Testing Parameters for Stress Placement: The Case of Dissyllabic Prefixed Verb/Noun Pairs
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Dissyllabic prefixed verb/noun pairs present an intriguing stress behaviour which can be divided into three types:
- **Verbal:** $V\/10$ and $N\/10$ e.g. control $\pm 6\%$
- **Alternating:** $V\/10$ and $N\/10$ e.g. record $\pm 30\%$
- **Nominal:** $V\/10$ and $N\/10$ e.g. access $\pm 10\%$

The relative share of the nominal type increases as noun relative frequency increases, which seems to confirm the hypothesis.

- However, the verbal type distribution contradicts this first impression: except when noun relative frequency is high, the share of the verbal type does not vary according to verb relative frequency.
- The alternating type curve does not confirm the hypothesis either, but is also quite intriguing: why would nouns, failing to force their pattern onto relatively more frequent verbs, would at the same time develop a growing resistance to stress shift? We have no suggestion so far.

**Does stress type depend on relative frequency?**

**Relative Frequency**

- Nouns: 1277, 74%, 63, 26%, 14, 15% (64)
- Compounds: 245, 85%, 44, 15%, 26 (289)
- Prefixes: 92, 7%, 115, 20%, 33, 20% (720)
- Nouns: 1727, 47%, 786, 28%, 235, 8% (2549)

**Version**

- Nouns: 15 (14%), 20 (5%, 12 (6%) (85%)
- Nouns: 12 (47%), 16 (8%), 8 (2%) (27%)
- Nouns: 40 (84%), 40 (89), 8 (8%) (73%)

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**Final syllable weight hypothesis**

- **Verbal:** 6, 24, 10, 60, 11
- **Alternating:** 3, 19, 3, 22, 5
- **Nominal:** 12, 5, 1, 0, 4

There seems to be a correlation between the weight of the final syllable and the stress type of the pairs: the heavier the final syllable, the more predominant the verbal type.

A long vowel ($V$) in the final syllable is most often associated with late stressing. The number of consonants in the coda does not seem to play a significant role in this context.

**Short vowel:** $C_{v}$ becomes significant, though less than long vowels as evidenced by the proportion of alternating pairs ($2^{nd}$ column). $VC$ is the only structure where the nominal type is predominant. However, these observations might be due to the specific nature of this corpus: Fournier’s 2010 study on syllable weight showed that it is not significant for stress placement among a corpus of 5887 dissyllabic roots.

**Further considerations**

- **Massive domination of the verbal model amongst dissyllabic prefixed units:**
  - Nouns: 101, 347 (81%), 14 (1%)
  - Verbs: 425 (9%), 1032 (77%)
- **Non-prefix:** 4416 (91%), 313 (23%)

### Glossary
- **Nominal:** The case of word stress.
- **Verbal:** The cases of word stress.
- **Nominal:** The cases of word stress.

### References

### Notes
- The parameters regulating English stress are not consensus: particularly in the case of verb prefixes. However, Descloux et al. (2010) showed that it is actually a decisive factor for stress placement in verbs as they are nearly never stressed on their prefixes, unlike nouns.

### Conversion

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