
Accent Is Predictable (If You're a Mind-Reader)

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ACCENT IS PREDICTABLE (IF YOU'RE A MIND-READER)

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The Chomsky-Halle Nuclear Stress Rule and its modification by Bresnan, and to some extent the criticisms that have been leveled at it, have in common an attempt to account for accent in terms of syntax. Instead, accent should be viewed as independent, directly reflecting the speaker's intent and only indirectly the syntax. Accented words are points of information focus.

In her ordering rule added to the stress assignments in Chomsky & Halle 1968, Bresnan 1971 accounts for examples offered by Newman 1946, in particular the types

George has pláns to leave.

George has plans to léave.

Helen left diréctions for George to follow.

Helen left directions for George to fóllow.

She is of course persuaded, as was Newman, that explanations of these accentual phenomena are to be found in the syntax, and dismisses as 'only apparent counter-examples' the contrary evidence set forth in Bolinger 1958, though admitting that 'a very few of Bolinger's examples—mostly idiomatic, e.g. *money to búrn*—remain unexplained' (263, fn. 3). As they were originally illustrations of an explanation at variance with Bresnan's, this statement should read 'unexplained in terms of the Nuclear Stress Rule (as modified)'. In other words, they remain valid counter-examples.

My position was—and is—that the location of sentence accents is not explainable by syntax or morphology. (That of stress is so explainable, and we see here perpetuated a classic confusion of levels.) I have held, with Hultzén 1956, that what item 'has relatively stronger stress [accent] in the larger intonational pattern is a matter of information, not of structure' (199). It is true that the examples I gave included a number of idioms, but the 'few' others represent prolific types, which I did not feel needed further demonstration. That was my error, which I want to remedy now. Along the way I hope to deal with the newer syntactic and morphological arguments brought forth in Bresnan 1972 (B72), Lakoff 1972 (L), and Berman & Szamosi 1972 (B&S). The last-named are closest to my position, but even they attach an importance to syntax that I think is unnecessary.

Following are examples in which the Nuclear Stress Rule (NSR) as modified ought to eliminate the accent on the final verb, but either does not or need not. They are matched with others where the rule operates successfully. The point of the comparison is the nature of the verbs as lexical items:

The end of the chapter is reserved for various probléms to compúterize.

The end of the chapter is reserved for various probléms to solve.

I have a póint to émpphasize.

I have a póint to make.

I can't finish in an hour—there are simply too many tópics to elúcidate.

I can't finish in an hour—there are simply too many tópics to cover.
 Knowing his character you can guess what he's up to—probably looking
 for some poor bôob to chéat.

I'm hot. I'm looking for sòmething còol to drínk.

Next month we may be out on the street. I'm looking for a hóuse to rent.

By contrasting items like *computerize* and *solve*, *elucidate* and *cover*, I do not mean to suggest that one can predict with assurance that one will be accented and the other not. I only emphasize that this is one factor in the speaker's decision. When he decides to say *elucidate* rather than *cover*, he has already made up his mind that the operation rather than the thing is the point of information focus; the choice of the semantically richer verb is part of the decision. He could decide, though this is less likely, to accent the semantically poorer word (*discuss* would be a better candidate for this than *cover*), or to de-accent the richer one. The latter would be true of *bôob to chéat* (reducing it to *bóob to cheat*) but less likely of *sòmething còol to drínk*, and this reflects the meaning of the sentence as a whole, especially as influenced by the main verb. *Look for* opens up possibilities that are somewhat obstructed by presentative verbs like *I have* and *there is*, which tend to focus on the noun, exactly as presentative *came* focuses on the noun in *Then the winds came*.

Some unattested historical episodes by way of further illustration.

Boston Strangler, out for his first prowl: Where can I find a girl to strángle?

Matthew: What is Jesus doing this afternoon? Mark: He is looking for a còuple of dèad men to resurréct.

Sigmund Freud: On your way back, bring me a pàtient to psychoánalysé.

Daniel Ellsberg: I've got these pàpers to declássify.

Sir Galahad: I'll be late for tea. I have a còuple of làdies in distrèss to réscue.

Thomas Arnold, Rugby, 1828: Tell Mary I'll be along in a minute. First I have a bòy to cáne.

