# Grammatik i fokus
## *Festskrift till Christer Platzack*
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# Grammar in focus
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# What's in a name? Syntactic and asyntactic accentuation in Dutch

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I have always considered Christer Platzack's family name, perhaps incorrectly, to be of West-Germanic extraction. It has what looks like a cognate form in the Dutch word *platzak* 'broke, out of money', a compound of the adjective *plat* 'flat' and the noun *zak* 'bag, pocket'. To what extent this is correct I will leave for Christer, whose avid curiosity in all matters linguistic must have led him to ponder the provenance of his own name. I will proceed, however, on the assumption that certain little studied aspects of Dutch onomasiology and accentuation connected to the *Platzack-platzak* alternation have so far escaped his attention.

Remarkably, the name *Platzack* and the compound *platzak* show different stress patterns, as illustrated in (1).

(1)   a.   PLATzack                          b.   platZAK

This is reminiscent of Van den Toorn's (1980) observation of a similar accentuation pattern with family names derived from place names (2):

(2)   a.   MOERdijk   (family name)      b.   moerDIJK       (place name)

The name *moerdijk* seems a compound (involving *dijk* 'dyke'), and it can be shown that family names derived from compounds in Dutch productively display the stress shift of the *Platzack-platzak* pair in (1):

(3)   a.   goed-KOOP      'cheap'         >    GOEDkoop
            good-buy
      b.   ooster-BEEK    'east brook'    >    OOSterbeek
            east-brook

Van den Toorn does not note the connection with compounds, but he correctly mentions that the pattern in (2) is also present with family names derived from phrases:

(4)   vroeg  in de  WEI                    >    VROEGindewei
      early   in the  meadow

This pattern can be shown to be entirely productive. Next to the prepositional phrase in (4) we find many others, as in (5a), as well as number phrases (5b),

adjective phrases (5c), noun phrases (5d), conjunction phrases (5e), and adverb phrases (5f):

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (5) | a. | zonder LAND | > | ZONderland | |
| | | without land | | | |
| | b. | vijf EIken | > | van VIJFeiken | |
| | | five oaks | | | |
| | c. | jonge VOS | > | JONGevos | |
| | | young fox | | | |
| | d. | huis in het VELD | > | HUIS in 't veld | |
| | | house in the field | | | |
| | e. | boter en BROOD | > | BOterenbrood | |
| | | butter and bread | | | |
| | f. | naakt geBOren | > | NAAKTgeboren | |
| | | naked born | | | |

What explains this stress shift pattern?

One might think that shifted stress is a linguistic sign, telling us that we are dealing with a name. But several observations argue against such an approach. First, compounds headed by a noun show a strong-weak pattern, but the names derived from those compounds do not shift to a weak-strong accentuation:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (6) | a. | VELD-man | 'field man' | > | VELDman |
| | | field-man | | | |
| | b. | ELS-tak | 'alder branch' | > | ELStak |
| | | alder-branch | | | |

Secondly, exotic family names such as *pasTOOR*, *taBAK* show the same stress pattern as the corresponding nouns (*pastoor* 'priest', *tabak* 'tobacco'). Also, latinized names show a productive stress shift to the (ante)penultimate, showing initial stress is not a tell-tale sign of name status:

(7)  JANsen  >  janSEnius          van BAARle  >  barLAEus

More tellingly, names that clearly show some internal structure obey stress rules that seem entirely regular. This can be observed with East Netherlandic family names derived from the names of farmhouses which are distinguished by a diacritic adjective (like *new, old, large, small*):

(8)  olde DAALhuis, klein GUNnewiek
     old           little

In these family names the stress is on the second member, as it is in adjective-noun combinations more generally (see (5c)). Similarly in complex names such as (9a) and combined names (i.e. combinations of a husband's and a maiden name) such as (9b):

(9)  a.  prinsen GEERligs, van limburg STIrum
     b.  jansen-de BOER, de boer-JANsen.

The stress pattern in complex and combined names is familiar from other juxtapositions, such as (10), and reveals what I take to be an important generalization about accentuation.

