

Syllable weight and High Tone in Moro: Evidence for Attraction

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The interaction between tone and syllable weight has primarily focused on the distribution of contour tones (Gordon 1999, Zhang 2001). In this paper, we present new data from Moro (Kordofanian) which suggests that high tone is sensitive to a three-way distinction in syllable weight, including onset sensitivity. We argue for the weight hierarchy (C)VC > CV > V for Moro, which accords with the generalization in Gordon (2005) that onset-sensitive weight is subordinate to rime-sensitive weight. Moreover, we show that our analysis accounts for the behavior of onsetless light syllables better than an extraprosodicity account (e.g. Odden 2006).