

An Intro. to Descriptive Linguistics.

Langue

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We may define a phoneme as a min.^m feature of the exp.n system of a spoken lang. by which 1 thing that may be said is distinguished from any other thing which might have been said. Thus, if 2 utterances are diff. in such a way that they suggest to the hearer diff. contents, it must be becoz there are differences in the exp.n.s.

Phonemes have no meanings; morphemes have meanings. The simpler words of Eng. are morphemes. Other words consist of 2 or more morphemes. The exp.n str. is merely the sum of the patterns of arrangement of these 2 basic units.

Phonology deals with the phonemes & sequences of phonemes
grammar deals with the morphemes & their combinations.

Eng. Consonants

We will find that bill & pill differ in only 1 phoneme. They are ∴ a minimal pair.

/ʃ/ - shall harsh

/z/ - rouge

/ç/ - chill hatch.

/j/ - Jill edge

The sounds used in Eng. are produced by a few basic mechanisms combined in various ways. 1 of the more imp. of these is voice, a regular periodic vibration generated thru the action of the vocal cords. The latter are 2 bands of elastic tissue in the larynx. They may be opened to permit free breathing, or brot tog. to produce various types of sounds, the most imp. of which is voice. In this instance, they are closed, but somewhat lightly. The air behind is moderately compressed by contraction of the thoracic cavity. The air pressure forces the cords apart. A small amount of the air passes ~~out~~ thru, & they again snap closed becoz of their elastic nature. In this way an alternating opening & closing of the cords is produced. This generates the sound waves which we call voice.

The shapes of the passage bet. the vocal cords & the outside air modify the quality of the voice in various ways. Sounds that involve no other mechanism than these are called resonants. All Eng vowels & /m, n, ŋ, l, r, y, w/ are resonants. They may be divided into 3 gps.

In /m n ŋ/ the passage thru the mouth is completely closed at some pt., but the ~~to~~ " " " nose is open. They are called nasal resonants or merely nasals. The 3 differ only in

V. Sigh.

the pt. at which the mouth passage is closed.

In /l/ the mouth is closed at the mid-line by the contact of the tip of the tongue against the gums. There is an opening at 1 or both sides. It is called a lateral resonant, or merely a lateral.

In /r y w/ the passage thru the mouth is open at the midline. They are ∴ called median resonants. This term includes also all Eng. vowels. Bcoz of the close similarity of /r y w/ to the vowels, they are sometimes called semivowels.

If the vocal cords are brot tog. sufficiently to obstruct the passage of air, but not to produce voice, a diff. sort of sound results. This is glottal friction. Friction differs from voice in that there is no clearly marked fundamental pitch.

The phoneme /h/ in normal speech consists largely of glottal friction. Since the mouth normally is moving toward the position for the foll. vowel, /h/ is frequently similar to a whispering of vowel. This means that /h/ varies widely in quality with its environment. It may even be a whispered nasal, as in /mhm/ 'yes.'

Friction can be produced at various other pts in the air

passage by any v. narrow opening. The sounds /f θ s ʃ/ are largely such friction produced at a narrow constriction in the mouth. They are ∴ called fricatives. The sounds /v ʒ z ʒ/ are similar except that there is simultaneous voice. They are ∴ called voiced fricatives, & in distinction /f θ s ʃ/ are called voiceless.

Fricatives differ also in the shape of the narrow opening in which they are produced. In /f v θ ʃ/ it is relatively wide from side to side but v. narrow from top to bottom. Becoz of the slit-like shape of the opening, these sounds are called slit fricatives. In contrast in /s z ʃ ʒ/ the opening is much narrower from side to side & deeper from top to bottom. These sounds are called grooved fricatives.

The sounds /p t k b d g/ are formed by the complete closure of the air passages. There may be either closure & opening, or only closure, or only opening. The sounds /b d g/ are further char. by voice at the moment of closing or opening; they are called voiced stops. /p t k/ have no voice at the moment of opening or closing. They are ∴ called voiceless stops. Eng. voiceless stops usually have a rather strong release of breath bet. the open-

ning & the beginning of voicing for the foll. vowel. This is aspiration, & the stops are said to be aspirate. The amount of aspiration in /p t k/ is rather variable in most Eng. dialects, but the variation is never significant.

The symbol [p^h] represents an aspirated stop, whereas [p[̄]] represents an unaspirated stop. Thus we may write pill as /pɪl/ or as [p^hɪl] & spill as /spɪl/ or as [sp[̄]ɪl]

Affricates are stops in which the opening is relatively slow. They ∴ are composed of a stop + a movement thru a fricative position: /tʃ/ starts with a sound similar to /t/ & moves thru a sound rather similar to /ʃ/; /dʒ/ starts with a sound similar to /d/ & moves thru a sound rather similar to /ʒ/

All the consonants are char. ized by a closure or a decided narrowing at some pt. in the mouth. They may be classified by this pt. of articulation. In each case there are 2 parts, known as articulators, which are not tog. The foll. are used in Eng.:

Bilabial

Lower Articulator
(lower) lip

Upper Articulator
upper lip.

Labiodental	(lower) lip	(upper) teeth
Dental	tip of tongue	(upper) teeth
Alveolar	" " "	" gums
Alveopalatal	front " "	far front of pala ^{te}
Velar	back " "	velum (soft palate)
Glottal		the 2 vocal cords.

