



## Acoustic correlates of lexical stress in Moroccan Arabic

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### Summary

Presently there is no consensus regarding the interpretation and analysis of the stress system of Moroccan Arabic. This paper tests whether the acoustic realisation of syllables support one widely adopted interpretation of lexical stress, according to which stress is either penultimate or final depending on syllable weight. The experiment reports on word-initial syllables that differ in presumed stress status. Target words were embedded in a carrier sentence within a scripted mock dialogue to ensure that the measurements reflect lexical stress rather than phrase-level prominence. Results from all four acoustic parameters tested (f<sub>0</sub>, duration, Centre of Gravity and vowel quality) showed that there were no differences as a function of presumed stress status, thus failing to support an interpretation according to which stressed syllables are acoustically differentiated. We consider the results in relation to previous claims and observations, and conclude that the absence of acoustic correlates of presumed stress is compatible with the view that Moroccan Arabic lacks lexical stress.

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