If Arnold had been seeing the boy rather than caning him, he would probably have said *bóy to see*.¹

The error of attributing to syntax what belongs to semantics comes from concentrating on the commonplace. In phrases like *bóoks to write*, *wórk to do*, *clóthes to wear*, *fóod to eat*, *lèssons to learn*, *gróceries to get*—as they occur in most contexts—the verb is highly predictable: food is to eat, clothes are to wear, work is to do, lessons are to learn. Less predictable verbs are less likely to be de-accented—where one has *lèssons to learn*, one will probably have *pàssages to mémorize*. It is only incidental that the syntax favors one or the other accent pattern. *It's tìme to léave* speaks of leaving; a paraphrase is *We must leave*. *I have*

¹ L's exx. 60-63 can be added to mine here. What he says about length is statistically correct, but is not, I think, the real criterion. In my examples *cane* and *see* are both monosyllabic. Low-content words are apt to be short—personal pronouns are the prime example—but this is the effect of some kind of historical attrition, and has no direct bearing on semantic content. L's idea of over-all length has more to recommend it, but still responds in part to meaning (the more the speaker adds, the more likely it is that one of the items added will overshadow what precedes), and in part to accidents of performance (the longer a speaker goes on, the more apt he is to revise the plan of his sentence).

a *duty to perform* speaks of duty; the verb could be omitted and the meaning would be the same.

The idea of predictability in the preceding paragraph is close to that of 'redundancy' credited by B&S to Perlmutter. But redundancy is too strong a concept. It is not necessary for the verb to be fully predictable from the noun; what counts is RELATIVE semantic weight. For this it is necessary to take account of the entire context, including the context of situation. B&S ex. 26 will illustrate. It is easy to create a situation in which *What kings abdicated?* is normal and non-contrastive: *I don't care how many passengers were rescued from the Titanic. At that point in history what I want to know is what kings abdicated.* The speaker is interested in the fate of kings and the rise of democracies. There is enough mutual understanding between him and his interlocutor to make him reasonably sure that the mention of 'kings'—in the context of democracy—will suggest 'abdication'. But if he is unsure of this he has the option of saying

ki ab
what
n^g dicated.

with *kings* receiving at least as high a pitch as *ab-* and followed by a fall-rise (Pike's 'contour-separation'). If *kings* receives an appreciably lower pitch, its meaning is presupposed ('redundant') and *abdicated* becomes contrastive relative to it.

Consider some other cases where the NSR should apply but runs into trouble. One involves coördinated infinitives:

Here's a batch of correspondéce to check òver and updáte.

I still have most of the gárdén to wèed and fértilize.

This way the specimen has less fòod to swàllow and digést.

We would predict—on a semantic theory—that the more items are accumulated, the more apt they are to receive a main accent. (WHICH ONE will get it—for example, *fertilize* rather than *weed*—may be a syntactic question, but that is not the point here.) I have marked both the noun and the last verb with acute accents to show that they are approximately equal, but it is not necessary to accumulate two or more verbs for this to happen. In *George is a wónderful fríend to háve*, the three accents can be made perfectly equal without distorting the sentence in the least. On the other hand, even with accumulated verbs, if the sense binds them as one, the accent may vanish:

I have a clóck to clean and oil.

There are still all these chícckens to kill and dress.

I wish I didn't have so many létters to write and mail.

The point is that the speaker adjusts the accents to suit his meaning. *Weed and fertilize* can be de-accented; *clean and oil* can be accented. It is in the nature of the case that our examples can show probabilities, rarely certainties.

Another construction involves terminal prepositions:

I need a light to réad by.

He needs a pròp to léan on.

I'm looking for a mirror to sháve by.
 I want a fáith to believe in.
 I want a good còmpany to wórk for.
 She found the idéal màn to clíng to.
 I need a tòol to wríte with.
 It's not a very good ròad to gó by.
 Come along, we have some differences to tàlk óver, you and I.
 It's a nice glàss to lóok through.
 We gave him a tòpic to tàlk about.

