CAS LX 500 Spring 2012
Linguistics/Cont. English

Assignment 2 (due Thursday, February 16 in class)

I. /l/-vocalization in London English

In many dialects of English, /l/ is phonetically realized as [w] in certain phonological contexts. This phenomenon is often referred to as "/l/-vocalization", since the resulting allophone [w] is more vowel-like.

A. The following data illustrates the pattern of/l/-vocalization in London English. What determines the distribution of the allophones [l] and [w] in this variety? Your answer should be stated in terms of syllable structure.

[l]: *live , loud , play , glow , lady , feeling, filler , goalie*
[w]: *belt , fold , bulb , girl , Charles , feel , goal , filter , bottle*

B. Consider next the following data:

[l]: *tell us , pull over , feel it , goal up*
[w]: *tell Joe , pull through , feel bad , goal down*

How might we account for the distribution of [l] and [w] seen here? Clearly state any necessary additional assumptions. Then, briefly explain how your proposal accounts for the difference between *feel*[l] *it* and *feel*[w] *bad*.

II. [j] in American English and British English (2 pages)

As we briefly saw in class, one feature that distinguishes American English from British English is the distribution of [j]. In particular, [j] may appear after the alveolar consonants [t, d, n, s, l] in British English, but not in American English:

American: *tune* [tun] , *dupe* [dup] , *news* [nuz] , *suit* [sut] , *lute* [lut] , *lurid* [lʊrɪd]

British: *tune* [tjun] , *dune* [djup] , *news* [njuz] , *suit* [sjut] , *lute* [ljut] , *lurid* [ljʊrid]

A. In British English, [j] cannot occur after [l] in the following words:

fluid	[fluɪd], *[fljuɪd]	*plumage*	[plumɪd͡ʒ], *[pljumɪd͡ʒ]
glue	[glu], *[glju]	*blew*	[blu], *[blju]

Do our current assumptions regarding the structure of English syllables account for this restriction? If, so then briefly explain why the ungrammatical [j]-pronunciations for these words are ruled out.

II. [j] in American English and British English (continued)

B. In British English, [j] does occur after [t, l] in the following words:

stupid [stjupɪd] *slew* [slju] *sleuth* [sljuθ]

Does the appearance of [j] in these words support the analysis of [s]-initial syllable onsets that we developed in class? If so, then briefly say how it does.

III. Exploring the English Syllable Template: The Rhyme

The following data illustrate certain restrictions (i.e., **phonotactic constraints**) governing possible diphthong + consonant sequences in the English rhyme.

	dime	*dine*	*[daɪŋ]
	type	*tight*	*tyke*
[aɪ] + C	*bribe*	*bride*	*[bɹaɪg]
	knife	*mice*	
	drive	*rise*	
	*[daʊm]	*down*	*[daʊŋ]
	*[taʊp]	*tout*	*[taʊk]
[aʊ] + C	*[laʊb]	*loud*	*[laʊg]
	*[maʊf]	*mouse*	
	*[raʊv]	*rouse*	
	*[kɔɪm]	*coin*	*[kɔɪŋ]
	*[trɔɪp]	*(De)troit*	*[trɔɪk]
[ɔɪ] + C	*[vɔɪb]	*void*	*[vɔɪg]
	*[t͡ʃɔɪf]	*choice*	
	*[pɔɪv]	*poise*	

Provide precise prose descriptions for all of the phonotactic constraints that you can identify in the above data. Wherever possible, try to state these constraints in terms of natural classes of speech sounds.

IV. Consonant Cluster Reduction in African American English

Under certain circumstances, word-final consonant sequences in African American English undergo reduction, whereby the final consonant is dropped. In the following words, consonant reduction has affected the word-final consonant sequences:

post	[pos]	(vs. [post])	*band*	[bæn]	(vs. [bænd])
wasp	[wɑs]	(vs. [wɑsp])	*raised*	[rez]	(vs. [rezd])
gift	[gɪf]	(vs. [gɪft])	*paged*	[peʤ]	(vs. [peʤd])
adopt	[ədɑp]	(vs. [ədɑpt])	*pound*	[paʊn]	(vs. [paʊnd])
picked	[pɪk]	(vs. [pɪkt])			

In the following words, the word-final consonant sequences are <u>not</u> affected by this reduction process:

paint	[peɪnt]	*pink*	[pɪŋk]	*bark*	[bɑrk]
jump	[ʤʌmp]	*belt*	[bɛlt]		

A. What is the relevant difference between those word-final consonant sequences that undergo reduction and those that do not?

B. Recall that sonority places a crucial role in determing whether a particular sequence of sounds constitutes a possible English syllable:

Table 6.1 *Sonority scale*

Oral stops		Fricatives		Nasals	Liquids		Semivowels	Vowels	
Voiceless	Voiced	Voiceless	Voiced					High	Low
p	b	f	v	m					
t	d	θ	ð	n			j	i	a
k	g	s	z	ŋ	l	r	w	u	ɑ

sonority →

How might the relative sonority of the word-final consonants determine whether a particular consonant sequence will undergo reduction?