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2016

## OMG the Word-final Alveopalatals are Cray-cray Prev(alent): The Morphophonology of Totes Constructions in English

Lauren Spradlin

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### Recommended Citation

Spradlin, Lauren (2016) "OMG the Word-final Alveopalatals are Cray-cray Prev(alent): The Morphophonology of Totes Constructions in English," *University of Pennsylvania Working Papers in Linguistics*: Vol. 22 : Iss. 1 , Article 30.

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## OMG the Word-final Alveopalatals are Cray-cray Prev(alent): The Morphophonology of Totes Constructions in English

### Abstract

This paper examines totes truncation, a previously undescribed morphophonological process. Totes constructions are formed by combining totes, a shortened form of the English adverb totally, and an optionally truncated and suffixed stem (e.g., totes atrosh > totally atrocious). Totes constructions are predominantly used by young adults both in speech and electronically. Using two data sets comprised of tokens pulled from electronic communication and social media posts, this work describes the construction's distribution, outlines its formation, and discusses its distinctive morphophonology. Totes constructions are formed post-lexically (Kiparsky 1982), resulting from prosodic template mapping and maximization (McCarthy and Prince 1986, Weeda 1992) and often end in unattested, or "creative" consonant clusters resulting from the deletion of extratemplatic material. Some totesed forms pose problems for traditional theories of English phonotactics, especially those that implicitly conflate the notions of 'unattested' and 'illicit.' By setting aside this categorical classification, this work offers an account of totes constructions' unique phonotactics and explores its implications for phonological theory. Totesed forms' creative coda clusters are unattested in un-totesed English, but adhere to English's sonority hierarchy, indicating that totesers are able to distinguish between a language's idiosyncratic phonotactic accidental gaps and cross-linguistic universals, and that they are willing to flout unprincipled co-occurrence restrictions, as long as creative forms exhibit well-formed sonority contours. Additionally noteworthy is the disproportionate presence of word-final alveopalatal consonants in the data. 180 of 618 stems (29.1%) end in an alveopalatal consonant, as opposed English in general, where alveopalatals occur only 1.86% of the time in any position (Dewey 1970). This preponderance of palatalization is argued to be due to the convergence of three factors: totesers targeting base words with underlying alveopalatals for truncation, phonologically-conditioned palatalization, and affective palatalization. Both types of palatalization are widely attested cross-linguistically (Kochetov & Alderete 2010, Chen 1973, Bhat 1978, Ohala 1994, Nichols 1971), but totes constructions may be the first documented systematic use of affective palatalization in English.

# OMG the Word-final Alveopalatals are Cray-cray Prev(alent): The Morphophonology of Totes Constructions in English

Lauren Spradlin

## 1 Introduction

This paper examines totes truncation and totes constructions, a relatively new morphological construction in English. Totes constructions are comprised of *totes* \_\_\_\_\_, where *totes* is a truncated form of *totally* and the second word is an optionally truncated and optionally suffixed stem. For example, *totes atrosh*, pronounced [tʰoʊts ə.'tɪoʊʃ], is a totes truncated form of *totally atrocious*. Drawing on two data sets, the present work describes the construction's distribution, formation, and unique phonological properties. Totes-truncated (totesed) forms exhibit codas and rimes unattested in un-totesed English; these forms are given, and their bearing on the notions of 'illicit,' 'ungrammatical,' and 'unattested' are discussed. Totesed forms are subject to a coda-level co-occurrence restriction not present in un-totesed English, which is described. 180 of the 618 stems (29.1%) end in alveopalatal consonants. An explanation for the disproportionate number of alveopalatal-final totesed forms is offered, pointing to phonologically-conditioned palatalization and affective palatalization, which is previously unattested in English.

## 2 Background

### 2.1 The Emergence of *Totes*

The construction is first electronically attested on Urban Dictionary in 2003, and has since become sufficiently widely-used to incite a variety of commentary on its use (Hanson 2012, Godwin 2013), be featured in a national ad campaign, inspire a coffee table book, *The Totes Ridic-tionary* (Cohen 2013), and warrant inclusion in the FBI's recently released internal manual *Twitter Shorthand* (IRSU 2014). Totes users (henceforth totesers) are generally in their teens and twenties, and use *totes* in speech and electronic communication for stylistic reasons, such as signaling group affiliation;<sup>1</sup> the construction may also have been popularized by character limits imposed on electronic communication.<sup>2</sup>

### 2.2 The Data

The claims made in this work are based on tokens drawn from two data sets; one is comprised of a single toteser's 438 abbreviated unique stems pulled from tweets, and the other is a composite of 180 unique stems abbreviated by multiple totesers in tokens compiled from various electronic sources.<sup>3</sup> The single toteser, @toteswords, is a self-proclaimed "expert on the subj" (<subject) and actively moderated a Twitter devoted to abbreviation from April 2010 to October 2013.<sup>4</sup>

The 180 general totesers' tokens span a wider chronological range than @toteswords's, 2003-2014, as well as a wider variety of locations, including multiple social media sites, text messages, and blog posts. Tokens were only included if judged to be used naturally (in the same sense that naturalistic speech data is unmonitored and spontaneous), unironically, and unambiguously.<sup>5</sup> Judgments were based on contextual and metalinguistic information available in each token. To-

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<sup>1</sup>For discussion on slang and group membership, see Eble 1996.