As with the simple verbs, it is possible to de-accent most of these. E.g., *róad to go by* comes almost as easily as *róad to take*; but the probability is less, and this can be traced at least in part to the meaning of 'purpose' in most of these examples, which is less incidental to the noun than other meanings, such as the 'obligation' of *diréctions to follow*. Nevertheless the same balancing act between noun and verb must be performed: in *tòol to wríte with*, *tool* is a relatively empty word; *Get me a péncil to wríte with*² has a semantically richer noun, one to which *wríte with* is relatively incidental. In fact, *Get me a tóol to wríte with* would probably be contrastive, suggesting that one intended to write with a hammer or a screwdriver instead of a pencil. The relation between the construction and the accent is not a necessary one; in a sentence like *He was bored because he didn't have any cómic books to look at*, the verb *look at* is as incidental to the noun as any simple verb could be. *Think of* and *consider* behave identically in *I have my reputátion to think of (consider)*.

Bresnan 1971 carries the syntactic argument one step further by excepting pronouns as such from items that carry 'primary stress'. A semantic theory accounts for this by saying that pronouns are formal deictic elements that are semantically empty. The claim of emptiness would be circular were it not for the fact that some nouns behave in the same way, though gradiently, and accent responds to the degree of emptiness. With pronouns the emptiness is complete:

I have someone to sée.
 I have somewhere to gó.
 I can't find anybody to hélp.

I can't find anybody to help would be contrastive. The emptiness of certain nouns can be illustrated by comparing them with other nouns that are semantically richer:

Those are cráwling things.
 Those are cráwling insects.
 I've got to go sée a guy.
 I've got to go sèe a fríend.
 He was arrested because he killed a man.
 He was arrested because he killed a póliceman.
 He gave me a twenty-five cént piece.
 He gave me a twenty-five cènt cóin.
 I'm going over to the dóctor's place.

² Not intended as contrastive.

I'm going over to the dòctor's bárn.
 It was during a ráiny spell (a cóld snap).
 It was during a ràiny wéekend.
 I'm doing it for Jóhn's sake. (= I'm doing it because of John.)
 I'm doing it for Jòhn's wélfare.
 We did it in nó time.
 We did it in tèn séconds.

The solution to this in Bresnan 1971 is to invent a category of 'semi-pronouns like *people, things*' (271). The difficulty is that the only way I know to identify such nouns is by their behavior under accent, and this assumes what is to be proved. They do not have the morphological peculiarities of the indefinite pronouns, such as compounding with *-one, -body, -where*, nor the combined morphological and syntactic peculiarities of the *some-any* alternation. And where the accentual behavior with true pronouns is predictable, that of empty nouns is only highly probable. A semantic theory assumes that they are not entirely empty, and predicts that under some conditions they may therefore be accented without any special requirement such as contrast. This should occur where the situation makes the verb more obvious than the noun. On one occasion when working in my garden, I remarked *I'm mainly concerned to keep Bermuda grass cut back from beds where I have other things planted*: the planting was presupposed, given the fact that it was a garden, and *things* won by default (to be truly contrastive, the accent would have fallen on *other*). It should also occur when the nouns are set against verbs that are comparably low in semantic content:

I can't go with you; I've got too many things to do.
 ... too many things to dó.
 I wish I didn't have so many pláces to go in one afternoon.
 ... pláces to gó ... ³

Do is as empty as *thing*, and *go* is as empty as *place*. It might seem that one could then account for these cases by creating a semi-proverb category of verbs; but this avenue is closed too, for the speaker is free to replace *do* with, e.g., *attend to* or *look after* or *take care of*: *I have too many things to take care of*. If the conversation is between buyers, it may even be *things to buy*; there is no specific anaphora, but buying is simply taken for granted. It is the relative informativeness or unpredictability of the meaning in the context that makes it possible to accent *thing* and de-accent the verb. As for *people*, again we have a choice:

I've got to fix dinner fast; there are péople coming.
 ... there are pèople cóming.

If there were a category of semi-pronouns, it would have to include *individual* and *person*, but the status of *man* and *people* would be doubtful:

I have a mán to see.
 I have a màn to sée.

³ The intensifiers with these nouns do not affect the comparison, since quantifier pronouns may have them too, and still are unable to carry the accent except for special reasons: *I have so múch to do* and *I have such a lóft to do* are accentable this way only with contrastive accent or with an emotional shift.

