

Lecture 4 Difficulties with taxonomic phonemics

Classical phonemic theory, which underlies most classroom applications of phonetic transcription, is not without its problems and absurdities.

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|---|--|--|
| 0. No problem | /A/ → { [x] /...
[y] /... } | |
| 1. Free variation | /A/ → [x ~ y] / ... | <i>fire</i> ['faɪə ~ 'faə]
<i>lot</i> [lɒt ~ lɒʔt ~ lɒt'] |
| 2. Neutralization | /A/ → [x]
/B/ → [x] | in the same environment |
| | GenAm /t, d/ → [r] between vowels | <i>waited, waded</i> |
| <i>atom, Adam</i> ['æɾəm]
(indeterminacy) | /l:, ɪ/ in weak syllable, before V or #
/ʊ, ə/ in weak syll, before C
/i:, ɪə/, before /r/ | <i>happier, happy</i>
<i>ambulance</i>
<i>period</i> |
| 3. Dissociation /A/ → [xy] (one phoneme, two phonetic segments) | diphthongs [əʊ] one phoneme or two?
[ɪ:] analysed as /ij/ (or written /iy/)
affricates [tʃ] analysed as a single phoneme (/č/) | |
| 4. Coalescence | /AB/ → [x] (two phonemes, one phonetic segment) | |
| | syllabic consonants /ən/ → [ŋ] in certain env. <i>garden</i>
GenAm /nt/ → [r̥] in certain environments <i>winter</i>
nasalized vowels in various languages /Vn/ → [Ṽ] | |
| 5. Insertion | ∅ → [x] | |
| | hard attack <i>an egg</i> ən 'ʔeg
preglottalization <i>petrol</i> peʔtrəl
plosive epenthesis <i>fence</i> fents, fenʔts | |
| 6. Deletion | /A/ → ∅
elision | <i>last man</i> lɑ:s mæn |
| 7. Crossing association lines | /XY/ → [yx]
metathesis | <i>ask</i> , non-standard [ɑ:ks] |