#PronouncingThingsIncorrectly: Initial phonological generalizations of a novel internet word game

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What is #PronouncingThingsIncorrectly?

An internet language game developed and popularized by viner Chaz Smith.

General format:

- Close up of face, "Pronouncing things incorrectly"
- Series of shots of text with mispronunciations

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Vine is a social video microblogging platform. Users post videos of up to 6 seconds.

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Orthography:	Original transcription:	Mispronunciation:
original	əˈrɪdʒ ə nl	ɒr ɪʤ 'ɒ nəl
skittles	ˈskɪt ls	skɪt 'tɪt ɪl iz
body	ˈbɒd i	ˈbu ti
wash	wɒʃ	wɪʃ
mayonnaise	meɪ əˈneɪz	me ɒn nə nə 'æs i
pop	pɒp	pup
secret	ˈsi krɪt	sɪˈkrit
diamond	ˈdaɪ mənd	di ə 'mɒn di
cologne	kəˈloʊn	kɒl 'ɒg ni

Data used in analysis

- 25 total words
- Three vines:
  - 7th: https://vine.co/v/eBMZK0j1nLK
  - 8th: https://vine.co/v/em2wuYT26Vp
  - 12th: Previous slide
- All take place in grocery store
- Earlier examples less regular

first

second

Phonological Characteristics

1. Vowel Harmony
2. Resyllabification
3. Stress Reassignment

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But what about number of syllables?

To correct for the mispronunciations having more syllables (and thus more chances for vowels to co-occur):

1. Only looked at multisyllabic words
2. Count how many different vowels there are in a word (types)
3. Count how many total vowels there are in a word (tokens)
4. Divide value from 2 by value from 3

A long word with complete vowel harmony has a lower score than a shorter word with complete vowel harmony.

Note: Very conservative measure! Only looked at repetition of the *same* vowel.

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Examples

ˈdaɪ mənd

1. Count how many different vowels there are in a word (types)
   a. *aɪ, ə = 2 types*
2. Count how many totals vowels there are in a word (tokens)
   a. *aɪ, ə = 2 tokens*
3. Divide 1 by 2
   a. *2/2 = 1*
   b. *maximum value, no vowel harmony*

di ə 'mɒn di

1. Count how many different vowels there are in a word (types)
   a. *i, ə, ɒ = 3 types*
2. Count how many totals vowels there are in a word (tokens)
   a. *i x 2, ə, ɒ = 4 tokens*
3. Divide 1 by 2
   a. *3/4 = 0.75*
   b. *Some vowel harmony*

