

A Scales-and-Parameters account of morphologically conditioned accentual exceptions

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), and (ii) those phonological weight-sensitive systems (which I call “hybrid”) where certain morphemes violate the accent rule (*e.g.*, Mattole).

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 accent from rhythm assigning those on separate planes (following van der Hulst 1996). I will focus here on 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). 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). In particular, I will show that the lexical accent system of Central Selkup (Samoyedic; Normanskaya *et al.* 2011) has the “diacritic weight scale” (1a), while Eastern Literary Mari (Permic; Reise *et al.* 2012) has the “hybrid weight scale” (1b).¹

- (1) a. diacritically superheavy > diacritically heavy > diacritically light
 b. diacritically heavy > phonologically heavy > {diacritically light, phonologically light}

Weight scales are constructed through pairwise comparisons between morphemes and/or syllables, showing that the weight relation HEAVIER-THAN is reflexive, 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 in (2) for [ˈtvelgu] (“steal-INF”) and [taˈpɔlgu] (“kick-SEMEL-INF”).

- (2) a. /tvel/: heavy √; /-gu/: heavy *suf* b. /tap/: heavy √; /-ol/: *superheavy suf*; /-gu/: heavy *suf*

AG	*	*	Select (<i>Left</i>) Weight Projection
WG	*	*	
	*	*	
	/tvel-gu/		

AG	*	*	*	Select (<i>Left</i>) Weight Projection
WG	*	*	*	
	*	*	*	
	/tap-ol-gu/			

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 [paˈjrem] (“holiday”) in (3a), and in exceptions, like [tʃodraˈnaːge] (forest-1Pl.POSS-COMIT) in (3b). Crucially, the *same* parameter settings are maintained for both.

- (3) a. /paj/, /rem/: heavy syllables b. /tʃo/, /dra/: heavy syllables; /na/, /ge/: diacritically heavy morphemes

AG	*	*	Select (<i>Right</i>) Weight Projection
WG	*	*	
	*	*	
	/pajrem/		

AG	*	*	*	Select (<i>Right</i>) Weight Projection
WG	*	*	*	*
	*	*	*	*
	/tʃodra-na-ge/			

Conclusion. Thus, the Scales-and-Parameters approach presented above uniformly accounts for both the regular accentual patterns and the morpheme-specific exceptions in (i) and (ii), as opposed to Accent Deletion, which is idiosyncratic and limited to (i).

¹ This is the standard dialect of Eastern Mari; it differs from Mari dialects discussed in Vaysman 2009, *a.o.*