(10) a.  luitenant-koloNEL          'wing commander'
         lieutenant-colonel
     b.  componist-TEKSTschrijver   'composer/lyricist'
         composer-lyricist

The generalization is:

(11)  When α merges with β yielding <α,β>, β is accentually marked

The rule in (11) is obviously reminiscent of the Nuclear Stress Rule of Chomsky & Halle (1968:91), especially in its application to syntactic structure building processes as discussed in Bresnan (1971), Cinque (1993), and Zubizarreta (1998:43). But it differs from these proposals in taking stress assignment to be a function of the independently needed operation Merge (for which see Chomsky 2001:3), i.e., it takes a strictly derivational approach (in line with Epstein 1999).

Adopting (11), the stress pattern of the compounds *platzak* 'broke' and *goedkoop* 'cheap' in (1b)/(3b) follows automatically on the assumption that *plat* is merged with *zak* and *goed* with *koop*. Conversely, the fact that the corresponding family names *Platzack* and *Goedkoop* show a different stress pattern indicates that these names are not felt to be the result of Merge, but are essentially atomic. Similarly, we may assume that the various phrases in (4) and (5), but not the family names derived from them, owe their stress patterns to the circumstance that these phrases are the result of straightforward applications of Merge (i.e. without movements to disturb the basic pattern). In the more complex cases, such as (4) and (5d), it can be seen that rule (11), applied at each instance of Merge, yields the same result as Cinque's (1993:245) null theory where stress reflects depth of embedding. Again, the corresponding family names betray by their deviating stress pattern not to be analyzable in terms of a sequence of Merge operations: they are felt to be atomic and are assigned stress independently of the rule in (11), i.e. in an asyntactic way. The facts in (8)-(9), then, show that names are not inherently unstructured: when names are (felt to be) merged, stress is assigned according to the rule in (11).

These seemingly innocent observations, then, lead to the conclusion that we must distinguish two mechanisms of accentuation: syntactic accentuation as

a function of the syntactic (and morphological) structure building operation Merge, and asyntactic accentuation (for the extension of syntactic stress assignment to morphology, see also Cinque 1993, section 9 and Josefsson 1998, among others). The latter can be seen as a residual accentuation mechanism, in elements that are felt to be syntactically (morphologically) atomic, such as names. The regularities of the asyntactic mechanism are to be expressed in terms of phonology, and we expect languages to differ in this respect. It seems that the residual accentuation mechanism in Dutch has preserved the basic Germanic property of stress assignment to the initial syllable (see Boer 1924:17, Prokosch 1939:118, Voyles 1992:41f), but other rules apply in words from exotic extraction (such as *pastoor* 'priest' and *tabak* 'tobacco' above) and new coinages (see Kager 1989, chapter 4). (In connection with this it may be noted that indigenous first names such as *BENno*, *HERman*, *LOdewijk* have initial stress, but exotic names like *louIS* and latinizations like *herMAnus* do not.)

The rule in (11) is not just based on the stress shift phenomenon with family names: the basic weak-strong accentuation can be witnessed in a range of juxtaposition phenomena, some of which are not generally considered to be of a linguistic nature. These involve sports results (12a), digit sequences (12b), complex numbers (12c), time indications (12d), amount indications (12e), math formulas (12f), reduplications (12g), coordinations (12h), etc.

(12)  a.  1-1        één-ÉÉN              'one-one'
      b.  1-3-2      één-drie-TWEE        'one, two, three'
      c.  21         één-en-TWINtig       lit. one and twenty
      d.  1:30       half-TWEE            lit. half two
      e.  2,50       twee-VIJFtig         'two fifty'
      f.  1+1=2      één en één is TWEE   lit. one and one is two
      g.  zozo       zo-ZO                'so-so'
      h.  a en b     a en BÉ              'a and b'

Deviations from this stress pattern, if at all possible, are judged to be contrastive (very common in counting, yielding *ÉÉNentwintig* for (12c), but still marked). All these phenomena are accounted for by (11).

