

Prosody in Abyānei language

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Abstract

Researchers of Iranian languages, which don't use analyzing hardware, usually claim that the word stress in Iranian languages is dynamic (marked by the intensity of a sound). We can find such a statement in the article of Pierre Lecoq (1974) in relation to the Abyānei language (accent d'intensité). The main goal of our investigation was to find the correlate of word stress in Abyānei with the use of the sound recording equipment and statistical analysis techniques. Speech of 3 Abyānei middle aged subjects (one man and two women) was recorded in the village in spring of 2008. 40 2-syllable words were cut out of the digital recordings. Those samples (with initial and non-initial stress) were segmented (boundaries between the phonemes were marked). The vowels were analyzed by Praat software (their parameters like intensity, duration, fundamental frequency etc. were extracted; see www.praat.org). The extracted sets of parameters were analyzed by ANOVA routines in Excel tables. The main result of the analysis is that the main feature of word stress in Abyānei is duration ($p=0.006$), in other words the stress in Abyānei is quantitative. The secondary feature is tone (F_0), i.e. the stressed syllable is sometimes marked by higher fundamental frequency. Intensity seems to play no significant role in marking the stressed syllable. Experimental study of other Iranian languages also shows the insignificance of the intensity feature for the word stress. Persian stress is tonal, Tajik – tonal, Afghan Pashto – quantitative, Afghan Dari – quantitative, Gavruni (the language of Iranian Zoroastrians) – quantitative, Sarykoli (the language of a tribe of Pamirian origin in China) – quantitative. The place of the stress in Abyānei as compared with the Persian is shifted towards the beginning of the word. The same feature can be found in another North-Western Iranian language – Gavruni (the language of Iranian Zoroastrians).