

琉球大学学術リポジトリ

音楽にみられる英語の異型アクセント

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English Aberrant Accentuation in Music

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0. Introduction

This paper points out that accentuation in English can vary when the words are uttered in songs, although in English, lexical accent (i.e., location of accent) is, in general, said to be fixed, unless words are in a certain environment where their accent is influenced by neighboring words. The purpose of this paper is not only to show the variability in English word accent but also to reveal characteristics of aberrant accent in relation to musical notes and rhythm.

With regard to songs, this paper examines a number of songs sung by American and British musicians in genres such as rock, alternative, and blues. The musicians chosen include Chuck Berry, the Beatles, the Eagles, Oasis, Blues Traveler, Third Eye Blind, Paul Simon, John Lennon, Paul McCartney, Eric Clapton, Cream, Alanis Morissette, Derek and the Dominos, and the Yardbirds. The songs used in the research are randomly chosen. All the songs used in this research are listed in the appendix.

1. Aberrant Accentuation in Songs

It is known that the accentuation of English words is fixed (see Cruttenden 2001: 221) in the sense that the accented syllable of a given word does not vary among native speakers of English¹. In other words,

there are generally no differences in placement of lexical accent among dialects of English². For example, the word *elephant* is pronounced *élephant*; no native speakers of English normally pronounce it with accent on either the second or third syllable (i.e., *eléphant* or *elephánti*) in their daily conversation³.

Thus, it could be assumed that in songs English words would be pronounced the same way as they are in speech. Based on this investigation, this assumption is proven more or less true, i.e., there is a tendency that English lexical accent remains the same in songs. For example, in the song titled *Let It Be* by the Beatles, *myself*, *mother*, *wisdom*, *darkness*, and *standing* are all pronounced as they would be in speech, i.e., *mysélf*, *móther*, *wísdóm*, *dárkness*, and *stánding*.

In contrast, other songs provide quite a number of exceptions; English words are sung with aberrant accent - different from the way they are pronounced in speech. For instance, the word *today* is pronounced *tóday* in one of *Oasis*' songs, *Wonderwall*. The first syllable is perceptually more prominent than the second one, due to its length, pitch, and vowel quality. In addition to its aberrant accentuation, what is significant is a change in vowel quality in the accented or most prominent syllable. That is, while the word is normally uttered [tədəi] in speech, it is pronounced [tú:deɪ] in the song. This phenomenon questions the claim put forward by Dasher and Bolinger (1982: 60): "vowel quality is a given and not a product of stressing rules or rhythm rules, and can be used to predict the possibility of accentuation." If their assumption were correct, the vowel (i.e., [u:]) in the initial syllable of *tóday* would be given first, and then accent assignment rules follow. How would speakers know where to put accent since both syllables contain a full vowel? Another question is how would the speakers know whether today is [tədəi] or [tú:deɪ] in a given song, since both pronunciations are seen in

songs (e.g., [tədə́] in *Roll Over Beethoven* sung by Chuck Berry)?

In this paper, the most prominent syllable in a word is marked with the diacritic (´). However, if there is more than one prominent syllable, they are also marked, e.g., *únderstánd*. Other words encountered with aberrant accentuation are listed below with the titles of the songs in which they occur.

(1) Aberrant accentuation found in songs

<u>Aberrant accentuation</u>	<u>Song</u>
speaking, troublé	Let It Be
bélieve	Yesterday
trippér, tickét	Day Tripper
candlé, distánce, corridór, chambérs, híghwáy, chámpágne, courtyárd, spírit, Cálifornia, twistéd	Hotel California
medicíne	The Boy In The Bubble
hopefúl, pockét, working	Hand In My Pocket
uníverse, póssessing	Across The Universe
earthý	Semi-Charmed Life
aftér, réalíze, sómehów	Wonderwall
télling, únderstánd, Míchéle	Michelle
somebody	Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds
nowhére	All You Need Is Love
strawberry, sometímes	Strawberry Fields Forever
working, sleepíng, monéy	A Hard Day's Night

The words listed above can be grouped into three types in terms of their characteristics. The first type is words in which one of the unaccented

syllables (rather than the “originally-accented” syllable) becomes prominent. Words with this characteristic are listed in (2a). Another type of words with aberrant accent is ones where the originally accent syllable remains prominent and an ordinarily unaccented syllable (or syllables) becomes as prominent as the accented one. Examples are listed in (2b). The third type of words includes those in which a secondary accent becomes primary. See (2c) for examples.

