

Stress, syllable, word?: evidence from English accents around the world

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Structure

Claims and evidence for Englishes as stress-timed and as syllable timed varieties;

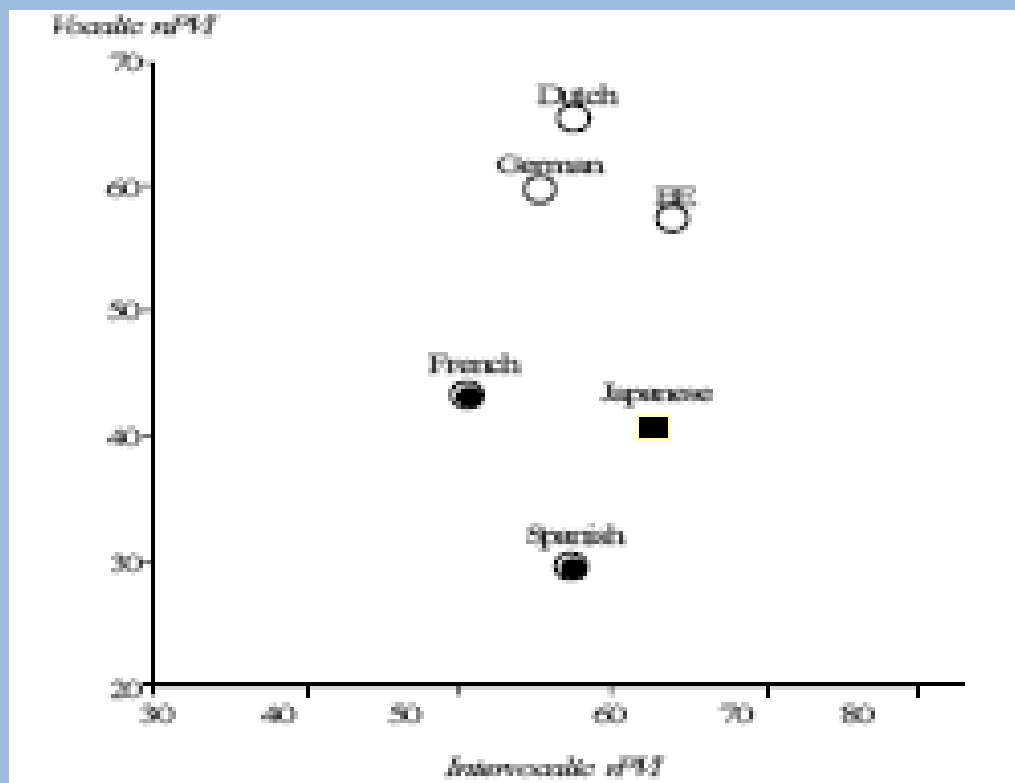
Introduction to present research, an examination of:

- How Englishes resolve hiatus;
- How they treat unstressed vowels in function words
- How they treat article allomorphy

Evidence that these may all be related in variation patterns in English

Suggestions about acquisition, contact and the status of Englishes from a prosodic typological perspective

Evidence for stress and syllable timing in English.



Grabe and Low
2002

Claims of syllable timing in varieties of English

Singaporean English (Tay 1982, Tongue 1974, Low, Grabe and Nolan 2000, Deterding 2001, Wee 2004)

Nigerian English (Bamgbose 1982, Udofot 2003)

Jamaican English (Thomas and Carter 2006)

Earlier African American English (Thomas and Carter 2006)

Chicano English (Fought and Fought 2002)

Hong Kong English (Setter 2003)

Filipino English (Gonzales and Alberca 1978, Wells 1982, Tayao 2004)

Hawaiian English (Wells 1982)

Indian English (Bansal 1990, Gargesh 2004)

Black South African English (Lanham 1990, Wissing et al 2000)

