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How to label accent position in spontaneous speech automatically with the help of syntactic–prosodic boundary labels

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Abstract

In this paper, we describe an approach that allows us to annotate accent position in German spontaneous speech with the help of syntactic–prosodic phrase boundary labels (the so–called M labels). The data are taken from the Verbmobil–corpus. Two factors are mainly relevant for such a rule–based assignment of accent to a word in a phrase: the part–of–speech of this word, and the position of this word in the phrase. Acoustic–perceptual accent labels are classified with a Multi–Layer–Perceptron, with a Language Model, and with a combination of both procedures. By taking into account rule–based generated accent labels, we could improve classification results by 2%, from 80% zu 82%. Best classification results could be obtained for the rule–based labels (88%) themselves.

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1 Introduction

For the automatic classification of accents, large training databases are needed. The perceptual labelling of accents, however, is very time consuming, and the database provided by our Verbmobil (VM) partner University of Braunschweig is therefore not too large. Above that, the higher linguistic modules syntax and semantics are not necessarily and always interested in 'perceptual' accents but in 'syntactic–semantic' accents. It seemed therefore worth while to try and label accent position automatically on the basis of boundary positions that were labelled using only the (written) transliteration of the dialogues. Note, however, that the degree of freedom, so to speak, is probably higher for accents than for boundaries; we should therefore not only rely on the 'syntactic correct' position of accents but in the classification phase, we should take into account their concrete phonetic realisation as well in order to use this information for semantic disambiguation, discourse analysis, and translation.

In this paper, we give only a sketch of the syntactic–prosodic boundary labels our accent rules are based on. A more thorough account can be found in [Bat96] and [Bat98]. As for the linguistic terminology used passim in this paper: it is fairly traditional and can be looked up in linguistic lexica as, e.g., [Buß90].

2 State of the art

Older accounts of a German accent phonology can be found, e.g., in [Kip66] and in [Hei81]. Newer ones within the tone–sequence–approach are, e.g., [Uhm91] and [Fér93]. The database in these studies consists either of introspective material or of elicited, read speech. For German, the automatic assignment of accent position for the *read* speech material of the ERBA database along similar lines as described below turned out to be very successful, cf. [Kie94]. Up to now, there are no accounts of accentuation based on large *spontaneous* German speech databases.

In [Ros92], the most important factors affecting pitch accent placement in (read) American English were part of speech, word class, break index after word, and number of syllables to the next pitch accent. A prominence–based approach for the generation of accents for German is described in [Wid97]. The parameters used in these studies are very similar to those that we will use in our approach.

Basically, it is still an open question how many (categorical?) levels of accentuation one should assume, cf. [Lie65] and [Rey93], [Rey94a], [Rey95], [Rey98], [Gro97]. [Bis92, p. 437] reports that " ... using two levels of stress (as opposed to one level) did not reduce the error rate when performing phone recognition of continuous speech." It might thus be a safe strategy only to use [$\pm$ accent], i.e., two classes, but if we did that, we most certainly would disregard information that can be found in the signal, in the perception, and in the syntactic–phonological rules. Besides, phone recognition is not the same task as the processing of salient syntactic–semantic information. For prosodic–perceptual annotation, we decided thus in favour of the three classes primary accent PA, secondary accent SA, and no accent (default), cf. [Rey94b]; these classes are taken as perceptual reference. A special class for emphatic accentuation (EC) is normally mapped onto PA. For our rule–based labels, we use for PA A3, for SA A2, and for no accent A0, in analogy to our boundary labels, cf. [Bat96, Bat98]. All these labels are described in Table 19 below. This means that we still have one open slot; we can thus in the future, if necessary, tell apart 'normal' de–accentuation A1 from 'full de–accentuation' A0.

3 Function and Opacity of Accentuation

Accentuation has at least those functions that are given and exemplified in Table 1; here and below, accentuated syllables/words are capitalized. Actually, the first two functions highlight certain aspects of the third function, *saliency*. To put it as simply as it is, the speaker draws the attention of the listeners to those items that are accentuated. If alternatives are possible, accentuation at the same time *disambiguates* between different readings. If the *neutral* reading is chosen, normally the whole sentence is in focus. Sometimes, the accentuated item alone can be in focus; in these cases the accent can but must not be more pronounced than in the default reading. Prosodic boundaries *structure* speech, but there is a regular relationship between boundaries and accents: normally, there is one marked phrase accent per prosodic phrase. Accents can thus, to a certain extent, take over the role of boundaries. *Exclamation* is halfway in between linguistic function and paralinguistic function; on the one hand, in German, it can be described as a sentence mood by its own [Bat88b, Bat88a], on the other hand, there is some overlap with *emphasis* or the marking of the *emotional* state of the speaker. *Contrast* can be sort of implicit in a neutral reading as well but is most typically conceived of as explicit as in the examples given in the table.

Boundaries structure speech and by that, can help to disambiguate between different readings. The same holds for accentuation which has, however, much more functions on top.[1] It seems as if the exact number of accents of different strength as well as the pertaining prosodic features and feature values are more opaque than it is the case for phrasing. Moreover, we believe that there are more degrees of freedom for accentuation than for phrasing, and that means in turn, that acceptability and grammaticality is not that clear–cut. Pause, e.g., is an important prosodic feature for the marking of boundaries and can almost alone do this job, cf.[Bat97]; the opposite of pause is no pause, and this is – other things being equal – a marker of continuity. Accents, however, can be marked by pronounced rises (L*H) or falls (H*L), or by a difference of tone levels alone (H* vs. L*), as already [Isa66] have shown. Accentuation is thus more a *formal*, foreground/background phenomenon than phrasing which can be characterised much more by a certain prosodic *substance*.

[1]Here, we will disregard other, more paralinguistic functions that can characterise phrasing as well as accentuation: stylistic and rhethoric functions, speaker idiosyncrasies, sociolinguistic markers, etc.

disambiguation:
NOCH einen Termin vs. *noch einen TERMIN* another date vs. still a date *in einem ZUG* vs. *in EINEM Zug* in a train vs. at one stroke *ich möcht' nach ZUG* vs. *ich möcht' n' NACHTzug* I want to go to Zug vs. I want to take a night-train
neutral (out–of–the–blue) vs. marked reading:
Hans liebt MARIA vs. *Hans LIEBT Maria* John loves MARY vs. John LOVES Mary
saliency/focus:
ich kann NICHT/nicht bis zum DONNERSTAG I CANNOT/cannot until THURSDAY
structuring:
ich möchte von MÜNCHEN über ULM nach STUTTGART fahren I want to go from MUNICH via ULM to STUTTGART
exclamativity:
stellt IHR euch an (exclamation/imperative/question) you are so silly! / queue up! / do you want to queue up?
emphasis/emotion:
das IST vielleicht eine BESCHEUERTE Hypothese that's really a crazy hypothesis
contrast:
ich habe kommT gesagt nicht kommST I did say comeS not come *ich möcht' NACH Berlin nicht von Berlin weg* I want to go TO Berlin not from Berlin

Table 1: Different functions of accentuation

If we look at the VM–scenario, matters are not that complicated because here, we have only to deal with the first three, basic linguistic functions of accentuation in Table 1. Structuring can be handled by phrasing, exclamations and 'exotic' contrastive accents as exemplified in Table 1 do not occur. The dialogue partners are normally cooperative and in no state of arousal. Emotion (anger) has to be elicited in a special way and will be dealt with in a separate module; cf. the 'meta–comment' on the quality of a sentence hypothesis in Table 1 (emphasis/emotion).

4 Reference: the acoustic–perceptual accent labels

In [Rey94b], an inventory of prosodic labels for the speech data in VM along the lines of ToBI, cf. [Sil92, Bec94], is described that contains additionally a 'functional' accent tier as well amongst other tiers. Accents depend on the presence of a prosodic boundary. The following different types of boundaries were labelled by the VM partner University of Braunschweig, cf. [Rey94b]:

- Full intonational boundary B3 with strong intonational marking with/without lengthening or change in speech tempo
- Minor (intermediate) phrase boundary with rather weak intonational marking B2
- Normal word boundary B0 (default, not labelled explicitly)
- "agrammatical" boundaries indicating hesitations or repairs B9

The following different types of accents were labelled as well:

- The primary, main accent PA is on the most prominent word within an intonational phrase which is bracketed by B3. As a principle, there should be only one PA per phrase, but more than one PA can be marked if there are several equally prominent words.
- All other accentuated words are labelled with a secondary accent SA.
- If the PA is extraordinarily accentuated, it can be labelled as emphatic/contrastive accent EC.

These accent labels will serve as reference for our accent rules. They have been taken as data for the training of statistical classifiers as well, cf. [Kie97]. Table 3 shows the pertaining figures for BS–TRAIN, the sample annotated perceptually with accent labels which served as training database, and the corresponding figures for BS–TEST which served as test database. BS–TRAIN and BS–TEST are mostly entailed in CD1; for all German VM CD–ROMs, Table 2 shows number of dialogues, turns, and minutes.

Note that there are, however, some drawbacks in this approach if one wants to use this information in the processing of the higher modules. Prosodic labelling by hand is very

CD	1	2	3	4	5	7	12	14	$\sum$
# dialogue	63	81	45	72	101	68	207	156	793
# turns	1840	1537	1214	1517	2154	1737	2034	1891	13924
# minutes	263	212	151	200	331	279	313	286	2035

Table 2: The German VM CD–ROMs

sample	UA	SA	PA	EC	$\sum$	# dialogue	# turns	# min.
BS–TRAIN	8134	1853	3125	162	13274	30	797	96
BS–TEST	850	279	412	6	1547	3	64	11

Table 3: Frequency of the prosodic–perceptual labels

time consuming, the database up to now is therefore rather small, cf. Table 3. On the other hand, large labelled databases are needed for the training of statistical models, which in the case of word recognition, where statistical HMM models have been used for two decades, can be obtained at much lower cost than prosodic labels, cf. [Ost93]. Especially in the case of accent labelling, inter–labeller agreement is often not very high, cf. [Rey98].