(2) Three types of aberrant accentuation

- (a) An unaccented syllable in speech becomes primary in music
 trippér, working, sleeping, monéy, somebody, today, aftér,
 earthy, uníverse, hopefúl, pockét, working, medicine, twistéd,
 speaking, bélieve, troublé, tickét, strawberry, sometímes,
 candlé, distánce, chambérs, póssessing
- (b) An unaccented syllable in speech is as prominent as the original
 primary accent
 Míchéllé, chámpanne, spírít, sómehów, téllíng, úndérstánd
- (c) The secondary accent becomes more prominent than the primary
 accent
 Cálifornia, highwáy, courtyárd, somehów, réalíze, corridór

As revealed in (2a), the words *candle*, *trouble*, *hopeful*, *today*, and *possessing* are pronounced [kændól], [tɹɪból], [houpfól], [tú:der], and [pózɛsɪŋ]⁴ respectively in songs, although in speech they are pronounced [kændl], [tɹɪbl], [hóupfəl], [tədér], and [pɛzɛsɪŋ]. Notice that the accentuation of these words in speech and in songs differs. For *candle* and *trouble*, accent falls on the initial syllable when uttered in speech while in tunes it is on the final syllable. A vowel is inserted in the final syllable due to the syllabic [l]⁵. Concerning *hopeful*, *today*, and *possessing*, the final syllable of

hopeful and the initial syllable of both *today* and *possessing* contain a schwa when pronounced in speech. Notice that when accent falls on those syllables, a schwa becomes a full vowel: [ə] to [u] in *hopeful*, [ə] to [u:] in *today*, and [ə] to [o] in *possessing*⁶. The alternation of [ə] and [u] in *hopeful* can be explained by analyzing the word as being made up of *hope* and *ful(l)*, where the latter morpheme has the vowel [u]. As a matter of fact, in the song, the word sounds like *hope full*, since there is a short pause between the two. As for *today*, in the song it sounds like “*two day*.” Similarly, this type of vowel alternation in relation to accentuation is also seen in speech. For example, *personal* has accent on its initial syllable. However, when the suffix *-ity* is added, a schwa in the third syllable becomes [æ], *personality* [pɜːnsənæləti:].

The words in (2b) are made up of two or three syllables, and in speech one of the syllables is more prominent than the others. However, in songs each one of the syllables is equally prominent within the word -- unaccented syllables in speech can become as prominent as the originally accented one in songs. In addition, unaccented syllables listed in (2b) do not contain a schwa.

Words listed in (2c) show that primary and secondary accents can switch in songs. This phenomenon is also seen in speech. Carr (1999: 87), for example, explains that the word *kangaroo* has its primary accent on the final syllable and a secondary one on the initial syllable when uttered in isolation, i.e., *kàngaróo*. However, it becomes *kángaròo* when followed by *court*. Cruttenden (2001: 280) and Giegerich (1992: 185) also touch upon this phenomenon and give explanations for it.

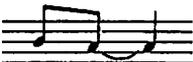
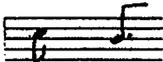
2. Accented Syllables and Musical Notes

This section focuses on the relationship between accented syllables

and musical notes (their height or/and length). More specifically, what is examined is whether there is a correlation between accent and height in musical notes.

2.1 Aberrant Accent and Musical Notes

Concerning aberrant accent and musical notes, in most of the cases investigated, notes assigned to aberrant-accent syllables are higher than ones assigned to other syllables within the words. Examples in (3) demonstrate this.

(3)	<p>bélieve</p>  <p>be - lieve -</p> <p>(Kusano 1981: 112)</p>	<p>tóday</p>  <p>to - day</p> <p>(Suzuki 2003: 42)</p>	<p>Cáifornia</p>  <p>Cal - i - for - nia</p> <p>(Murakami and Kusano 1994: 77)</p>
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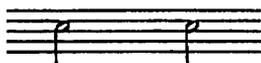
There are also cases where the same high note is given to more than one syllable of a word. As the example in (4) illustrates, both syllables in *speaking* have the note “mi,” even though the accent falls on the second syllable. The example is extracted from *Let It Be*.

(4)	<p>speaking</p>  <p>speak-ing There will</p> <p>(Kusano 1981: 18)</p>
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In the example above, notice that the note assigned to the accented

syllable is longer than the other one. It seems that the accented syllable is distinguished from the unaccented one by the length of the note. Notice that the notes for words such as *Miché*lle and *chámpá*gne do not show a difference in length since all the syllables of the words are accented.