<sup>2</sup>Text messages were once limited to 160 characters per SMS, and Twitter posts, called tweets, are limited to 140 characters.

<sup>3</sup>The data throughout the paper is unedited, and appears in its original form, except that username information has been removed.

<sup>4</sup>@toteswords's abbreviations are not all explicitly *totes* + \_\_\_\_\_ constructions, but in one of his tweets, explains that *totes* can be used in combination with any abbreviation. In another, he refers to all abbreviations as #toteswords.

<sup>5</sup>Potentially ambiguous truncated forms were only included if the post included the whole stem and truncated form.

kens like (1) were excluded as unnatural and/or ironic. In (2), the speaker uses the construction naturally, and with no explicit reference to it or any demonstrated metalinguistic awareness of doing so.

- (1) Mom: “Probs.” Me: “Ah! Did you just *totes abbrev*?!” “Scuse me?” “*Totes abbrev*.” “Oh, yeah. I *totes abbrev-ed* with my probs. Gucci?”
- (2) K my bucket list is now *totes abbreviated* to “(1) human love 2) buttsecks 3) whale-watching” #EndOfDays

Tokens pulled from social media are orthographically rendered, but are better classified as ‘fingered speech’ than as traditional writing, and often unambiguously convey the phonological content of corresponding spoken form (Tagg 2009). For example, *totes tradge* is the totes-truncated form of *totally tragic*; the final voiced alveopalatal affricate [dʒ] is reflected unambiguously in the orthographic <dge>.<sup>6</sup> *Perfecsh* (<perfection) is equally transparent in orthographically representing [kj] as <csh>. In other cases, phonetic ambiguity was resolved by considering the base word. At first glance, <sh> in *yoosh* could reasonably represent a voiceless alveopalatal fricative [ʃ]. When its base word, *usual*, is taken into account, [ʒ] becomes much more likely, as there is no final devoicing associated with totes constructions.<sup>7</sup> In certain cases, neither the underlying phonological representation nor the surface phonetic form was transparent, even after considering the base. On these occasions, spoken examples were consulted.

It should be noted that there are also exceptional forms that are either combinations of independently lexicalized truncations (*totes deplorbz*, *totes obvi*, *totes amazeballs*,<sup>8</sup> etc.) or phrases which happen to include a *totes*, but when separated have an unclear meaning. For example, *Totes mcgoats* would be an appropriate response to a yes/no question and exhibits a *totes*, but it is unclear what *mcgoat* or *mcgoats* would mean, if anything, independently from its *totes*. Tokens like these were also excluded.

## 2.3 Truncation: Distribution, Classification, and Variation

### 2.3.1 Distribution of Totesed Forms

Truncation, also called clipping or shortening, is a morphological process that reduces a word to one of its parts (Marchand 1969). *Totes* (the lexical item) is a truncated and suffixed variant of *totally*, used in similar distribution to the English adverb. It can be used alone as an entire utterance, generally in response to a yes/no question. It is also used in constructions comprised of *totes* + *adjective/adverb*, *totes* + *verb*, and *totes* + (*determiner*) *noun*. In the vast majority of tokens, speakers truncate the word following the *totes*. Example (3) illustrates truncated and untruncated variants of *ambiguous*. Examples (4) and (5) exhibit *totes* combined with verbs and nouns.<sup>9</sup> When used with (determiner-less) nouns, the *totes* is short for *total* rather than the distributionally incompatible *totally*.

- (3) a. D is **totes ambig**, but I'll err on the sentimental side.  
 b. What if 6S cancels into 6S? 6S S is **totes ambiguous**! Or what if a notation requires re turning to neutral? :v
- (4) a. Just for the record, I have a Degree in Applied Science and for the most part I'm totes profesh when it comes to health and fitness. But this article opportunity was too good to pass up. So let me **totes elab** yar?  
 b. Kay, so I should **totes elaborate**/add more but I'm kinda busy today. Ill eplain tomorrow I guess. Also I need to hibernate, I ended up not being able to recharge my sleep reserves

<sup>6</sup>Every English word ending in <dge> also ends in [dʒ].

