



The syllabic structure of English

Lecture # 5

Plan

- 0 Definition of the syllable.
- 0 Different approaches to the syllable.
- 0 Types of syllables.
- 0 Syllable division.

J. Kenion:

- o S. is one or more speech sounds, forming a single uninterrupted unit of utterance, which may be a word, or a commonly recognized subdivision of a word.

J. D. O'Connor:

- o S. is something that contains a vowel with or without surrounding consonants.



O.J. Dikushina:

- o Consists of phoneme or a number of phonemes, in pronouncing a syllable the energy of articulation increases until it reaches the climax (the most energetically articulated phoneme)

Vassiliev V.A.:

o Is an integral part of a word.

- o We derive syllables as they explain how phonemes are combined in a language. They support the idea of linguistic hierarchy.

Vowel theory

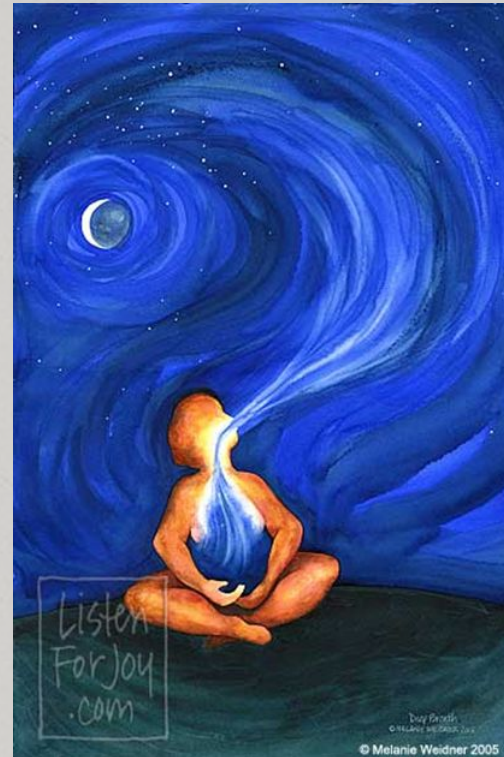
- o There are as many syllables, as there are vowels

- o What about consonants?!

Expiratory (chest pulse or pressure) theory

- o by R.H. Stetson.
- o Each syllable should correspond to a single expiration.

- o BUT: a number of syllables can be pronounced with a single expiration (Torsuyev).



Sonority theory

- o O. Jespersen
- o each sound is characterized by a certain degree of sonority.
- o According to sonority a ranking of speech sounds could be established: <the least sonorous> voiceless plosives □ voiced fricatives □ voiced plosives □ voiced fricatives □ sonorants □ close vowels □ open vowels <the most sonorous>.
- o BUT: it fails to explain the actual mechanism of syllable formation and syllable division. Besides, the concept of sonority is not very clearly defined.

The theory of muscular tens

- o L.V Shcherba.
- o In speaking muscular tension impulses follow one another making up syllables.
- o The end and the beginning of the syllable is stated by the type of consonants:

Initially strong

- Follow short vowels
- Occur at the end of a close syllable

it

Finally strong

- Followed by long vowels
- Occur at the beginning

new

Double

- Are strong at both ends and weak in the middle
- Occur at the juncture of words and morphemes

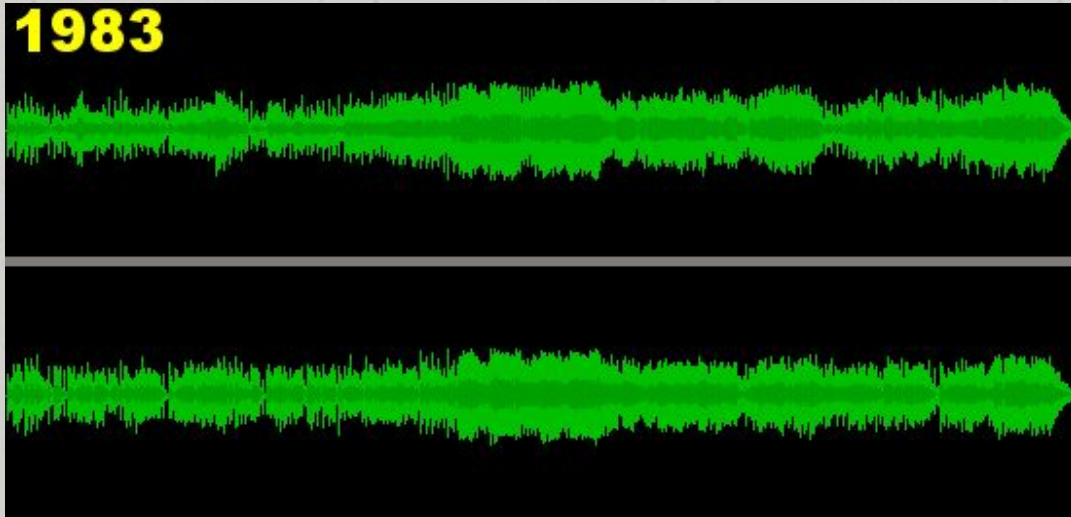
day



Loudness theory

- 0 Russian linguist and psychologist N.I. Zhinkin:
- 0 S. are due to “curves of loudness”, not to breath puffs or else.

1983



Types of syllables

Fully open

- V
- O:

Fully closed

- CVC CVCC CCVC
- Bit left place

Initially covered

- CV CCV CCCV
- Too spy straw

Finally covered

- VC VCC VCCC
- on act acts

Mora – unit of a syllable length

short

1
mora

long

2
mora
s

Stressed

- Secondary
- primary

Unstressed

Syllable division

- o The syllabic boundary coincides with the morphological: dis-place, be-come
- o In CCV structure the boundary is after long accented vowel: far-mer
- o In CVCV the boundary is within the intervocalic consonant: sit-y
- o In CSCV –within the intervocalic sonorant: inn-er, cin-em-a
- o Thiphthongs are disyllabic: sci-ence, flow-er

Rules of writing

- o Never divide a word within a syllable
- o Never divide an ending or a suffix
- o Except -ly never divide a word so that -ed, -er begin the next line
- o Never divide a word so that one of the parts is a single letter
- o Never divide a word of one syllable
- o Never divide a word of less than 5 letters

Seminar questions

- 0 Definition of the syllable.
- 0 Different theories of syllables.
- 0 Syllable formation.
- 0 Phonotactics.
- 0 Syllable division.
- 0 Functions of the syllable.

Practical tasks

Divide these words into phonetic syllables.
Give their syllabic structural patterns:

o bugle, satchel, trifle, rhythm, April, equal, happens, marbles, patterns, dragons, urgent, servant, listened, errands, parents, patients.

Divide these words into phonetic syllables:

o comfortable, cottage, orchard, ground, kitchen, pantry, study, several, upstairs, bedroom, nursery, bathroom, furniture, modern, own, electricity, January, February, Tuesday, Thursday.