Syllabic Consonants in English: phonetic and phonological aspects

Tsutomu AKAMATSU
Leeds

*In writing parts of Part I, I benefited from a number of epistolary discussions I carried on with Jack Windsor Lewis who unstintingly and promptly answered my questions. My deep gratitude is hereby expressed. My thanks are also due to Beverley Collins who made available to me at my request Daniel Jones’s paper ‘The Use of Syllabic and Non-Syllabic l and n in Derivatives of English Words Ending in Syllabic l and n’ (1959) to which I had been unable to have access.

ABSTRACT: This paper consists of two parts. In Part I, I begin with a systematic presentation of the occurrence of the five well-known syllabic consonants in English, viz. [m̩], [n̩], [l̩], [ŋ̍] and [r̩], with regard to the various phonetic contexts in which they occur. I discuss what I call ‘co-variation’ that syllabic consonants enter into with alternative phonetic forms. I dwell on the question of [r̩] as this involves a number of specific points worth discussing. Finally, I take a brief look at more syllabic consonants such as [s̩], [ʃ̩], [b̩] and [k̩] which occur only sporadically. In Part II, I first make an attempt to see if the commutation test can resolve the question of determining the phonological status of the syllabic consonants, but with a negative conclusion. Putative minimal pairs like coddling (< coddle + ing) and codling (< cod + ling) are dismissed on the grounds that the commutative items should not contain ‘virtual pause’ within them. If this precaution is ignored, one would end up establishing dubious phonemes (e.g. */l̩/) in the English consonant system, which no researchers would endorse. The phenomenon of syllabic consonants is not a paradigmatic matter. It is a syntagmatic matter. A survey is conducted on how some past and present researchers have phonologically interpreted the status of each syllabic consonant in English. There is common agreement that a syllabic consonant is phonologically interpreted as ‘schwa + non-syllabic consonant’. The phonetic fusion of these two phonetic entities is achieved with the vocality (= syllabicity) of the schwa acting on the non-syllabic consonant. I then offer my own phonological interpretation of the nasal syllabic consonants [n̩], [m̩] and [ŋ̍] which differs in some respects from the traditional interpretation in that homorganicity between the syllabic nasal consonants and certain consonants that precede them bears upon the phonological status of these nasal syllabic consonants. This is because there is involved the neutralization of the opposition between /n/, /m/ and /ŋ/. Finally, the question of how to indicate the syllabic consonants in phonological notations is considered.

KEYWORDS: syllabic consonant, non-syllabic consonant, simplex, complex, homorganicity, co-variation, phonetic symbols ‘ə’ and ‘ᵶ’ in LPD, syncope, compression, fusion, commutation test, commutative item, minimal pair, potential pause, vocality (= syllabicity), neutralization, archiphoneme, ’/ɑ/ + ‘sonant’, ’/ə/ + ‘non-syllabic consonant’.

RÉSUMÉ: Cet article comporte deux parties. Dans la Partie I, je commence avec une présentation systématique des cinq consonnes syllabiques en anglais qui sont bien connues, c-à-d. [m], [n], [l], [ŋ] et [r], dans les diverses contextes phonétiques où elles apparaissent. Je discute ce que j’appelle la ‘co-variation’ que contractent les consonnes syllabiques avec les formes phonétiques alternatives. Je me penche longuement sur la question de [r] qui soulève bon nombre de points qui valent d’être discutés. Enfin je considère brièvement d’autres consonnes syllabiques comme [ʃ], [tʃ], [b] et [k] qui ne se produisent que sporadiquement. Dans la Partie II, j’essaie d’abord de voir si l’épreuve de commutation peut résoudre la question de déterminer le statut phonologique des consonnes syllabiques, mais j’arrive à une conclusion négative. Les paires minimales putatives comme coddling (coddle + ing) et codling (< cod + ling) sont rejetées pour la raison que des items commutatifs ne doivent contenir aucune pause virtuelle. Si l’on ignore cette précaution, on finirait par établir des phonèmes douteux (par ex. */l/) qu’aucuns chercheurs n’admettraient. Les consonnes syllabiques ne sont pas d’ordre paradiagrammatique. Elles sont d’ordre syntagmatique. Je passe en revue les interprétations phonologiques du statut de chaque consonne syllabique en anglais qu’offrent que l’un chercheurs tombent d’accord pour interpréter une consonne syllabique comme ‘schwa + consonne syllabique’. La fusion phonétique de ces deux éléments se produit lorsque la vocalité (= syllabicity) du schwa agit sur la consonne non-syllabique. J’offre ma propre interprétation phonologique des consonnes nasales syllabiques [n], [m] et [ŋ], une interprétation qui est, à quelques égards, différente de celles traditionnelles en ce que l’homorganicité qui existe entre les consonnes nasales syllabiques et certaines consonnes qui les précèdent ont une conséquence sur l’interprétation phonologique de ces consonnes nasales syllabiques. Ceci résulte du fait de la neutralisation de l’opposition entre /n/, /m/ et /ŋ/. Pour finir je considère la question de savoir comment on pourrait indiquer les consonnes syllabiques dans les notations phonologiques. MOTS CLÉS: consonne syllabique, consonne non-syllabique, simplexe, complexe, homorganicité, co-variation, symboles phonétiques ‘ə’ et ‘ᵶ’ dans LPD, syncope, compression, fusion, épreuve de commutation, item commutatif, paire minimale, pause virtuelle, vocalité (= syllabicity), neutralization, archiphonème, ’/ɑ/ + ‘sonante’, ’/ə/ + ‘consonne non-syllabique’.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

One of the well-known studies of syllabic and non-syllabic consonants in English is Jones (1956b/1959). A reference to this study is found in e.g. Jones (§215 in 1956 and 1964) and Jones (1956c: §422) and also in papers written on the subject of syllabic consonants of English by a number of other scholars such as Toft (2002: 143) and Álvarez González (1981: 47).
Collins and Mees (1999: 399) write as follows in connection with Jones (1956b/1959).

It is a competent, if unexciting, treatment of English syllabic consonants, notable mainly for a large collection of examples, which are, as always with Jones, accurately observed.

Jones (1956b/1959) indeed offers a wealth of examples of the occurrence (in Jones’s own pronunciation) of syllabic consonants, notably [l̩] and [n̩].

In this paper I intend to study the syllabic consonants occurring in English in both their phonetic and phonological aspects. I will be concerned with not only [l̩] and [n̩] on which Jones (1956b/1959) concentrates for good reason, but also with some other syllabic consonants such as [m], [ŋ̍] and [r̩̩]. All these are consonants that can be characterized as ‘sonorants’. I will further deal with some other syllabic consonants which can be characterized as ‘obstruents’ such as [s], [ʃ], [k], [p], [b], etc. I will study all these various syllabic consonants mainly in simplex words (e.g. camera) if not to the exclusion of complex words (e.g. bottleneck, hustling) which are compounds and derivatives. I will therefore explore the subject by going beyond what Jones (1956b/1959) concentrates on.

In Part I (151-91), I will deal with the phonetic aspects of the syllabic consonants, i.e. some generalities about the occurrence of the syllabic consonants and, then, discuss a few specific points that interest me with regard to certain of the syllabic consonants.

In Part II (191-219), I will turn to the phonological aspects of the syllabic consonants, notably with respect of their phonological status, as proposed by different researchers. I will end with the question of how the syllabic consonants might be shown in phonological notations.

PART I: PHONETIC ASPECTS OF THE SYLLABIC CONSONANTS

Non-syllabic consonants and syllabic consonants

One of the properties of consonant sounds is said to be that some are always non-syllabic, while others may be syllabic as well as non-syllabic depending on the phonetic contexts in which they occur.

For example, [b] in English is said to be always non-syllabic, in whatever phonetic contexts it may occur, as in bee, hub and about. My phrase ‘is said to be’ here implies the potential occurrence of the syllabic [b] in some cases (see p. 190). Another consonant [l], for example, is non-syllabic, [l], in e.g. lit, melt, sallow and tell, but is syllabic, [l̩], in e.g. settle, fiddle, heckle and tingle. The diacritic ’ˌ’ is customarily used in phonetic notation to signify syllabicity.
[l] is not the only consonant to occur either non-syllabic or syllabic in different phonetic contexts in English. The nasal consonants, i.e. [n] (apico-alveolar), [m] (bilabial), [ŋ] (dorso-velar), and [r] (alveolar non-lateral frictionless continuant), also occur either non-syllabic or syllabic, i.e. [n] or [n̩], [m] or [m̩], [ŋ] or [ŋ̍], [r] or [r̩], respectively. [l], [n], [m], [ŋ], [r] are the five syllabic consonants in English that are regularly mentioned by phoneticians.

The terms ‘simplex’ and ‘complex’

To begin with, however, I need to explain two mutually associated technical terms I employ here and there in what follows in terms of which I state where the syllabic consonants may be said to occur in so-called ‘words’. The two technical terms are ‘simplex’ and ‘complex’.

By the term ‘simplex’ (short for ‘simplex word’) is meant a simple word (e.g. black) which by definition has no affix(es) and is therefore not either a compound or a derivative. ‘Simplex’ is opposed to the counterpart notion and term ‘complex’ (short for ‘complex word’) which is either a compound (e.g. blackboard < black + board) or a derivative (e.g. blacker < black + -er).

My personal preference is to employ the term ‘simplex’ (or, alternatively, ‘simple word’) rather than the term ‘word’ which is popularly used but which lacks a strict definition. The set of three related expressions I might wish to use within the confines of this paper that derive from the term ‘simplex’ should be ‘simplex-initial position’, ‘simplex-medial position’ and ‘simplex-final position’. However, I will instead use the set of three related expressions ‘word-initial position’, ‘word-final position’ and ‘word-medial position’ in this paper, which will certainly be immediately clearer to all readers. I need to emphasize straightaway that, in this latter set of three expressions, the term ‘word’ is always strictly to be taken in the sense of ‘simplex’, not ‘complex’. Hence, ‘word-initial position’ (= ‘simplex-initial position’), ‘word-medial position’ (= ‘simplex-medial position’) and ‘word-final position’ (= ‘simplex-final position’).

Where do the syllabic consonants of English occur?

We will first see where [l], [n], [m], [ŋ] and [r] occur. We will look at them one by one.

[l]

(i) [l] occurs in word-final position, in examples like the following.

That the consonant before [l] is in principle preceded by an accented vowel/accented syllable is necessary to all syllabic consonants in English. In addition, the condition ‘preceded by a consonant’ is relevant as, when preceded by a vowel, [l] does not occur (cf. [ˈmɛt] metal when not pronounced [ˈmet]). This condition also applies to the occurrences of all syllabic consonants in English.  

(ii) In word-medial position, [l] occurs preceded by a consonant which is in turn always preceded by an accented vowel, in examples like the following.


Among the examples cited above, catalogue is considered as a simplex since the etymology of this word is undoubtedly opaque to average speakers of English (< cata + logue (?)).

(iii) Does [l] occur, in examples such as the following, in ‘word-medial position’ or ‘word-final position’?


My answer is that [l] in all the examples above will be regarded as occurring in word-final position. It is evident that some of these (from bottleneck to metalwork) are compounds and the others (from bottleful to settler) are derivatives. Complexes are by definition either compounds or derivatives. The occurrence of [l] in simplex-final position within a complex, that is, in final position in a simple word within a derivative or within a compound, exemplifiable by [ˈbɒt̩l̩] in [ˈbɒt̩l̩] or [ˈbɒt̩ln̩k], can legitimately be regarded as being identical with the occurrence of [l] in final position in a simple word. It is evident that, in all these complexes, [l] is better described as occurring in word-final position. We shall see even more clearly below when I show the occurrence of [n] that it is justified to describe all such examples also in terms of word-final position, not word-medial position.

---

1 For instance, in [ˈrdl̩], [l] is preceded by the accented syllable [ˈrdl̩], while in [ˈkæmˈrəʊ], [r] is preceded by the accented syllable [ˈkæm]. However, see p. 189 for some exceptions like support, solicitor, society when occasionally pronounced [ˈsə Spells ˈsəʊ] or [ˈsəˈlɪstə] or Thank you! when pronounced with a rising tune, occasionally, with [ˈtʃəʊ] or [ˈkʃəʊ]. See in this connection infra fnn. 85 and 86 for some detailed remarks.
[n]

(i) [n] occurs in word-final position, in examples such as the following.


Of the examples given above, suddenness to woodenheaded are derivatives, hence complexes, while all the others are simplexes.

(ii) [n] occurs in word-medial position, in examples such as the following. Roach (1983\textsuperscript{3}) occurs in rapid


Among the examples cited above, Tottenham and Hottentot are considered as simplexes as the etymologies of these words are undoubtedly opaque to average speakers of English (Tottenham < OE Totehām ‘village of Totta (anthronym) + ham ‘home’; and Hottentot < Afrikaans {hot en tot ‘hot and tot’}).

All the examples above (incident to Tottenham) are simplexes. In all these examples, [n] can be described as occurring in word-medial position.

[m]

[m] occurs in word-final position in examples as the following. [m] does not occur in word-medial position.


\textsuperscript{2} MacCarthy (1950\textsuperscript{4}: 117 fn. 1) gives [ˈʔoŋp] and [ˈhæpn] as well as [ˈʔoŋp] and [ˈhæpn], having given (op. cit., §419) [ˈʔoŋp] and [ˈhæpn]. Roach (1983\textsuperscript{3}: 70, 1991\textsuperscript{2}: 80, 2000\textsuperscript{3}: 89, 2009\textsuperscript{4}: 70) also endorses all of [ˈʔeŋp], [ˈhæpən] and [ˈhæpn]. Ward (1929\textsuperscript{1}: §258, 1931\textsuperscript{1}: §258, 1939\textsuperscript{1}: §258, 1945\textsuperscript{1}: §258, 1972\textsuperscript{2}: §258) does not give [ˈʔoŋp] and [ˈbeikn] which have no schwas, the pronunciations which seem to be also possible.

\textsuperscript{3} At an early date, in addition to the frequent occurrence of [l] and [n], the occurrence of [m] and [ŋ] is fully recognized by Ward (§235 in 1920\textsuperscript{1}: §258 in 1931\textsuperscript{2}, 1939\textsuperscript{1}, 1945\textsuperscript{4} and 1972\textsuperscript{2}) who gives the examples of [ˈklæpm] and [ˈklæpm] for Clapham as well as [ˈʔoŋp] and [ˈʔoŋp] for open and [ˈbeikn] and [ˈbeikn] for bacon. She is full aware of the use of the syllabicatic diacritic, which she does not, however, employ in giving these examples. Ward characterizes the former variants with [n] as occurring in quick speech and those without [n] as occurring in careful speech. (I have modified some of the phonetic symbols used by Ward and added accent marks, without doing violence to the essence of her presentation.) Jones (1956c: §292) notes that [ˈklæpm] occurs in rapid pronunciation and that the more usual pronunciation of the word is [ˈklæpm]. There is as yet no reference to either [ˈklæpm] or [ˈklæpm] in some earlier editions of Jones (1956c), viz. (1909\textsuperscript{1}: §53, 1914\textsuperscript{2}: §53). The only other adducible example I am aware of in this connection is Petersham [ˈpiːt ə ˈhæm] (in LPD3). The change from [ən] to [m] in e.g. open on the one hand and that from [ən] to [m]
Of the examples given above, *handsomely* is a derivative, hence a complex, while all the others are simplexes.

**[ŋ]**

[ŋ] occurs in word-final position in examples like the following. It does not occur in word-medial position.


(N.B. I am not aware, so far as English phonetics literature is concerned, of the occurrence of [ŋɡ] which would be a phonetic counterpart of [kŋ] in English words ending in -gan (e.g. *organ*), -gon (e.g. *dragon*), -gin (e.g. *noggin*) or -gun (e.g. *shogun*).)

**[r]**

(i) [r] rarely occur in word-final position.

(ii) [r] occurs in word-medial position in such examples as the following.


None of [l̩], [ŋ], [m], [ŋ] and [r] occurs in word-initial position. As for the occasional occurrence of [ŋ] in utterance-initial, and consequently, word-initial position (cf. *Thank you!*), see p. 187.

---

*LPD3* (51) the pronunciation with [kŋ] (as in [ˈbeıkŋ] *bacon*) is mentioned in the Note on ‘assimilation’. *Laver* (1994: 241) cites [ˈberkŋ] as an example involving [ŋ] as being on an (apparently) comparable status to [n] and [m].

4. In *LPD3* (51) the pronunciation with [kŋ] (as in [ˈbeıkŋ] *bacon*) is mentioned in the Note on ‘assimilation’. *Laver* (1994: 241) cites [ˈberkŋ] as an example involving [ŋ] as being on an (apparently) comparable status to [n] and [m].

5. *Roach* (1983: 69) cites *thicken* and *waken* and says that ‘after velar consonants…syllabic n is possible but an is also acceptable.’ and goes on to say that ‘Syllabic velar nasal q is also possible in this context’. *Roach* (1991: 81, 2000: 89, 2009: 70) retains *thicken* but drops *waken*. *Roach* (1983: 70, 1991: 81, 2000: 89, 2009: 70) says that ‘Examples of possible syllabic velar nasals would be ‘thicken’ 0kŋ (where 0kŋ and 0kŋ are also possible), and ‘broken key’ brɔŋ ki: ‘where the nasal consonant occurs between velar consonants ‘(n or an could be substituted for q).’ *Jones* (§285 in 1950 and 1956), at an earlier date, expresses the same view as *Roach’s* and gives examples like taken *teikŋ, we can go…* 0kŋ *go…* and egg and bacon *rŋ q beikŋ,* though, says he, pronunciations with *an* or *n* occur in slower speech. (The phonetic notations are *Jones’s.*). Notice that *Jones* does not give *rŋ m beikŋ,* (where [m] is actually [m]) which I suppose is also possible. *Windsor Lewis* (personal communication, 13 February 2013) supports my view and says it happens normally.

8. Some authors attribute this pronunciation with [r] to *hungry* as well.
The consonants that precede the syllabic consonants

A variety of consonants precede each of the syllabic consonants. The identities and number of these consonants vary depending on the individual syllabic consonants. Here is a result of my survey of the sequences of various consonants and the individual syllabic consonants.

(1) Consonants + [l]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonant</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[p] + [l]</td>
<td>palp [ˈsæpl] supple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[b] + [l]</td>
<td>rebel [ˈrɛbl]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[m] + [l]</td>
<td>mammal [ˈmæməl]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[f] + [l]</td>
<td>muffle [ˈmʌfl]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[v] + [l]</td>
<td>cavil [ˈkævl]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[θ] + [l]</td>
<td>lethal [ˈliːθl]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[t] + [l]</td>
<td>bottle [ˈbɒtl]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[d] + [l]</td>
<td>muddle [ˈmʌdl]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[n] + [l]</td>
<td>channel [ˈtʃænl]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ʃ] + [l]</td>
<td>bushel [ˈbʊʃl]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[tʃ] + [l]</td>
<td>satchel [ˈsætʃl]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[θ] + [l]</td>
<td>cudgel [ˈkʌdl]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[k] + [l]</td>
<td>uncle [ˈʌŋkl]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ɡ] + [l]</td>
<td>fungal [ˈfʌŋgl]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[r] + [l]</td>
<td>bottle [ˈbɒtl]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(N.B. [h], [ʒ], [ð] and [ŋ] do not precede [l].)

(2) Consonants + [n]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consonant</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[p] + [n]</td>
<td>open [ˈɔpən]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[b] + [n]</td>
<td>ribbon [ˈrɪbən]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[f] + [n]</td>
<td>soften [ˈsɔftn]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[v] + [n]</td>
<td>oven [ˈʌvn]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[t] + [n]</td>
<td>cotton [ˈkɒtn]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[d] + [n]</td>
<td>sudden [ˈsʌdən]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[θ] + [n]</td>
<td>Jonathan [ˈdʒɒnəθən]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ð] + [n]</td>
<td>heathen [ˈhiːθən]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[s] + [n]</td>
<td>lesson [ˈlesn]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[z] + [n]</td>
<td>prison [ˈprɪzn]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

7 [θ] as in [ˈliːθl] lethal or [ˈeθl] Ethel rarely occurs. I am aware of only two other examples, i.e. brothel (to be mentioned in fn. 8) and [ˈbeθl] Bethel.

8 Note the absence of [ð] which is the voiced counterpart of [θ]. This is because [θ] does not occur in BrE. A word like brothel is pronounced with [θ] in BrE, though it is pronounced with [ð] or [θ] in AmE.
Syllabic consonants in English: phonetic and phonological aspects

(1) Consonants + [n]

[f] + [n] as in [ˈæfn] ashen

[ʃ] + [n] as in [ˈʃuːzn] fusion

[tʃ] + [n] as in [ˈkwɛstn] question

[dʒ] + [n] as in [ˈtksdʒn] oxygen

[k] + [n] as in [ˈbrəʊkn] broken

[g] + [n] as in [ˈpeɪgn] pagan

(The occurrence of [n] is conveniently mentioned in EPD14 (xiv) as follows:
‘Final syllabic /n/ is to be understood following /t, d, f, v, s, z, ʃ, ʒ/ as in ‘cot-
ton, sudden, often, listen, dozen, ocean, vision’…)

(3) Consonants + [m]

[p] + [m] as in [ˈɔpm] open

[b] + [m] as in [ˈnbm] ribbon

[θ] + [m] as in [krəˈsɛnthəm] chrysanthemum (N.B. [θm] in this example does
not occur in word-final position, where [θm] not [θn] normally occurs; cf.
[ˈɔnthəm] anthem.)

[ð] + [m] as in [fedθm] fathom

[s] + [m] as in [ˈhɛnsm] handsomelhansom

[z] + [m] as in [ˈbodzm] Buddhism

[j] + [m] as in [ˈfævəm] Faversham

(N.B. [d], [t], [g], [k], [l], [v], [z], [tʃ], [dʒ], [b], [r], [l], [m] and [n] do not seem
to occur before [m].) All the examples involving [m] given above occur in
word-final position.)

(4) Consonants + [ŋ]

[k] + [ŋ] as in [ˈbɛkn] bacon

(5) Consonants + [ɹ]

[d] + [ɹ] as in [ˈfliendɹ] philanderer

[l] + [ɹ] (devoiced) [ˈsɑːtɹ] Sartre

lable following a velar consonant is spelt ‘an’ or ‘on’…it [i.e. [n]] is rarely heard…’, suggests that
[ən] is more usually heard. His remark would not apply to my example of broken here as it is spelt with en.

10 Roach’s remark quoted in fn. 9 would apply to my example of pagan as it is spelt with an
and also to e.g. wagon as it is spelt with on. According to him, [ən] rather than [ŋ] is more frequently
heard. Roach’s criterial reference to the spelling, i.e. en (as in thicken and waken, and surely broken
as well) on the one hand and an and on (as in pagan and wagon) on the other as an explanation about
the equal occurrence of [ŋ] and [ən] for the former and the definitely preferred occurrence of [ən]
over [ŋ] for the latter is not clear to me.

11 This pronunciation is entered as one of the alternative variants (the last variant listed) of this
word in LPD3. The main pronunciation given in LPD3 is [krə sænthəm].

12 [ðm] (weak form of them) can be another example here.
\[ \ddot{a} + [r] \text{ as in } ['f\ddot{a}t\eta] \text{ fathering} \]
\[ [g] + [r] \text{ as in } ['\text{hangn}] \text{ Hungary} \]

(N.B. \([r]\) mostly occurs in word-medial position, as shown above. \([r]\) rarely occurs in word-final position. Sartre cited above is one of the rare examples).

**Homorganicity between the syllabic consonants and the consonants that precede them**

Looking at the list given above, it is clear that some of the sequences of various consonants and the syllabic consonants exhibit homorganicity between the consonants and the syllabic consonants (e.g. \([tl]\) as in \(['\text{btl}] \text{ bottle}\) while the others (e.g. \([pl]\) as in \(['s\ddot{a}pl]\) \text{ supple}\) do not.

1. **Presence of homorganicity**

Instances of homorganicity are found in a relatively small number of cases in all of (1) to (5). We can probably consider that homorganicity occurs in \([dr], [tr] \) and \([\ddot{d}r] \) (but not in \([gr]\) ) if we assume that the place of articulation of \([d], [t] \) and \([\ddot{d}] \) is assimilated to that of \([r]\) so that both successive consonants in each sequence are pronounced post-alveolarly. Homorganicity is of course absent in \([\ddot{a}l]\) in which \((\ddot{a}) \text{ (glottal)}\) is pronounced in place of \([t]\) (apico-alveolar) as in e.g. \(['\text{btl}] \text{ bottle}\) cited in (1).

There exists homorganicity between \([l]\) and each of the preceding consonant, viz. \([t], [d], [\ddot{g}], [n]\). As for the non-occurrence of \([\ddot{a}]\) in BrE, see fn. 8.