*I have an individual to see.

I have an individual to *sée*.

This would be a strange category.

If the balance may tip either way when noun and verb are equally impoverished, the same is true when noun and verb are equally rich:

We're looking for a neighborhood where there are other *bòys* to *pláy* with.

... where there are other *bóys* to play with.

We have but one life to *lìve*.

We have but one life to live.

It's too heavy a *prìce* to *páy*.

It's too heavy a price to pay.

The context of *bóys* to *play with* is one in which the presence of boys signifies the presence of someone to play with. The accents are on the noun for the same reason as in the following:

I've got to hurry; my *móther's* calling me.

The *téléphone* rang.

We were late; a *brìdge* was out (i.e., 'It was the bridge's fault.')

For a semantic theory, there is no difficulty with Bresnan's puzzles—e.g., it would not create for itself the quandary of indefinite lowering of accents (272). It does not force the main accent to fall on any particular one of 'primary-stressed items to the right of the verb' (274), but leaves this to the speaker's invention. If it is Christmas time, he may readily ask *Whose children are you going to get presents for?*, de-accenting everything after the noun that is the focus of his interest. It correctly predicts that the three squares a day will carry no particular semantic weight, hence *Peter had cláms for dinner*, but that something in between may well do so, hence *I had some nice cláms for my snáck this afternoon*.

The supposed dependence of accent on syntax has a long history. One of the most persistent notions concerns noun phrases consisting of adjective plus noun, which (for semantic reasons) most often are accented on the noun. But the opposite is commonplace. Some examples I have recorded:

They may be able to reach the edge of town, but I don't see how you could make it to *óur* place in 45 minutes unless you went through every *réd* light.

I like it because it has a *sílky* sheen.

... the Arab tumblers bouncing and rolling like rubber balls wherever there was an *émpy* space.

Gagini—oh, he's a Costa Rícan grammarian. (Context having to do with Spanish teachers but no previous mention of grammarian.)

I wonder when they're going to paint the *cénter* line. (On a road; no previous mention of line.)

But I used to have one just like it that I used for mixing *hót* drinks. (Drinks had not been mentioned; the interest was in hot things, and this particular mixer could handle only liquids anyway.)

Compounds are born this way (*center line* is a possible example), but to call these

compounds is to beg the question. The information focus is simply on the adjective; when we say *He has a yellow streak in him* we are saying that he is yellow, and *streak* adds next to nothing. If the contrary happens—even under circumstances that might otherwise favor the adjective—the noun gets the accent. Someone struggling to get into a pair of pajamas was heard to say *I can't tell which is the front end of these darned things*—here *front* was in potential contrast to *rear*, but the speaker had in mind *end* as against some other part.

Other structures are equally affected. In the pair

He accidentally broke the *cár* window

He accidentally broke the *còttage* window

(said in answer to *What happened?*, to eliminate any presupposition), the usual accentuation is as shown, very likely because breaking a window in a car affects the car more than breaking the window in a cottage affects the cottage. In the pair

It's a *geránium* plant

He's an *FBI plánt*

we understand that if it is a geranium, it is a plant. (*Rúubber factory, élm tree, móvie theater, référence volume*, and similar phrases de-accent the noun as the more predictable element; *It's a kind of móvie pavilion, a kind of référence diréctory* are the opposite.) In the pair

You have a good *héad* on your shoulders

You have a good *hèad* for *búsiness*

the first is enhanced whimsically but not informatively by *on your shoulders*. (Again, 'idiom' begs the question.) In the sentences

They *strá*ngled him to death

They *hò*unded him to *dé*ath

They *scá*red him to death

(once more answering *What happened?*), the first de-accent *death* because strangulation normally involves death, the second accents *death* because hounding in itself is not fatal, and the third may be treated either way because figuratively there is a choice. The power of a figure of speech is also seen in the sentence *If you try to avoid any shield at all [in riding a motorcycle], the force of the rain is like sánd thrown in your face*, where *sand* is the point of the simile and everything after it is de-accented. Any of the following can be used to answer someone viewing the wreckage of an establishment and wondering about it:

Some *bú*rglars broke into my shop last night.

