

Hidden compounds in English

Darin Flynn
dflynn@ucalgary.ca



A paradox in words with medial stress lapses

- The words below illustrate a large class of words assumed to be single phonological words (PW) in spite of having medial unstressed syllables which behave allophonically as if they are PW-initial — Withgott’s (1982) paradox.

<i>Máni</i> [t ^h]owòc	<i>Nàvra</i> [t ^h]ilóva
<i>Póco</i> [t ^h]opàug	<i>Mèdi</i> [t ^h]erránean
<i>Pélo</i> [p ^h]onnèse	<i>Winne</i> [p ^h]esáukee
<i>Quínni</i> [p ^h]iàc	<i>Lòlla</i> [p ^h]alóoza
<i>álla</i> [k ^h]ochìck	<i>àbra</i> [k ^h]adábra
<i>Álla</i> [h]abàd	<i>mùja</i> [h]idéen

Stress vs. accent in single and compound words

- “Phonologically, the difference between primary and secondary stress in accented words is the same as that in compounds.” (Plag et al. 2011, p. 372; see also Vanderslice & Ladefoged 1972; Farnetani et al. 1988; Kunter 2010; Gussenhoven to appear)

uni-accented	bi-accented
<i>Víolàte</i> , <i>SÓcratès</i> , etc.	<i>VìolÁtion</i> , <i>PìcoTÉE</i> , etc.
<i>Ápple càke</i> , <i>Á-ráy</i> , etc.	<i>Àpple PÍE</i> , <i>ÈX-RÁY</i> , etc.

- This claim raises the possibility that certain words with primary and secondary stress syllables are better understood as (pseudo) compounds.

Independent support for pseudo compounds

- My analysis resolves the intractable “Luxipalilla problem” (Pater 2000:269; Collie 2007:319–326):

- Why can’t heavy-initial words like *Luxipalilla*, *Hardecanutte*, *Hōnokaōpe*, etc. be footed *[(Lùx)(ìpa)(lìlla)], *[(Hàr)(dèca)(núte)], etc.?

- Because a CG-internal PW-boundary intervenes in such cases: [[Lùxi]_{PW}palìlla]_{PW}CG
[[Hàrde]_{PW}canúte]_{PW}CG

- Observe the PW-initial allophony here, too: ...[p^h]alìlla, ...[k^h]anúte

- The allophony of words like *càpi*[r]alístic suggests that a PW-final lapse may carry over into a related word — a paradigmatic uniformity (PU) effect:

[[cápi]tal]_{PW} → [[càpita]_{PW}lístic]_{PW}CG

cf. [t^h], not [r], in [[mìli]_{PW}tarístic]_{PW}CG

- To make sense of this effect without complex CGs, Davis (2005) is forced to posit extraordinary metrical feet:

- A ternary foot carries over from [[cápi]tal]_{PW} in the case of [[càpita]_{Ft}(lístic)_{Ft}]_{PW}

- [[mìli]_{Ft}(ta(rístic)_{Ft})_{Ft}]_{PW} involves a recursive superfoot Ft’

- No such feet are needed if [[càpi]tal]_{PW} carries over into [[càpi]tal]_{PW}lístic]_{PW}CG — a PU effect

- [[mìli]_{Ft}]_{PW}ta(rístic)_{Ft}]_{PW}CG follows the PW-lapse-avoiding pattern: [[Nàvra]_{PW}tilóva]_{PW}CG

- Expletive “infixation”: pace McCarthy (1982)

- Nàvra-f’ing-tilóva* > *Nàvrati-f’ing-lóva*

[[NÀvra]_{PW}f’ing]_{PW}tilÓva]_{PW}CG

Proposal: English systematically creates (pseudo) compounds to avoid PW-medial stress lapses

- Withgott’s paradox disappears if words with medial lapses are in fact phonological compounds, i.e. Composite Groups (CG) in Vogel’s (2009) terms (or else Prosodic Word Groups in Vigario’s (2010) terms), e.g.:

[[MÁni]_{PW}towòc]_{PW}CG cf. [[Ápple]_{PW}càke]_{PW}CG [[NÀvra]_{PW}tiLÓva]_{PW}CG cf. [[Àpple]_{PW}PÍE]_{PW}CG

- I suggest that long words are broken up in this way to avoid PW-internal stress lapses: *[[Mánitowòc]_{PW}], *[[Nàvratilóva]_{PW}

*LAPSE (Elenbaas 1999; Kager 2003; Gordon 2002:502; Alber 2005:500; cf. Selkirk’s 1984 ‘Anti-Lapse Filter’)

- English phonology is much more tolerant of adjacent unstressed syllables at levels above PW (Selkirk 1996:195), e.g. [a [balóney]_{PW}]_{CG} vs. *[[abalóne]_{PW}] (cf. [[àbalóne]_{PW}])

*LAPSE/PW >> *LAPSE/CG, MATCH-WORD

↓
“Assign one violation for every lexical word in the syntactic component that does not stand in a correspondence relation with a prosodic word in the phonological component” (Elfner 2012, p. 241; see also Weir 2012, p. 111; Bennett et al. 2015, p. 34)

- “The Composite Group, which includes constructions with clitics as well as compounds” (Vogel 2009, p. 41) is independently motivated (Nespor & Vogel 1986; Hayes 1989:207–211, 237ff. et seq.) and its constituency is on hand to facilitate the breakup of words like those above, so much so that phonologists complain of “the frequent overlap of the CG with the PW” (Vogel 2009:18).

- This breakup may represent an Anglo-Saxon style nativizing process

“English has basically two types of word — the familiar homely-sounding and typically very short words ... and the more learned, foreign-sounding and characteristically rather long words” (Quirk 1974, p. 138)