The Scales-and-Parameters approach to morpheme-specific exceptions in accent assignment

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Introduction. In this paper, I present a new take on the problem of exceptionality in the domain of accent assignment, focusing on two types of systems traditionally analyzed in terms of lexical accents: (i) lexical accent systems with accented dominant affixes, and (ii) phonological weight-sensitive systems in which certain morphemes violate the accent rule ("hybrid" systems).

Problem. The question arises how to capture regular and exceptional accent locations using the same accentual grammar, both within a given system and across the two types of systems.

Account. I introduce here the *Scales-and-Parameters theory*, a parametric, non-metrical theory which separates accent from rhythm and lacks feet (following van der Hulst 1996, 2010). I extend the notion "weight" to morphemes by treating their ability to attract/repel word accent as "diacritic weight", rather than lexical accent (see van der Hulst 1999). Now, since weight is an *ordinal* variable, it allows (unlike lexical accent) for novel types of weight *scales* containing diacritic and/or phonological weight. Thus, Central Selkup (Samoyedic), which is a lexical accent system (Normanskaya *et al.* 2011), has the "diacritic weight scale" (1a), while Eastern Literary Mari (Permic), which is a hybrid system (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 relevant weight relation is reflexive, transitive and antisymmetric, *i.e.* it is a *scale*.

Sample derivations. The weight degrees defined by the weight scale are formally represented on a "Weight Grid" (WG) in terms of relative height of the gridmark columns. Universally, *only the heaviest* morpheme(s)/syllable(s) in the form are projected onto the "Accent Grid" (AG) where one of these units is assigned accent by the Select parameter, as shown in (2) for Central Selkup.

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

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        *           Select (Left)                     *           Select (Left)
   AG   *   *       Weight Projection       AG         *           Weight Projection
        ‾‾‾‾‾                                          ‾‾‾‾‾
   WG   *   *                               WG     *   *   *
        *   *                                       *   *   *
                                                        *
        /tvel-gu/  ['tvelgu]  "steal-INF"
                                                /tap-ol-gu/  [ta'polgu]  "kick-SEMEL-INF"
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Conclusion. In this way, the Scales-and-Parameters approach presented above uniformly accounts for both the regular accentual patterns and the exceptions in (i) and (ii) with the *same* combination of parameter settings, as opposed to Accent Deletion, which is idiosyncratic and limited to (i).

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[1] This is the standard dialect of Eastern Mari, different from other Mari dialects (discussed in Vaysman 2009, *a.o.*).