

English words and phrases (suprasegmentals)

Rogers Chapter 5

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Syllable structure Rogers p. 88-93

- Syllables: usually easy to agree on how many syllables make up an English word
 - Harder sometimes to agree on ‘boundary’ between two syllables
- Simple scheme can be used to represent ‘possible English word’
 - Can be applied easily to any possible English word
- Starting point is possible one syllable words

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Phonetics more than Cs and Vs

- Additional things necessary to characterize phonetic patterns of English
- 1) Phonotactics
 - Restrictions on what C and V patterns go together to making up syllables and words
- 2) Prosodics (suprasegmentals)
 - Stress
 - Intonation

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Basic structure

Two main divisions of syllable

Onset -- all consonants before the vowel

Rhyme (sometimes spelled *rime*)

nucleus - vowel or diphthong

coda - consonants following vowel (if any)

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Multisyllable words

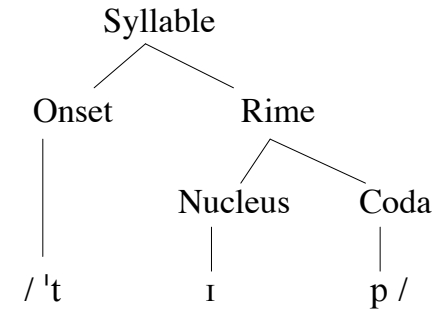
- Two principles yield unique syllable structures
 - 1) Maximize onsets
 - As many consonants as possible get ‘stuck’ to onset of syllable
 - Maximum determined by possible one-syllable words
 - 2) Avoid rhymes ending in lax vowels

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Simplest closed syllable Example: ‘Tip’



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Open and closed syllables

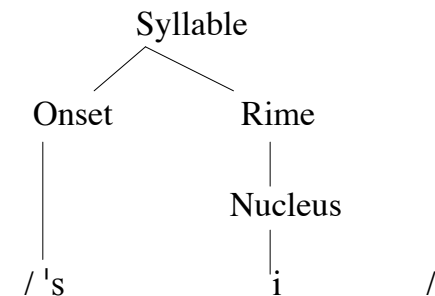
- Open syllables are syllables that end in a vowel or diphthong
 - i.e. those that have a rhyme with a nucleus but no coda consonants
- Closed syllables are syllables that end in a consonant
 - i.e. they have rhymes with coda consonants

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Simplest open syllable Example: ‘See’

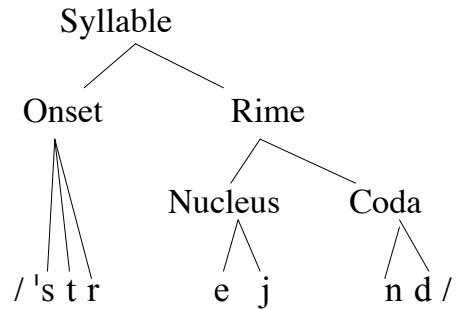


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Example 'strained'



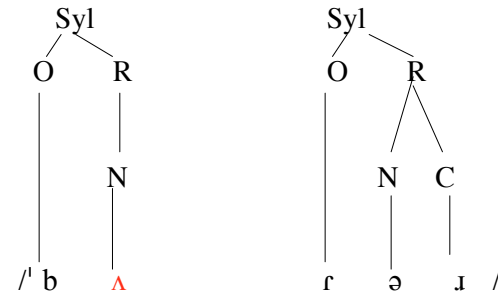
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Example 'butter'

Max onset only leaves bad first syllable!!

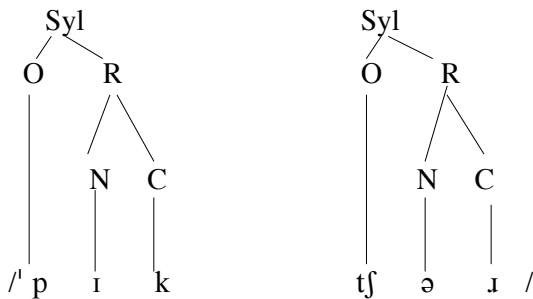


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Example 'Picture'



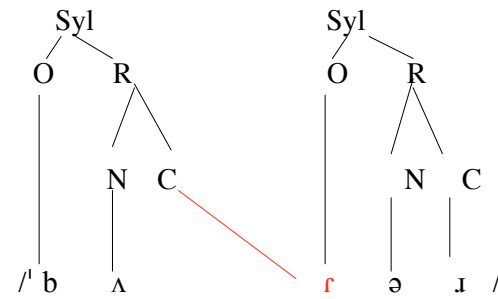
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Example 'butter'

Fix: Ambisyllabicity



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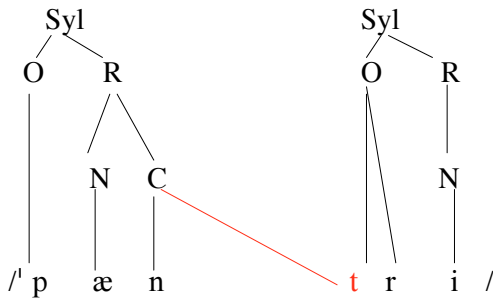
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Principle of ambisyllabicity (Rogers p. 93)

“In an unstressed syllable, the first consonant of the onset also serves as the coda of the preceding syllable.”