Other instances of homorganicity are in \([\ddot{a}n]\) as in \(['\text{b\ddot{a}n}] \text{ button}, \text{ [dn]} \text{ as in } ['\text{he}\ddot{a}n] \text{ Haydon}, \text{ [pn]} \text{ as in } ['\text{k\ddot{a}epm}] \text{ Clapham}, \text{ [bn]} \text{ as in } ['\text{ ribn}] \text{ ribbon}, \text{ [kn]} \text{ as in } ['\text{be}\ddot{k}\ddot{j}] \text{ bacon}.^{13} \text{ What articulatorily happens is as follows. (i) in the case of } [tl] \text{ and } [dl], \text{ ‘lateral release’ occurs while ‘apico-alveolar closure’ is maintained; (ii) in the case of } [nl], \text{ ‘apico-alveolar closure’ is maintained while ‘lateral release’ and ‘velar closure’ are concomitantly executed; and (iii) in the case of } [kn] \text{ ‘velar release’ occurs while ‘velar-dorsal closure’ is maintained.} \]

It is not clear to me if e.g. \text{ ribbon}, notated \( ['\text{rib} \mid \eta] \) (cf. \( ['\text{sup} \mid \eta] \text{ open} \)) in \text{ LPD3 results, with the elision of the schwa, in not only } [-\eta] \text{ (cf. } [-\text{pn}] \text{) but even } [-\text{bn}] \text{ (cf. } [-\text{pm}] \)). \text{ EPD18 notates } ['\text{rib.} \ddot{a}n] \text{ while } \text{ CPDBAE notates } ['\text{rban}], \text{ suggesting that neither } [\eta] \text{ nor } [m] \text{ occurs preceded by } [b] \text{ in this or other phonetically relevant}

---

\(^{13}\text{ As a number of writers do, O’Connor (1973: 146) too cites the example of } ['\text{be}\ddot{k}\ddot{j}] \text{ but in specific reference to the context where } \text{bacon} \text{ is followed by a word beginning with } [k]. \text{ He cites the phrase } \text{bacon cutter.} \)
If [b] + [m̩] does occur, one can of course reckon with homorganicity between [b] and [m̩]. Laver (1994: 241) gives the example [kæbm̩] (I have vicariously added the square brackets) cabin boy. This example, which is a compound, involves the process ‘[bmn] > [bn] > [bm]’, in part parallel to ‘[pan] > [p̩n] > [p̩m]’, often cited to exemplify the process which e.g. open undergoes. The difference between the two processes culminating in [m̩] is of course that the former involves the omission of [ɪ] in [ˈkæbn] in a certain speech style, unlike in the case of the latter process. It remains to be seen if a similar process may take place (in the same relevant speech style) in e.g. cabin crew [k̩n̩m̩] as well as cabin fever [m̩f̩] (this latter is certainly possible), and so on, where [ŋ̩] and [ɱ̩], etc. are syllabic. Laver’s example above is a compound, but an example need not necessarily be such but can be a phrase, e.g. (The) cabin burned []-bm-.

One interesting example of [m̩] occurring in a compound is given by Roach (1983: 70, 1991: 81, 2000: 89, 2009: 70), though not in any of EPD15 through EPD18, viz. uppermost which is said to be pronounced [ˈapməʊst] (which is more usual) or [ˈapməʊst]. Notice that the latter pronunciation involves [m̩] in [p̩m] (resulting from the elision of the schwa of [ˈʌpa…]). I have not found this example in the writing of any other researcher. Incidentally, Roach (1983: 70, 1991: 81, 2000: 89, 2009: 70), or for that matter any of EPD15 through EPD18, does not give utmost as pronounced [ˈʌtməʊst], a potential case analogous to uppermost. It seems to me that a potential pronunciation [ˈʌtməʊst] for utmost might give rise to confusion between it and uppermost [ˈapməʊst]. For this reason, it is suspected that [ˈapməʊst] instead of [ˈʌtməʊst] may be unusual.

2. Absence of homorganicity

In a good number of other cases there is no homorganicity between a syllabic consonant and the preceding consonant. Such cases are shown as follows.

So far as [l̩] is concerned, homorganicity does not exist between [l̩] and the various consonants occurring before it. These consonants are [p], [b], [m], [f], [v], [θ], [ʃ], [ʒ], [tʃ], [dʒ], [k], [g], [r] and (we will not forget) [ʔ], that is, a fair large number of consonants.

As for [n], homorganicity is absent between it and the various consonants preceding it. These consonants whose number is also quite large are [p], [b], [f], [θ], [s], [z], [ʃ], [ʒ], [tʃ], [dʒ], [k] and [g].

---

14 I sought the thoughts of Windsor Lewis (compiler of CPDBAE) (personal communication, 12 January 2013) about the attestability of [bm̩] in, say, ribbon if at all pronounced [ˈribm] prepausally. His answer was in the negative, in principle. Yet I am aware that EPD3 (51) acknowledges the occurrence of e.g. ribbon pronounced [ˈribm] (progressive assimilation). I feel inclined to take [bm] into account.
It is true that [l] and [n] are the most frequently occurring syllabic consonants in English. This might possibly be due to the fact that a very large number of English words end with [l], preceded or not by [t], [d] or [n], and also those which end with [n] preceded or not by [t] or [d], if perhaps to a somewhat lesser extent. This is of course a matter of lexical statistics which needs investigating.

For [m], except for [p] with which [m] enters into homorganicity, there is no homorganicity between [m] and a fair number of consonants preceding it. These consonants are [ð], [s], [z] and [ʃ].

There are no instances of non-homorganicity so far as [ŋ̍] is concerned as it only occurs preceded by [k].

Finally, so far as [r] is concerned, out of the four consonants which occur before [r], [g] is the only consonant with which [r] does not enter into homorganicity.

With regard to [ŋ̍], it is significant that the occurrence of [pm] and [bm] is relatively uncommon. Only a small number of cases of [ŋ̍] with consonants preceding it occur and these consonants are those that do not enter into homorganicity.

Quite apart from the fact of homorganicity or non-homorganicity mentioned above, it is a fact that [l] and [n] are the major and most frequently occurring syllabic consonants in English while [m], [ŋ̍] and [r̩] enjoy only marginal occurrence. This is most probably why major attention by phoneticians is customarily focused on [l] and [n].

The question of homorganicity or non-homorganicity between the syllabic consonant and the consonant preceding it, i.e. the question I have presented above at some length, is of not only phonetic interest but – as we shall see later – of phonological significance.

Two-way co-variation between ‘syllabic consonant’ and ‘schwa plus non-syllabic consonant’

With a notable exception of [ŋ̍]15, the occurrence of a syllabic consonant (i.e. [l], [ŋ̍], [m] or [r̩]) is invariably matched by that of ‘[ə] + non-syllabic consonant’,16 so that, for example, the occurrence of e.g. [l] is invariably matched by that of [əl]. In

---

15 Why [ŋ̍] is an exception will be explained later (see last paragraph in The occurrence of syllabic consonants in word-initial context (187) and fnn. 85 & 87).
16 Jones (1959: 136) says: ‘…that syllabic l’s and n’s of the original words are by no means always retained, but that in a great many cases the addition of the suffixes causes the sounds to become n o n-s y 11 a b i c.’ Wells (JW’s blog, 20 Dec. 2011) also says as follows: ‘Syllabic consonants are never categorically required in English. There is always an alternative pronunciation available, with ə and a nonsyllabic consonant.’
other words, [l] and [ɫ] are in co-variation in the pronunciation of those words which involve [ɫ] and [l]. This relationship between [ɫ] and [l] can be expressed as [ɫ] ~ [l] (e.g. [ˈbɒtəl] ~ [ˈbɔtəl] for bottle). I will call it ‘two-way co-variation’ and employ the symbol ‘~’ to mean ‘co-varies with’ or ‘in co-variation with’). As [l] results from the elision of the schwa of [ɫ], it is [ɫ] that logically takes precedence over [l] in terms of articulatory process, hence [ɫ] > [l]. In other words, from the point of view of articulation, [ɫ] is the primary variant and [l] the secondary variant, not the other way round. The co-variation [ɫ] ~ [l] is therefore directional and is to be understood in the sense of [ɫ] > [l], not [l] > [ɫ]. This directional co-variation is customarily expressed in the form of [l] in both LPD3 and EPD18. Thus, for instance, for bottle, LPD3 notates [ˈbɒtəl] and EPD18 [ˈbɔtəl]. The notation [ˈbɒtəl] or [ˈbɔtəl] is a conflation of [ˈbɒtəl] and [ˈbɔtəl], two pronunciations which co-vary, i.e. [ˈbɒtəl] ~ [ˈbɔtəl]. It should be noted at this juncture that CPDBA systematically lists only pronunciations with syllabic consonants, without indicating the form ‘[a] + non-syllabic’, e.g. [ˈbɔtəl] in which [l] automatically represents [l]; no syllabic diacritic is added as it would be superfluous to do so.

Three-way co-variation between ‘syllabic consonant’, ‘schwa plus non-syllabic consonant’ and ‘non-syllabic consonant’

‘[a] + non-syllabic consonant’ does not necessarily co-vary with a syllabic consonant only, what I have called ‘two-way co-variation’ between ‘syllabic consonant’ and ‘schwa plus non-syllabic consonant’.

Many words have three co-varying pronunciations, i.e. [ɫ] ~ [l] ~ [l], so that e.g. hustling is pronounced [ˈhaʃlɪŋ] (with a schwa followed by non-syllabic lateral), [ˈhaʃln] (with a syllabic lateral) or [ˈhaʃln] (with a non-syllabic lateral). [ˈhaʃ-əl-ŋ] and [ˈhaʃ-ən] are trisyllabic while [ˈhaʃ-ln] is disyllabic. In other words, there is what I call ‘three-way co-variation’ between ‘schwa plus non-syllabic consonant’, ‘syllabic consonant’, and ‘non-syllabic consonant’. The example of three-way co-

---

17 Practically all researchers consider the schwa elidable in such and other similar cases involving the occurrence of syllabic consonants. However, Toft (2002: 111) unorthodoxically considers such schwas as epenthetic vowels.
18 The space in the phonetic notation in LPD3 and the dot in that in EPD18 represents syllable division.
19 This clearly indicated by Jones (1959: 136) when he writes: ‘An examination of the words formed with such suffixes reveals, however, that the syllabic l’s and n’s of the original words are by no means always retained, but that in great many cases the addition of the suffixes causes the sounds to become n o n s y l l a b i c .’ He then gives examples like [ˈkriknl], [ˈsimpl], [ˈsaikln] and [ˈlɪsn]. Jones continues to add an important remark (not made by most researchers in connection with syllabic consonants) that, for instance, [k] in [ˈkwiknl] quickly is longer than [k] in [ˈkriknl], while (as is well known) [l] in [ˈkwiknl] is much longer than [l] in [ˈkwiknl]. I take it that Jones could
variation for hustling may be expressed as [ˈhʌst-ɪŋ] - [ˈhʌst-lɪŋ], or simply, [ˈhʌst-lɪŋ] - [ˈhʌst-lɪŋ]. A few more examples are e.g. lentil [ˈlɛnt-əl], or [ˈlɛnt-əl] - [ˈlɛnt-lɪ] (LPD3), i.e. [ˈlɛnt-lɪ] - [ˈlent] - [ˈlentlɪ]) (EPD18), i.e. [ˈlent-lɪ] - [ˈlent]- [ˈlentllɪ]). Notice that the order in which of the three pronunciations for lentil is listed in LPD3 and EPD18 is the reverse of each other. Three-way co-variation between [r], [r] and [r] can be exemplified by [ˈfʌ:ðəŋ] - [ˈfʌ:ðəŋ] - [ˈfʌ:ðəŋ] for fathering.

Roach (1983: 70, 1991: 81-2) makes some relevant remarks, and gives a few examples involving [ər], [r] and [r], which I copy below by employing my co-variation notation and slightly modifying his phonetic notation without doing it violence.

- [ˈhʌstrɪ] - [ˈhʌstrɪ] - [ˈhʌstrɪ] for history
- [ˈwʌndrə] - [ˈwʌndrə] - [ˈwʌndrə] for wanderer
- [ˈbætr̩ɪŋ] - [ˈbætr̩ɪŋ] - [ˈbætr̩ɪŋ] for buttering
- [ˈflætrɪ] - [ˈflætrɪ] - [ˈflætrɪ] for flattery

In addition, Roach gives the following two pairs of words which he presents as minimal pairs distinguished through the difference between [r] and [r].

- [ˈhʌŋgrɪ] Hungary vs. [ˈhʌŋgrɪ] hungry
- [ˈdʌltrəs] adulterous vs. [ˈdʌltrəs] adultress

He goes on to say, however, that both Hungary and adulterous can also be pronounced with [t], in which case these two pairs of words would not constitute minimal pairs.

Subsequently, Roach (2000: 89-90, 2009: 70) drops all the above-cited examples involving the use of [r] and/or [r] except Hungary and hungry, about which he repeats the same remark that he made in the previous two editions. This means that Roach suggests that there are no cases in which the use of [r] and [r] is amenable to producing minimal pairs and that it only produces instances of co-variation.

Roach makes another point. In connection with his example of four words which we have copied above, i.e. history, wanderer, buttering and flattery, Roach (1983: 70, 1991: 81-2) says that, of the forms in which non-syllabic [r] occurs, [ˈhʌstrɪ] (though not [ˈhʌstrɪ]) and [ˈwʌndrə] (though not [ˈwʌndrə]), and [ˈbætr̩ɪŋ] (though not [ˈbætr̩ɪŋ]) and [ˈflætrɪ] (though not [ˈflætrɪ]) are unusual. However, all mention [ˈkrɪnkli] instead of [ˈkwɪklɪ] here and thereby cite [ˈkrɪnkli] and [ˈkwɪklɪ] in co-variation. Jones ascribes the relatively short [k] followed by [l] to ‘compensatory shortening’.  

20 In my correspondence with Windsor Lewis (12 January 2013), I sought confirmation that these three forms are attestable ones and obtained an affirmative answer. Windsor Lewis describes ‘the first [ˈhʌsln] is fussier, the second [ˈhʌsln] careful and the third [ˈhʌsln] normal for GB of our generation.’ I agree with him.
these example words and the relevant remarks are subsequently dropped in Roach (2000\textsuperscript{3}: 80, 2009\textsuperscript{4}: 70). The point he made and subsequently withdrew is that a non-syllabic consonant is acceptable if more than one consonant occurs before the schwa of ‘schwa + non-syllabic’ in the unaccented syllable (e.g. [ˈhistri], [ˈwondəra]) but not so acceptable if only one consonant occurs (e.g. [ˈbætrɪŋ], [ˈflætrɪ]). It is not entirely clear if what Roach says about degrees of acceptability of variants with non-syllabic consonant is equally applicable to variants with [sl], [l] and those with [sn], [n] and [n].

Let’s consider, for the sake of argument, Roach’s point mentioned in the preceding paragraph by taking examples of the forms with non-syllabic [n]. The word merchant is indicated as [ˈmɛrtʃənt] in EPD18 and [ˈmɛrtʃənt] in LPD3. According to Roach, [-tʃənt] with [n] (non-syllabic) would be acceptable if [tʃ] is regarded as two consecutive consonants, i.e. [t] + [ʃ] as in [ˈwɔnt] white shirt, but not so if [tʃ] is regarded as a single well-knit consonant, as in [tʃ]ənt church. In which way Roach regards [tʃ] is not clear to me as he does not touch this point\textsuperscript{21} but it seems safe to guess that he probably regards [tʃ] as two consecutive consonants and he would be consistent with himself in considering [ˈmɛrtʃənt] with [n] as acceptable.\textsuperscript{22} LPD3’s notation suggests that while recognizing [ˈmɛrtʃənt] with [n], it recommends [ˈmɛrtʃənt] with [n] to the foreign student.\textsuperscript{23} Note that LPD3 is comparing here [n] and [sn] rather than [n] and [n] while not explaining why [sn] is preferred for the foreign student. At any rate, Roach and LPD3 agree in preferring e.g. [ˈmɛrtʃənt] with [n].

By Roach’s criterion, [ˈhaslɪŋ] and [ˈfu.ɒrɪŋ] cited above would be judged to be little acceptable, yet paradoxically EPD18 indicates [ˈhæsəŋ] (as well as [ˈhæsəŋ] and [ˈhæsɪŋ]). EPD18 does not indicate [ˈfu.ɜːrɪŋ]. LPD3 notates [ˈhæsəŋ] and [ˈhæsɪŋ] but not [ˈhæsəŋ], while [ˈfu.ɒrɪŋ] is not given.

The phenomenon involved in [sl] > [l], [sn] > [n], [sm] > [m], [sr] > [r] or [sr] > [r], provided that the elision of the schwa does not result in the creation of [l], [n], [m], [s] or [r], is what is known as ‘syncope’ in synchrony since the number of the constituent syllables is reduced by one through the elision of the schwa.\textsuperscript{24} Rather than

\textsuperscript{21} Cf. e.g. Roach (1983\textsuperscript{1}: 42-3, 1991\textsuperscript{2}: 52, 2000\textsuperscript{5}: 54, 2009\textsuperscript{2}: 43).

\textsuperscript{22} If so, there is a residual problem. Roach (1983\textsuperscript{1}: 42-3, 1991\textsuperscript{2}: 52, 2000\textsuperscript{5}: 54, 2009\textsuperscript{2}: 43) treats [tʃ] as an affricate, which is customarily regarded to be a single well-knit consonant. If so, merchant would have just one consonant and therefore, according to Roach, [ˈmɛrtʃənt] would not be acceptable after all any more than are [ˈbætʃəŋ] and [ˈflætʃəŋ] which have only one consonant, [tʃ], before [r]. There would then be a contradiction.

\textsuperscript{23} To my knowledge, LPD3 does not, unlike Roach, mention the condition of there being one consonant or more than one consonant, depending on which condition either a non-syllabic consonant or a syllabic consonant is acceptable.

\textsuperscript{24} I wish to throw in here a personal remark that, in my natural flow of English pronunciation (I am a non-native speaker of English who learned English as a foreign language), I regularly pro-
the term ‘syncope’, Wells regularly employs the term ‘compression’. 

The non-occurrence of [l] in favour of [əl] or [l]

The occurrence of [l] is not attested in some cases where it might be expected. This can be exemplified by coupling (n.) which is pronounced [ˈkʌplɪŋ] (neither [ˈkʌplɪŋ] nor *[ˈkʌplən]g)), whereas coupling (v. pres. part.) may be pronounced [ˈkʌplɪŋ] as well as [ˈkʌplɪŋ] or [ˈkʌplɪŋ]. Note also in this connection that coupler is pronounced [ˈkʌplə] only, and couplet [ˈkʌplɪt] or [ˈkʌplɪt] only. Both LPD3 and EPD18 give the same indication in this respect.

Differentiative use of the phonetic symbols ‘ɔ’ and ‘ɔ’

Having dealt with some generalities about the syllabic consonants occurring in English, I now wish to discuss a small number of specific issues which personally interest me.

I have earlier said that a syllabic consonant co-varies with [ə] + non-syllabic consonant, e.g. [əl] ~ [l]. The schwa in [ə] + non-syllabic consonant receives varying notations in pronouncing dictionaries. It is notated uniformly by ‘ɔ’ (non-italic, down-sized and superscripted) as in [ˈbɑːt.ɪ] or [ˈprɪz.ʌm] in EPD18. However, in LPD3, the schwa in [ə] + non-syllabic consonant is differentially notated by ‘ɔ’ as in [ˈbɑːt.ɪ] or by ‘ɔ’ (italicized, not down-sized and not superscripted) as in [ˈprɪz.ʌm]. Some discussion is therefore in order in connection with the use of the italic phonetic symbol ‘ɔ’ which is employed for a special purpose for a good number of words in LPD3 (but not in EPD16, EPD17, EPD18). The reason for using discriminately the

\[\text{nounce by way of compression}\]

English words which are said to have syllabic consonants [l], [ŋ] and [r] if the syllabic consonants in such words are followed by vowels. Thus, meddler, meddling, buttoning, history, offerer and numerous other words are always pronounced [ˈmedlə], [ˈmedlɪŋ], [ˈbʌtnɪŋ], [ˈhɪstrɪ], [ˈv.ˈfla], etc. Therefore, in my pronunciation, putative ‘minimal pairs’ such as codling (pronounced with [dl]) vs. coddling (pronounced with [d]) are unknown. On the other hand, I always observe [l] and [ŋ] in word-final position as in bottle, coddle, meddle, button, pardon, etc. and regularly have [l] and [ŋ] when they are followed by consonants, e.g. incident, incidentally.

The term ‘compression’, in Wells’s usage, covers a wider field of phenomena than just ‘syncope’. See e.g. LPD3 (149 & 173-4).

Strictly speaking, ‘’ employed in both EPD18 and LPD3 and ‘ɔ’ employed in LPD3 express not just the presence of [ə] but the double sense of the presence or absence of [ə], i.e. [əl] or [l], so that ‘ɔ’ or ‘ɔ’ leads to a conflation of [əl] and [l].

The phonetic symbol ‘ɔ’ (italicized schwa) was used in EPD1 through EPD14, but has been replaced by the phonetic symbol ‘’ from EPD15 onward. However, I have noticed that ‘ɔ’ still lingers, though rarely, in EPD15, EPD16, EPD17 and EPD18, accidentally or otherwise. For example, see cadre [ˈkɑː.də], [ˈker.-də] (EPD15, EPD16, EPD17, EPD18), entendre [ˈɛn.tə.nɪŋ], genre
two phonetic symbols, ‘ə’ and ‘œ’ is clearly explained in LPD3 (567) as follows in the Note about ‘Optional sounds’.

   Sounds shown in italics are sounds which the foreign learner is recommended to include (although native speakers sometimes omit them). They denote sounds that may optionally be elided.

   [...]  
   bacon ‘beɪkәn. Some say ‘beɪkən, others say ‘beɪk n [i.e. ['beɪkən]. LPD recommends ‘beɪkən.

LPD3 (799) also says as follows in the Note on ‘syllabic consonants’.

   Syllabic consonants are also sometimes used where LPD shows italic ə plus a nasal or liquid, thus distant ‘dɪstənt. Although there is a possible pronunciation ‘dɪst nt [i.e. ['dɪstnt]], LPD recommends ‘dɪstənt.

   We thus understand that ‘œ’ relates to recommended inclusions of the schwa (cf. ['beɪkən], ['dɪstənt]) for foreign students.

   As for the phonetic symbol ‘œ’ we find the following in LPD3 (567) in the Note about ‘Optional sounds’.

   Sounds shown with raised [superscripted, non-italic downsized] letters are sounds which the foreign learner is recommended to ignore (although native speakers sometimes include them). They denote sounds that may optionally be inserted.

   [...]  
   sadden ‘sæd ən. Some say ‘sæd n [i.e. ['sædən]], others say ‘səd ən. LPD recommends ‘səd n.

   We thus understand that ‘œ’ relates to recommended non-inclusions of the schwa (cf. ['bɪt ən], ['səd ən]).

   In connection with both ‘œ’ and ‘œ’ we find the following written by Wells (his blog of 22 December 2011).

   The above-stated use of ‘œ’ in these editions is explained differently.
This is the reasoning behind the notation I use in LPD, where potential syllabic consonants are shown either as ələnərm or as ân ân, depending on whether a syllabic consonant is more or less likely as the output. The LPD notational convention is that a raised symbol denotes a possible insertion, an italic symbol a possible omission. So ’n implies a default ən, as in hidden ˈhɪdn̩, while ən implies a default ân, as in hesitant ˈhezɪtənt.

We thus understand from the passage just quoted that both ‘possible insertion of the schwa’ indicated by ’n’ and ‘possible omission’ of the schwa indicated by ’â’ are recommendations for foreign students, who are advised to use the default syllabic consonant (e.g. [n̩] in [ˈsædən]) as much as the default non-syllabic consonant [ən] as in [ˈhezitənt]).

Where foreign students are concerned, (i) in the case of a possible insertion, [n̩] is the first and recommended variant (e.g. wooden [ˈwʊdn]) while [ən] is the second variant (e.g. wooden [ˈwʊdn]), and (ii) in the case of a possible omission, [ən] is the first and recommended variant (e.g. hesitant [ˈhezɪtənt]) and [n̩] the secondary variant (e.g. hesitant [ˈhezɪtənt]). In other words, in (i) which has to do with a possible insertion, we have [n̩] → [ən] while in (ii) which has to do with a possible omission, we have [ən] → [n̩]. It is clear that what is implied by the symbol ’→’ is not necessarily the logical precedence, which I earlier indicated, of the former pronunciation over the latter in terms of the articulatory process involved in (i) or (ii). This is why I choose here the terms ‘first variant’ and ‘second variant’ rather than ‘primary variant’ and ‘secondary variant’, the terms I have earlier employed. What is signified by the symbols ’→’ and the terms ‘first variant’ ‘second variant’ will become apparent further below.

The use of the phonetic symbols ’s’ and ’â’ in LPD3 in connection with syllabic consonants is clearly meant to serve a pedagogical purpose. It must be said that LPD is not only descriptive but pedagogical on at least a few matters such as epenthetic plosives, elisions and syllabic consonants, not that this should be taken as a criticism.29

---

28 Wells (2005: 6) previously succinctly says: ‘In LPD, raised symbols denote optional additions, italic symbols optional omissions.’

29 Cf. Wells (2005: 5): ‘[This brings us to] the question of description versus prescription, always a slightly difficult issue for lexicographers who have been trained in a firmly descriptive tradition but who are aware that the dictionaries they write are used mainly by people seeking authoritative guidance on how to speak. A degree of prescriptivism is therefore expected and indeed found.’ Wells here is referring to different presentations of the pronunciation of English words as given by EPD, LPD and ODP.
Syllabic consonants in English: phonetic and phonological aspects

Here are some examples of different phonetic notations in connection with the use of ‘ə’ (as distinct from that of ‘œ’) in LPD3 and that of ‘œ’ in EPD18.30

national, [ˈneɪʃn əl] (LPD3) - [‘neʃn əl] (EPD18)
Buddhism [ˈbʌd lz əm] (LPD3) - [ˈbʌd l zəm] (EPD18)
prism [ˈpriz m] (LPD3) and [ˈpriz n] (EPD18)31
barrel [ˈbær əl] (LPD3) - [ˈbær əl] (EPD18)
avastral [ə ˈstrɔl] (LPD3) - [ə ˈstrɔl] (EPD18)
reverie [ˈrəvr i] (LPD3) - [ˈrəv ri] (EPD18)
binary [ˈba n ər i] (LPD3) - [ˈbær nə ri] (EPD18)

As can be seen above, apart from the pedagogical purpose for which LPD3 differentially employs the phonetic symbols ‘ə’ and ‘œ’, we may regard the indication of the occurrence of the syllabic consonants as given in LPD3 and EPD18 as essentially the same. It seems correct to understand that, anyway, the occurrence of the syllabic consonants is recognized in LPD3 as well as EPD18 in those cases where ‘œ’ is employed in LPD3.