A comparison of Tables 2 and 3 shows that approx. twenty times the amount of data is available for the training of a classifier if we are not confined to the prosodic–perceptual labels.

5 Starting point: the M labels

Because of the disadvantages of the purely perceptual labelling described in the last section, we wanted to develop an automatic labelling of accent position based on the syntactic–prosodic phrase. Such a phrase is denoted to its left either by the beginning of the turn (no M label but it can be assigned automatically) or by a M label, and to its rigth again by a M label or by the end of the turn; note that following our new labelling conventions, a M label is denoted even at the end of the turn. (The first version of the M annotation scheme is described in [Bat96], the revised version in [Bat98].)

As we have to deal with spontaneous speech, agrammatical boundaries (at repetitions, restarts, repairs, etc.), henceforth 'I'–boundaries for 'irregular', can be found as well; these are labelled already in the basic transliteration and are re–coded as the so called I labels, cf. [Bat96]. In our context, such a label functions most of the time the same way as the M labels, i.e., it triggers the assignment of the 'accent phrase' (henceforth AP) which is the domain for the assignment of the accent. Very short irregular passages, however, as, e.g., *dann treffen wir uns IRB am IRE am Mittwoch* should be skipped. Such a rule might be: skip irregular passages if they do not contain content words that can be the carrier of the phrase or 'primary' accent.

For the assignment of our accent rules, we need two pieces of information: first, the number of words in the AP; this is a rather straightforward task. Second, for each word the word class (part–of–speech: POS) it belongs two.

6 Annotation of the lexicon with part–of–speech labels

For the automatic assignment of phrase accent position starting from the syntactic–prosodic M labels, we have to know the POS of each word which is therefore annotated in the lexicon. This lexicon contains all word forms than can be found in the VM CD–ROMs 1–5, 7, 12, 14. The POS is coded with one unique alphabetic character for each word. Besides, there exist special lists of words that can have different syntactic functions or semantic meanings depending on whether they are accentuated or not, cf. below.

Normally, the POS can only be annotated unequivocally if the syntactic context is known. For the isolated word form in the lexicon we have to find a compromise using the following strategy:

- If in doubt, we rely on the transliteration, e.g., in the case of near-homographs where the initial letter (capital vs. small letter) can tell apart noun from adjective
- Probability in general
- Probability in the VM scenario
- Specification if possible (unequivocal morphology)
- Underspecification if necessary, i.e. if we cannot tell apart different POSs

Details can be found in [Nut98]. In Table 4, each POS label is described shortly. In the following, we will describe shortly the classes and give examples for them.

n: Noun complete noun or transparent noun fragment

e: proper name (E*igenname*) person, city, etc.

k: copulative verb (K*opula*) *sein, werden, haben*

m: auxiliary (M*odalverb*) *dürfen, mögen, können, müssen, sollen, wollen*

label	part of speech POS	cover class	main class
n	**N**oun	NOUN	CW
e	proper name (**E***igenname*)	NOUN	CW
m	auxiliary (**M***odalverb*)	AUX	FW
k	copulative verb (**K***opula*)	AUX	FW
v	**V**erb (all other verbs)	VERB	CW
i	**I**nfinitive (or 1./3. pers. plur.)	VERB	CW
r	pa**R**ticiple (present/past, not inflected)	APN	CW
g	adjective, not inflected (**G***rundform*), predicative/adverbial	APN	CW
d	a**D**jective, inflected (attributive)	API	CW
a	**A**rticle, pronoun	PAJ	FW
p	**P**article (adverb, preposition, conjunction)	PAJ	FW
j	inter**J**ection	PAJ	FW
b	character (**B***uchstabe*, spelling mode)	NOUN	CW
F	**F**ragment (of a noun, with capital letter)	NOUN	CW
f	**f**ragment (¬noun, with small letter)	API	CW
s	**s**pecial words (list)	PAJ	FW
y	particle verb (list and rule)	VERB	CW
z	particle verb particles (list)	PAJ	FW
*	not accentuated (list)	*	*

Table 4: parts–of–speech in the lexicon

v: Verb all other verbs, inflected

i: Infinitive infinitive (or 1./3. pers. plur.)

r: paRticiple participle, present/past, not inflected (*-t, -en, -end*)

g: adjective (G*rundform*) not inflected (in predicative/adverbial position)

d: aDjective inflected, attributive, including inflected participle

a: Article/pronoun
definite: *der, die, das*; indefinite: *einer, eine, eines*; personal: *ich, du, er, sie, es, wir, ihr, sie, ...*; reflexive: *sich*; possessive: *mein, dein, sein, ...*; demonstrative: *diese(r/s), derjenige, ...*; indefinite: *jemand, etwas, niemand, nichts, alle, sämtliche, jeder, kein, mancher, mehrere, einige, man*; interrogative: *wer, wessen, wen, wem, was*; relative: *der, die, das, welche(r,s), was*

p: Particle not inflected, comprising:
adverb: local: *da, dort, oben, ...*; temporal: *jetzt, niemals, immer, ...*; modal: *allein, fast, kaum, genau, ...*; causal: *daher, dadurch, ...*; pronominal: *darauf, darüber, ...*
preposition: local: *an, auf, in, ...*; temporal: *an, in, um, ...* ; causal: *wegen, durch, ...*; modal: *ohne, mit, ...*
conjunction, coordination: *aber, und, ...*
conjunction subord..: *daß, um, ohne, ...*; temporal: *bis, während, ...*; causal: *weil, da, ...*; final: *damit, daß, ...*; conditional: *wenn, falls, ...*; concessiv: *obwohl, ...* modal: *indem, wie, ...*

j: interJection
sensation: *ah, au, hurra, igitt, oh, owe*; **address:** *hallo, he, heda, hey, tschüs, dalli, hü, pscht*; **onomatopoetic:** *hahaha, hatschi, miau, kikeriki, peng, klirr*; **discourse:** *hm, ja, aha, genau, richtig, bitte?, was?*; **response:** *ja, nein*

b: character (B*uchstabe*): spelling mode, denoted in the transliteration with a leading '$' before the character

F: Fragment noun, with capital initial letter, opaque

f: Fragment non–noun, with small initial letter, opaque

s: special word words (particles, articles, etc.) with different semantics, depending on whether they are accentuated or not

z: Particle Verb Particle (PVP) particle that *can* be part of a particle verb

y: Particle Verb (PV) verb that contains a PVP

These clases can be mapped onto six 'cover' classes:

NOUN: NOUNs, proper names, character, Fragment (CW)

AUX: AUXiliary and copulative verb (FW)

VERB: all other VERBs including infinitives but not participles (CW)

APN: Adjectives and Participles, Not inflected (CW)

API: Adjectives and Participles, Inflected, fragments (CW)

PAJ: Particles, Articles, pronouns, interJections (FW)

For the accent rules described below, we need the main classes CW and FW, and for CWs, N (NOUN), V (VERB), and their complement ¬NOUN,¬VERB, i.e., A (APN, API). Besides, information on special words (s), Particle Verbs (PV: y), and on Particle Verb Particles (PVP: z) is used. For the annotation with POS, our general strategy was to sub–specify the categories as much as possible. A mapping of subclasses onto cover classes can easily be done; the opposite automatic mapping is, however, not possible. We will not use some of the classes in the formulation of our accent rules; this could be done, however, in a later stage, if this should be necessary.

Interjections are a cover class comprising different kinds of particles. They are very often 'satzwertig', i.e., constitute a syntactic phrase; in such a case, they carry the PA. Possibly, most of them should be part of the special particle list, because they can be either accentuated or not. The term is rather traditional but can be used for this cover class.

Articles and particles are cover classes as well; each of them comprises several classes because some homographs/homophones cannot be told apart, as, e.g., *der/die/das* (definite vs. demonstrative article) and *da* (local adverb vs. causal conjunction). In any case, such particles should be listed as special particles because they can be [+/- accentuated].[2]

In the lexicon, the position of the word accent is denoted for each word. Particles with more than one syllable have one accent position denoted; particles etc. that are prone to be clitisized as well as word fragments that cannot be analyzed do not have any word accent. For the time being, we do not denote more than one (possible) word accent position per word. In the future it is planned to denote more than one (optional) accent position. Apart from lexicalized accent shift with different meaning (*umFAHren* vs. *UMfahren*), accent shift is linguistically irrelevant, as is the case in proper nouns, cf. the German city–name *ERlangen* vs. *ErLANgen*, or in numerals (*SIEbenundzwanzig* vs. *siebenundZWANzig*).

