

English words and phrases (suprasegmentals)

Rogers Chapter 5

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

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

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)

Multisyllable words

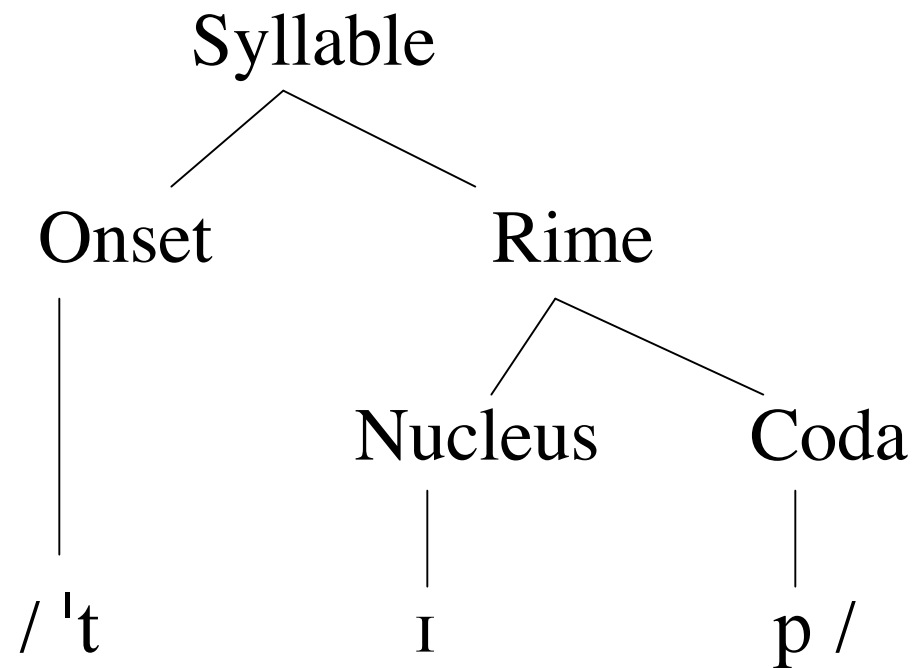
- Two principles yield unique syllable structures
 - 1) Maximize onsets
 - As many consonants as possible get ‘stuck’ to onset of syllable
 - Maximum determined by possible one-syllable words
 - 2) Avoid rhymes ending in lax vowels

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

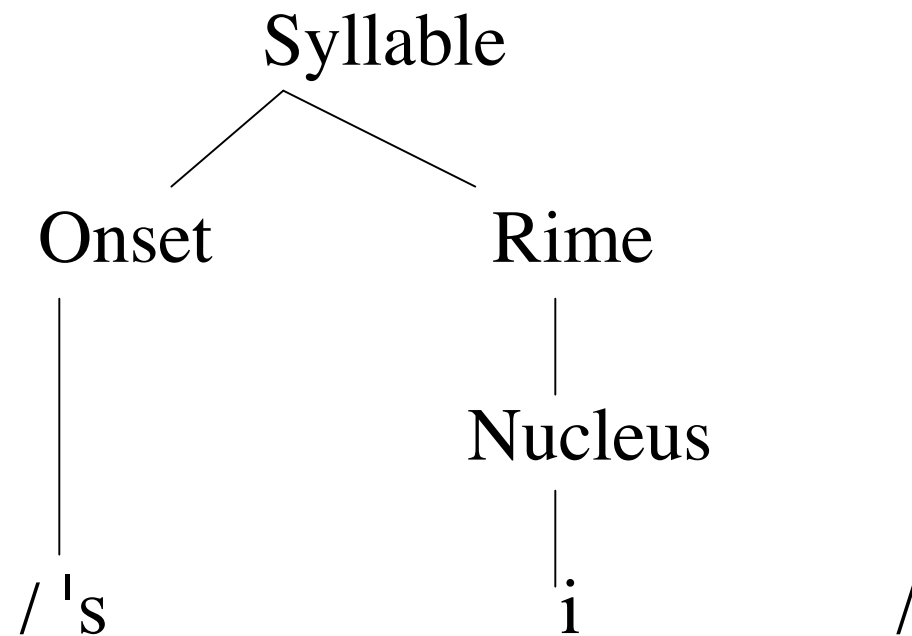
Simplest closed syllable

Example: 'Tip'

