PHONOLOGY
THE SOUND PATTERNS OF LANGUAGE

1/ What is Phonology?

  => Phonology is the study and identification of the distinctive unit of sound **(phoneme) in a language.**

  => Phonology studies the ways in which speech sounds form systems and patterns in human language.

   e.g: arrange the following phonemes to form meaningful words. How many patterns are there?
/i/, /e/, /n/, /t/,/b/

      /tin/, /ten/, /net/, /bin/, /bit/, /bet/

2/ What is a phoneme?

=> A phoneme is a **minimal/smallest, distinctive** unit of sound in a language.

=> A phoneme is an **abstract unit**, a segment used to **differentiate** between the **meanings of words**.

e.g: /tin/ <-> /ten/ <-> /net/

/bin/ <-> /bit/ <-> /bet/

3/ The phoneme theories: 4 views (pages 41, 42)

4/ What is a phone?

=> A phone is a **phonetic unit or segment**.

5/ What is an allophone?

 => An allophone can be defined as a predictable phonetic variant of a phoneme.

e.g 1: [l] clear variant when used initially as in *"lip", "love", "like"*

 [l_0] devoiced variant after voiceless / p / as in *"play", "plan", "please"*

 [ḷ /ɫ] dark variant when used finally as in *"little", "table", "apple"*

e.g 2: [t′] unaspirated after a voiceless fricative as in *"still", "stand", "steak"*

 [t^h] aspirated before a short vowel in stress position as in *"till", "ten", "tan"*

Note: *Although these variants are slightly different, they still share such similar phonetic properties as <+consonantal>, <+voiced>, <+alveolar>, <+lateral> (e.g1) or <+consonantal>, <+voiceless>, <+ alveolar>, <+plosive> (e.g 2).*

=> An allophone is a variant of a phoneme. The allophone of a phoneme forms a set of sounds that

    a/ **do not change the meaning of a word.**

    b/ are all very similar to one another.

    c/ occur in different contexts different from one another.

    d/ have non-distinctive differences.

=> When two phonemes occur interchangeably without changing the meaning of a word we say that these two phonemes are in free variation in that particular word.

    e.g: "economics" may be pronounced as /ˌiːkəˈnɒmɪks/ or / ˌekəˈnɒmɪks /

6/ Distinctive features:

=> **Features:** Phonemes can be broken down into smaller constituents called features.

=> **Distinctive features**: the differences which distinguish phonemes from each other.

e.g: /p/   /b/

    + consonantal   + consonantal

    + bilabial   + bilabial

    + stop   + stop

    - voiced   +voiced

      (distinctive feature)

7/ Minimal pairs:

  are pairs of words which are different from each other in **ONLY ONE** phoneme.

e.g: bit – boot, cat – cap, ten – tan, thin – tin, bat – bite

8/ Types of pronunciation:

⇒**British English: Received Pronunciation (RP)** is the type of British standard pronunciation which has been regarded as the prestige variety and which shows no regional variation.

⇒ **American English**

⇒ **Australian English**

9/ Principles of transcription:

a/ What is transcription?

Transcription is the use of the symbols in IPA (International Phonetics Association) to show sounds or sound sequences in a written form.

b/ Types of transcription:

b1/ Phonemic transcription (linguistically broad transcription)

-> It is used to show only the distinctive sounds of a language.

-> It is based on the principle "one symbol per phoneme".

-> It is written within two parallel slanting lines/   /.

-> It may be used for teaching purposes to show differences in pronunciation.

b2/ Allophonic/Phonetic transcription (linguistically narrow transcription)

-> It uses allophonic symbols for various sounds.

-> It is based on the principle "one symbol per allophone".

-> It is written in square brackets [   ].

-> It may be used to show the different pronunciation of closely related dialects or to show the pronunciation of individual speakers or groups of speakers.