

There are a variety of dialects of English that differ in subtle ways. I've given some sample words from two such dialects below.

	British	American
pure	[pjuwə]	[pjuwɪ]
cute	[kjuwt]	[kjuwt]
tune	[tjuwn]	[tuwn]
abuse	[əbjuwz]	[əbjuwz]
dues	[djuwz]	[duwz]
argue	[agjuw]	[ɑɪgjuw]
muse	[njuwz]	[njuwz]
new	[njuw]	[nuw]
lewd	[ljuwd]	[luwd]
few	[fjuw]	[fjuw]
view	[vjuw]	[vjuw]
suit	[sjuwt]	[suwt]
hue	[hjuw]	[hjuw]

Notice that the British speakers have a [j] before the [uw] in many words in which the American speakers don't. Imagine that this is because there is a rule in the American dialect, which is absent in the British dialect, that deletes [j] in certain environments. That is, suppose that in the American dialect a word like [tuwn] is underlyingly [tjuwn], but that American dialect speakers have a "rule" that deletes the [j] in this word. Write this rule, making sure that it doesn't delete [j] in those places where it remains in the American dialect. So, your rule should look like this:

Delete [j] / ... \_\_\_\_\_ [uw]

Where "... " indicates the set of sounds after which [j] is deleted.

Look at the list of sounds that you've put in this rule and consider how each of them is articulated. Now list all the sounds after which [j] is not deleted, and compare them to the list after which [j] is deleted. There is something common to the articulation to all of the sounds that trigger the [j] Deletion rule that is found in none of the sounds which don't trigger this rule. What is this common property?

Answer:

The rule is:

$$\text{Delete [j] / } \left\{ \begin{array}{l} [t] \\ [d] \\ [l] \\ [n] \\ [s] \end{array} \right\} \text{ — [uw]}$$

[j] is deleted before [uw] when the sound preceding [j] involves an articulation that brings the tip of the tongue to the alveolar ridge.

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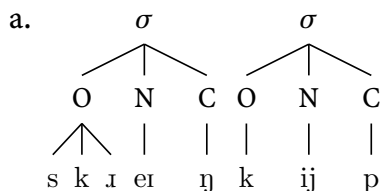
Consider the following list of imaginary words.

- a. [skæɪŋkijp]
- b. [kjuwspabt]
- c. [plədsblɪkt]
- d. [spwɔtk.ijɪn]

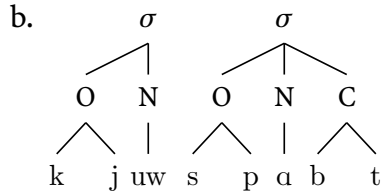
Only one of these is a possible word of English. The others cannot be syllabified in a way that obeys the phonotactic constraints of English. Give the syllable structure for each of these imaginary words and for the unsyllabifiable words, explain which phonotactic constraints prevent it from being syllabified. Be sure that for the unsyllabifiable words you consider all the ways in which they *might* be syllabifiable and show why each of these is blocked by a phonotactic constraint.

Answer:

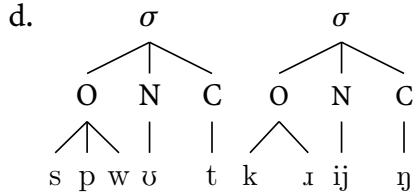
The possible word is (a). It can be syllabified as follows:



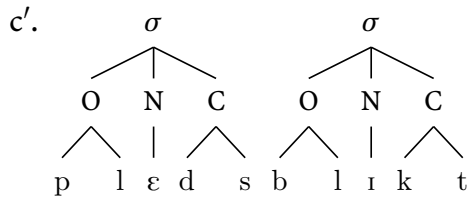
None of the other imaginary words can be syllabified. To syllabify (b) requires forming a coda that puts [bt] together, as shown below, and this violates the phonotactic constraints on codas that we discovered in the last homework.



To syllabify (d) requires putting [spw] into an onset, as shown below, and this violates the phonotactic constraints on English onsets.



The problem with (c) is that the string of consonants in the middle of the word cannot be divided into either a good coda (for the preceding syllable) or a good onset (for the following syllable). The [s] cannot be made part of the coda of the first syllable, as is shown in c', because [ds] does not make a legitimate coda. (This is something else we discovered in homework 2.)



But, as shown in c'', [s] cannot be made part of the onset of the second syllable either, since [sbl] violates the phonotactic constraints for onsets in English.

