

"Rule B" in the Franconian tone accent area: Accent reversal in Arzbach  
(Westerwald)

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This paper shows how tonal contrasts in the Franconian tone accent area can sometimes be reversed. In particular, it presents data from the dialect of Arzbach, showing that the tone accents there have a lexical distribution which is a complete reversal of the common one.

The Franconian tone accents are distinctive word accents which consist of the so-called Accent 1 and Accent 2. In at least most areas the occurrence of these tone accents is restricted to bimoraic units.

After a brief explanation of the common lexical distribution (usually called "Rule A") and its reversal ("Rule B"), both based on the MHG vowel system, I will answer two basic questions of my research programm:

1. Are there (still) tone accents in Arzbach?

After Bach (1921) had claimed that there is a rule reversal in Arzbach the area has not been examined again. Arzbach is located close to the border of the Franconian Tone-Accent-Area, and the research history shows that in such areas a reduction or even a neutralization of the phonological opposition is possible. For that reason I examined if the accent opposition is still functionally relevant in Arzbach. I performed perception tests with potential tone accent minimal pairs following a method developed by Schmidt 1986 (Distinctivity test). In my talk I will show that there is still a recent tone accent opposition in Arzbach.

2. Are the tone accents in Arzbach following Rule B?

For this part of my research I performed a phonetic analysis of tone accent minimal pairs (pitch, duration). Then I compared my results to known phonetic data from other areas in order to classify the accents in Arzbach according to their lexical distribution. I will show that Bach's assumptions are correct and that the tone accents in Arzbach thus follow Rule B.

## **Bibliography**

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