Note that both LPD3 and EPD18 employ the phonetic symbol ‘œ’ (not superscripted, not italicized, not downsized) for words like buxom, custom, freedom, capstan, Oscan, etc. which have only [əm] or [ən], respectively, to the exclusion of [m] or [n], again respectively.

It would seem to me more appropriate to use the phonetic symbol ‘œ’ (as do EPD18 and CPDBA) than to use the phonetic symbol ‘œ’ in LPD3 for a fair number of words, e.g. acceptance [ək ˈsept ən s] (but, curiously, not in repentance [ri ˈpent ən s]), barrel [ˈbær əl], cutttery [ˈkʌt tər i],32 spidery [ˈspidər i], central [ˈsentr əl], coral [ˈkər əl], handsome [ˈhæm nəm s], national [ˈneʃn ən əl], prism [ˈpriz m], etc. This matter concerns particularly those foreign learners of English who may often find it difficult to pronounce the schwa satisfactorily with regard to its quality. If some foreign learners have already succeeded in correctly pronouncing [l], [n], [m] [r], [tr] and [dr], there seems to be no need to discourage this achievement on their part. On the other hand, I agree with LPD3 in indicating bacon [ˈbeɪk ən], paragon [ˈpær

30 Here and below I only refer to EPD18, but the phonetic notations in question are the same in EPD15, EPD16 and EPD17 as well.
31 It is interesting to note that while LPD3 differentially notates prism [ˈpriz m] (with default [əm]) and prison [ˈpriz n] (with default [n]), such a pedagogically differential notation is not adopted in EPD18 which gives [ˈpriz əm] and [ˈpriz n]. CPDBA gives [ˈpriz m] and [ˈpriz n] which correspond to [ˈpriz m] and [ˈpriz n], respectively. The fact is not missed out here that prism and prison are orthographically more different from each other than phonetically in terms of the segments.
32 The phonetic (phonological?) symbol ‘i’ in a case like this stands, as LPD3 says, for a product of the neutralization of /ɪ/ - /ɨ/ in word-final context, as here, and in a certain other phonetic contexts. Strictly, then, the symbol ‘i’ in question stands for the archiphoneme /ɪ-ɨ/ which LPD3 does not characterize, however.
ag ən], etc. with the phonetic symbol ‘ə’, as there is no particular need to encourage [kj] on the part of foreign students of English.

The question of the occurrence of [r]

I. Does [r] not occur in English?

While the occurrence of [l], [n], [m] and [ŋ] is customarily acknowledged without question, the occurrence of [r] appears to be contested by some and recognized by others, and there does not seem to be complete agreement on this point.

The occurrence of [r] is ruled out by none other than Jespersen (1950: 130) who writes as follows.

[r] happens never to be syllabic because the only position in which it occurs in Modern English is before a vowel, and that being the case [r] can never be the peak as compared with the subsequent vowel.

Scherer & Wollmann (1977: 103), too, categorically negate the occurrence of [r] in English.

Cohen (1965: 61, 63, 64) specifically mentions [l] and [ŋ] but neither [r] nor [m]. It is difficult to presume whether or not he rules out [r].

II. [r] occurs in English

Roach (1983: 70, 1991: 81) says that ‘Syllabic r is less common in RP [than in what Roach refers to as ‘most American accents’]...’. The word ‘RP’ is replaced by ‘BBC’ in Roach (2000: 89) and by ‘BBC pronunciation’ in Roach (2009: 70). He cites e.g. particular and indicates [prtkj[lr] (his notation) as the probable American pronunciation of the word. He obviously alludes to [ɔ:]. (See pp. 170-71 for my discussion about the relationship between [r] on the one hand and [ɔ:] or [ə:] on the other.)

That CPDBA admits [r] as well as [l], [n] and [m] is obvious from the following words (CPDBA: xi).

When it would not otherwise be clear that an m, n, l, or r constitutes by itself a full syllable, a short vertical stroke appears beneath the letter.

Unlike LPD3 or EPD18, CPDBA does not indicate ‘[ə] + non-syllabic’ for those words that have syllabic consonants. Thus, whereas LPD3 and EPD18 give e.g. [ˈɪbˈrə,l] and [ˈɪb.ˈrə,l], respectively, for liberal, CPDBA gives only [ˈɪbrl] which is equivalent to [ˈɪbrl]. The notational convention CPDBA adopts makes a syllabic diacritic legitimately unnecessary in [ˈɪbrl]. On the other hand, CPDBA supplies a
syllabicity diacritic in e.g. [ˈnovlɪst] for *novelist*, which corresponds to [ˈnovlɪst]. *LPD* indicates [ˈnovlɪst] and *EPD*18 [ˈnovl.ɪst].

**III. Does [rl] occur in English? Re *CPDBA***

An instance of the occurrence of [r] is explicitly indicated with the use of syllabicity diacritic in *CPDBA*, as in *literal* [ˈlɪtrl]. According to the notational convention adopted in *CPDBA*, [l] occurring in word-final position in [ˈlɪtrl] is actually [l], therefore [ˈlɪtrl] = [ˈlɪtrl]. As against [ˈlɪtrl] in *CPDBA*, *EPD*18 notates [ˈlɪt.əl], and *LPD*3 [ˈlɪt.əl]. The two notations [ˈlɪt.əl] and [ˈlɪt.əl] would lead, when both schwas are elided, to [ˈlɪtɪl lˈlɪtr.ɪ]. When only one or the other schwa is elided, [ˈlɪt.əl] and [ˈlɪt.əl] would lead to [ˈlɪtəl lˈlɪtrəl] (if the first ə is elided) or [ˈlɪtə.l lˈlɪtə rl] (if the second ə is elided). It seems that none of [ˈlɪtɪl lˈlɪtɪl], [ˈlɪtɪl lˈlɪtɪl] and [ˈlɪtɪl lˈlɪtɪl]33 would be equivalent to [ˈlɪtɪl] (= [ˈlɪtɪl]) notated in *CPDBA*.

The notation [rl] in word-final position is found in *CPDBA* for a good number of words such as *April* [ˈaɪprl], *carol* [ˈkaʊrl], *central* [ˈsentrl], *doggerel* [ˈdɒgərl], *mackerel* [ˈmækərl], *moral* [ˈmɔrl], *pectoral* [ˈpektərl], *petrel* [ˈpetrl], *petrol* [ˈpetrl], *quarrel* [ˈkwɔrnl], *scoundrel* [ˈskɔʊndrl], *squirrel* [ˈskwɜrl], etc.34 where [rl] is equivalent to [r] not [rl]. The absence of vertical stroke underneath the phonetic symbol ‘l’ in [rl] seen in these examples is due to the fact that, as *CPDBA* (xi) itself says,

Such a vertical stroke would be superflous in the cases e.g. *button* ˈbʌtn, *bottle* ˈbotl, *novelty* ˈnəvlɪt, *novelette* ˈnəvlɪt-et, etc.

It would seem to me that [ˈlɪtrl] rather than [ˈlɪtrl] will suffice. *EPD*18 notates [ˈsentrəl] and *LPD*3 [ˈsentərl], which will lead, with the elision of the schwa, to [rl] (≠ [rl]), but not to [rl]. One begins to wonder at this stage if the notation [ˈlɪtrl] in *CPDBA* corresponds to [ˈlɪtrl]. If not, one may wonder if the phonetic symbol ‘r’ does represent either [r] or [r̩], as the case may be.

In order to find out whether *CPDBA*’s notation [ˈlɪtrl] *literal* with [r] is a regular practice and not a one-off, I checked to see how *CPDBA* notates all those words (the total of 7 words, save oversight on my part) whose spelling ends with -*eral*. This is what I found.

---

33 In all these three pronunciations there occurs ‘compression’ from the full trisyllabic form of the word (if both schwas are retained) as both [ˈlɪtr lˈlɪtr.l] and [ˈlɪtrəl lˈlɪtə rl] are disyllabic.

34 But not in e.g. *Mongrel, ministrel, timbrel, wastrel, tambrel*, etc. for which [rl] is indicated, and e.g. *trumbrel, tendril*, etc. for which [rl] is indicated.
collateral [tərl], equilateral [tərl], lateral [trl],\footnote{CPDBA additionally indicates [-tərl], which is an alternative pronunciation if not one preferentially recommended in the opinion of the compiler of CPDBA.} multilateral [trl], quadrilateral [tərl], trilateral [-tərl], unilateral [trl].

All the words are notated with either [ərl] (i.e. [ərl]) or [rl] (i.e. [rl]). How [rl] and [ərl] are distributed among these words is not clear to me. At any rate, it seems to me that the notation [ˈlɪtərl] with [rl] in CPDBA appears unique and peculiar.

I also examined all those words (the total of 4 words, save oversight on my part) whose spelling ends with -toral, which is a spelling somewhat similar to -teral. This is what I found.

electoral [-tərl], pectoral [-tərl], pastoral [-tərl], littoral [-tərl]

All 4 words are notated with [ərl] (i.e. [ərl]), with neither [rl] (i.e. [rl]) nor, again, [r̩l] (i.e. [r̩l]).

I fail to guess the precise reason why only literal is notated [ˈlɪtrəl] in CPDBA. Could it simply be a case of misprint?

IV. How does one explain the occurrence of [rl] (i.e. [rl])?

It would be interesting to speculate how the alleged occurrence of [r] in [ˈlɪtrəl] might be explained. One may wish to look at the sequence ‘[r] + [l]’ in word-final position from the point of view of ‘sonority hierarchy’. It may be thought that the consonant whose degree of sonority is the greater of the two becomes syllabic; this is why [n̩l] (not [n̩l]) and [zm̩] (not [zm]) occur. How about [r] and [l] occurring in this order? The relative degrees of sonority of the English consonants from minimum to maximum are as follows: \([p \ t \ k] < [f \ θ \ s \ f \ h] < [b \ d \ g] < [v \ θ \ z \ ʒ] < [m \ n \ ŋ] < [l] < [r].\footnote{See Jespersen (1950: 127). One can additionally consider [tʃ dʒ] which are affricates placed between [p t k] and [f θ s f h]. I am not, just here, concerned with relative sonority among the consonants within each sub-group.} \(I\) have omitted [w] and [j]). It might therefore be suggested that [r] becomes syllabic rather than [l] in the sequence ‘[r] + [l]’ in word-final position.

Yet this is not what seems to happen. The phonetic notations given by many scholars regularly show [rl], not [rl]. That non-occurrence and non-recognition of the occurrence [rl] in favour of [r] in barrel, central, coral, (all of them notated [-tərl]) except in literal (notated with [rl]) in CPDBA itself and in numerous other words may be due to the fact that, if [rl] is to occur, [r] which is syllabic should be pronounced long, that is, long enough to form a syllable. Such being the case, [r] would be practically equivalent to [ɾ] \textit{in quality} that occurs in e.g. [ˈfɜðər] further in AmE except
that it would be long (Cf. LPD3: xxxi) where we read: ‘rhotacized [ɹ], in GenAm better (= syllabic [r]). It is not clear whether [r] (syllabic [r]) corresponds to [ɾ] or [ɾ̩]. It is not easy to determine whether [ɾ] or [ɾ̩] corresponds to [r] in [ɹr]. Information about the phonetic nature in terms of quantity and quality of [ɾ] and [ɾ̩] in comparison with each other is surprisingly scarce. That [ɾ] occurs in accented syllables and [ɾ̩] in unaccented syllables is invariably remarked upon, but a quantitative distinction between them, if any, is not. [ɾ] and [ɾ̩] are said to parallel [s] and [z], respectively. [s] (i.e. [sː]) and [ɾ] are described as being two vowels which are distinguished from each other in that [s] (i.e. [sː]) is longer than [ɾ] (Jones 1964\(^2\): §342 and §355, 1950\(^1\): 198) but are qualitatively similar (Gimson 1962\(^2\): 116, 1970\(^2\): 122, 1980\(^2\): 124, 1994\(^2\): 116, 2001\(^2\): 125, 2008\(^2\): 130). Pairs of words like foreword [-wɔd] and forward [-wɔd], and commerce [-mɔs] and commas [-məz], cited as minimal pairs by Gimson, well illustrate the quantitative difference and the qualitative similarity between [s] and [ɾ]. Wise (1958: 119ff.) offers the following description.

The paired sounds [ɾ] and [ɾ̩] are exactly analogous in General American to the paired sounds [s] and [ɾ] in Southern, Eastern, and British. [...] [ɾ] (always stressed) … [ɾ̩] (always unstressed). [...] The sound [ɾ] is mid-central, tense, and unround. [...] The sound [ɾ̩] is mid-central, lax, and unround. [...] Remember that [ɾ̩] is used in unaccented syllables...

The terms tense and lax in the above quoted passage are associated with the presence and absence of accent. Though the same expression ‘mid-central’ is used for both [ɾ] and [ɾ̩], it is possible that the arch of the tongue is higher for the former than for the latter (Wise 1958: 118). This effectively seems to imply a qualitative difference between [ɾ] and [ɾ̩] in terms of the height of the tongue. There is no mention by Wise of any quantitative difference.

That [s] or [ɾ̩] necessarily occurs in accented syllables, as Jones and Wise among others say, is not entirely true, as [s] or [ɾ̩] may also occur in unaccented syllables in e.g. pervert (n) [ˈpɜːrɜːvərt] [ˈpɜːrɜːvərt], invert (a) [ˈɪnɜːrvənt] [ˈɪnɜːrvənt], introvert (n) [ɪntrəˈvɜːrt] [ɪntrəˈvɜːrt], expert [ɛkˈspɜːrt] [ɛkˈspɜːrt], insert (n) [ɪnˈɜːrt] [ɪnˈɜːrt], etc; if not in Herbert [ˈhɜːbərt] [ˈhɜːbərt], concert (‘agreement’) [kənˈɜːrt] [kənˈɜːrt], etc. These phonetic notations are essentially taken from those found in LPD3, to which I have added the length mark, i.e. [s] and [ɾ̩] instead of [s] and [ɾ], respectively.

Problems similar to the one I raised above in connection with the occurrence of [ɾ̩] as in the notation [ˈlitr̩l] found in CPDBA do not seem to arise in cases where [l] is preceded by other consonants than [ɾ̩], as in [pl, bl, vl, ɬl, ɬl, ʃl, tʃl, ɬʃl, sl, zl].

\(^{37}\) According to LPD3, this second pronunciation is an alternative variant in BrE. Neither EPD18 nor CPDBA indicates this.
Each of these consonants is endowed with a degree of sonority inferior to that of \([l]\). The only exception consists therefore in the sequence \('[r] + [l]' which manifests itself as \([rl]\), not \([rl]\).

V. Other sources in connection with of \([r]\) in word-medial position

Let’s turn our attention now from CPDBA to some other sources of work. The occurrence of \([r]\) in word-medial position in English is also acknowledged in other dictionaries than CPDBA.

\textit{EPD14} (xxviii), if not earlier editions of \textit{EPD}, explicitly recognizes \([r]\) occurring in word-medial position. We read as follows.

\(\text{/'m}/\) is used less frequently, e.g. to show the alternatives /ˈmemər, ’memri, ’memri/ for \textit{memory}.

\textit{EPD15} (xiv), \textit{EPD16} (xiv), \textit{EPD17} (xiv) and \textit{EPD18} (xvii) write as follows.

Syllabic consonants are frequently found in English pronunciation […] the consonant alone (usually one of /m, n, ŋ, l, r/) is pronounced with the rhythmical value of a syllable.\textsuperscript{39}

\textit{EPD16} (522) and \textit{EPD17} (492), in ‘information panel’ on ‘syllabic consonant’, say:

[…] in English it appears to be possible either to pronounce /m n ŋ l r/ as syllabic consonants or to pronounce them with a preceding vowel […]

The same passage occurs in \textit{EPD17} (492) but not as part of the rubrique ‘information panel’ which seems to have been abandoned. The passage also occurs in \textit{EPD18} (576) in the newly created rubrique ‘Glossary’. In the passage just quoted, the example of \textit{history} [ˈhɪstərɪ] is given in which \([r]\) occurs in co-variation with \([ər]\) in word-medial position.

The above cited word \textit{memory} accordingly receives the following notation in \textit{EPD18} (312).

[ˈmem. ’rɪ, ’-rɪ] i.

\textsuperscript{38} It goes without saying that I object to /r\(\bar{\text{r}}\)/ with diagonal lines in this passage (it should be [rl]) as I do not recognize a phoneme in English notated as /r\(\bar{\text{r}}\)/ as distinct from /r\(\bar{\text{r}}\)/.

\textsuperscript{39} Whereupon \textit{EPD15} refers us to Roach (1991\textsuperscript{2}: 78-82), \textit{EPD16} and \textit{EPD17} to Roach (2000\textsuperscript{1}: 86-90), and \textit{EPD18} to Roach (2009\textsuperscript{1}: 68-71). In those pages, Roach treats of \([l]\), \([n]\), \([m]\), \([ŋ]\) and \([r]\). Roach (1983\textsuperscript{1}: 67-71) also treats of all these syllabic consonants, but \textit{EPD14} which was still under Gimson’s editorship, not Roach’s, does not refer to this source.
Gimson (2001; 208, 2008: 222) also recognizes the occurrence of [r] in word-medial position as follows:40

The /r/ in the sequence of /rl/ is frequently reduced in rapid speech by the elision of the schwa. This may leave non-syllabic /rl/ pre-vocally or it may result in a syllabic /rl/. Both are possible in conference, misery, camera, reverie, malingering, binary, commentary, memory, victory. …the elision of /rl/ in parrot, barrel may leave syllabic or non-syllabic /rl/…

No phonetic notations of the words cited in the above quoted passage when pronounced with [r] (in all the cases where [r] may occur in word-medial position) are actually given by Gimson (2001, 208, 2008: 222). It would be interesting to compare how such pronunciations are indicated in CPDBA, LPD3 and EPD18.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CPDBA</th>
<th>LPD3</th>
<th>EPD18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>conference</td>
<td>‘konfrns</td>
<td>‘kon pp主要从事’s</td>
<td>‘kon pp主要从事’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>camera</td>
<td>‘kæmˠə, -məɾə</td>
<td>‘kæm̩ˠə</td>
<td>‘kæm̩ˠə, ‘kæm rə</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reverie</td>
<td>‘revəɾi</td>
<td>‘rev əɾ ɨ</td>
<td>‘rev əɾ ɨ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>malingering</td>
<td>———</td>
<td>mə ˈlɪŋ ə ɾ ə</td>
<td>mə ˈlɪŋ ə ɾ ə</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>binary</td>
<td>———</td>
<td>‘bəm əɾ ɨ</td>
<td>‘bəm əɾ ɨ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commentary</td>
<td>‘koməntrə</td>
<td>‘kom ənt əɾ ɨ</td>
<td>‘kom ənt əɾ ɨ, -trə</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>memory</td>
<td>‘memərə, -məɾə</td>
<td>‘mem əɾ ɨ</td>
<td>‘mem əɾ ɨ, ‘-ɨ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>victory</td>
<td>‘viktəɾ, -təɾɪ</td>
<td>‘vikt əɾ ɨ</td>
<td>‘vikt əɾ ɨ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parrot</td>
<td>‘pərət</td>
<td>‘pərət</td>
<td>‘pərət</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>barrel</td>
<td>‘bərəl</td>
<td>‘bərəl</td>
<td>‘bərəl</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A phonetic notation like [‘kon fr主要从事’s] in LPD3 or [‘kon fr主要从事’s] in EPD18 is to be read as representing four different variant pronunciations, i.e. [‘konʃːɾənʃ] [‘konʃːɾənʃ], [‘konʃːɾənʃ] and [‘konʃːɾənʃ] (LPD3), or [‘konʃːɾənʃ] [‘konʃːɾənʃ], [‘konʃːɾənʃ] and [‘konʃːɾənʃ] (EPD18).

It may not be uninteresting to cite in this connection one more example, the variant pronunciations of veterinary, as recorded in LPD3, i.e. [‘vet əɾ ən ar əɾ ɨ] which is the primary variant, plus [‘vet in ar əɾ ɨ] and [‘vet əɾ ən ar əɾ ɨ] which are other (non-primary) variants. Potential additions of a schwa indicated by ‘ə’ and/or potential omissions of a schwa indicated by ‘ə’ in these variant pronunciations will result, among other things, in the occurrence of [r] in word-medial position. Also for veterinary, EPD18 records [‘vet əɾ ən əɾ ɨ] and [‘-ɾən əɾ-] while CPDBA indicates [‘vetməɾə] (sic) (rechte [‘vetməɾə]) as the preferred (primary?) variant and [‘vetnəɾɪ] and [‘vetnəɾɪ] as other variants which, I understand, according to CPDBA, are not preferred but need not be avoided.

40 The passage to be quoted below did not occur yet in Gimson (1994), to say nothing of Gimson (1989) or any earlier editions.
It might be supposed prima facie that, of the words cited further above, parrot and barrel are something of an exception in that in parrot, [r] would not occur since the schwa would be unelidable while, in barrel, [r] does not occur (but [r] does) when the elidable schwa is actually elided and, consequently, there occurs [r] (hence [ˈbærl] which CPDBA notates [ˈbærI]).

VI. The occurrence of [r] (as well as [r̩]) before a consonant

In the light of what we read in the passage quoted above from Gimson (20016: 208, 20087: 222), two points interest us.

(i) There results from the elision of the schwa either a non-syllabic [r] or a syllabic [r̩] before a vowel; e.g. [ˈkæmrə] or [ˈkæmr].

(ii) Either a non-syllabic [r] or a syllabic [r̩] may occur before a consonant; [ˈpært] or [ˈpɛrt], [ˈbærl] or [ˈbærI].

The occurrence of either [r] or [r̩] relates to word-medial position.

Further remarks are made by Gimson (20016: 236, 20087: 250) on this point as follows:

A more recent development concerns the sequence /r/ + weak vowel + C [my italic] in which the weak vowel may be elided, leaving a preconsonantal (possibly syllabic) /r/ (even though /r/ does not normally occur before a consonant in RP), e.g. barracking /ˈbærknɪŋ/, Dorothy /ˈdɒrθɪ/, pterodactyl /ˈtɛrədæktɪl/.

As [r] (as well as [r̩]) may be said to occur before a consonant, it follows that the above example words are presumably pronounced [ˈbærknɪŋ] as well as [ˈbærkn], [ˈdɔrθɪ] as well as [ˈdɔrθ], and [ˈtɛrədæktɪl] as well as [ˈtɛrədæktɪl]. Whether [r] or [r̩] occurs in all these words has impact on the number of the constituent syllables of the words in question. For example, [ˈbærknɪŋ] are trisyllabic while [ˈbærkn] is disyllabic.

The phenomenon of ‘[r]/[r̩] + C’ exemplified above has no doubt repercussion on a small area of phonotactics of English, notably in (if only) non-RP and at least in rapid speech.

The source of the information about the phenomenon ‘[r]/[r̩] + C’ is found in a paper by Windsor Lewis (1979)41 which is rightly referred to in a footnote by Gimson (20016: 236; 20087: 250). Given that, as I write these lines in 2013, thirty-odd years have elapsed since the publication of Windsor-Lewis’s paper, it seems reasonable to

---

41 The updated version of this paper can be found in Windsor Lewis’s blog, Home Page, in 3. English Language, 4. Pre-Consonantal /r/ in General British Pronunciation.
suppose that the phenomenon ‘[r]/[r] + C’ is fairly widespread and attestable even in RP in our days.

Windsor Lewis (1979) reminds us that Jones (1949: §755) says that

In non-dialectal Southern English... no r-sound is ever used finally or before a consonant, except occasionally when a is elided.42

To judge from his wording in the above passage, it appears that Jones does not necessarily deny the phenomenon of ‘[r]/[r] + C’ attested in dialectal English speech.

Jones (§755 in 19609, 19629, 19649) says that

Exceptionally r occurs before n and l in one pronunciation of words like barren 'bærn, quarrel 'kwɔrəl (more usually 'bærən, 'kwɔrəl).’

As for ‘C’ before which [r]/[r] may occur (I will conveniently indicated [r]/[r] by means of [r]), Windsor Lewis enumerates a fair number of ‘C’ with pertinent example words, among them [t] ([’tɛrti, [k] ([’lɛktʃəl], [f] ([’ɡlɔːrəd]), [s] ([’m bærəŋ], [dʒ] ([’m kɔrdʒəbl], [l] ([’bærəl], [’kwɔrəl], [’hæərlə], [r] ([’terərəst, [’laβrəri], [’fɛbrəri]), [n] ([’fɔrənə, [’aʊrəni], and [’bærən] which Windsor Lewis doubtlessly acknowledges without citing it as an example word), and [n] ([’kærəml]).

In addition to the consonants mentioned above, the other consonants that Windsor Lewis refers to are: [p], [b], [tʃ], [θ], [ʃ], [h], [d], [g], [v], [ʊ], [z], [ŋ], [w] and [j].43 It seems then that, according to Windsor Lewis, nearly the whole gamut of English consonants can occur after [r] in the phenomenon ‘[r]/[r] + C’. The absence of [ʒ] in his data of examples may or may not be accidental. How about garaging

---

42 This passage recurs in Jones (19649: §755) – the 9th is the last edition of this work by Jones – where the phrase ‘In this type of English’ equivalently replaces ‘In non-dialectal Southern English’ which already appears in Jones (1949: §755).

