

Syllabic structure of English

Lecture 4

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Hierarchical structure of language

Definition 1

Speech sounds are normally part of a larger and hierarchically higher phonetic unit known as the syllable, which is an integral constituent part of a still higher unit which is the word.

Syllable : Definition

Syllable is the smallest unit into which speech continuum is divided

.

- *Is it evident? How do you divide into syllables: an aim, a name, reading, studying, city, seated, agree, unrestricted, simple, etc.*

Definition3

- Syllable is the smallest articulatory (pronunciation) unit.
 - Ex. **t**wilight, **t**ea, **see**- **seed**- **seat**,
 - **В**ода, **в**од, **в**одовоз

Definition 4

- Syllable is the smallest perception unit.

Experiments has shown that the listener can recognize the preceding sound only after he has analyzed the whole syllable (Кожевников, Чистович, Джапаридзе).

Definition 5

- The syllable determines particular ways in which phonemes are grouped in a particular language. (Greek : “syn”- together, “labein” – take)

Ex. “Knabe” (German – 2 syl, English – 3 syl))

Definition 6

- Syllable is a combination of vowel and consonant.

(term “con+sonant” – sounding with something)

Other possible definitions?

- Syllable is a unit of rhythm.

The foot in poetry is a certain combination of stressed and unstressed syllables.

Example : мой дядя.....

Syllable structure

C+V

- CV
- VCV
- CVCC
- No
- Ago
- Rhythm

Definition 7

- «Syllable is a structural unit , which consists of a vowel alone or of a vowel (or a syllabic consonant) surrounded by consonants in the numbers and arrangements permitted by a given language»

(Борисова, Метлюк. Теор фонетика) .

Classification of syllables

- Open (be)
- Closed (fit)
- Covered (not)
- Uncovered (awe)

Orphographic classification

- Open “be” “sale”
- Closed “fit”
- Syl 3 “card” “third” “hurl”
- Syl4 “care” “lure”

English syllabic sonorants

- Вопль
- Фильм
- Ритм
- Челн

- People
- Film
- Rhythm
- Fallen

English syllabic sonorants in word final positions

-m	-n	-l
-Tm -thm -sm -zm -lm	- pn -bn - tn - dn - kn- gn - fn- vn- sn- zn- etc.	- pl- bl- tl- dl- kl- gl- fl- vl- sl- zl- etc.

Syllable division

- An aim
- A blacked eye
- A nice house
- Stand 'up
- Is'over
- A name
- A black tie
- An ice house
- Stan'dup
- Iso'ver

Open vs closed syllables

Syllable division

- Parking
- Forty
- Garden
- Music

- city
- lily
- petty
- sorry
- money

Syllable division and morphemic structure

- Late-ly
- Feel- ing
- La-ter
- Fee-ling

Syllable vs Mora

- English and Russian are syllable counting and not MORA – counting .
MORA = length of 1 short vowel

Syllable as carrier of prosodemes

Ex. How many
syllables are
there in the
word
"syllable"
?

Syllable and sound change

- Assimilation (historical , incidental, complete, partial)
- Accommodation

Theories

- R. Stetson “Chest pulse theory”

Every syllable is a fresh expiration?

- star, seeing

Relative Sonority Theory

O. Jespersen

- Sounds group themselves according to the degree of sonority
- Sounds differ in the degree of sonority
- Sounds are opposed as peaks of sonority vs valleys of sonority

Ex. sand vs sadden

Classification of sounds acc. to the degree of sonority

- Open vowels
- Mid-open vowels
- Close vowels
- Sonorants
- Voiced fricatives
- Voiced stops
- Voiceless fricatives
- Voiceless stops

Definition 8

- The distance between the two points of lower sonority is a syllable.

Ex. 1. October (3), melt (1) , metal (2)

2. Star, skate, next

3. an aim, a name

Muscular Tension Theory

Shcherba L.S.

- Syllable is an arc of muscular tension

Three types of consonants :

*сильноконечные, сильноначальные,
двухвершинные*

Ex. It, pin,
tie, part,
that time, pen knife

Loudness theory

- Syllable is an arc of loudness.

Ex. a black tie
 a blacked eye

Syllable division – juncture

- Juncture – open , close

Ex. We'll own

we loan

Initial distribution : "a-gree"