Punjabi is an Indo-Aryan language spoken in northwest India and parts of Pakistan which has received very little attention within the field of linguistics. It possesses a puzzling system of stress such that it is entirely predictable yet patterns differently in disyllabic and trisyllabic words depending on the combination of syllables according to weight in each word. The complete paradigms of stress assignment in disyllabic and trisyllabic words are found in (1) and (2).

1) Disyllabic Words
   - L'H  pé.la:  ‘before/earlier’
   - H'ÍH gá.l.mi:  ‘hot’
   - ŠH dší.l.na:  ‘to spill’
   - ŠS ví.l.va.l:  ‘Thursday’
   - L'S  bà.má.m:  ‘sick’
   - H'S  tãl.bú:dz  ‘watermelon’

2) Trisyllabic Words
   - L'ÍH  tʃi.ti.a:  ‘letters’
   - HÍH  bín.dr.a:  ‘forehead decorations’
   - HHS  máː.gol.wa.l:  ‘Tuesday’
   - LHS  dá.va:daːp  ‘quickly’
   - HHÍH  bāk.h.sū.:wi  ‘safety pin’
   - LÍH  mi.lá:.na:  ‘to mix’
   - LÍSH  bi.tjá.l.na:  ‘to think’
   - HÍSH  saŋ.gí.t.na:  ‘to sing and dance’

(L = light syllable, H = heavy syllable, S = superheavy syllable)

Punjabi exhibits a distinction in syllable weight and a left-dominant stress system, thus requiring the construction of moraic trochees. Foot construction is from right to left and degenerate feet are permitted. Syllables are minimally bimoraic and ternary feet are permitted. Furthermore, there is no secondary stress in Punjabi and stress is not contrastive. Contrastive patterns such as L'H and LÍH simply do not exist.

Under a derivational framework, two separate sets of rules are necessary – one set for disyllabic segments and another for trisyllabic segments – yielding an account of stress which lacks unification and is inconsistent with respect to extrametricality. This inconsistency in the treatment of extrametricality leads to final moras being extrametrical in disyllabic segments and final superheavy syllables being extrametrical in trisyllabic segments.

An OT framework provides a more successful and appealing account of stress in Punjabi than the derivational framework. Under the OT framework, a single set of ranked constraints accounts for stress in both disyllabic and trisyllabic segments. The ranking of constraints which is as follows: LEFTMOST, SUPERHEAVY >> NONFINALITY >> CONTOUR (H)(H) >> PARSE-SYL >> WSP (WEIGHT-TO-STRESS)>> FT-BIN. The constraints LEFTMOST, SUPERHEAVY (Oostendorp 2002), NONFINALITY (Prince and Smolensky 2002), PARSE-SYL, WSP, and FT-BIN are all well attested and exhibit typological force. The constraint CONTOUR (H)(H), on the other hand, is newly introduced and indicates that leftmost heavy syllables are stressed in sequences of (H)(H).

In addition to investigating the assignment of stress in Punjabi, this paper argues that the CONTOUR (H)(H) constraint belongs to a family of CONTOUR constraints. For instance, Inkelas (1999) proposes a CONTOUR *H L constraint for Turkish which bans the sequence of a heavy unstressed syllable followed by a stressed light syllable. Furthermore, cross-linguistic support is provided for the CONTOUR (H)(H) constraint from the Indo-Aryan languages of Hindi and Sindhi and the Urban Hijazi dialect of Arabic.
References


