The Syllable II

A Summary

Lecture 12

The Syllable

The syllable can also be thought of as a phonological unit- that is, as a grouping of sounds in accordance with certain rules, which differs from language to language.

Cont.

The essential component in any syllable is a vowel, which provides the nucleus of the syllable.

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- **This may be preceded or followed by one or more consonants.**

- **Consonants before the vowel form the onset of the syllable.**

- **Consonants after the vowel form the coda.**

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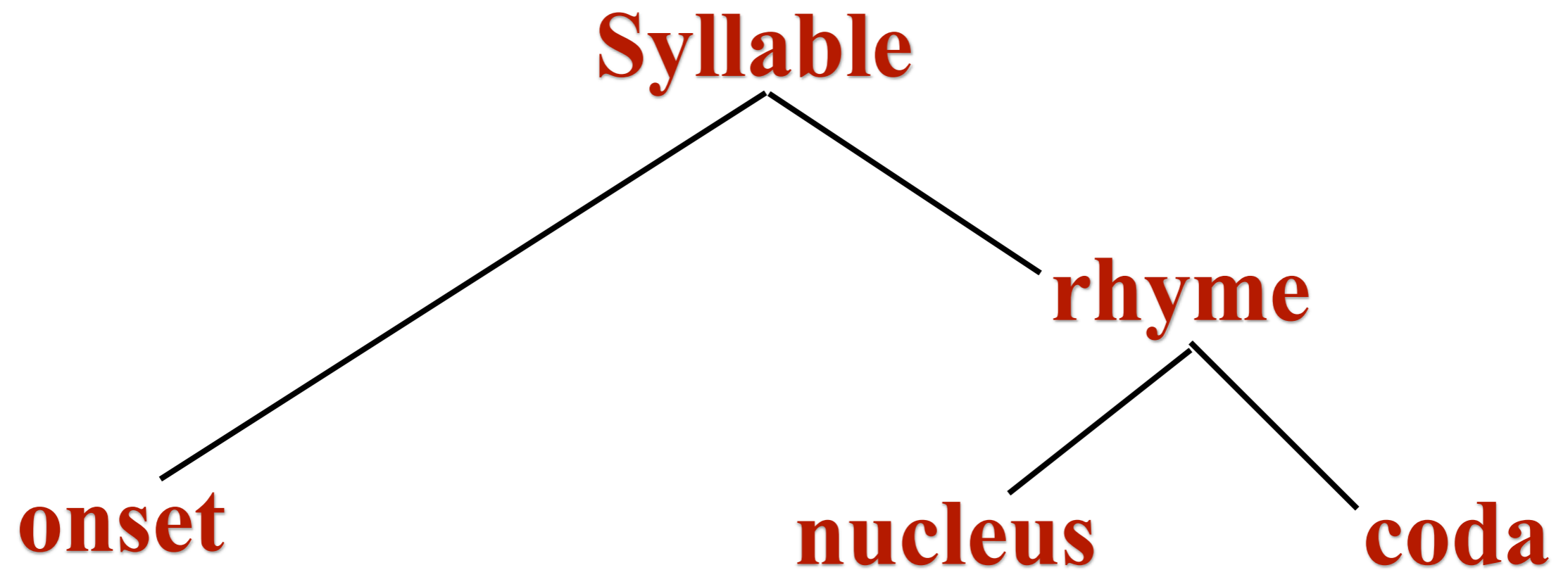# Cont.

There are reasons for believing that the nucleus and coda together form another unit within the syllable.

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- **In English, two syllables are said to rhyme with each other if they have the same nucleus and the same coda or absence of coda.**

- **Example: day - bay**

Rhyme

- **The nucleus-post-coda unit of the syllable is called the rhyme.**

The structure of the English syllable

Syllable

rhyme

onset

nucleus   **coda**

Phonotactics

Languages differ in the types of syllables they use. Speakers of the languages have an intuitive understanding of what are and what are not permitted syllables in their language.

Cont.

Example:

blick = possible English word

bnick = is not possible

Cont.

It is that [bn] is not permitted syllable onset in English.

In fact, no onsets of plosive consonant followed by nasal consonant are followed in English.

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Cont.

A statement of the permitted combinations of phonemes into structures (often syllables) is a statement of **phonotactics** of the language.

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Cont.

Onsets in English will provide an illustration of the phonotactic pattering.

Example: [ŋ] does not occur at the beginning of words.

Cont.

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Cont.

Two consonant combinations are restricted.

There is no **/bd-, bg-, bm-, mk-/.** They do not exist.

Cont.

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Cont.

Three consonant onsets are more restricted. The first consonant is **always /s/.**

The second is generally **/p, t, k/.**

Cont.

This gives combinations as **/str-/** and

/spl-/.

Example:　**construct** = **/nstr/**

Cont.

The coda may have up to four consonant clusters. Thus, the situation can be summed up as:

$$C_0^3 \; V \; C_0^4$$