CLE SEMINAR SERIES-III

Topic: Marking of Secondary Stress in Urdu Speech Corpus

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Abstract

Stress is one of the suprasegmental features of language along with intonation and rhythm. Some languages take only one stress per word, i.e. Mohawk and Aguacatec. Literature review shows that in many languages, words may have more than one stress. In such cases, the most prominent stress is the primary stress (indicated by σ') while other stresses are subsidiary or secondary (σ˛). The stress literature is rife with examples of languages with symmetrical stress patterns. For example, in Chimalapa Zoque (Knudson 1975), primary stress falls on the penultimate syllable and secondary stress falls on the initial syllable. According to a dictionary-based estimate by Mattys (2000:254), 41% of all English words have at least one secondarily stressed syllable. In Khalkha Mongolian(Walker 1997), primary and secondary stress assignment is driven by weight. Primary stress falls on the rightmost heavy syllable in the word and in the words with more than one heavy syllable; secondary stress falls on all heavy syllables not bearing primary stress. There are languages in which primary and secondary stresses behave differently or asymmetrically with respect to a particular phonological process. For example, in Wargamay (Dixon 1981), only primary stressed syllables undergo vowel lengthening while secondary stressed syllables do not. Similarly, in Huariapano (Parker 1994, 1998), while weight influences primary stress assignment, it does not influence secondary stress assignment. During stress marking on Urdu language, secondary stress is observed in bi/tri or polysyllabic words. Sometimes, certain syllable in a word is less prominent than primary stressed syllable and more prominent than unstressed syllable. Therefore, stress should be marked on three levels; (1) primary stressed; (2) secondary stressed and (3) unstressed.