<sup>7</sup>Most of the tokens for [juʒ] (<usual) were spelled <yoozh>, orthographically reflecting the voiced status of the final phoneme.

<sup>8</sup><deplorable, <obvious, and <amazing, respectively

<sup>9</sup>Totes truncation may be rarer for verbs, but it is hard to tell definitively. Twitter is not searchable using parts of speech as a criterion. Additionally, inflectional endings on verbs convey salient grammatical information, so they may just be truncated less frequently.

- last weekend and I'm on rather low battery.
- (5) a. you're **totes a tradge** too! hahahaha I'll tell ya tomorrow what he was at in the car journey LOL #BlessMyMum haha.
- b. Craig Linville This show being canceled is **totes a tragedy**.

There are a few tokens where the truncated form exists only in combination with an overt *totes*. Thus, the truncation is arguably linked to the *totes*, rather than simply a lexicalized adverbial *totes* and a lexicalized abbreviation that have been combined into a single phrase. The following truncations are the those attested only immediately following a *totes* and a reduced auxiliary verb: *arbz* (<arbitrary), *cleesh* (<cliché),<sup>10</sup> *dil* (<diligent), *dramad* (<dramatic), *exot* (<exotic),<sup>11</sup> *grodes* (<grody), *inevs* (<inevitable), *kesh* (<Ke\$ha), *losh* (<lotiony), *misanth* (<misanthropic),<sup>12</sup> *ungrammat* (<ungrammatical), *verbates* (<verbatim), and *vuln* (<vulnerable). There are four truncations that proved difficult to search for, as they are homographs with other higher frequency words. These are *debauch* (<debaucherous), *nov* (<novel), *pec* (<pecan), and *qui* (<quiet).

### 2.3.2 Classifying Totes Truncation

Weeda 1992 classifies truncation along three dimensions: where the deleted material is removed from, what material is left post-truncation, and which prosodic template is used. Totes constructions are clearly back-clippings, in that phonological material is deleted from the end of the word. The other classificatory parameters are not so neatly applied, however. The quantity of the phonological material remaining post-truncation varies according to the stress profile of the base, as does the quantity of deleted material, preventing its classification as either simple or subtractive truncation. The number of syllables remaining post-truncation range from one to four (e.g., *bluebz* (<blueberries), *democ* (<democracy), *aphrodeej* (<aphrodisiac), and *clarificaish* (<clarification)), as does the number of syllables deleted (e.g., *awf* (<awful), *appreesh* (<appreciate), *fash* (<fashionable), and *Deuts* (<Deuteronomy)). With regard to the third classification, two prosodic templates are invoked when forming totes constructions: the unrestricted syllable and the iamb. The unrestricted syllable is employed in coda maximization. On a metrical foot level, the iamb is the preferred template. When an iamb is unavailable (i.e., in words with initial primary stress) totes truncation results in monosyllabic truncated forms. The vast majority (97.2%) of truncated forms are monosyllabic or disyllabic, which is likely a consequence base word length. Across the data sets, only 17 tri-syllabic truncations exist (of 618 tokens, or 2.8%), and their base words contain either four or five syllables. *Clarificaish* (<clarification) and *ejaculaish* (<ejaculation) are the two longest truncations, at four syllables each.<sup>13</sup>

## 3 Totes Formation

Totesed forms' distributional characteristics were outlined in the previous sections to give the unfamiliar reader a feel for the construction. The current section outlines the steps taken in deriving totesed forms, lists totesed codas and rimes that are unattested in un-totesed English, notes a co-occurrence restriction unique to totesed forms, and discusses implications for phonological theory.

### 3.1 The Mechanics of Totes Truncation

When forming totes constructions, speakers follow a series of four steps, given in (6) below.

<sup>10</sup>*Cleesh* (<cliché) is unexpected in that its primary stressed syllable is deleted. I imagine this is an exception, or is due to the word's status as a loanword pronounced with secondary stress on the first syllable, [ˌkliːʃ.ˈʃeɪ].

<sup>11</sup>*Exot* returns only one search result without a *totes*. Exot Treasures is a specialty textiles vendor.

<sup>12</sup>*Misanth*'s primary stress is on its initial morpheme, so its formation is exceptional. It does, however, surface as the expected iamb. I imagine this is a consequence of the probable unrecoverability of [ˈmɪs].

<sup>13</sup>I received a text message that read "Yo these breathy voiced consonants are totes protoindoeuropea" (<Proto-Indo-European) once. This marginally natural form is heptasyllabic, but is not included in my data.

