

WHAT MAKES KIT HAPPY?

Péter Szigetvári

Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest

szigetvari@elte.hu

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1 HAPPY tensing: questions

unstressed KIT > FLEECE, when word final or prevocalic (Wells 1982)

happy hápi > hápi: create kriéjt > kri:éjt
zombie zómbi > zómbi: Latvia látviə > látvi:ə

Q1 Why only in unstressed position?

Q2 Why prevocalically and word finally, but not preconsonantly?

Q3 How can a light syllable becomes heavy while unstressed?

(phonetically HAPPY may not be identical to FLEECE (Fabricius 2002), the former is unstressed, the latter is stressed)

2 FLEECE is not a long vowel (nor is GOOSE one)

iy/uw (Batchelor 1809, Trager & Smith 1957, Chomsky & Halle 1968)

ij/uw (Sweet 1900), ij/uw (Lindsey 2019)

i:/u: (Jones 1917; later perpetuated in the British transcribing tradition)

| | FLEECE, GOOSE GOAT | PRICE, MOUTH, CHOICE | SQUARE, NURSE, FORCE, START |
|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| occurs unstressed? | yes | no | no |
| occurs prevocalic? | yes | yes | no |

3 The vowel inventory of British English

| | __C | __# | __V |
|--|-----|-----|-----|
| short vowels: KIT i , STRUT ə , FOOT u , DRESS e , TRAP a , LOT/CLOTH o | yes | no | no |
| long vowels: NEAR i: , NURSE ə: , CURE u: , SQUARE e: , START/PALM/BATH a: , FORCE/NORTH/THOUGHT o: | yes | yes | no |
| diphthongs: FLEECE ij , GOAT əw , GOOSE uw , FACE ej , PRICE aj , MOUTH aw , CHOICE oj | yes | yes | yes |

4 Diphthongs are VC, not VV

(Batchelor 1809, Trager & Bloch 1941, Trager & Smith 1957)

- **ə**-epenthesis after “diphthongs”: *feel* **fijəl**, *fail* **fejəl**, *file* **fajəl**, *foil* **fojəl**,
hire **hajə**, *hour* **awə**
- no hiatus filling after “diphthongs”: *rarer* **re:r>ə**, *drawing* **dro:r>inj** vs. *paying* **pejin**
lower **ləwə**
- **j** and **w** occur after long vowels (*narwhal* **na:wəl**, *Gerwig* **gə:wig**) and unstressed **i** and **ə**
(*beyond* **bijənd**, *away* **əwéj**), but not after stressed short vowels, since these are
(mis)analysed as diphthongs (*chaos* **kéjos**; *Genoa* **džénəwə** rhymes with *Ottawa* **ótəwə**;
oasis **əwéjsis** begins like *away* **əwéj**)
- diphthongs ending in **j** may not be followed by **j** and diphthongs ending in **w** may not be
followed by **w**, but they may vice versa: *Taiwan* **tájwón**, *kiwi* **kijwij**, *alleluia* **álilúwjə**
(because there are no geminate consonants)

I conclude that diphthongs (shaded in §3) are *not* part of the vowel inventory (any more than **el**, **an**, **əs**, or **ok** is).

5 The stressability scale for English

5.1 Syllable weight: VV > VC > V (cf. Hayes 1995)

| never stressed | unstressed or stressed | only stressed |
|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------|
| C < | VC#/VCV < | V < |
| VCV | VCC* | VV |
| light syllable | heavy syllable | closed syllable |
| syllabic consonant | | long vowel |

* not muta-cum-liquida

5.2 Segment sonority: nonhigh V > nonlow V > C (cf. Kenstowicz 1997)

| | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| long vowels | i: e: a: ə: o: u: | only stressed (cf. §5.1) |
| nonhigh vowels | e a o | only stressed |
| nonlow vowels | i ə u | either stressed or unstressed |
| consonants | r l m n s t... | never stressed |

note: vowel+glide+schwa strings coalesce into a long vowel, but only in stressed position (long vowels may not occur unstressed)

idea **ajdijə** > **ajdi:** *area* **é:rijə** (***é:ri:**)
secure **sikjúwə** > **sikjú:** *jaguar* **džágjuwə** (***džágju:**)

6 HAPPY tensing: answers

HAPPY “tensing” is **j**-epenthesis, which occurs word finally and prevocalically, where short vowels are not allowed: **hápi** > **hápij**; **kriéjt** > **krijéjt**.

A1 Epenthesis occurs because *VV and *V# are extended to unstressed position.

A2 Stressed KIT does not occur either prevocalically or word finally, also cf. A3.

A3 Intervocalic and word-final C-epenthesis does not make a syllable heavy; it is the least obtrusive repair. **FLEECE is not a vowel, it is KIT+yod**.

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