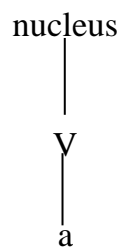


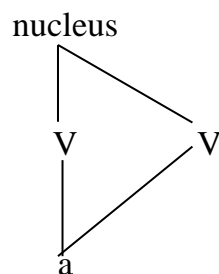
SYLLABLE

Syllable phonology : Phonologists like Allen (1953) demonstrate that the vowel is phonologically defined by the fact that it forms a syllable. Allen (1953: 80-83) says that a syllable is composed of a vowel, together with initial consonant(s), and, *in pausa*, a following consonant. Allen (Ibid.: 83) also points out that the prosody of vowel-length and tone are of great importance from the point of view of syllable structure. In that way, the syllable structure is treated as a prosodic and not as phonematic unit. According to the syllable phonologists Clements and Keyser (1983: 12-14) the notions light syllable and heavy syllable may be formally defined in terms of the category “nucleus”, where they take the nucleus to be a prosodic category. They further state that light syllables are those containing a simple (non-branching) nucleus, i.e., V, while heavy syllables are those containing a complex (branching) nucleus, that is VV or VC, as shown in Fig. 1.

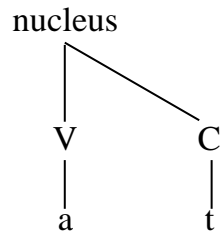
Light syllable



Heavy syllables



or



[Fig. 1]

While describing stress system of English they tried to distinguish between what have been termed ‘weak’ and ‘strong’ clusters, as shown in the bracketed portions of the following words:

Weak cluster: Amer [ic] a

Strong clusters: Wisc [ons] in

Ariz [on] a

Here ‘weak cluster’ means single short vowel followed by no more than one consonant. A ‘strong cluster’ consists of a short vowel followed by two or more consonants, or else of a long vowel plus zero or more consonants. According to them, the rules for assigning regular stress in English words are sensitive to this distinction as well as to the distinction between short and long vowels. Thus, the familiar rule for assigning main stress to nouns of three syllables or more, illustrated by the above examples, places stress on the right most syllable which is not a final short vowel syllable or a penultimate light syllable. In this way they have proposed that the nucleus is a category of prosodic organization dependent on, but formally distinct from the syllable.