If a token can be an adjective or an adverb, it is normally listed as CW, i.e. as adjective. In the case of homographs, we decide in favour of the most likely word class; this decision

[2] As for the distinction of conjunction vs. adverbs, this might be no problem because most of the time, the position in the AP is different: typically, conjunctions are on the first position in a clause, and adverbs are most of the time – but not always – somewhere else. With other words: Their position in an AP might often disambiguate the neutralised, ambiguous POS of such words. Actually, most of these words are treated as ' special' and that means that we do not model them as [± accentuated] but as 'undefined', cf. below.

aber	ah	allerdings	also	auch
ausgerechnet	ausschließlich	bereits	besonders	bloß
da	dabei	dadurch	dafür	dagegen
daher	dann	denn	direkt	doch
eben	ebenfalls	ebenso	eher	eigentlich
ein	eine	einem	einen	einer
einfach	erst	etwa	fast	frühestens
gar	genau	gleich	gleichfalls	halt
höchstens	immer	insbesondere	ja	lediglich
mal	mhm	nicht	noch	nun
nur	oh	okay	recht	ruhig
schon	sehr	selbst	sicherlich	so
sogar	spätestens	vielleicht	wann	warum
was	weiter	weiterhin	wenigstens	wer
weshalb	weshalb	weswegen	wie	wieder
wiederum	wieso	wieviel	wieviele	wo
woanders	wobei	wofür	wohin	wohl
womit	worüber	worum	wovon	zumindest

Table 5: List with special words annotated with AU for sematic reasons

was checked in some instances: *halt*, e.g., can be modal particle or verb (imperative). In our dialogues, it is almost always a particle. *sein* is virtually always auxiliary, not pronoun because in the VM dialogues, the dialogue partners never speak about a third party.

For the time being, there are three lists of words that have to be treated in a special way:

(1) words that trigger different semantic interpretations depending on whether they are accentuated or not. This list is open, i.e., it can be supplemented if necessary. For the moment, it includes the particles (or adjectives) given in Table 5; besides that, it includes the POS 'a', i.e., articles and pronouns. Semantically salient words in general but in the VM–domain in particular, are numerals and time of day/week expressions. It is not clear yet whether we should treat them as 'normal' words or as members of this special word class.

(2) particles that can be the first part of a particle verb which behave differently compared to other verb. This list is rather close and given in Table 6.

(3) words that are not accentuated even if they are a CW (label * in Table 4); for the time being, the only word that belongs to this list is *Uhr* because in time of day expressions as *... vierzehn Uhr zwanzig ..* (2 p.m.), normally the noun is not accentuated but the numerals.

An alternative to this approach to annotate POS in the lexicon is to use the output of an automatic POS–tagger, cf. the 'STTS' described in [Sch95]. With this tagger, particle verbs

über	ab	abwärts	an
auf	aufwärts	aus	bei
dabei	daher	dahin	dar
daran	darauf	darein	davor
dazu	durch	ein	einher
entgegen	fest	her	herüber
herab	heran	herauf	heraus
herbei	herum	herunter	hervor
herzu	hin	hinab	hinan
hinauf	hinaus	hinein	hinter
hinzu	klar	los	mit
nach	ran	raus	rein
um	umher	unter	vor
voran	voraus	vorbei	vorher
weg	weiter	wider	wieder
zu	zurück	zusammen	

Table 6: List with particles that can be the first part of particle verbs.

and particle verb particles, e.g., can be labelled with a high probability; above that, tagging is generally not under–specified as it is in our approach. Some post–processing is necessary as well because auxiliaries are never treated as full verbs even if they function that way, cf. below. It turned out, however, that a POS–tagger is not very reliable in the context of agrammatical boundaries; this is not surprising because in these contexts, there are often no regular word sequences. This fact is no problem for our POS–lexicon. There are two other advantages: first, the POS–annotation is unequivocal, each word has only one POS.[3] This makes the processing of word hypotheses graphs easier. Second, a lexicon look–up takes less processing time than a tagger. This can be relevant in a 'real–life' end–to–end–system with severe time constraints as VM.

7 Preprocessing

7.1 Syntactic boundary labels

The syntactic–prosodic boundaries displayed in Table 7 are reference points for the AP to their left and trigger the assignment of accent position. '*' in column *trigger* means a 'normal' phrase; to the left of this boundary, at least one accent position must be defined.

[3]Note that this holds for the lexicon itself but is nor true for the further processing because some words are members of one or more special lists; for details, cf. [Nut98].

'*u' means that an adjacent AP is a possible AP: if this syntactic–prosodic boundary is clearly marked prosodically, then the speakers most certainly produce an additional PA that they would not produce otherwise. This means that there is an AP to the right of the respective boundary (RC1 before a right dislocation, DS1 before a postsentential discourse particle) or to its left (FM3, DS3, or DS1 after a presential discourse particle). As we presently cannot use the result of an automatic classification of boundaries for the assignment of accents, we simply define the accent positions in these APs as '*u', i.e., as undefined as for their accentuation.

In the case of AM3 and AM2, the parentheses around '*' denote that an accent position is only defined if these boundary labels do not denote the word boundary of a FW with another ambiguous boundary label AM3 or AM2 immediately to its left. By that, we prevent an accent assignment to FWs at the beginning of a sentence.

Two boundary labels do not trigger accent assignment: AC1, i.e., an ambigous boundary between constituents (typically before and after words as *auch, noch*), and any other word boundary (default, no phrase boundary).

7.2 Agrammatical boundary labels

Agrammatical boundaries are labelled in the VM basis transliteration, cf. [Koh94] and the column 'VM label' in Table 8. We simply recode these labels according to Table 8 even if we sometimes might favor another interpretation. Normally, there is a syntactic–prosodic boundary labelled at these positions that triggers accent assignment, cf. Table 7. If a syntactic–prosodic annotation is, however, not possible because the word sequence is too irregular, we define an AP to the left of IWN, IWE, IRE, and IRN. The beginning of a reparandum IRB and hesitations do not trigger accent assignment and have to be skipped. 'Nonverbals' as, e.g., hesitations, do not count as words and are for the time being skipped altogether; but cf. below Table 22.

7.3 Special word classes: Semantically important words

Examples for a different semantic interpretation of these words with [± accent] are:

FINDE ich schon vs. *finde ich SCHON*
I'll find that for sure vs. I really do believe that
Dann brauchen wir noch einen TERMIN vs. *Dann brauchen wir NOCH einen Termin*
Then we still need a date vs. Then we need another date
Dann kann ich auch am DONNERSTAG vs. *Dann kann ich AUCH am Donnerstag*
Then I can on Thursday vs. Then I can even on Thursday
Machen wir das EINFACH. vs. *MACHEN wir das einfach.*
Let's do it in a simple way vs. Let's simply do it

context (between/at)	**label**	**main class**	trigger
main clauses	SM3	M3	*
main clause and subord. clause	SM2	M3	*
subord. and main clause	SS2	M3	*
main and subord. clause, pros. int.	SM1	M3	*
subord. and main clause, pros. int.	SS1	M3	*
coord. of main/subord. clause	SC3	M3	*
subord. clause and subord. clause	SC2	M3	*
free phrase, stand alone	PM3	M3	*
seq. in free phrases	PC2	M3	*
free phrase, pros. int., no DA bound.	PM1	M3	*
left dislocation	LS2	M3	*
seq. of left dislocations	LC2	M3	*
right dislocation	RS2	M3	*
seq. of right dislocations	RC2	M3	*
'dislocation' at open verbal brace	RC1	M3	*u
embedded sentence/phrase	EM3	M3	*
pre-/postsentential particle, with <pause> etc.	FM3	M3	*u
pre-/postsent. part., ambisentential	DS3	MU	*u
pre-/postsentential particle, no <pause> etc.	DS1	MU	*u
between sentences, ambiguous	AM3	MU	(*)
between free phrases, ambiguous	AM2	MU	(*)
between constituents, ambiguous	AC1	MU	–
between constituents	IC2	M2	*
asyndetic listing	IC1	M2	*
every other word boundary	IC0	M0	–

Table 7: Syntactic–prosodic boundary labels and their main classes

agrammatical phenomena	VM label	class	trigger
word fragment and new construction	=/-	IWN	*
word fragment at end of reparandum	=/+	IWE	*
begin of reparandum	+/	IRB	–
end of reparandum	/+	IRE	*
syntax fragment and new construction	/-	IRN	*
hesitation at word end	...<Z>	IZE	–
hesitation at word beginning	...<Z>	IZB	–

Table 8: Labels for irregular boundaries

If such a word is found in an AP, it is labelled with `*u`, i.e., as AU. It is *undefined* whether it is accentuated ('starred') or not. If there are more words belonging to this class in an AP, they are treated the same way. After that, the normal accent rules apply, but the word in the 'default' accent position is not labelled as 'accentuated', i.e., only starred, but with `*u` as well, as A3U. In an AP, there can thus be two or more words with `*u`: one word as A3U, and one or more words as AU; in addition, no, one or more words with A2U labels can occur. This means that in analogy to ambiguous syntactic–prosodic boundaries, all these words should not be classified with a language model (LM) but only with an acoustic–prosodic classifier, in our case with a Multi–Layer Perceptron (MLP). Note that these words are labelled with *u, even if they are prior to the 'anteantepenultima' (fourth last word in a phrase), cf. below; in all these cases, there are thus always at least two words with *u in the whole phrase.

7.4 Special word classes: Particle verbs

Before the accent rules which are described in the following section are applied, we first check whether there is a particle verb in the AP and whether it or its two parts (particle + verb form) can be found in this AP, cf. the particle verb *abmachen* (arrange) in the sentence *dann machen wir das so ab* (let's arrange it that way).

The rules can be formulated in a straightforward way:

> **(a)** If a particle verb is found in the ultima position, and an auxiliary somewhere else in the AP, the particle verb is treated differently from all other verbs, cf. Table 10.
>
> **(b)** If the first part of a particle verb (the particle) is in ultima position, and the second part (the verb form) somewhere else in the AP, the particle is treated differently from all other particles, cf. Table 10.

