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Some Remarks on Norwegian Prosody

The author is chiefly concerned with Standard Eastern Norwegian and will deal with the stress system, the toneme system and the length system. All three systems involve a binary opposition. An utterance falls into a number of syllables. These syllables are either stressed or unstressed. The stress system is basic and includes all syllables. It is found in all Norwegian dialects. The toneme system is lacking in some Northern and Western dialects. In the tonemic dialects the toneme system is superimposed on the stress system, but it does not include all syllables. Toneme presupposes stress, not vice versa. Tonemic opposition can only occur between sequences of one stressed syllable + one or more unstressed syllables. Auditory observation as well as fundamental frequency curves disprove the old view that isolated stressed monosyllables have the same tonetic realization as toneme 1.

It seems realistic to work with long and short vowel phonemes, but not long and short consonant phonemes. Contoid length can be varied freely without changing a word into another, while this is impossible with vocoid length.