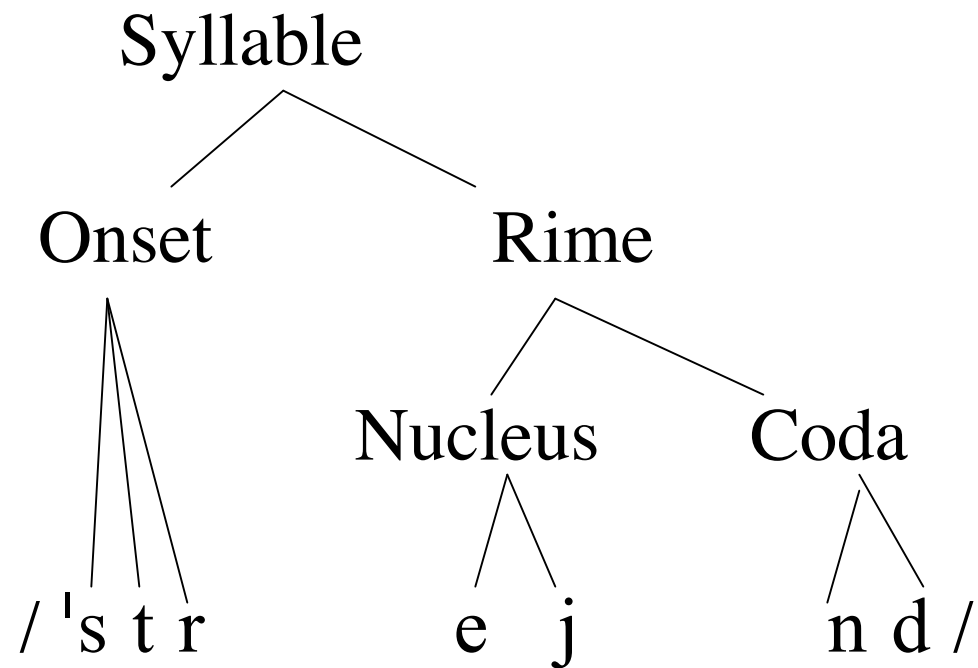


Simplest open syllable

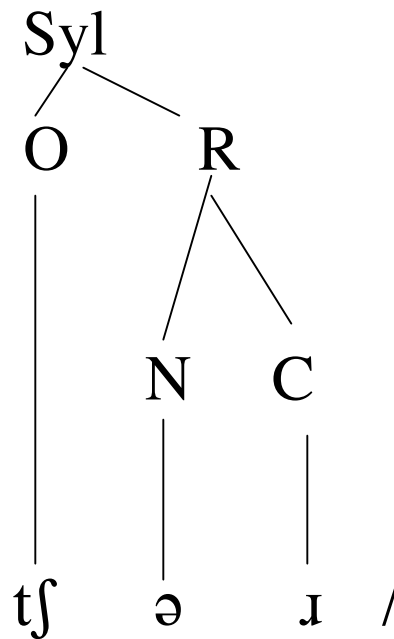
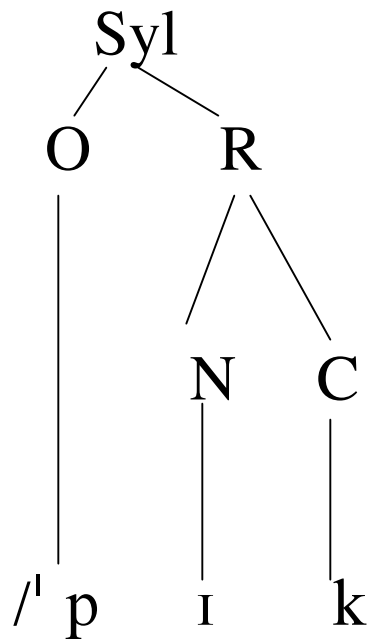
Example: 'See'



Example 'strained'

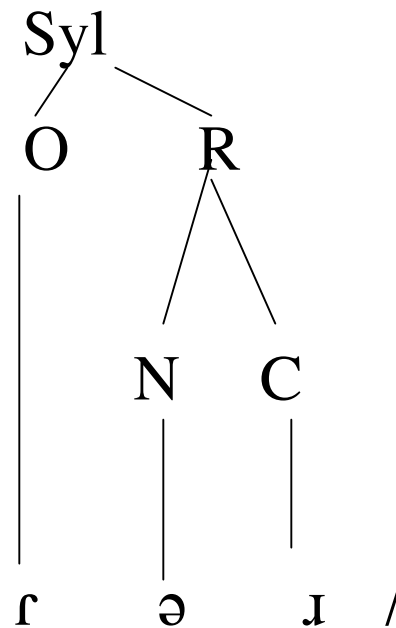
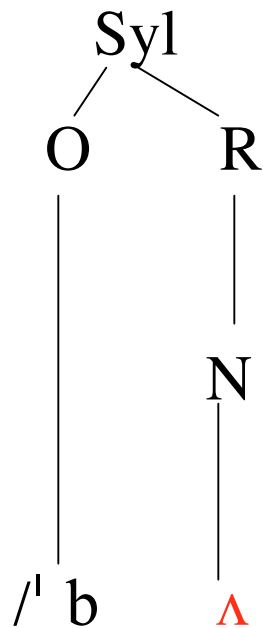


Example 'Picture'