It would seem that Cinque's (1993) generalization according to which stress is assigned to the (most deeply embedded) complement likewise follows from (11), suggesting that accentuation is not sensitive to the head-complement distinction but to the ordering (in the sense of an ordered pair) of juxtaposed (merged) elements. Unmarked focus, then, as in (13a), results from the application of (11) to the pair <loves, Mary>, whereas marked (contrastive) focus (13b) results from reversing (11):

(13)  a.   John [ loves MARY ]
      b.   John [ LOVES Mary ]

As is well known, (13a) has a range of interpretations, in which *Mary*, the VP *loves Mary*, and even the entire sentence *John loves Mary* can be in focus (Chomsky 1971). This can now be seen as the interpretive effect of a harmonious sequence of applications of (11), in tandem with the sequence of applications of Merge. In (13b), such 'focus projection' is impossible (only *loves* can be in focus), suggesting that a reversal of (11) at some point in the derivation has the effect that further Merge operations, yielding larger structure, are no longer accompanied by the stress assignment mechanism of (11).

In languages like Dutch and German, a noun phrase complement appears nonadjacent to the verb of which it is the internal argument (i.e., it has been moved and merged anew). It has been assumed, incorrectly, that movement leads to, or is even caused by, defocusing of the noun phrase. In actual fact, it can be shown that displacement *preserves* the unmarked stress pattern (i.e., with stress on the displaced complement), but in many cases object displacement across sentence adverbs and negation will be accompanied by a marked stress pattern (focusing on the verb, for instance), because the object refers to a discourse-familiar entity, which bars application of the unmarked stress assignment mechanism (11). In the confines of this paper I must refer the reader elsewhere (Zwart 1997:92) for more extensive discussion of this point, which had to be raised in order to understand the application of (11) in the domain of morphology.

With compounds headed by a noun, we note that the basic weak-strong pattern is reversed (cf. (6)). If (11) has the wide application suggested here, it must be the case that the stressed component preceding the head noun is in fact merged with the head noun as its complement (i.e., as the second member of the ordered pair yielded by Merge). In other words, head-final compounds involve reordering (movement), as suggested already in Kayne (1994:41), with preservation of the accentuation properties. Thus, (6a) *veldman* is derived as in (14):

(14)  [ VELD$_i$  [ man      $t_i$ ]]

The movement illustrated in (14) might be mediated by the binding morpheme that we see in Germanic compounds such as *kat-te-gat* 'cat's hole', discussed in Josefsson (1998:59ff) and Hoekstra (1995). Consequently, as we have seen, noun-headed compounds and family names derived from compounds share the same stress pattern (assuming, as in the preceding paragraph, that displacement does not affect the output of the stress assignment rule in (11)).

Finally we may return to the stress alternation between place names and family names in (2). The place name *moerDIJK*, which looks like a compound,

is strange, since it lacks the strong-weak pattern associated with noun headed compounds in Dutch. Place names show a much more varied accentuation pattern than person names. It is not uncommon for place names derived from phrases to retain the phrasal stress pattern, suggesting that place names are not necessarily felt to be atomic (examples *hoogeVEEN* 'high moor', *uitHUIzen* 'out [of] houses', *cadier en KEER* [a coordination of two place names yielding a new one]), but the reverse is also found (*DRIEbergen < drie BERgen* 'three mountains', *Overflakkee < over flakKEE* 'across the Flakkee [a body of water]'). Place names derived from compounds also show a mixed picture (next to the type *moerDIJK*, which seems very common, we find cases like *ZANDvoort* '< sandy crossing'). I suspect that cases like *DRIEbergen* and *ZANDvoort* are to be analyzed in the same way as person names, i.e., they are felt to be atomic and receive the asyntactic Germanic initial stress. On the other hand, the types *hoogeVEEN* and *moerDIJK* are felt to be structured and are stressed in accordance with rule (11). What is special about the type *moerDIJK*, then, is that it appears to be a compound without the movement of the complement illustrated in (14), which characterizes noun headed compounds in Dutch. In other words, some place names (like *moerDIJK*) seem to be the result of Merge, but none of Merge *and* Move, whereas person names (and other place names) are fully asyntactic (unless they are combined or complex, as in (8)-(9)).

It would be interesting to see if the special accentuation patterns of names in other languages (e.g. Sezer 1981 for Turkish) could be accounted for in a similar way as discussed here for Dutch.

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