

**PHONEMES AND ALLOPHONES. TYPES OF ALLOPHONES**

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Abstract: The article is about Phonemes and Allophones. Types of Allophones. Native speakers do not observe the difference between the allophones of the same phoneme. At the same time, they realize that allophones of each phoneme possess a bundle of distinctive features that make this phoneme functionally different from all other phonemes of the language. This functionally relevant bundle is called the invariant of the phoneme. All the allophones of the phoneme /d/ are occlusive, forelingual, and lenis.

Keywords: phoneme, allophone, two types, phoneme theory, two separate terms.

Аннотация: Статья о фонемах и аллофонах. Виды аллофонов. Носители языка не замечают разницу между аллофонами одной и той же фонемы. В то же время они осознают, что аллофоны каждой фонемы обладают набором дифференциальных признаков, которые делают эту фонему функционально отличной от всех других фонем языка. Этот функционально значимый набор называется инвариантом фонемы. Все аллофоны фонемы /d/ являются смычными, переднеязычными, ненапряжёнными.

Ключевые слова: фонема, аллофон, 2 типа, теория фонем, два отдельных термина.

INTRODUCTION

The crucial distinction between phonemes and allophones is that substituting one phoneme for another will result in a word with a different meaning (as well as a different pronunciation), but substituting allophones only results in a different (and



perhaps unusual) pronunciation of the same word. The founder of the Phoneme Theory was the Russian scientist Baudouin-de-Courtenay who was the head of the Kazan Linguistic School. The 1st period of his work was characterized by a morphological approach. Baudouin-de-Courtenay tried to analyze phonemes according to their functions in morphemes. He perceived that the same morpheme was not always represented by the same combination of sounds. Baudouin-de-Courtenay introduced a new term "homogeneous" to define the sounds that make up a phoneme and he distinguished 2 types of homogenous:

- divergent – variants of the same sound arising from the phonetic laws functioning in English at present;
- correlates (having mutual relation) – sounds that are different and the different qualities of which cannot be explained by the existing laws of the language.

In other words, Baudouin-de-Courtenay tried to explain the phenomenon of alternation. His diver-gents and correlates represent phonetic and historical alternations.[1]

During the 2nd period (psychological approach) he defined the phoneme as a physical image of a sound. He also regarded phonemes as fictitious units and considered them to be only perceptions of articulatory movements and muscular sensations. This approach is also called mentalistic /physical.[3]

METHODS

In the 1950-es a new standpoint arose; the originator is S.K. Showmyan. A new approach to the phoneme may be termed" cybernetic ". The phoneme is proclaimed to be incognizable by direct perception; it is therefore termed a " construct " which requires a special conceptual apparatus to be cognized.

In the 1st period L. V. Shcherba was under the influence of I. A. Baudouin. L. V. Shcherba, like Baudouin, considers phonemes "perceptions", but his phonemes are "generic perceptions". Moreover, he was the first to advance the idea of the distinctive function of phonemes.[4]

The principal points of L. V. Shcherba's phoneme theory are:



- 1) the theory of phonemic variants (they represent phonemes in actual speech.);
- 2) the theory of phonemic independence.

In the 2nd period of his work, Prof. L. V. Shcherba revised his phoneme theory. In his book on French phonetics he treats phonemes as "sound types" which are capable of distinguishing the meaning and the form of words. The various sounds that we actually utter and which are the individual representing the universal (the phoneme), will be called phonemic variants. Thus, he created the materialistic phoneme theory. Academician Shcherba defined the phoneme as a real independent distinctive unit that manifests itself in the form of its allophones. This approach comprises the abstract, and the functional. Ferdinand de Saussure viewed phonemes as the sum of acoustic impressions and articulatory movements. He also viewed phonemes as disembodied units of the language formed by the differences separating the acoustic image of one sound from the rest of the units. Language in his opinion contains nothing but differences. This approach is called abstractional/abstract.

N. S. Trubetskoy (the head of the Prague Linguistic School) defined the phoneme as a unity of phonologically relevant features of a sound. A relevant feature is the feature without which we can't distinguish one phoneme from another. This approach is called functional.

Phonemes can be neutralized. In this case, we receive an archi-phoneme. That is a unity of relevant features common to both phonemes (but it is an abstraction) (e.g. wetting – wedding in AmE). In case of archi-phoneme, we cannot distinguish one phoneme from another. Thus the distinctive function of the phoneme is lost.

By the way, N. S. Trubetskoy developed de Saussure's principle of the separation of speech from language by proclaiming a new science – phonology as distinct from phonetics.

RESULTS

According to Trubetzkoy, phonetics is a biological science, and should concern itself with the sounds of a language as they are pronounced and as they are heard, without paying any attention to their function in the language. Phonology is a



linguistic science, and should concern itself with the distinctive features of a language only.

Another kind of approach to the nature of the phoneme was expressed by a British scholar, the head of the London School of Phonology, Daniel Jones. He defined the phoneme as 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.

In his monograph, he expounds his new theory, which may be called "atomistic". He breaks up the phoneme into atoms and considers different features of phonemes as independent phenomena. Thus, he speaks of the different qualities of the same phoneme as "phones", a number of which forms the corresponding phoneme. He also speaks of different degrees of length as "chrones" which are combined into "chronemes" (the long and the short chronemes in English). In the same way, he distinguishes tones and tonemes in tone languages, strones and stones (different degrees of stress).