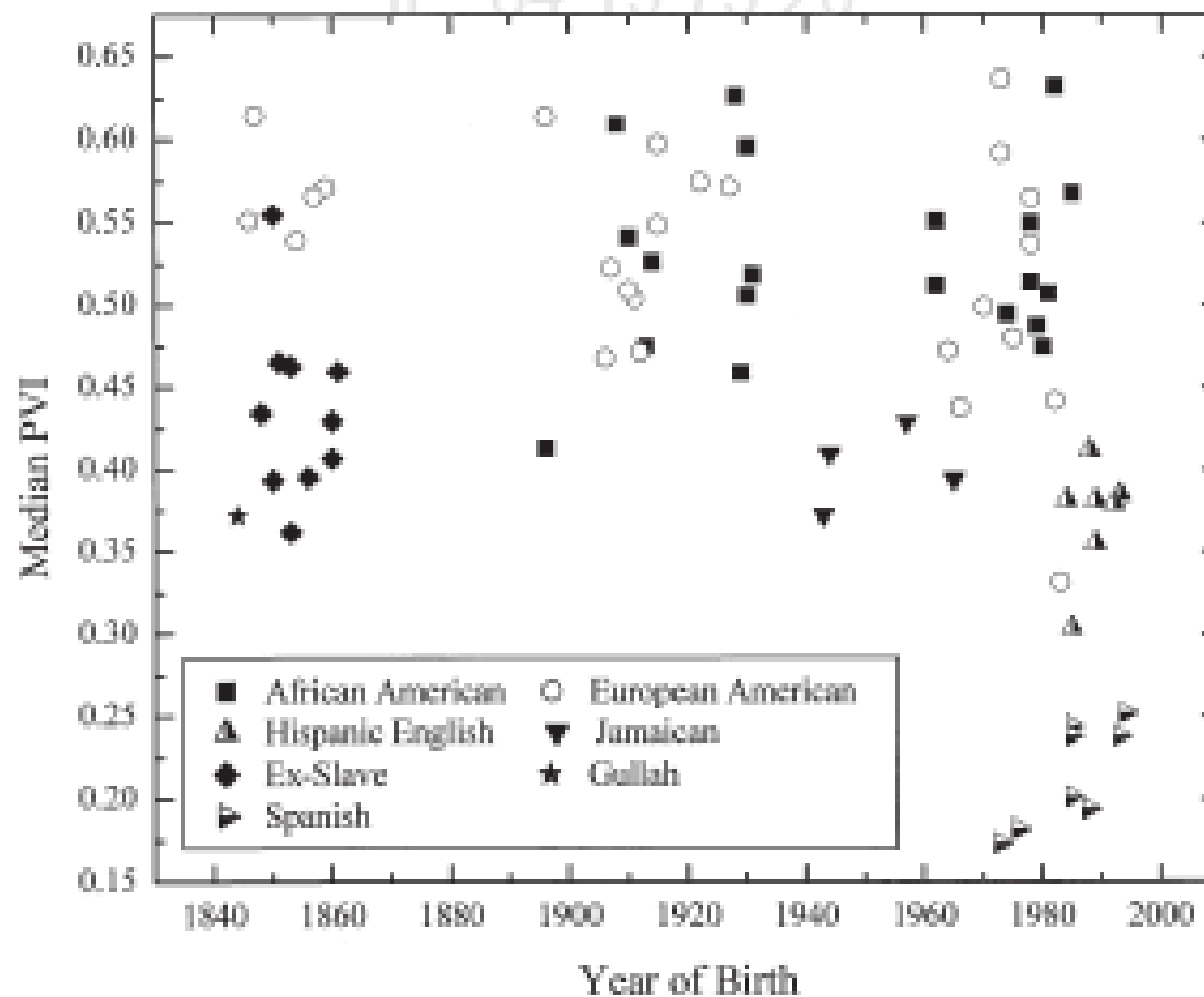
Malaysian English (Platt and Weber 1980, Baskaran 2004)

Taiwan English (Jian 2004)

Claims of syllable timing in varieties of English

Bahamian English (Childs and Wolfram 2004)
Australian Aboriginal English (Malcolm 2004)
Fijian English (Tent and Mugler 2004)
Ghanaian English (Huber 2004)
Liberian Settler English (Singler 2004)
East African English (Schmied 2004)
Pakistani English (Mahboob and Ahmar 2004)

Thomas and Carter (2006)



Claims of syllable timing in varieties of English

New Zealand English...

(Bauer 1994, Holmes and Ainsworth 1996, 1997, Warren 1997, Szakay 2006)

Maori English > Pakeha (=NZ of European origin) English

Claims of syllable timing in varieties of English

Little research *within* the UK:

Spencelayh (2001) – somewhat more syllable timed in Scotland

Ferragne and Pellegrino (2004) – East Anglian English most stress-timed of 14 British Englishes (Scottish and Inner London most syllable-timed)

East Anglian English

- > ‘One of the most interesting features of the older East Anglian dialect...is the fact that /ə/ was the **only vowel which could occur in any unstressed syllable**’ (Trudgill 2004: 165-6, my emphasis)
- > Water, butter...
- > Window, barrow...
- > Wanted, horses, running, naked, David
- > Very, money, city...

