz*. "diacritic weight scales" (ordering diacritic weights) and "hybrid weight scales" (ordering diacritic *and* phonological weights). I will illustrate these with two case studies. Thus, I show that Central Selkup (Samoyedic; Normanskaya 2011) has the "diacritic weight scale" (1a), while Eastern Literary Mari (Permic; Reise *et al.* 2012) has the "hybrid weight scale" (1b).

- (1) a. diacritically superheavy > diacritically heavy > diacritically light
 b. diacritically heavy > phonologically heavy > {diacritically light, phonologically light}
- Technically, weight scales are constructed through pairwise comparisons between morphemes and/or syllables, showing that the weight relation HEAVIER-THAN is irreflexive, transitive and antisymmetric, *i.e.* it is a *scale*. The weight degrees defined by the weight scale are formally represented on a "Weight Grid" (WG) in terms of relative height of gridmark columns. Universally, *only the heaviest* morpheme(s)/syllable(s) in the form are projected from the WG onto the "Accent

Grid" (AG) where one of these units is, then, assigned accent by the Select parameter.

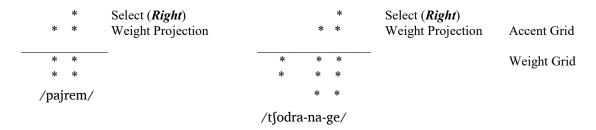
In Central Selkup, accent falls on the leftmost heaviest morpheme (if any), as derived for ['tvelgu] ("steal-INF") and [ta'polgu] ("kick-SEMEL-INF") in (2a) and (2b), respectively.

(2) a. /tvel/: heavy $\sqrt{\ }$; /-gu/: heavy suf b. /tap/: heavy $\sqrt{\ }$; /-ol/: <u>superheavy</u> suf; /-gu/: heavy suf

In Eastern Literary Mari, accent falls on the rightmost heavy *syllable* in regular forms. However, certain *morphemes* attract word accent (even though the syllable they contain is light), while certain others repel it (even though their syllable is heavy). The former are reanalyzed in S&P as diacritically heavy, the latter as diacritically light. By making reference to (1b), the S&P grammar uniformly assigns accent both in regular forms, like [paj'rem] ("holiday") in (3a), and in exceptions, like [tʃodranaˈge] (forest-1Pl.POSS-COMIT) in (3b). Crucially, the *same* parameter settings are maintained for both.

(3) a. /paj/, /rem/: heavy syllables

b. /t[o/, /dra/: heavy syllables; /na/, /ge/: diacritically heavy morphemes



In this language, diacritic and phonological weights can be ordered on a single weight scale (a "hybrid weight scale") in such a way that, for every occurrence of a given morpheme, either its diacritic weight or the weight of the syllable contained in it is relevant for accent assignment. I.e., in hybrid systems, diacritic weight can override phonological weight, which accounts for morpheme-specific exceptions.

It is also logically possible that the two types of weight combine in a single scale (a "relativized weight scale") so that both are relevant to accent assignment. This prediction is borne out, as evidenced by the accent system of Tundra Nenets.

Conclusion. Thus, the S&P theory uniformly accounts for both the regular accentual patterns and the morpheme-specific exceptions in lexical accent systems and in hybrid systems, as opposed to Accent Deletion, which is idiosyncratic, non-local and limited to lexical accent systems. This is achieved with the same formal device, *i.e.* a scale, as opposed to lexical accent theories. The proposal above builds on several case studies from under-described and/or severely endangered languages, which makes the study interesting from an empirical point of view.

References

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