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نموذج الأسئلة

Department of English Language and Literature

Faculty of Education First Year Phonology (1) Exam
December 2013

Answer the following questions:

1. Provide an articulatory description for the sounds whose symbols are:
   a. /k/
   b. /θ/
   c. /z/
   d. /r/
   e. /æ/
   f. /u:/

   Provide examples and draw figures where possible

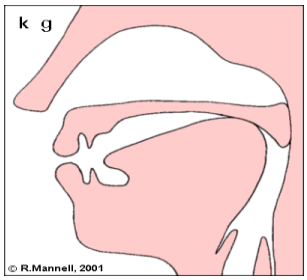
2. Write to distinguish between:
   a. Palatals and velars
   b. Phoneme and allophone
   c. Semantics and pragmatics
   d. Oral and nasal sounds

نموذج الإجابة

The first question

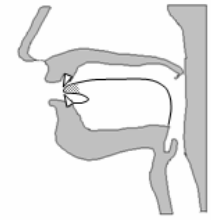
a. /k/

This sound is phonetically described as voiceless velar stop. It is produced by the help of the soft palate or velum and back of the tongue. On the production of this sound the soft palate is raised to close the nasal cavity. The back of the tongue makes a closure with the soft palate. As the soft palate is raised to close the nasal cavity, the air has only one passage to go out through the mouth. It passes through the oral cavity but gets stopped by a closure made by the back of the tongue and the velum. The air is piled behind the closure. When the closure is released, the air gets out suddenly with plosion. The vocal cords are still so as to produce no voice. The voiceless /k/ sound is found in words like cat /kæt/, skip /skip/, and back /bæk/. The Figure illustrates the vocal tract on producing this sound.



b. /θ/

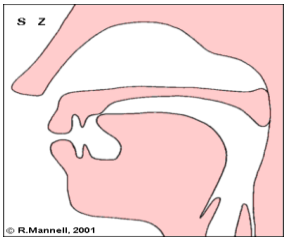
This sound is voiceless dental fricative consonants, respectively. It is produced by having the tip of the tongue between the upper and lower front teeth. The mechanism of producing this sound starts when the air starts its trip out of the lungs moving upward in the vocal system. As the soft palate is raised to close the nasal cavity, the air has only one passage to go out through the mouth. It passes through the oral cavity till it reaches a part where the air stream is very narrowed by the tip of the tongue ant the upper and lower teeth. It forces itself gradually out of this narrow passage producing friction with the sound. This voiceless sound /θ/ is found in words like thin /θin/, methane /miθæn/ truth /truθ/. The Figure illustrates the vocal tract on producing this sound.



c. /z/

This sound is voiced alveolar fricative consonant. It is produced by having the blade of the tongue raised towards the upper alveolar ridge but still allowing the air to move through out of the mouth. The mechanism of producing this sound starts when the air starts its trip out of the lungs moving upward in the vocal system. As the soft palate is raised to close the nasal cavity, the air has only one passage to go out through the mouth. It passes through the oral cavity till it reaches a part where the air stream is considerably narrowed by the blade of the tongue and the upper and alveolar ridge. It

forces itself gradually out of this narrow passage producing friction with the sound. The voiced /z/ is found in words like zed /zed/, zoo /zu:/, etc. The Figure illustrates the vocal tract on producing this sound.

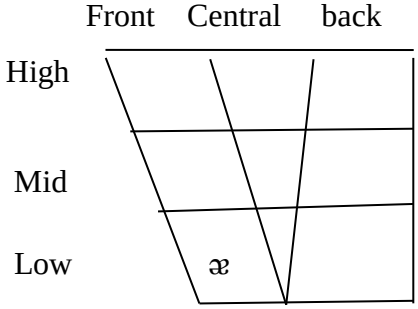


d. /r/

This sound is phonetically described as retroflex approximant. It is produced by narrowing the vocal tract at the place of articulation but not enough to pro-duce friction. Its place of articulation is retroflex which means that the tip of the tongue is curled just behind the alveolar ridge. However, it is not palatalized. In other words, the sound is post-alveolar approximant liquid. The vocal cords vibrate during the articulation producing voice. In Standard British English (R.P.) the sound /r/ is never pronounced before a consonant or silence but only when a vowel follows it.

e. /æ/

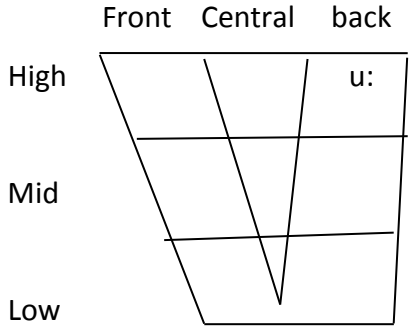
This is a front low neutral short vowel. It is produced when the front of the tongue is raised to a low position. The lips are neutral and the vocal cords vibrate to produce voice. The air goes out without obstruction on the production of this sound. It exists in words like fat, /fæt/; bat, /bæt/; mat, /mæt/; etc. Figure 29 illustrates the position and height of the tongue on producing this sound.



f. /u:/

3. This is a high back rounded long vowel. On the production of this sound the back part of the tongue is raised to a high position. The lips are rounded and the air passes freely without obstruction out of the mouth. This sound is oral. However, if the sound is preceded or followed by a nasal sound it gets nasalized, i.e. air gets out of both oral and nasal cavities. Like the case with all vowels, the vocal cords

vibrate producing voice. This sound is found in words like pool /pu:l/, fool /fu:/, tool /tu:l/. Figure 21 illustrates the articulation of /u:/.



The Second question

a. Palatals and velars

PALATAL is an adjective used to describe the sounds articulated by raising the front part of the tongue to a point on the hard palate just behind the alveolar ridge, e.g. /ʃ/ in wash and /ʒ/ in measure. VELAR is an adjective used to describe sounds articulated by raising the back of the tongue to the soft palate or velum, e.g. /k/, /g/.

b. Phoneme and allophone

A PHONEME phoneme may be defined as a minimum feature of the expression system of a spoken language by which one thing that may be said is distinguished from any other thing which might have been said. Thus, if two utterances are different in such a way that they suggest to the hearer different contents it must be because there are differences in the expressions. The difference may be small or extensive. The smallest difference that can differentiate utterances with different contents is a difference of a single phoneme. This description is best illustrated by a full-scale application in the presentation of the phonemic system of a language we will find that bill and pill differ in only one phoneme. They are therefore, a minimal pair. When differing sounds are assigned to the same phoneme in a language they are called ALLOPHONES.

c. Semantics and pragmatics

The study of context which concerns the relations between the language event and the rest of the world is sometimes called semantics. It concerns what the non-linguist generally has in mind when he talks about the meaning of an utterance. The terms semantics and meaning are often however used rather differently by linguists. PRAGMATICS is the field of study deals with particular utterances in particular situations and is specially concerned with the various ways in which the many social contexts of language performance can influence interpretation. Pragmatics goes beyond such influences as supra-

segmental phonemes, dialects, and registers (all of which "also shape interpretation) and looks at speech performance as primarily a social act ruled by various social conventions.

d. Oral and nasal sounds

ORAL is an adjective used to describe the sounds produced by pushing lung air out through the mouth. NASAL is an adjective used to describe the sounds produced by pushing the lung air out not only through the mouth but also through the nose.