Summary

- > Widespread reports of relative 'syllable timing' in "New" contact Englishes;
- > Also in New Zealand English, but this could well be as a result of contact too;
- > NZE does demonstrate, though, evidence of spread of 'syllable timing' to L1 English European NZE speakers

Our research...

- > Collaborators: Sue Fox (Queen Mary, London); Siria Guzzo (L'Orientale, Naples); Christian Uffmann (Sussex)...
- > Examination of language variation in South East of England, in three very different communities:
 - Wisbech English (East Anglian variety);
 - Tower Hamlets English (Anglo and Bangladeshi Englishes of East London);
 - Bedford Italian English (originally 3rd generation, later 1st & 2nd too)

Locations



Aspects of variation

- Hiatus resolution
- Allomorphy in the article system
- Treatment of vowels in unstressed function words

Hiatus resolution

In non-rhotic accents, linking and intrusive /r/

Inserted after morpheme-final prevocalic non-high vowels that are final due to loss of rhoticity (linking /r/):

- i) cider bottle /saɪdə bɒtəl/
- ii) cider apple /saɪdə ɹ æpəl/

as well as those morpheme-final prevocalic non-high vowels that aren't due to the loss of rhoticity (intrusive /r/):

- iii) vodka bottle /vɒdkə bɒtəl/
- iv) vodka and tonic /vɒdkə ɹ ən tɒnɪk/

Hiatus resolution

- > Words ending in a high vowel trigger an intrusive
- > [j] if the vowel is front and unrounded:
- > e.g. Jelly and ice-cream [dʒɛliːʝənɑːskɪɪm]

- > Words ending in high vowel trigger an intrusive [w]
- > if the vowel is back and/or rounded:
- > e.g. Blue and red [bluːʷənɹɛd]

Hiatus resolution

> +n in indefinite article

i) a pear /ə pɛə/

ii) an apple /ən æpəl/

> **Vowel change in definite article**

i) the pear /ðə pɛə/

> ii) the apple /ði æpəl/

> Allomorphy...

Hiatus resolution

Function words...

- > OF [ə] before consonants,
> [ə] + intrusive /r/ OR [əv –ɒv] before vowels

- > TO [tə] before consonants,
> [tə] + intrusive /r/ OR [tu] before vowels

- > YOU [jə] before consonants,
> [jə] + intrusive /r/ OR [ju] before vowels

- > List of allomorphic function words also includes MY, BY, I

Wisbech results

OF	Before consonant:	[ə]	100%
>	Before vowel:	[əv –ɒv]	100%
TO	Before consonant:	[tə]	100%
>	Before vowel:	[tu]	100%
YOU	Before consonant:	[jə]	95.2%
	Before vowel:	[ju]	100%
V#V	Where first vowel is front and high:	[j]	100%
>	Where first vowel is back and high:	[w]	100%
	Where first vowel is non-high:	[r]	95.6%
Indefinite article: Use of 'an' before vowels			100%
Definite article: Use of /ðɪ/ before vowels			92%

Tower Hamlets (Bangladeshi)

OF	Before consonant:	[ə]	39%
>	Before vowel:	[əv –ɒv]	100%
TO	Before consonant:	[tə]	27%
>	Before vowel:	[tu]	100%
YOU	Before consonant:	[jə]	15%
	Before vowel:	[ju]	100%
V#V	Where first vowel is front and high:	[j]	62%
>	Where first vowel is back and high:	[w]	85%
	Where first vowel is non-high:	[r]	55%
Indefinite article: Use of 'an' before vowels			23%
Definite article: Use of /ði/ before vowels			19%

Tower Hamlets (Bangladeshi)

Prefer full forms of function words, even before consonants

Competing with /r w j/ as V#V hiatus resolver is /ʔ/ - glottal stop...

