

BBN-ANG-141 Foundations of phonology

9. Stress, accent, & intonation

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outline

what is what?

stress and vowel quality

stress patterns

stressless “words”

multiply stressed words

accents and the tonic

intonation

- parts of the tone unit

- types of nuclear tone

stress

- ▶ stress is acoustic prominence, eg length, higher pitch, loudness of a vowel

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- ▶ stress is stable: a stressed vowel does not become unstressed, an unstressed vowel does not become stressed (we must assume that *átom* and *atómic* are not related phonologically; note that apart from *m*, they are totally different: *átəm* vs *əthómik*)

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- ▶ many dictionaries use different symbols for stressed and unstressed **ə** and **ij**: *agree* ə'gri: vs *ugly* 'ʌgli; *Kennedy* 'kenədi vs *Kentucky* ken'tʌki (dictionaries using different symbols for other stressed–unstressed vowel pairs are rare)

stress patterns

s = strong/stressed, w = weak/unstressed

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- ▶ no word without 's': Stress Requirement
- ▶ no word beginning with 'ww': Early Stress Requirement

stressless “words”

Jane can swim well dzéjn kən swím wél vs dzéjn kán swim wel

Jack saw the cat dzák só: ðə kát vs dzák so: ðij kat

- ▶ some monosyllabic function words (prepositions, conjunctions, auxiliaries, determiners, pronouns) have a weak (ie unstressed) form

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- ▶ weak forms always attach to some other word in the sentence, they never occur in isolation, they are clitics, **not phonological words**
- ▶ some monosyllabic function words do **not** have a weak form: *off, on, my, I, they, may, might, ought*

multiply stressed words

ss	campaigned	Cam reigned
sws	contradict	Cohn's a dick
swws	catamaran	Pat had a plan
sww	Madagascar	Maddy asked her
swswsw	telecommunication	Terry can fetch the children
swwsw	indivisibility	Indie Vickie's billing me

accents and the tonic

the tonic is always the last accent, which is typically (but not always) the last stress:

św w ś w Św: Tery can fetch the CHILdren (neutral reading)

reasons for not having an accent on a stressed vowel

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3. clash
4. lexical

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- ▶ $\acute{s}w$ w \acute{s} w $\acute{S}w$: Terry can fetch the children (neutral reading)

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- ▶ $\acute{s}w$ w \acute{s} w $\acute{S}w$: Terry can fetch the children (neutral reading)
- ▶ $\acute{S}w$ w s w sw : TErry can fetch the children (not Jerry)

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- ▶ *św w ś w Św*: Terry can fetch the children (neutral reading)
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- ▶ *w Śsw*: She's ACcepted (not excepted) (vs *w wŚw*: She's acCEPted)

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- ▶ $w \acute{S}sw$: She's ACcepted (not excepted) (vs $w \acute{w}S$: She's acCEPted)
- ▶ $s s \acute{s}\acute{S}$: I said LeNIN (not Lennon) (vs $s s \acute{S}w$: I said LEnin)

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- ▶ $\acute{S} | \acute{S} s$: BOND. JAMES Bond.

compounds

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- ▶ w w Ś s: It's a BLACK bird (not a white one)

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with contrast

- ▶ w w Ś s: It's a BLACK bird (not a white one)
- ▶ w w ś Ś: It's a blackBIRD (not a blackboard)

accent clash

s (w) s (w)	ś (w) s (w) ś . . .
thirtéen	thírteen mén
sardíne	sárdine sándwich
left hánd	léft-hand dríve
black bírd	bláck bird's nést (= bláckbird's nést)
kangaróo	kángaroo párk
Waterlóo	Wáterloo Státion
académic	ácademic yéar
fundaméntal	fúndamental érror
chicken-héarted	chícken-hearted héroes

note: retúrn tícket, lagóon páradise (since *return*, *lagoon* are *ws*, not *ss*)

noncompounds stressed like compounds

compound

śś airport, toothpaste, limestone

śws basketball, honeydew, thunderstorm

śsw grasshopper, hamburger, bookkeeper

śsws superpower, butterfinger, watercolour

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noncompound

śs cohort, ally, decade

śws apricot, satisfy, renegade

śsw ancestor, Chewbacca, orgasm

śsws alligator, pomegranate, Schwarzenegger

intonation

phonetically

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- ▶ modalities, attitudes, (non)completeness in intonation languages (like English or Hungarian)