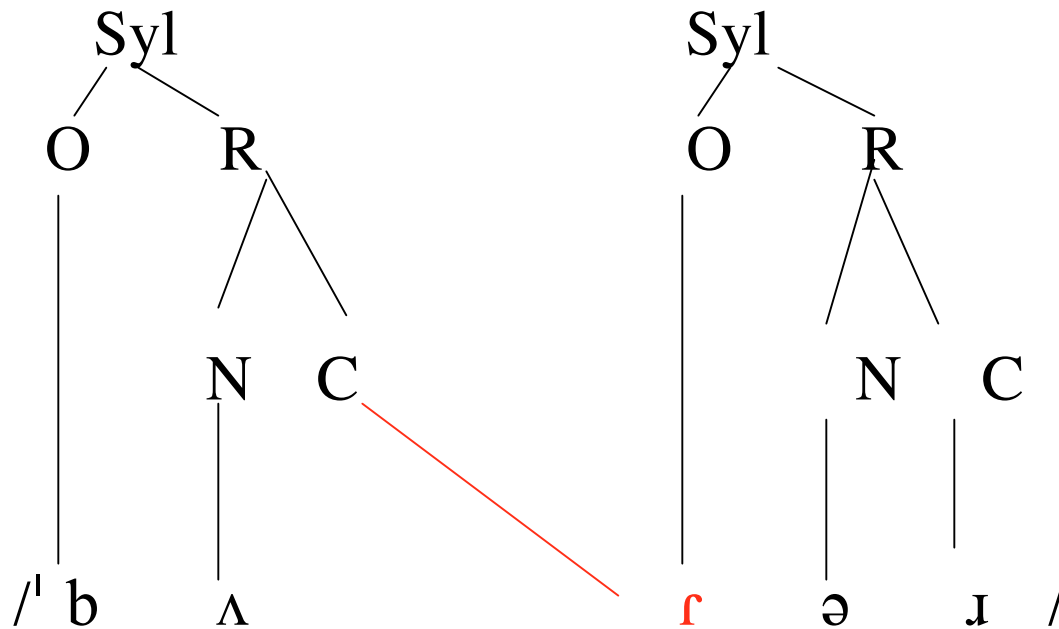
Example 'butter'

Max onset only leaves bad first syllable!!



Example 'butter'

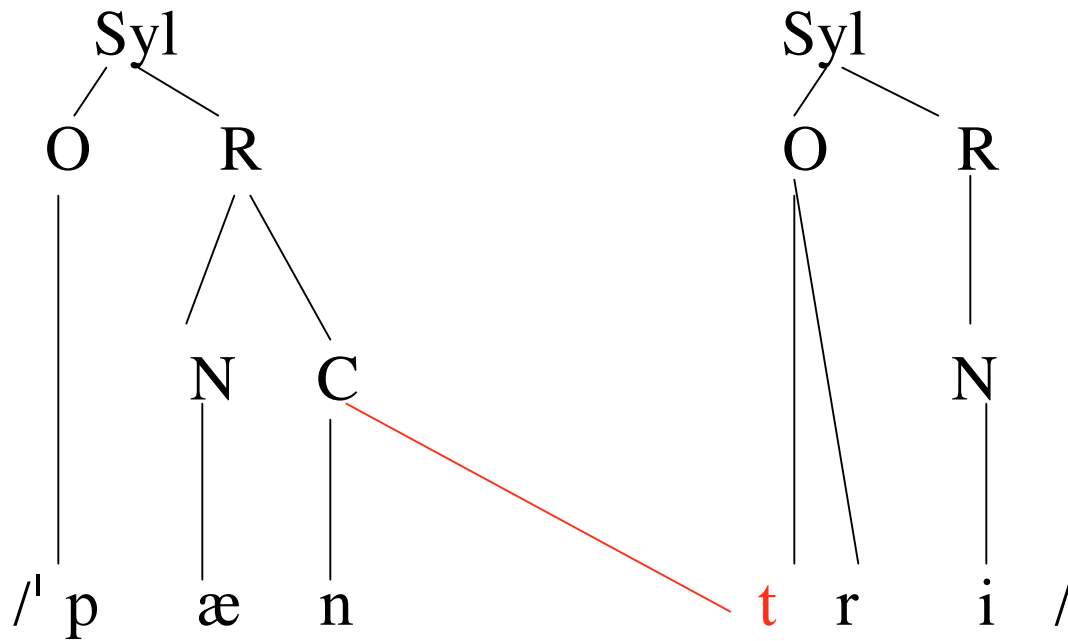
Fix: Ambisyllabicity



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

Our approach: 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

The complication

- The tonic syllable is the most prominent of all 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
 - (I don’t think so).

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

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 [ɜɪ] or [ɜ̄] for the full vowel

Two other vowels also occur in reduced syllables

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

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

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

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.

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

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 ,dɒg]
- The man with a **dog**.
 - [ðə ,mæn wɪðə *'dɒg]

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/, /ɜ˞/, /ʌ/ and /i/)
 - Do not ‘promote’ reduced vowels.
 - ‘promenade’ should never have a [ɛ] in the second syllable