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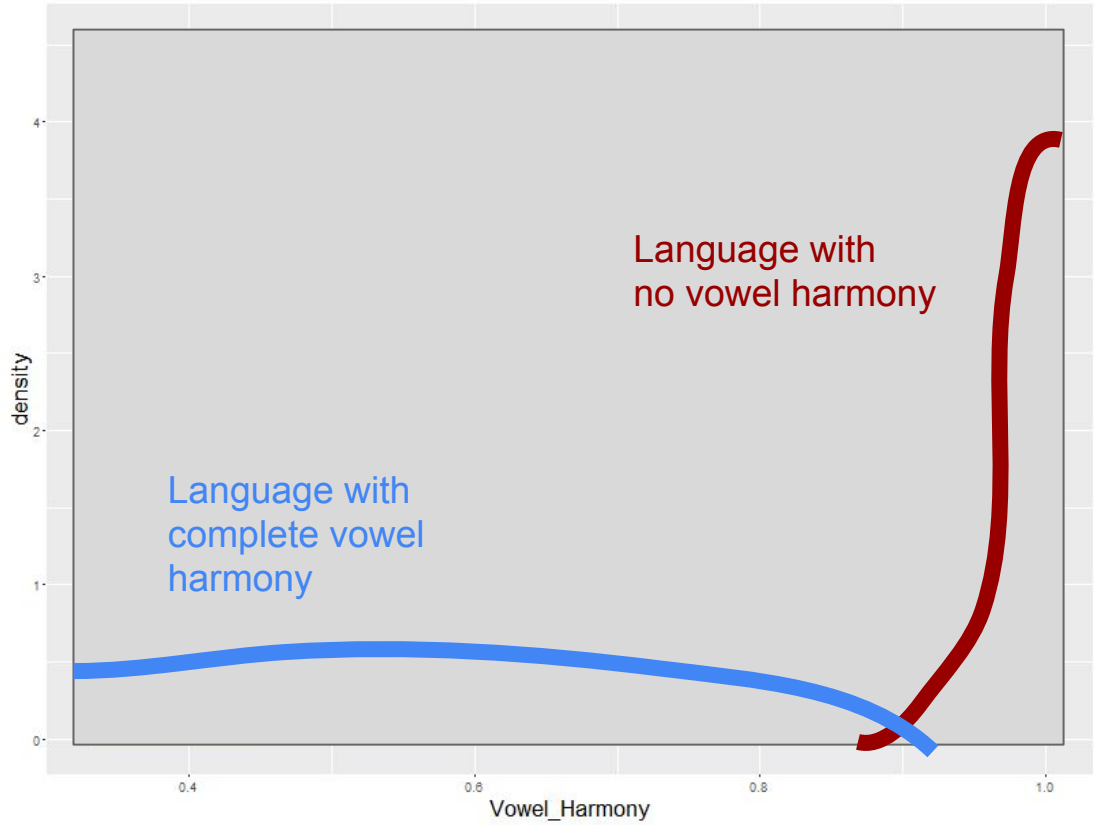