The implementation of these rules is not straightforward. Note that we do not have a lemmatized lexicon; that means that we can certainly not always retrieve particle and verb from the compound form. A complete and asciisized list of all German particle verbs does not exist and would always be incomplete for systematic reasons because this is a very productive construction. The rules are therefore for the time being implemented in the following way:

> **(a')** If a verb is found in the ultima position, whose first characters can be found in the 'particle verb list', and an auxiliary verb is found elsewhere in the phrase, the verb in the ultima is starred, i.e., labelled as accentuated.
>
> **(b')** If we find a particle from the 'particle verb list' in ultima position, and if there is a verb or auxiliary somewhere else in the AP, the particle is starred, i.e., labelled as accentuated.

Rule (a)' yields a wrong result, e.g., if we find *hindern* (hinder) in ultima position, because *hin* (up to) is such a particle, but *hindern* is of course no particle verb. In this and comparable cases, the erroneous POS assignment does not matter much because a verb in ultima has often secondary accent, cf. Table 10. For rule (b)', we have for the moment no severe contraindiction. It is, however, possible that another rule would be more adequate, if we look at examples like: *dann können wir das am Montag ausmachen* (Then we can arrange that on Monday) where the noun in the penultima as well as the particle verb in the ultima can be accentuated.

7.5 Further preprocessing of the POS

For a correct assignment of accents, the word class has to be changed if there is only an auxiliary but no 'normal' verb in an AP; in this case, the auxiliary is treated as normal verb. Examples: *Am Montag kann ich* I can on Monday, *wie wäre es* what about, and *ich kann übrigens* (by the way, I can). A spelled sequence of characters is a special case of asyndetic listing, e.g., *Treffen wir uns dann auf der $I $A $A* (Then let's meet at the $I $A $A) or *Unsere nächste Geschäftsreise geht also dann in die $U $S $A* (Our next bussiness trip will be to the $U $S $A). For a German speaker, there are two default possibilities to put accents on these sequences: either only on the ultima, or on each character. This depends partly on the specific sequence, partly on speaker idiosyncratic factors. We therefore change these sequences into sequences with asyndetic boundaries, e.g., *$U $S $A* into *U* IC1 *S* IC1 *A* IC1 . The character in the ultima gets starred, all other character are treated as having a secondary accent '+'. Note that this strategy has to be checked against the prosodic–perceptual annotation. It will surely not cover all cases, especially not those with longer spelling sequences and rhythmic alternation of strong and weak elements, but it will cover a sufficiently great part.

word_{n-3}	word_{n-2}	word_{n-1}	word_n
FW in ultima			
general rules			
(FW)	(FW)	(FW)	*FW
*CW	FW	FW	FW
(FW)	*CW	FW	FW
(FW)	(FW)	*CW	FW
+CW	FW	*CW	FW
CW	*CW	FW	FW
specific rules			
(FW)	CW	CW	FW
CW	CW	CW	FW
CW in ultima			
general rules			
(FW)	(FW)	(FW)	*CW
+CW	FW	FW	*CW
CW	+CW	FW	*CW
(FW)	+CW	FW	*CW
specific rules			
(FW)	(FW)	CW	CW
(FW)	CW	CW	CW
(CW)	CW	CW	CW
CW	FW	CW	CW

Table 9: Accent rules, general, basic version

		CW	CW	FW
 word$_{n-3}$	word$_{n-3}$ word$_{n-2}$	word$_{n-2}$ word$_{n-1}$	word$_{n-1}$ word$_n$	word$_n$
		+N	*N	
		A	*N	
		V	*N	
		*N	+A	
		+A	*A	
		V	*A	
	(*N)	*N	+V	
		*A	+V	
		*V	V	
			*CW	+PVP
		*CW	+PV	

Table 10: Accent rules, specific, basic version

8 The assignment of accent position

The 'accent grammar' that will be described in the following is a rule based system with sequential control. Input is a POS sequences, especially the last four words in an AP.

In German, there is a tendency towards an accentuation in the ultima, i.e., towards the right edge of a phrase; we assume that the accent is somewhere on the last four words of an AP. In the rules, word$_{n-3}$ is the fourth last word (anteantepenultima), word$_{n-2}$ the third last word (antepenultima), word$_{n-1}$ the second last word (penultima), and word$_n$ the last word (ultima) in an AP. The above described rules for particle verbs can thus be formulated as follows:

Let CW(PV) be any particle verb and FW(PV) any particle that can form the first part of a particle verb PVP, then:

(a") word$_n$ = *CW(PV)

(b") CW(2. part of PV) in word$_1$, ..., word$_{n-3}$, word$_{n-2}$, word$_{n-1}$ AND word$_n$ = *FW(PV)

These rules for particle verbs apply first, those described in the following second.

With 15 different POS-classes and a phrase–length of up to four words, $(15 * 14 * 13 * 12) + (15 * 14 * 13) + (15 * 14) + 15 = 45715$ different sequences are theoretically possible without POS-repetition. If we map these 15 classes onto the six cover classes VERB, NOUN, API, APN, PAJ, and AUX, the possible combinations are reduced to $(6*5*4*3)+(6*5*4)+(6*5)+6=512$. If we further map these 6 classes onto the two main classes, FW and CW, $2^4+2^3+2^2+2=30$ sequences are possible with POS–repetition and do occur as well in our database. For a sub–sample of all VM–CDROM's, table 11 shows the top 50 sequences for 15 and 6 classes, as well as the 30 sequences for 2 classes, with frequency of occurrence. The names are self-explaining; 'AdjN' means 'adjective, not inflected', 'AdjI' means 'adjective, inflected'.

If we can formulate the rules with only the two main classes, the position of the accent(s) is given in a first, basic version in Table 9. Bracketed positions are optional but of course the optional position at word$_i$ presupposes that all positions word$_{i+1}$ ... word$_{n-1}$ are not empty. This is the case for a FW in ultima position, and no CW or an alternation of CW's and FW's in the second and third last position (word$_{n-1}$ and word$_{n-2}$). It is also the case for CW in ultima together with FW in penultima position. For all other constellations (no position of accent denoted in Table 9) with at least two adjacent CW's in the last three positions (CW clash), we need more detailed rules. '*' denotes primary accent, '+' denotes secondary accent. If necessary, secondary accent can either be modelled together with primary accent, or together with 'no accent'; this a matter to be solved empirically - we will, e.g., have a look at the correlation of our rules with the perceptual–prosodic labels.

For the specific rules for a CW clash, we need the POS N(oun) N and V(erb) V with their complement A ($\neg$N,$\neg$V). These are given in Table 10 in a first, basic version, together with the rules for PVs and PVPs. Note that for the moment, only the starred positions are fixed. It is a matter of empirical evaluation whether the positions of secondary accents (+) are valid or whether for some constellations, they should better be modelled with either primary accent or with no accent.

Table 12 shows one example for each rule given in Tables 9 and 10; the rule–based labels are described in Table 19. Note that it is easy to find cases that possibly are not covered or contradicted by our rules. This can be traced back to different factors:

- We have stressed above that the degree of freedom is rather high for different degrees of accentuation, esp., for words that can carry the SA; these words can as well have PA or no accent. This is no matter to be solved with examples but only via statistical distribution. Using introspection, native speakers can often find (slightly) different accent pattern for one and the same AP.
- There can always be idiomatic expressions with an accent distribution that is not covered by our rules.
- Of course, there can be some erroneous POS labels or M labels.
- POS is not unequivocal; this causes the wrong analysis in Table 12 for the line: '+A *A FW *auf halb A2 drei A3 einigen SM3*'. *einigen* is here not an pronoun but a verb. The analysis is wrong, the result of the wrong application of a rule, however, is correct:

a verb as well as a FW is unaccentuated in this context. We do not know whether this phenomenon – wrong analysis but correct placement of accents – is rare or not but anyhow, it helps to improve the classification results.

We do not assume a total de–accentuation of that CW in a CW CW sequence that is not the carrier of the PA but annotote it most of the time with a SA. Two factors might be responsible for that: first, a CW clash is not automatically an accent clash if there are de–accentuated syllables in between. Second, there might be something like an accent spreading from the PA onto the adjacent CW resulting in a SA on that CW. The choice between these two explanations can depend on whether one considers accent to be a phenomenon based on the syllable (phonetic point of view) or based on the word (syntactic–semantic point of view). Actually, the underlying reason does not matter as long as the phenomenon is modelled adequately.

For classification, the rules given in Tables 9 and 10 were slightly modified, cf. Tables 15, 16, 17, and 18. There might still be some inconsistencies in the formulation of our rules but for the moment, we do not want to make them fully consistent simply because we do not know yet which formulation is – from a statistic point of view – the most adequate one.

The parameters relevant for the assignment of accent position in our approach are thus:

- POS
- position in the AP
- rhythm (alternation of accentuated and unaccentuated syllables/words
- possibly accent spreading

There is a tendency toward the following hierarchy:

1. CW > FW
2. NOUN > APN/API > VERB
3. *Rightmost–principle*
4. special words (lists, classes)

That means that CW is stronger than FW. Within CWs, nouns are stronger than adjective/participles, which in turn are stronger than verbs. Within members of the same classes, the rightmost-principle is applied, i.e., a word is stronger than a word belonging to the same POS–class and positioned to its left. Of course, these rules have to be modified, especially, if the so called 'special words' are involved.