- (6) 1. Locate Primary Stress
2. Maximize Coda
3. Delete Extratemplatic Material
4. Optional Affective Suffixation

The first step, Locate Primary Stress, requires speakers to identify the syllable carrying the word's primary stress. Proceeding left-to-right, phonological material up to and including the primary-stressed syllable of the base word is retained. Second, Maximize Coda requires that as many consonants as possible reassociate to the truncated form's coda. Whether consonants reassociate to the truncated form's coda depends on the well-formedness of the resulting sonority contour (as dictated by English's Sonority Hierarchy (Hammond 1999) and the Sonority Sequencing Generalization (Blevins 1995)). Consonantal reassociation over a variety of prosodic boundaries is illustrated in (7). Unassociated material is subsequently deleted in step 3. Once the bare truncation has been formed, speakers may optionally affix a variety of affective suffixes, namely *-z/*, *-ij/*, and *-oʊz/*, whose distributional restrictions are discussed in Section 3.3. Table 8 gives sample derivations of toted truncated forms.

relevant prosodic boundary	base word		truncated form	
syllable boundary	marvelous	[ˈmaɪ.və.ləs]	marv	[ˈmaɪv]
morpheme boundary	comfy <sup>14</sup>	[ˈkʌm.fɪj]	comf	[ˈkʌmf]
lexical word boundary	wheelchair	[ˈwi:l.tʃeɪr]	wheelch	[ˈwi:lʃ]

Table 7: Consonantal reassociation resulting from Coda Maximization.

base word	republican [rɪpʌblɪkən]	ginormous [dʒaɪnoʊməs]	interesting [ɪnˈtɪrɪstɪŋ]	comfortable [kʌmf.təɪ.bəl]
locate primary stress	rɪ.ˈpʌb.lɪ.kən	dʒaɪ.ˈnoʊ.məs	ˈɪn.tɪrɪst.ɪŋ	ˈkʌmf.təɪ.bəl
maximize coda	rɪ.ˈpʌb.lɪ.kən	dʒaɪ.ˈnoʊ.m.əs	ˈɪn.tɪrɪst.ɪŋ	ˈkʌmf.t.əɪ.bəl
delete extratemplatic material	rɪ.ˈpʌb	dʒaɪ.ˈnoʊ.m	ˈɪn.tʃ	ˈkʌmf.t
surface form	rɪ.ˈpʌb	dʒaɪ.ˈnoʊ.m	ˈɪn.tʃ	ˈkʌmf.t
optional affective suffixation	-	dʒaɪ.ˈnoʊ.mz	-	-

Table 8: Sample derivations of toted forms.

Note that in *republican*, the [l] does not reassociate to the coda; doing so would create an illicit post-vocalic sonority rise from [b] to [l]. In *ginormous*, the [m] is included in the truncated form's coda as the terminus of the sonority fall spanning [oʊ], [ɪ], and [m]. Two characteristics of surface toted forms indicate that the process occurs post-lexically: consonantal reassociation across morpheme and word boundaries (e.g., *wheelch*) and coarticulatory effects triggered by deleted material (e.g., *inch* <*interesting*, pronounced [ɪn.tʃ]).

### 3.2 Totesing Begets Codas and Rimes Unattested in Un-totesed English

#### 3.2.1 Unattested Codas and Rimes

The construction's post-lexical nature yields surface coda clusters and rimes that are unattested in un-totesed English (cf. Hammond 1999). Consonantal reassociation over syllable boundaries en-

<sup>14</sup>In this instance *comfy* is the base word, rather than *comfortable*. *Comfi* is attested, and the <ɪ> reflects its derivation from the longer form.

genders unattested coda clusters like the final [lg] in *totes vulg* (<vulgar), and unattested rimes like the /oʊʃ/ in *totes sosh* (<social) are attributable to truncation taking place after morphophonological rules have applied. Table 9 lists each unattested form by coda or rime type.