To know how sounds are produced is not enough to describe and classify them as language units. When we talk about the sounds of language, the term "sound" can be interpreted in two different ways. First, we can say that [t] and [d], for example, are two different sounds in English: e.g. ten-den, seat-seed. But on the other hand, we know that [t] in *Let Us* and [t] in *Let Them* are not the same. In both examples, the sounds differ in one articulatory feature only. In the second case, the difference between the sounds has functionally no significance.

The sense of "sound" in these two cases is different. To avoid this ambiguity, linguists use two separate terms: phoneme and allophone.

The phoneme is a minimal abstract linguistic unit realized in speech in the form of speech that sounds opposable to other phonemes of the same language to distinguish the meaning of morphemes and words (by Shcherba + Vassilyev).

Let us consider the phoneme from the point of view of its aspect.

DISCUSSION



Firstly, the phoneme is a functional unit. In phonetics function is usually understood as a role of the various units of the phonetic system in distinguishing one morpheme from another, one word from another, or one utterance from another.

The opposition of phonemes in the same phonetic environment differentiates the meaning of morphemes and words: e.g. bathpath, light-like. Sometimes the opposition of phonemes serves to distinguish the meaning of the whole phrase: He was heard badly - He was hurt badly. Thus we may say that the phoneme can fulfill the distinctive function.

Secondly, the phoneme is material, real, and objective. That means it is realized in speech in the form of speech sounds, its allophones. The phonemes constitute the material form of morphemes, so this function may be called the constitutive function.

Thirdly, the phoneme performs the cognitive function, because the use of the right allophones and other phonetic units facilitates normal recognition.

We may add that the phoneme is an abstract and generalized unit. The phoneme is a minimal language unit. The phoneme belongs to the language, the allophone – to the speech.

Language is an abstract category, it's an abstraction from speech. Speech is the reality of a language, thus the phoneme as a language unit is materialized in speech sound. The phoneme is a sort of generalization (abstraction).

Let us consider the English phoneme /d/. It is an occlusive plosive stop, forelingual, apical, alveolar, lenis consonant. This is how it sounds in isolation or in such words as a door, darn, down, etc, when it retains its typical articulatory characteristics. In this case, the consonant [d] is called the principal allophone.

The allophones that do not undergo any distinguishable changes in speech are called principal.

Allophones that undergo quite predictable changes under the influence of the neighboring sounds in different phonetic situations are called subsidiary, e.g.:

a) deal, did, did you - it is slightly palatalized before front vowels and [j];



- b) bad pain, bedtime - it is pronounced without any plosion before another stop;
- c) sudden, admit - it is pronounced with nasal plosion before [n], [m];
- d) dry - it becomes post-alveolar followed by [r];
- e) middle - before [l] a lateral plosion;
- f) breadth - before interdental sounds it becomes dental;
- g) dwell - when followed by [w] it becomes labialized;
- h) dead - in the word-final position it's partly devoiced.

Thus, we see that the allophones mentioned above are all fore-lingual lenis stops, but they show some differences. The allophones of the same phoneme never occur in the same phonetic context.

Subsidiary allophones can be positional and combinatory. Positional allophones are used in certain positions traditionally. For example, the English /l/ is realized in actual speech as a positional allophone: it is clear in the initial position, and dark in the terminal position, comparing light, let and hill, melt.

Russian positional allophones can be observed in “воплѣ, рублѣ” where terminal /л/ is devoiced after voiceless /п, б/.

Combinatory allophones appear in the process of speech and result from the influence of one phoneme upon another.

Native speakers do not observe the difference between the allophones of the same phoneme. At the same time, they realize that allophones of each phoneme possess a bundle of distinctive features that makes this phoneme functionally different from all other phonemes of the language. This functionally relevant bundle is called the invariant of the phoneme. All the allophones of the phoneme /d/ are occlusive, forelingual, and lenis. If occlusive articulation is changed for constrictive one [d] will be replaced by [z]: e. g. breed - breeze, deal — zeal.

The articulatory features which form the invariant of the phoneme are called distinctive or relevant. To extract relevant features of the phoneme we have to oppose it to some other phoneme in the phonetic context.



If the opposed sounds differ in one articulatory feature and this difference brings about changes in the meaning this feature is called relevant: for example, port — court, [p] and [k] are consonants, occlusive, fortis; the only difference being that [p] is labial and [t] is lingual.

The articulatory features that do not serve to distinguish meaning are called non-distinctive, irrelevant, or redundant. For example, it is impossible to oppose an aspirated [ph] to a nonaspirated one in the same phonetic context to distinguish meaning.

We know that anyone who studies a foreign language makes mistakes in the articulation of sounds. L.V. Shcherba classifies the pronunciation errors as phonological and phonetic.

If an allophone is replaced by an allophone of a different phoneme the mistake is called phonological. If an allophone of the phoneme is replaced by another allophone of the same phoneme the mistake is called phonetic.

CONCLUSION

Phonemes and allophones are essential concepts in phonetics and phonology, helping to explain how speech sounds function in languages. Phonemes are the smallest units of sound that distinguish meaning, while allophones are the different variations of a phoneme that occur due to contextual influences but do not change the meaning of a word.

Allophones can be categorized into two main types: complementary distribution and free variation. Allophones in complementary distribution appear in specific phonetic environments and do not overlap, whereas allophones in free variation can occur in the same environment without altering meaning.

Understanding phonemes and allophones is crucial for linguistics, language learning, and speech recognition, as they highlight the flexibility and systematic nature of human speech production.

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