**Prevocalic Tenseness in English, Binarity and the Typology of Long Vowel Distributions**

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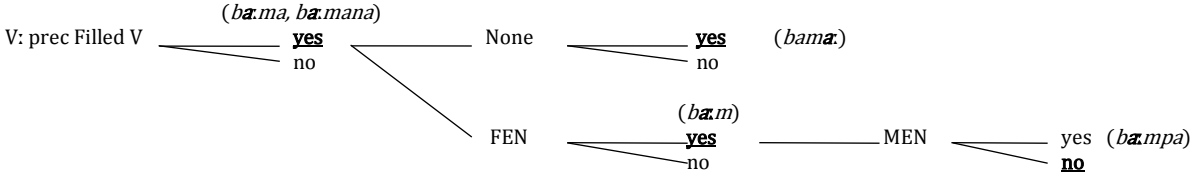
This presentation connects the process of Prevocalic Tenseness (PT) with Current Southern British English's place in the broader typology of long vowel (V:) distribution. The analysis of PT is couched in the framework of Strict CV, but the presentation is of broader interest to other frameworks because of (a) our proposed typology of V: distributions and (b) the novel mechanism by which this typological variation is formally accounted for: parameter hierarchies (Ulfsbjorninn 2017; Benz & Ulfsbjorninn 2018; of the same type as used for syntax Baker 2001; Biberauer et al. 2013; Biberauer & Roberts 2014; Sheehan 2014). Prevocalic Tenseness is an exceptionless static distribution which subsequently interacted with monophthongisation. In English, only 'tense' (long) monophthongs /iː, uː/ precede schwa. This reveals a contrast between diphthongs and V+schwa hiatuses: (a) [lɪə] → [lɪː] 'Lear/leer' vs. [liːə] 'Leah' and (b) [ʃʊə] → [ʃoː] 'sure' vs. [suːə] 'sewer'. *A priori,* Strict CV cannot distinguish diphthongs from hiatuses or VC sequences due to its recasting of constituency into flat dependency (Scheer 2013). However, this data demands an interpretation of this contrast. The key question is: why should monophthongisation affect *V+schwa* and not V:*+schwa*? The data suggests that only binary vocalic spreading is possible, but this doesn't follow from the general distributional restrictions on V:s. As we will demonstrate typologically, if a language allows V:s then it universally allows V:s preceding filled Vs (e.g. [b**a**:r**a**]) (cf. Yoshida 1993; Kaye 1995; Scheer 2004). In any other position, V: is marked and its distribution is parametrised according to three independent core environments: (a) Medial Empty Nucleus (MEN) [b**a**:m**Ø**pi], (b) Final Empty Nucleus (FEN) [b**a**:m**Ø**], or (c) nothing [bam**a**:].

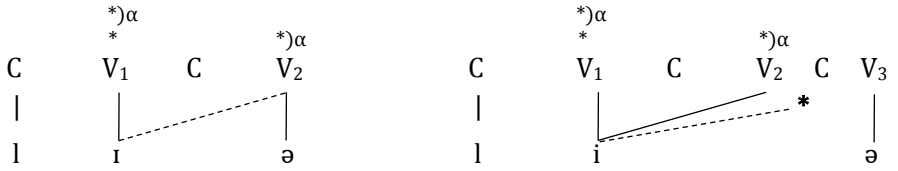
(1) Parameter hierarchy for long vowels (English settings shown in **<u>bold underline</u>**)




In English, a vowel may spread to any V position that is (a) licensed by a filled vowel, (b) in absolute word-final position, or (c) before FEN, but not before a MEN. This implies that there would be nothing improper about having ternary monophthongisation of hiatus sequences. One way to restrict this sequence is to impose a binary limit on spreading. The most economical way is to have this limit piggy-back on a pre-existing representational condition. We propose the (Strict CV) mechanism for quantity: *Incorporation* (Ulfsbjorninn 2014) (a) Filled $V_1$ = $V_1$* (* is a grid mark) (b) Filled $V_1$ prec Empty $V_2$ = $V_1$**). In English there are only **two** degrees of quantity: Heavy (VC, VV) > Light (V), despite there also being 'superheavy' rimes (VVC) (Harris 1994). No phonological behaviour identifies VVCs as phonologically heavier than heavy rimes. That is to say, there is no third weight category. *Incorporation* in English is binary. Having established that, English PT results from assuming that *vowels can only spread into incorporated positions* (also required for Palestinian (Faust & Ulfsbjorninn to appear)). Accordingly, diphthongs are

incorporation domains and correspondingly have permitted their $V_2$ to be subject to spreading, while the $V_3$ of hiatus sequences has fallen outside of the domain of incorporation.

(2) [lɪː] ‘leer’ [liːə] ‘Leah’

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