Avoid use of article allomorphy, preferring ‘a’ and /ɔ̃ə/ regardless of following sound, and use glottal stop to resolve hiatus

Tower Hamlets (Anglo boys)

OF	Before consonant:	[ə]	94%
>	Before vowel:	[əv – ʊv]	100%
TO	Before consonant:	[tə]	98%
>	Before vowel:	[tu]	100%
YOU	Before consonant:	[jə]	88%
	Before vowel:	[ju]	100%
V#V	Where first vowel is front and high:	[j]	96%
>	Where first vowel is back and high:	[w]	100%
	Where first vowel is non-high:	[r]	94%
Indefinite article: Use of 'an' before vowels			26%
Definite article: Use of /ði/ before vowels			36%

Tower Hamlets (Anglo boys)

Mostly retain the traditional system

BUT – shift towards the loss of allomorphy in the article system, like the Bangladeshi adolescents

3rd generation Bedford Italian English

OF	Before consonant:	[ə]	100%
>	Before vowel:	[əv – ɒv]	100%
TO	Before consonant:	[tə]	79%
>	Before vowel:	[tu]	95%
YOU	Before consonant:	[jə]	28%
	Before vowel:	[ju]	100%
V#V	Where first vowel is front and high:	[j]	62%
>	Where first vowel is back and high:	[w]	86%
	Where first vowel is non-high:	[r]	60%
Indefinite article: Use of 'an' before vowels			54%
Definite article: Use of /ðɪ/ before vowels			40%

3rd generation Bedford Italian English

Shift towards full forms of function words, even before consonants

Competing with /r w j/ as V#V hiatus resolver is /ʔ/ - glottal stop...

Avoid use of article allomorphy, preferring 'a' and /ə/ regardless of following sound, and use glottal stop to resolve hiatus

Comments 1:

The shift towards allomorphy matches acquisition patterns:

Articles

V (-high)_V

V(high)_V

MOST [?] - - - - - **LEAST [?]**

Evidence from child language acquisition suggests children acquire the complex hiatus system of English in the **reverse order** to this...

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Comments 1:

Hiatus breaking /j w/ acquired first (already present at 2;4), and used >40% at age 2, and >80% from 3-7 years

Hiatus breaking /r/ is acquired later (first instances at 2;11) and although reaching high levels beyond 3, never exceeds the levels of /j w/.

Article allomorphy is acquired latest. It doesn't reach 80% until aged 6; at aged 3 it is around 30%, and indefinite article allomorphy lags slightly behind definite.

Before they acquire these forms, children use.....[?]
(Newton and Wells 1999, 2002)

Comments 2

The use of glottal stop as a hiatus breaker instead of the complex traditional British system is also found...

....in the New Englishes that are often said to have syllable timing (Britain and Fox 2007)

....and in New Zealand English, more among Maori NZE speakers than European Nzers (Bauer 1994, Bauer and Warren 2004)

Comments 3

The use of unreduced vowels in function words is also found...

...in the New Englishes that are often said to have syllable timing (Britain and Fox 2007)

....and in New Zealand English, more among Maori NZE speakers than European Nzers (Bauer 1994, Holmes and Ainsworth 1996, 1997)

Comments 4

Is this just a matter of transfer effects from the language(s) in contact with English where the new English formed? Are syllable timing, glottal stop hiatus resolution and non-reduced function word vowels contact ‘angloversals’?

Possibly, BUT...

When we looked at 2nd generation Italians in Bedford, we found...

2nd Generation Bedford Italian English

OF	Before consonant:	[ə]	100%
>	Before vowel:	[əv – ʊv]	100%
TO	Before consonant:	[tə]	100%
>	Before vowel:	[tu]	100%
YOU	Before consonant:	[jə]	100%
	Before vowel:	[ju]	100%
V#V	Where first vowel is front and high:	[j]	100%
>	Where first vowel is back and high:	[w]	100%
	Where first vowel is non-high:	[r]	77%
Indefinite article: Use of 'an' before vowels			100%
Definite article: Use of /ðɪ/ before vowels			90%

Comments 5: Christian Uffmann (pc)

- > Glottal stops are good unmarked edges or margins to phonological constituents;
- > Change from phrase to word as the basic phonological unit for prosodification

SO....

- > A number of claims that some contact Englishes are more 'syllable timed' than British English;
- > Evidence that vowels in function words are not being reduced as they are in British English;
- > BUT
- > These same Englishes seem to be adopting glottal stop as a hiatus resolver, argued to be a characteristic of word languages.

Does this make sense?

Thank you!