The *pó*lice raided my shop last night.

Some *gá*ngsters knocked over my shop last night.

I turn now to the further syntactic explanations that have appeared in the more recent round of papers.

In B&S ex. 37, the non-infinitival nature of the clause in *Mary baked a cake that the children áte* (contrasting with 34, *Mary baked a cake for the children to eat*) is held to be a possible reason for the terminal accent. But suppose we make the finite clause convey the same meaning ('purpose') as the infinitive: *Mary baked*

a cake that the children would eat. Mary is concerned about the children's welfare, not about the eating. Purpose is more usual with the infinitive than with finite clauses; but this is only a fact of statistics.

As a way of explaining their examples in §3.2, B&S distinguish between agentive and abstract subjects, a distinction that seems to be accepted by B72, §1. Once again I believe that the syntax is only incidental. The contrast is rather between what characterizes and what does not. The significant fact about *John amused Mâry* is not that *John* is an abstract subject but that *amused* describes him: 'John was amusing (to Mary)', with the same accent pattern as *John looked funny (to Mary)*. If we presuppose 'Mary' (which is easy to do since we rarely use just a given name unless the referent is conceptually close by), the characterizing element becomes the heart of the message. But if the verb fails to characterize, it makes no difference whether the subject is agentive or abstract: the verb will lose the accent. In answer to *Why are you scolding the poor lad so?*,⁴ a normal reply is either *His coming in like that frightened his sister* or *Coming in like that he frightened his sister*. The subject may be abstract, but it is not characterized—the intent is not to say 'Johnnie was frightening', but to express concern for the sister. B&S exx. 55a, 56a, and 57a are similar: the verbs (counting *annoying* and *sick* as verbs) characterize one of the arguments of the sentence. The fact that they all appear with the copula is significant. But this does not necessarily hold for 58 and 59, and it is here that I judge their starring or lack of it to be incorrect:

58a. Those facts convinced Mâry that John was right.

58b. *Those facts convinced Mâry that John was right.

59a. Sailboats remind Jôhn of his childhood.

59b. *Sailboats remind Jôhn of his childhood.

All four of these are perfectly normal, but actually the unstarred ones should be starred if *Mary* in 58a and *John* in 59a are not to be presupposed. For the two others, here are relevant contexts:

What was the reason for all that discussion about sailboats?—Sailboats remind Jôhn of his childhood.

What was it that ended the argument?—Those facts convinced Mâry that John was right.

An entirely different factor—emotional highlighting—may alter examples of the type of B&S 51, *John got down on his knees and appealed to Mary*, starred by B&S when the main accent is on *appealed* because *John* is an agentive subject. I add *literally* to show the meaning, but it is not required: *John got down on his knees and (literally) appealed to Mâry*. Similarly, ... and (*literally*) begged for-giveness.

The final concession that B&S make to syntax is that a relative clause may have its internal accents affected by whether it functions as subject or as object. Thus:

73. The fact that we like the propôsal that George left is not surprising.

⁴ The accent pattern in this question is instructive. It is asked with the poor lad in view, hence presupposed; also with the degree of scolding in view, hence presupposed. Accordingly *poor lad* and *so* are de-accented: *Why are you scolding the poor lad so?*

74. The fact that the proposal that George left was about traffic rules is not surprising.

In these two examples, B&S have contrived a context in which the accents are probably as they show them: in 73 the information about *proposal* can be entirely new to the context; in 74 it can be more readily taken as presupposed. But in the remaining examples of this group (69–71), I agree with B72's criticism (fn. 5) of the empirical facts. *The volcano that erupted has been a threat for centuries* can have the greater prominence as easily on one element as the other (*volcano, erupted*). If it comes in answer to *Tell me about the volcano that erupted*, then the noun, being presupposed, will be less accented, and *erupted*, coming on a simple rising pitch, will seem to be somewhat more accented (actually the pitch is to be accounted for in terms of Delattre's 'major continuation'). If it is in answer to *I want to know more about the geography of the region*, the opposite happens: *volcano* is not presupposed, and is accordingly highlighted; and since the entire subject represents something new, the intonation puts *erupted* on a fall-rise and makes it seem more subdued. The confusion here illustrates the risks of talking about prosody in a vacuum.