	IPA	truncated form	base word
[mb] <sup>15</sup>	[nʌmb]	numb	number
	[mɛmb]	memb	remember
	[noʊ.ˈvemb]	Novemb	November
	[flæmb]	flamb	flamboyant
	[tæmb]	tamb	tambourine
[nf]	[ɪnf]	inf	infamy
	[sɪnf]	sinf	sinful
[lg]	[pɪlg]	pilg	pilgrim
	[vʌlg]	vulg	vulgar
[ldʒ]	[nə.ˈstældʒ]	nostalɪ	nostalgic
[eɪʃ]	[seɪ.ə.ˈbreɪʃ]	celebraish	celebration
	[fə.ˈleɪʃ]	fellaish	fellatio
	[peɪʃ]	paish	patient
	[ˈpleɪ.ˈsteɪʃ]	PlayStaish	PlayStation
	[rə.ˈleɪʃ]	relaish	relationship
	[ˌveɪ.ˈkeɪʃ]	vacash	vacation
[oʊʃ]	[ə.ˈtroʊʃ]	atrosh	atrocious
	[ə.ˈmoʊʃ]	emosh	emotional
	[fə.ˈroʊʃ]	ferosh	ferocious
	[foʊʃ]	fosh	fo sho(<for sure)
	[groʊʃ]	grosh	grocery
	[loʊʃ]	losh	lotiony
	[nə.ˈgoʊʃ]	negosh	negotiable
	[preɪ.ˈkoʊʃ]	precosh	precocious
	[preɪ.ˈmoʊʃ]	promosh	promotion
	[soʊʃ]	sosh	social
[ɛʒ]	[pleɪʒ]	plej	pleasure
[æʒ]	[kæʒ]	cazh	casual
[juwʒ]	[juwʒ]	uzh	usual
	[kən.ˈfjuwʒ]	confuzh	confusion
	[də.ˈluwʒ]	deluj	delusional
[juwʃ]	[fjuwʃ]	fewtch	future
	[mjjuwʃ]	mewtch	mutual
[ɪjdʒ]	[preɪ.ˈsɪjdʒ]	proceej	procedure
[ug]	[fruwg]	froog	frugal
	[guwg]	goog	Google
[ɛð]	[tə.ˈgeð]	togeth	together
	[weð]	weath	weather
[ɛsp]	[desp]	desp	desperate
[ijts] <sup>16</sup>	[pijts]	peetz	pizza

Table 9: Final sequences unattested in un-totesed English, but present in totesed forms.

Four final clusters rarely attested in un-totesed English exhibit corresponding totesed forms;

<sup>15</sup>While it may be tempting to call the **b** an orthographic remnant of truncation, both *numb* and *Novemb* were observed in their spoken forms by trained phonologists.

<sup>16</sup>Where [ijts] is monomorphemic

[lj], [lb], [ln], and [ɹg] occur in *Welsh*, *bulb*, *kiln*,<sup>17</sup> and *morgue*, respectively. Relevant forms are given in Table 10.

	previously attested in	IPA	truncated form	base word
[lj]	Welsh	[bʊlj]	bullsh	bullshit
[lb]	bulb	[wɛlbz]	wellbs	wellbeing
[ln]	kiln	[vɔln]	vuln	vulnerable
[ɹg]	morgue	[aɹg]	arg	argue
		[gaɹg]	garg	gargle
		[maɹg]	marg	margarita
		[taɹg]	targ	Target

Table 10: Final sequences rarely attested in un-totesed English, but present in totesed forms.

### 3.3 Optional Affective Suffixation is Subject to the sC-/z/ Suffixation Restriction

#### 3.3.1 Optional Affective Suffixation

Post-truncation, up to three optional affective suffixes can be added to the truncated form. When multiple affective suffixes appear, the final one is always *-z/*. Tokens exhibiting three affective suffixes (and an overt *totes*<sup>18</sup>) were limited to *-z/ + -ij/ + -z/*.<sup>19</sup> This is demonstrated in Table 11 below, where *jeal* (<jealous) co-occurs with all possible suffix combinations. The same exhaustive suffixal distribution is exhibited by *awk* (<awkward), *fame* (<famous), and *norm* (<normal).<sup>20</sup>

base word	bare truncation	affective suffix 1	affective suffix 2	affective suffix 3	orthographic surface form	phonetic surface form
<jealous> /dʒɛləs/	jeal [dʒɛl]	-	-		totes jeal	[tɔʊts dʒɛl]
		-/oʊz/	-		totes jealo	[tɔʊts dʒɛloʊz]
		-/oʊz/	-/z/		totes jealos	[tɔʊts dʒɛloʊz]
		-/z/	-		totes jells	[tɔʊts dʒɛlz]
		-/ij/	-		totes jealy	[tɔʊts dʒɛlij]
		-/ij/	-/z/		totes jellies	[tɔʊts dʒɛlijz]
		-/z/	-/ij/	-/z/	totes jealsies	[tɔʊts dʒɛlzijs]

Table 11: Distribution of optional affective suffixes.

Affective suffixes other than *-z/* allow further suffixation of inflectional morphology. *Abbrev* (<abbreviate, abbreviation) co-occurs with 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular present tense, progressive aspect, simple past tense, and plural morphemes. Suffixation of adverbial *-ly* is also attested. When stacking affective suffixes and inflectional ones, the affective suffix precedes the inflectional one. *Abbrev* + affective *-z/* + plural *-z/* is prevented by adherence to English's co-occurrence restriction against adjacent sibilants (Hayes 2011:185). This restriction is upheld in other sibilant-final forms; *awes* (<awesome), *ax* (<accident), *cass* (<casserole), *crise* (<crisis), *deece* (<decent), *philos* (<phi-

<sup>17</sup>Pronunciations of *kiln* vary. [kʰɪln], [kʰɪl], and [kʰɪl.n] are attested (Hammond 1999:61).