POS		cover classes		main classes	
#	sequences	#	sequences	#	sequences
3524	Intj	6558	PAJ	6621	FW
2603	Part	1100	APN	3395	FW FW FW CW
1061	AdjN	847	NOUN	2869	CW
659	Noun	793	PAJ PAJ PAJ NOUN	2293	FW FW CW CW
595	Char Char Char Char	772	PAJ NOUN	1784	FW CW FW CW
583	AdjI Noun	735	PAJ PAJ	1654	FW CW
582	Frag	732	API	1590	CW CW
485	Part Noun	684	PAJ PAJ PAJ PAJ	1220	FW FW FW FW
443	Art Noun Cop Prop	658	PAJ PAJ API NOUN	1211	CW FW FW CW
431	Art	652	NOUN NOUN NOUN NOUN	1116	FW FW CW
407	Part Part	591	API NOUN	1001	CW FW CW CW
407	Part Art AdjI Noun	561	PAJ PAJ PAJ VERB	966	FW FW
310	Noun Prop	555	PAJ PAJ NOUN VERB	963	FW FW CW FW
297	Part Art Noun Inf	447	PAJ NOUN AUX NOUN	884	CW CW CW CW
293	Art Verb	403	PAJ PAJ PAJ APN	802	FW CW CW CW
271	Verb Noun	399	VERB PAJ PAJ PAJ	658	FW CW FW FW
262	Part Part Art Noun	394	NOUN NOUN	601	CW FW FW FW
237	Part Art	369	PAJ VERB	595	FW CW CW FW
211	Part Noun Art AdjI	326	AUX PAJ PAJ NOUN	563	FW FW FW
211	Part Art Noun	313	PAJ PAJ NOUN	491	CW CW FW CW
195	Noun Art AdjI Noun	310	VERB NOUN	443	FW CW FW
188	Art Part Art Noun	301	PAJ PAJ NOUN PAJ	418	CW FW CW
175	Art Noun	299	AUX PAJ PAJ APN	414	FW CW CW
156	Art Verb Part	284	PAJ VERB PAJ PAJ	337	CW FW CW FW
152	Part Part AdjI Noun	276	PAJ NOUN PAJ NOUN	303	CW FW
150	AdjI	275	PAJ AUX PAJ	252	CW CW FW FW
141	Part Art Noun Part	272	PAJ NOUN PAJ API	176	CW CW CW
132	Art Part Part Inf	264	PAJ VERB PAJ	172	CW CW CW FW
130	Art Cop AdjN	248	NOUN PAJ API NOUN	165	CW FW FW
124	Part Part AdjN Noun	239	PAJ APN	114	CW CW FW
117	Art AdjI Noun Inf	239	AUX PAJ PAJ PAJ		
113	Noun Art AdjI	226	AUX PAJ PAJ VERB		
112	Noun Part Art Noun	216	PAJ AUX PAJ PAJ		
110	Cop Art Part Noun	212	NOUN PAJ PAJ NOUN		
108	Cop Art Part AdjN	204	PAJ PAJ PAJ		
108	Art AdjN	201	PAJ API		
104	Prop	190	VERB		
104	Part AdjN	189	PAJ PAJ APN NOUN		
103	Art Part Part Part	188	PAJ AUX PAJ NOUN		
102	Verb Art Part Part	173	PAJ AUX PAJ VERB		
102	Part Part Part Noun	168	PAJ API NOUN VERB		
100	Inf	164	PAJ PAJ PAJ API		
100	AdjN Noun	161	PAJ NOUN PAJ VERB		
99	Art Noun Part Inf	159	PAJ AUX PAJ APN		
96	AdjN Part AdjN Noun	151	PAJ API NOUN		
93	Part AdjI	149	PAJ AUX		
90	Verb	145	PAJ AUX APN		
90	Part Part Art Part	138	NOUN PAJ NOUN VERB		
89	Part Art Part Part	126	PAJ PAJ NOUN AUX		
89	Art Part Part AdjN	125	PAJ API NOUN PAJ		

Table 11: Distribution of sequences (POS, cover classes, main classes): The top 50

sequences	... word_{n-4} word_{n-3}	word_{n-2}	word_{n-1}	word_n
general rules				
FW in ultima				
FW FW FW *FW	und dann AU	wieder AU	gleich AU	hier A3:AU SM3
FW FW *FW		daß	wir	vielleicht A3:AU IC2
FW *FW			bei	mir A3 SM3
*FW				ja A3:AU FM3
*CW FW FW FW	wie sieht A3	es	bei	Ihnen IC2
FW *CW FW FW	kein	Problem A3	für	mich PM3
*CW FW FW		treffen A3	wir	uns IC2
FW FW *CW FW	wenn	das	klappen A3	würde SM3
FW *CW FW		da AU	ginge A3:AU	es RC1
*CW FW			sagen A3	wir EM3
+CW FW *CW FW	wie lange A2	wir	brauchen A3	werden SM3
CW *CW FW FW	... angemessene	Zeit A3	zu	sein SM3
CW in ultima				
FW FW FW *CW	... können wir	ja AU	gleich AU	sagen A3:AU SC2
FW FW *CW		wie	das	aussieht A3 SM3
FW *CW			der	Mittwoch A3 LS2
*CW				Moment A3 EM3
+CW FW FW *CW	kurz A2	vor	dem	Mittagessen A3 SM3
CW +CW FW *CW	den ganzen	Tag A2	hindurch	Termine A3 SM3
FW +CW FW *CW	zum	Beispiel A2	am	Montag A3 IC2
+CW FW *CW		geht A2	in	Ordnung A3 PM3
specific rules				
+N *N FW		Anfang A2	August A3	eventuell SM3
+N *N			Herr A2	Mohr A3 PM3
A *N FW		vielen	Dank A3:AU	denn AU DS1
A *N	das ist	der	erste	Advent A3 SM3
V *N FW	aber AU ich	kann IZE	Sie A3:AU	dafür AU IC2
V *N		wie	wär'	Mittwoch A3 IC2
*N +A FW	... wir jetzt alle	Termine A3	festgelegt A2	haben SS2
*N +A	ziemlich	mit	Terminen A3	belegt A2 SM3
+A *A FW	auf	halb A2	drei A3	einigen [sic!] SM3
+A *A	... bedank' mich	auch AU	recht A2:AU	herzlich A3:AU SM3
V *A		ich	komme	bestimmt A3 SM3
V *A FW	wir	sollten	unbedingt	bald IC2
*N +V FW	IZE am IZE	Samstag A3	versuchen A2	würden SM3
*N +V	beim	Glas	Wein A3	sitzt A2 SC3
*A +V	daß das	zu	lange A3	geht A2 SM3
*A V			blau A3	machen LS2
*A V FW	um	vier	kommen	können SS2
*V V	das müßte	sich	einrichten A3	lassen SM3
*V V FW	ob wir das	machen	lassen	dann SM3
*PVP	wie	sähe	das	aus A3 RS2
*CW PVP	die	passende	Atmosphäre A3	an A2 SM3
*PV	ich	würde	deshalb	vorschlagen A3 SM2
*CW +PV		ein AU	Treffen A3:AU	ausmachen A2:AU SM3
*CW +PV FW	daß wir	April A3	vorziehen A2	sollten SM3

Table 12: Examples for sequences

word$_{n-1}$	word$_n$	annotate	with primary accent
∗NOUN	VERB	100%	70%
∗NOUN	AUX	100%	70%
PAJ	∗NOUN	100%	50%
PAJ	∗API	100%	50%
PAJ	∗APN	100%	50%
Artikel	∗VERB	40%	25%
Artikel	∗AUX	40%	25%

Table 13: Rules for word sequences before the last four words.

If a phrase contains more than four words, first the last four words are processed, then the words before these last four words. First, we wanted to label all CWs in these sequences with a secondary accent. By that, however, too many positions are annotated, if we compare them with the acoustic–perceptual labels. We therefore take into account pairs of words and their POS; theoretically, we can tell apart $15 * 15 = 225$ different combinations. Those given in Table 13 are chosen for accent assignment. In a sequence NOUN VERB, e.g., NOUN is annotated with 100%, with 70% as primary accent and with 30% with secondary accent. With these distributions, we try to approximate the distribution found in the training data. Most of the time, an IC2 label, i.e., a constituent boundary within a larger phrase/clause, could have been annotated; by that, the number of exceptionally long APs could have been reduced considerably. The labelling of IC2 is obviously not a very easy task, cf. [Bat98]; maybe it should be conducted again in a later stage.

In Figure 1, we show in idealized form the flow chart of our accent assignment procedure.

The treatment of accents within ambiguous phrases, i.e., phrases delimited with an ambiguous boundary, is more difficult. Often, ambiguous boundaries are annotated as pairs, as in *Das geht* AM3 *vielleicht* AM3 *am Samstag* (That's possible AM3 maybe AM3 on Saturday). This is, however, not always the case. We thus have to formulate rules for two different constellations:

case 1: After some words $\omega_i \dots \omega_{i+n}$, an ambiguous boundary is annotated. Then, some other words $\omega_{i+n+1} \dots \omega_{i+n+k}$ and a triggering boundary follow.
Phrase $\omega_i \dots \omega_{i+n}$ and phrase $\omega_{i+n+1} \dots \omega_{i+n+k}$ are analyzed separately, and in addition, phrase $\omega_i \dots \omega_{i+n}\omega_{i+n+1} \dots \omega_{i+n+k}$ is analyzed as a whole. All accent positions found are labelled as ambiguous: ':Amb'.

case 2: Word sequence and first boundary are the same as above. The second boundary is as well an ambiguous boundary. Again, these two phrases are analyzed separately, and in addition, phrase $\omega_i \dots \omega_{i+n}\omega_{i+n+1} \dots \omega_{i+n+k}$ is analyzed as a whole. Then $\omega_{i+n+1} \dots \omega_{i+n+k}$ is kept in memory and attached to the left of the next phrase to

```
/*** input ***/
initialize lexicon
FOR all turns
    analyze turn, generate phrases (triggering boundaries)
    FOR each phrase
        /*** preprocessing ***/
        FOR each word of the phrase
            define POS with a lexicon look–up
        annotate special words
        /*** analysis ***/
        find the last (four) words in the phrase
        apply accent rule
        /*** analysis of the rest of the phrase ***/
        IF    # words > 4
        THEN  analyze rest of the phrase
        /*** output ***/
        output
```

Figure 1: Idealized accent assignment procedure.

be analyzed. This procedure is applied iteratively, until a triggering boundary follows, which means that case 1 applies. All accent positions found are labelled as ambiguous: ':Amb'.

