A First Look at Lexical Stress in Mankiyali

As part of an NSF funded project, this paper describes and analyzes the lexical stress pattern of Mankiyali, a hitherto undocumented language of Northern Pakistan. Word-level stress placement in Mankiyali is weight-sensitive, in that the syllable on which stress falls is largely determined by the weight of that syllable in relation to other syllables in the word. Most languages with weight-sensitive stress criteria demonstrate a binary distinction in syllable weight (Gordon 2006, Dryer & Haspelmath 2013), where syllables with a long vowel are heavy and all others are light. However, Gordon also notes that several languages have been found to exhibit three or more distinctions in syllable weight. The Mankiyali stress system is intriguing because preliminary analysis suggests that it utilizes the quinary stress scale in (1). This specific five-grade distinction in syllable weight is extremely rare, perhaps unattested, in the world's documented languages.

(1) *Mankiyali Primary Stress Criterion*: VVC > VV > VCC > VC > V

After providing details about the demographics of the Mankiyali speakers and the data-collection methods employed for the project, this paper provides a comprehensive description of the Mankiyali stress pattern at the word level, analyzing both primary and secondary stress. What follows is an overview of that description.

Primary stress placement in Mankiyali is not only dependent on syllable weight, as described above, but is also reliant on the position of the syllable within a word. When syllable weight is neutral, the default primary stress position settles on the penultimate syllable as illustrated in (2). The conventional IPA symbol ' ' is placed before a syllable to denote primary stress.

(2) a.na.ˈgu.gu ‘owl’

In words with syllables of varying weight, the heaviest syllable always attracts primary stress regardless of its location in the word. Thus, in words in which a heavy syllable is present, the tendency for primary stress to occur on the penultimate syllable can be interrupted, with primary stress shifting to the heaviest syllable. If there is a tie for the heaviest syllable in a word, stress will fall on the rightmost instance that is not word-final. However, if the word-final syllable is unmatched in weight, stress will shift to fall on that syllable. This indicates that, while stress prefers to avoid word-final position, a heavy syllable can overrule this preference, thereby drawing stress to the final syllable. The examples in (3) evince Mankiyali's five-grade stress scale:

(3) Evidence of the 5-grade stress scale in Mankiyali

a.	VC > V:	ˈkaɣ.la.ɳa	‘he will do’
b.	VCC > VC:	kaɽ.ˈsaŋg	‘a huge heap’
c.	VV > VCC:	zind.ˈgii	‘life’
d.	VVC > VV:	kaa.ˈɣaaz	‘a piece of paper’

References

Dryer, Matthew S. & Haspelmath, Martin (eds.) 2013. The World Atlas of Language Structures Online. Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. (Available online at http://wals.info, Accessed on 2020-10-11.)

Gordon, Matthew. 2006. *Syllable Weight: Phonetics, Phonology, Typology*. Routledge.