Bilabial stop - /p/ or /b/

Labiodental fricative /f/ or /v/

Dental fricative - /θ/ or /ð/

Alveolar nasal - /n/

Alveopalatal fricative - /ʃ/ or /ʒ/

Velar stop - /k/ or /g/

The term "lip" without specification may be assumed to refer to the lower lip. Similarly, "teeth" - upper front teeth.

		Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Alveopalatal	Velar	Glottal
Stops	voiceless	p			t		k	
	voiced	b			d		g	
Affricates	voiceless					tʃ		
	voiced					dʒ		
Fricatives								
slit	voiceless		f	θ				h
	voiced		v	ð				
groove	voiceless				s	ʃ		
	voiced				z	ʒ		
Lateral	voiced				l			
Nasals	"	m			n		ŋ	
semivowels	"	w			r	y		

The Eng. Vowel System.

3 variables in the positions of the vocal organs are particularly significant in the phonetic description of Eng. vowels.

els. The most imp. is the position of the highest part of the tongue. It may be relatively high, mid, or low. It may also be relatively front, central, or back. Note the difference in meaning bet. central (intermediate bet. front & back) & mid (intermediate bet. high & low). These 2 variables provide a symmetrical charting of the Eng. vowel phonemes:

	Front	Central	Back
High	i	ɪ	u
Mid	e	ə	ɔ
Low	æ	ɑ	ɒ

The 3rd variable which is of importance in Eng. vowels is the rounding of the lips. In /u/ there is always moderate rounding. In /ɔ/ there is usually somewhat less, but always enough to be noticeable. In /ɒ/ the rounding is still weaker. The front & central vowels are never rounded.

/ɪ/ is neither extremely high nor extremely front. /ɪ/ has the same ht. as /i/ & /u/ or may be higher than either. It may be produced by starting from /i/ & drawing the tongue backward toward the /u/ position. There is no

lip rounding. The tongue position is distinctly higher than for /ɔ/.

The glide or semivowel /w/ is a movement of the tongue upward & backward with an accompanying ↑ in lip rounding.

Both /y/ & /w/ involve a raising of the tongue. In /y/ the movement is up & forward, in /w/ it is up & backward.

The Morpheme

Morphemes are gen. by short sequences of phonemes. Some " can be usefully described as the smallest meaningful units in the str. of the lang. By "smallest unit" we mean a unit which cannot be divided without destroying or drastically altering the meaning. For ex., /streɪnɪ/ as in strange is a morpheme.

However, /streɪnɪnis/ as in strangeness is not a single morpheme, It may be divided into /streɪnɪ/ & /nis/. Each of these pieces does have meaning, & the meaning of the combination is related to the meanings of the 2 pieces. ∴ /streɪnɪnis/ is 2 morphemes.

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Layne - ?

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V. Singh

Immediate Constituents

Syntax may be roughly defined as the principles of arrangement of the constituents, formed by the process of derivation & inflection (words) into larger constituents of various kinds.

Syntactic Devices

The meaningful str. of a sentence can best be stated in terms of a hierarchy of ICs.

The iggle squiggles grazed wombly in the garlish goop

Only 3 words of the 9 are recognized. Also the 4 word fractions -s, -ed, -ly, & -ish.

They suggest certain facts about some constituents or hint at certain consten. al patterns. For ex., -ish is comm- only a derivational suffix forming adjectivals or words with similar fun. c. This scrap of evidence is strengthened by the fact that garlish occurs in a position where such a word might be expected. This in turn, tog. with the position of in the, suggests that goop is most probably a noun. The 1st word in the sentence, the, signals in a somewhat diff. way. This must always be the 1st word (unless preceded by all,

both, or $\frac{1}{2}$) of a nominal phrase. After the, perhaps separated by 1 or more adjs & their modifiers, must usually be a noun. Thus the noun phrase must be: The iggle, or The iggle squiggles, or The iggle squiggles trazed, or some longer sequence. There is nothing that will surely identify the noun, tho the ending -s is certainly suggestive. There is a common noun suffix of this form, & it is not at all common for adjs to end this way. Thus the iggle squiggles seems more probable as a nominal phrase than does the iggle squiggles trazed. Foll. a nominal phrase, probably a sentence subject, the most likely element wud be some sort of verbal phrase. This wud normally consist of either a single verb, or of a verb form preceded by 1 or more auxiliaries. If the latter were present, they wud be v. helpful in signalling the beginning of the verbal phrase. Since no auxiliary is present, the verbal phrase is most likely a single word, perhaps with 1 of the verb inflectional suffixes. Either squiggles or trazed wud qualify: both have endings that look likely. But wombly looks rather unlikely as a verb, tho it wud be risky to rule it out absolutely. We are left with 2 possibilities:

The iggle	squiggles	trazed	wombly	in the	harlish	goop.
subject	verb	?	?			

The iggle squiggles trayed wombly in the hairiest goop.
 subject verb ?

Which of these word seem best depends largely on the possibility of identifying the elements marked with ?s. Wombly in the 2nd analysis looks like words such as happily, daily. Like them it has the ending -ly & it occurs immediately after the verb, a v. suitable position. That is to say the whole sentence might be comparable to:

The little pigs wallowed happily in the muddy puddle.

Articulatory Phonetics.

The glottal stop [ʔ] is produced by the closure, opening, or closure & opening of the vocal cords.

The Phoneme

Any sound or subclass of sounds which is in complementary distribution with another so that the 2 tog. constitute a single phoneme is called an allophone of that phoneme. A phoneme is, ∴, a class of allophones.