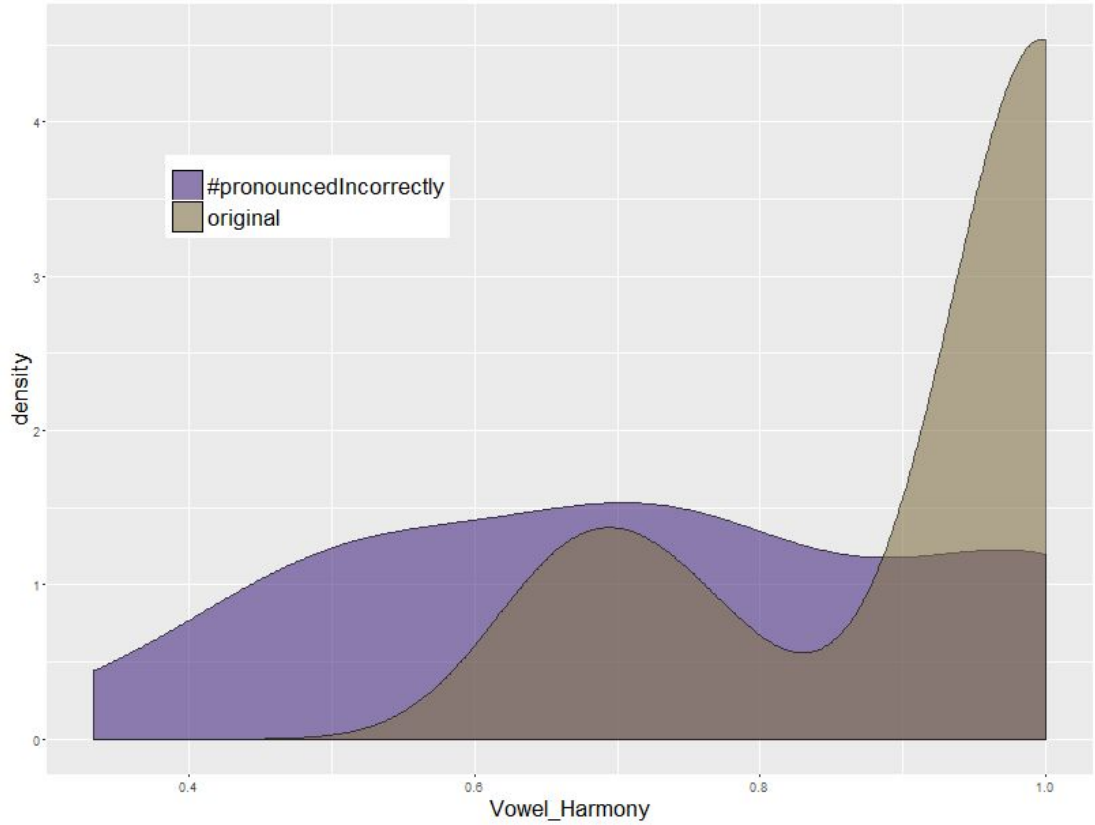
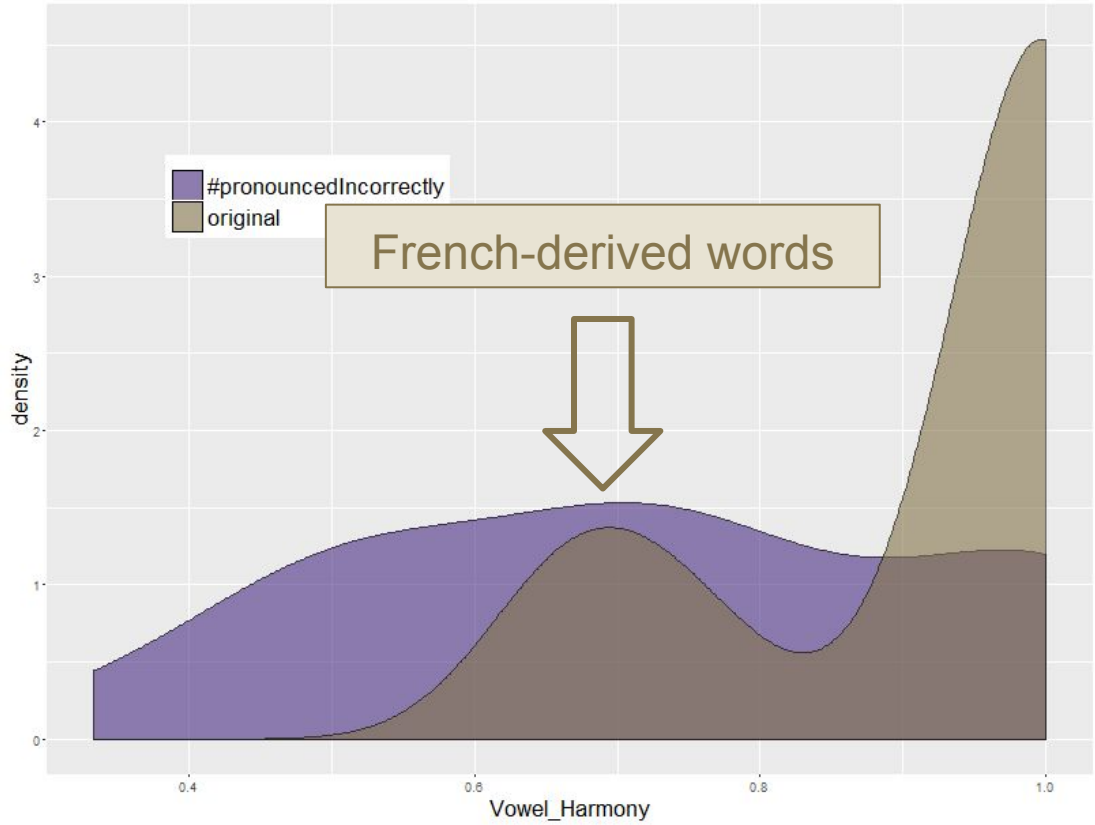


