The Plot Against Harry: The Facts About New York Truncation

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(1) New York truncation:

Harry	[ˈhæɹi]	Har-	[ˈhæɹ]
Larry	[ˈlæɹi]	Lar-	[ˈlæɹ]
Sarah	[ˈsæɹə]	Sar-	[ˈsæɹ]

(2) Benua (1995) invokes output-output correspondence constraints (McCarthy and Prince 1995), asserting that an allophonic [æ]~[æ̝̟] alternation is blocked upon truncation.

(3) Benua's analysis is theoretically specious and descriptively inadequate:

- New York has no [æ]~[æ̝̟] alternations.
- [æ] and [æ̝̟] are contrastive in New York (e.g. Mary [mæ̝̟ɹi]-Marry [mæɹi]).
- Active alternations readily alternate upon truncation (e.g. Philip [ˈfɪləp]-Phil [ˈfɬ] (*[ˈfɪl])).
- Acknowledging the linguistic and psychological distinction between active and static phonological patterning readily accounts for the truncation data.

Benua (1995)

(4) New York English æ-Tensing: preceding all tautosyllabic obstruents except voiceless stops, and preceding tautosyllabic anterior nasals.

æ → æ̝̟ / __ C]$_\sigma$ (where C= voiced obstruents, voiceless fricatives, anterior nasals)

New York Alternations (sic):

a.	manage	[ˈmænəd̥ʃ]	b.	man	[ˈmæ̝̟n]
	Janice	[ˈtʃænɪs]		plan	[ˈpl̥æ̝̟n]
	cafeteria	[ˈkʰæfətʰiɹia]		laugh	[ˈlæ̝̟f]
	cannibal	[ˈkʰænəbɬ̩]		mandible	[ˈmæ̝̟ndəbɬ̩]
	planet	[ˈpl̥ænɪʔ]		plan it	[ˈpl̥æ̝̟nɪʔ]

(5) æ-TENSING: *æC]$_\sigma$ where | C | > | [-cont, -vc] |
*TENSE-low "no tense low vowels"
IDENT-IO[tense]

(6) æ-TENSING >> *TENSE-low, IDENT-IO[tense]

Input: /plæn/$_x$ or /plæ̝ə̯n/$_y$	æ-TENSING	*TENSE-low	IDENT-IO[tense]
a. [ˈpl̝æn]	***!**		*****$_y$
b. ☞[ˈpl̝æ̝ə̯n]		*****	*****$_x$

(7) Truncated words are exceptional; truncated names have [æ], not [æ̝ə̯], in spite of the fact that these vowels are in the tensing environment.

New York non-alternations:

Janice	[ˈtʃænɪs]	Jan-	[ˈtʃæn]
cafeteria	[ˌkʰæfəˈtʰiɹɪa]	caf-	[ˈkʰæf]
Massachusetts	[ˌmæsəˈtʃʰusɨts]	Mass-	[ˈmæs]

(8) Truncation:

BT-Identity
Base ←→ **T**runcated Form
↑
IO-Faith ↓
Input

BT-Identity
[ˈhæɹi] ←→ [ˈhæɹ] (*[ˈhæ̝ə̯ɹ], *[ˈhɑr])
↑
IO-Faith ↓
/hæɹi/ or /hæ̝ə̯ɹi/ or /hɑɹi/

(9) "Since Optimality Theory's output constraints cannot require the lax allophone to be present in the input string, either allophone may be present in the underlying form. OT relies on constraint ranking to force the appropriate segment to appear in the optimal output. The lax [æ] in the base name *Pamela* is therefore reliably present only in the output form of this word. Because the truncated version is always faithful to this allophone, BT-Identity constraints must compare the two surface strings."

(10) **BT-Identity >>** æ-TENSING >> *TENSE-low >> IO-Faith

(11) [ˈhæɹi] truncates to [ˈhæɹ], and not [ˈhæ̝ə̯ɹ] (or [ˈhɑr]) due to an output-output constraint of the form IDENT–BT [tense], which, due to its outranking æ-TENSING, blocks the supposed tensing that would otherwise surface in such a closed syllable. Benua concludes that the truncate must be a correspondent of the output, since the status of the input can contain either [æ] or [æ̝ə̯].

Base: [ˈhæɹi]	IDENT-BT	æ-TENSING, etc.
a. ☞[ˈhæɹ]		*****
b. [ˈhæ̝ə̯ɹ],[ˈhɑr]	***!**	

(12) Benua's analysis of base-truncate identity in New York English rests crucially on her assertion that abstract representations are **underspecified** for tenseness, and that the vowels [æ] and [æ̟ə̯] engage in an **alternation** (and thus the truncate corresponds to the base, not to the input). This first assertion is unmotivated, while the second assertion is incorrect.

(13) **Alternation**: *active* context-dependent phonetic changes in a single contrastive value.

(14) New York English possess **no cases** of [æ]~[æ̟ə̯] alternation, allophonic or otherwise. (Note that Benua does not provide even one example of a true alternation in her supposed examples of the pattern (cf. 4)). Actually, it possesses [æ]~[æ̟ə̯] minimal pairs involving morphologically derived froms.

