



Factors Informing Conditioned Allomorph Selection

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1. English Demonyms

Demonyms are names for residents of places (U.S. Printing Office, 2008):

- Residents of **Iceland** are called **Icelanders**
- Residents of **Chicago** are called **Chicagoans**
- Residents of **Delhi** are called **Delhiites**

English demonyms have multiple allomorph suffixes:

Allomorph	Phonetic Realization	Demonym Example
-an	[ən]	American [ə.ˈmɛ.ɹɪ.kən]
-er	[ɹ]	New Zealander [nu.ˈzi.lən.ɹ]
-ese	[iz]	Japanese [ˌdʒæ.pə.ˈniːz]
-ian	[ni.ɹjən/i.ɹjən]	Canadian [kə.ˈneɪ.di.ɹjən]
-ite	[aɪt]	Brooklynite [ˈbrʊk.lɪ.ɹnaɪt]

Allomorph distributions overlap phonologically, e.g.:

- Vietnam** [vi.jət.ˈnɑm] + **-ese** [iz], forms **Vietnamese** [vi.jət.nə.ˈmiz]; phonologically similar base **Suriname** [sʊ.ɹi.ˈnɑm] + **-er** [ɹ] forms **Surinamer** [sʊ.ɹi.ˈnɑ.mɹ].
- Houston** [ˈhju.stɪn] + **-ian** [i.ɹjən] forms **Houstonian** [hju.ˈstou.ni.ɹjən]; phonologically similar base **Austin** [ˈɑ.stɪn] + **-ite** [aɪt] forms **Austinite** [ˈɑ.stɪ.ɹnaɪt].

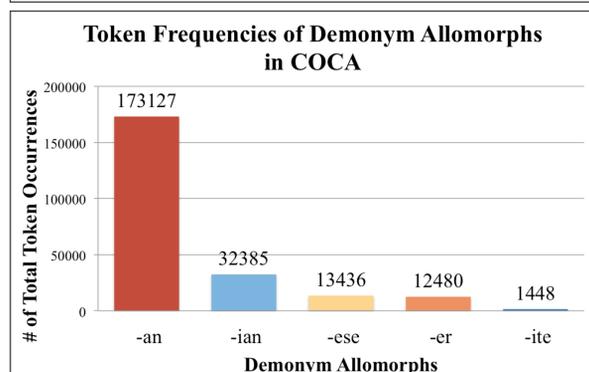
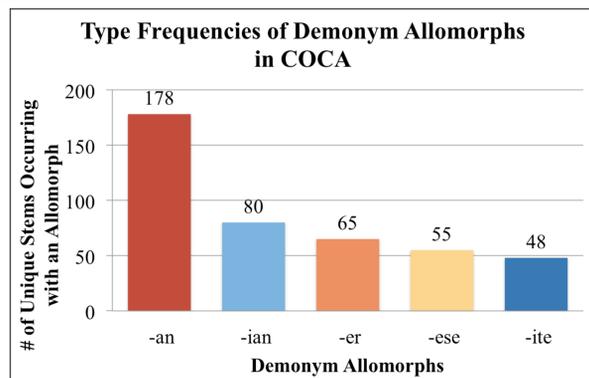
Research Question: What conditions the selection of a demonym allomorph, given that phonological conditioning cannot fully account for allomorph alternation?

Hypothesis: English demonym allomorphy is conditioned *simultaneously* by phonology and other informative factors like usage, frequency, familiarity (Bybee, 2001), and knowledge of *dominant* allomorphs (Mascaró, 2007). Crucially, phonological and non-phonological factors must be considered together to properly describe demonym allomorphy.

2. Corpus Study

In Corpus of Contemporary American English (Davies, 2008):

- Confirmed usage of demonym suffixes with selected place names to be used in Experiment.
- Estimated familiarity with place names, demonym suffixes, and demonyms based on *type* and *token* frequency.
- Identified shared phonological properties of bases that share the same demonym suffix.



Important phonological conditioning factors for allomorph distribution:

- Stress-finality** (primary, secondary, or none).
- Quality of base-final segment** (C, CC, or V).
- No completely exceptionless distributions were found.

3. Experiment

Experiment manipulates *familiarity* using fictional and real place name bases and demonym suffixes (see section 1) in web survey (Qualtrics, 2014).

