

Relating to the Weight Grid

How to uniformly capture accentual regularities and exceptions both *within* a given accent system and *across* different types of systems using a single accent-assigning mechanism? In this talk, I will focus on exceptional affixes in lexical accent systems (accented dominant suffixes in Central Selkup and Uzbek) and in mixed systems (Eastern Literary Mari, Tundra Nenets). Since morphemes, on a par with syllables, are able to attract/repel word accent, I propose that morphemes also have weight, albeit unpredictable (“diacritic weight”). Since “weight” is an ordinal variable (as evidenced by phonological weight scales) and since diacritic weight is a type of weight, novel types of weight scales are predicted, which order either diacritic weight alone (in lexical accent systems), or both syllable weight and diacritic weight (in mixed systems). In the latter type of system, the two types of weight may be independent (Mari), or dependent (Tundra Nenets). Reference to such weight scales enables the parametric component of the grammar to correctly and uniformly assign word accent in all three types of systems (phonological, lexical and mixed). An advantage of this approach is that it makes accent location in languages like Tundra Nenets partly predictable, thereby reducing the amount of lexical specification of weight. I will show that it also allows for a straightforward account of Moses Columbian Salish, traditionally analyzed as involving a highly complex “strength hierarchy”, dominance and morpheme extrametricality.