

The Syllable

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① **What is a syllable?**

② **The nature of the syllable**

③ **The structure of the English syllable**

What is a syllable?

- ◎ Crystal (1989) defines the syllable as " an element of speech that acts as a unit of rhythm, consisting of a vowel, a syllabic consonant or vowel /+ consonant combination ".
- ◎ Hancock (2003) believes that a syllable is often described as a group of one or more sounds with a peak or nucleus.

Syllable

- a unit of phonemes with only one vowel sound, with or without consonant. Sounds not letters
- Air care

What is a syllable?

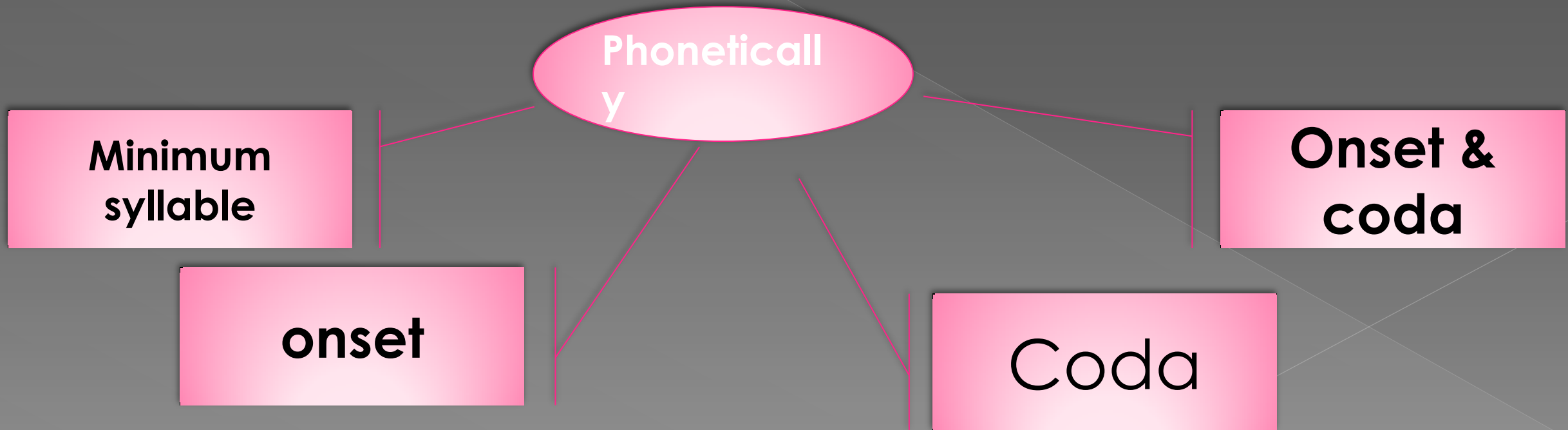
- The syllable is the basic unit of speech studied in both the phonetical and phonological levels of analysis.

Phonetically The relationship between how we produce them & how they sound

phonologically The possible combination of English phonemes

What is a syllable (**Phonetically**)?

Syllables are usually described as consisting of a centre which has little or no obstruction to airflow and which sounds comparatively loud; before and after this centre (i.e. at the beginning and end of the syllable), there will be greater obstruction to airflow and/or less loud sound.



Examples of syllable

A minimum syllable is a single vowel in isolation. It is preceded and followed by silence. 'are' a:, 'or' ɔ:, 'err' ɛ:

Some syllables have an onset - that is, instead of silence, they have one or more consonants preceding the centre of the syllable: 'bar' ba: 'key' ki: 'more' mɔ:

Syllables may have no onset but have a coda - that is, they end with one or more consonants: 'am' æm 'ought' ɔ:t 'ease' i:z

Some syllables have both onset and coda: 'ran' ræn 'sat' sæt 'fill' fɪl

Syllable
(phonologically)

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graph TD; A["Syllable (phonologically)"] --> B["What can occur at initial position"]; A --> C["What can occur at final position"]; B --> D["Vowel, 1 or 2 or 3 consonants"]; C --> E["Vowel, 1 or 2 or 3 or 4 consonants"];
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What can occur
at initial position

Vowel, 1 or 2 or 3
consonants

What can occur
at final position

Vowel, 1 or 2 or 3
or 4 consonants

What can occur
at initial position

Zero
Onset

Onset

3 consonants cluster

- Pre-initial+ initial
+post-intial

2 Consonants Cluster

- S (pre-initial) + initial (t,m,w)
- Initial consonant +post-initial (l,r,
w, j)

Initial Position

Zero onset

- (Question) 1st syllable of the word begins with a vowel Any vowel may occur, though (ʊ) is rare.