43 Those cases that involve [j] seem somewhat strange to me. Example words Windsor Lewis cites include [’kærən] carrying (for [j]) and [’brərn] borrowing (for [w]), in which [i] of [’kærən] carry changes to [j] and [oʊ] of [’brən] changes to [w].
['gærʒɪŋ]/[ˈgærʒɪŋ] < ['gærʒɪŋ]44 All the consonants mentioned above plus [w] and [j] – even though [w] and [j] are articulatorily non-consonantal – can alternatively be characterized as ‘non-vowels’.

In the light of what Gimson (20016: 236, 20087: 250) says in the passage quoted above and what Windsor Lewis says, we understand that what is indicated as /r/ in the formulation ‘/r/ + weak vowel + C’, can be [r] or [r] as the case may be. For instance, camera, cited by Gimson may be pronounced [ˈkæmrə] or [ˈkæmrə] or, authority cited by Windsor Lewis may be pronounced [ˈɔθɜrɪ] or [ˈɔθɜrɪ] and electrical also cited by Windsor Lewis may be pronounced [ˈɪlektʃrə] (he says that [r] is actually devoiced in this phonetic context, [t–k]) and possibly also [ˈɪlektʃrə] with [r].

The occurrence of alternative pronunciations with [r] or [r̩] of words such as those cited above results in different numbers of constituent syllables of individual words, the one with [r] (e.g. [ˈkæmrə]) being one syllable fewer than the one with [r̩] ([ˈkæmrə]).

When I sought Windsor Lewis’s thoughts about Jespersen’s view that [r] (but not [r̩]) occurs only prevocally in what Jespersen (19505: 30) termed ‘Modern English’, he said that Jespersen was probably being ‘pedagogical’. This is not surprising. Jespersen’s view was expressed in print in 1912 (he surely entertained such a view even before that date) and what he termed ‘Modern English’ in his writing was such as related to what was later to be labelled by Jones as ‘Received Pronunciation’. Much time passed from 1912 till Windsor Lewis published his paper of 1979 about the phenomenon of ‘/r/ + weak vowel + C’ in what he described as ‘contemporary General British pronunciation’ and what Gimson (20016: 236, 20087: 250) considered as ‘a more recent development’.

Jones (19497: §755) first saying that ‘In non-dialectal Southern English…no r-sound is ever used finally or before a consonant’ is reminiscent of and is in keeping with Jespersen’s (19505: 130) remark I have quoted further above (168) in which he categorically negates the occurrence of [r] before a consonant as well as in final position. Also, Jones’s qualifying additional statement (19497: §755) that ‘Exceptionally r occurs before n and l in one pronunciation of words like barren and quarrel…’ corresponds to the phenomenon ‘/r/ + weak vowel + C’.

At the end of my lengthy discussion of the occurrence of [r] and [r] in connection with Windsor Lewis’s various statements on this and other subjects, it is only fair for me to put here on record my own understanding of his position on this matter, and his agreement with it. Here follows the contents of the letters exchanged between us on 22 October 2012. I wrote:

---

44 [ˈgærəz] or (for that matter) [ˈgærəz]}, with [ə] instead of [i], are not entered in any of LPD, EPD and CPDBA. If so, this is the only example I have encountered in which [r] co-varies with [ər] rather than [ər].
My general understanding is as follows.

(1)...

(2) Where you do employ the diacritic for syllabicity placed under a consonant symbol (e.g. your notation of literal for which you put the diacritic under r, thus ṭ), the reader should NOT understand that the notation ṭ necessarily indicates only the syllabic as it implicitly represents either [t] (non-syllabic) or [ṭ] (syllabic), depending on the phonetic surroundings. Thus, your notation ṭlɪtr, for example, actually stands for either [ʼlɪtr] (i.e. non-syllabic [r] followed by syllabic [l]) or [ʼlɪt̩r] (i.e. syllabic [r] followed by syllabic [l]), though this latter may not normally occur.

(3) I agree with you that the notation ṭlɪtrl is adequate without a syllabicity mark under [l], according to your notational convention. Do I understand right? Or do you still disagree?

Windsor Lewis replied:

Your understanding is perfectly in accord with mine.

VII. The occurrence of [r̩] in word-medial position according to Mora Bonilla (2003)

Mora Bonilla (2003: 98) also admits the occurrence of [r̩] in word-medial position and gives examples such as the following. Many of the examples are those that occur in fast or casual speech, examples that are unlikely to be given in EPD18, LPD3 and CPDBA which do not set out to record those occurring in fast or casual speech.


Notice that there is no accent mark in the phonetic notations for correct and terrific, for which Mora Bonilla mentions ‘pre-tonic syllabic consonant’. Should the phonetic notations in question rather be [krɛkt] and [trɪfɪk] If so, are they likely to occur in fast or casual speech?

VIII. The occurrence of [r̩] in word-medial position according to Toft (2002)

It is not clear if Toft (2002: 112) recognizes the occurrence of [r̩] in (southern) BrE in word-medial position, as she says:

In semi-formal registers /r/, /l/ and /t/ may be syllabic, the latter only in some rhotic dialects [my italics].
IX. The occurrence of [r] in word-medial position according to Szigetvári (2002: 140, 143)

Szigetvári acknowledges the occurrence of [r] and gives examples such as the following. The phonetic notations are Szigetvári’s in which no accent marks are found.


X. The occurrence of [r] in word-final position

So far I have discussed the occurrence of [r] in word-medial position. We now turn our attention to the occurrence of [r] in word-final position.

[r] is generally not considered to occur in word-final position in BrE. For example, cadre is notated as [ˈkɑːdr] (LPD3), [ˈkɑːdrə, -drə] (EPD18) and [ˈkɑːdrə] (CPDBA). LPD3 and EPD18 thus indicate two pronunciations for this word.

Note that the downsized superscripted ‘‘ in [ˈkɑːːdrə] in EPD18 stands for the so-called ‘‘linking r’’ and not rhotacization of the schwa, i.e. [ə], and therefore [ˈkɑːːdrə] is equivalent to [ˈkɑːːdr] when cadre is pronounced preconsonantally or prepausally. The use of the italic schwa ‘‘ in [ˈkɑːːdrə] in EPD18 is puzzling, apart from the fact that the italic schwa ‘‘ is not expected to be used in EPD18 as well as EPD15, EPD16 and EPD17. Should we understand ‘‘ to be ‘‘ (as in e.g. Linda [ˈlɪndə] in which the schwa cannot be elided anyway)? Or should we understand that ‘‘ stands for an optional (i.e. elidable) schwa, in which case we expect to see ‘‘ (as in e.g. button [ˈbʌtn]) rather than ‘‘? If an optional schwa is un-elided, [ˈkɑːdrə] will be interpreted as [ˈkɑːdrə] but if it is elided, [ˈkɑːdrə] will be interpreted as [ˈkɑːdr].

It is in EPD11 that cadre is for the first time notated as [kɑːdr] (without an accent mark for the first syllable, which consequently implies a monosyllabic pronunciation) as the primary variant, with [ˈkɑːdrə] as the secondary variant and [ˈkɛdri] (as the third variant?). In EPD12, the order of [kɑːdr] and [ˈkɑːdrə] is reversed ([ˈkɛdri] stays in its former position) and this remains so in EPD13, but EPD14 lists [ˈkɑːdrə], [ˈkɑːdrə] (this replaces [kɑːdr]) and [ˈkɛdri] in this order. EPD15 brings in some change, giving [ˈkɑːdrə], [klei-], [-drə], which EPD16, EPD17 and EPD18 retain. The occurrence of [dr] (as well as [tr] in word-final position, is generally not recognized.

45 See supra fn. 27.
46 See e.g. Gimson (1962: 166, 1979: 171, 1980: 172, 1989: 173) and Gimson (1994: 157, 2001: 172, 2008: 182) where the possibilities of occurrence of various affricates including [tr] and [dr] in different contexts are presented in a chart. [tr] and [dr] are shown there as not occurring in word-final position, but both as occurring in word-initial position (as in tram and dram) and in word-
CPDBA, in addition to [ˈkədr], indicates [ˈkədr] with the note ‘with unsyllabic [CPDBA’s italics] r’. It would seem, however, that [r] is implicitly acknowledged to occur here (note the accent mark) despite the note ‘with unsyllabic r’, and that [ˈkədr] is actually equivalent to [ˈkədr̩], a disyllabic pronunciation, for, if not, the accent mark ‘ ’ would be out of place for a monosyllabic word.

The word Sartre is notated as [ˈsɑː trə] or [ˈsəː trə] in LPD3. It is notated [ˈsəː trə] (notice again the use of the italic schwa ‘ə’ which in my opinion should be ‘ə’) in EPD18. Does this mean that the word is pronounced [ˈsəː trə] or [ˈsəː trə]? If so, why not notate [ˈsəː tr̩ə]? The notation [ˈsəː tr̩ə] would be strange since there is no question of a voiceless [r̩] occurring in [səː tr̩ə] constituting a syllable and yet the accent mark is present. CPDBA does not enter this word.

In notating [ʒɔːr] for genre – the only pronunciation recorded in CPDBA for this word – coupled with the note ‘non-syllabic r’, CPDBA signals a monosyllabic pronunciation in which [r] does not occur. For genre, LPD3 notates [ʒɔn ɾə], and EPD18 [ʒɔn ɾə]. For entendre, LPD3 notates [ɛn ɾən ɾə] (in the expression *double entendre*), and EPD18 [ɛn ɾən ɾə] as a separate entry while CPDBA does not record this word, either as a separate entry or in the expression *double entendre*.

It is not impossible to consider that, in AmE, [ɾ̩] occurs in word-final position if [ɾ̩] is seen in terms of [ɚ] (a rhotacized schwa which is syllabic).47 Kenyon & Knott (1951) enters [ˈkaː drə] cadre, but [ˈ3ən ɾə] genre. They do not enter entendre.

As will have been clearly seen, the question of a possible occurrence of [ɾ] in word-final position concerns the anglicized pronunciation of French words or French loanwords whose spelling ends with -re. French loanwords that are fully integrated into English such as *calibre* (caliber), *sabre* (saber) and *macabre* (macaber) are extraneous to the question as -re (-er) is pronounced with [ə] (or [ɚ] in AmE). The spelling -re in such words is English while that with -er is American.

This brings almost to a close my lengthy remarks about the question of [ɾ] in word-medial position. There will, however, be occasional further references to [ɾ] in the following pages.

**Successive occurrence of syllabic consonants**

Practically all the words cited and discussed in this paper up to now are such that each word involves a single occurrence of a syllabic consonant.

---

Mora Bonilla (2003: 98 fn. 1) cites a few examples (said to occur in fast speech) in which two syllabic consonants occur consecutively, e.g. [ˈdʒenr̩] general, [ˈɔːnr̩] ordinary and [ˈvetnr̩] veterinary, quoting (Brown 1990²: 75) and (Roach 1991²: 82 [= 2000³: 90, 2009⁴: 71]).

Roach (1983¹: 71, 1991²: 82, 2000³: 90, 2009⁴: 71) cites a few words in which two successive syllabic consonants occur, word-finally or word-medially.


Word-medially  [ˈvɪʒn̩r̩] visionary

We recall another notation of national earlier presented, viz.

[ˈnæʃn̩l] corresponds to the pronunciation of national when [n], [ɔ] and [ə] all turn into [n̩] and [l̩], respectively, except that [ˈnæʃn̩l] turns not into [ˈnæʃn̩l] but into [ˈnæʃn̩l] in which [n] occurs and there occurs only one syllabic consonant [l̩].

In connection with [ˈlɪtr̩l], we recall CPDBA's notation [ˈlɪtr̩l] which we have discussed at some length. [ˈlɪtr̩l] is actually equivalent to [ˈlɪtr̩l]. As for [ˈdʒenr̩l] general, CPDBA notates [ˈdʒenr̩l].

EPD18's notation of visionary is [ˈvɪʒn̩r̩i], which corresponds to [ˈvɪʒn̩r̩i], [ˈvɪʒn̩r̩i], [ˈvɪʒn̩r̩i]. Roach indicates [ˈvɪʒn̩r̩i] (see above).

In connection with [ˈvɪʒn̩r̩i], we may recall LPD3’s notation of veterinary as [ˈvetn̩r̩n̩r̩i] (primary variant), and [ˈvetn̩n̩r̩i] and [ˈvetn̩n̩r̩i] (non-primary variants). If [ɛ] and [n] both turn into [r̩] and [n], respectively, the primary variant will turn into [ˈvetnr̩r̩i] and the two non-primary variants into [ˈvetnr̩r̩i] and [ˈvetnr̩r̩i]. The primary variant will have three successive syllabic consonants ([r̩r̩]) and the two non-primary variants will have one syllabic consonant ([r̩]) and two successive syllabic consonants ([n̩r̩]), respectively.

It is not clear which of the potential syllabic consonants occurring in words such as cited above will turn into actual syllabic consonants. The number of actual syllabic consonants may differ in different speakers’ pronunciation of the words.

Let’s first consider [ˈvetn̩r̩n̩r̩i]. There are three potential syllabic consonants in this word, i.e. [n̩], [n̩n̩] and [n̩r̩]. There are in principle eight different actualizations of the three potential syllabic consonants. They are as follows. Shown within parentheses is the number of actual syllabic consonants in the different pronunciations.
1. [ər], [ən], [ər] (0)
2. [ər], [ən], [r̩] (1)
3. [ər], [n̩], [ər] (1)
4. [ər], [n̩], [r̩] (2)
5. [r̩], [ən], [ər] (1)
6. [r̩], [ən], [r̩] (2)
7. [r̩], [n̩], [ər] (2)
8. [r̩], [n], [r] (3).

Of the 8 versions indicated above, 4, 7 and 8 represent occurrences of successive syllabic consonants, i.e two (4, 7) or three (8). Two syllabic consonants occur in 6 but they are not consecutive.

Some of the actual syllabic consonants listed above may or may not occur in different speakers’ pronunciation of *veterinary*. It is unpredictable which of such pronunciations shown above may be used by different speakers on different occasions. Nor is it completely clear to listeners which pronunciation a speaker has used on a particular occasion. In this connection Roach (1983¹: 71, 1991²: 82, 2000³: 90, 2009⁴: 71) makes interesting remarks as follows. I will quote his words at some length.

It is important to remember that it is often not possible to say with certainty whether a speaker has pronounced a syllabic consonant, a non-syllabic consonant or a non-syllabic consonant plus a. For example, the word ‘veteran’ given above could be pronounced in other ways than *vetn*. An RP speaker⁴⁸ might instead say *vetr̩n, vetən* or *vətr̩n*.

*EPD*¹⁸ notates [ˈvet.ən, -r̩n] for *veteran*, which should correspond to [ˈvetən, ’vetən, ’vetən, ’vetən], though Roach, in his above quoted passage, leaves out [ˈvetən], a case of two successive syllabic consonants. Note that *vətr̩n (= [ˈvetr̩n])* that Roach instances in the above quoted passage results from the elision of the schwa between [t] and [r] *without producing [r]* and is therefore a case of ‘compression’.

Straight after the above quoted passage, Roach goes on to make interesting remarks about the relation between phonetic notation and varied pronunciations such as he is concerned with here.

The transcription makes it look as if the difference between these words was clear; it is not. In examining colloquial English it is often more or less a matter of arbitrary choice how one transcribes such a word. Transcription has the unfortunate tendency to make things seem simple and more clear-cut than they really are.

---

⁴⁸ The expression ‘An RP speaker’ occurs in Roach (1983¹: 71, 1991²: 82) but is replaced by the expression ‘A BBC speaker’ in Roach (2000³: 90, 2009⁴: 71).
Non-syllabic consonants preceded by a vowel other than the schwa

Words that involve syllabic consonants may have alternative pronunciations in which vowels other than a schwa plus a non-syllabic consonant occur, for instance, [ɪ] in e.g. *axil* [ˈæksl, ə-] which has [-ɪ] as well (LPD3) or [ʊ] in e.g. *awful* ['əʊf əl, -əl] which has [ʊ] as well (LPD3).

I checked the occurrence of [ɪ] in word-final [ɪl] that co-varies with word-final [ʊ]. This is how I went about my investigation. I consulted a rhyming dictionary\textsuperscript{49} to obtain a list of all words ending with -il (anvil, axil, April, etc.). 66 words in all, which were whittled down to 47 for my investigation.\textsuperscript{50} They were then checked for me to see as to how LPD3 and EPD18 indicate the alternative pronunciations, i.e. [ɪ], of these words. It goes without saying that the syllable [ɪ] or [ʊ] must be preceded by a syllable with an accented vowel, so that words like *fulfil* and *mil* did not qualify for my investigation. The results were as follows.

(i) Words with [ɪl] as the only form (e.g. *anvil*,\textsuperscript{51} apostil,\textsuperscript{52} codicil, daffodil, fusil,\textsuperscript{53} nihil, orchil, pistil, postil,\textsuperscript{54} strigil, tormentil,\textsuperscript{55} tranquil,\textsuperscript{56} tranquill,\textsuperscript{57} tranquil*,*). The order of the two variants is the exact reverse of that in EPD18.

(ii) Words with [ɪl] as the primary variant and [ʊ] as the other variants (e.g. *anvil, anvil*,\textsuperscript{58} axil, cherivil,\textsuperscript{59} dentil, fibril,\textsuperscript{60} jonquil,\textsuperscript{61} lentil,\textsuperscript{62} Tamil,\textsuperscript{63} tumbril,\textsuperscript{64} vigil,\textsuperscript{65}).

(iii) Words with [ɪl] as the third variant and [ʊ] as the first and second variants (e.g. *April, basil/Basil, cavil, cherivil, civil, council, devil*,\textsuperscript{66} evil, fossil, imperil, lentil).\textsuperscript{67}

\textsuperscript{49} Walker (1942). I own a copy of this dictionary in my private collection. I have inherited this copy from the late Peter (Arthur Desmond) MacCarthy who scribbled ‘P. MacCarthy Dec 1943’ on the flyleaf. It could be any of the four reprints available previous to 1943.\textsuperscript{50} Of the 66 words, 19 are not entered in LPD3 or EPD18 or in either. As a result a total of 47 words remained to be checked.

\textsuperscript{51} According to EPD18. LPD3 lists [ɪl] and [ʊ], hence three co-variants.

\textsuperscript{52} This word is entered in EPD18 but not in LPD3.

\textsuperscript{53} This word is entered in EPD18 but not in LPD3.

\textsuperscript{54} This word is entered in EPD18 but not in LPD3.

\textsuperscript{55} This word is entered in LPD3 but not in EPD18.

\textsuperscript{56} This word is entered as being pronounced [ˈtræŋk wəl, -wəl] in LPD3 but [ˈtræŋk,wəl] in EPD18. According to LPD3, this word belongs to (ii). According to EPD18, this word belongs to (i).

\textsuperscript{57} According to LPD3. According to EPD18, this word belongs to (i).

\textsuperscript{58} According to EPD18. According to LPD3, this word belongs to (ii).

\textsuperscript{59} [ˈfærl, -rəl] (LPD3), [fər,brə, -brəl] (EPD18). According to EPD18, this word does not involve [ɪl].

\textsuperscript{60} This word is entered as being pronounced [ˈdʌŋk wəl, -wəl] in LPD3 and [ˈdʌŋk,wəl, -wəl] in EPD18.

\textsuperscript{61} [ˈlənt l, -l] according to LPD3. The order of the two variants is the exact reverse of that in LPD3 and EPD18.

\textsuperscript{62} According to EPD18, but according to LPD3 this word belongs to (iii).

\textsuperscript{63} Spelled in this way in EPD18 only, which also enters a variant spelling *tambrel* for which only [-brə] is given.

\textsuperscript{64} [ˈvɪdʒ ɪl, -əl] (LPD3), [ˈvɪdʒə əl, -əl] (EPD18).
nostril, pencil, peril, pistil, pupil, stencil, Tamil,68 tendril,69 tonsil, tumbril/tumbril,70 utensil, until,71 vigil, weevil).

I also checked the occurrence of [u] in word-final [ul] that co-varies with word-final [‘ul]. I again consulted the afore-mentioned rhyming dictionary to obtain a list of all words ending with -ul (armful, artful, etc.). There were a total of 179 words, which were whittled down to 141 for my investigation.72 I then checked how LPD3 and EPD18 indicate the alternative pronunciations, i.e. [ul, ‘ul]. All the words ending with -ful that I obtained have the suffix -ful. The only word among those I checked that does not end with -ful is mogul/Mogul. The results of my investigation were as follows.

(i) [ul] as the only form (e.g. armful, basinful, bellyful, boxful, brimful(1)),73 bucketful, capful, cupful, glassful, handful, mouthful, paifful, panful, plateful, pocketful, potful, prayerful, sackful, showful, spadeful, spoonful, thimbleful.

(ii) Significantly, no words were found with [ul] as the first and second variants and ['ul] as the other variants.

(iii) [ul] as the third variant with ['ul] as the first and second variants (e.g. artful, avful,74 bagful, baleful, baneful, bashful, beautiful, boastful, bountiful, changeful,75 careful,

---

68 According to LPD3. But according to EPD18, this word belongs to (ii).
69 According to LPD3. [-ul] is not recorded for this word in EPD18, so that this word belongs to none of (i), (ii) and (iii).
70 According to EPD18. According to LPD3, this word belongs to (ii).
71 According to LPD3. According to EPD18, this word belongs to (ii).
72 This word is entered as being pronounced ['tendr əl, -ɻl] in LPD3 and ['tend.r1, -dr1] in EPD18. Therefore this word belongs to (iii) according to both LPD3 and EPD18. Notice that syllable boundary for this word is indicated at different places in the two dictionaries. A short summary of different syllabifications in English words in EPD18 and LPD3 is given in ‘Tutorial: THE SYLLABLE’ on the internet at www.personal.rdg.ac.uk/~llsroach/phon2/mitko/syllable.htm, which can alternatively be visited by typing ‘Roach, the syllable’ in the bar.
73 LPD3 lists these two variant spellings, tumbril and tumbril, in this order as a single conjoined headword and indicates both [brəl] as the first and second variants and [brɪl] as the third variant for both tumbril and tumbril, which therefore belong to (iii) according to LPD3. On the other hand, EPD18 enters tumbril and tumbril as two separate successive headwords in this order and indicates only ['təm.brɪəl] for tumbril and no third variant with [ul] – therefore this word belongs to none of (i), (ii) and (iii) according to EPD18 – and ['təm.brɪəl, -brɪəl] for tumbril, which therefore belongs to (ii), according to EPD18.
74 Both LPD3 and EPD18 indicate the occurrence of only [ul] for this word. For this reason, this word is not involved in any co-variation with [əl] and [l] and belongs to (i). This done, LPD3 (864) adds the remark: ‘– also occasionally, in STRESS SHIFT ENVIRONMENTS (until ‘now), ‘ən təl’. EPD18 (523) appends a Note to the same effect, saying: ‘There is an occasional form /əntəl/, -əl/ in stress-shift environments (e.g. until death), but this is rare.’, so in this case this word belongs to (ii).
75 Of the 179 words, 38 are not entered in LPD3 or in EPD18 or in either. As a result the total of 141 words remained to be checked.
76 This word is pronounced ['brɪm.fəl] as indicated in both LPD3 and EPD18.
the other, the sense of ‘characterized’ are too distinct in the usage of English speakers for them to be lost.

The occurrence of [ə́l] as the first and second variants and that of [ɑːl] as the third variant in (iii) where a large number of words are attested is interesting. It may be conjectured that, as the sense of ‘characterized by’ is progressively diminished in the speaker’s mind, the change occurs in which the quality of a full vowel [ɑː] is weakened to a schwa, which is then elidable, i.e. [ɑːl] > [əl] > [ɪə]

I have referred above to the link between just two vowel letters (i.e. i and u) and the occurrence of [i] and [u], respectively, in words that involve syllabic consonant [l]. I dispense with investigating on similar lines the link between the letters e, a and o and the occurrence of [ɔː], that is, in el (e.g. bushel, lintel, rondel) or le (e.g. bottle, mettle, idle); in al (e.g. hospital, mammal, metal); and in ol (e.g. gambol, idol, pistol).80

There are a few exceptional cases in which a special relationship exists between vowel letters and syllabic consonants that differs from that indicated above (i) to (v)).

For example, with the letter o, Capitol (cf. Capitol Hill), for example, is pronounced [ˈkæp ɪt l, -təl] (LPD3). (Only [ˈkæp.təl:] is given in EPD18 and [ˈkæptrl] (= [ˈkæptrl]) in CPDBA.). However, in the case of e.g. atoll, which is pronounced [ˈætʊl] ([təl] (LPD3, EPD18, CPDBA) but not [ɔːl], [əl] is the only pronunciation. Similarly, in words like benzol, parasol, phenol, etc. which have [ɔː] (corresponding to the letter o) in [ɔːl] in the unaccented syllables, [ɔːl] does not co-vary with [ə́l] or [ɑːl].

As for the letter a, this corresponds in principle to the schwa in [ə́l] which are the first and second variants with no further variant. However, there are a few exceptions like Neanderthal [niˈændə ʊl, -əl] (LPD3) or [niˈændəl, -əl] (EPD18). Thus [əl] or [ɔːl] are presented as the first variant while [ə́l] as the second (in LPD3) and the third variant (in EPD18).