Hypothetical chart



Mispronunciations showed much more vowel harmony



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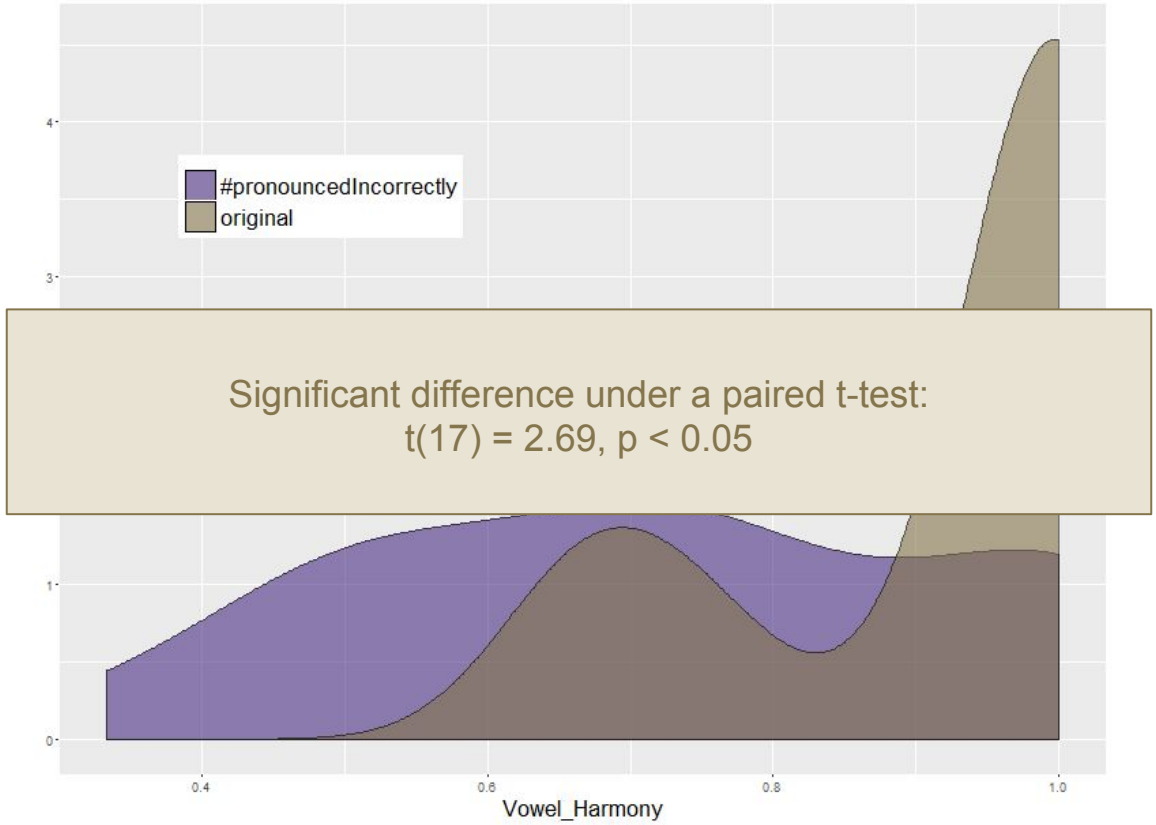

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2. Resyllabification
3. Stress Reassignment

Orthography:	Original transcription:	Mispronunciation:	Change in # syllables:
original	əˈrɪdʒ ə nl	ɒr ɪʤ 'ɒ nəl	--
skittles	ˈskɪt ls	skɪ 'tɪt ɪl iz	+2
body	ˈbɒd i	ˈbu ti	--
wash	wɒʃ	wɪʃ	--
mayonnaise	meɪ əˈneɪz	me ɒn nə nə 'æs i	+3
pop	pɒp	pup	--
secret	ˈsi krɪt	sɪˈkrit	--
diamond	ˈdaɪ mənd	di ə 'mɒn di	+2
cologne	kəˈloʊn	kɒl 'ɒg ni	+1

General Observations

- More syllables in mispronunciations
  - Average of 0.52 more syllables/word
- Shorter/simpler syllables
  - Maximum structure in original: CCVCC
  - Maximum structure in mispronunciations: CCVC
  - Most syllables (36/57 = 63%) in original have codas
  - Most syllables (38/70 = 54%) in mispronunciations *do not* have codas

AND:

- Relies on orthography

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AND:

- Relies on orthography (!)

Orthographic vowels & double consonants

Vowels:

"c**o**l**o**gn**e**" written with three vowels, pronounced with three syllables:

kəˈloʊn -> kɒl 'ɒg ni

Double consonants:

"Ski**tt**les" written with double consonant, gets an extra syllable:

ˈskɪt ls -> skɪ 'tɪt ɪl iz

But is the use of orthography reliable?

Yes!

Linear model that predicted # of syllables using:

1. Number of vowels + number of double consonants
2. Number of syllables in original pronunciation

Performed significantly better ($F(22) = 6.74$, $p = 0.016$) than one that only included syllables in pronunciation

Resyllabification is dependent on orthography!

