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On the way towards an accentual norm
(exemplified by nouns)

SUMMARY

We have undertaken to describe the accentual reality encouraged primarily by the lack of consensus among linguists on whether or not the accentual norm exists and whether the codification of speech should be pursued at all. Both the comparative analysis of manuals and the common usage point to positive answers. Our analysis of the modern conceptions of accentual norm and codification (which can ultimately be reduced to three groups: a „conservative“, „moderate“ and „revolutionary“ one) has shown that there are much fewer differences between their representatives than could be inferred, due to the prevailing agreement amongst manuals (accentuated mainly by them).

The widespread accentual variants of the conversational functional style of the Standard Croatian language (which result from the fact that the ideal codified norm is hardly ever fully realised) are the cause of the current re-examination of the norm and of the relationship between norm and usage. Being on the same path, we have been discovering variations which can be described and categorised, following the phases of codification: from listing, via description, all the way to proposing a prescription. We have compared the corpus material to the one found in written sources and in practice (in educated, exemplar, model speakers) in order to detect stable and systematizable instances on the track of prescription. The acceptable and the accepted are the basic principles we have followed in the attempt to obliterate the bifurcation of usage and norm – in the time when the evolutionary reach of language stabilizes the norm by its flexibility. In general, it has become clear that occasional accentual variants have overcome the regional variation of language, becoming at the same time the ones that are used spontaneously by speakers. In the balance between these two, we have highlighted again the falling tone in a non-initial syllable, the loss of post-tonic lengths, as well as, partially, the simplification of accentual alternations in inflexional paradigms, and especially the pervasive analogical levelling (both among and within paradigms). Along with that, the lexical and typological hypercorrectness has arisen as the result of the imperfect acquisition of the accentual norm, namely the corpus of the unchangeable type has been spreading, in practice, into changeable accentual patterns (e. g. into the type *jùnāk – junáka*).

The standard language is comprised of the usage, norm and codex and the interaction within this trinity is growing more vigorous: a convergent relation between them has been confirmed by all modern Croatian language manuals, especially within a less strict approach to accent distribution rules. Nowadays, it cannot be claimed that standard speakers are those whose origin cannot be determined solely by their speech because, in modern speech situations, it could not be said with certainty where someone who pronounces e. g. *Austrâlija* or *Indonêzija* comes from, although these are not the neutral variants. Since speakers tend to equate thoughts and language expression, every instance of „artificial“ pronunciation (*Melànêzija*, *poljòprivreda*), which has not been attested either in the speaker's vernacular (regardless of the type to which it belongs) or in the language of their ideal, would disrupt the harmony of the thought and expression. Thus, the accent distribution rules have often acted as the criterion for the definition of the neutral spoken standard, however it is the analysis of lexical and paradigmatical accent that has shown that such a definition cannot be limited to these rules alone. For instance, variants such as *kljúčevi* and *pròdor* are increasingly common but have not been granted equal status with variants *kljùčevi*, *pròdor*. Obviously, language usage is not uniform in the whole speech area and it is fairly clear where it is said *mandòlīna* and where *mandolīna*. Variants such as *u mladòsti* are perceived as dialectal at present, and those like *u govòru* are considered bookish, although no clear-cut borders can be drawn here either. Based on planned codification, the contemporary manuals are on the way to a more descriptive approach than was the case in the last century. Today, more attention is paid to extralinguistic factors (and the widespreadness principle) in codification, whereby it is clear that the inherent features of the accentual system cannot be ignored either. Codification encroaches on the system and makes adjustments to it (as can be seen in the relationship between the principle of systematism and the distributional rules) because the diffusional periphery of the standard has endangered its stable core. The accents in the language use are the result of the variability of the standard language which is comprised in the postulate of the flexible stability of the standard, and which of course, also exists in accentuation.

Where there is no uniformity, we have offered possible solutions: in lexical doublets, paradigmatical ambiguities and typological classification. We define **general** rules (the ones that refer to the distribution of the accentual inventory and those that are conditioned by morphological and word-formational features – general paradigmatic, which of course, permeate the accentual norms as well, resulting from the phonemic structure of words) and an accentual **typology** which arises out of all this.

Lexical variants are most often motivated exactly by the ambiguous accent distribution rules, but also by more recent tendencies in noun derivation and composition. The first has been well represented in literature and it is clear that non-initial falling accents are accepted in compounds, loan-words, foreign proper names and acronyms when spelt out, as well as in paradigmatic accentuation, e. g. Gen. pl. of nouns with the mobile *a* and a rising accent in other case forms, in Voc. sg., in typological patterns (*defilê* – *defilëa*). Normative manuals refute increasingly the thesis of the strictness of the accent codex by accepting widespread variants, even those that disagree with the classical distributional rules, which have included exceptions anyway since the first attempts of codification (starting from Karadžić, succeeded by Daničić and Maretić). In addition, we have seen that manuals are not in accord even regarding the number of accents a word can have (taking into account secondary automatic accents as well), the accentuation of semi-compounds (we maintain that it corresponds to the accentuation of their constituents), the frequency of the leftward shift of accent (in professional speakers, the noun corpus is still unaffected), the status of post-accentual length on the lexical level (we divide them in two groups: those that are lost in inflection and those that are preserved) etc.