(5) Miché



Mi - chelle

(Kusano 1981: 108)

chámpá



cham-pagne on

(Murakami and Kusano 1994: 78)

2.2 Non-Aberrant Accent and Musical Notes

In non-aberrant accented words, accented syllables do not always receive a high note. Although there are a number of examples where a high note or the highest note is assigned to the accented syllable of the words, there are also cases opposite to this, i.e., a low note is assigned to an accented syllable.

Among the examples shown in (6), in *myself* (extracted from *Let It Be*), the note given to *self* is higher than the one to *my*. In *strawberry* (from *Strawberry Fields Forever*), among the three notes given to the word, the highest note is assigned to the accented syllable.

(6) mysélf



find my - self —

(Kusano 1981: 18)

stráwberry



Straw-ber-ry

(Kusano 1982a: 60)

However, the example below shows that a lower note is given to the accented first syllable than to the two following syllables. A longer note is given to the accented syllable, but it is not the longest; the longest one is on the final syllable. Notice that the syllable with a schwa has the shortest note. The example is from the song *Yesterday*.

(7) yésterday



yes - ter - day. —

(Kusano 1981: 112)

Furthermore, there are also words where the accented syllable as well as its unaccented syllable(s) receive a high note. An example is *imagine* (taken from *Imagine*), where not only the accented syllable but also the final unaccented syllable is associated with a high note.

(8) imáagine



Im-ag-ine

(Kusano 1982b: 105)

Similar to the example of *speaking* above, among normally accent words, there are also words in which the same note is given to all syllables. In this case, what is different from *speaking* is that the words do not sound abnormal because all the accented syllables have a longer note. For instance, the word *agree* in *Let It Be*, as shown below, consists of two syllables, with a final accent in speech. All the syllables have the same note, but the word is perceived as final-accented. A longer note falls on the accented syllable, i.e., length reflects “accent.”

(9) agrée



to me —
a- gree

(Kusano 1981: 18)

3. Aberrant Accent and Musical Rhythm

From the perspective of relationship between word accent and musical rhythm, this section looks into whether there are differences between aberrant-accent words and normal-accent words.

When English words are uttered in songs, they are not just said without considering the musical notes or tune of the song. As discussed

above, a musical note is given to each syllable of the words - the note can be higher or lower, and it can also be shorter or longer than the others. Similarly, there is an interaction between accent and rhythm.

Unlike the relationship between syllables and musical notes, when a song is sung in English, not all syllables of a word coincide with musical beats. Rather, certain syllables are on the beat. More specifically, in general, musical beats and accented syllables concur⁷. This does not mean that all accented syllables are on the beat. The following example illustrates this. This example is extracted from the song *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*, sung by the Beatles. Arrows indicate the beats of the song.

(10)	picture	yourself	in a	boat on a	river with	tangerine ⁸
	↑		↑		↑	↑
	trees	and	marmalade ⁹	skies	somebody	calls you, you
	↑		↑	↑	↑	↑
	answer	quite	slowly,	a	girl with	kaleidoscope
	↑		↑		↑	↑
					eyes	

One of the exceptions to this tendency is seen in *Hands In My Pocket* sung by Alanis Morissette. As (11) shows in a part of the song's lyrics, while the primary accent of *happy* is on the first syllable, it is the second syllable that is on the beat.

(11)	I'm	broke	but	I'm	happy
		↑		↑	↑

Beats of a song generally coincide with the primary accent of words. In (10) above, none of the pronouns, articles, or prepositions is on the

beat. They are not salient or accented in speech unless there are pragmatic reasons. On the other hand, monosyllabic lexical words such as *boat*, *trees*, *skies*, *calls*, *girl*, and *eyes* coincide with the musical beats. As for the polysyllabic words, they are pronounced the same way as in speech, and their primary accent coincides with the beat.

Let us now turn to aberrant accent by asking the question "What is the relationship between the words with aberrant accent listed in (2) above and rhythm?" In answer to this, there are four possible hypotheses: (i) aberrant accent and beat coincide; (ii) normal accent (original primary accent in speech) and beat coincide; (iii) both aberrant accent and normal accent coincide with beat; and (iv) neither one of the accents coincides with beat. By examining each one of the three types of aberrant accentuation (see (2)), I will discuss the relationship between aberrant accent and rhythm.

Among the three types of aberrant accentuation, the first one to be examined is the group of words listed in (2a). The primary accent in these words is on one of the originally unaccented syllables. Let's take the aberrant-accent word *troublé* from *Let It Be* as an example¹⁰. If hypothesis (i) is correct, the second syllable of the word would be on the beat, as shown in (12a). If hypothesis (ii) is right, (12b) would be a case, which is the same as the cases of normal accent discussed earlier. Hypothesis (iii) is shown in (12c), where both syllables are on the beat. Finally, (12d) illustrates hypothesis (iv), where there is no concurrence between accent and the beat.