Another example is Rosenthal (i) [ˈrəʊz θəl, -ˌθəl] and (ii) [ˈrəʊθəl] (LPD3) or [ˈrəʊθəl] (EPD18). The notations given by LPD3 and EPD18 are interestingly different from each other. LPD3 indicates different pronunciations in respect of two different individuals who bear this name ((i), (ii)). One of the pronunciations is such that [θəl] is the first variant and [ˈθəl] the second and third variants. Note that [θəl] is not indicated for (i). The other pronunciation is such that [əl] is the only pronunciation for (ii). On the other hand, EPD18 indicates [-θəl] and [-əl] as two alterna-

80 As already said towards the end of fn. 24, I personally always pronounce all such words with [ɪ], not with [əl].
81 I believe that [niˈændəl] in EPD18 should rather be [niˈændəl]. See [niˈændə].
tive pronunciations of equal status, so that either [ʌːl] or [ɔːl] is the only pronunciation. [3] which LPD3 indicates for (i) (but not for (ii)) is not shown in EPD18. I conjecture that much the same variety exists for -thal in Lilienthal (not entered in either LPD3 or EPD18) as it does for -thal in Neanderthal and Rosenthal. The variety in the pronunciations for -thal in Rosenthal (and most possibly in Lilienthal) in English is not surprising since these are German anthronyms. As for Neanderthal, it has a somewhat complicated etymology but also derives ultimately from a German anthronym (Joachim Neander). In all these examples, -thal derives from Tal ‘valley’. As Tal is pronounced with [aː] in German (not [aːl]), the rendition of -thal in English with [aːl] in these words of German origin is nearest to the autochthonous pronunciation, and the process of anglicization is seen in [aːl] > [aːl] > [ɔːl] > [3]. We also see that [l] along with [ɔːl] is the commonest rendition of -al in -thal in these words (as in lethal, zenithal, betrothal, azimuthal).

In a large number of words there are no vowel letters to correspond to the elid- able schwa. Some examples are as follows: axolotl82, bos’ibo’s’n83, logarithm, rhythm, and a large number of words whose spelling ends with -ism like catechism, cephalism, communism, criticism, cynicism, iodism, prism, realism, scepticism, schism, syllogism, snobbism, vocalism, witticism, etc.

### The occurrence of the syllabic consonants in word-initial context

I said earlier that syllabic consonants do not occur in word-initial position. However, such examples as had a lot [hædəlʊt], had another [hædənˈðə] and good enough [gʊd ˈnʌf] (in this example Wells puts a space between [gʊd] and [ˈnʌf]) pronounced with the elision of the schwa are given in Wells’s blog (21 December 2011). Note that he happens not to put any accent marks in these examples. In giving these examples, Wells says:

> For syllabic consonants in initial position, all I can offer are cases such as had a lot, had another if pronounced with no schwa…

If Wells had put the accent marks, he would probably have notated the above examples as follows: [hæd ˈnʊt], [hædˈnʌðə] and [ˈgʊd ˈnʌf] (as he was supposed to be exemplifying cases in which the syllabic consonants occur in word-initial position) rather than [hædˈnʊt], [hædˈnʌðə] and [ˈgʊd ˈnʌf]. If we are to go along with Wells’s supposed notation in which we added the accent marks, we would understand that,

---

82 In Spanish, axolotl is a scientific name for a certain kind of water animal which is normally called ajolote [aˈxoˈlote] in Spanish. The English word axolotl ‘one type of salamander’ (< Sp. axolotl < Nāhuatl āxōlōtl (singular) or āxōlōmēh (‘water monster’) is pronounced [ˌæksəˈlʊt], ‘-’ - - - - ] (LPD3), [ˌækəs əˈlʊt, ’-’ - - - - ] (EPD18).

83 This example is somewhat suspect purely from an orthographical point of view, but it is nevertheless listed here. LPD3 gives [ˈbɔːs ˈn] and EPD18 [ˈbɔːs:ˈn], that is, the same pronunciation.
Unlike any examples of syllabic consonants occurring in word-medial or word-final position (which we have seen up to now), examples of syllabic consonants occurring in word-initial position show that these syllabic consonants occur in accented syllables and, as a consequence, it would seem justified to talk about ‘word-initial position’ since ‘[n] = [ʌn]’ corresponds to e.g. an- of another and en-of enough. It would seem that ‘[l] = [ɔl]’ in [hæd’lɔt]/[ hæd ‘lɔt] corresponds to a l- of a lot and may not point to the occurrence of [l] in word-initial position. Actually, Wells’s supposed notation in question is in contradiction with his own notation when, at an earlier date, Wells (1995: 409) gives a few other examples as follows: get along [ˈɡe t]ŋ], write another [ˌra tɪŋ]ʌð and better not [ˌbɛ t]ŋ]t. This notation is in keeping with the well-known fact that a syllabic consonant is always preceded by a syllable containing an accented vowel and is uncontroversially acceptable. The syllabic consonants [l] in [ˈɡe t]ŋ] and [ŋ] in [ˌra tɪŋ]ʌð], to which we can add [ˌhæd’lɔt], [ˌhæd’lʌð] and [ˌɡɒd n’ʌf] (my notation, not Wells’s), do occur in word-initial position. However, [ŋ] in [ˌbɛ t]ŋ]t] cannot be said to occur in word-initial position as the elided schwa which is the final segment of [ˈbɛtə] belongs to better.

Does a syllabic consonant occur in initial position of an utterance? One such example may be [ŋʃ-ʃ]tʃi < [θɛn ʃ]kju] thank you! when said with a rising tune. In connection with this example, I should perhaps also mention the syllabic consonant [ʃ] in [ʃk jʊ] which occurs in one of the variant pronunciations of thank you! when said with a rising tune.

---

84 I wish to point out, however, that a non-standard single form alot (< a + lot), pronounced like allot, has often been witnessed in our days. Fowler (1996: 45) mentions allot occurring in informal correspondence in AmE. I myself have sometimes noticed its occurrence on the internet. If so, [l] in [hæd’lɔt]/[ hæd ‘lɔt] can be regarded as occurring in word-initial position.

85 Cf. Jones (fn. 27 to §1065 and fn. 1 to §909 in 1960, 1962, 1964). Curiously, Jones puts [ŋʃ-ʃ]kju] in the verbal explanation, i.e. with secondary accent mark against [ŋ], but primary accent mark in the accompanying intonation pattern, thus [ŋʃ-ʃ]kju]. Previous editions (including 1950 and 1966) have [ŋʃ-ʃ]kju] (with primary accent) in both the verbal explanation and the intonation pattern. Be this as it may, I do not think that this difference between primary accent and secondary accent for [ŋ] in question has any significant auditory effect in [ŋʃ-ʃ]kju] (Thank you!) said with a rising tune.

86 Cf. Jones (fn. 27 to §1065 and fn. 1 to §909 in 1960, 1962, 1964). In particular, Jones (fn. 1 to §909 in 1960, 1962, 1964) unambiguously uses the expression ‘a syllabic k’ for the first [k] in [ˈkkɔ] and actually adds a syllabic diacritic, thus [ˈkkɔ]. Exactly the same indication occurs in Jones (1956), though I have been unable to confirm the first occurrence of the indication in (an) earlier edition(s).

87 LPDS (817) says: ‘There are also casual forms such as ˈhɛŋk ju, ˈŋk ju’. Note that a diacritic for the syllabicity for [ŋ] is not specifically employed in ˈŋk ju’.
Compression

A few words are in order at this point about what is called ‘syncope’ which corresponds to one of the types of ‘compression’.

A syllabic consonant (e.g. [l] in [ˈmɛt]) co-varies with ‘[ə] + non-syllabic consonant’ ([ə] in [ˈmɛt]). However, this may not always be the case. For example, co-variation [l] ~ [əl] occurs in *hustle*, but *hustling* may be pronounced in such a way that [ˈhʌlsəln] (with [l]) may co-vary with [ˈhʌlsəln] (with [l]), in other words, [l] ~ [l].\footnote{[ˈhʌlsəln] also occurs (what Windsor Lewis describes as a fussy pronunciation for ‘General British of our generation’; see supra fn. 20. Compare such a case with *metal* which has [əl] but where the elision of the schwa always results in [l], not [l], i.e. *[mɛtl]*.}

In this example, [ˈhʌlsəln] is trisyllabic, while [ˈhʌlsəln] is disyllabic. Compression is said to occur in [ˈhʌlsəln] > [ˈhʌlsəln], in which process the number of the constituent syllables is reduced by one. Thus, the elision of [ə] does not necessarily result in the syllabic consonant. Another example of compression is [səˈpəʊz] (disyllabic) > [ˈspəʊz] (monosyllabic). The compressed form is generally noted [ˈspəʊz] as here, with non-syllabic [s]. Referring to this case, *LPD3* says as follows in the entry for *suppose*.

—*but the phrase I suppose is often at ˈspəʊz*

The accent mark here should be taken as an utterance-level accent, not a word-accent as in [səˈpəʊz] when occurring on its own. The point in this example is that [səˈpəʊz] does not change to [ˈspəʊz] with the syllabic [s]. If it did, the phonetic notation would rather be [ˈsəʊz] with the first unaccented syllable [s]. The problem of whether [s] or [ːs] is supposed to occur in such a case is implicitly suggested in some examples adduced by Beaken (1971) which is quoted by Wells (1982: 321).

[f] as in [ˈfɜɡɛt] (forgot), [ʃ] as in [ˈʃɛd] (she said), [n] as [nʔˈmatf] (not much).\footnote{I have dealt with [n] earlier but what is interesting here is that it occurs in an example like this in word-initial *cum* utterance-initial position.}

Notice that Beaken — and Wells as well — indicates [f], [ʃ] and [n] each of which is either a syllabic consonant or, as Wells somewhat non-committally puts, ‘a kind of syllabic consonant’ (1982: 321). Is it or is it not a syllabic consonant in each such case? If it is, then there cannot be said to occur compression in that the number of the constituent syllables remains the same. If it is not, then [f] not [f], [ʃ] not [ʃ], [n] not [n], should be chosen, and the examples concerned should be notated [ˈfɜɡɛt], [ˈʃɛd] and [ˈnʔˈmatf] (cf. [ˈspəʊz] as Wells himself puts for the compressed form for *suppose*).

What happens in the case of [f], [ʃ] and [n] (and in fact in those of any other syllabic consonants) is that the consonants in question are lengthened, thus [f] = [f:], [ʃ] = [ʃ:], [n] = [n].
[ʃ̩] = [ʃː], and [n̩] = [nː]. thus forming syllables on their own but without being accented. This is explicitly stated by Laver (1994: 264-5) who writes:

[…] the prolongation of a fricative element, which in effect takes over the role of syllable nucleus.

and gives two relevant examples (solicitor, support) as follows. The specification of ‘formal utterance’ and ‘informal utterance’ is important as being relevant to what I will say further below.

Orthographic form No solicitor will ever support that view

\[
\text{Formal utterance: } [nəʊ səˈlɪstə wɪlˈɛvə səˈpɒt ðət vju] \\
\text{Informal utterance: } [nəʊ səˈlɪstə]ˈɛvə ʃːˈpɒt ðət vju]
\]

Laver appropriately indicates both the phonetic symbol for the syllabic [ʃ] and the length mark (representing the prolongation of [ʃ]) and does not place an accent mark before [ʃː]. Laver clearly reckons with ‘a syllabic consonant’, not ‘a kind of syllabic consonant’ as Wells says. He says that [ʃː] of [ʃːˈpɒt] is longer than [ʃ] in the pronunciation of sport. According to Laver, [ʃːˈpɒt] is disyllabic and [ʃː] on its own forms a syllable.

Laver’s (1994: 147) further example is [ʃ] in operatic society is [ɒpərætɪk ˈsəʊtɪ] in informal speech style. Notice that in this example Laver does not add a length mark, thus [ʃː] not [ʃːː].

We can answer a question at this juncture: is there compression in [səˈlɪstə] (in formal utterance) > [ʃːˈlɪstə] (in informal utterance), and in [səˈpɒt] (in formal utterance) > [ʃːˈpɒt] (in informal utterance)? One is inclined to answer affirmatively in the former word (4 syllables - 3 syllables) but negatively in the latter (2 syllables - 2 syllables). Reduction of the schwa does not necessarily result in compression.

We may mention here in connection with [ʃ] that Bloch and Trager (1942: 28) cites the interjection pst. LPD3 enters psst [ps, pst] (no indication that [ʃ] occurs here) while EPD18 enters neither pst nor psst. Hall (1964: 62) cites pst whose pronunciation he indicates as [pʃt] with [ʃ]. Pike (1962: 145) cites pst!, sh!, mhm, and what he refers to as ‘the isolated unreleased [b]’90.

One further example I wish to adduce is police pronounced [pliːs] in informal speech in which the schwa in [poliːs] in formal speech style is elided. Should it be notated [ˈpliːs]? There is no question of a syllabic [p] occurring in what I notate as

---

90 In citing these examples, Pike adds: ‘All contoids are syllabic contoids when they are functioning as syllable crests.’ Incidentally, I believe that what Pike mentions as ‘the isolated unreleased [b]’ occurs in such a pronunciation of probably as [ˈprɒbɪ] which is seen to be equal to [ˈprɒbbl] because [b] = [bb]. The first of the geminate [bb] is unreleased.
[pliːs] or [ˈpliːs]. This seems to be an instance of compression without resulting in a syllabic consonant.

As is explicitly indicated, syllabic consonants like [s] and [f] mentioned above – and other consonants than those I have discussed further above – tend to occur in casual speech or rapid speech, as mentioned by various phoneticians. Laver’s specification ‘informal utterance’ is precisely what it relevantly means. The dissimilar phonetic notations of the same orthographic form, one in respect of ‘formal utterance’ and the other in respect of ‘informal utterance’ are appropriate not only in connection with the occurrence of syllabic or non-syllabic consonants but on a few other points.

I earlier mentioned three-way co-variation, ‘[s] + non-syllabic consonant’ ~ ‘syllabic consonant’ ~ ‘non-syllabic consonant’. Since compression largely tends to happen in informal utterance (in casual speech or in fast speech), the said co-variation may appositely be regarded as taking place not in the same speech style but between two speech styles.

The consonants like [s], [f] and [ʃ] (categorizable as ‘obstruents’) whose syllabic counterparts [s̩], [f̩] and [ʃ̩] I have seen above are unlike [l], [n], [m], [ŋ] and [r] (categorizable as ‘sonorants’) whose syllabic counterparts [l̩], [n̩], [m̩], [ŋ̍] and [r̩] are much oftener mentioned in phonetics literature in connection with syllabic consonants and which I have dealt with further above. There are more ‘obstruent’ consonants which can function as syllabics.

Haplology is said to give rise to syllabic consonants, both sonorants and obstruents. Of course I am not here alluding to cases like haplogy (< haplology), a well-known jocular word known among linguists, morphonology (< morphophonology) and Mississippi (< Mississippi) which do not result in syllabic consonants we are concerned with here. The following are some well-known examples:


\textsuperscript{91} EPD18 gives, among other variant pronunciations of this word, [ˈju火烧. ˈju.ri, ˈjɜ火烧.]. The first pronunciation represents haplology whereby [ɾ] is dispensed with, while the last indicates the occurrence of [ɾ] which results from the elision of the schwa.

\textsuperscript{92} LPD3 notes in the entry for particularly: ‘—in casual speech sometimes also -ˈtk jʊɹi’. This effectivel points to the possible occurrence of [l̩] which results from the elision of the schwa.

\textsuperscript{93} However, LPD3 notes in the entry for probably: ‘—In casual speech sometimes ˈprob li’. From this notation it does seem clear to me that compression occurs with or without resulting in the occurrence of [b].

\textsuperscript{94} LPD3 characterizes this pronunciation as ‘considered incorrect’. However, as noted in LPD3 (xx), such a pronunciation is in widespread use.
A question may be asked concerning the cases of [ˈprɒbl̩] Does [ˈprɒbl̩] result from the elision of [ə] in [ˈprɔbəl̩]? If so, [ˈprɒbl̩] is seen to be equal to [ˈprɔbl̩] because [b̩] = [bb].

The articulation of [b̩], [k̩], [s̩], [f̩] and [ʃ̩], etc, is such that the hold stage of a plosive (e.g. [b]) or a fricative (e.g. [s]) is sustained long enough for it to form a syllable ([b̩], [s̩]) and that this sustention is continued into the hold stage of the following same plosive ([b]) or fricative ([s]) which is subsequently released. The duration of [b̩], [k̩], [s̩], [f̩] and [ʃ̩] would be double that of [b], [k], [s], [f], [ʃ], comparable to what happens elsewhere, at the boundary between words, as in club bar, book case, six sails, tough fight, fish shop.

The schwa in ‘schwa + non-syllabic consonant’ that co-varies with a syllabic consonant

Roach (1983: 68, 1991: 79, 2000: 87, 2009: 69) considers it as ‘a mispronunciation [in RP] to insert a vowel between the l and the preceding consonant’ in the case of ‘common’ [Roach’s word] words like bottle, muddle and struggle.’ On the hand, according to him, this injunction against the insertion of a vowel before a non-syllabic consonant does not apply in the case of what he considers as ‘less common and more technical’ words, and he cites missal [ˈmɪsəl] and acquittal [əˈkwɪtl̩] /əˈkwɪtəl]. (I have vicariously added the accent marks.) Roach’s recommendation here seems to be the contrary of that made by Wells who notates [ˈmɪsəl] (not [ˈmɪsəl]) and [əˈkwɪtl] (not [əˈkwɪtəl]). It is reminded that Roach does not resort to the distinction indicated by Wells with the use of ‘ə’ and ‘ə’.

Roach (1983: 69, 1991: 80) says that ‘To pronounce a vowel before the nasal consonant would sound strange (or at best overcareful) in RP’. He replaces ‘RP’ (1993: 69, 1991: 80) by ‘BBC’ (2000: 88) and further replaces ‘BBC’ by ‘the BBC accent’ in Roach (2009: 69). He thus (strangely to me) disallows the schwa in e.g. pigeon and Christian (words which he cites as relevant examples). LPD3, on the contrary, allows (and recommends) the schwa by notating [ˈpɪdʒən] and [ˈkrɪstʃæn]. Jones (§277 in 1950 = 1956) too, contrary to Roach, includes [tʃ] and [dʒ]; among other consonants, after which [n] frequently occurs, citing e.g. merchant (hence [ˈmɜːʃtʃənt]) and sergeant (hence [ˈsæːdʒɪnt]). On the other hand, no objection will be raised to Roach disallowing [l] + [n] or (implicitly) [l] + [n] as well (e.g. sullen) and saying that a schwa must intervene between these two sounds, hence [ˈsɔlən].
PART II: PHONOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE SYLLABIC CONSONANTS IN ENGLISH

The phonological status of the syllabic consonants in English has been discussed and solutions offered by various researchers. The question of the phonological status of syllabic [l], [m] and [n], i.e. [l̩], [m̩], [n̩], in English has drawn the attention of a number of researchers. The researchers’ attention has invariably been attracted by the co-variation [s] ~ [l], [sn] ~ [n], and [sm] ~ [m], that is, that the occurrence of a syllabic consonant [l], [n] or [m] is always matched by that of ‘[s] + a non-syllabic consonant’ (i.e. [l], [n] or [m]). There are some pairs of words in English such that the members of each pair differ from each other in their pronunciation in that, for instance, one member has [l] and the other [l̩] at a corresponding point, the remaining sounds and the accentual patterns being identical. These pairs are what are commonly known as ‘minimal pairs’ or ‘near-minimal pairs’. Jones (1959: 137-8) gives a number of examples of such pairs of words (as pronounced, as he specifies, by Jones himself). He just enumerates these pairs of words but I will add some details to them where necessary.

\[\text{codling (}<\text{cod} + \text{ling}) [l] \text{ vs. coddling (coddle + ing) [l]}\]
\[\text{suckling (}<\text{suck} + \text{ling}) [l] \text{ vs. suckling (}<\text{suckle} + \text{ing}) [l]\]
\[\text{nestling (}<\text{nest} + \text{ling}) [l] \text{ vs. nestling (}<\text{nestle} + \text{ing}) [l]\]
\[\text{finely (}<\text{fine} + \text{ly}) [l] \text{ vs. finally (}<\text{final} + \text{ly}) [l]\]
\[\text{gamboling (< gambol + ing) [l] vs. gambolling (}<\text{gambol} + \text{ing}) [l]\]

The case of gamboling vs. gambolling may call for a comment. Unlike suckling (< suckle + ing) and nestling (< nestle + ing) which have [l], gamboling (< gambol + ing) also cited by Jones as having [l] not [l], but gambolling (< gambol + ing) also cited by Jones has [l]. LPD3 gives [ ‘gəm b̞l] for both gamble and gambol and, what’s more, adds (= gamble)\(^{100}\) in the entry gambol. EPD18 too gives an identical form for both words, i.e. [ ‘gəm b̞l], which is equivalent to [ ‘gəm b̞l] in LPD3. As for gambling, LPD3 gives [ ‘gəm bl̞] only, in agreement with Jones, while for gambol(ing) it gives [ ‘gəm bl̞n] so EPD18, for gambling, gives [ ‘gəm b̞ln] and [ ‘gəm bl̞n], the

\(^{95}\) Gimson (2008: 215) points out, quite rightly, that [l] in codling is the so-called ‘clear l’ while coddling may have [l] as well as [l] which is the so-called ‘dark l’. Though this difference proves irrelevant to the task of determining the phonological status of [l], this valid information is not necessarily given by many others in citing such pairs of words.

\(^{96}\) According to LPD3’s notation, (coddling < coddle + ing) is pronounced [ ‘kədln], i.e. [ ‘kn̩dl̩n] - [ ‘kədln], while (codling < cod + ling) is pronounced [ ‘kn̩dl̩n], ‘sucking child’.

\(^{97}\) ‘young bird in the nest’.

\(^{98}\) The spelling with -lt- here is of course British.

\(^{99}\) The equal symbol ‘=’ here means that the two different words are pronounced in the same way.
latter being definitely in accord with Jones, and for gambolling it gives ['ɡæmbɔlɪŋ]. This means that, according to both LPD3 and EPD18, gambolling can have not only [ɪ] as Jones notes but also [ˈɪ] (or [ɪ]) as well. Consequently, the case of gambling vs. gambolling may not be entirely valid.

Jones notes finally with [ɪ] only, but both LPD3 and EPD18 notate [ˈɪ], that is, both [stl] and [ɪ].

Jones cites Kipling [ɪ] vs. crippling (< cripple + ing) [ɪ]. This case may appear to show both [ɪ] and [ɪ] occurring at a corresponding point in an identical context, viz. [p - l] and the pair of words here constitutes a near-minimal pair.

Jones also cites sicklist [ɪ] vs. ficklest [ɪ] (< fickle + st). This case too may appear to show both [ɪ] and [ɪ] occurring at a corresponding point in an identical context, this time, [ɪk - ɪst], and the pair of words here may appear to constitute a near-minimal pair. However, there is a problem. The prosodic contexts are not the same for sicklist and ficklest in that a virtual pause is present at the boundary between sick and list while it is present at the boundary between fickle and est, so that the two words are not, strictly speaking, even a near-minimal pair, still less a minimal pair.

Jones cites, strangely, twaddly (< twaddle + ly) and twaddle as both having [ɪ], so that they are not relevant to [ɪ] vs. [ɪ] here.

Jones cites oddly (< odd + ly) as having [ɪ], so this example is irrelevant to [ɪ] vs. [ɪ]. EPD18 agrees with Jones about oddly having [ɪ].

Elsewhere, Jones (§439 in 1950, 1962 and 1967) cites medlar [-l-] vs. meddler [-l-], and Putney [-n-] vs. buttoning [-n-].

As I already mentioned (162), Roach (1983: 71, 1991: 81-2) cites Hungary [-r-] vs. hungy [-r-], and adulterous [-r-] vs. adulteress [-r-], adding that [r] and [ər] are also alternative pronunciations instead of [-r-]. This means that the members of each pair are not necessarily distinguished from each other by virtue of [r] vs. [r] and consequently do not constitute minimal pairs. Roach (2000: 90) retains Hungary [-r-] vs. hungy [-r-] with the same remark about [r] and [ər] being alternative pronunciations instead of [-r-], but drops the pair adulteress vs. adulterous, without any accompanying comment. The pair adulteress vs. adulterous are subsequently definitively absent in Roach (2009: 70). This amounts to Roach himself abandoning these two pairs as minimal pairs.

Meanwhile, in EPD15, EPD16, EPD17 and EPD18, the notation of Hungary and hungy is ['haŋ,ɡər.i] and ['haŋ,ɡri], respectively, which again means this pair of words are not necessarily distinguished from each other through [-r-] vs. [-r-] and do

---

not form minimal pairs. EPD15, EPD16, EPD17 and EPD18 note adultress [ˈdʌl.tər.es, is, -əs] and adulterous [ˈdʌl.tər.əs]. For the same reason as I mentioned for Hungary and hungry, adultress and adulterous are not necessarily minimal pairs.

LPD3 notates Hungary [ˈhʌŋ.gər.i] and hungry [ˈhʌŋ.gri], which means that the distinction [r] vs. [r̩] is not crucial for the two words, as Hungary is pronounced with [r] as well as [r̩].

Of a number of minimal or near-minimal pairs of words in whose pronunciation the difference [l] and [l̩] occurs at a corresponding point in an identical context, this difference is alleged to be linked to the distinction between the members of each pair. We will retain the following examples for further consideration in an attempt to determine the phonological status of syllabic consonants. We will consider [l] and [n] here.

