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Compound accent patterns in some dialects of Southern Swedish

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Abstract

This is a study about the accent pattern of compound words in the Southern Swedish variety. This pattern differs from Standard Swedish in that the first element of the compound may retain Accent I, whereas the standard dialect invariably gets Accent II. Bruce (1974) showed that this accent shift blocking varied with area and type of compound. The present study deals with four dialects of Southern Swedish using the recently collected dialect material from SWEDIA 2000 and finds that the blocking still is prevalent in Bara, Löderup and Norra Rörum, while it is virtually nonexistent in Broby.

Introduction

In Swedish, two degrees of tonal prominence are generally recognized: word accents and focus. Swedish has two word accents that mainly are realized by different F₀ movements in relation to the stressed syllable. The word accents are primarily lexical, and both can thus co-occur with semantic or phrasal focus, resulting in a focal accent that is realized by slightly alternate patterns of F₀ movements. The word and focal accent patterns are also one of the major characteristics of the differences between Swedish dialects. A case in point is compound words, where the accent pattern is different in Southern and Standard Swedish. Compound forming is highly productive in Swedish. For a more detailed account of non-accentual properties of Swedish compounds, see, e.g. Liljestränd (1993).

Compound words, compound stress and lexical phrase stress

With compound words we mean words that have the compound stress pattern, i.e., one primary stressed syllable and one secondary stressed syllable. The primary stress usually falls on the leftmost element of the compound, and the secondary stress on the rightmost element. These words include: (1) real compounds (combination of two or more simple words), (2) derivatives (formed by adding stressable affixes) and (3) formal compounds (words that have the compound stress pattern but cannot be analyzed into independent morphemes)

- (1) *järnväg, stoppskylt, trafikljus*
- (2) *mångkulturell, trippelseger, läraktig*
- (3) *aborre, alibi, ingefära, rädisa*

Some words may be compounds morphologically, but do not have the compound stress pattern. Instead they receive lexical phrase stress, which is right dominant (stressed on the last element). This occurs when the suffix attracts the primary stress (4). Furthermore, some geographical suffixes (5) seem to repel secondary stress, as well as the suffixes in (6).

- (4) *-al, -inna: central, lärarinna*
- (5) *-land, -stad: Holland, Halmstad*
- (6) *-dag, -bär, -man: måndag, vinbär, länsman*

The accent pattern of compound words

In Standard Swedish, compound words receive Accent II on the domain starting on the primarily stressed syllable. This means that words having Accent I (or lacking Accent II) in isolation are assigned Accent II. This rule is applied almost indifferently; only in cases like (5) and (6), the first element retains its word accent. In Southern Swedish, the pattern is different. Accent I words acting as first elements in compounds may resist the accent shift, with the result that the compound word has Accent I. Bruce (1973) states the rules governing this resistance (7)-(8)¹. Compounds with Accent II occur in the cases in (9). Exceptions to (9b) exist, e.g. color adjectives and numerals: *svårtvitt*, *trérummare*.

- (7) Words with monosyllabic first element receive Accent I when:
- (a) directly followed by an unstressed syllable in the second element: *gáspedal*, *stórpublik*, *cúpfinal*
 - (b) directly followed by adjoining s: *tv'ångsmatning*, *bórdsplacering*
 - (c) the second element is semantically more related to the following elements than the first: *bárndaghem*, *bússhållplats*
- (8) Words with polysyllabic first element receive Accent I when:
- (a) finally stressed: *totálkatastrof*, *finálbetoning*
 - (b) penultimate (or earlier) stress and having Accent I: *bándyboll*, *pánsarhögskola*
- (9) First element of compound receives Accent II when:
- (a) already having accent II: *gåmmalmodig*, *j`ättefin*
 - (b) monosyllabic directly followed by a stressed syllable: *måtsal*, *störstad*, *flèrstämmig*

In a follow-up study, Bruce (1974) checks the validity of these rules in the dialects of Malmö, Kristianstad and Halmstad (all in Southern Sweden). The cases in (9) behaved as expected, and for the other types the results are summarized in Table 1. Based on these results, Bruce suggests a 'ranking hypothesis' where the types are ordered on the basis of their ability to resist Accent II in compounds. The ranking is (8b) > (7b) > (8a) > (7a) > (7c).

Table 1. Occurrence of accent shifts in different dialects in Bruce (1974).

