The Accent Locality Hypothesis and parameter dependency: toward a perfect fit

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This talk presents important refinements to the Primary Accent First theory ("PAF") proposed in van der Hulst (1996, 1997, 2010, 2012), *a.o*. This theory separates word accent (primary stress) from rhythm (non-primary stress) and assigns those independently. It attempts to capture cross-linguistic variation in accentual patterns in terms of a small number of parameters. While, in many cases, PAF makes correct predictions, it also significantly overgenerates. Thus, as I will show, of the 36 weight-sensitive (WS) systems generated by the PAF parameter system, 19 are unattested.

The goal of this paper is to reduce the parameter space of the PAF grammar, while retaining PAF's correct predictions. To that end, I introduce a particular parameter dependency into the PAF grammar and modify the Extrametricality parameter.

First, since initial extrametricality is cross-linguistically very rare, the Extrametricality parameter (Left/Right) is replaced with the Nonfinality parameter (Yes/No). This rules out initial extrametricality altogether. (Nonfinality (Yes) results in final extrametricality).

Second, I propose (1) for WS systems with nonfinality:

(1) *The Accent Locality Hypothesis*

In a WS system with nonfinality, accent in words with heavy syllables must fall on the heavy syllable closest to the right word edge.

This hypothesis is theoretically desirable because it sets a strong locality restriction on accent location by minimizing the distance between the accented heavy syllable and the right edge of the word (2).

(2) l h l l (h ˈh) <σ>] *l h l l (ˈh h) <σ>]

Traditionally, accent is assigned in PAF by the Select parameter, which chooses the {Left, Right} heavy syllable in the accent domain. However, as (1) implies, Select must be fixed to the "Right" setting in WS systems with nonfinality, which makes the testable, falsifiable prediction (3).

(3) *The combination {Nonfinality (Yes), Select (Left)} is unattested.*

Testing (3) against the data in StressTyp, the largest database of stress patterns of the world's languages (van der Hulst *et al.* 1996) reveals that the prediction (3) is borne out, thus supporting the Accent Locality Hypothesis (1). This empirical result justifies the dependency of Select on Nonfinality.

The changes to the PAF grammar proposed here successfully eliminate all the unattested combinations of parameter settings, while leaving the attested ones unaffected, bringing the revised PAF grammar very close to the level of descriptive adequacy.