

Tonal Accent in Iquito (Zaparoan)

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In this paper I will describe the system of tonal accent found in Iquito nouns and adjectives. There are a number of minimal pairs in Iquito that contrast solely on the basis of the position of a tonal accent in the word, e.g. *áasi* ‘bunch (of bananas)’ and *aási* ‘rain’; *másicu* ‘raft’ and *masícu* ‘bird sp.’. Such pairs show that at least some Iquito words must be lexically marked for tonal accent. However, most Iquito words are not members of tonal minimal pairs, and the location of tonal accent in most words is predictable based on word shape. Alternations in the position of tonal accent in two morphological environments for nouns (in the plural form and in the first person singular possessed form of the noun) form the basis for distinguishing which accentual patterns must be lexically specified and which are predictable from word shape.

Iquito words also have alternating metrical stress. Stressed syllables are longer in duration than unstressed syllables, and consonants following stressed syllables are longer than consonants following unstressed syllables. In general, Iquito words are parsed into moraic trochees from the right edge of the word to the left. However, the metrical component of Iquito prosody interacts with the tonal component in a crucial way: syllables bearing a lexical tonal accent are always stressed.

Since Iquito words have both tonal accent and metrical structure, Iquito provides an interesting case study for interactions between stress and tone. As in other systems of tonal accent, there is an affinity between tonal accent and stress in Iquito. However, the distribution of stress cannot be reduced to the distribution of tonal accent, since not all stressed syllables carry a tonal accent, and since the location of primary word stress and lexical tonal accent do not always coincide.