Example ‘Pantry’



Beyond syllable structure

- There's more to phonetics than consonants, vowels and syllable structure
- Major missing ingredients stress and intonation
- Intonation is subtle and rather complex
 - We will concentrate on simplest cases
 - Necessary to fully understand stress

Treatment simplified version of Ladefoged

- Stress
- There may really only be three basic kinds of English vowels
 - Full (primary) stressed vowels
 - Full (non-primary stressed) vowels
 - Most vowels labeled by Rogers as 'secondary stress' are actually these
 - Reduced vowels
 - Very short, limited inventory... obscure quality

Additional factor ‘tonic syllables’

- Every utterance consists of one or more intonational phrases
- Every intonational phrase has a ‘tonic’ syllable: The one most prominent syllable of the phrase
- A tonic syllable is always centered on a full primary-stressed vowel

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Our working system

- Primary stressed syllables involve some *excursion* of the pitch contour

See sense 2 and 3 of definition at <http://www.mw.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book=Dictionary&va=excursion>

- One primary stressed syllable is the *tonic syllable*
 - It has ‘extra punch’
 - Tonic syllable is often the **last** primary stress in the intonational phrase
- Other full vowels may occur in non-primary stressed syllables
 - I will use the ‘secondary stress’ symbol when we need to emphasize this
 - This will only mean a ‘full non-primary stressed vowel’
 - These cause no appreciable *excursion* of the pitch, just a return toward the baseline **pattern**

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The complication

- The tonic syllable is the most prominent full, primary stressed syllables
- Other stressed syllables may sound less prominent and may be interpreted as ‘secondary stresses’
- Some linguists think there can be many grades of stress

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Our working system-- reduced vowels

- Reduced vowels will sometimes be noted explicitly by use of special symbols

[ə] [ɚ] are always used for reduced vowels

Note: Rogers sometimes uses [ɚ] in full vowels

I will use [ɚ] or [ɚ̄] for the full vowel

Two other vowels also occur in reduced syllables

[ɪ] a reduced, short, centralized version of [i]

[ɪ̄] a reduced, short, centralized version of [i]

- Alternately reduced vowels will sometimes be noted explicitly by use of IPA extra short diacritic or *micron*: [ɪ̆] and full non-stressed vowels may be indicated by a *macron* [ɪ̄]

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Minimalist intonation

- Intonation is quite a complex topic in English
- There is not full agreement on exactly how to describe it
- There are clearly several different types of rising and falling patterns with different potential meanings
- What do you want to name the dog?
 - John: ‘Napoleon.’
 - Mary ‘Napoleon?’
 - John (definitively): ‘Yeah. Napoleon(!)’
 - Timmy: ‘Napoleon???! I want to call him Spot.’
- This is a topic that takes a long time to explore properly
 - Beyond our scope.

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Simple falling intonation pattern

- **Examples: Mark tonic syllable with ***
- The **man** with a **dog**.
 - [ðə 'mæn wɪðə *'dɒg]
- The **man** with a dog.
 - [ðə *'mæn wɪðə ɪdɒg]
- The man with a **dog**.
 - [ðə ɪmæn wɪðə *'dɒg]

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Simple falling intonation pattern

- We will consider only the most ‘prosaic’ pattern for now
- Mainly to see how it interacts with stress.
 - We may examine some additional patterns later.
 - Mark tonic syllable with * before a primary stress mark

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Live transcription

- SPECIAL -focus on stress and intonation
 - Mark tonic primary stress
 - Other primary stress
 - Secondary stress
 - Explicitly mark reduced syllables³ **4th** transcription quiz.
 - I will demonstrate it frequently in class
- GENERAL TRANSCRIPTION
 - Mark primary stress
 - Do not confuse reduced syllables with full ones
 - (Some leniency for /ɪ/, /ɜː/, /ʌ/ and /i/)
 - Do not ‘promote’ reduced vowels.
 - ‘promenade’ should never have a [ɛ] in the second syllable

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