Catalan stress is iambic
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Abstract

Lexical stress in Catalan is free but is subject to important limitations. There is a three-syllable right-edge stress window, and a word with a heavy penult may not have proparoxytone stress. Most recent work on Catalan has claimed that its stress pattern is fundamentally trochaic (i.e. TROCHEE » IAMB). I argue that, if the basic stress pattern of Catalan is taken as iambic (IAMB » TROCHEE), and if we acknowledge the prosodic category colon (κ) standing above foot in the prosodic hierarchy (Green 1997) in the constraint ALIGNHEADκR, the above-mentioned limitations fall out automatically. The salience in the lexicon of words of trochaic shape, such as ‘taules ‘tables’ or ‘ferro ‘iron’ is a consequence of the fact that in all nouns and adjectives stress is required to fall on the stem and is excluded from inflectional affixes such as –es (F.PL) or –o (M.SG). Four constraints are shown to outrank faithfulness to limit the range of attested stress patterns: a prosodic markedness constraint WHC (a version of the Weight-to-Stress principle), a morphology-prosody markedness constraint excluding stress from inflectional suffixes, and two alignment constraints ALIGNHEADκRT, and IAMB. In nominals involving derivational affixation the prosodic constraint HEAD(PrWd) (3a), also ranked above faithfulness, together with ENDRULE-R AND *LAPSE, which are ranked below faithfulness, ensures that only the rightmost input stress surfaces.