

# PHONOLOGY. PHONEMES

Lecture 2

# Plan

- Phonology.
- Methods of Phonological Investigation.
- Theories of the Phoneme.
- Phonemes and Allophones.
- Phonetic and Phonological Mistakes.

# Phonology

# Phonology

**Phonetics** studies speech sounds from the articulatory and acoustic point of view.

**Phonology** studies their communicative purposes.

The unit of **phonetics** is a speech sound, the unit of **phonology** is a phoneme.

# Methods of Phonological Investigation

# Methods of Phonological Investigation

**Phonemes** can be studied by the method of minimal pairs (commutation test, method of substitution). It consists in finding pairs of words which differ in one phoneme.

E.g. bat – cat (minimal pair)

E.g. can – ran - man (minimal set)

# Methods of Phonological Investigation

The method of minimal pairs helps to identify 24 consonants and 20 vowels in English. They form a system of opposition. If the substitution of one sound for another results in the change of meaning, the commuted sounds are different phonemes.

# Methods of Phonological Investigation

The articulatory features that serve to distinguish meaning are called **distinctive (relevant) features**: [t – d] (presence or absence of voice).

The articulatory features that do not serve to distinguish meaning are called **non-distinctive (irrelevant) features**: [p – p] (presence or absence of aspiration).

A decorative horizontal bar at the top of the slide, consisting of an orange rectangular block on the left and a larger blue rectangular block on the right.

# Theories of the Phoneme

# Theories of the Phoneme

## Scientists about **the Phoneme:**

- L. A. Baudouin de Courtney: In speech we utter a much greater variety of sounds than we are aware of. And these sounds are united in a number of sound types which are capable of distinguishing the meaning and the form of words, so they serve the purpose of social communication.

# Theories of the Phoneme

- Ferdinand de Saussure: The phoneme is the sum of acoustic impressions and articulatory movements of that which is heard and of that which is pronounced, both being mutually dependent.
- Trubetzkoy N.: The phoneme is the minimal sound unit by which meaning may be differentiated.

*Trubetzkoy N. proclaimed a new science – **phonology** as distinct from **phonetics**. He separated **language** from **speech**.*

# Theories of the Phoneme

- **D. Jones:** The phoneme is a family of sounds. The members of the family show phonetic similarity. No member of the family can occur in the same phonetic context as any other member.
- **B. Bloch, G. Trager:** The phoneme is a class of phonetically similar sounds, contrasting and mutually exclusive with all similar classes in the language.

# Theories of the Phoneme

- **L. V. Shcherba**: The phoneme is a real independent distinctive unit which manifests itself in the form of allophones.
- **V. A. Vassilyev**: The phoneme is a dialectical unity of **3 aspects**:
  - 1) *material, real, objective;*
  - 2) *abstract and generalized;*
  - 3) *functional.*

# Phonemes and Allophones

# Phonemes and Allophones

**Allophones** are variants of phonemes (actually pronounced speech sounds).

**Allophones** are realized in concrete words. They show phonetic similarity (their acoustic and articulatory features have much in common), but at the same time they differ in some degree and are incapable of differentiating words.

**[t]** in *twice, eighth, trouble, written, little, stay.*

# Phonemes and Allophones

- **Typical, or principal** variant of the phoneme is the most representative and free from the influence of the neighbouring phonemes.
- **Subsidiary allophones** are variants of the phoneme in actual speech:
  - **Positional allophones** (let – hill)
  - **Combinatory allophones** (peak – speak).

# Phonetic and Phonological Mistakes

# Phonetic and Phonological Mistakes

- **Phonological mistakes:** if an allophone of some phoneme is replaced by an allophone of a different phoneme, the meaning of a word is changed.

cap - gap

- **Phonetic mistakes:** if an allophone of some phoneme is replaced by another allophone of the same phoneme, the meaning of a word is not changed.

take - steak

# Questions

# Questions

- What is phonology?
- What theories of the phoneme do you know?
- What methods of phonology do you know?
- What is the difference between phonemes and allophones?
- What types of allophones do you know?
- What is the difference between phonetic and phonological mistakes?
- What functions does the phoneme perform?

Thank you for your attention!