The combination of case 1 and case 2 makes it possible to process an arbitrary number of sequences of ambiguous boundaries. If there is more than one ambiguous boundary, the words are processed twice, first with the context to the left and then with the context to the right. If a word is given two accent labels with the same strength, the second is ignored; if it is labelled with primary and secondary accent at the same time, the stronger accent wins. In the future, these ambiguous boundaries shall be classifed with a MLP as either boundary or not before our accent rules are applied, i.e., there will be no need to treat these cases in a special way.

Even if Figure 1 is formulated for a whole turn, this is not necessary; in an incremental approach, it is as well possible to process one increment/phrase after the other.

In our database, many non-verbals as, e.g., breathing, coughing, etc., are annotated. These are disregarded in our approach and thus annotated as unaccentuated via default. If we take into account these non-verbals in the classification, results get better, cf. below.

	word_{n-3}	word_{n-2}		word_{n-1}		word_n	
rule: FW *CW						# phrases: 337	
PA				9	(2.7%)	205	(60.8%)
SA				11	(3.3%)	85	(25.2%)
$\sum$				20	(5.9%)	290	(86.1%)
rule: FW FW *CW						# phrases: 159	
PA		3	(1.9%)	9	(5.7%)	95	(59.7%)
SA		17	(10.7%)	11	(6.9%)	42	(26.4%)
$\sum$		20	(12.6%)	20	(12.6%)	137	(86.2%)
rule: *NOUN +APN/API						# phrases: 34	
PA				18	(52.9%)	11	(32.4%)
SA				7	(20.6%)	7	(20.6%)
$\sum$				25	(73.5%)	18	(52.9%)

Table 14: Mapping of primary accent given for three POS–sequences onto the acoustic–perceptual labels PA and SA

9 Correlation of annotations

Emphatic accent can practically be on any word, even if some accentuations can only be imagined in a rather peculiar co–textual setting. Generally, the degree of freedom might be higher for accentuation than for boundary marking.[4]

These two factors cannot be controlled with our rules. Above that, our rules are only statistic rules, i.e., they try to model frequent constellations. There are always phrases, especially idiomatic phrases, that cannot be accounted for by our rules.

We have tried to modify our rules by looking at the actual distribution of primary and secondary accents in our training data; these modified rules are given below, in Tables 15 to 18. In Table 14, three rules are given, the third one being such a modified rule, together with the frequency of the POS-sequences they are applied to, and together with the mapping onto the acoustic–perceptual labels PA and SA. We can see that the first two rules are 'good' rules for a two class–problem 'accentuated vs. not accentuated' but not that good if we try to tell apart SA and PA. The third rule, however, is sub–optimal, because for a two-class-problem, only 53% are correct for the last two word. We believe that at least three factors are responsible for that; cf. above the factors discussed in connection with Table 12:

[4]This might be the reason why often, recognition rates for accents are a bit lower than those for boundaries, other things being equal, cf. [Bat97].

word_{n-3}	word_{n-2}	word_{n-1}	word_n
FW	FW	FW	∗FW
+CW	FW	FW	FW
FW	+CW	FW	FW
FW	FW	∗CW	FW
+CW	FW	∗CW	FW
∗CW	CW	FW	FW
–	FW	FW	∗FW
–	+CW	FW	FW
–	FW	∗CW	FW
–	–	FW	∗FW
–	–	+CW	∗Partikel
–	–	+CW	∗FW
–	–	–	∗FW

Table 15: rule–class: rule–FW

- Telling apart PA from SA is not an easy task and the results are therefore possibly not very robust, cf. [Rey98].
- The database annotated with acoustic–perceptual labels is rather small.
- There might simply be too much variability in POS sequences like this one that cannot be captured by rules with such a rather coarse granulation.

Note that in Table 14, we have not yet taken into account the special words labelled with AU. For these words, our rules do not want to predict accentuation; instead, a classifier trained with the acoustic–perceptual labels should be used.

Generally, we want to stress that our goal is not to model perception but to use accent information in higher linguistic modules, cf. our discussion of this topic for boundary classification in [Bat98]. For this task, it might thus not be optimal to rely too much on perception. In a sophisticated system, it could be necessary to use two different accent classifiers, one for processing in syntax and semantics along the lines of our syntactic-prosodic rules, and another one for special accent constellations (special words), cf. section 12.

Table 19 shows all labels used. Tables 20 and 21 show the correspondence for BS-TRAIN with percent values for rows and columns, respectively. Otherwise, the figures are the same. In Table 20, we see that 77% of all A0 and 80% of all AU correspond to UA; for the rest, A0 corresponds more to SA than to PA; for AU, it is the other way round. The differences between these two classes are, however, rather small. A2 is halfway in between A0 and A3 and thus the weakest category with only 38% correspondence with SA. The complement, i.e., 'bad errors' are, however, only 31% correspondence with UA if we sum up

word_{n-3}	word_{n-2}	word_{n-1}	word_n
FW	FW	FW	*CW
*NOUN	FW	FW	*CW
*API	FW	FW	*CW
*APN	FW	FW	*CW
CW	FW	FW	*CW
+CW	+API	FW	*CW
+CW	+APN	FW	*CW
+CW	CW	FW	*CW
FW	+CW	FW	*CW
–	FW	FW	*CW
–	+CW	FW	*CW
–	–	FW	*CW
–	–	–	*CW

Table 16: rule–class: rule–CW

word_{n-3}	word_{n-2}	word_{n-1}	word_n
–	CW	*CW	+particle verb particle
–	+CW	*particle verb	FW
–	+NOUN	*NOUN	FW
–	*NOUN	VERB	FW
–	*NOUN	+APN/API	FW
–	+APN/API	*APN/API	FW
–	+APN/API	*NOUN	FW
–	*APN/API	Verb	FW
(*NOUN)	*VERB	VERB	FW
–	VERB	*NOUN	FW
–	VERB	*APN/API	*FW
–	+CW	*CW	FW

Table 17: rule–class: rule–CW–CW-FW

word_{n-3}	word_{n-2}	word_{n-1}	word_n
(+CW)	–	∗CW	+particle verb
(+CW)	(+CW)	+NOUN	∗NOUN
(+CW)	–	∗NOUN	VERB
(+CW)	(+CW)	∗NOUN	+APN/API
+CW	+CW	APN/API	∗APN/API
CW/FW	+CW	APN/API	∗APN/API
(+CW)	–	+APN/API	∗APN/API
∗NOUN	CW/FW	+APN/API	∗NOUN
(+CW)	+CW	+APN/API	∗NOUN
(+CW)	(+CW)	∗APN/API	Verb
(+CW)	(∗NOUN)	∗VERB	VERB
(+CW)	(+particle)	VERB	∗NOUN
(+CW)	(+NOUN)	∗VERB	APN/API
(+CW)	–	∗CW	CW

Table 18: rule–class: rule–CW–CW

annotation	description
	acoustic–perceptual annotations
UA	no accent
SA	secondary accent
PA	primary accent
EC	emphatic accent
	rule–based annotations
A0	no accent
A2	secondary accent
A3	primary accent
AU	special word
A2:AU	special word with secondary accent
A3:AU	special word with primary accent
A2:Amb	secondary accent in an ambiguous phrase
A3:Amb	primary accent in an ambiguous phrase
A2:AU:Amb	special word with secondary accent in an ambiguous phrase
A3:AU:Amb	special word with primary accent in an ambiguous phrase

Table 19: Acoustic–perceptual and rule–based annotations of accents.

the correspondences with the other three types SA, PA, and EC. 42% of A2:AU correspond, however, with A0 which supports the annotation of the under–specification. As for A3, 60% are correlated with PA, and there is only 16% wrong correlation for the two-class-problem. The result for A3:AU is a bit worse, 23% wrong correlations for the two-class-problem. 59% of all words are annotated with AU or with Amb (5081/8586 or 1/1.7).

In Table 21, 85% (35% + 50%) of all UA correspond to A0 or to AU. As expected, most errors can be found for A2:AU (4%) and A3:AU (6%). If we do not take into account the 23% correlation with AU for SA, the error amounts to 24% wrong correlation with A0. As expected, the correlation of SA with all A2 variants is bad, namely only 23%. The definitely wrong correlation of PA with A0 is only 13%. Note that the correlation with all A2 labels is only 12%. In contrast, 22% of EC correlate with A2 labels, and 30% with A0/AU. This might be taken as indication that the very pronounced accents EC can really sometimes be traced back to non-syntactic factors like emphasis which can be put on virtually every word. The sums for rows and columns given in Table 21 show that there is a close correspondence between PA/EC on the one hand and all A3 accents on the other hand: 3125+162 vs. 3117. This can be taken as evidence supported elsewhere, cf. [Kom97], that a prosodic phrase normally has just one phrase accent. The number of secondary accents A2 is, in contrast, much lower than the acoustic–perceptual secondary accents SA.