Harry [ˈhæɹi]	truncates to	Har- [ˈhæɹ]
↑contrasts with↓		↑contrasts with↓
hairy [ˈhæ̟ə̯ɹi]	the V does not alternate with	hair [ˈhæ̟ə̯ɹ]

Larry [ˈlæɹi]	truncates to	Lar- [ˈlæɹ]
		↑contrasts with↓
	the V does not alternate with	lair [ˈlæ̟ə̯ɹ]

Janice [ˈtʃænɪs]	truncates to	Jan- [ˈtʃæn]
↑contrasts with↓		↑contrasts with↓
Janny [ˈtʃæ̟ə̯ni]	the V does not alternate with	Jan (full name) [ˈtʃæ̟ə̯n]

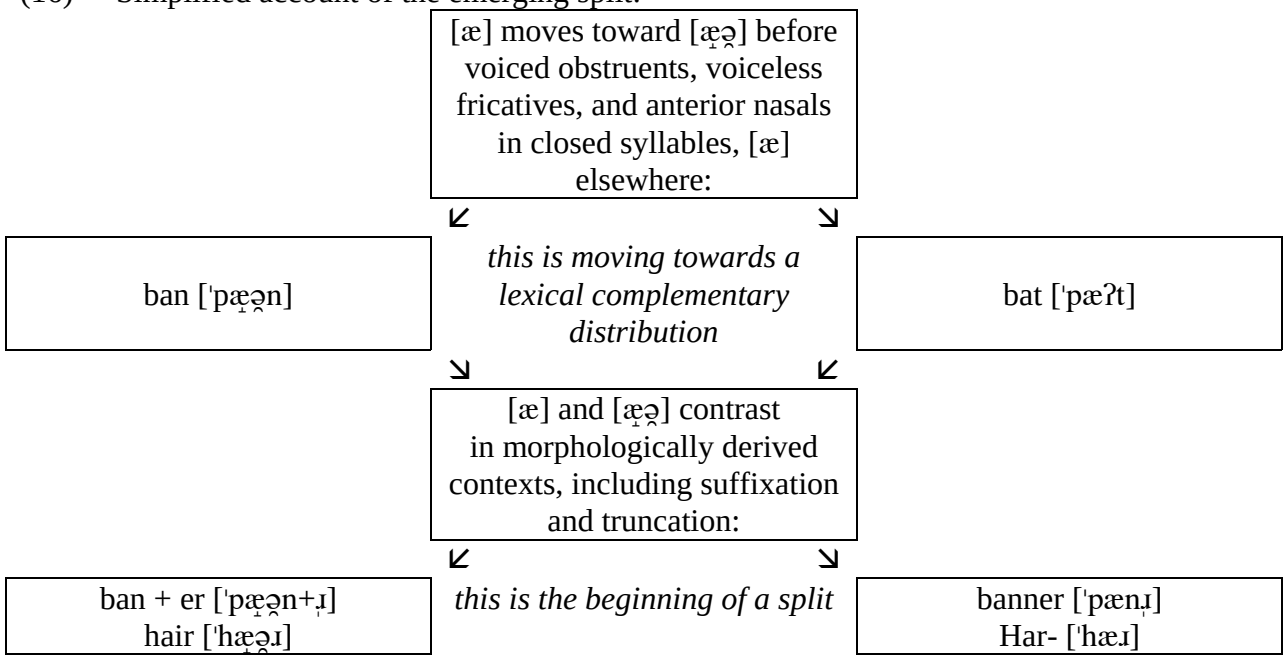
Cabbott [ˈkʰæbət]	truncates to	Cab- [ˈkʰæb̚]
↑contrasts with↓		↑contrasts with↓
cabbie [ˈkʰæ̟ə̯bi]	the V does not alternate with	cab [ˈkʰæ̟ə̯b̚]

ban [ˈpæ̟ə̯n]	does not alternate with	banner (one who bans) [ˈpæ̟ə̯nɹ̩]
		↑contrasts with↓
		banner (pennant) [ˈpænɹ̩]

Marilyn [ˈmæɹələn]	truncates to	Mar- [ˈmæɹ]
↑contrasts with↓		↑contrasts with↓
Mary [ˈmæ̝̈ɹi] merry [ˈmɛɹi] marry [ˈmæɹi] Murray [ˈmʌɹi] Maury [ˈmɔɹi] Morry [ˈmɐɹi] Mari [ˈmɑɹi] myrrhy [ˈmɻi]	truncates to	Mar- [ˈmæ̝̈ɹ]

(15) Generalizations:
- [æ] and [æ̝̈] **never alternate** with each other.
- [æ] and [æ̝̈] are in **static complementary distribution** in underived closed syllables (due to a sound change; see especially Labov 1994).
- [æ] and [æ̝̈] are **contrastive** in morphologically derived forms, including suffixation and truncation.

(16) Simplified account of the emerging split:



(16) Since there is no [æ]~[æ̝̈] alternation in New York English, truncates possess the same vowel quality as their base. Not surprisingly, ***truncates do not engage in an alternation that is elsewhere absent from the language.***

(17) Since the two vowels do not engage in a phonologically dynamic relationship with one another, there is no reason for a speaker to regard the two as alternants of each other.