Our further research has shown that the accentual situation is not disputable in all lexemes; in most cases the accentuation is stable (e. g. in derivation with approximately a hundred suffixes), and where variants have been found (derivatives with the suffixes *-(a)c*, *-(a)k*, *-āk*, *-ār*, *-ba*, *-ce*, *-če*, *-ica*, *-ić*, *-ik*, *-ina*, *-īšte*, *-je*, *-ka*, *-l(a)c*, *-nja*, *-o*, *-or*, *-telj*, *-ø*) we describe the organisation of doublets. A distinct group consists of nouns derived with suffixes *-ant*, *-ij*, *-ist*, *-ent*, *-ljant*, *-or* which are accentually stable in manuals, but the spread of non-initial falling accents into more formal registers as well has encouraged certain grammarians and lexicographers to start marking the suffix with a falling accent. However, future manuals are expected to take a clear stance towards the afore-mentioned prosodic phenomena and to apply systematically the principles that they advocate, which is not the case presently. The accentuation of compounds is not characterized by sheer confusion either; there are constants there which can be described and which have been offered for the most part (e. g. in *Tvorba riječi* by S. Babić) and attested in use and in other manuals (with the suffixes *-a*, *-(a)c*, *-āč*, *-āš*, *-ica*, *-ina*, *-telj*). Slightly more variation is found in compounds with the suffixes *-ja*, *-je*, *-īk*, *-nīk*, *-ka*, *-ø*. A comparative analysis has made it obvious that the shift from the linking vowel (to the left or right) is becoming more and more frequent and is finding its way into normative books. There is no accord amongst manuals and three things can be deduced from the present situation: first, in some cases the accent on the linking vowel/medial syllable is

more frequent than the initial accent (chiefly in the *Tvorba riječi*); second, there are manuals which prefer the initial accent (the best representative of this being the *Hrvatski jezični savjetnik*) and third, the most common practice is finding a middle road by accepting occasionally both variants (e. g. in the *Riječnik hrvatskoga jezika*, published by the Leksikografski zavod, and in the monography *Naglasak u hrvatskome književnom jeziku*). The compromise solution appears to be the best, as long as it is the one that applies the selected models systematically, in the way set by the current development. Placing the accent on the linking vowel is alive in language use in a part of the corpus (especially in derivatives with the suffixes *-ja*, *-je*, *-ka*) so it definitely should remain one of the doublets. It is lexicographers' duty to organize the accentual data which are prescribed in grammars, as well as attested in language use.

In the chapter on general paradigmatic accentuation we have drawn a line between general (predictable) and specific rules. The general accents (i.e. alternations) are predictable because they are constant in inflexion, not requiring the introduction of a new pattern. The general accentual norm, conditioned morphologically and derivationally, is considered to include those accentual rules that assign the accent in morphological paradigms and in word formation regardless of the accent of the basic form. Our analysis has defined the following general accentual paradigm constants: first, lengthening before a consonant cluster containing a sonorant; second, compensatory shortening of syllables (e. g. in neuter nouns ending in *-ø* before *-et/-en-*); third, the accent of certain case forms: **Voc. sg.** (the initial falling accent is dominant), **Loc. sg.** (distinguished by a rising tone in monosyllabic, some disyllabic and trisyllabic inanimate or abstract masculine type *a* nouns and feminine type *i* nouns with a falling intonation in the stem), **Nom. pl.** („compensatory shortening“ before the plural morpheme *-ov/-ev-*, and the monosyllables with the metatony of the Nom. sg. accent into the long rising accent have a variant Nom. pl. under the influence of the so-called continental type of accentuation), **Gen. pl.** (the falling tone prevails, and we have provided an overview of accentual constants in seven points), **Dat/Loc/Inst. pl.** (identical to the Gen. pl. accent in nouns ending in *-ī* and *-ijū*). We offer examples of the paradigms involving a change of the accent of the basic form in accordance with the described rules (as it is in: *grād – u grādu – grādovi*; *òko – òči – òčijū*; *stvâr – stvâri – stvârī*; *dijéte – djèteta*; *prâse – prâseta*; *čeljáde – čeljàdeta*; *lòvac/lóvac – lóvca – lóvci*; *pàlac – pâlca – pâlčevi*) as patterns of the type II – the predictably changeable type. Since these alternations are predictable, we have excluded these paradigms from the („real“) changeable type (type III).