Figure 2 illustrates the three stages in our approach with the distribution of the pertaining labels: We started with the syntactic M boundaries and assigned each of the M3 and M2 boundary one A3 accent. These in turn are correlated with the acoustic–perceptual accents PA/EC. Approximately half of the MU boundaries should correspond to one PA/EC label. We can see that there are some additional A2 accents but of course not one per phrase, and that there are more SA labels than A2 labels.

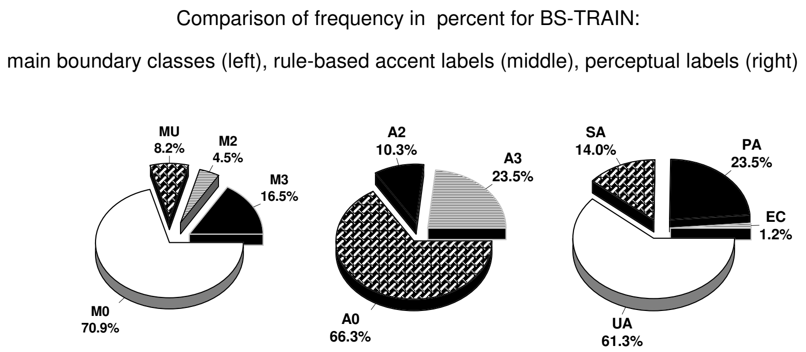

Figure 2: The three stages in our approach: syntactic–prosodic boundaries, rule–based accent positions, acoustic–perceptual accent labels

	UA		SA		PA		EC	
A0	2865	(77%)	442	(12%)	404	(11%)	19	(1%)
AU	4064	(80%)	433	(9%)	540	(11%)	29	(1%)
A2	155	(31%)	185	(38%)	142	(29%)	11	(2%)
A2:AU	319	(42%)	221	(29%)	203	(27%)	22	(3%)
A2:AU:Amb	34	(39%)	16	(18%)	35	(40%)	2	(2%)
A2:Amb	9	(56%)	2	(12%)	5	(31%)	0	(0%)
A3	115	(16%)	151	(21%)	434	(60%)	20	(3%)
A3:AU	506	(23%)	374	(17%)	1259	(57%)	58	(3%)
A3:AU:Amb	58	(33%)	23	(13%)	92	(53%)	1	(1%)
A3:Amb	9	(35%)	6	(23%)	11	(42%)	0	(0%)

Table 20: Correspondence of acoustic–perceptual and rule–based accent labels for BS–TRAIN, without non–verbals, in percent for rows.

Table 22 gives an outline of all correspondences, even those for BS-TEST which are not given in detail, cf. [Nut98]; note that the speakers of BS-TEST are not entailed in BS-TRAIN; this might explain the lower correspondence rates. If we model non-verbals as not accentuated words, the correspondences are of course slightly better. κ values for the correspondences are given in Table 23; for human labellers, [Rey98] reports κ values from 34% – 46% for secondary accents and 72% – 77% for primary accents. These results corroborate our results that secondary accents are less reliable than primary accents.

Summing up the correspondences we can say that they are reliable enough. We can thus reduce the effort for the annotation of accentuation to a large extent because the only thing we need for our rule–based labels is the annotation of POS in the lexicon, together with an annotation of M boundaries. The fact that we need annotated M boundaries can be neglected for an estimation of effort because these boundaries can be very reliably, up to more than 90%, predicted by a LM, cf. [Bat98]. Even if we would have liked a better correspondence of the rule–based labels with the perceptual–prosodic labels, we want to stress that more important is the question whether automatic classification can be improved by taking into account the rule–based labels. This question will be dealt with in the next section.

10 Automatic classification

As classifier, we use the freely available KNN simulator SNNS, cf. [Zel95]. SA, PA, and EC as well as A2 and A3 belong to the class 'accentuated'. For the training with the rule–based labels, we disregard all words labelled with AU and/or :Amb. The feature vector consists of the usual prosodic 276 features, cf. [Kie97, Bat98]. For classification, we use a MLP. In the

	UA		SA		PA		EC		Σ
A0	2865	(35%)	442	(24%)	404	(13%)	19	(12%)	8796
AU	4064	(50%)	433	(23%)	540	(17%)	29	(18%)	
A2	155	(2%)	185	(10%)	142	(5%)	11	(7%)	1361
A2:AU	319	(4%)	221	(12%)	203	(6%)	22	(14%)	
A2:AU:Amb	34	(0%)	16	(1%)	35	(1%)	2	(1%)	
A2:Amb	9	(0%)	2	(0%)	5	(0%)	0	(0%)	
A3	115	(1%)	151	(8%)	434	(14%)	20	(12%)	3117
A3:AU	506	(6%)	374	(20%)	1259	(40%)	58	(36%)	
A3:AU:Amb	58	(1%)	23	(1%)	92	(3%)	1	(1%)	
A3:Amb	9	(0%)	6	(0%)	11	(0%)	0	(0%)	
Σ	8134		1853		3125		162		**13274**

Table 21: Correspondence of acoustic–perceptual and rule–based accent labels for BS–TRAIN, without non–verbals, in percent for columns.

sample	# classes	Correspondence in percent			
		with annotation of special words		without annotation of special words	
		without non–verbals	with non–verbals	without non–verbals	with non–verbals
BS_TRAIN	2	76,9%	80,7%	77,0%	85,0%
	3	70,0%	74,6%	70,9%	81,0%
BS_TEST	2	76,7%	80,1%	71,5%	80,6%
	3	65,9%	70,8%	63,8%	75,4%

Table 22: Correspondence of acoustic–perceptual and rule–based accent labels in percent, outlook

	with annotation of special words	without annotation of special words
BS_TRAIN	0,50	0,47
BS_TEST	0,52	0,40

Table 23: κ for BS_TRAIN and BS_TEST, 2 classes

sample	training– labels	test– labels	$\mathcal{RR}$	$\mathcal{RR}_{\overline{C}}$
BS_TRAIN	perceptual	perceptual	80,2%	79,8%
	rule–based	perceptual	79,7%	79,4%
	perceptual	rule–based (−)	69,7%	72,1%
	perceptual	rule–based (+)	76,0%	76,3%
	rule–based	rule–based (−)	78,0%	77,3%
	rule–based	rule–based (+)	74,7%	74,5%
2000 Turns	rule–based	perceptual	78,1%	77,5%
	rule–based	rule–based (+)	77,8%	76,0%
	MLP–generated	perceptual	79,9%	79,6%
4000Turns	rule–based	perceptual	77,5%	76,4%
	rule–based	rule–based (−)	74,5%	73,2%
	rule–based	rule–based (+)	78,2%	76,9%
	MLP–generated	perceptual	79,7%	79,4%
	MLP–generated	rule–based (+)	76,1%	76,9%

Table 24: Outline of classification results for different sets of training and test samples.

training phase, each class is represented with an equal number of cases which means that, if necessary, items are copied.

Table 24 shows the classification results for different sets of training and test samples.

$\mathcal{RR}$ displays the overall recognition rate, $\mathcal{RR}_{\overline{C}}$ displays the mean of the class–wise computed recognition rate. '(−)' for the rule–based labels means that all items annotated with AU or with :Amb are removed from the test sample. Experiments *with* these items are characterised with '(+)'. Not surprisingly, the best result of 80.2% could be achieved for a MLP that was trained and tested with acoustic–perceptual labels. [Kie97] reports for a similar experiment 82.6%; the samples differ slightly, and another MLP-simulator was used. A MLP trained with rule–based labels yields only slightly worse result, namely 79.7%. For these two experiments, Tables 25 and 26 display the confusion matrices.[5] The experiments *without* AU or :Amb denoted with '(−)' in Table 24 show marked differences compared to those *with* AU or :Amb denoted with '(+)', and within these '(−)'-experiments, a rule-based training yields better results than a training based on acoustic–perceptual labels.

One of the main reasons for the development of our rule–based accent labels is that by that, we have access to a ways greater training database than with only acoustic–perceptual labels. We thus conducted experiments with 2000 or 4000 turns with rule–based labels as training and BS-TEST as test sample; results are as well given in Table 24. Even if the recognition rate is high (78.1% and 77.5%) it can be seen that the recognition rate goes down

[5]Due to technical reasons, the sample sizes differ slightly.

if we enlarge the training sample and test with the acoustic–perceptual labels. Presumably, the rules model the behaviour of those speakers entailed in BS-TRAIN but not so much the behaviour of those speakers entailed in BS–TEST. In contrast, the best result for a rule-based training and test set with '(+)' could be achieved with 4000 turns, namely 78.2%. It might be possibly more adequate to use more general rules along the lines of those displayed in Tables 9 and 10.

Another possibility to enlarge the training set is a so-called bootstrap-procedure: the training set is classified with the best MLP based on the acoustic–perceptual labels. If the probability of 'accentuated' is greater than 0.5, then this word is marked as accentuated. In turn, these 'MLP–generated' labels , cf. Table 24, are taken as training set for a new MLP. It can be seen that these results are better for the classification of acoustic–perceptual labels (79.7%) and only slightly worse than those achieved with the acoustic–perceptual labels of BS-TEST, namely 80.2%. It can be expected that by removing iteratively those items with a probability around 0.5, i.e., 'uncertain candidates', we can improve recognition results, cf. [Teb95].

