Introduction to Linguistics

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Lecture 9

Review: What is Phonology?

-Phonology is the description of the systems and patterns of speech sounds in a language.

- Phonology rules determine which sounds may be combined.

-Phonology is concerned with the abstract or mental aspect of the sounds.

Review: What is the difference between Phonetics and Phonology?

-**Phonetics** is about the **physical aspect** of sounds, *It studies of the production of speech sounds by the vocal tract by the speaker*.

Phonetic transcriptions are done using the square brackets, [ ].

-**Phonology** is about the **abstract aspect** of sounds and it studies the *phonemes* (phonemic transcriptions adopt the slash / /.

What is a Phoneme?

A phoneme is a meaning-distinguishing sound in a language. for example:

bat - **p**at

ha**d** - ha**t**

-/b/ , /p/, /d/ and /t/ are phonemes because they can bring a difference in meaning between two words.

- Each phoneme has different versions that are produced in actual speech. For example , the phoneme /t/:

[t^h] E.g. *tree*
[t] E.g. *star*
[t̪] E.g. *eighth*
[D] E.g. writer

-These different versions are called **phones**.

-**Phones** are phonetic units and will appear in square brackets.

- When we have a set of phones , all of which are versions of one phoneme, we refer to them as **allophones** of that phoneme.

1. The [t] sound in the word tree is normally pronounced with a stronger puff of air than is present in the [t] sound of the word star.

- The small puff of air is called **aspiration**.

2. In the pronunciation of a word like eighth, the influence of the final dental [θ] sound causes a dental articulation of the [t] sound. This would be represented as [t̪] .

3. The [t] sound between two vowels in a word like writer often becomes a **flap**, which we represent as [D].

Nasalization

- Nasalization (or nasalisation) is the production of sounds for speech by pushing air out through the nasal cavity.

- For example , in English there is a difference in pronunciation of the /i:/ sound in words like seed and seen.

Seed [si:d]
Seen [sĩ:n]

-Is [ĩ:] an allophone or a phoneme in English?

What is the difference between a phoneme and an allophone?

The crucial difference between phonemes and allophones is that substituting one phoneme for another will result in a word with a different meaning (as well as a different pronunciation, but substituting allophones only results in a different (and perhaps odd) pronunciation of the same word.

Minimal Pairs & Sets

-Phonemic distinctions in a language can be tested via pairs and sets of words.

-When two words such as *pat* and *bat* are identical in form except for a contrast in one phoneme, occurring in the same position, the two words are described as a minimal pair.

-Examples of minimal pairs:

fan-van
bet –bat
site-side

- When a group of words can be differentiated, each one from the others by changing one phoneme (always in the same position), then we have a minimal set.

-Examples of minimal sets:

feat, fit, fat , fate, fought, foot

big, pig, fig, dig, wig

Phonotactics

- The constraints on the sequence or position of English phonemes are known as Phonotactics.

- Examples:

Words beginning with /pl/ and /kl/ are common in English(can you give examples?), but words beginning with /tl/ are not.