Type	Example	Malmö	K-stad	H-stad
(7a)	<i>gáspedal</i>	no	yes	yes
(7b)	<i>tv'ångsmatning</i>	no	no	yes-no
(7c)	<i>bússhållplats</i>	no	yes	yes
(8a)	<i>finálbetoning</i>	no	yes(no)	yes
(8b)	<i>bándyboll</i>	no	no	no

Aim of present study, research questions

Since a rather considerable amount of time has passed since this study, and one common phenomenon of dialects is adaptation to the standard language, it would be interesting to see what the situation is today. The recent research project SWEDIA 2000 aims to collect speech data of many different dialects of Swedish. This material contains compound words, and thus allows us to investigate the matter. Unfortunately, the material in Swedia has limitations, so all the compound types can not be tested. It is, however, possible to examine the accent pattern of the type (8b), which has the highest ranking in Bruce's hierarchy. The specific question we shall try to answer in this study is: How does the realization of compound accentuation vary depending on age, gender and dialect? A more general question is how the compound accentuation of today relates to the findings of Bruce (1974).

Methodology

Data description

In this study, we limited ourselves to the dialects of Skåne (Scania). They are the southernmost dialects of Southern Swedish. In the SWEDIA 2000 material there are recordings from four different Scanian towns:

- 1) Bara, in southwestern Skåne (close to Malmö)
- 2) Löderup, in southeastern Skåne
- 3) Norra Rörum, in central Skåne
- 4) Broby, in northeastern Skåne (close to K-stad, in the north direction)

In each town, twelve subjects are recorded, three in each of the groups:

- a) younger (20-30 years of age) men (YM)
- b) younger women (YW)
- c) older (50-60 years) men (OM)
- d) older women (OW)

For all speakers the following utterances were extracted:

- (I) *endollarssedel* (one dollar bill), a compound word consisting of the words *én*(one), *dóllar*, adjoining *s* and *sédel* (bill). This is a case of the exception to (9b), in having a monosyllabic numeral as first element
- (II) *femtiolapp* ("fiftier", a bill of fifty crowns), a compound word consisting of the words *fémtio* (fifty) and *krònor* (crowns, the currency of Sweden). This is a type (8b) compound.

Some utterances had to be discarded either because the intensity was too low, or that the wrong target word was said, e.g., the speakers mistook the numeral for definite article and said *en dollarsedel*.

Analysis method

The utterances were classified as having Accent I or Accent II. Focus intonation and phrase accents were abstracted from, as this does not influence the type of word accent. The utterances were first analyzed by ear (by the author), and in some unclear cases by analysis-by-synthesis through F0 manipulation. This allows the experimenter to change the F0 contour and do a resynthesis with the new contour. In this way the word accent can be changed from one to the other and this is helpful in determining which accent a word has.

Results

The results of the accent classification are presented in Table 2. From the table, it is clear that all of the speakers in Löderup and Norra Rörum use Accent I on both words. In Bara, almost all speakers use Accent I, except for some of the OM. However, in Broby, the Accent II pattern is dominating (also with the exception of one OM).

Table 2. Occurrences of Accent I for each dialect, word, sex and age and the number of analyzed words in each group.

		<i>Word (I)</i>	<i>Word (II)</i>			<i>Word (I)</i>	<i>Word (II)</i>
Bara	OM	2/4	3/4	Löde.	OM	2/2	3/3
	OW	3/3	3/3		OW	3/3	3/3
	YM	2/3	2/2		YM	2/3	2/3
	YW	3/3	3/3		YW	3/3	2/3
	Tot.	10/12	11/12		Tot.	10/10	10/10
Broby	OM	1/3	0/3	N. Rör.	OM	3/3	4/4
	OW	0/3	0/3		OW	3/3	3/3
	YM	0/3	0/3		YM	2/3	3/3
	YW	0/3	0/3		YW	3/3	3/3
	Tot.	1/12	0/12		Tot.	11/11	13/13

Discussion

If we follow the ranking in Bruce (1974), we see that even the highest ranked compound type gets Accent II in Broby. A prediction from this would be that the accent shift blocking is lost in all types. Some support comes from the other word *endollarssedel* that follows (9b) and fails to follow the exception pattern it has in the other dialects.

The fact that Broby does not show accent shift blocking raises the question of where the border of the accent shift is. Broby is close to the north of Kristianstad, and south of Halmstad, both of which retained Accent I in the top-ranked (8b) pattern in Bruce's data. The border of the accent shift blocking may thus have moved southwards as a result of adaptation to the standard dialect of Swedish, but the lack of differences between generations speak against that. More investigations of other towns in the area between Kristianstad and Halmstad are necessary to clear the picture.

Age and gender seem to play minor roles. There are a few exceptions in the OM class, but this may as well be idiolectical.

Conclusion

This study has shed some new light on the compound accent pattern in Southern Swedish. In the dialects furthest to the south, Accent I prevails on certain types of compounds, whereas in the most northern of the dialects examined (Broby), the same compounds get Accent II.

Notes

1. Word accents are indicated using the traditional (´ for Accent I, ` for Accent II) symbols.

References

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