<sup>18</sup>*-z/ + -oʊz/ + -z/* is attested in some totesed forms without overt *toteses*, but it's much rarer. Totes constructions arguably exhibit affective palatalization, which often signals diminutivization (cf. Section 3.3.2). Cross-linguistically, high front vowels also tend to signal diminutives, whereas low back vowels tend to be used in forming augmentatives (Wescott 1971 and references therein). *-zovz/* may be dispreferred relative to *-zizjz/* as *-zovz/* doesn't serve to reinforce the diminutive, affective aspect of the construction.

<sup>19</sup>@toteswords did tweet specifically about *-zizjz/*: "Add '-zies' to words. Example: free reignzies; thankzies, peenzies."

<sup>20</sup>There are likely stems additional stems that exhibit exhaustive suffixation paradigms, but I haven't searched for them.



losophy), and *synops* (<synopsis) do not co-occur with affective *-/z/* either. Totesed forms are subject to an additional coda-sized co-occurrence restriction, discussed in the following section.

### 3.3.2 The sC-/z/ Suffixation Restriction

After observing English's adjacent sibilant co-occurrence restriction, most base words take affective suffixes freely; codas with a sibilant in any position are the exception. Totesed forms adhere to an additional restriction against two sibilants co-occurring in the coda of any one truncation. This differs from general English phonotactics in that its domain is larger and spans the entire coda, rather than just the final segment. Suffixation of affective *-/z/* is blocked in truncated forms with sC coda clusters, where s is a sibilant and C is an oral stop or affricate. *Majest* (<majestic), *nast* (<nasty), and *desp* (<desperate) are not attested with affective suffixal *-/z/*. Neither is *quest* (<question, pronounced [kwɛstʃ]). Fourteen additional sC-final totesed forms are attested in the data.<sup>21</sup> Curiously, none of them exhibit affective suffixal *-/z/*, but many surface with inflectional *-/z/s*. Other un-totesed abbreviations do not seem to observe this co-occurrence restriction.

This restriction does not exist in unabbreviated un-totesed English words either; *-/z/* is one of the few inflectional morphemes English has. There are un-totesed sC-/z/ clusters that result from pluralization (e.g., *pests*), 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular present tense marking (e.g., (she) *gasps*), possession (e.g., the *whisk's* handle), and copula reduction (e.g., the *flask's* full). In un-totesed English, the *-/z/* in the sC-/z/ conveys inflectional information, and while it is occasionally dropped in casual speech, it is still grammatically necessary and pronounced. However, totes truncation's optional affective *-/z/* involves complex articulatory sequences and conveys no inflectional information. This is perhaps why it is unattested; avoiding hyperarticulated speech in this casual construction may be more important than forming the largest possible coda. This analysis is unsatisfying and entirely speculative, and the sC-/z/ co-occurrence restriction warrants further study.

## 3.4 Implications for Phonology

### 3.4.1 'Unattested' Doesn't Mean 'Illicit,' and Totesers are Happy to Fill in Accidental Gaps

The unattested sequences listed in Section 3.2.1 are better analyzed as accidental gaps rather than true phonotactic violations or illicit clusters. 'Violation' is too strong, and I prefer to use 'creative' to refer to consonant clusters and rimes that do not occur in un-totesed English words, but have no principled reason not to. The creative clusters shed light on the difference between what English users produce as speakers of un-totesed English and what they subconsciously know qualifies as well-formed with regard to English phonology. Totesers have no qualms about creating syllables that fill in gaps in English's coda and rime inventories, demonstrating their flexibility, or perhaps the flexibility of phonotactic rules in general. In producing creative sequences, speakers heed the specifications of a universally well-formed syllable (by avoiding random phoneme sequences and sequences that would violate English's sonority hierarchy). Totesed forms, and their creative clusters, are used to signal affect, which may be more important to the toteser than adhering to English's idiosyncratic distributional patterns or phonotactics.

The few forms that do contradict English's sonority hierarchy belong to two classes: those with orthographically reflected excrescent consonants and those with [s]-medial final clusters. Excrescent consonants are also referred to as intrusive stops, and can occur between a sonorant and voiceless obstruent, resulting from the cessation of voicing and changes in intraoral air pressure. In this environment, they are characterized by progressive place assimilation and regressive voicing assimilation (Clements 1987). Excrescent consonants are also sometimes orthographically represented. The [p]s in the final codas of *presumpsh* (<presumptuous), *scrumpsh* (<scrumptious), *pumpk* (<pumpkin) are likely excrescent, and are an articulatory reflex of the transition between the voiced nasal and the following voiceless obstruents, rather than part of the form's phonological representation. The sonority falls present in /mj/ and /mk/ are well-formed. The acceptability of

<sup>21</sup>They are *brewsk* (<brewski), *brosk* (<broski), *const* (<constitution), *cost* (<costume), *desp* (<desperate), *dudesk* (<dudeski), *frust* (<frustrated), *inst* (<instance), *majest* (<majestic), *nast* (<nasty), *prost* (<prostitute), *resc* (<rescue), *transp* (<transportation), and *yest* (<yesterday).