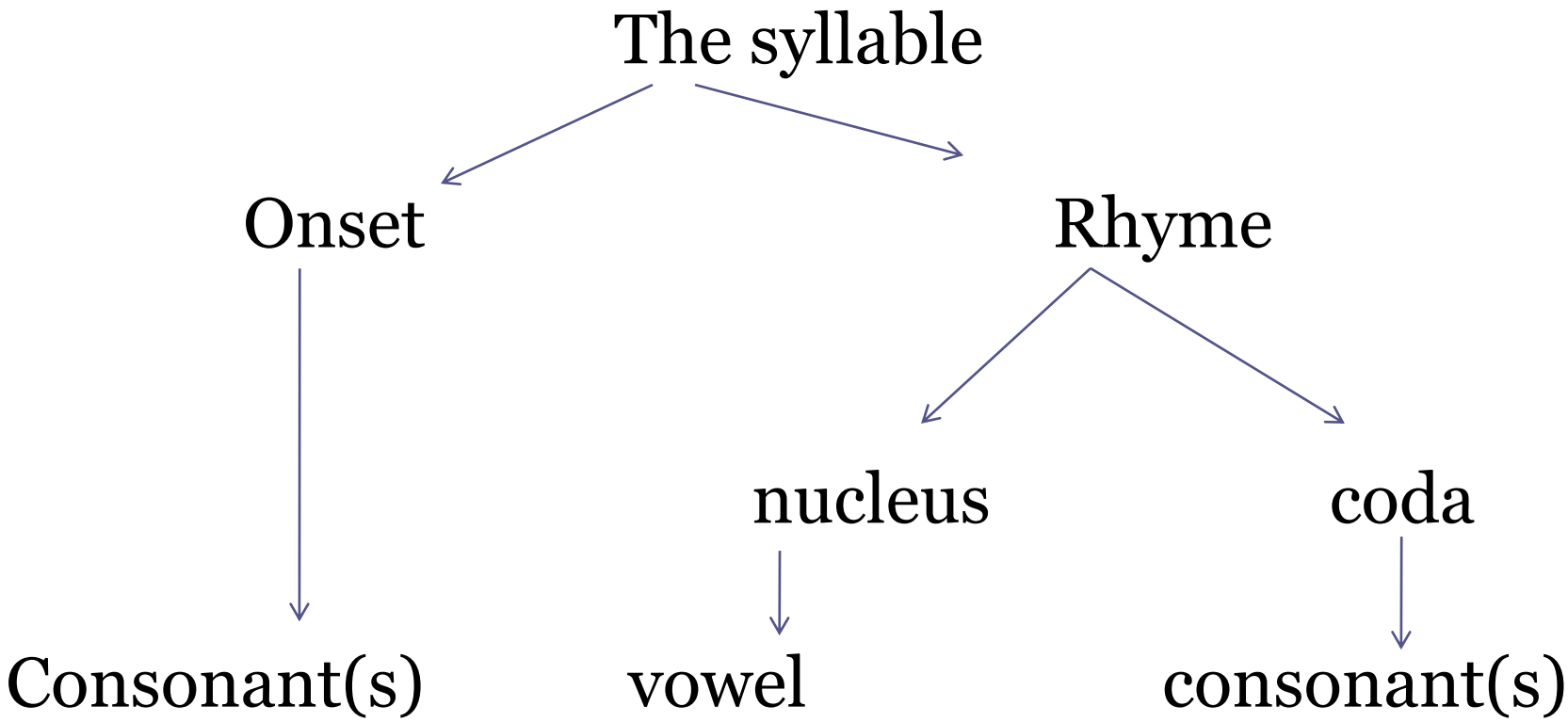
Syllables

-What is a syllable?

a unit of pronunciation having one vowel sound, *with* or *without* surrounding consonants, forming the whole or a part of a word.

-What are the basic elements of a syllable?

1. Onset (one or more consonants)
2. Rime (or Rhyme) (consists of the nucleus (the vowel) & the coda (any following consonants)


The syllable
Onset
Rhyme
nucleus
coda
Consonant(s)
vowel
consonant(s)

Types of Syllables

1. Open syllables

Open syllables are syllables that have no coda.

2. Closed syllables

Closed syllables are syllables that have a coda.

Shapes of Syllables in English

CCVC
VCC
CVC
V
CV
VC
CVCC
CCCVC
CVCCC

Can you give word examples of each?!

Quiz # 2

1. Transcribe the following words using phonetic symbols.

1. cry 2. allow 3. come 4. judge
5. stop 6. knife 7. code 8. boil
9. ate

2. Convert the following phonetically spelled words to standard English spelling.

1. laɪf 2. tuː 3. ɔːlðəʊ
4. aɪz 5. dʒɔɪn 6. θriː