- codling (< cod + ling) [l] vs. coddling (< coddle + ing) [l]
- suckling (< suck + ling) [l] vs. suckling (< suckle + ing) [l]
- nestling (< nest + ling) [l] vs. nestling (< nestle + ing) [l]
- lightning [n] vs. lightening (< lighten + ing) [n]
- medlar [l] vs. meddler (< meddle + er) [l]
- Putney [ˈpʌtni] vs. buttoning [ˈbʌtnɪŋ] (< button + ing) [n]

Though not a minimal pair like any of the five other pairs, it is perfectly justified to retain Putney vs. buttoning with practically the same validity as for the others since the difference between [p] in [ˈpʌtni] and [b] in [ˈbʌtni] can in no way be thought to influence the occurrence of [n] rather than [ŋ] in Putney or that of [ŋ] rather than [n] in buttoning. In other words, the substitution of [p] by [b] (*Butney) would be thought to retain [ŋ], and the replacement of [b] by [p] (*buttoning) would be thought to retain [ŋ]. The change from voicelessness ([p]) to voicedness ([b]) or vice versa in these words would not affect the occurrence of [ŋ] in the former word and that of [ŋ] in the latter.

Jones’s (1950: §31) well-known definition of the phoneme runs as follows.

…A PHONEME IS A FAMILY OF SOUNDS IN A GIVEN LANGUAGE WHICH ARE RELATED IN CHARACTER AND ARE USED IN SUCH A WAY THAT NO ONE MEMBER EVER OCCURS IN A WORD IN THE SAME PHONETIC CONTEXT AS ANY OTHER MEMBER. [Jones’s capitals]

A corollary of this definition is that sounds occurring in the same phonetic context belong to different phonemes. As applied to [l] and [n] (related in character and occurring in the same context) as in [ˈkɒdlɪŋ] codling and [ˈkɒdlɪŋ] coddling, the two laterals (one of them being non-syllabic and the other syllabic) are to belong to two different phonemes which one may wish to indicate as /l/ and /ŋ/. If so, the two words would be phonologically noted /ˈkɒdlɪŋ/ and /ˈkɒdlɪŋ/, respectively.
Jones himself would not come out with these phonological identities and I know of no other researchers (myself included) that do. Jones (1950: §301) makes no attempt to offer a solution about the phonological status of [l] or any other syllabic consonants in English except to say that e.g. [l] differ from [l] by being ‘long’ while [l] is ‘short’ and conjecturally assigning that [l] and [l] to a single phoneme, presumably /l/.

In reality, pairs of English words like codling (< cod + ling) and coddling (< coddle + ing), suckling (< suck + ling) and suckling (< suckle + ing), nestling (< nest + ling) and nestling (< nestle + ing), lightning and lightening (< lighten + ing), medlar and meddler (< meddle + er), and a number of others frequently cited as forming putative minimal pairs, are not really minimal pairs, as I will explain further below.

If [l] and [l], or [n] and [n], are not to be taken as belonging to two different phonemes, i.e. /l/ and /l/, respectively, or /n/ and /n/, respectively, are [l] and [l], or [n] and [n], to be interpreted as ‘allophones’? They freely occur in the same context, i.e. ‘free variants’ of one and the same phoneme, that is, ‘free variants’, whatever it is supposed to be? As it turns out, however, this is a contradiction in terms since, according to Jones (1950: 7 fn.15),

Members of a phoneme have also been termed “conditioned variants.” They are also said to be in “complementary distribution”.

[l] and [l] are not conditioned variants and certainly do not occur in complementary distribution.

The only remaining term, if not the concept, that Jones has in his arsenal is ‘variophone’ (see Jones 1950: §628ff.) but this term is totally inapplicable to the case of [l] and [l], as one would be convinced when reading Jones’s pertinent passages about a ‘variophone’.

It is evident that a phonological analysis whereby to determine the phonological status of [l] is at a deadlock if it is based on the phoneme as a group of phonetically similar and complementarily distributed sounds, as is attributable to Jones and post-Bloomfieldians. We need to look for some other mode of phonological analysis to accomplish our task.

Besides, we need to ask ourselves if it is right to commute e.g. [ˈkɒdlin] and [ˈkɒd̩lin] with each other, since this commutation assumes the difference between [l]

---

102 I am aware that e.g. Wells (1965: 111) suggests the possibility of setting up /l/ n, m, ñ, r/ as opposed to /l/, n, m, ñ, r/ in English for a minority of speakers for whom there exist such pairs of words as [batld] battled vs. [batnds] battened, but this is outside the scope of my present paper.

103 However, we cannot use here the term ‘free variant’, whose concept and term is found in Jones (§601 in 1950, 1962, 1967). The meaning of what Jones otherwise calls ‘diaphone’ is inapplicable in our present consideration.
and [l], which in turn should lead us to establish /l/ and */l/ in English. I have already said that this will be rejected by all. This analysis, if at all accepted, would lead to */kɒdlɪŋ/ vs. /ˈkɒdlɪŋ/.

Martinet gives an apposite recommendation to phonological analysts to the effect that commutative items should be such that there is no potential pause (F. pause virtuelle, as opposed to actual pause = F. pause actuelle) inside them (cf. Martinet 1960: III-5, III-6 and III-7). This is so even if the prosodic feature is identical in the commutative items. We return here to e.g. [ˈkɒdlɪŋ] coddling (< coddle + ing) and [ˈkɒdlɪŋ] coddling (< cod + ling). Potential pauses do occur between coddle and ing and between cod and ling. Disregard of Martinet’s recommendation would result in establishing two phonemes */l/ and /l/ in English, which is unacceptable. I myself referred at some length to Martinet’s recommendation (Akamatsu 2000: 50-51), quoting the relevant passages from Martinet (1960: III-5, III-6 and III-7). As well as the above examples, I additionally cited in Akamatsu (2000: 51) the examples of night-rate and night rate (to which I could have added Nye trait) and subsequently also in Akamatsu (1992: 63) in order to explain in detail the infelicitous consequence of phonological analysis of these triplets in which potential pauses occur at different points inside these words. One would end up, wrongly, establishing three phonemes, i.e. /t/ (Nye trait), /ɒ/ (nitrate) and /l/ (night-rate), on account of three degrees of aspiration. As is well known, the example of these triplets have been cited for a long time by post-Bloomfieldians who, instead of the concept and term of ‘potential pause’, employ those of ‘internal open juncture’, which they regard as a phoneme.\(^{104}\)

Writing in a different parlance and without using the term ‘potential pause’, Jones (1931: 60) cites the example of the pair ‘blacked eye (blæk ai)’ and ‘black tie (blæk tai)’, as he presents them, which he says was suggested by E[dith E.] Quick [c. 1902–1947]. He says that, in (blæk tai), (t) is aspirated while in (blæk ai), (t) is unaspirated, i.e. [f] and [t].\(^{105}\) Jones (1931: 61-4) gives more relevant examples pertaining not only to [tʰ][t] but also to [pʰ][p] and [kʰ][k]. Jones (1944: 128-9) advises against performing phonological analysis whereby to establish the phonemes of a given language by working on data larger than words and gives the example of the pair, plum eye [ˈpʌmplɒmp ‘ai] and plum pie [ˈpʌmplɒmp ‘pʰai].\(^{106}\) Disregard of Jones’s injunc-

\(^{104}\) For this reason, the concept of ‘potential pause’ should not be confused with that of ‘internal open juncture’.

\(^{105}\) Jones (1931: 61) gives a few other relevant examples concerning [t] and [tʰ] such as missed eight and Miss Tate, worst act and worse tact, just able and chess table, and dressed eye and dress tie.

\(^{106}\) The example of plum pie vs. plum eye is subsequently repeated in Gimson (1962: 50, 1970: 50-1, 1980: 55, 1989: 52), but not in Gimson (1994\(^b\)), Gimson (2001\(^a\)) and Gimson (2008\(^b\)) which are editions revised by Alan Cruttenden. I used the example plum pie vs. plum eye in Akamatsu (1992: 63) to explain the importance of performing the commutation test on minimal or near-minimal multiplets that do not contain potential pauses.
tion would lead to establishing two phonemes /p/ and /ph/ in English as, according to Jones, two different sounds occurring in the same context are assigned to different phonemes, a corollary of his definition of the phoneme (unless, of course, they are free variants, members of a variphone or members of a diaphone). Jones (§34 in 1950, 1962 and 1967) emphasizes the necessity of defining phonemes by limiting oneself to consideration of stretches not longer than ‘word’ by which he means ‘sympleses’ and refers us back to Jones (1944: 127-32) and to Jones (1956: §1095) where he talks about the necessity of indicating where accent falls and cites the pair *black tie* and *blacked eye*, though here without explicitly warning against establishing in English two phonemes /th/ (re *black tie*) which is aspirated and /t/ (re *blacked eye*) which is unaspirated. Jones (1956a: 100), returning to this subject, cites ˈɡreɪtai (grey tie) and ˈgreitai (great eye), as he notes them, and makes the same point.

Jones’s injunction concerns confronting syntags (e.g. *plump eye* and *plum pie*) with each other or two items with each other one of which is a complex (= a compound or a derivative) (e.g. *nitr*ate vs. *night-rate, light*ning vs. *light*ening) or both of which are complexes (e.g. *coddling* vs. *codling*). On the contrary, he recommends confronting simplexes (which Jones calls ‘words) with each other. Jones does not mention ‘potential pause’ but, as simplexes do not contain potential pauses, we can safely regard Martinet’s recommendation and Jones’s injunction as being ultimately the same.

Let’s bring back the list of pair of words given earlier on and try to apply Martinet’s and Jones’s recommendations to them. I reproduce the list of words below.

- *codling* (< *cod* + *ling*) [l̩] vs. *coddling* (< *coddle* + *ing*) [l̩]
- *suckling* (< *suck* + *ling*) [l̩] vs. *suckling* (< *suckle* + *ing*) [l̩]
- *nestling* (< *nest* + *ling*) [l̩] vs. *nestling* (< *nestle* + *ing*) [l̩]
- *lightning* [n] vs. *lightening* (< *lighten* + *ing*) [n]
- *medlar* [l̩] vs. *meddler* (< *meddle* + *er*) [l̩]
- *Putney* [n] vs. *buttoning* [n] (< *button* + *ing*) [n]

To consider the first pair of words, the commutable items in *codling* will be [kɒd] *cod* and [lɪŋ] *ing*, but, more importantly for the present purpose, the commutable items in [ˈkɒdlɪŋ] *coddling* will be [ˈkɒdl] *coddle* and [n] *ing*. (We will leave aside [n] *ing.*) Confronting [ˈkɒdl] with [kɒd] in no way contributes to establishing the phonological status of [l̩].

[II] in [ˈkɒdl] *coddle* can hardly commute with any consonants simply because they rarely occurs word-finally after [d]. No English words are attestable such as *[ˈkɒdp]*, *[ˈkɒdb]*, *[ˈkɒdt]*, *[ˈkɒdd]*, *[ˈkɒdk]*, *[ˈkɒdg}*, etc. Though no perfect minimal multiplet seems to exit, a possible near-minimal multiplet is available such as [ˈkɔ:dn] *cordon*. Confronting [ˈkɒdl] with [ˈkɔ:dn] characterizes [l̩] as “lateral”, no
more than that. The occurrence of other consonants after pre-final [d] is also rare in English (but cf. *cods [-dz]*).

Commutation is a matter of examining sounds on the paradigmatic axis with a view to finding out their phonological status. Attempts to identify the phonological status of [l̩] through commutation clearly fail.

There are situations in which [l̩] and [l] can be directly confronted with each other in an identical phonetic context and we can ascertain that [l̩] is syllabic (said to be long by phoneticians) and [l] non-syllabic (said to be short). We fully acknowledge that their direct confrontation does not lead to identifying two phonological entities, i.e. two single phonemes, which one might be tempted to represent as /l/ and /l/, respectively, as the difference between [l̩] and [l] evidently does not relate to distinguishing two different words. Witness e.g. [ˈhʌsɪŋ] vs. [ˈhʌsɪŋ] in which [l] and [l] can be directly confronted which each other in an identical phonetic context [ˈhʌsɪŋ], without [l̩] and [l] being regarded as realizations of two separate phonemes. The same can be said, *mutatis mutandis*, for instance, of [n̩] and [n], which can be directly confronted with each other in an identical phonetic context [ˈbʌtɪŋ] as in [ˈbʌtɪŋ] vs. [ˈbʌtɪŋ].

In citing above pairs of pronunciations involving [l̩] and [l], or [n̩] and [n], I take this opportunity to re-emphasize the importance of taking note of the occurrence of non-syllabic consonants (where they do occur) in co-variation with ‘syllabic consonants’ and ‘[ə] + non-syllabic consonant’, that is, what I referred to as ‘three-way variation’. The occurrence of non-syllabic consonants in such cases results of course from syncope.

Attempts having failed to determine the phonological status of syllabic consonants (we have seen [l]) by analyzing relevant phonetic data on the paradigmatic axis, we need to seek another strategy, that is, to conduct our analysis on the syntagmatic axis.

The characteristic of syllabic consonants that is traditionally mentioned is their ‘extra duration’ (when compared with the corresponding non-syllabic consonants). Specifically with regard to [l], it is sometimes mentioned that it is a velarized lateral, the so-called ‘dark’ [l] in *codling* [ˈkɒdlɪŋ], which is inherently longer than a palatalized lateral, the so-called ‘clear’ [l] in *codling* [ˈkɒdlɪŋ].

Jones (§ 439 in 1950¹, 1962², 1973³) does emphasize the fact that [l] is much longer than [l], which fact, if taken advantage of, might lend itself in a certain way to determining the phonological identity of [l]. Incidentally, Jones’s words ‘much longer’ is too vague for us to understand ‘how long’ or ‘by what discrete degree of length’. Is [l] to be understood to stand for [l], [lː], [lːː], etc.?

As [l] co-varies with [əl], it would be helpful to note the following remark (McArthur 1996: 927):
...in pronouncing [l̩] the time needed to pronounce the schwa is transferred to the following consonant...

As the schwa in [əl] is transferred to [l], it stands to reason that [ə] which constitutes a syllable on its own confers syllabicity (hence the ‘duration’ associated with syllabicity) on [l], with the result that the syllabic lateral, i.e. [l̩], is created. This means that the phonological status of [l] is such that it has both the feature of ‘lateral’ and the syllabicity feature of [ə]. When I say ‘the syllabicity feature of [ə]’ here, I do not allude to all the features of [ə], i.e. all the articulatory characteristics traditionally describable in terms of the position of the tongue in the oral cavity, the position of the velum and the state of the glottis. The vocalic resonance in not only [l̩] but also [n̩], [m̩], [ŋ̍], [l̩] and [r̩] need not necessarily reflect some determinate quality of [ə]. It is not relevant if these syllabic consonants have differing resonances. [ə] in English enjoys a fairly wide ‘field of dispersion’ as is shown by the various highest positions assumed by the main part of the tongue and plotted on a quadrilateral diagram (see e.g. Jones §§356-70 in 1949, 1956, 1964; Gimson 2008: 132, Figure 23 (Variants of /ə/)). The differing resonances that [l], [n], [m], [ŋ] and [r] manifest are conditioned not only by the various sub-types of [ə] but also by different contexts in which these syllabic consonants occur. The most noticeable and consequently the most talked about is the resonance of [l] (whose resonance is that of the so-called ‘dark l’) in [tl], [dl], [nl], [ml], etc. occurring before actual pause or before potential pause when preceded by [t], [d], [n], [m], etc. The various resonances of [n], [m], [ŋ] and [r] occurring in other contexts are different and nearer ‘central’. The critical point is that the actual resonances heard in the syllabic consonants matter less than the fact that syllabicity is transferred to the non-syllabic consonants and change them into the corresponding syllabics.

But how does the transfer of [ə] of [əl] actually happen articulatorily? Let’s first take the examples of [ˈbɒtəl] > [ˈbɒtl]. As is well known, during the process from [təl] to [l], the transition from [t] to [l] is clear-cut in that there is no scope for [ə] which is to be transferred to [l] to intervene between [t] and [l] due to the laterallosion of [t]. When the transfer of [ə] is achieved, the feature of syllabicity has passed to [l], while the articulatory feature of [ə] (central vocal quality) cannot be passed on since, in addition to velic closure, complete apico-alveolar closure is formed with simultaneous posterodorsal velarization while unilateral or bilateral aperture is allowed. Therefore only the syllabic characteristic of [ə] coalesces with [l], which re-

---

107 It will be guessed in advance that, in determining the phonological status of [s], [ʃ] and [f], earlier mentioned, it will be necessary to reckon with [ə], i.e. a voiceless schwa.
108 For the concept of ‘field of dispersion’ (F. ‘champ de dispersion’), see Martinet (1955: 47).
109 The oral cavity is bilabially closed in the case of [m], by dorso-velar closure in the case of [ŋ], by apico-alveolar closure for [n], and by close lamino-postalveolar in the case of [r]. All this prevents articulatory feature of [ə] (central vocal quality) from being passed on to the non-syllabic consonants in question.
sults in [l] ([t]) in [ˈbot(l)]. Thus the process of the transfer of [a] to [l] results in the fusion of [a] and [l] into [l].

The concomitant but separate phonetic characteristics of [l] which is a single segment are laterality and syllabicity. It is syllabicity of [l] that is traditionally referred to as ‘long’ as compared with [l], a non-syllabic.

It is now for us to determine the phonological status of [l], [n], [m], [ŋ] and [r]. To this end, we first perform the commutation test which is necessary, among other things, to elicit the distinctive units (be they phonemes, archiphonemes) of English in terms of relevant features.\textsuperscript{110} I will show below only that part of the commutative series consisting of multiplets, minimal or near-minimal, that are pertinent to eliciting those consonant phonemes that are associated with [l], [n], [m], [ŋ] and [r] in which we are particularly interested in this paper.\textsuperscript{111} (CS = Commutatives Series)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CS1</th>
<th>CS2</th>
<th>CS3</th>
<th>CS4</th>
<th>CS5</th>
<th>CS6</th>
<th>CS7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[pr–]</td>
<td>[–nt]</td>
<td>[ˈx–ɔ]</td>
<td>[st–]</td>
<td>[ˈpriz–]</td>
<td>[–s–]</td>
<td>[–sɔ–]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ppp]</td>
<td>[ptt]</td>
<td>[ˈ(d)arə]</td>
<td>[sp]</td>
<td>[–sp]</td>
<td>[–sp]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[fɪb]</td>
<td>[btʃ]</td>
<td>[ˈ(r)əbə]</td>
<td>[sib]</td>
<td>[–sib]</td>
<td>[–sib]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[prt]</td>
<td>[tʃt]</td>
<td>[ˈʌtʃ]</td>
<td>[stʃ]</td>
<td>[–stʃ]</td>
<td>[–stʃ]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[pɪd(l)]\textsuperscript{112}</td>
<td>[dʃt]</td>
<td>[ˈʌdʒ]</td>
<td>[sɒd]</td>
<td>[–sɔd]</td>
<td>[–sɔd]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[pɪk]</td>
<td>[ktʃ]</td>
<td>[ˈ(s)əkə]</td>
<td>[skʃ]</td>
<td>[–skʃ]</td>
<td>[–skʃ]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[pɪg]</td>
<td>[ɡtʃ]</td>
<td>[ˈ(s)əːɡə]</td>
<td>[sɡʃ]</td>
<td>[–sɡʃ]</td>
<td>[–sɡʃ]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[pɪm]</td>
<td>[mtʃ]</td>
<td>[ˈ(s)ʌmə]</td>
<td>[sm]</td>
<td>[ˈprizm]</td>
<td>[–sm]</td>
<td>[–səm]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[pɪn]</td>
<td>[ntʃ]</td>
<td>[ˈænʃ]</td>
<td>[sm]</td>
<td>[ˈprizn]</td>
<td>[–sn]</td>
<td>[–sən]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[pɪn]</td>
<td>[n̩]</td>
<td>[ˈænʃ]</td>
<td>[sn]</td>
<td>[–sn]</td>
<td>[–sŋ]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[pɪl]</td>
<td>[lɪt]</td>
<td>[ˈkələ]</td>
<td>[sl̩]</td>
<td>[ˈfŋl]</td>
<td>[–sl]</td>
<td>[–səl]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[pɪl]</td>
<td>[lɪt]</td>
<td>[ˈbələ]</td>
<td>[–]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The commutation test reveals that [l]’s that occur in CS1, CS2, CS3, CS4 and CS7 and [l] that occur in CS5 and CS6 are realizations of the phoneme which we define as “lateral” and indicate as /l/.

It might be queried whether it is justified to include consideration of [l] in CS5 and CS6 along with [l] in CS1, CS2, CS3, CS4 and CS7 for the establishment of /l/ in

\textsuperscript{110} We dispense here with details of this commutation test, for which we refer the reader to Akamatsu (1992: 60-80) or Akamatsu (2000: 41-57).

\textsuperscript{111} The first three commutative series are taken, in part, from the three commutative series found in Akamatsu (2000: 54). The multiplets in CS1, CS2 and CS3 were originally presented orthographically, but are presented here in their phonetic forms. CS4, CS5, CS6 and CS7 are newly added here as being relevant to our investigation into the phonological status of the syllabic consonants.

\textsuperscript{112} [pɪd(l)] ([piːd(le)]) is a near-minimal multiplet which can validly be included in CS1. The addition of [l] to [pɪd] is thought to cause no change of [d] to any other consonant.
the face of the fact that [l] is syllabic while [l] is non-syllabic. There are two reasons for the justification of my course of action adopted.

1. In eliciting the distinctive units of the second articulation, i.e. the phonemes and the archiphonemes, of English, what I presented above as [m], [n] and [l], i.e. as non-syllabic consonants, thus ['przn'], ['przn] and ['frzl]. As has already been seen, [m], [n] and [l] are a concomitant combination of [m] and syllabicity, that of [n] and syllabicity, and that of [l] and syllabicity, respectively. Syllabicity is a prosodic element which can be separated from [m], [n] and [l] in a phonological analysis in performing the commutation test. The commutation test is conducted to elicit the phonematic units (phonemes, archiphonemes) so that, during the course of the commutation test, the identification of [m], [n] and [l] (syllabic consonants) as such is irrelevant to the analyst who would not even suspect that what he notates [m], [n] and [l] in CS5 and CS6 are in fact [m], [n] and [l]. I have deliberately notated [m], [n] and [l] above, instead of [m], [n] and [l], only because of our specific interest in this paper in the subject of syllabic consonants and my foreknowledge that we have these syllabic consonants here. For the reason stated above, it is justified to ignore and disregard syllabicity in [m], [n] and [l] in CS5 and CS6.

2. Syllabicity (which relates to ‘duration’) which characterizes [m], [n], [l], [ŋ] or [r] is a feature on a different dimension (as syllabicity is a prosodic element, as already said) from that on which we know relevant features of distinctive units are identified. Syllabicity is a prosodic feature which eludes the framework of double articulation, the second articulation in particular, in the present case. This is why the analyst is justified to notate ['przn'], ['przn'], ['frzl'], [sm], [sn], [sl] instead of ['przn'], ['frzl'], [sm], [sn], [sl]. There are no similar examples involving [r] or [r] as neither is hardly, if ever, occurrent in word-final position in (British) English. Therefore the analyst will operate with [m], [n], [l] and [ŋ] so far as CS5, and CS6 are concerned.

Faced with the task of seeking the phonological characterization of [m], [n], [l], [ŋ] and [r], the analyst will concentrate on [m], [n], [l], [ŋ] and [r] by separating syllabicity off and concentrating on the phonological characterization of these segmental elements.

We can establish the phoneme /t/ which is definable as “spirant” and whose realization [r] appears in CS2 and CS3.
Both /l/ “lateral” and /r/ “spirant” in English are non-correlated phonemes, i.e. outside correlations (formed by ‘series’ and ‘orders’\(^{113}\)) of phonemes, and raise few problems, if any, in seeking the phonological status of [l] and [r].

We now turn to [n]’s in CS1, CS3 and CS4 and regard them as realizations of the phoneme /n/ definable as “apical nasal”. The reason why we leave CS2 out of account here is the fact that, though [m] and [n] occur, [ŋ] does not in CS2.

Next, [m]’s in CS1, CS3 and CS4 are considered as realizations of the phoneme /m/ definable as “labial nasal”.\(^{114}\)

[ŋ]’s in CS1, CS3 and CS4 are realizations of the phoneme /ŋ/ definable as “dorsal nasal”.

We have elicited above five phonemes, /l/, /n/, /m/ and /ŋ/ and /r/. To summarize:

/l/ “lateral”
/n/ “apical nasal”
/m/ “labial nasal”
/ŋ/ “dorsal nasal”
/r/ “spirant”

It is the pairs [-sm]/[-sn], [-sn]/[sŋ] and [-sl]/[-sŋ] (see CS6 and CS7) occurring in alternative pronunciations of one and the same part of the word (e.g. handsome [sm]’/-sn]; Johnson [-sn]/[-sŋ]; council [-s]/[sŋ] that initially alert the analyst to the phonological equivalence of [m] and [mn], [n] and [sn] and [l] and [sl]\.\(^{115}\) The analyst will also see that there is in some way a close relationship between [m] and [mn], [n] and [sn], and [l] and [sl], that is, the members of each pair are functioning syntagmatically (but not paradigmatically) with the same status, that is, they are syntagmatically replaceable with each other. By comparing [m] with [mn], [n] with [sn], and [l] with [sl], the analyst knows that [m] and syllabicity are fused into [m], [n] and syllabicity into [n], and [l] and syllabicity into [l]. The analyst will be aware that, outside the commutative series presented above, a similar case of phonological equivalence seems to exist between e.g. [r] and [ər] as in [kæmərə]/[ˈkæmərə] for camera.

\(^{113}\) For ‘series’, ‘orders’ and ‘correlation’, see e.g. Martinet (1955: 69-70) and Martinet (1960: III-15).

\(^{114}\) Note that I define /m/ “labial nasal”, not “bilabial nasal” as, according to my own analysis, /p/, /b/, /h/, /f/ and /m/ in English form a single ‘order’ designated as “labial” order, not as “bilabial” order.

