The diacritic weight scale in lexical accent systems: accent assignment in Nxa'amxcin

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Introduction. Linguistic theory must allow for a uniform account of regularities and exceptions. In this talk, I present a novel integrated approach to morpheme-specific exceptions and regular accentuation in lexical accent systems, on the example of Nxa'amxcin (Interior Salish, Washington), henceforth N.

Background. The lexical accent system of N. displays a complex array of accentual patterns.

- In a classic study, Czaykowska-Higgins (1993) identifies 2 root classes: strong (S) and weak (W), and 2 classes of suffixes: recessive (R) and dominant (D). S win accent over R (1d), by contrast, according to my observation, W lose accent to those R that have an underlying vowel (1e), but win over R that lack it (1f).
- Further, Czaykowska-Higgins (1993) identifies 5 *exceptional* morpheme classes in N., mainly D affixes that win over S roots (1a), D* affixes that win over D, and exceptional roots (SE, WE) that win over D, but lose to D* (1b,c); also, R* exceptionally wins over regular R. (Prefixes in N. never get the accent.)

(1) a. **S-ˈD**	b. **ˈSE-D**	c. **SE-ˈD***
/k-√ʔimʼx = ikn/	/na-√maʕʼʷ = ikn/	/kɬ-√xar = lwas-tn/
[k̓imʼˈxikn]	[naˈmaʕʼʷkn]	[kɬxarləˈwasn]
LOC-√move=back	LOC-√break=back	LOC-√cover=chest
"camp up high"	"he broke his back"	"bib"
d. **ˈS-R$_{VOWEL}$**	e. **W-ˈR$_{VOWEL}$**	f. **ˈW-R$_{VOWELLESS}$**
/sac-√imʼx-mix/	/s-√q̓yʼ = mix/	/√tyˈ = lqs/
[sacʼˈʔimʼxəxʷ]	[sq̓iyʼˈmix]	[ˈtiyˈəlqs]
IMPF-√move-IMPF	NOM-√write=people	√roll=nose
"he's moving"	"school children"	"wheelbarrow"

Goal. To provide a simple, uniform account of accent assignment for both regular patterns and morpheme-specific exceptions in N.

The approach. Since accent-attracting capacities of individual morphemes in *lexical* accent systems are parallel to those of syllables in *weight-sensitive phonological systems*, these capacities are viewed here as *diacritic weight*.

- Diacritic weights of morphemes stand in a "heavier-than" relation. It is well known that, in certain phonological accent systems, accent is assigned with reference to a phonological weight scale, rather than a binary "heavy/light" distinction (Gordon 2006). Diacritic weight displays a hallmark of weight in general: it is ordinal. Like phonological weight, diacritic weight allows for weight scales.
- The Scales-and-Parameters (S&P) theory (which I proposed elsewhere), by augmenting the parameter system of the Primary Accent First theory, or PAF (van der Hulst 2010) with *diacritic weight scales*, accounts for word accent in lexical accent systems with morpheme-specific exceptions, in particular for accentual dominance. According to S&P, accent in a given language can be assigned mainly with reference to the weight scale of the language and two binary parameters due to PAF: Select (resolving accentual conflicts) and Default (supplying a default accent).

Results. I have established that the 9 non-intersecting morpheme classes of N. may be ordered on a 4-level diacritic weight scale. Two of these classes trigger a local *weight-decreasing* ("Lightening") rule

that reduces the weight of the following morpheme by 1 degree. In N., word accent is assigned using, mainly, Select (Right) and Default (Left), in combination with that scale.

TABLE 1. ***The regular and exceptional diacritic weight classes, listed in (1), as function of their relative diacritic weight and lightening capacity.***

Weight degree	Lightening	Non-lightening
1		$W, R_{VOWELLESS}$
2	R*	R_{VOWEL}
3	SE, WE	S, D
4		D*

Select (Right) and Default (Left) are set in N. based on (1a) and (1f), respectively.

Sample derivations. Weight of each morpheme is encoded on the Weight Grid according to the scale. The Weight Grid is a formal prosodic representation that carries weight degrees as integers. Then, the Lightening rule, triggered by lightening morphemes (superscripted with an "^{L}"), decreases the weight of the morpheme to its right (2b); in absence of lightening morphemes, the rule fails to apply (2a). The greatest weights in the form are projected onto the Accent Grid and the rightmost heaviest morpheme is assigned word accent by Select (R), as in (2).

(2) a. **S-ˈD**	b. **SE-ˈD***	c. ˈ**SE-D**	
n-√ptiẋ^{w} = atk^{w}-n-t-ø-n	ciq + q-nun-t-ø-n	na-√maʔ^{w} = ikn	
3 3	3 4^{L}	3^{L} 3	*Weight Grid*
N/A	3 3	3 2 Lightening	
* *	* *	* Weight Projection	*Accent Grid*
*	*	* Select (Right)	
[nptiˈẋ^{w}atk^{w}n]	[ciqqˈnunn]	[naˈmaʔ^{w}kn]	

Conclusion. The proposed approach treats lexical accent systems as weight-sensitive, dispensing with lexical accent altogether. Since weight is ordinal, it allows for diacritic weight scales. The accentual grammar supplies a particular diacritic weight scale and a set of parameter settings that, in combination, assign accent to *both* regular and exceptional words of N. in a uniform way.

By contrast, lexical accent approaches to N. accent treat regularities and exceptions dissimilarly. Moreover, they make complex assumptions, unnecessary here, such as cyclicity, Stress Erasure, internal morphemic EM (Czaykowska-Higgins 1993), or gradient surface representations in Harmonic Grammar (Zimmermann 2017). This comparison indicates, then, that the proposed approach is superior to lexical accent analyses because it is unified, parsimonious and straightforward.

References

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