*transp* (<transportation) and *dudesk* (<dudeski<sup>22</sup>) may be due /s/'s special status in consonant clusters (i.e., its ability to both precede and follow voiceless obstruents, Hammond 1999:94), but there's no way to tell definitively.

#### 4 Palatalization and a Preponderance of Alveopalatals

A striking pattern in the totes data is that almost a third of the totesed forms (29.1%) end in an alveopalatal consonant. While ending in an alveopalatal is not required of well-formed totes construction, it's a recognizable characteristic of totesed forms. The disproportionate number of alveopalatal forms seems to result from the confluence of three factors: totesers choosing base words with underlying alveopalatals as targets of totes truncation (e.g., *appreciate(iv)e*, *belligerent*, *special*, *treacherous*, (*un*)*fortunate*), coarticulatory effects triggered by deleted material, and purely affective palatalization.

Palatalization is among the most common phonological processes cross-linguistically (Kochetov and Alderete 2011, Chen 1973, Bhat 1978). It is a process where, under the influence of front vowels or glides, consonants gain secondary palatal articulation or shift their place of articulation to coronal (Kochetov and Alderete 2011). Here, a distinction will be made between phonologically conditioned palatalization and expressive, or affective, palatalization.

##### 4.1 Post-Lexicality and Phonologically-Conditioned Palatalization

Two phenomena indicate totes truncation is a post-lexical process: consonantal reassociation across morpheme and word boundaries, and coarticulatory effects triggered by deleted material. This section provides a very brief overview of Lexical Phonology (Kiparsky 1982), followed by a discussion of consonantal reassociation and coarticulatory effects.

Within the framework of Lexical Phonology (LP), a distinction exists between lexical phonology and post-lexical phonology. Lexical phonological rules are cyclic, and post-lexical phonological rules are non-cyclic. Essentially, Lexical Phonology argues that there are multiple levels at which word formation takes place, and each level is responsible for slightly different phonology and morphology. Kiparsky's (1982) LP model includes 3 lexical levels, and one level where post-lexical phonology takes place. Words cycle through each level indefinitely until they are well-formed and proceed to the next. Outside these cyclically applied levels is the post-lexical domain where totes constructions are formed. Totesers treat morphologically complex words as whole, opaque inputs, and maximize codas without attending to morpheme boundaries, or even lexical word boundaries. Eighteen tokens exhibit final consonants that are morpheme- or word-initial in their respective base words (e.g., *caref* <careful, *bullsh* <bullshit). All 18 forms are given in Table 12.

base word	morphological structure	coda maximization	OAS	surface truncated form
awful ['a.fəl]	{awe}+{-ful}	['af]	-/z/	awfs ['afs]
careful ['keɪl.fəl]	{care}+{-ful}	['keɪf]	-	caref ['keɪf]
democracy [dɛ.'ma.kɪə.'sɪj]	{demo}+{cracy}	[dɛ.'mak]	-	democ [dɛ.'mak]
hopeful ['həʊp.fəl]	{hope}+{-ful}	['həʊpf]	-/z/	hopefs ['həʊpfs]
joyful ['dʒɔɪ.fəl]	{joy}+{-ful}	[dʒɔɪf]	-	joyf ['dʒɔɪf]
playful ['pleɪ.fəl]	{play}+{-ful}	['pleɪf]	-	playf ['pleɪf]
pornography [pɔːr.nə.'ɡɪ.ə.'fɪj]	{porno}+{graph}+{-y}	[pɔːr.'nag]	-	pornog [pɔːr.'nag]

<sup>22</sup>*Dudeski* is {dude}+{-ski}, used here as an in-group marker. Interestingly, *toteski* is an attested variant of *totes*, where the {-ski} presumably serves the same function.