\(^{115}\) Wells (1965: 111) mentions that, for a minority of RP speakers, there exist pairs like [ˈpætən] pattern, [ˈpɛtən] Patton, [ˈmodən] modern and [ˈtrədən] trodden, and [ˈtʃætəli] Chatterley and [ˈbætlɪŋ] battling. However, I leave such cases out of account in the present paper.
The analyst cannot be sure whether or not a phonological equivalence exists between \( \hat{n} \) (which is non-occurrent in CS5 and CS6) and \( [n] \) (which is part of \( [sn] \) in CS7) as long as he limits himself to operating with just the commutative series presented above, unlike in the case of \([m] \) and \([\hat{m}] \), \([n] \) and \([\hat{n}] \) and \([l] \) and \([\hat{l}] \). The analyst needs to investigate by working on further commutative series and confirms that \([n] \) never occurs word-finally since \([\hat{n}] \) does not occur word-finally preceded by any vowels except \( [i, e, o, æ, ə] \) (cf. Trnka 1966: 39). This confirms that \([sn] \) in CS7 is actually non-occurrent, and the analyst can now replace the question mark placed after \([sn] \) by an asterisk placed in front of it, thus *\([sn] \). The analyst also discovers that \([\hat{n}] \), and hence \([n] \), occur only after \([k] \). Therefore the existence of such a co-variation as \([k\hat{n}] \sim [kn] \) is also impossible. We have seen that \([k\hat{n}] \) (as in \([tk\hat{n}] \) thicken [‘thekin] bacon) is attested but without it co-varying with \([kn] \). Such being the case, in order to determine the phonological status of \([\hat{n}] \), the analyst needs to resort to a specific analytical procedure, that is, to examine the opposability among \([m] \), \([n] \) and \([\hat{n}] \) prepausally when preceded by \([k] \). This we will show later.

The phonological status of e.g. \([\hat{m}] \) can be determined when we understand the transfer of syllabicity to \([m] \) and the resultant fusion of syllabicity and \([m] \) into \([\hat{m}] \). The incorporation of syllabicity to \([m] \), \([n] \) and \([\hat{n}] \) leaves the quality of each of these nasal consonants unchanged in that \([m] \), \([n] \) and \([\hat{n}] \) remain articulatorily the same as \([m] \), \([n] \) and \([\hat{n}] \). For analytical and expository facility, therefore, it seems reasonable to consider below \([m] \), \([n] \) and \([\hat{n}] \), by leaving out of account syllabicity temporarily and where appropriate, instead of \([m] \), \([n] \) and \([\hat{n}] \). The phonological status of each of \([l] \) and \([\hat{r}] \) can likewise be determined, mutatis mutandis. However, before proceeding to give the phonological status of \([m] \), \([n] \), \([\hat{n}] \), \([l] \) and \([\hat{r}] \), it is essential to discuss first certain points regarding \([m] \), \([n] \) and \([\hat{n}] \).

In attempting to determine the phonological status of \([m] \), \([n] \) and \([\hat{n}] \), our attention is drawn to the non-occurrence of \([\hat{n}] \) – see CS5 – in the context \([\hat{m}] \) (that is after \([z] \) but in fact after any consonant (cf. Trnka 1966: 410) and the non-occurrence of \([\hat{n}] \) – see CS6 – in the context \([s] \) while, on the other hand, both \([m] \) and \([n] \) occur in both CS5 and CS6. This fact is important as the non-occurrence of \([\hat{n}] \) in CS5 and CS6 should be taken into account in determining the phonological status of \([n] \) and \([m] \) as well as \([\hat{n}] \) itself. We will first determine the phonological status of \([m] \), \([n] \) and \([\hat{n}] \) which are non-syllabic, by setting aside the feature of syllabicity which characterizes \([m] \), \([n] \) and \([\hat{n}] \).

---

116 Two-way co-variation exemplified by e.g. \([al] \sim [l] \) is a manifestation of the phonological equivalence.

117 Trnka (1966: 41) is of the view that \([n] \) (hence we assume \([\hat{n}] \) as well) does not occur after any consonant. However, we take the view that \([n] \) (hence \([\hat{n}] \) as well) does occur after \([k] \), if not after \([g] \). See supra fn. 5 and fn. 6.

118 See supra fn. 4 and fn. 5.
In post-vocalic word-final position (see CS1 and CS4) and in intervocalic word-medial position (CS3) where all of [m], [n] and [ŋ] occur, [m] is regarded as a realization of /m/ “labial nasal”, [n] as a realization of /n/ “labial nasal”, and [ŋ] as a realization of /ŋ/ “dorsal nasal”. However, in word-final position preceded by [z] (CS5) or [s] (CS6), [m] and [n] occurs but [ŋ] does not. (It is reminded that we are legitimately examining [m] and [n] instead of [m̩] and [n̩].) We should first wonder whether [m] is a realization of the archiphoneme associated with the neutralization of the opposition /m/ “labial nasal” - /ŋ/ “dorsal nasal”. If so, the archiphoneme /m-ŋ/ is definable as “nasal” which is the common base of /m/ and /ŋ/. We should also wonder whether [n] is a realization of the archiphoneme associated with the neutralization of the opposition /n/ “apical nasal” - /ŋ/ “dorsal nasal”, in which case the archiphoneme /n-ŋ/ is definable, again, as “nasal” which is the common base of /n/ and /ŋ/. However, both of these supposed neutralizations must be rejected for two reasons. First, faced with one and the same archiphoneme, i.e. the same phonological content which is “nasal”, we do not know which phonological opposition, /m/ - /ŋ/ or /n/ - /ŋ/, is neutralizable. Therefore the answer is that neither is neutralizable. Second, a neutralizable opposition is bound to be an exclusive opposition. (By an exclusive opposition is meant a phonological opposition the common base of whose two or more member terms (phonemes or tonemes) is exclusive to these member terms and not found in any other terms (phonemes or tonemes) of the same language.) As “nasal” which is the phonological content of the said archiphoneme /n-ŋ/ is also found in /m/ “labial nasal” and, since “nasal” which is the phonological content of the said archiphoneme /m-ŋ/ is also found in /n/ “apical nasal”, it follows that neither /n/ - /ŋ/ nor /m/ - /ŋ/ can be an exclusion opposition and consequently cannot be a neutralizable opposition. The conclusion of all this is that /n/ and /m/ occurs in word-final position preceded by /z/ or /s/ and that /ŋ/ does not occur in that position. [m] and [n] which occur after [z] or [s] in that position are realizations of /m/ and /n/, respectively.

The phonological status of [m] and [n] when preceded by [z] or [s] is as follows.

[m]: /s/ + /m/
[n]: /s/ + /n/  
(N.B. The schwa phoneme is realized as a prosodic feature of syllabicity in [m] and [n].)

As a matter of fact, it is not only when preceded by [z] or [s] that the above-mentioned phonological status of [m] and [n] is valid. Various other consonants too can occur in word-pre-final position before [m] or [n], as earlier shown in p. 156 and

---

Syllabic consonants in English: phonetic and phonological aspects

p. 157, and the above-mentioned phonological status of [ŋ] and [ŋ] apply in such cases as well, except in the cases of [p] + [m], [b] + [n], [t] + [ŋ], and [d] + [ŋ].

What is common to [sm̩], [zm̩], [θm̩], [ðm̩] and [jm̩], and to [pn̩], [bn̩], [fn̩], [vn̩], etc. is that there is no homorganicity between the two sounds in each of these consecutive consonants. The labiality of [m] is not determined by the preceding consonant, i.e. [s], [z], [θ], [ð] or [ʃ], and the speaker can choose and does choose [m] as distinct from [n] as necessary, so consequently [m] is a realization of /m/. Likewise, the apicality of [n] not being determined by the preceding consonant, i.e. [p], [b], [f], [v], etc., the speaker can choose and does choose [n], as necessary, distinct from [m], so consequently [n] is a realization of /n/. There is consequently no neutralization of the opposition /m/ - /n/ - /ŋ/ since /m/ or /ŋ/ is chosen by the speaker.

Let’s next consider [pn̩], [bn̩], [fn̩], [vn̩], etc. There is no homorganicity between [p], [b], [f], [v], etc. on the one hand and [n̩] on the other. As the apicality of [n̩] is not being determined by [p], [b], [f], [v], etc., the speaker can choose and does choose [n] instead of [m] or [ŋ], so consequently [n] is a realization of /n/. The phonological status of [ŋ] in these cases is again as follows.

\[\text{n̩}: /s/ + /n/\]

We will now look at cases where homorganicity does exist between certain consonants and [ŋ̍], [ŋ], and [ŋ̍], i.e. [tn̍], [dn̍], [pn̍] and [bn̍], and [kn̍].

In the case of [tn̍] (e.g. [ˈbʌtn̍] button) or [dn̍] (e.g. [ˈsʌdn̍] sudden), the apicality of [n̍] is determined by the apicality of [t] or [d] which precedes it. The speaker has no choice about the place of articulation of the nasal consonant following [t] or [d], that is, the choice between labiality, apicality and dorsality. The phonological opposition /m/ - /n/ - /ŋ/ is neutralized, with the result that [n] in [tn̍] or [dn̍] is a realization of /m̍/ - /n/ - /ŋ/ definable as “nasal” (most writers would prefer to symbolize it as /N/).

There is another way to prove that [n] in [tn̍] or [dn̍] should be regarded as a realization of the archiphoneme /m-n-ŋ/ combined with syllabicity (of /s/). We only need to consider [tn] and [dn] since the abstraction of syllabicity leaves the [n] articulatorily identical with [n]. We take note of the fact that, whilst [n] occurs word-finally preceded by [t] or [d] (i.e. [tn], [dn]), neither [m] nor [ŋ] occurs in the same condition (*[tm], *[dm], *[tn], *[dn]). We would not rush to conclude that [n] is a realization of /h/ and both /m/ and /ŋ/ are non-occurrent after /h/ or /ld/. Instead we know that the difference between [n] and [m] on the one hand, and that between [n] and [ŋ] on the other, is unavailable after [t] or [d]. It may be wondered if [n] is a realization of the archiphoneme /h-m-/ associated with the neutralization of the opposition /h/ - /m/ and, if so, this archiphoneme is definable as “non-dorsal nasal”. It may at the same time be wondered if [n] is a realization of a different archiphoneme /n-ŋ/ associated with the neutralization of the opposition /h/ - /ŋ/ in which case this archiphoneme is definable as “non-labial nasal”. However, [n] cannot be a realization of both archiphonemes and
nor can it be that both neutralizations concomitantly produce [n]. We would not know which of the two phonological oppositions is neutralized. We conclude that [n] is a realization of neither the archiphoneme */n-m/ nor */n-ŋ/, but a realization of the archiphoneme /m-n-ŋ/ which is definable as “nasal” (no distinction between “labial”, “apical” and “dorsal” being possible) and is associated with the neutralization of the opposition /m/ – /n/ – /ŋ/. Therefore, [n] in [tn] or [dn] is phonologically as follows.

\[ [n]: /s/ + /m-n-ŋ/ \]

The same analytical process can be pursued mutatis mutandis in connection with the determination of [ŋ̍] in [pm̩] and [bm̩] and that of [n̩] in [kŋ̍]. Note that we have earlier indicated the phonological status of [n̩] differently as follows.

\[ [n̩]: /ə/ + /n/ (and not [n̩]: /ə/ + /m-n-ŋ/) \]

In the case of [pm] (e.g. [ˈklæpm] Clapham, [ˈɔpm] open) or [bŋ] (e.g. [rɪbm] ribbon, [kæłbŋ] cabin boy), the place of articulation of [m], i.e. labiality, is dictated by that of [p] or [b] that precedes [m]. The speaker is denied the choice of the nasal consonant between labiality, apicality and dorsality after [p] or [b]. This means that [m] is a realization of the archiphoneme /m-n-ŋ/ definable as “nasal”, which is the archiphoneme already seen above, so that [m] is phonologically analyzed as follows.

\[ [m]: /s/ + /m-n-ŋ/ \]

In the case of [kŋ̍] (e.g. [ˈbeɪkŋ̍] bacon), the dorsal articulation of [ŋ̍] is automatically determined by that of [k] which precedes [ŋ̍]. The speaker is denied the choice between labiality, apicality and dorsality of the nasal following [k]. Therefore, the phonological opposition /m/ – /n/ – /ŋ/ is neutralized after [k], so that [ŋ̍] is a realization of the same archiphoneme as we saw above.

\[ [ŋ̍]: /s/ + /m-n-ŋ/ \]

It is stressed that, although no such co-variation as [əŋ̍] ~ [ŋ̍] exists, the justification of postulating /s/ above is the syllabicity in [ŋ̍].

We have thus established the phonological status of [m̩], [n̩] and [ŋ̍] everywhere they occur. Here is the final summary.

\[ [m]: /s/ + /m/ \]
\[ [m]: /s/ + /m-n-ŋ/ \]

---

120 In the case of open [ˈɔpm]) there is a discrepancy between the sound [m] and the letter n, but there is none in the case of Clapham [ˈklæpm] or Petersham [ˈpiːtəm], i.e. [m] and m. In Clapham and Petersham, [m] is chosen by the speaker either because of the spelling or through knowing the pronunciation of Clapham or Petersham in daily life even without bothering about the spelling.
[ŋ̍]: /ə/ + /ŋ/  

(N.B. 1. As [ŋ̍] always occurs as a realization of the archiphoneme /m-n-ŋ/ and only occurs in [kŋ̍], no such phonological interpretation as '/ə + /ŋ/' is possible.)

(N.B. 2. In the presentation of the phonological status of [m], [n] and [ŋ̍], the sequential order – as seen above – of /ə/ on the one hand and /m/, /n/ and /m-n-ŋ/ on the other hand is completely immaterial, as /ə/ and /m/, /ə/ and /n/ and /ə/ and /m-n-ŋ/ are unordered just as, for instance, the relevant features of a phoneme (e.g. “voiceless”, “plosive”, “nasal” of /p/ in English) or an archiphoneme (e.g. “non-dorsal nasal” of /m-n-ŋ/ also in English) are unordered. I have conveniently chosen the order as seen above that is in conformity of the conventional representation of ‘[ə] + non-syllabic consonant’ in pronouncing dictionaries. One is therefore justified to present e.g. either /ə/ + /m/ as much as /m/ + /ə/, for [m̩].)

That [m] and [n] can both have an identical phonological status is a good demonstration of the functionalist principle that there is no necessary correspondence between physical reality and linguistic function.121

We finally add to the above list the phonological status of [l̩] and [r̩] which will be determined as follows.

[l̩]: /ə/ + /l/  
[r̩]: /ə/ + /r/  

My analysis of the phonological status of the syllabic consonants in English as shown above might seem somewhat reminiscent of Martinet’s solution to the phonological status of [ɲ] and [ŋ] in French. But there are similarities and differences, as will be seen from Martinet’s lines to be quoted below in connection with the problem of how to characterize the so-called ‘n mouillé’ (i.e. “palatal nasal” /ɲ/) of agneau (1965: 71). See also in this connection Martinet (1974).

Que le trait pertinent de palatalité soit attribué à un phonème /ʎ/ [i.e. /ɲ/] ou qu’il apparaisse comme le phonème /j/ [i.e. /ŋ/], cela importe peu. Ce qui importe, c’est qu’il apparaîsse dans la description, comme il apparaît à titre distinctif dans la chaîne. … L’important n’est pas de réaliser des économies sur le plan paradigmatique aux dépens du plan syntagmatique, ou vice versa. L’essentiel est de donner une représentation qui rende pleine justice à tous les éléments distinctifs.

The similarities and differences between Martinet’s phonological definition of ‘n mouillé’ in French and mine of the syllabic nasals (and for that matter, the other syllabic consonants) in English are as follows.

121 This principle is succinctly summarized by Martinet (1960: III-3).
(1) The entity that Martinet identifies is a phoneme which is definable in its entirety in terms of relevant features. The entity that I have identified is some sort of unit, not just a phoneme or an archiphoneme, that is only partially definable in terms of relevant features.

(2) The French phonological system has, among others, two phonemes, i.e. /ɲ/ “palatal nasal” and /j/ “palatal”, that are taken into account in establishing the phonological status of /ɲ/, whereas the English phonological system has the phonemes /m/, /n/, /ŋ/ and /r/ but not */syllabicity/; this last being not a relevant feature but a prosodic element, which overlays each of [m], [n], [ŋ], [l] and [r].

(3) Martinet takes into account two phonemes, /n/ and /j/, which occur successively in this order, in identifying a single phoneme /ɲ/. I take into account two successive phonetic elements, e.g. [ə] and [l], which occur successively in this order, for me to phonologically identify [l̩]. The two elements, i.e. /n/ and /j/, and e.g. [ə] and [l], are in both cases elements found on the syntagmatic axis.

(4) Whereas the whole phonological characteristic of /j/ “palatal” is taken into account in defining /ɲ/, only a certain single phonetic characteristic of [ə], i.e. syllabicity, is taken into account in characterizing e.g. [l].

(5) The notion of ‘transfer’ of [ə] to the following e.g. [l] is resorted to, which results in a coalescence of [ə] and [l] and ultimately in a fusion of [ə] and [l]. The notion of ‘transfer’ is extraneous to accounting for “palatality” (which /j/ is) in /ɲ/ in French.

(6) There is no setting up a syllabic phoneme which might be presented as */l/ as opposable to a non-syllabic phoneme /l/, whereas /n/ and /ɲ/ are perfectly opposable to each other (cf. /ano/ anneau vs. /apo/ agneau).

The widespread solution known to the problem of the syllabic consonants in English, [m], [n], [ŋ], [l] and [r], is to phonologically envisage e.g. [l] in terms of /ən/ + /l/. Cohen (1965: 63) mentions, in connection with the interpretation of word-final [tn] and [tl] as /tən/ and /təl/, Trubetzkoy, Trnka, Martinet, Trager and Bloch, and Swadesh as advocating this solution.

This is the solution advocated by Trubetzkoy (1939: 56) who writes about instances not in English but in e.g. German. Trubetzkoy offers this solution, not in reference to the commutation test (which was still not fully worked out in his days) but on the basis of the relation between a sequence of sounds, ‘vowel + a certain consonant (i.e. [ən], [əl], [əl])’ and a single sound, a syllabic consonant ([m], [n], [ŋ],) to see whether or not a sequence of sounds is to be analyzed as a single phoneme.

(monophonemantic interpretation) or multiple phonemes (polyphonemantic interpretation). In Trubetzkoy’s own words,

Daher werden die deutschen silbischen l, m, n als Realisierung der Phonemverbindungen “el”, “em”, “en” gewertet…

As it happens, the case of [əl] and [l], that of [əm] and [m], and that of [ən] and [n] in German are not quite comparable in details to those in English. Nevertheless, the same conclusion would be drawn, that is, that [l] is a realization of /əl/.

What interests us is that, in his analysis of Polish nasalized vowels, Trubetzkoy offers the formula “Vokal + Nasal” (“vowel + nasal”). Though “Vokal” here refers to various vowels, this formula may, if we like, be utilized in our analysis of the syllabic consonants in English. Besides, to my mind, ‘syllabicity’ and ‘vocalic function’ are the two faces of the same coin. This is patently suggested in Martinet (1947: 49) (= Martinet 1965: 72) and Martinet (1960: III-21) – I will quote his relevant lines further below (211) – and also in Trnka (1966: 33) when he says that “…these consonants take over its [i.e. of [ə]] vocalic function and become syllabic.” Note also in this connection that Trager and Bloch (1941: 232) consider ‘syllabicity’ as an allophone of /əl/.

Cohen (1965: 65 fn. 44) refers to Trnka (1935: 52) which is subsequently reprinted as Trnka (1966: 55) where we read the following lines by Trnka.

… syllabic l, n, m are equivalent to ə+l, ə+n, ə+m (cf. p. 33) …

Trnka (1966: 33) gives a detailed exposition about his interpretation and adds succinctly (1966: 33 fn. 12),

Syllabic /l, n, m/ must be regarded, therefore, as equivalent to /ə + l/, /ə + n/ and /ə + m/.

Trnka’s explanation as to why he reaches this interpretation is given at some length spreading over two pages. Unlike Trubetzkoy, Trnka (1966: 33) talks about the neutralization of the opposition /l/ - /əl/ in non-initial syllables ‘before l, n, and m’ as he puts it. He interestingly goes on to say,

…it is only the retention of syllabicity and non-obstructional articulation which characterizes a vowel versus a consonant in this position. The representative phoneme is /əl/, but its articulation here is usually so reduced before l, n, and sometimes m, that these consonants take over its vocalic function and become syllabic.

---

123 Trubetzkoy (1935: 16) appropriately writes Realisierungen (in the plural). Trubetzkoy (1949: 64) puts réalisations (in the plural) and also Trubetzkoy (1969: 61) realizations (in the plural). It is possible that this minor error crept into Trubetzkoy (1939:16) during the process of hurried editing by Jakobson in the understandable critical circumstances.

124 Wells (1965: 111 fn. 3) expresses the same view when he writes: ‘Grundzüge, p. 56 with reference to German. His arguments apply, mutatis mutandis, to English.’
I disagree with Trnka on four points here, though this has no direct relevance to Trnka’s conclusion ‘/ə/ + [l] > ‘syllabic l’, ‘/ə/ + [n] > ‘syllabic n’, and ‘/ə/ + [m] > ‘syllabic m’ and to my conclusion ‘syllabicity + [l] > [l̩ ’, ‘syllabicity + [n] > [n]’, and ‘syllabicity + [m] > [m]’.

First, contrary to what Trnka says, the schwa does not necessarily reduce before [l], [n] and [m], as the forms [əl], [ən] and [əm] do exist in co-variation with [l̩ ], [n̩ ] and [m̩ ].

Second, in my view, /ɪ̃/ - /ə/ is not ‘…in unstressed syllables…the only [my italics] pair of phonemes capable of distinguishing words’ (Trnka 1966: 33). Cf. foreword [-w̜d] vs. forward [-w̜d] and commerce [-m̜s] vs. commas [-m̜z].

Third, I find it difficult to see that /ɪ̃/ - /ə/ is ‘neutralized in unstressed syllables’, as Trnka puts it.

Fourth, I do not endorse either the notion or the term of ‘representative phoneme’ consequent on neutralization of a phonological opposition or that /ə/ is the representative phoneme of the alleged neutralization of /ɪ̃/ - /ə/.

However, my disagreement with Trnka on these four points does not call for any discussion in this paper. It is essential to take note that I agree with Trnka’s mention of ‘syllabicity’ and ‘vocalic function’ and his idea that the non-syllabic consonants ‘take over its [i.e. /ə/] vocalic function (this corresponds to ‘transfer of syllabicity’ in my expression) and become syllabic (this corresponds to ‘coalescence’ and ‘fusion’). Furthermore, So far as the syllabic consonants are concerned, Trnka’s words that ‘its [i.e. /ə/] articulation here is usually so reduced…’ corresponds to my view that the articulatory features which usually characterize the schwa becomes irrelevant, as I said further above.

Let’s turn our attention to Martinet. I am not aware of his phonological interpretation of the syllabic consonants that occur in English. However, Cohen (1965: 63 fn. 45) refers to Martinet (1937) as offering a relevant interpretation in connection with Danish. Note that Martinet does not, as Cohen suggests to the contrary, treat of word-final [tn] and [tl] in English. Martinet discusses what he refers to as ‘les sonantes employées avec valeur vocalique’ in Danish. What Martinet refers to as ‘les sonantes’ (or specifically ‘les sonantes consonantiques’ as I would say) corresponds to ‘sonorants’ in English terminology. Martinet’s expression ‘les sonantes employées avec valeur vocalique’ would correspond to ‘the syllabic consonants’. He interprets such syllabic consonants in Danish phonologically in terms of ‘/ə/ + sonante’. An example which Martinet (1937: 174) gives is ‘enten [end̩ ] ændən’. This is what he writes (1937: §2.24).

Pike (1962: 144): ‘The sonorants are nonvocoid resonants and comprise the lateral resonant orals and resonant nasals (e.g. [m], [n], and [l]).’
Devant n et l, [ə] disparaît le plus communément, et la sonante suivante devient voyelle [I would say ‘syllabique’ here rather than ‘voyelle’, i.e. ‘vocalique’] (cf. un mot comme *enten* “ou” qui se prononce [endn̥], et où il est artificiel d’interrompre l’occlusion buccale en passant de [d] à [n]). Ceci ne doit pas empêcher d’interpréter phonologiquement *enten* comme *ændan* et *Adel* comme ’*ādəl*.

Though Martinet notates [n̥] with a diacritic (a small low ring) which in our days generally represents ‘devoiced’, this diacritic should be understood as representing syllabicity here. Though Martinet does not indicate *ændan* enclosed by oblique bars (as we would in our days), we understand it as a phonological notation. Martinet indicates sounds within square brackets phonologically but phonological notations are given by default without the use of oblique bars.

That Martinet interprets not only [n] but other syllabic consonants, i.e. [l] and [r] in Danish, in terms of ‘/ə/ + sonante’ is clear from his statement as the following (1937: §3.29).

Ils [r̩, l̩, m̩, n̩] se combinent avec un phonème précédent pour donner des [r], [l], [m] et [n] voyelles. Ces réalisations sont naturellement à interpréter comme *ār*, *āl*, *ām*, *ān*…

Martinet gives a number of examples of Danish words in whose pronunciation syllabic consonants occur and present their phonological notations along the same lines.

126 According to Makkai (1972: 4), the use of oblique lines for this purpose is said to have occurred for the first time in print in phonological literature as late as 1941, in Trager and Bloch (1941). We do read in Trager and Bloch (1941: 229 fn. 9) as follows: ‘Phonemic symbols are enclosed between diagonals to distinguish them from spellings (cited in italics) and from phonetic symbols (enclosed in square brackets).’