(12) (a) *troublé* (b) *troublé* (c) *troublé* (d) *troublé*
 ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

The part of the lyrics that includes the word *troublé* is shown in (13).

Only the first syllable concurs with the beat. Thus, hypothesis (ii) is correct.

(13) When I find myself in times of troublé
 ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

As far as my investigation is concerned, this is in general consistent; i.e., generally speaking, aberrant accent does not coincide with the beat. More examples from songs by various musicians are given in (14) to show that this phenomenon is not a characteristic of a particular musician.

(14) (a) *Wonderwall* by Oasis

 tóday is gonna be the day
 ↑ ↑ ↑

(b) *Hand in my pocket* by Alanis Morissette

 I'm lost but I'm hopefúl baby
 ↑ ↑ ↑

(c) *Hotel California* by Eagles

 she lit up a candlé and she showed me the way
 ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

(d) *The Boy in the Bubble* by Paul Simon

 Medicine is magical
 ↑ ↑

However, there are some exceptions to this generalization. An

intriguing one is the word *póssessing* in *Across the Universe*. Due to the aberrant accentuation, a schwa was replaced by a full vowel, and it coincides with the beat. No other example like this is found in my data.

(15) my open mind póssessing and caressing me
 ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑ ↑

Now let us consider the second type of aberrant accentuation in (2b). In words of this type, all syllables, including ones unaccented in speech, are salient and can concur with the beat of a song, although this varies among songs. For example, all the syllables of *únderstánd* in *Michelle* coincide with the beat of the song.

(16) ún dér stánd
 ↑ ↑ ↑

However, in *Hotel California* only the second syllable of *chám págne* is on the beat. It should be pointed out that this difference is very much attributed to the difference in rhythm of the songs.

(17) chám págne
 ↑

Concerning words belonging to the third type of aberrant accentuation, their secondary accent becomes more salient than their primary one in music. With regard to the relationship between the “new” most salient accent and the rhythm of the song, I have observed two patterns. The first pattern, shown in (18a), is one where the originally secondary accent coincides with the beat. In the second pattern, the originally

is on the beat. Thus, as far as the words listed in (2a) are concerned, our hypothesis (ii) is correct. As for words in (2b), hypotheses (ii) and (iii) are sound. The difference between them is in the rhythmic patterns of the songs. Concerning the third type of aberrant-accent words, we have seen concurrence of not only aberrant accent and beat but also originally primary accent and beat. That is, for this case, hypotheses (i) and (ii) are correct. Finally, the case of hypothesis (iv) is also seen in our data. Therefore, on the basis of this research, it can be concluded that all the patterns suggested by the hypotheses suggest are seen in our data.

Conclusion

Lexical accent of English words can vary in music although it is known to be fixed in speech. Based on their patterns of accentuation, I have grouped aberrant-accent words into three types (see (2) above), and following these categorized patterns, I have analyzed them. We have seen that aberrant accent causes changes in vowel quality. That is, when an accent falls on a syllable with a schwa, it becomes a full vowel. This phenomenon is not seen in speech - similar vowel alternation seen in speech involves affixation of morpheme(s).

In the second section, I have looked into the relationship between accented syllables and musical notes in both aberrant-accent and normal-accent words. As for aberrant-accent words, syllables with aberrant accent are usually given a higher note than the other syllable(s) in the words. If the same note is given to both accented and unaccented syllables, the former receives a longer note in many cases, although this is not always so. On the other hand, in normal-accent words, there seems to be no accented syllable-high note relationship.

In the third section, I have investigated the relationship between words with accented syllables and the rhythm of songs. For words with normal accent, the beats of the song generally coincide with the primary accent of a word. However, for aberrant-accent words, the relationship varies depending on the types of aberrant accent. In words with a salient unaccented syllable (2a), the beat coincides with their originally accented syllables. This phenomenon is also seen in words with accents on both their originally accented and unaccented syllables (2b), and when both syllables concur with beats in the song. The third type of words is ones where those words in which their originally secondary accent is more salient than originally primary accent. When it comes to those words, there are two types: one that shows a concurrence of secondary accent and beat and those in which the originally primary accent coincides with the beat. Finally, all types of words can be placed between beats in music.

Notes

¹ Throughout the paper, ‘native speakers of English’ refers to speakers of British and American English who grew up with English as their first language.

² There are exceptions: e.g., *enquiry* [énkwɪɹɪ] and *realize* [ɹɛləáɹɪz] in Scottish English (Cruttenden 2001: 231).