Onset

- The syllable begins with one consonant Any consonant may occur, though (ŋ, ʒ) are rare.

Consonant Cluster

Pre-initial

- Two-consonants (s) Followed by one of a small set of consonants

Initial + post-initial

- Two-consonants Begins with one of a set of 15 consonants, followed by one of the set (l, r, w, j)

Pre-initial + initial + post-initial

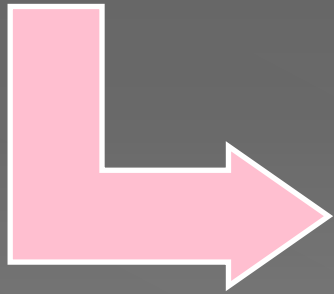
- 3 consonants

Final consonants cluster

- ◉ **Zero coda**: if there is No final consonant at the end of a word, blue, me
- ◉ **Final consonant** Only one consonant Any consonant may be a final consonant except (h, w, j) (r) is a special case: it doesn't occur as a final consonant in BBC pronunciation, **black**.

Final consonants

Zero coda: if there is No final consonant at the end of a word, blue, me



Final consonant Only one consonant
Any consonant may be a final
consonant except (h, w, j) (r) is a
special case: it doesn't occur as a
final consonant in BBC pronunciation,
black.

Two-consonant Final Clusters

There are two sorts:

- First, final consonant preceded by a pre-final consonant. The pre-final consonants are(m, n, ŋ, l, s)

'bump' bʌmp, 'bent' bent, 'bank' bæŋk, 'belt' belt, 'ask' ɑ:sk.

- Second, a final consonant followed by a post-final consonant. The post-final consonants are(s, z, t, d, θ)

'bets' bets, 'beds' bedz, 'backed' bækt, 'bagged' bægd, 'eighth' eitθ.

Three-consonant Final Clusters

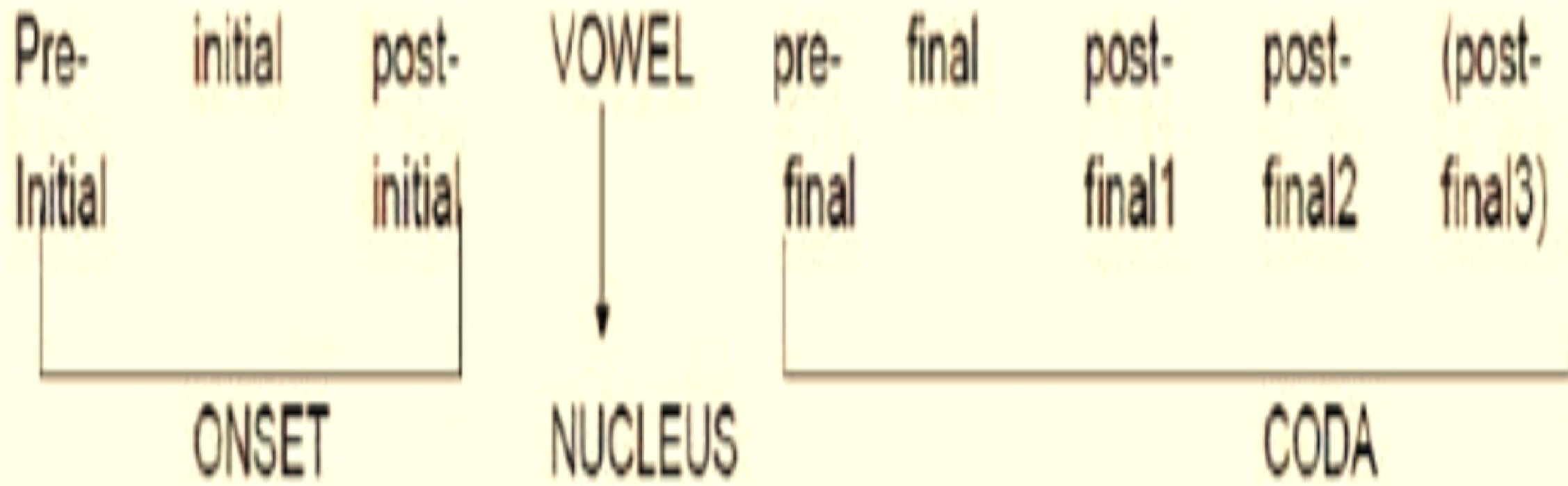
There are two types :

- pre-final + final + post-final consonant.

- final consonant + two post-final consonants

Four-consonant Final Clusters

- Most four-consonant clusters can be analyzed as consisting of a final consonant preceded by a pre-final and followed by post-final 1 and post-final.



The structure of the English syllable