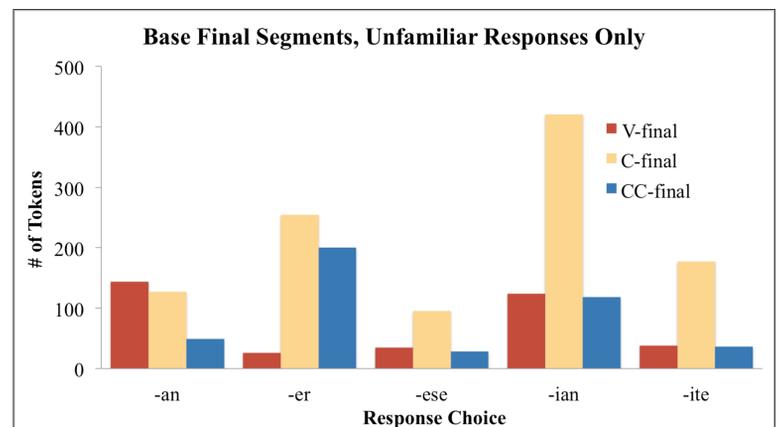
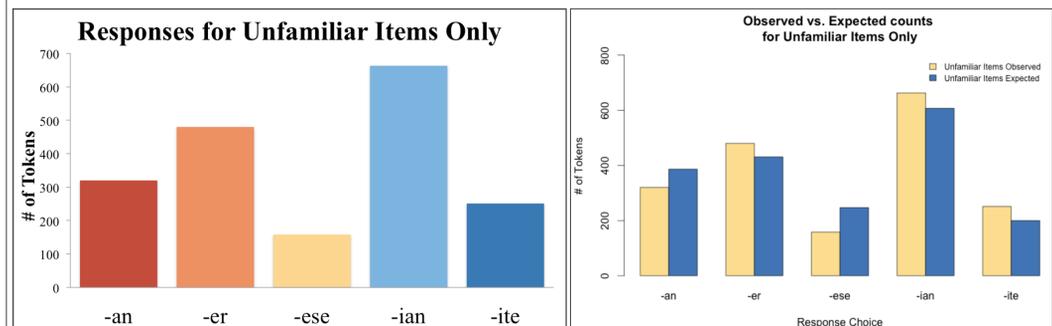
25 phonologically balanced place names in four experimental conditions:

- Real countries (RC), e.g. **Mexico** (most familiar)
- Real localities (RL), e.g. **Nashville** (more familiar)
- Fictional places, literary source (FL), e.g. **Narnia** (less familiar)
- Fictional places, non-literary source (FS), e.g. **Bajor** (least familiar)

For each item, participants (N=44; native English speakers) answered:

- Their preference among 5 orthographically-presented demonyms, e.g.:
 Saigonan Saigonese Saigoner
 Saigonian Saigonite
- Whether they had heard this term used before (Y/N).
- Their level of confidence (1-5 scale) in the selection of the demonym term.

Results were analyzed for those items that participants noted as *unfamiliar*, using descriptive statistics and observed vs. expected values from chi-square tests.



Important conditioning factors for allomorph distribution in experiment:

- Quality of base-finality** (C, CC, or CV); cf. above chart.
- Analogy** of unfamiliar items to phonologically similar familiar items, e.g. *Duckburger* (cf. *Luxembourger*); *Smallvillian* (cf. *Nashvillian*).
- ian** was most frequent response across conditions in experiment, suggesting *dominant allomorph* status; especially in *unfamiliar* items.

4. Discussion and Implications

- Phonological factors* have greater effect on allomorph selection in unfamiliar bases, while *usage factors* like frequency, familiarity, allomorph dominance, and analogy may inform allomorph selection in familiar/lexicalized bases.
- The *dominant* demonym allomorph differs between the corpus results (conditioned by usage) and experiment results (conditioned by phonology).

-an	-er	-ese	-ian	-ite
Most common allomorph in corpus; not in experiment. Paired with bases ending in <i>-ia</i> .	Favored with CC-final bases in both corpus and experiment.	Least common allomorph in experiment. Favored secondary stress-final bases.	Used often with unfamiliar experiment items; pairs well with a phonological variety of bases.	Infrequent in corpus and experiment. Prefers C-final bases.

- Demonyms allow for expansion of current theories on conditioned allomorphy by presenting a case with *multiple* viable allomorph choices.
- Comparing familiar and novel bases shows distinct allomorph distributions reflecting stability vs. change in the lexicon, linking usage effects (Bybee, 2001) and phonology effects (Becker, 2009; Paster 2009).
- Demonyms allow us to understand how speakers apply knowledge of usage *and* phonology to an ever-changing lexicon (Zuraw 2000, 2010).