Patterns of Allophony

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This is a small collection of common allophones taken from the PBase database\textsuperscript{1}, presented as graphs. In making these graphs I have focused on selecting patterns that occur more than once, or which are part of a larger pattern that occurs more than once. For example, in some languages /l/ will present as [d] after nasals. In fewer languages both /t/ and /l/ will do this, so I include them both. I have tried to leave out one-off exotica, but one or two might have slipped through if they struck me as especially interesting.

I have omitted certain very common changes. For example, voicing assimilation of any kind is left out for consonant clusters, and do I not include either nasal assimilation or word-final devoicing. I have also left out all patterns of deletion, which are also largely predictable (as codas, word-finally, etc.).

Reading the Graphs

Arrows indicate the direction of change. The environment in which the change occurs is indicated by the grey text to the right of the line. So, in the selection below, note that /t/ becomes [θ] before /p/, /t/, and /k/, but becomes the glottal stop [ʔ] word finally.

The environments are given in fairly standard notation: C is a consonant, V a vowel, N any nasal consonant, # is a word boundary, and the underline represents the sound itself. Curly braces enclose a set of phonemes. So, the notation _# marks a change that occurs at the end of a word, _{w,j}V marks a change that occurs when the sound is followed by either /w/ or /j/ and then a vowel, and #_{i,e} marks a change that happens at the start of a word and followed by either /i/ or /e/.

\textsuperscript{1}http://pbase.brohan.ca/query