B72 likewise contains new syntactic arguments; the first concerning 'concealed partitives'. The observations are interesting and statistically correct, but lacking in direct relevance. Partitive constructions contain restrictive clauses, which give information essential to identification: *She buried those men she killed*. Their opposite numbers are not essential to identification, and are accordingly not highlighted: *They'll enjoy any jokes you make* ('They'll enjoy your jokes'—*you make* adds nothing beyond identifying the jokester). But whether partitive or not, if the information is not felt to be important, the corresponding words will not be accented. Thus B72 stars her ex. 51, *Who was that one capitalist you voted for?*, which for me is a perfectly normal utterance: *Back in 1968, Joe, who was that one capitalist you voted for?* Replace *one* with *particular* and the result is the same. It is true that some partitive nouns have low semantic value: B72's *bit*, exx. 53–54, is an illustration. It is partitive, because it implies *bit of* something; and it is not accented. One would not say *He's looking distressed because that's too big a bit that he's trying to eat*. But *mouthful* is also partitive; and if it replaces *bit* in this sentence, it may readily carry the main accent, with everything following it de-accented. The problem with *bit* is not that it is partitive but that it is indefinite and a minimizer. It does not take counters (except as a monetary unit): *How much did you give your horse to eat?—* I gave him three bits*. (Cf. *I gave him three scoops*.) It does not take a conclusive intonation unless negative:

I gave him a bit. *I gave him a bit. I didn't give him a bit.

(In this respect it is like indefinite *some-any*:

I gave him some. *I gave him some. I didn't give him some.

It cannot be questioned: * *Which bit was biggest?* (Cf. other partitives: *which slice, which chunk, which spoonful.*) In short, *bit* behaves more like a member of the determiner system than like an ordinary noun.⁵

B72's second new syntactic idea is that of 'initiatory vs. elicitory questions' (ex. 55-59). A question like *Which túrn should we take?* 'occurs typically in situations where one initiates a discourse with a question'. A question like *Which túrn should we take?* requires a prior context such as *We should take one of these túrns.* The latter is used to 'elicit latent or withheld information'. I cannot imagine why question types should be invented for this purpose when what is involved is the de-accenting of repeated elements and the accenting of new elements, which is to be found everywhere:

If you have hundred dóllars, then spénd a hundred dollars.
 I had a héadache, but fortunately it wasn't a bád headache.
 I won't give it to Jóhn because I knów John.

To say that these questions 'elicit latent or withheld information' is only to say that there is such a thing as new information. B72's description puts the cart before the horse. It is inaccurate to say that an elicitory question 'presupposes that there is information being withheld'. What is presupposed is the information that is GIVEN. If you say *My dad gave me a pen,* you are not withholding the information that it is a good pen; but if I am interested in knowing, I will ask *How good a pen is it?* The point of the question, *good,* is accented; the repeated *pen* is de-accented, because THAT is what is presupposed.

Some incidental questions about B72: In ex. 7-8, I find the use of 'topic' confusing. If the topic is that about which information is given (topic vs. comment), then the examples are the reverse of what they should be:

Why are you coming indoors?—I'm coming indoors because the sún is shining (= because of the sún).

What is the state of the sun?—The sun is disappéaring.

In the first example, the topic is the coming indoors; the comment is the sunshine. In the second example, the topic introduced is the sun; the comment answers the question about it. If TOPIC is being used in some new sense, I suggest that it be given a different name. There is already enough terminological confusion.

Ex. 21, *Whose umbrella is dirty?*, is described as 'an optional version of 18', *Whose umbrella is dirty?* But in 18, *umbrella* does not have to be presupposed. In 21 it does.