³ In pitch-accent languages such as Japanese, accentuation differs from dialect to dialect. For instance, the word for ‘flower’ is pronounced *hana*] [LH] in Tokyo and *ha*] *na* [HL] in Kyoto.

⁴ More precisely, *candle*, *trouble*, *hopeful*, *today*, and *possessing* sound [kændsəl], [tɹʌbəl], [həʊpful], [tú:dèɪ], and [pózèsɪŋ]. To simplify the matter,

I will mark only 'primary accent' or most prominent one.

⁶ Another analysis might note that the second syllable contains a schwa. When *candle* and *trouble* are pronounced carefully, there is a schwa before [l] in the final syllable.

⁶ With regard to variability of pronunciation in connected speech, Cruttenden (2001: 238) lists examples. Although the list is not exhaustive, there are no such variants as seen in *hopeful*, *today*, and *possessing*. Furthermore, while the variation discussed in the text involves a change in relation to accentual patterns, the variation that Cruttenden points out is not concerned with locus of accent.

⁷ It should be pointed out that some rap singers intentionally put words off the beat. This seems to be a popular 'rapping' or singing style among rap singers.

⁸ The word *tangerine* has two pronunciations: *tángerine* and *tàngeríne*.

⁹ According to the American Heritage Dictionary of the English language, the accentuation of *marmalade* is *mármaláde*. However, Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary lists two pronunciations: *mármaláde* and *màrmaláde*.

¹⁰ In this section, for convenience, only aberrant accentuation is marked with the diacritic (˘); e.g., *troublé*.

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Appendix: A list of the songs examined and names of musicians

<u>Song</u>	<u>Musician</u>
Across The Universe	the Beatles
A Day In The Life	the Beatles
A Hard Day's Night	the Beatles
All You Need Is Love	the Beatles
Another Girl	the Beatles
Anyone For Tennis	Cream
Back In The USSR	the Beatles
Can't Find My Way Home	Eric Clapton

Come Together	the Beatles
Day Tripper	the Beatles
From Me To You	the Beatles
Getting Better	the Beatles
Hand In My Pocket	Alanis Morissette
Here There And Everywhere	the Beatles
Hotel California	the Eagles
I Ain't Got You	the Yardbirds
I Am The Walrus	the Beatles
I'll Follow The Sun	the Beatles
Imagine	John Lennon
I'm Happy Just To Dance With You	the Beatles
I Need You	the Beatles
I Saw Her Standing There	the Beatles
I Should Have Known Better	the Beatles
Jealous Guy	John Lennon
Johnny B. Goode	Chuck Berry
Junk	Paul McCartney
Layla	Derek and the Dominos
Lawdy Mama	Cream
Let It Be	the Beatles
Love Me Do	the Beatles
Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds	the Beatles
Magical Mystery Tour	the Beatles
Martha My Dear	the Beatles
Maxwell's Silver Hammer	the Beatles
Maybe I'm Amazed	Paul McCartney
Michelle	the Beatles
Nobody Knows You When You're	

Down And Out	Eric Clapton
Paperback Writer	the Beatles
Penny Lane	the Beatles
Presence Of The Lord	Eric Clapton
P.S. I Love You	the Beatles
Ram On	Paul McCartney
Roll Over Beethoven	Chuck Berry
Rock And Roll Music	Chuck Berry
San Francisco Bay Blues	Eric Clapton
Semi-Charmed Life	Third Eyed Blind
She's A Woman	the Beatles
Sleeping In The Ground	Eric Clapton
Spoonful	Cream
Strawberry Fields Forever	the Beatles
Tales Of Brave Ulysses	Cream
The Boy In The Bubble	Paul Simon
Two Of Us	the Beatles
When I'm Sixty-Four	the Beatles
White Room	Cream
Wonderwall	Oasis
Yellow Submarine	the Beatles
Yesterday	the Beatles
You Never Give Me Your Money	the Beatles

音楽にみられる英語の異型アクセント

論文要旨

一般に、英語の語においてアクセントの置かれる音節は決まっており、方言間でも変わることはないと言われている（例：*élephant* は *eléphant* または *elephánt* と発音されない）が、本稿は英語のアクセントが曲中では通常と異なる場合があることを指摘し、更に、その異型アクセントが起こる環境を音符やリズムの観点から明らかにすることを目的とする。

結論を簡潔に言えば、異型アクセントと音符・リズムの相互関係は普通アクセントと音符・リズムの相互関係とは異なるという結果である。結論に達した過程を例を示し、詳細に説明する。なお、本稿ではロック、オータナティブ、ブルースの3つの音楽のジャンルに焦点をしばった。