

Syllable :

A syllable is a larger sound unit than a phoneme in a word. It consists of one or more than one phoneme. It is usually that combination of sounds which is produced as a result of one chest pulse. As we know that a word is articulated with several muscular movements (chest pulses) depending on the number of consonant and vowel sounds in it. A syllable has usually a vowel sound as an essential element along with consonant sounds. We have syllables of only vowel sounds also such as, 'a', 'I' etc. On the other hand we have, we have syllables without vowel sounds also, such as the second syllable of the words, button, little etc.

In English language there are words of one syllable like Pat (monosyllabic), two syllables like Problem (disyllabic), three syllables like Potato (trisyllabic), etc. We can realize the number of chest pulses during the articulation of these words.

Each chest pulse produces one syllable.

A vowel sound generally occupies central place in a syllable.

Minimal Pairs, Phonotactics, SyllableMinimal Pairs:

A Minimal Pair is that pair of words which has only one sound different between the two words. For example - the words tip and lip are the minimal pair as there is difference in initial sounds /t/ and /l/ only. This concept of minimal pair is useful in understanding many other phonological concepts.

Phonotactics:

It deals with that aspect of phonology which talks about the permissible constituents of a syllable in a language. It is seen that in English, a consonant-vowel-consonant combination is very common as we have words like - big, sit, cat, etc. which conform to this pattern. In the constitution of syllable and consequently a word, only a certain set of phonemes is used. To clarify it further, a combination of five or more consonants in continuation is not permissible in English. The consonantal clusters like 'mks', 'rkt', 'qmps', etc do not occur in English, whereas the consonantal clusters like 'str' (strange), 'lth' (twelfth), 'tr' (train) etc. are found. Such a phonological phenomenon is language specific as we can find unacceptable consonantal clusters of English, acceptable in any other language. Thus, Phonotactics takes into account the phonological constraints that govern the permissible combination of phonemes.