

Menpeko perpausetako hitz azentugabeen foku azentuaz
(On the focal accent of unaccented words in subordinate clauses in Basque)

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Abstract:

We examine the position of the sentential main accent in subordinate clauses in Lekeitio Basque describing a new asymmetry. Whereas a lexically unaccented word preceding the subordinate verb in a clause with *-ela* 'that' will carry the main accent, that is not true in clauses with other complementizers. We empirically verify this unusual contrast and provide a syntactic analysis for this asymmetry. We propose that the explanation has to do with the phase-domain where accent assignment takes place. We suggest that, except for *-ela*, all other complementizers are postpositional and that, consequently, accent is assigned at different phases.

Keywords: nuclear stress, phase, embedded sentence, postposition