Rule 24, since examples to which it has failed to apply (25c, 25d, 28) are starred or questioned, is presumably obligatory. But all these examples are possible, given a suitable context: *What are you sitting there musing about?—What kind of bók (présent) should a boy give a girl?*

The 'piling up of elements' (fn. 6) has already been mentioned in connection with L (my fn. 1). But B72's example can be stretched even beyond its present length, and de-accenting of everything can still be admitted after an early main

⁵ The Latin analogy, on which *partake of* is constructed, shows *part* simply swallowed up. Cf. Romance formations like Sp. *Le di de comer* 'I gave him to eat', where the head noun meaning 'bit' or 'something' has vanished.

accent: *What kind of books would you like your children to be interested in reading when they grow up?*

It is what B72's fn. 7 leaves unsaid that poses the real quandary for the NSR. The example *thirteen mén* is cited as a well-known case which, if it were more general—that is, if the altering of internal stresses were really widespread—would undercut the cyclic principle; 'however, since it is exceptional, it is taken to be the result of some sort of special rhythm rule'. In my view, the rule involved is a reality of English prosody which underlies the NSR itself; it is capable of altering not only the internal stresses of words like *thirtéen*, shifting them back, but those of terminal elements, shifting them in the opposite direction. The NSR is an attempt to overlay onto word stresses, and describe in stress terms, what is really a performative realized in the intonation. The English intonation that means 'I declare' is the one that has its main accent or accents followed by a terminal fall, and it is gradiently assertive: the deeper the fall, the more accents there are; the closer to the end the last one comes, and the sharper the contrasts are, the more assertive the intonation becomes. The contrast is sharpest when the main peak is as close as possible to the end and is followed by an abrupt fall. In excitedly emphatic speech the pressure toward the right frequently interferes with the lexical stresses of the words that fall there. I have recorded dozens of examples:

Students may resist their apparent arbitrariness.

They will follow up their enthusiasms.

I found great enthusiasms. (different speaker, different occasion)

They center around the sacrament of baptism.

It had oleander plants in there.

That doesn't mean that a lot of the stuff ... won't be available elsewhere.

This altered the program somewhat.

That's where the more tars and nicotines are.⁶

In some cases the effect has been to produce what needs to be recognized as a second lexical pronunciation: Bronstein (1960:246) notes *justifiable* and *inflúence*. Kenyon & Knott 1953 recognize two pronunciations for *irreconcilable*: *irré-concilable* and *irreconclable*; they mark the latter 'emphatic'.⁷ Given a forced choice, three other speakers and I revealed the same preferences in the following.

His rich uncle died and he found himself a millionaire.

The president of the college was able to finance the new library building because he hunted around and found himself a millionáire.

There is more redundancy in the first than in the second of these. I am sure that, historically, the backshift of stress on adjectives and nouns is due to their preponderant early position in the sentence, and the rightward shift in verbs to their late position. Similar pressures must have contributed to the terminal stresses in French and to the unemphatic-emphatic alternatives seen in Sp. *dígalo* and *digaló*. The NSR rule is a way of recognizing this performative in-

⁶ See Bolinger 1961 (94-5) for additional examples.

⁷ This is borne out in my own experience. On being asked *How do you reconcile these two letters?*, my reply was *They're irreconcilable*. The other pronunciation would have been *blah*.

tonation: the main accent goes, normally, on 'the last stressable constituent'. The intonational reality is, rather, that the speaker will put the main accent as far to the right as he dares, when assertive pressure is high; and he frequently dares to put it on a syllable (almost but not quite always one containing a full vowel) farther to the right than the recognized lexical stress. (This is one more reason why I insist on the distinction between ACCENT and STRESS. Stress belongs to the lexicon. Accent belongs to the utterance.)

At one point B72 draws what to me is the obvious conclusion. She observes (§3) that if certain of B&S's examples are accepted as disproof, they 'constitute evidence not only against the ordering hypothesis, but also against the possibility of any systematic structural explanation of stress assignment.'⁸ This is my feeling about the entire discussion. The distribution of sentence accents is not determined by syntactic structure but by semantic and emotional highlighting. Syntax is relevant indirectly in that some structures are more likely to be highlighted than others. But a description along these lines can only be in statistical terms. Accents should not be mashed down to the level of stresses, which are lexical abstractions. In their zeal to reverse Trager-Smith phonology, transformationalists have fallen into the same trap. Whether one tries to set up prosodic rules for syntax or syntactic rules for prosody, the result is the same: two domains are confused which should be kept apart.

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⁸ See also her remark (*ibid.*) that most of L's examples are not structure-dependent and hence are 'a counter-example to any purely grammatical theory'.