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Dr. Hemant Jha

Topic: Phonetic Transcription

English is not a phonetic language like Sanskrit. In a phonetic language each letter has a fixed sound. In describing the sound system of one language, it is necessary to distinguish between speech sound and what are called 'phonemes'. A speech sound is a sound of definite organic formation and definite acoustic quality which is incapable of variation. A phoneme may be described regularly as a family consisting of an important sound of the language (generally the most frequently used member of that family) together with other related sounds which ~~make~~^{take} its place in particular sound-sequences or under particular conditions.

of length or stress or intonation.

The /k/ in the English word keep, cool, call, are three different distinct sounds articulated at different parts of the palate but they are regarded as belonging to the same phoneme, since the use of the different varieties of /k/ is ^{solely} dependent upon the nature of the adjoining vowel.

In English some letters have fixed sounds. They are ~~the~~ t, d, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, v, w, x,

Other letters stand for different sounds such as :-

c :- cat; chord, city, machine.

g :- go; gum;

u :- mute; musk.

x :- box; xavier.

a :- sat; car.

e :- me; met.

i :- fit; fine.

t :- top; venture.

As a general rule it is only necessary in practical phonetic writing to have

symbols for the phonemes. The use of allophones (special members of the phoneme group) is ~~not~~ in most languages, determined by simple principles which can be stated once for all, and which can be taken for granted in reading phonetic texts — a transcription based on the principle 'one symbol per phoneme' is called a phonemic or 'linguistically broad transcription'. A transcription which provides special signs for allophones is called 'allophonic' or 'linguistically narrow' transcription.

There are also 'comparative' or 'typographically narrow' forms of transcription in which special symbols are introduced in order to show that certain sounds of the language transcribed differ from sounds of another language.

So to represent the 'sound' of a word correctly phonetic symbols are used. There are two systems known as the Daniel Jones system and the Hornby system. The chief

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difference between the two is that Daniel Jones uses /ə/ for '37' where as Hornby uses /o/ for '37'. Jones uses /æ/ for the vowel phoneme in 'cat' and for this sound the symbol used by Hornby is /a/. We go by the set of symbols devised by Daniel Jones in his book "Pronouncing Dictionary".

Consonants :-

The following consonants have fixed sounds. So, they are used as phonetic symbols:-

b, d, f, h, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, v, w, z.

In addition to these the following symbols are used:-

/t/ (ट); /g/ (ग); /j/ (य); /dʒ/ (ज); /ʃ/ (च); θ (थ)
/s/ (स); /tʃ/ (च); /ŋ/ (ङ). Examples:-
/t/ > /ten/ (ten); /g/ > /gu:z/ (goose) /j/ > /jeɪn/ (yarn); /dʒ/ > /dʒədz/ (judge); /ʃ/ > /ʃæt/ (that); /θ/ > /θæŋk/ (Thank); /s/ > /ʃɪp/ (ship); /tʃ/ > /tʃeɪn/ (chain); /ŋ/ > /sɪŋ/ (sing).

- x - x - (To be concluded in the next.)