

Central Swedish Pitch Accent: a retro approach

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Most Scandinavian dialects have what is sometimes called “contrastive pitch accent”, where every stressed word has either “accent 1” or “accent 2”. The received wisdom is that at least one of these involves underlying tones. Partial motivation for this claim comes from mono-morphemic minimal pairs such as [¹re:gel] ‘rule’ versus [re:gel²] ‘bolt’, where both have the same segmental content, syllable count and stress, but different pitch contours.

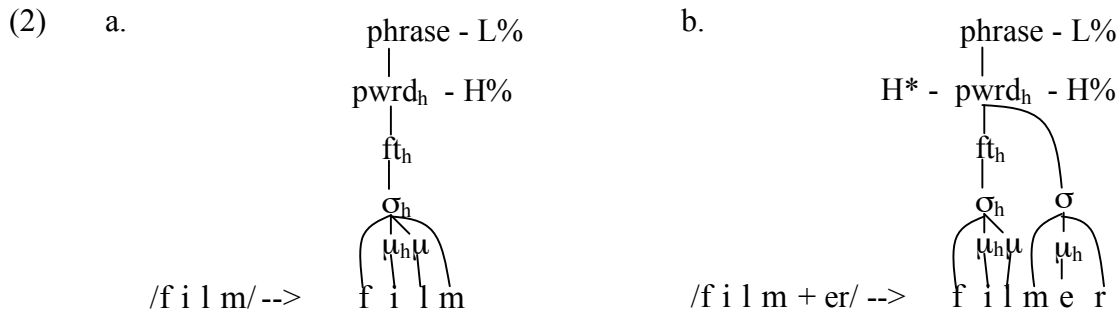
However, despite a large literature on the topic, including quite complex analyses of the interaction of presumed underlying tones and morphology, there are several unresolved issues regarding the surface distribution of tones and their phonetic realizations - particularly as they interact with the prosodic hierarchy and morphological structure. In addition, recent research has started to question the fairly common view that all cases of accent 1 and/or accent 2 (depending on the theory) are lexically stored. This research suggests that at least some “lexical pitch accents” are actually surface-derivable.

This talk has two goals. The first is to carefully present the facts regarding Central Swedish stress assignment, vowel epenthesis, morphological structure and pitch contours, and to show that all tones are predictably assigned in this dialect. This claim is counter to all recent literature, but is reminiscent of some work of the 1960s and 1970s. I will show that the shorthand diacritic notation usually used for accent 1 and accent 2 (see above examples) to allow for generalizations to be made across all Scandinavian dialects actually obscures many crucial facts about tone distribution within dialects and leads to incomplete analyses. When transcriptions are given with tones noted (as in non-Scandinavian tone research), we see a more complex, but more easily interpretable morpho-phonological system. The second goal is to provide a representational analysis of both morphological and prosodic structures as they pertain to the distribution of Central Swedish tones. I will show that the same mechanisms needed independently to explain both regular and exceptional stress (e.g. underlying prosodic word structure) straightforwardly explains “lexical pitch accent” without underlying tones.

The following are selected details about the analysis as it applies to mono-morphemic citation forms. 1) Most monosyllabic content words are underlyingly non-prosodified and form predictable surface structures such as (2a). The phonological phrase has a low boundary tone (L%) at its right edge and the prosodic word has H% at its right edge. These surface as a HL pitch contour (accent 1). 2) Most disyllables containing two underlying vowels are also underlyingly non-prosodified and form a structure such as (4a). The initial syllable forms a bimoraic trochee (Hayes 1995) and the two syllables form a prosodic word. The final syllable has both a phrase L% and prosodic word H%, while the stressed syllable has a prominence H* and OCP-motivated L (not indicated in these structures). Thus, these forms surface with a HLHL pitch contour (accent 2). 3) The absence of H* in monosyllables is due to an OCP restriction against two high tones on the same syllable. 4) Exceptional final stress, as in (5a), is due to underlying prosodic word structure. 5) The mechanism used for exceptional final stress also allows (i.e. cannot be blocked) for exceptional prosodification of disyllables (see (5b)). Syllables must adjoin outside the underlyingly specified prosodic word. The effect of this is not realized as exceptional stress placement, as was the case with final stress, but on tone alignment - i.e. accent 1. Finally, complications due to morphology encountered by other analyses do not arise in this account (see (6)). Underlyingly non-prosodified syllables to the left of the stress always adjoin lower in the prosodic hierarchy (if possible) than syllables to the right. To conclude: given the independent need for predictable prosodification and underlying prosodic word structure, additional underlying tones are unnecessary.

- (1) Monosyllabic 3rd declension noun root (bold underline indicates epenthesis)
 ['fílm̂] ['fíl̂ m̂er̂] ['fílm̂en̂] ['fíl̂ m̂eŋà]

film 'film' *filmer* 'films' *filmen* 'the film' *filmerna* 'the films'



- (3) Disyllabic 3rd declension noun root
 ['mû:túr̂] ['mû:túr̂er̂] ['mû:túr̂n̂] ['mû:túreŋà]

motor 'engine' *motorer* 'engines' *motorn* 'the engine' *motorerna* 'the engines'

