PLINP201 PHONOLOGY OF ENGLISH

Lecture 2: Allophony

1. Some **allophones of /t/**

top	[tʰ]	*mattress*	[t̪, ʔt]
stop	[t⁼] no asp.	*eighth*	[t̪, ʔ]
potter	[t˙] weak asp.	*button*	[tⁿ, ʔ]
pot ‖	[t˙, t̚, ʔt, t']	*bottle*	[tˡ]

2. **Taxonomic-phonemic** theory assigns these sound-types to /t/ on the grounds of phonetic similarity and non-contrastive distribution. **Generativist** theory derives them as surface segments by rule from underlying /t/.

Discuss: Is there a /t/ in *postman* [ˈpəʊsmən]? in *soften*? in *whistle*? in *chalet*? How many instances of /t/ are there in *night-time*? And of [t]?

3. **Aspiration**

3.1 A fortis plosive is strongly aspirated when initial in a syllable with a strong vowel.

$$\sigma$$
$$\wedge$$

/p, t, k/ → [pʰ, tʰ, kʰ] /   _ [strong V]

tack, (stack, matter); attack, (tobacco); bedtime, agitate, titanic.

3.2 A fortis plosive has zero aspiration (a) when preceded by /s/ at the beginning of a syllable, and (b) when followed by a consonant (other than a semivowel).

$$\sigma$$
$$\wedge$$
$$\wedge$$

/p, t, k/ → [p⁼, t⁼, k⁼] / (a)   s _   *spin, steam, scowl*

(b)   _ [+cons]   *lapse, sets, fix, doctor*

3.3 Otherwise, /p, t, k/ have slight aspiration: *ripe, better, resting, today, ask.*
3.4 How can we make sure we deal appropriately with 'approximant devoicing' in *pure, please, twin, tune, cream, queue; (splash, studious, scream)*?

4. **Clear and dark /l/**
There are two possible formulations, depending on which sound-type is taken as the default.
4.1   A lateral is velarized before a consonant (including /w/ but not /j/), or before a pause or major syntactic boundary.

l → ɫ   / _ {C, ‖}   *milk, railway, fill‖*

4.2 A lateral (specified as underlyingly velarized) is brightened before a vowel or /j/, unless a major syntactic boundary intervenes.

ɫ → l   / _ V   *let, blue, filling, million*

Discuss: (i) Which is right? Are they both right? (ii) How major is 'major'?