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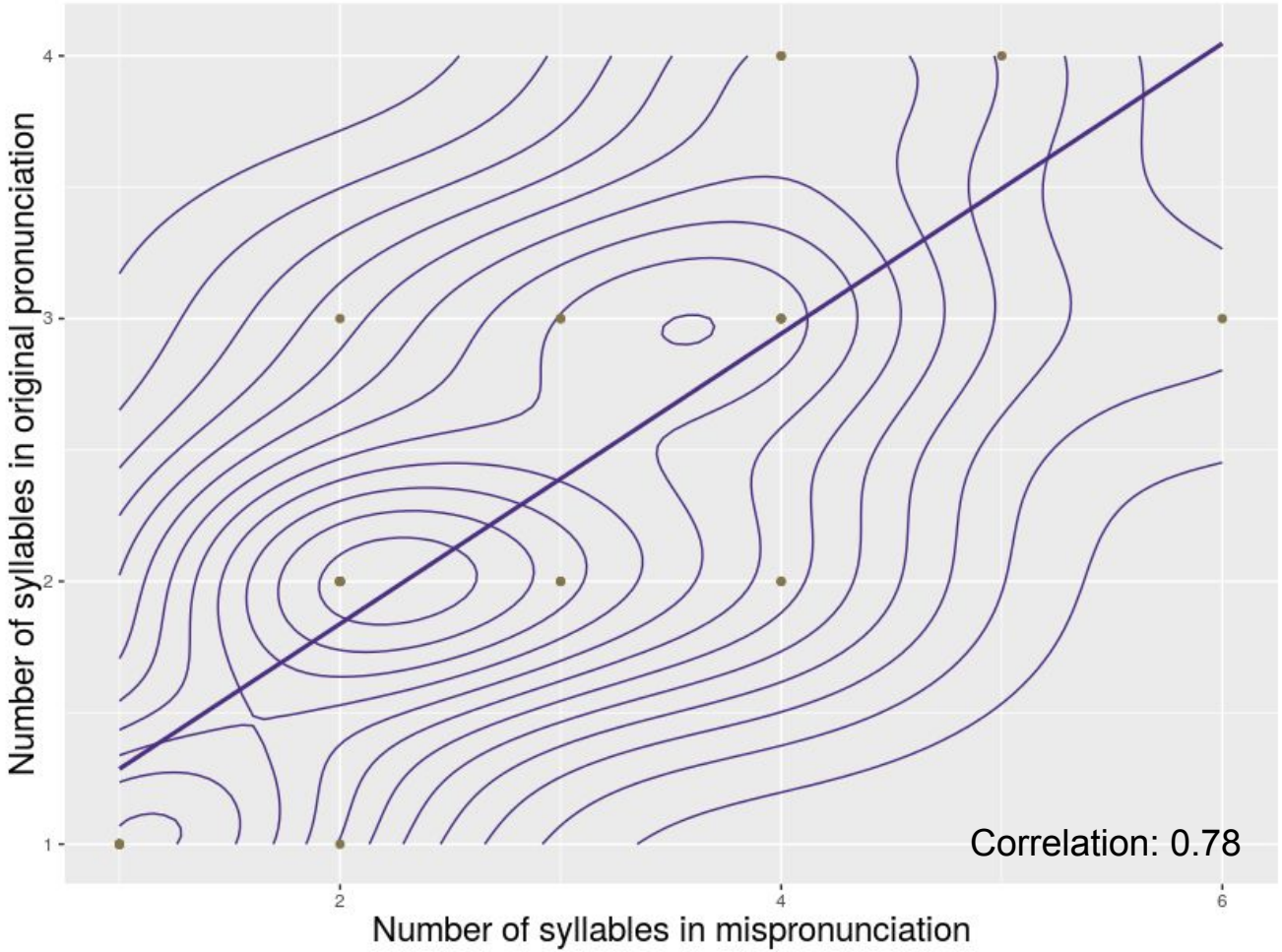
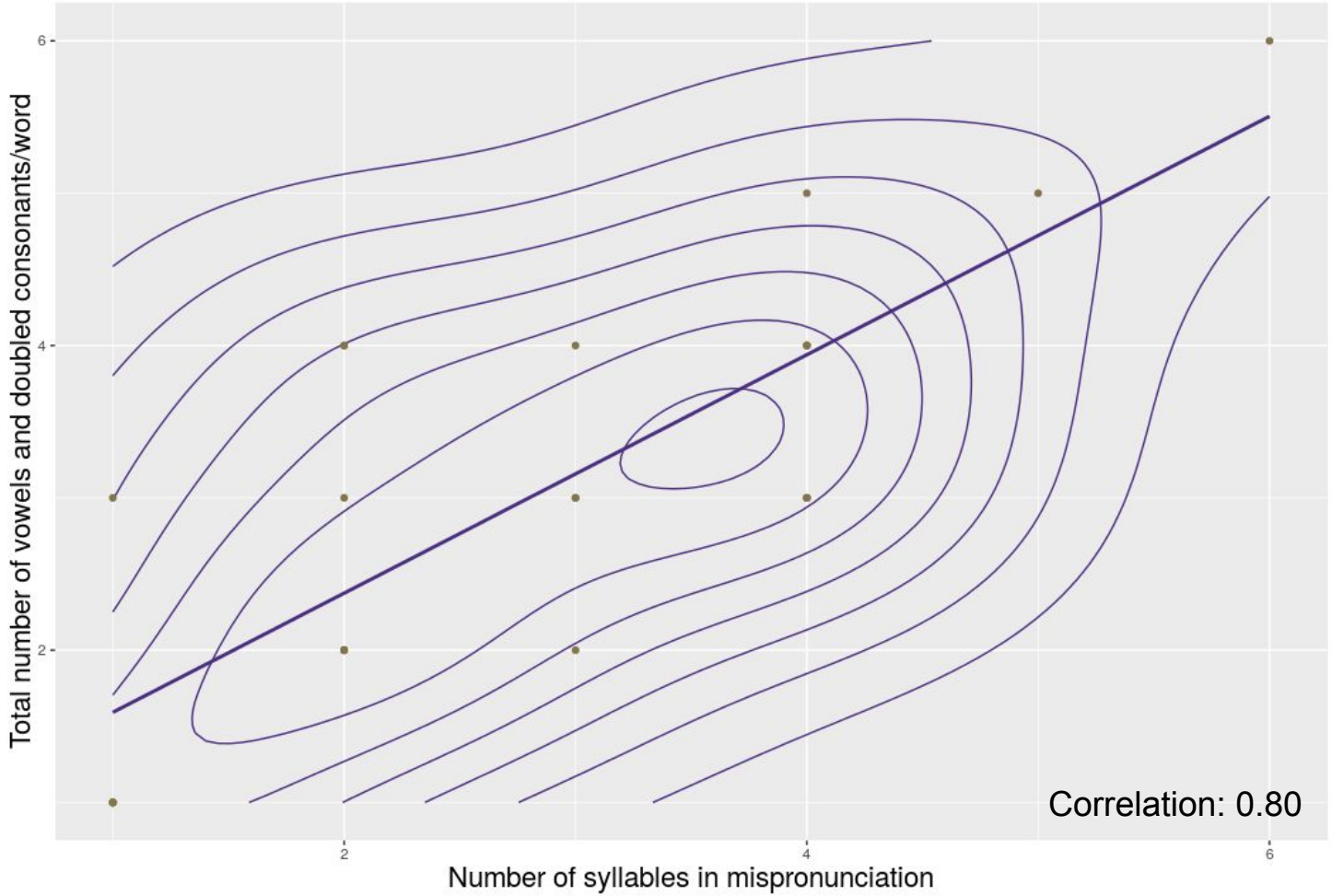