(18) Non-identity upon truncation is the obvious and well-attested result when the relevant phonological relationship is dynamic. Not surprisingly, ***truncates engage in alternations that are elsewhere present in the language.***

	allophonically alternates with	we don't see	because X~Y is phonologically *active*
Melanie [ˈmɛləni]	Mel- [ˈmɛɬ]	*[ˈmɛl]	l ~ɬ
Philip [ˈfɪləp]	Phil- [ˈfɪɬ]	*[ˈfɪl]	l ~ɬ
Cabbott [ˈkʰæbət]	Cab- [ˈkʰæb̚]	*[ˈkʰæb]	b ~ b̚
Patricia [pʰəˈtˌɹɪʃə]	Pat- [ˈpʰæʔ]	*[ˈpʰætʰ] *[ˈpʰətʰ] *[ˈpʰəʔ]	tʰ ~ ʔ æ ~ ə

(19) Summary:

- [ˈhæɹi] truncates to [ˈhæɹ] because there is no active alternation process that affects the vowel's phonetic value in the derived environment.
- The complementary distribution of [æ] and [æ̝ə̯] is a consequence of the incomplete [æ] - [æ̝ə̯] split, not due to any active phonological process.
- The evidence for the static nature of the [æ] - [æ̝ə̯] distribution stems *exactly* from the fact that nothing prohibits the introduction of the contrast in morphologically derived contexts.
- [ˈmɛləni] truncates to [ˈmɛɬ], not [ˈmɛl], because the complementary distribution of [ɬ] and [l] is phonologically active.

(20) What is the difference between a **static complementary distribution** between two sounds, and a **dynamically active alternation** between two sounds?

(21) In a theory which posits abstract, underspecified underlying representations (e.g. generative phonology), there may be no difference between the two either in terms of their formal properties or in the impact they are predicted to have on the system as a whole (see Kenstowicz and Kisseberth 1977,1979 for the thorny particulars).

(22) Generative phonology (with abstract underspecified underlying representations):

A non-alternating pattern: [æ] and [æ̝ə̯] in New York monosyllables:
Rule-based phonology (lexical redundancy rule):
/æ/ → [æ̝ə̯] / ___ C# (where C= voiced obstruents, voiceless fricatives, and nasals)

Constraint-based phonology:

Input: /æ̝ə̯C/ or /æC/	Tensing
a. ☞æ̝ə̯C#	
b. æC#	*!

Base: æCV	BT identity	Constraint
a. æ̟ə̯C#	*!	
b. ☞æC#		*

English truncates do not engage in alternations that are elsewhere absent from the language. There are no violations of a supposed a-tensing constraint.

An alternating pattern: l-darkening in English:
Rule-based phonology (morphophonemic rule):

$$/l/ \rightarrow [ɬ] \; / \; \_\_\_ \; (C)]_{\sigma}$$

Constraint-based phonology:

Input: /l/ or /ɬ/	Constraint
a. ☞[ɬ](C)]$_{\sigma}$	
b. [l](C)]$_{\sigma}$	*!

Counterfactual:

Base: l	BT identity	Constraint
a. [ɬ]	*!	
b. ☞[l]		*

English truncates engage in alternations that are elsewhere present in the language. There are no violations of a so-called "BT identity" constraint.

(23) Given that both the **static condition** (such as the distribution of New York [æ] and [æ̟ə̯]) and the **dynamic condition** (such as English l-darkening) are expressed in the same formal terms, the generative theory predicts that the two patterns are always linguistically and psychologically indistinct. As English truncation shows, this is an incorrect prediction.

(24) **X is in static complementary distribution with Y**:
- The relationship between **X** and **Y** may be irrelevant to the learner, because they do not engage in a dynamic relationship; their complementary distribution serves no functional purpose (either meaning-changing or meaning-preserving), and therefore it can be (and obviously is) ignored.
- Therefore, operations are not subject to fully inactive constraints on distribution, as English truncation shows ([ˈhæɹi]~[ˈhæɹ]).

(25) **X dynamically alternates with Y**:
- The learner is aware of the dynamic relationship between **X** and **Y**, and their ultimate functional equivalence (i.e., that the alternation does not yield a change in meaning).
- Therefore, all operations display alternation, as English truncation shows ([ˈfɪləp]~[ˈfɬ]).

(26) The issue here is not merely definitional ("static complementary distribution," "morphophonemic alternation," etc.). Especially, it is whether the linguistic and psychological distinction between static and active (morpho)phonemic patterning is appreciated by researchers who use these terms.

(27) Benua's analysis is theoretically specious descriptively inadequate:

- New York has no [æ]~[æ̰] alternations.
- [æ]~[æ̰] are contrastive in New York, an emerging split.
- Actual alternations readily alternate upon truncation.
- Abstract underspecified lexical entries are unmotivated, and obscure the actual straightforwardness of the pattern; assuming full specification encounters no such problems.
- Acknowledging the linguistic and psychological distinction between active and static phonological patterning readily accounts for the truncation data.