

English Root Stress across Frameworks - Guierre meets Analogy (ERSaF)

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This project serves to (a) promote our current understanding of regularities in English word stress, and (b) foster dialogue and collaboration between theoretical frameworks across research traditions: Guierrian theory and analogy-based theories of phonological grammar.

How is stress assigned in English morphologically simplex words? How do we explain, for example, that words like *begin*, *emit* and *rétrogréss* have stress on the final syllable, but words like *listen*, *vómit* and *gállivant*? Despite the fact that there is a vast literature and that most scholars agree that English stress is not idiosyncratic, existing theoretical accounts are often not based on large corpora and leave large portions of the data unexplained. The most widely known among these are accounts set within the generative tradition of linguistic theorising, which assume that stress assignment is mainly determined by two groups of factors: morphological complexity and syllable structure.

The project aims to shed new light on regularities in English verb stress, and to ultimately develop a better model, by bringing together perspectives from two research traditions.

- Guierre's work and that of the Guierrian school represents a phonological framework that is widely used in the French-speaking literature, but is underrepresented especially among the English-speaking contemporary literature.
- 'Analogy' refers to a mechanism of linguistic generalisation in which formal properties of an unknown form are learned by comparing that form to similar forms in the mental lexicon. Analogy has been considered the basic foundation of grammatical behaviour in the neogrammarian tradition. In the contemporary literature, analogy plays a central role in usage-based models of (phonological) grammar; computational analogical models have since neogrammarian times developed the approach further and have made it empirically testable.

Our central hypothesis is that, even though Guierrian and analogy-based theories fundamentally differ in their conceptual architectures, learning from each other will be highly beneficial in developing an adequate model of stress assignment.

We will use a computational analogical mechanism to test the Guierrian system of representation on two types of empirical data on non-uniform word stress in English simplex roots, which have so far defied attempts to account for them within the mainstream generative literature. One type will be dictionary data of existing words; the other will be novel words elicited in a reading study. In terms of the Guierrian framework, this will enable us to test basic assumptions about the relevance and nature of the hypothesised units of representations. In terms of an analogical framework, this will help us develop an adequate theory of representation, something that is currently lacking in analogical accounts of generalisation. We will use our findings to test extant architectural claims, Guierrian, analogical, and generative.

Links: [Sabine Arndt-Lappe's personal website](#) | [Quentin Dabouis' personal website](#)