Number of syllables in original pronunciation
4
3
2
1
2
4
6
Number of syllables in mispronunciation
Correlation: 0.78


Total number of vowels and doubled consonants/word
6
4
2
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4
6
Number of syllables in mispronunciation
Correlation: 0.80

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Stress placement

Really pretty regular!

Stress assignment:

- Trochees
- From right edge
- Rightmost foot gets primary stress

Examples
(ɒr ɪdʒ) ('ɒ nəl)
(ˈ**bu** ti)
lyn ('**ʧɒb** les)
(me ɒn) (nə nə) ('**æs** i)
(di ə) ('**mɒn** di)
kɒl ('**ɒg** ni)
(pi ɹɒk) ('**si** di)
(hɒ wɒ) ('**i** ɒn)

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Not completely regular, though

Some "problem cases":

1.	"Skittles"	skɪ **'tɪt** ɪl iz
2.	"jalapenos"	ʤə **'lɒ** pən oz
3.	"secret"	sɪ ˈ**krit**
4.	"Generation"	**'gi** ni i ɹə tɔɪn

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Plural morphemes could be extrametrical if they have their own syllable

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Plural morphemes could be extrametrical if they have their own syllable

Although:

"Lunchables" -> lyn (**'ʧɒb** les)

"Cheerios" -> (**'ʧwɒ** ɹos)

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Could be for humorous effect: was part of a phrase pronounced "poop secrete"

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???

