

The smell of morphemes in the PAF theory: the case of Eastern Mari

This paper is concerned with the accent system of Eastern Literary Mari (ELM), the standardized variety of the Eastern Mari dialectal group. I offer here a complete descriptive characterization of accent assignment in ELM, unavailable to the date in the existing generative literature. I then provide a theoretical account based on the Primary Accent First (PAF) theory (van der Hulst 1996, 2010, 2012) and the *hybrid scale* introduced here.

Eastern Literary Mari is an unbounded Last/First accent weight-sensitive system (lacking rhythm). The core accent rule (Hayes 1995: 296) is given in (1):

(1) Accent falls on the rightmost heavy syllable of the word; otherwise, accent is initial.

For weight purposes, syllables with “full” (i.e. peripheral) vowels are heavy, while syllables with /ə/ are light (Hayes 1995: 296). In addition, we note that final open syllables with a mid vowel (/e/, /o, /ø/) are also light:

(2) kəgər'tʃen dove; 'pələʃ ear; 'ʃyrtø thread; kəp'ʃange beetle

The scope of the accent rule is quite general: accent is assigned without reference to morphological structure, i.e. uniformly in morphologically simple and complex words (3), inflectional and derivational morphology (3)-(4), and indiscriminately for all lexical categories:

(3) <i>Nom</i>	<i>Genitive</i>	<i>Inessive</i>	<i>Lative</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
'mut	'mutən	'mut-əʃto	mu't-eʃ	word
'vate	'vat-ən	va'te-ʃte	va't-eʃ	wife

(4) *derivation*

A→N	'taza	healthy	ta'za-lək	healthiness
V→N	'pogən	gather	pogən-ə'maʃ	gathering
N→A	o'la	city	o'la-se	urban

However, this phonologically-based accent rule has limitations associated with individual morphemes in the language: certain morphemes are stressed although their syllable is light while certain other morphemes in word-final position fail to receive stress although their syllable is heavy. For example, the suffix /-ge/ (COMIT) in final position always surfaces stressed (see Riese 2012: 97) while the suffix /-la/ (COMPAR) in the same position always surfaces unstressed (5). Therefore, the former is lexically accented and the latter is lexically unaccented.

(5) jotʃa-'ge child-COMIT tul'ʃol coal tul'ʃol-la like coal

At this juncture, we note that, cross-linguistically, both lexical accent and phonological weight can play a role in determining surface stress. van der Hulst (1999: 19) draws this parallel explicitly by proposing that lexical accent *is* a kind of weight, namely “diacritic weight”.

The account

1. By analogy with phonological weight scales (see Gordon 2006: 27-28), I introduce what I term the “hybrid scale”. In a hybrid scale, diacritic weight and phonological weight are integrated into a single, language-specific weight scale.
2. Accent in ELM is assigned with reference to the following hybrid scale:

$$(6) h_d > h_p > \{l_p, l_d\}$$

3. The grammar of ELM contains the scale (6) and the set of PAF parameters in (7):

$$(7) \{Domain (Unbounded), Select (R), Default (L), EM (No)\}$$

This grammar generates all and only the well-formed stress patterns of Eastern Literary Mari and therefore attains the level of descriptive adequacy in the sense of Chomsky (1964).

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