Figure 3 shows the probabilities for accentuation for the three classes UA, SA, and PA for BS–TEST. The distribution meets our expectations: for UA, it goes down continuoulsy from 0 to 1, for PA, it is the other way round. SA is more difficult to classifiy and does not show such a clear–cut distribution.

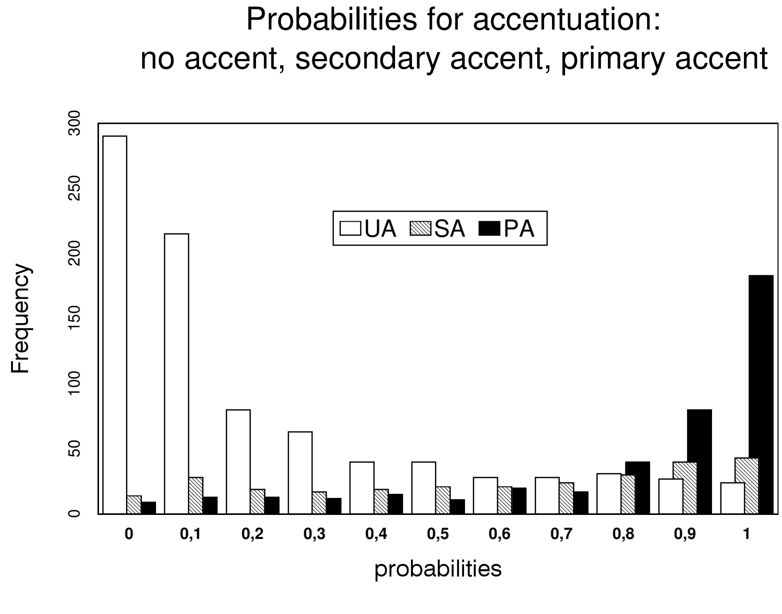

Figure 3: Probabilities for accent assignment: UA, SA, PA

Label	#	classified as	
		UA	SA, PA, EC
UA	850	84,5%	15,5%
SA, PA, EC	697	25,0%	75,0%

Table 25: Classification results for a MLP, trained with acoustic–perceptual labels ($\mathcal{RR}$ = 80,2%, $\mathcal{RR}_{\overline{C}}$ 79,8)

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Label	#	classified as	
		UA	SA, PA, EC
A0	818	82,2%	17,9%
A2, A3	671	23,4%	76,6%

Table 26: Classification results for a MLP, trained with rule–based labels ($\mathcal{RR}$ = 79,7%, $\mathcal{RR}_{\overline{C}}$ 79,4).

11 Combination of LM and MLP

In [Kom97, Bat98], we have shown that with LMs (LM) alone, boundaries can be predicted to a very large extent, and that even better results can be achieved with a combination of LM and MLP. For the experiments described in the following, we annotated CD-ROMs 1-5 with rule–based accents; all words denoted with AU or :Amb were mapped onto their respective main classes A0, A2, or A3. SA and PA together are defined as 'accentuated'. These accent labels were taken as training sample for a trigram-LM. As test sample, we again use BS-TEST, either with acoustic–perceptual or with rule–based accent labels.

With the first set of experiments, we try to classify rule–based labels in BS–TEST. The trigram-probabilities are combined with a MLP that is trained on 4000 turns with rule–based labels. Table 27 shows the results for 10 experiments with different weighting factors for LM and MLP always summing up to 1.0. With the LM alone (λ_{MLP} = 0,0), $\mathcal{RR}$ of 86,6% could be achieved which is more than 8% higher than that achieved with the MLP alone (λ_{MLP} = 1,0). Best results are achieved with a combination of LM and MLP that takes into account both classifiers to the same extent: $\mathcal{RR}$ = 87,9, λ_{MLP} = 0,5. Tables 28 and 29 show the confusion matrices for these two constellations. It can be seen that accents are recognized better with the LM alone, and that A0 is as always recognized better than A3.

With the second set of experiments, we try to classify acoustic–perceptual labels in BS–TEST. The trigram-probabilities are combined with a MLP that is trained on the rule–based

λ_{MLP}	λ_{LM}	$\mathcal{RR}$	$\mathcal{RR}_{\overline{K}}$
0,0	1,0	86,6%	86,3%
0,1	0,9	87,0%	86,8%
0,2	0,8	87,2%	86,8%
0,3	0,7	87,3%	86,7%
0,4	0,6	87,7%	87,1%
0,5	0,5	87,9%	87,1%
0,6	0,4	85,2%	84,1%
0,7	0,3	83,8%	82,6%
0,8	0,2	81,5%	80,2%
0,9	0,1	79,6%	78,2%
1,0	0,0	78,4%	76,8%

Table 27: Classification results in percent, training with rule–based labels (LM and MLP), test with rule–based labels.

	A0		A3	
A0	889	(87%)	132	(13%)
A3	76	(14%)	450	(86%)

Table 28: Classification results in percent, training with rule–based labels (LM and MLP), test with rule–based labels, results only for LM, ($\lambda_{MLP} = 0{,}0$)

	A0		A3	
A0	914	(90%)	107	(10%)
A3	81	(15%)	445	(85%)

Table 29: Classification results in percent, training with rule–based labels (LM and MLP), test with rule–based labels, results for a combination of LM with MLP, ($\lambda_{MLP} = 0{,}5$)

λ_{MLP}	λ_{LM}	$\mathcal{RR}$	$\mathcal{RR}_{\overline{C}}$
0,0	1,0	76,3%	75,3%
0,1	0,9	76,5%	75,6%
0,2	0,8	77,1%	76,1%
0,3	0,7	77,7%	76,7%
0,4	0,6	78,4%	77,5%
0,5	0,5	79,6%	78,8%
0,6	0,4	82,5%	81,9%
0,7	0,3	81,5%	81,0%
0,8	0,2	81,6%	81,1%
0,9	0,1	80,9%	80,4%
1,0	0,0	79,9%	79,5%

Table 30: Classification results in percent, training with rule–based labels (LM and MLP), test with acoustic–perceptual labels.

labels of BS-TRAIN. Results are given in Table 30. Again, the different weighting factors for LM and MLP always sum up to 1.0. With the LM alone ($\lambda_{MLP} = 0{,}0$), results are worse ($\mathcal{ER} = 76.3$) than with the MLP alone ($\mathcal{ER} = 79.9$). Again, best results are achieved with a combination of LM and MLP: $\mathcal{ER} = 82.5$, $\lambda_{MLP} = 0{,}6$.

The last set of experiments uses the same constellation as the second but a MLP that is trained with the acoustic–perceptual labels in BS–TEST. Results are almost the same as for the second set.

These results obtained so far meet our expectations that, in analogy to the classification of boundaries,

1. classification with rule-based labels is in the same range as classification with acoustic–perceptual labels or even better
2. a LM alone yields very good results
3. a combination of LM and MLP improves classification results even more.

The classification of acoustic–perceptual labels improves by more than 2% (11% reduction of error rate) and that of rule–based labels by more than 1% (10% reduction of error rate) with a combination of LM and MLP. This result that corroborates our results obtained for boundaries, cf. [Bat98], can be taken as a confirmation of the hypothesis that prosodic events like accents and boundaries are – to a large extent – not independent phenomena: not independent from each other, and not independent from syntax.

λ_{MLP}	λ_{LM}	$\mathcal{RR}$	$\mathcal{RR}_{\overline{K}}$
0,0	1,0	76,3%	75,3%
0,1	0,9	76,6%	75,6%
0,2	0,8	77,1%	76,1%
0,3	0,7	77,6%	76,7%
0,4	0,6	78,2%	77,4%
0,5	0,5	79,6%	78,8%
0,6	0,4	82,4%	81,8%
0,7	0,3	82,1%	81,6%
0,8	0,2	81,1%	80,6%
0,9	0,1	80,2%	79,7%
1,0	0,0	80,2%	79,8%

Table 31: Classification results in percent, training with rule–based labels (LM) and with acoustic–perceptual labels (MLP), test with acoustic–perceptual labels.

12 Concluding remarks

We have already pointed out above that matters are a bit more complicated for accent classification than for boundary classification. There are more degrees of freedom which can often be traced back – at least in our application – to two main functions of accentuation: first, normal, default, (out-of-the-blue) accentuation which best can be treated with a LM; we have seen that these accents can be predicted to a great extent (88%). Second, special, non-default accentuation which best can be treated with a combination of LM and MLP but with emphasis on the MLP. We have to rely on the MLP if we have to decide upon which of n possible PA's are realised or not. Lists for these special words have to be adapted to the needs of those higher linguistic modules that make use of accent information. Besides, a certain amount of 'noise', i.e., random variation, has to be faced as well. This noise is partly due to sparse phenomena which *could* be analyzed linguistically but cannot possibly be modelled statistically, partly simply due to intrinsic variation.

In a text–to–speech or content–to–speech system, the generation of a prosody which corresponds to the intention of the speaker is still a difficult task. This can partly be caused by problems encountered in the semantic content analysis if the content has to be analyzed based on speech recognition output. A sort of short–cut would be to pass prosody through as is, e.g., to use the probabilities for accentuation obtained by a classifier for generation. For shallow processing and translation without any content analysis, this might be the only manageable and possibly best solution. This means that one could use *prosodic substance* as a substitute for *semantic content* – a concept that is not far–fetched if those (possible) functions of prosody exemplified above in Table 1 really are manifested by prosodic means. In the near future, we will pursue such an approach together with our VM partner University of Bonn.

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