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- ▶ modalities, attitudes, (non)completeness in intonation languages (like English or Hungarian)
- ▶ lexical words in tone languages (like Mandarin)
[mā] 'mother', [má] 'hemp', [mǎ] 'horse', [mà] 'scold'

parts of the tone unit

Did you | 'never | 'see my fan|'tastic | 'blue-green um| 'brella, Michael?

The diagram shows the sentence "Did you | 'never | 'see my fan|'tastic | 'blue-green um| 'brella, Michael?" with brackets underneath. A red bracket under "Did you" is labeled with a red "1". A long black bracket under the rest of the sentence is labeled with a black "2". A black bracket under "'brella" is labeled with a black "3". A black bracket under "Michael?" is labeled with a black "4".

- 1 the pre-head, a degenerate foot before the first accented syllable of the tone-unit

parts of the tone unit

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- 2 the head, all syllables from the first accented syllable of the tone-unit up to the tonic
- 3 the tonic (nucleus/sentence-stress), the last accented syllable of the tone-unit, characterized by pitch change

parts of the tone unit

Did you | 'never | 'see my fan|'tastic | 'blue-green um| 'brella, Michael?

The diagram shows the sentence divided into four parts by brackets below it:

- 1**: Under 'Did you'
- 2**: Under ''never | 'see my fan|'tastic | 'blue-green um|'
- 3**: Under ''brella, Michael?'
- 4**: Under ''brella, Michael?' (highlighted in orange)

- 1** the pre-head, a degenerate foot before the first accented syllable of the tone-unit
- 2** the head, all syllables from the first accented syllable of the tone-unit up to the tonic
- 3** the tonic (nucleus/sentence-stress), the last accented syllable of the tone-unit, characterized by pitch change
- 4** the tail, all unaccented syllables after the tonic

parts of the tone unit

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 - 4** the tail, all unaccented syllables after the tonic
- ▷ tone-units may lack one or other of these parts: *did you 'eat?* (1+3); *'sar`dines* (2+3), etc.; only the tonic is obligatory: *,me?* (3)

types of nuclear tone: falling tone

also known as long fall

typical of completed statements, wh-questions, confirmation-seeking tag questions, exclamations, eg

- ▶ you 'always 'make such a `mess, John
- ▶ 'what can you 'see on the `blackboard
- ▶ 'that was a 'nasty ~surprise | `wasn't it
- ▶ what a `disaster

types of nuclear tone: high-rising tone

also known as long rise

typical of polar (ie yes-no) questions, echo questions (tonic always on wh-word), information-seeking tag questions, eg

- ▶ is it 'you who 'made such a ´mess, John
- ▶ are you ´ready
- ▶ you're ´ready
- ▶ (uninterpretable noise) ´what did you say
- ▶ 'this is `Schubert, | ´isn't it

types of nuclear tone: low-rising tone

also known as short rise

typical of uncertainty and parentheticals, eg

- ▶ 'maybe the 'baby's a ,sleep
- ▶ it 'looks very 'much like the ,other one
- ▶ `today | says ,Mary | we'll `leave
- ▶ `Richard | 'often 'called the ,Lionhearted | 'returned from Je`rusalem

types of nuclear tone: falling-rising tone

also known as fall-rise

typical of incompleteness or non-finality, in subordinate clauses, main clauses followed by another main clause, lists, personal opinions, eg

- ▶ when we ˘get there | we'll have a good ˘meal
- ▶ I'd ˘buy you it | if I could ˘afford it
- ▶ I 'opened the ˘door | and ˘went in
- ▶ ˘one | ˘two | ˘three | ˘four
- ▶ 'John could ˘do it for us
- ▶ he's not ˘that bad

sample exam questions

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2. ssw
3. wws
4. wss

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