The following information is of historical interest. Collins & Mees (1999: 205) write: ‘It is notable that throughout the book [i.e. *An outline of English phonetics*, 1918], Jones uses square brackets to enclose narrow transcription.’ They then quote from Jones who says that ‘Broad transcription of English is used throughout this book, narrow forms being occasionally added in cases where it might be helpful. Such narrow transcription is in every case enclosed in squares brackets.’

Collins & Mees conclude that ‘This would appear to be the first time that this convention (later applied to phonetic as opposed to phonemic transcription) was ever employed in a published work.’

In point of fact, the attribution of the first use of square brackets in phonetics to Jones (re 1918) would seem to be incorrect. Sweet (19081 et 19102, on p. 10) writes as follows nearly a decade before Jones (1918) does: ‘Narrow Romic [Romantic in 1st ed., Romantic in 2nd ed.] are distinguished from Broad Romic symbols by being enclosed in [ ].’ I owe this information to Windsor Lewis in a private communication (20 March 2014). I am aware, however, that, at an even earlier date, Viétor (1887: 26, 37, 53 *et passim*), for instance, employs square brackets for the purpose in question. Specifically on p. 37, we find his expression ‘das Zeichen [ ].’ It is even possible that Viétor (18843) – to which I have so far not had access – already makes use of square brackets. It is even possible (though not confirmed) that Viétor may have already used square brackets in phonetics as early as 1884 (Viétor 18844).

128 That is, r, l, m, n, in Martinet (1937) where he does not use diagonal bars (/ /) to indicate phonematic units.
We have seen that Martinet proposes the phonological interpretation ‘/ə/ + sonante’ so far as Danish is concerned. It would seem to me to be reasonable to suggest that, in the case of the syllabic consonants in English, i.e. [l̩], [n̩], [m̩], [ŋ̍] and [r̩], Martinet would probably not propose the interpretation i.e. /ən/, /əm/, /əŋ/ in certain cases (though agreeing with /əl/ and /ər/) in the case of English but rather an interpretation substantially congruous with mine offered above. It would be a highly likely possibility, given Martinet’s acquaintance with and positive attitude towards the concepts of neutralization and the archiphoneme as evidenced already at the time in e.g. Martinet (1933) and Martinet (1936) as well as, of course, Martinet (1937).

I am basically agreeable to such a solution whereby ‘/ə/ + sonante’ for the syllabic consonants is adopted in English as well. In accepting this solution, I wish to re-emphasize (I have already made the point on pp. 198-9) that not the whole of the phonetic features of /ə/ should be taken into account. The only feature of /ə/ to be reckoned with is its syllabicity or vocality (in the sense syllabicity = vocality), the rest of its features being irrelevant. Two segments (e.g. [ə] and [l]) are reduced to ([l̩]), with the sonorant consonant ([l]) retaining its various attributes (voicedness, non-nasality, laterality, etc.) and acquiring syllabicity.

Martinet (1947: 49), which is reproduced in Martinet (1965: 72), speaking about French, says,

…le caractère vocalique ou syllabique de [y] [i.e. [j]]…caractère consonantique et non syllabique de [t]…

where ‘vocalique’ and ‘syllabique’ are synonymously referred to.

Subsequently, Martinet (1960: III-21) even more directly repeats his synonymous reference to vocality and syllabicity when he says as follows while referring to abbaye /abei/ and abeille /abej/, …la vocalité et la syllabicité ne sont ici qu’un seul et même trait.

Trager and Bloch (1941: 232) first cite gambolling [l] vs. gambling [l], evening ‘making even’ [n] vs. evening ‘early night’ [n], and fathoming [m] vs. rhythmic [m]\(^\text{129}\). They then mention the occurrence of what they consider as ‘free variation’ (stylistically determined, they say), ‘syllabic consonant’ = ‘/ə/ + consonant’, exemplifying this by [l] ~ [əl] for idol, and [n] ~ [ən] for mountain. They do not refer to [m] ~ [əm] as in rhythm [ˈrɪðm] ~ [ˈrɪðəm] or prism [ˈprɪzm] ~ [ˈprɪzmə], and say that [m] is less common. They point out an appreciable degree of phonetic similarity between [ə] of [əl], [ən] and [əm] on the one hand and allophones of /ə/ on the other. They consider /ə/ as having been preliminarily established. They point out that ‘lateral-colored

\(^\text{129}\) Trager and Bloch employ, as does Martinet (1937), the phonetic symbols [], η and η without adding square brackets. I have replaced them here by [l], [n] and [m] and will continue to do so below.
syllabicity’ or ‘nasal-colored syllabicity’ (their expressions) are [l̩] and [n̩], which are in complementary distribution with allophones of /l/ occurring elsewhere. (We note that they do not mean [l] and [l], or [n] and [n], occurring in complementary distribution.) They conclude that ‘[l, n, m] are [phonemically] /l/, /n, /m/.’ Clearly Trager and Bloch’s criteria for analyzing [l̩], [n̩] and [m̩] are phonetic similarity and complementary distribution.

It is very interesting that, among the various allophones of /ə/, Trager and Bloch mention ‘syllabicity’ which they apparently regard as an allophone of /ə/ and which they find in [l] (apple), [n] (button) and [m] (rhythm)\(^{130}\) in addition to [ʌ] (undone) and [ə] (sofa). Their way of looking at ‘syllabicity’ as an allophone of /ə/ would seem like the idea of ‘transfer (of [ə]) to [l], [n] or [m],’ resulting in coalescence, and eventually a fusion, of [ə] and [l], [n] or [m].

Trager and Bloch (1941: 232-3) go on to deal with [ɚ] (= [r̩]?) in AmE which they consider as ‘the weak-stressed retroflex vowel’ and analyze it in terms of ‘a combination of /ə/ + consonant’, that is, along the same line as for the other above-mentioned syllabic consonants. They again employ the criteria of phonetic similarity and complementary distribution (re ‘[ɚ] and prevocalic [r]) and conclude that ‘[ɚ] is phonemically /ər/’ (1941: 233). This interpretation may be considered to apply to [r̩] in BrE as well.

Trager and Bloch do not mention [ŋ̍] at all in this work, so we do not know how they may analyze it ‘phonemically’, but possibly [ŋ̍] = /əŋ/.

We now turn to Swadesh (1935: 150). The two points in his article are (i) that he analyzes the syllabic consonants phonologically as ‘/ə/ + non-syllabic consonant’ and (ii) that /ə/ functions mainly as ‘syllabicity’ in the syllabic consonants. In his own words,

… I should not hesitate to substitute ər for Bloomfield’s r in all cases and similarly ən for n, əm for m, əl even in those cases where syllabic r, n, m, l are normally pronounced, because the vowel discussed above has a range of values that shades off into mere syllabicity in some instances.

It seems that, so far as I can see from my short survey above, there is common agreement among researchers that syllabic consonants, [l], [n], [m], [ŋ], and [r] in English, are phonologically interpretable in terms of /l/ + /l/, /l/ + /n/, /l/ + /m/, /l/ + /h/, and /l/ + /l/, respectively, though my interpretation does not agree with this in some respects, that is, as I fully explained above, they concern the phonological status of [ŋ], [m] and [ŋ] where these are preceded by those consonants (necessarily plosives) which are homorganic with them, viz. [t] and [d] preceding [ŋ], [p] and [b] pre-

\(^{130}\) Although Trager and Bloch do not mention the example of rhythm earlier, they do do it here and refer to Swadesh (1935: 150).
ceding [m], and [k] preceding [ŋ]. The commonly agreed formula about the phonological status of the syllabic consonants in English can be succinctly expressed as ‘/ə/ + sonant’. The ‘sonant’ is /l/, /n/, /m/, /ŋ/ or /r/ for the majority of researchers, but /l/ “lateral”, /r/ “spirant”, /n/ “apical nasal”, /m/ “labial nasal” or /m-n-ŋ/ “nasal”, as the case may be, for myself and (it is hoped) for other functionalists. It is to be particularly stressed that the ‘sonant’ in question can never be /ŋ/ “dorsal nasal” according to my phonological analysis of the syllabic consonants in English.

I said that there seems to be common agreement that the syllabic consonants are phonologically interpreted as ‘/ə/ + non-syllabic consonant’ or ‘/ə/ + sonant’. We note, however, at least one dissentient voice attributable to Jones (1950: §301) who objects to such a phonological interpretation and considers that both a syllabic consonant (e.g. [l]) and the corresponding non-syllabic consonant ([l]) belong to the same phoneme (/l/), the difference between them being that the former is longer than the latter. Jones thus apprehends the occurrence of a syllabic consonant and a non-syllabic consonant as a paradigmatic phenomenon. If so, the confrontation between [l] and [l] occurring in an identical context (e.g. [ˈkɒd̩ɪŋ] [ˈkɒd̩ɪŋ]) would in theory lead to establishing two phonemes */l̩/ and /l/ which, however, he does not, as he operates with /l/ only. Besides, his principle that two sounds occurring in the same context belong to different phonemes (/l/ and /l/?)) cannot be maintained. This is so as he would not consider the syllabic and non-syllabic consonants occurring in the same context as either free variants or members of a variant.

Phonological interpretation of syllabic consonants other than [l], [n], [m], [ŋ] and [r]

We have seen, in addition to those mentioned just above, a few other syllabic consonants that are voiceless (e.g. [s], [ʃ], [k]) or voiced (e.g. [b]). All of these are obstruents, unlike [l], [n], [m], [ŋ] and [r] which are sonorants.

The above-mentioned phonological interpretation ‘/ə/ + consonant’ might be thought to apply to [s], [ʃ], [k] and [b] as well. If so, I tentatively suggest the following. (However, for another suggestion of mine, see infra 216-7.) Each of [s], [ʃ], [k] and [b] is long and syllabic. Its duration and syllabicity are like two sides of the same coin and point to one and the same entity. Syllabicity of /s/ is transferred to /s/, /ʃ/, /ʃ/, /k/, etc., so that syllabicity and each of these consonant phonemes coalesce and are fused. In this process, /s/ would be transferred as *syllabic and voiceless* ([s]). One should remember that the distinction between ‘voiced’ and ‘voiceless’ is phonologically irrelevant to /s/ and the voicelessness is caused through regressive assimilation by the phonological characteristic “voiceless” inherent in /s/, /ʃ/, /ʃ/, /k/, etc. In the case of [b], /s/ would be transferred as *syllabic and voiced* to /b/, and there results [b].
How do we indicate syllabic consonants in phonological notation?

The final point that calls for our attention is how to represent syllabic consonants in English in the phonological notation of individual words and in running phonological notation. I will show below a few different ways in which the syllabic consonants may be represented with different degrees of success and validity, not all of which I am ready to favour. I will end with one type of phonological notation of the syllabic consonants that I am inclined to regard as the most appropriate.

Let’s first consider e.g. coddle ['kɒdl], coddling ['kɒdlɪŋ] and codling ['kɒdlɪŋ]. Following the common practice (if not my own practice in certain respects) according to which the syllabic consonants are interpreted as /l̩/, /ɑːl/, /ɑːl/ and /əl/, the following phonological notations may first be proposed: /ˈkɒdl/, /ˈkɒdlɪŋ/, /ˈkɒdlɪŋ/. The disadvantage of these notations is that /əl/ as a unit corresponding to a syllabic consonant does not stand out enough in /ˈkɒdl/ and /ˈkɒdlɪŋ/. Besides, the notations /ˈkɒdl/ and /ˈkɒdlɪŋ/ might easily be understood to correspond to [ˈkɒdl] (instead of [ˈkɒdl]) and [ˈkɒdlɪŋ] (instead of [ˈkɒdlɪŋ]). They can accordingly be amended as /ˈkɒdl.əl/ and /ˈkɒdl.əl.ɪŋ/.

We can alternatively, though perhaps less preferentially, propose /ˈkɒdl/, /ˈkɒdl.ɪŋ/ and /ˈkɒdlɪŋ/. In these notations it is assumed that the speaker automatically realizes /l̩l/ in /ˈkɒdl/ by [d]. In both /ˈkɒdl/ and /ˈkɒdl.ɪŋ/, /l/ occurs syllable-finally. The insertion of a dot in /ˈkɒdl.ɪŋ/ is to ensure that /l/ occurs syllable-finally and is realized by [l]. On the other hand, /l/ in /ˈkɒdlɪŋ/ which does not occur syllable-finally is automatically realized by [l].

Our examples of coddle, coddling and codling which constitute a case of three-way co-variation will be phonologically notated as follows. I attach the phonetic notation for each item.

['kɒdl] - ['kɒdlɪŋ] - ['kɒdlɪŋ]
/ˈkɒdl.əl/ - /ˈkɒdl.əl.ɪŋ/ - /ˈkɒdlɪŋ/

Here is another example, bottle, which involves a case of two-way co-variation.

['bɑːl] - ['bɑːlɪŋ]
/ˈbɑːl.əl/ - /ˈbɑːlɪŋ/

The insertion of dots in the proposed phonological notations is not overtly meant to mark syllabary boundary but ultimately does so. /əl/ constitutes a syllable, so that each dot does have the same purpose as a dot used in phonetic notation by MacCarthy (1957: 3) that ‘a decimal point [is used] to mark syllable division’.
The following are a few more examples of proposed phonological notations of words whose pronunciation involves [n], [m], [ŋ] and [r]. They all constitute cases of two-way co-variation.

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{[‘brɔkə]} - \text{[‘brɔkən]} \\
/ˈbrɔkən/ - /ˈbrɔkən/
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{[‘ɔpə]} - \text{[‘ɔpən]} \\
/ˈɔpən/ - /ˈɔpən/
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{[‘ɔpəmə]} - \text{[‘ɔpəmən]} \\
/ˈɔpəmən/ - /ˈɔpəmən/
\end{array}
\]

(N.B. A second dot in /ˈɔpəmən/ is necessary; its absence may tempt the reader to read /…n/ with /n/ [non-syllabic]).

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{[‘bʌtə]} - \text{[‘bʌtən]} \\
/ˈbʌtən/ - /ˈbʌtən/
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{[‘sʌdə]} - \text{[‘sʌdən]} \\
/ˈsʌdən/ - /ˈsʌdən/
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{[‘rɪðəm]} - \text{[‘rɪðəm]} \\
/ˈrɪðəm/ - /ˈrɪðəm/
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{[‘ɔpən]} - \text{[‘ɔpən]} \\
/ˈɔpən] - /ˈɔpən/
\end{array}
\]

(N.B. 1. The space is placed between ə and m-n-ŋ in order that the latter (the archiphoneme /m-n-ŋ/) may the better visually stand out; the presence of the space prevents us from reading [əm]).

(N.B. 2. The alternative symbol, N (for m-n-ŋ/), is for convenience sake in that the single symbol is used and no space need be placed between ə and N in the phonological notation.)

(N.B. 3. Words involving [m] of [pəm] do not co-vary with [əm].)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{[‘bɛkŋ] } - \text{[‘bɛkŋ] } \\
/ˈbɛkŋ/ - /ˈbɛkŋ/\end{array}
\]

(N.B. Words involving [ŋ] of [kŋ] do not co-vary with [əŋ].)

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{[‘kəmərə]} - \text{[‘kəmərə]} \\
/ˈkəmərə/ - /ˈkəmərə/
\end{array}
\]

Here is a made-up utterance in which all five syllabic consonants, [l], [ŋ], [m], [ŋ] and [r], occur. I indicate the syllabic consonants in boldface in the phonetic notation.

\[
\text{[mat ‘ŋək] z ‘brɔkə] ‘kəmərə wɔz ‘sʌdən ‘faond m ‘kləpəm]}
\]
/mat /ʌm-nŋklz/ˈbraʊk.ʌm-nŋ /ˈkɛm.ər.ə waz ˈsʌ.d.əm-nŋli ˈfaʊm-nŋd in ˈklip.əm-nŋ/  
(or /mat /ˈNk.əl z ˈbraʊk.N ˈkɛm.ər.ə waz ˈsʌ.d.əNli ˈfaʊNd in ˈklip.əN/.)

(N.B. /N/ in /…ˈbraʊk.N ˈkɛm.ər.ə…/) is deliberately meant here (cf. progressive assimilation [k] + [n] > [k] + [ŋ]) to correspond to [ŋ] but, in the absence of this progressive assimilation, corresponds to [n] (‘/n’ + /n’).

What about phonological notations for syllabic consonants like [s], [ʃ], [k], [b], etc.? Will it be reasonable to use for these syllabic consonants the same type of phonological notation as for [ʃ], [k], [m], [ŋ] and [r]? If it is judged to be so, is one to note e.g. /as, pət/, /as.ˈlɪstə/, /as.ˈsætt/? This type of phonological notation would be quite unacceptable.

The occurrence of [s], [ʃ], [k], [b], etc., unlike that of [ʃ], [k], [m], [ŋ] and [r], is incidental and infrequent and is not of the sort that is regularly indicated in pronunciation dictionaries. Characteristic co-variation like [ʃ] ~ [ʃ] (two-way co-variation) or [ʃ] ~ [ʃ] ~ [ʃ] (three-way co-variation) is extraneous to [s], [ʃ], [k], [b], etc. We recall at this juncture my tentative suggestion offered (supra 214) that [ʃ], [ʃ], [k], [b], etc. result from the transfer of the schwa (devoiced) to [s], [ʃ], [k], [b], etc. However, the essential feature of these syllabic consonants is above all their augmented duration,

which is generally a geminate, e.g. [bb], [ss] rather than, say, [bbb], [sss], and this feature need to be shown in the relevant phonological notations.

Probably an appropriate type of phonological notation for these syllabic consonants would be to double the given symbol for each of them, so that [s], [ʃ], [k], [b], etc. will be phonologically represented as /ss/, /ʃʃ/, /kk/, /bb/, etc. Some such examples would be [sːˈpɔt] /ssˈpɔt/, [ʃːˈlɪstə] /ssˈlɪstə/, [ʃːˈsæt] /ʃʃˈsæt, [ʃʃˈsed] /ʃʃˈsed/, [kk jʊ] /kk jʊl, [ŋ-kjʊ] /ŋkjoʊ, [ʃrɒbli] /prəbblɨ, [pɒˈtɪkJʊlæp] /pəˈtɪkJʊlæp, [rˈɡɪəl] /rˈɡɪəl, [ˈfɛbər] /ˈfɛbər. I also add here [ŋ-kjʊ] (or [ŋkjʊ] /ŋkjoʊ, which does not belong to the category of the syllabic consonants here for the reason that the notation with the doubling of the symbol, /ŋŋ/, is convenient and desirable.

A few, if not all, of the examples of phonological notation of the syllabic consonants shown above which resort to doubling symbols for phonemes present problems to functionalists, if not to non-functionalists. For instance, /ss ˈp-bʊl/ should be
preferred over /ssˈpɔt/, /ˈk k-g j ʊʊ/ over /ˈkk jʊ/, and /ˈŋ m-n-ŋ kj ʊʊ/ over /ˈŋŋkju/.

Finally, how do we phonologically represent interjections like [ʃ̩] (variously spelt sh, ssh, shh) and [m̩] mmm? [ʃ] and [m] are alleged to be long and form the crests of syllables, that is, provided such interjections occur surrounded by troughs in utterances. It is true that they are long but they cannot form the crests of syllables if there is nothing in the immediate environment that can be said to be troughs. Some might suggest that [ʃ] and [m] be notated /ʃ/ and /m/. However, prior to considering or suggesting how to phonologically notate such interjections, there is a fundamentally important question to consider, that is, whether such interjections can be regarded as syllabic consonants at all. I have two main reasons why [ʃ] and [m] may not be treated like all five syllabic consonants of English. First, neither [ʃ] nor [m] is preceded by an accented vowel on most occasions on which they are uttered, and second, these interjections do not have the variant form [əʃ], [əm] with which [ʃ] and [m] could co-vary. Consequently, it would seem that the only way [ʃ] or [m] might be phonologically notated is in the form of /ʃ/ and /m/. A length mark might be accorded a flexible implication that [ʃ] or [m] actually varies in its length ([ʃ], [ʃʃ], [ʃʃʃ], etc. or [m], [mm], [mmm], etc.), as the actual length of [ʃ] or [m] is dependent on how long the articulation of [ʃ] or [m] is sustained by the speaker. However, phonological notations like /ʃ/ and /m/ which involve /:/ (length as a ‘phonematic’ unit?) in English phonology would be problematical and unacceptable for functionalists. Besides the problem of whether or not to regard interjections such as cited above to form syllabic consonants proper, attempts at devising phonological notations of interjections like them would most likely fail.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Various phonetic aspects of the syllabic consonants [ʃ], [n], [m], [ŋ] and [r] in English were described and discussed in Part I. In dealing with generalities of their occurrences, questions concerning the occurrence of [r] occupied some considerable space. In addition to the above-mentioned five syllabic consonants, I have looked at a few marginal syllabic consonants whose occurrences are incidental such as [s], [ʃ], [k], [b], etc.

The phonological aspects of the syllabic consonants were treated in Part II. I concentrated on the determination of the phonological status of the syllabic consonants from a functionalist point of view. I then referred to previous investigations by a few other researchers into the phonological solution of the syllabic consonants. We

134 /u-ʊ/, which is a single distinctive unit of the second articulation is the archiphoneme /u-ʊ/ associated with the neutralization of the opposition /u/-/ʊ/.
are all agreed that syllabicity or vocality (two sides of the same coin) should be attributed to the schwa phoneme. Lastly I gave some thoughts to possible phonological notation of the syllabic consonants.

As I have amply shown, a syllabic consonant in English is both phonetically and phonologically a syntagmatic phenomenon in which the schwa and a non-syllabic consonant are involved as they occur successively or are fused. A syllabic consonant results from a fusion of the schwa (in terms of its intrinsic feature, syllabicity) and the non-syllabic consonant. A syllabic consonant may be part of two-way co-variation in e.g. [l] ~ [ɪl] (bottle) or of three-way co-variation as in [l] ~ [ɔl] ~ [l] (hustling). Phonologically, a syllabic consonant is analyzed as ‘schwa + a consonant (phoneme, archiphoneme)’, e.g. /ɔ/ + /l/, or ‘/ɔl/ + /m-n-ŋ/’. The identification of the phonological status of [ŋ], [ŋ] and [ŋ] calls for special care from a functional point of view: [ŋ] may be analyzed as either ‘/ɔl/ + /m/’ or ‘/ɔl/ + /m-n-ŋ/’ as the case may be; likewise, [ŋ] may be analyzed as ‘/ɔl/ + /l/’ or ‘/ɔl/ + /m-n-ŋ/’ as the case may be, while [ŋ] is always analyzed as ‘/ɔl/ + /m-n-ŋ/’.

Most phoneticians hold the view that a pair like coddling (< coddle + -ing) and codling (< cod + -ling) is a putative minimal pair whose members are differentiated from each other since [l] and [l] occur at a corresponding point in an identical phonetic context and are in a paradigmatic relation. I reject such a view as it would lead to establishing phonematic units, *[l] and *[l] for special care from a functional point of view: [ŋ] may be analyzed as either ‘/ɔl/ + /m/’ or ‘/ɔl/ + /m-n-ŋ/’ as the case may be; likewise, [ŋ] may be analyzed as ‘/ɔl/ + /l/’ or ‘/ɔl/ + /m-n-ŋ/’ as the case may be, while [ŋ] is always analyzed as ‘/ɔl/ + /m-n-ŋ/’.

There is common agreement among researchers that the phonological interpretation of a syllabic consonant is such that it consists of two phonematic units in succession, not in a single phonematic unit. However, at least one researcher to my knowledge sees it otherwise and regards a syllabic consonant as a variant of a single consonant phoneme.

REFERENCES

An English Pronouncing Dictionary (19171, 19242, 19263, 19374, 19405, 19446, 19457, 19478, 19489, 194910, 195611, 196312, 196713, 197714); London: Dent. An English Pronouncing Dictionary (197715, 200316, 200617, 201118) are published under the new title Cambridge English Pronouncing Dictionary. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. The different successive editorships are as follows: 19171 to 196713 (ed. Daniel Jones),

CPDBA (= *A Concise Pronouncing Dictionary of British and American English*). See Jack Windsor Lewis.

EPD (= *An English Pronouncing Dictionary*).

LPD (= *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary*). See John Christopher Wells.


Brown, Gillian (1990\textsuperscript{3} [1977\textsuperscript{4}]): *Listening to Spoken English*. Harlow: Longman.


GIMSON, Alfred Charles (1994†, 2001†, 2008†): *Gimson’s Pronunciation of English*. London: Hodder Education. (*Gimson’s An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English* revised by Alan CRUTTENDEN. It is referred to in the present article as GIMSON (1994†, 2001†, 2008†).)

N.B. GIMSON † was published in February 2014 by Rougledge (London & New York), too late for me to take into account in the present article.


JESPERSEN, Jens Otto Harry (1950†[1912†, 1921†, 1936†, 1945†]): *Engelsk Fonetik til Brug for Lærere og Studerende*. Copenhagen: Nordisk. (1950† is the last ed. in Danish.)


JONES, Daniel (1956c = 1956d [1909†, 1914†, 1950†]): *The Pronunciation of English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (According to Gimson’s Foreword, Jones’s (b.1881-d.1967) last corrections were made in 1962.)


Syllabic consonants in English: phonetic and phonological aspects


VIEtor, Wilhelm (18841): *Elemente der Phonetik des Deutschen, Englischen und Französi-
schen*. Heilbronn: Henninger.

VIEtor, Wilhelm (18872): *Elemente der Phonetik und Orthoepie des Deutschen, Englischen
und Französischen*. Heilbronn: Henninger.


WARD, Ida Caroline (19721 [19293, 19312, 19393, 19454]): *The Phonetics of English*, Cam-
bridge: Heffer.