In the chapter on the morphological accent, we have also addressed the question of the retraction of accent to a proclitic. The common opinion is that this retraction (especially in nominals) is regionally marked or obsolete, although it was, not so long ago, considered desirable. Yet, not all retractions are unusual and stylistically marked, especially the ones that can be found in non-Neo-Štokavian idioms, and not every lack of retraction is stylistically neutral either. In speech practice, the accent is still realised on the proclitic in certain cases, however, the lack of retraction is also tolerated.

Typological rules are those that are valid only for types and units smaller than types. An accentual type is a part of the language as a system concretized by codification. The main criterion for the classification of all parts of speech into accentual types adopted in modern accentological works is the distribution of prosodic features – tone, length and place of stress – and their alternations in inflectional paradigms. The accentual types (I, II, III) branch out further only according to accentual characteristics, regardless of the phonological (the number of syllables) and morphological (the inflectional type or gender) features of a word. For instance, the words falling within the unchangeable type (type I) can be, for the sake of clarity, classified into four sub-types – each with one of the four accents, or, as we have done, into two sub-types – with lengths typical of particular case endings and other posttonic lengths. In lexicographic works, a symbol denoting unchangeability would suffice, which would point unambiguously to the fact that the accent is constant throughout the paradigm (identical accentual behaviour is observed in these nouns: *národ*, *podnáslov*, *proturázlog*, *veleposlánstvo*, *bibliotekárstvo*, *trodimenzióálnōst*, *poluintelektuálac*, *internacionalizácija*; *sèlo*, *domàcin*, *akadèmik*, *računovòdstvo*, *vjeroučiteljica*, *evolucionizam*, *antiimperijalizam*, *devetnaestogodišnjàkinja*; *jârbol*, *bràtić* – i. e. regardless of the place of stress, the gender of the noun or its inflectional class). In contemporary dictionaries, the accentual unchangeability is indicated by a grammatical note which excludes the stem (e. g. *sèlo*, *-a*), but our analysis has demonstrated that this is not applied systematically either so we maintain that a note referring to accentual (un)changeability should be introduced in future lexicographic publications.

Thus, the unchangeable accentual type (type I) refers to words which preserve the accent of the basic form/variant throughout the paradigm (*národ* – *národa*); occasionally, the alternations of prosodic elements predictable from the general rules (e. g. phonemic: *kľinac* – *kľinci*) are also included here, but we have classified this kind of alternations as a distinct type (type II). The „real“ changeable type (type III) is comprised of words which are characterised by an accentual pattern (the number of patterns is limited) and which show alternations that

are deemed specific. Linguistic economy is not a concept which is always readily applicable in accentual typology, since accentual alternations are at times preserved in order to level out variants in the same form (rather than within a paradigm), this is observable particularly in Gen. pl. of nouns (*dòlovi – dòlōvā; vòlovi – vòlōvā*). In the light of new evidence, we have offered a list of patterns which is the result of a comparative analysis and the recognised developmental trends. The alternations that can be predicted from the general paradigmatic rules have been excluded from the paradigmatic patterns, and those that have not been attested in practice and in the majority of manuals, are limited within the corpus (attempting to avoid „atomization“ of the language material) or do not correspond with the developmental trends (e. g. with the trend of accentual levelling) have also been ignored in this outline. The temporal stratification of language and the introduction of special notes in general paradigmatic rules can render the list even more concise. The number of alternations has been further decreased by the extended harmonization of the accent in inflexion (for instance in singular cases *gláva – glávi, glâvi; vòda – vòdi, vòdi*). We have taken into account convenience, clarity and usability, which had long been pointed out by language theorists (S. Babić and B. Finka), and eventually presented 17 patterns (with the relevant corpus, which is not hermetic) upon which one can then build a simple image of the accentual alternations in the paradigm: *ròk – ròkovi; gròš – gròša – gròševi; vâl – válovi; stúp – stúpa – stúpovi/stùpovi/stüpovi; gláva – glávi/glâvi – glâvu – glâve; vòda – vòdu – vòde; pòlje – pòlja/pòlja; sèlo – sèla/sèla; lònac – lònaci; nòc – nòci; rôg – ròga – rògovi/rògovi; stòl – stòla – stòlovi; žìvot – žìvòti; prèzime – prezimèna; ràme – ramèna; vrijéme – vrèmena – vremèna; jùnāk – junáci*. The nouns that belong to the patterns *pòlje – pòlja* and *sèlo – sèla* are on the path towards the unchangeable type.

The purpose of a clear accentual typology of nouns is twofold: easier learning and teaching of accentuation – which is still largely ignored in teaching, and a simpler, clearer and more complete representation of the accentual-morphological data in lexical entries of dictionaries. First of all, we wish to build a foundation for an accentual manual of the Croatian language, including a glossary of ambiguous accentual variants. Prior to this, it was crucial to detect all forms of accentual behaviour, bring them into relation with one another, classify them into types and mark these with unambiguous symbols (thus avoiding listing all forms with different accents in the lexical entry), and finally this should also be applied in a language manual. An example of possible application is available at the end of this book, in the Word index (*Kazalo riječi*).