Most words follow pattern

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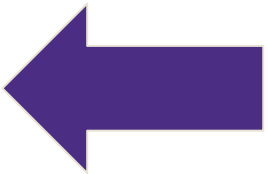

Accounts for over 90% of multisyllabic data

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Are these completely regular?

Nope.

Often ignored if:

- There's a more humorous alternative
  - "pop secret" pronounced "poop secrete", violating stress assignment process
  - Really good example! https://vine.co/v/ivgtdrmF32e
- Another transformation takes place
  - "Glade" to "Ebola"
- Player is less fluent with game:
  - Many examples (both fluent and less-fluent) on #PronouncingThingsIncorrectly tag on Vine
  - https://vine.co/tags/PronouncingThingsIncorrectly

So what?

1. Possible experimental elicitation paradigm!
    a. Especially for work on stress/syllabification
2. Highlights some pressures on English
    a. Preference for regular stress assignment
3. Clear example of impact of orthography
    a. Follows with experimental evidence (e.g. Welcome & Alton 2015)

What else?

Lots of possibilities!

- More complete analysis of vowel harmony, beyond just segment repetition
- *Something* going on with lax/tense vowels
- More data collection!
  - Note that Smith is familiar with this analysis, so it's possible that it may influence his future Vines
- Possible L1 effects?
- More formal analysis
- Others?

References

Smith, C. (2015, April) #PronouncingThingsIncorrectly Pt. 7 (IB Quinn And Joe) [Video file]. Retrieved from https://vine.co/v/eBMZK0j1nLK

Smith, C. (2015, May) #PronouncingThingsIncorrectly Pt. 8 at da groshwery stow [Video file]. Retrieved from https://vine.co/v/em2wuYT26Vp

Smith, C. (2015, September) #PronouncingThingsIncorrectly Pt. 12 [Video file]. Retrieved from https://vine.co/v/eQvv79FP2nV

Welcome, S. E., & Alton, A. C. (2015). Individual Differences in the Effect of Orthographic/Phonological Conflict on Rhyme and Spelling Decisions. *PloS one*, *10*(3), e0119734.

Thanks!

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peroxide	pəˈɹɒk saɪd	pi ɹɒk 'si di
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skittles	ˈskɪt ls	skɪt 'tɪt ɪl iz
hydrogen	ˈhaɪ dɹə dʒən	'hi di ɹo gɛn
original	əˈrɪdʒ ə nl	ɒr ɪʤ 'ɒ nəl
generation	dʒɛn əˈreɪ ʃən	'gi ni i ɹə tɔɪn
grape	greɪp	gɹɒp
cheese	tʃiz	tʃæz
nut	nʌt	nut
wash	wɒʃ	wɪʃ
pop	pɒp	pup

secret	ˈsi krɪt	sɪˈkrit
success	səkˈsɛs	'sʌk kəs
cheddar	ˈtʃɛd ər	ˈtʃi təɹ
honey	ˈhʌn i	'hu ni
cheerios	ˈtʃɪəɹ iˌoʊs	'ʧwɒ ɹos
tide	taɪd	'ti di
body	ˈbɒd i	ˈbu ti
lunchables	'lʌnʧ ə bəlz	lyn 'ʧɒb les
tomatoes	təˈmeɪ toʊz	to 'mo toz
seventh	ˈsɛv ənθ	sə 'vʌn ðə
cologne	kəˈloʊn	kɒl 'ɒg ni
Hawaiian	həˈwaɪ ən	hɒ wɒ 'i ɒn

Does stress always move?

Nope!

> About a third of the time (7/19 = 36%), when both the original and mispronunciation are multisyllabic, stress doesn't move.
>
> (If you count from left edge)

Examples:

"Body"	ˈbɒd i	->	ˈbu ti
"Honey"	ˈhʌn i	->	'hu ni
"Cheerios"	ˈʧɪəɹ i oʊs	->	'ʧwɒ ɹos