English stress is stable, lexical, and binary

Péter Szigetvári

Eötvös Loránd University
szigetvari@elte.hu

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three claims about English word stress

1. stress is **stable**, ie
   - stressed Vs do not become unstressed
   - unstressed Vs do not become stressed

2. stress is **lexical**, ie phonology does not manipulate which Vs are stressed and which are unstressed

3. stress is **binary**, ie a V is either stressed or unstressed, tertium non datur (so we’re not talking about binary feet here!)
how do we know if a V is stressed?

stress is relational

- first V is more prominent in *látèst, látèx*
- second V is more prominent in *lagóon, lampóon*
- ́v is the tonic if these words are final in the neutral reading of an utterance

yet, in some sense,

- the other Vs of *látèx* and *làmpóon* are also stressed
- while the other Vs of *látèst* and *lagóon* are not stressed
- why do we think so?
stress shift

**lampoon vs lagoon**

- In *lampoon* either V may be more prominent than the other: *lampóon vs lámpoon póetry*
- In *lagoon* the first V may not be more prominent than the second: *lagóon, lagóon dólphin, *lágoon dólphin*
- So both Vs in *lámpóon* are stressed, which one is more prominent is predictable from the context: *lámpóon, lagóon*

**látest vs látèx**

- The second V may not be more prominent than the first in any context in either word
- So what’s the difference?
vowel quality

according to a wide-spread assumption

- vowels reduce in unstressed position to \( \mathbf{\text{e}} \) (\( \mathbf{\text{u}} \))
- so \( \text{lÉjtÉks} \) vs \( \text{lÉjtæst} \); \( \text{lámpáwn} \) vs \( \text{lægáwn} \)
  (also \( \text{amulet} \) \( \text{ámjúlt} \), \( \text{ámjælt} \))

however, this only works if...

- we use different symbols for “normal” and “reduced” vowels: eg \( \text{æ} \) vs \( \text{ə} \); \( \text{i} \) vs \( \text{i} \) (\( \text{ʊ} \) vs \( \text{ə} \)), cf Bolinger 1986 and many others
- else vowel quality is not indicative of stress: cf
  \( \text{Kentucky} \) \( \text{kÉntákij} \) vs \( \text{Kennedy} \) \( \text{kénædíj} \);
  \( \text{today} \) \( \text{tædÉj} \) vs \( \text{Monday} \) \( \text{mándÉj} \);
  \( \text{abut} \) \( \text{əbút} \) vs \( \text{butter} \) \( \text{bútə} \);
  \( \text{begin} \) \( \text{bígin} \) vs \( \text{Biggin} \) \( \text{bígin} \)
- so we’re using the appropriate symbol only because we know which vowels are stressed in the first place
vowel reduction is history

the GP view (à la Kaye 1995)

- full vowel~reduced vowel alternations are lexical (ie not phonological): regular (analytic) affixation (eg of -ing, -ed, -ness, un-, etc) does not lead to vowel reduction, since it does not induce any change in stress

- nonanalytic (level-1) affixation may change stress; the relationship of *academy* ἀκαδημία—*academic* ἀκαδημίκ—*academician* ἀκαδημίʃan/ἀκαδημίʃan is not phonological; note that practically only the consonants are constant, like in *sing* and *sang*, or *full* and *fill*

- vowel reduction is a historical relic (like ablaut, umlaut, velar softening, or spirantization), not a phonological process, but — like in the case of velar softening or vowel shift — spelling disguises this (cf *academic*/*academician*, *hide*/*hid*, etc)
stress is stable

if we exclude historical events from phonology

- stress will be stable, ie
  - Vs lexically stressed do not become unstressed: *work \( \text{wə:k} \), *\( \text{wə:k} \); exc some one-syllable function words, eg *were \( \text{wə:} \), \( \text{wə} \), this is lexical allomorphy
  - Vs lexically unstressed do not become stressed: the nonfirst Vs of *\( \text{wə:kəbəl} \) are never stressed; exc in contrastive topic: *is the idea working? — no, it’s work\( \text{əbəl} \)

- stresses are not all equally prominent, but no stress is lost

- “stress shift” is simply prominence shift: *sárd\( \text{ə} \)ne vs *sárd\( \text{ə} \)ne spr\( \text{əd} \); léft hánd vs léft hánd dr\( \text{ə} \)ve (three adjacent stresses come out as “231”)

- word stress in English is stable and lexical
so why is the last V of *latex* stressed?

some segmental consequences of stress

- aspiration before stress vs t-lenition: *lát[h]èx vs lá[ʔ]/[r]/[s]est*
- no syncope (including high vowel gliding) before stress: *Lebanon l´Eb@n@n vs l´b*ʃn@n; linear lín/jə vs delineate dílín*'/jèjt* (nb this is not a stress-clash-avoidance strategy: cf methodological méθ@d*ʃl@djik@l, characterize kár@kt*ʃr@jz*)
- no excrescent plosive in nasal+fricative clusters before stress: *censure séntʃə, prince prínts vs ensure in*ʃó:, princess prín*tsés, incest in*tsëst*
- unstressed ɾw only before stress: *amulet ámjʊwlɛt, ámjʊlɛt, ámjʊlət, but *ámjʊwlət*; stimulus stímjʊ*wləs vs stimulate stímjʊ(w)lɛjt*

data from Wells 2008
vowels and stress

there are two types of vowels

- the vowels that occur in unstressed position are \( \varepsilon \, \iota \, \varepsilon \, \omega \, \varepsilon \, \iota \, \varepsilon \, \omega \)
- although these vowels are not "derived" from other vowels by phonological rules, we could call them reduced
- all other vowels do not occur in unstressed position (\( \alpha \, \varepsilon \, \omega \, \varepsilon \, \iota \), \( \varepsilon \omega \, \varepsilon \iota \) and all long vowels)
- thus the second V of \textit{latex} is stressed
- for syllables with possibly reduced vowels we must consider segmental effects or stress shift (eg \textit{Príncess Ánne} vs \textit{sincére wísh}; \textit{uncháined} vs \textit{únchained mélody})
**lampoon vs latex**

if both have both Vs stressed, what’s the difference?

**short answer**
I wish I knew

**longer answer**
the contrast of *black bird* ‘avis nigra’ and *blackbird* ‘Turdus merula’ neutralizes in
  - *black( )bird’s nest* (difference in structure)
  - *is this a black( )board? no, it’s a black( )bird!* (emphasis)

**also note**
*lämpóon pőetry* vs *făke látěx* (no stress shift in the other direction)
thanks to

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