sinful ['sɪn.fəl]	{sin}+{-ful}	['sɪnf]	-	sinf ['sɪnf]
threesome ['θriːj.səm]	{three}+{-some}	['θriːjs]	-	threes(e) ['θriːjs]
wonderful <sup>23</sup> ['wʌn.dɛɪ.fəl]	{wonder}+{-ful}	['wʌn.dɛɪf]	-	wonderf ['wʌn.dɛɪf]
apeshit ['eɪp.ʃɪt]	{ape}+{shit}	['eɪpʃ]	-	apesh ['eɪpʃ]
blueberries ['bluː.bɛɪɪz]	{blue}+{berry}+ {-s}	['bluwb]	(plural -/z/)	bluebs ['bluwbz]
bullshit ['bʊl.ʃɪt]	{bull}+{shit}	['bʊlʃ]	-	bullsh ['bʊlʃ]
iPhone ['aɪ.fəʊn]	{i-}+{Phone} <sup>24</sup>	['aɪf]	-	iPh ['aɪf]
seagull ['siːj.gəl]	{sea}+{gull}	['siːjg]	-	seeg ['siːjg]
wellbeing <sup>25</sup> [wel.'biːɪŋ]	{well}+{being}	['welbz]	-/z/	wellbs ['welbz]
wheelchair ['wiːl.tʃeɪr]	{wheel}+{chair}	['wiːlʃ]	-	wheelch ['wiːlʃ]
fo sho <sup>26</sup> (<for sure) [fɔʊ.ʃoʊ]	{fo}#{sho}	[fɔʊ]	-	fosh [fɔʊ]

Table 12: Codas maximized post-lexically over base words' morpheme and word boundaries.

#### 4.2 Affective Palatalization in English?

A smaller but significant portion of the totes tokens exhibits expressive palatalization, particularly involving [ʃ]. Expressive palatalization, defined by Kochetoc and Alderete (2011) as “an apparently phonologically unmotivated process that applies in baby talk registers, diminutive constructions, and sound symbolism,” is iconically associated with notions of smallness, childishness, and affection (Ohala 1994). Cross-linguistically, Japanese and Warlpiri have certain consonants that are always palatalized in baby talk; Huave and Lake Ojibwa mark diminutive constructions with palatalization; Southern Sierra Miwok, Wiyot, and Sahaptin palatalize consonants in constructing diminutives; Basque and Japanese add palatalized consonants to convey smallness or childishness in manner vocabulary; and Quechua and Russian form truncated hypocoristics by palatalizing consonants (Kochetov and Alderete 2011, Ohala 1994, Nichols 1971).

Of the 618 tokens, 180 or 29.1%, end in a final alveopalatal consonant. This is notably much higher than the general frequency of alveopalatals in English. In any position within a word, alveopalatals account for approximately 1.86% of all phonemes (Dewey 1970).

*Awesh* (<*awes* <awesome), *deesh* (<*deece* <decent), *imposh* (<*imposs* <impossible), *impressh* (<*impress* <impressive), *maybsh* (<*mayb* <maybe), and *posh* (<*poss* <possible),<sup>27</sup> are clear examples of affective palatalization by English speakers using *totes* constructions. There are no phonological triggers of palatalization in these examples. Five of the six shift from word-final [s] to [ʃ], but do so preceding a reduced, central vowel, which is not a conditioning environment for phonological palatalization. *Maybsh* is the outlier and is truly exceptional in exhibiting an exclusively affectively motivated suffixal [ʃ].

## 5 Conclusion

This paper outlined a previously undescribed morphophonological construction used by young

<sup>23</sup>*Wonderf* (['wʌn.dɛɪf]) is aberrant in that it is a trochee. I imagine its deviation is related to preservation of morphological information. The /f/ is the only remnant of {-ful} and *wonder* is a distinct word. More pronounced coda consonants gives listeners more information to recover the truncation's meaning.

<sup>24</sup>{i-} is arguably a newly coined productive derivational prefix that connotes that something is an Apple product. iPhone, iPod, iPad are all devices produced by Apple. Additionally, a flask that resembles an iPhone is marketed as an iFlask, and a Google search for “i products” returned cases, chargers, and accessories for all of the Apple products listed above.

<sup>25</sup>*Wellbeing* behaves as *wonderf* does, and likely for the same reason. *Well* is un-totesed English word, and the /b/ is the only indication of {-being}.

<sup>26</sup>*Fo sho* also patterns with *wellbs* and *wonderf*.

<sup>27</sup>A written token of this has been nearly impossible to find. It is attested in its spoken form, however.

adults in speech and electronically, totes truncation. The construction's distribution, formation, and morphophonology were detailed, based on data comprised of electronic and spoken tokens. Unattested, or creative, consonant clusters present in totesed forms were listed and their acceptability explained. Some totesed forms pose problems for traditional views of English phonotactics, especially those that conflate the notions of 'unattested' and 'illicit.' It was argued that by producing these creative clusters, speakers are flouting the idiosyncratic accidental gaps in the English coda and rime inventories, rather than violating universal rules governing syllable well-formedness. The sC-/z/ co-occurrence restriction unique to totesed forms was outlined. Finally, it was argued that the striking proportion of word-final alveopalatal consonants is the result of palatalization as an affective marker in English.

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The Graduate Center, City University of New York  
 365 Fifth Avenue, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
 New York, NY 10016  
 lspradlin@gradcenter.cuny.edu