Stress in Prefixed Disyllabic Verb/Noun Pairs
Véronique Abasq, Quentin Dabouis, Elodie Descloux, Jean-Michel Fournier, Pierre Fournier, Isabelle Girard, Marjolaine Martin, Sophie Vanhoutte

To cite this version:
Véronique Abasq, Quentin Dabouis, Elodie Descloux, Jean-Michel Fournier, Pierre Fournier, et al.. Stress in Prefixed Disyllabic Verb/Noun Pairs. 20th Manchester Phonology Meeting, May 2012, Manchester, United Kingdom. hal-01346880

HAL Id: hal-01346880
https://hal.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-01346880
Submitted on 23 Jul 2016

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Aims

An intriguing stress behaviour — three types:
- Verb: V /01/ and N /01/ e.g. control ± 60 %
- Alternating: V /10/ and N /10/ e.g. record ± 30 %
- Nominal: V /10/ and N /10/ e.g. access ± 10 %

but no definite account of their distribution.

The aim of this poster is to test out the role of frequency and vowel quality (full versus reduced).

Source corpus: LLL Database

LLL Database of the pronunciation of lexical units in Southern British English, General American English and Australian English, based on three reference dictionaries:
- Longman Pronunciation Dictionary
- Cambridge English Pronouncing Dictionary
- Macquarie Dictionary

For each entry, it contains its spelling, its pronunciations and stress patterns in the three varieties (including variants), its category/ies, its morphology, its meaning, its lexical status, and etymology information.

Verb/Noun pairs corpus

- Historically prefixed pairs
- COCAE frequency of Verb and Noun superior to 0.5 per 1 million
- Removal of unclear and/or heterogeneous cases:
  - Mixed frequencies (homonyms):
  - Abstract, second…
  - Semantically separable structures: dislike, overlook...
  - Mixed category status of the first element: bypass, download...

Final corpus: 186 disyllabic prefixed verb/noun pairs

Context / previous study: verbs stress behaviour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>/V/</th>
<th>/U/</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>verb</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>noun</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Variation

EPD and LPD consistency:
- EPD: 1 difference only, present v. (reversed variants)
- US: 3 verbs, accent, detail, rebound

Frequency

Distribution of stress types according to relative frequency (verb in mean):

Vowel quality and stress type

Hypothesis: does a full vowel in the unstressed syllable imply an alternating type?

Vowel quality and stress variants

Hypothesis: does a full vowel in the unstressed syllable imply the existence of a stress variant?

Further observations

If the quality of the vowel does not determine stress behaviour in both cases, we observe a similarity that calls for an explanation: the proportion of full vowels, whether as only pronunciation or as a variant, is higher in the alternating type than in the nominal and verbal types, and is also higher when there exists a stress variant than in the whole corpus.

It seems to us that, if the quality of the vowels is not a determining factor for stress, the reverse effect is what accounts for the phenomenon: the existence of a stressed counterpart favours the preservation of a full vowel in unstressed position.

References


Corpus Of Contemporary American English, Mark Davies: http://www.americancorpus.org

Morphological structure is indeed the key factor of stress assignment.

Vowel quality and stress assignment

Hypothesis: does a full vowel in the unstressed syllable imply an alternating type?

Vowel quality and stress assignment

Hypothesis: does a full vowel in the unstressed syllable imply the existence of a stress variant?

LLL work on verbs stress


