The case for NONINITIALITY

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Overview Recent work argues that weakly-layered feet account for a quantity-insensitive stress typology better than a model with strictly binary feet and symmetrical extrametricality (Kager 2012; Martínez-Paricio & Kager 2015). I argue that stress assignment in Blackfoot (Algonquian; Frantz 2017) is easily analyzed using symmetrical extrametricality, but requires additional assumptions under the weakly-layered feet analysis. I propose a NONINITIALITY constraint within an Optimality Theory (OT) framework (McCarthy & Prince 1993; Prince & Smolensky 1993).

Data I: default stress Stress in Blackfoot is manifested with a pitch peak on the prominent syllable, represented with an acute accent (ˊ). Stress falls on the second syllable if it is heavy, (2a), and the third syllable otherwise, (2b), regardless of the weight of the first syllable.

(1)	a.	‘s/he danced’	[i.pʌ́s.ka]	L **Ĥ** L	b.	‘s/he hit’	[i.pi.k͡sî]	L L **Ĺ**
		‘s/he wasthirsty’	[iʔ.ná:.ki]	H **Ĥ** L		‘s/he dove’	[ɪˢt.ta.jíˀ]	H L **Ĺ**

The two analyses require different representations for default stress, with third syllable stress shown below. An analysis with strictly binary feet leaves the leftmost syllable unparsed to the main foot, (2), while an analysis with weakly-layered feet predicts that the initial syllable is parsed as an adjunct to a foot, (3). However, (3b) is not a harmonic representation. Weight-to-Stress Principle (WSP; Prince 1990) ensures that heavy second syllables attract stress in (1a), but would also cause the initial syllable in (3b) to be footed.

(2) UNPARSED SYLLABLE AT EDGE
- a. $\#\sigma\ (\sigma\ \acute{\sigma})\ \ldots$
- b. $\#\sigma_{\mu\mu}\ (\sigma\ \acute{\sigma})\ \ldots$

(3) WEAKLY-LAYERED FEET
- a. $\#(\sigma\ (\sigma\ \acute{\sigma}))\ \ldots$
- b. $*\#(\sigma_{\mu\mu}\ (\sigma\ \acute{\sigma}))\ \ldots$

Data II: cyclic stress The same default stress patterns obtain for event nominalizations built on verbal stems, (4a). Crucially, when person prefixes are added to the nominalization, accent shifts to a stem-initial heavy syllable, (4b). This implies the syllable was left unfooted, supporting the analysis in (2). A weakly-layered foot analysis requires additional assumptions.

(4)	a.	‘work’	[aʔ.púʔ.ta.kṣ̩.sɪ.n]	H **Ĥ** L L̥ L
	b.	‘your work’	[kɪ.t=áʔ.púʔ.ta.kṣ̩.sɪ.n]	L= **Ĥ** H L L̥ L

Analysis and implications There are two challenges for a weakly-layered foot analysis. I propose a NONINITIALITY constraint as the symmetrical counterpart to NONFINALITY and show that this accounts for Blackfoot stress. I explore how a weakly-layered foot analysis would need to be modified to account for quantity-sensitive systems.

References

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